

THE UNIVERSITY OF HULL

**ROMANCING THE ORDEAL: REPRESENTATIONS OF PAIN AND
SUFFERING IN MIDDLE ENGLISH METRICAL ROMANCES**

being a Thesis submitted for the Degree of

Doctorate of Philosophy

in the University of Hull

by

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Summary of thesis submitted for PhD degree by Pınar Taşdelen on Romancing the Ordeal: Representations of Pain and Suffering in Middle English Metrical Romances

This thesis concentrates on the representations of pain and suffering in forty-five Middle English metrical romances. This excludes certain Arthurian and non-anonymous material. It comprises an introduction, five chapters, and an index of themes related to suffering, categorizing the suffering theme in metrical romances.

The introduction deals with the definitions, authorship, audience, classification, manuscript contexts and indexes of metrical romances, so as to contextualize the current work. The first chapter categorizes the villains and focuses on the reasons for villainy and the nature of domestic and stranger villains, who are inherently evil, have reasons to be villainous, or who act as a catalyst to initiate villainy, distinguishing them from good villains who victimize unintentionally. It also examines how villainies are punished. The second and the third chapters concentrate on female and male victims respectively, and explore the nature and reactions of victims, how victims respond to their ordeals (either in a submissive or resistant fashion) and the representations of self-victimizers. The functions of domestic and stranger relievers of suffering are also considered. The fourth chapter discusses how Middle English metrical romances make use of journeys in the form of enforced exile, self-exile, quest and pilgrimage. The fifth chapter examines how divine interferences and supernatural agents function in the representations of pain and suffering, while paying attention to the significance of dreams in relation to suffering, and the representations of ordeals in the fairy world.

The index categorizes the conventional romance characters and circumstances with particular relation to the representations of suffering. It is also intended to serve as a research tool for scholars studying ordeals in Middle English romances, or romances in general.

Abstract

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Introduction

This introduction presents the ongoing critical interest in the definition, production, audience and taxonomy of romances. It consists of four sections in order to introduce the definitions, authorship and audience, classification, manuscript contexts and indexes of romances, and it concludes with another section explaining the choice of corpus and methodology in this study.

Definitions

The definition of medieval romance as a genre is a long-running discussion in Middle English studies. Much scholarship on the definition of medieval romance is directed at identifying and interpreting the conventional subject matter and forms of romances. Critics are not in agreement about the defining features of medieval romance; therefore, the generic definition is highly contentious. As Lillian Herlands Hornstein points out, '[a]lthough the romances have never been considered difficult to understand, no one has been able to tell us exactly what they are'.¹ Pamela Gradon is doubtful whether romance can be regarded as a genre at all since 'the texts that we call romances are merely a somewhat arbitrary selection from medieval narrative'.² It is even uncertain whether medieval authors had a sense of genre, since they changed romance conventions to adapt them to new audiences and social situations.³ Joanne A. Rice highlights the vagueness of the term and defines it as 'simply a work written in a Romance language, nothing more'.⁴ In other words, 'romance is the shape-shifter par excellence among medieval genres, a protean form that refuses to settle into neat boundaries'.⁵

Yin Liu believes there are three reasons which make it difficult to define romance. First of all, it is unclear whether the word romance refers to the language of the poem's source or to its genre. Secondly, a Middle English text identifying itself as romance may not be accepted as a romance by a modern scholar, or a text classified as romance by a modern scholar may not call itself a romance. Thirdly, there are

¹ Lillian Herlands Hornstein, 'Middle English Romances', in *Recent Middle English Scholarship and Criticism: Survey and Desiderata*, ed. by J. Burke Severs (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1971), pp. 55-95 (p. 64).

² Pamela Gradon, *Form and Style in Early English Fiction* (London: Methuen, 1971), p. 269. The same idea is discussed in Joanne A. Charbonneau, 'Romances, Middle English', in *Medieval England: An Encyclopaedia*, ed. by Paul E. Szarmach, M. Teresa Tavormina and Joel T. Rosenthal (New York: Garland, 1998), pp. 646-9.

³ Paul Strohm, 'Middle English Narrative Genres', *Genre*, 13 (1980), 379-88 (p. 387).

⁴ Joanne A. Rice, *Middle English Romance: An Annotated Bibliography, 1955-1985* (New York: Garland, 1987), p. xvii.

⁵ Matilda Tomaryn Bruckner, 'The Shape of Romance in Medieval France', in *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Romance*, ed. by Roberta L. Krueger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 13-28 (p. 13).

anachronistic assumptions which claim the influence of other genres on romance.⁶ If romance is formulated with a rigid definition, ‘the dynamism and fluidity that mark the genre’ are lost.⁷ Raluca L. Radulescu stresses that romance has flexible generic boundaries, and texts referred to as romances by modern critics were treated as lives, histories, legends or chronicles in the Middle Ages.⁸

In addition to the Middle English romance *Richard Coer de Lion*, there are medieval texts which refer to particular romances such as *The Laud Troy Book*, Chaucer’s *Tale of Sir Thopas*, the *Cursor Mundi* and the *Speculum Vitae*. These references display the popularity of their heroes and how they were ‘regarded as common property of authors and audiences’ in the fourteenth century.⁹ The last two works advertise themselves as alternatives to romance, which their writers consider to be unedifying and secular. They include lists of romance heroes made to define ‘romance’ as a concept; however, it is difficult to classify their contents in accordance with their subject matter, language, popular or courtly features. For instance, in the fourteenth-century didactic work the *Speculum Vitae*, the poet differentiates his work from the works on Octovian, Isumbras, Beves of Hamptoun and Guy of Warwick which celebrate love and chivalry, while Chaucer disassociates his Sir Thopas from Horn, Beves, Guy and Libeaus.¹⁰ *The Laud Troy Book* refers to romance heroes such as Beves, Guy, Gawain, Perceval, Roland, Octovian, Charlemagne, Havelok and Horn.¹¹ The lines of *Richard Coer de Lyon* identify romance heroes such as Partonope, Ipomadon, Alisaunder, Charlemagne, Arthur, Gawain, Lancelot, Beves and Octovian.¹² Likewise, the fourteenth-century spiritual, didactic text, the *Cursor Mundi*, provides a list of heroic allusions in its opening lines to the heroes of romance, such as Alisaunder, Charlemagne, Gawain, Arthur, Tristrem, Isumbras and Amadace, about whom people enjoyed reading and listening. Thus, the *Cursor*-poet makes a connection between the

⁶ Yin Liu, ‘Middle English Romance as Prototype Genre’, *The Chaucer Review*, 40.4 (2006), 335-53 (pp. 335-7).

⁷ Thomas Hahn and Dana M. Symons, ‘Middle English Romance’, in *A Companion to Medieval English Literature: c.1350-c.1500*, ed. by Peter Brown (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007), pp. 341-57 (p. 354).

⁸ Raluca L. Radulescu, ‘Genre and Classification’, in *A Companion to Medieval Popular Romance*, ed. by Raluca L. Radulescu and Cory James Rushton (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2009), pp. 31-48 (p. 34).

⁹ Edmund Reiss, ‘Romance’, in *The Popular Literature of Medieval England*, ed. by Thomas J. Heffernan (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1985), pp. 108-30 (p. 112).

¹⁰ See *Speculum Vitae: A Reading Edition*, ed. by Ralph Hanna, 2 vols, EETS o.s., 331, 332 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), lines 35-48.

¹¹ Liu, ‘Middle English Romance’, p. 350. See also Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Riverside Chaucer*, gen. ed. by Larry D. Benson, 3rd edn (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987), VII. 897-902; *The Laud Troy Book*, ed. by J. Ernst Wülfing, EETS o.s., 121 (London: Kegan Paul, 1902), lines 11-26.

¹² *Der Mittelenglische Versroman über Richard Lowenherz*, ed. by K. Brunner (Vienna, Leipzig: Braumüller, 1913), p. 424, lines 6726-34. All references from *Richard Coer de Lyon* are taken from this edition, cited by Brunner’s page and line number.

spiritual love he praises and the earthly love pursued by these romance heroes.¹³ The poet criticizes the reading of romance and the tale of romance heroes, in order to urge the romance audience to turn from earthly love to the worship of the Virgin Mary.¹⁴ Hence, he not only makes his audience become aware of romance as a genre and its difference from biblical texts, but also ‘offers up his biblical history of the world as a morally superior alternative to romance’.¹⁵ These references also demonstrate that romance not only circulated by scribal copying but also through oral recitation.¹⁶

Although its definition is controversial, the origin of ‘romance’ is traceable. The old French word *romanz* which identifies the works in French changed into *romance* to represent any secular text of love and adventure in French or English.¹⁷ It has a non-English origin, and many English romances are adaptations or translations from French originals.¹⁸ Even if each translated text has a different focus,¹⁹ romances ‘often overlap in style as well as content, and in some general as well as particular respects’.²⁰ In romances, ‘there is a strong sense of related literature, and a sense of intertextuality: the reader’s understanding of a text is partly dependent on a prior reading of a comparable text’.²¹ Romance offers imaginative character developments and incidents to test its boundaries and to explore new possibilities, by making use of this intertextuality and

¹³ John J. Thompson, ‘The *Cursor Mundi*, the ‘Inglis tong’, and Romance’, in *Readings in Medieval English Romance*, ed. by Carol M. Meale (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1994), pp. 99-120 (pp. 109-10). See *Cursor Mundi*, ed. by Richard Morris, 7 vols, EETS o.s., 57, 59, 62, 66, 68, 99, 101 (London: Trübner, 1874-93), lines 1-26.

¹⁴ Thompson, ‘*Cursor Mundi*’, p. 102.

¹⁵ Kevin Sean Whetter, *Understanding Genre and Medieval Romance* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), p. 4. The *Cursor Mundi* and the *Speculum Vitae* produce romance lists in order to distance themselves from the romances. For a detailed discussion of the romance lists see Kathryn Hume, ‘The Formal Nature of Middle English Romance’, *Philological Quarterly*, 53.2 (1974), 158-80; Paul Strohm, ‘The Origin and Meaning of Middle English Romance’, *Genre*, 10 (1977), 1-28; Liu, ‘Middle English Romance’, pp. 335-53. Liu, in the Appendix, discusses the *Cursor Mundi*, *Richard Coer de Lyon*, the *Speculum Vitae*, Chaucer’s *The Tale of Sir Thopas*, *The Laud Troy Book* which are lists of Middle English texts used to describe the subject matter of romance (pp. 348-50).

¹⁶ Nancy Mason Bradbury, ‘Popular Romance’, in *A Companion to Medieval Poetry*, ed. by Corinne J. Saunders (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), pp. 289-307 (p. 292).

¹⁷ Bradbury, ‘Popular Romance’, p. 291.

¹⁸ Judith Weiss, ‘Introduction’, in *Medieval Insular Romance: Translation and Innovation*, ed. by Judith Weiss, Jennifer Fellows and Morgan Dickson (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2000), pp. 1-5 (p. 5); Derek Brewer, ‘The Popular English Metrical Romances’, in *A Companion to Romance: From Classical to Contemporary*, ed. by Corinne J. Saunders (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), pp. 45-64 (p. 45); Siân Echard, ‘Insular Romance’, in *The Oxford Handbook of Medieval Literature in English*, ed. by Elaine M. Treharne and Greg Walker (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. 160-80 (p. 160).

¹⁹ Jane Bliss, *Naming and Namelessness in Medieval Romance* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2008), p. 3.

²⁰ Maldwyn Mills, ‘Introduction’, in *Romance in Medieval England*, ed. by Maldwyn Mills, Jennifer Fellows and Carol M. Meale (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1991), pp. 1-3 (p. 2). For a detailed comparison of romance with other genres see Simon Gaunt, ‘Romance and Other Genres’, in *The Cambridge Companion*, ed. by Krueger, pp. 54-9.

²¹ Carol Fewster, *Traditionality and Genre in Middle English Romance* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1987), p. 3.

familiarity.²² The familiar motifs and incidents of other genres are adapted to romance through imagination.

Romance is ‘a series of related genres [...] characterized by conventions, motifs, archetypes’²³ and it draws its material from other medieval genres like *chanson de geste*, epic, folktale, hagiography, *exemplum*, courtly lyric, classical Latin literature and contemporary chronicles. These are blended to appeal to the moral concerns of the romance audience.²⁴ Since romance combines all these separate forms of narratives, it is ‘heroic, historical, erotic, and religious’ at the same time.²⁵ The generic comparisons and contrasts of romance with other genres are utilized by scholars attempting to define romance with relation to other genres, because a generic comparison exposes the distinctive features of romance, and differentiates it from other genres.²⁶

By tracing the tradition from ancient Greek literature,²⁷ romance is often discussed as a descendant of French *chanson de geste*, adopting the heroic subject matter²⁸ and adapting it to the particular hero in whose praise the romance is written.²⁹ It is also regarded as the ‘epic of the feudal age’³⁰ or as the successor of epic,³¹ since both genres deal with heroic adventures.³² Like epic and *chanson de geste*, romance represents ‘ideas or ideals, defines heroes who embody those ideals, and celebrates the

²² Rosalind Field, ‘Popular Romance: The Material and the Problems’, in *A Companion*, ed. by Radulescu and Rushton, pp. 9-30 (p. 29).

²³ John Stevens, *Medieval Romance: Themes and Approaches* (London: Hutchinson, 1973), p. 16.

²⁴ *Middle English Romances*, ed. by A. C. Gibbs (London: Arnold, 1966), p. 2; *Middle English Verse Romances*, ed. by Donald B. Sands (New York: Holt, 1966; repr. Exeter: Exeter University Press, 1986), p. 6; Roberta L. Krueger, ‘Introduction’, in *The Cambridge Companion*, ed. by Krueger, pp. 1-9 (p. 3). See also Whetter, *Understanding Genre*, pp. 9-34.

²⁵ Reiss, ‘Romance’, p. 109.

²⁶ Carolyn Craft, ‘Romance’, in *A Companion to Old and Middle English Literature*, ed. by Laura Cooner Lambdin and Robert Thomas Lambdin (Westport: Greenwood, 2002), pp. 352-75 (p. 355).

²⁷ *Ancient English Metrical Romances*, ed. by Joseph Ritson, 3 vols (London: W. Bulmer, 1802), I (1802), p. v.

²⁸ Rosalind Field, ‘Romance in England, 1066-1400’, in *The Cambridge History of Medieval English Literature*, ed. by David Wallace (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 152-76 (p. 154). See also Marianne Ailes and Phillipa Hardman, ‘How English are the English Charlemagne Romances?’, in *Boundaries in Medieval Romance*, ed. by Neil Cartlidge (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2008), pp. 43-56.

²⁹ Dieter Mehl, *The Middle English Romances of the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries* (London: Routledge, 1968), p. 17; John Finlayson, ‘Definitions of Middle English Romance’, *The Chaucer Review*, 15.1 (1980), 43-62; 15.2 (1980), 168-81 (p. 54).

³⁰ Gibbs, *Middle English Romances*, p. 3.

³¹ William P. Ker, *Epic and Romance: Essays on Medieval Literature* (London: Macmillan, 1931), p. 3. For a discussion of the nature of epic and romance see also Dorothy Everett, ‘A Characterization of the English Medieval Romances’, in *Essays on Middle English Literature by Dorothy Everett*, ed. by Patricia Kean (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1955), pp. 1-22 (pp. 6-10); Derek Pearsall, ‘The Development of Middle English Romance’, *Mediaeval Studies*, 27 (1965), 91-116 (repr. in *Studies in Medieval English Romances: Some New Approaches*, ed. by Derek Brewer (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1988), pp. 11-35), pp. 11-2; Sands, *Middle English Verse Romances*, p. 6; David Brunley, ‘Comforting the Troops: An Epic Moment in Popular Romance’, in *Romance*, ed. by Mills, Fellows and Meale, pp. 175-86.

³² Nathaniel E. Griffin, ‘The Definition of Romance’, *PMLA*, 38.1 (1923), 50-70 (pp. 50-1).

success of the heroes'.³³ In respect of its chivalric aspect, romance is defined as a 'narrative about knightly prowess and adventure, in verse or in prose, intended primarily for the entertainment of a listening audience',³⁴ 'a story of adventure generally involving a considerable amount of armed combat' in which 'love may or may not be an ingredient; when it is, it is often the occasion or the excuse for knightly prowess'.³⁵ Romances are 'stories of adventure in which the chief parts are played by knights, famous kings, or distressed ladies, acting most often under the impulse of love, religious faith, or, in many, mere desire for adventure',³⁶ and these adventurous stories of noble men and women end happily.³⁷ The attempt to define romance in relation to epic and *chanson de geste* is debatable, though, since it narrows the definition of romance only to chivalric narrative.³⁸ Epic literature differs from romance in its exclusive concern with action and statement rather than motives,³⁹ and its hero's contemplation of his private identity, before his service to his society.⁴⁰

The style and subject matter of romance bear a resemblance to those of epic and other genres, suggesting a generic interaction. In addition to this, most English romance manuscripts are miscellanies, suggesting the popularity of the genre and also 'medieval perceptions of generic intertextuality'.⁴¹ This flexible textual transmission allowed romance authors to adapt or rewrite each other's works.⁴² Therefore, it is usually difficult to differentiate genres with standard definitions. It is difficult to group romance and hagiographical texts separately in the same manuscripts because almost three-fifths of the existing thirteenth- and fourteenth-century romances occur in manuscript sources alongside didactic and religious works.⁴³ This homogeneous arrangement of texts blurs

³³ Edward E. Foster, 'Simplicity, Complexity, and Morality in Four Medieval Romances', *The Chaucer Review*, 31.4 (1997), 401-19 (p. 401).

³⁴ J. Burke Severs, gen. ed., *A Manual of the Writings in Middle English, 1050-1500*, 11 vols (New Haven: Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1967-2005), I: *Romances*, ed. by J. Burke Severs (1967), p. 11.

³⁵ Albert C. Baugh, 'The Middle English Romance: Some Questions of Creation, Presentation, and Preservation', *Speculum*, 42.1 (1967), 1-31 (pp. 1-2).

³⁶ Everett, 'Characterization', p. 3; John W. H. Atkins, 'Metrical Romances, 1200-1500, II', in *The Cambridge History of English Literature*, ed. by A. W. Ward and A. R. Waller, 15 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1907-27), I: *From the Beginnings to the Cycles of Romance* (1907; repr. 1974), pp. 301-19 (pp. 301-2).

³⁷ *Medieval English Romances*, ed. by Carl Schmidt and Nicolas Jacobs, 2 vols (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1980), I (1980), p. 1.

³⁸ Finlayson, 'Definitions of Middle English Romance', p. 49.

³⁹ Eugene Vinaver, *The Rise of Romance* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), p.11.

⁴⁰ Susan Crane, *Insular Romance: Politics, Faith, and Culture in Anglo-Norman and Middle English Literature* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), p. 11.

⁴¹ Whetter, *Understanding Genre*, p. 42.

⁴² Finlayson, 'Definitions of Middle English Romance', p. 52; Julia Boffey, 'From Manuscript to Modern Text', in *A Companion*, ed. by Brown, pp. 107-22 (pp. 116-7).

⁴³ Brewer, 'Popular English Metrical Romances', p. 53.

the distinction between the heroes of the romances and the saints of the hagiographies, and even the compilers of the manuscripts are doubtful because ‘the poems are in some collections classed as romances, in others as legends’.⁴⁴ The vagueness concerning the generic difference of romance from hagiography is greater when making comparisons with folk tales and chronicles. Supernatural elements commonly used in romance to initiate actions or create mystery are associated with the folk tale origin of the genre.⁴⁵ While its presentation of a particular historical period and its didactic intention to discuss political values through exemplary heroes are common features it shares with the chronicles,⁴⁶ romance differs from chronicles in that the main intention of the romance writer is not credibility or historical reality, but to create a plausible pseudo-historical story.⁴⁷ The diversity of these attributions enriches the definition of romance as a genre, despite making its generic boundaries more complex, due to the fact that romance not only adopts, but also adapts the generic features of other genres.

Authorship and Audience

As with the ambiguity of generic definition, the issues of romance authorship and audience are also debated. The argument concentrates on whether romances were copied in manuscripts or recited orally, recited in public or read by individuals, whether they appealed to an upper or a lower class audience. It has been suggested that ‘the extant romances appear to be for the most part ‘literary’ creations, composed with some care at the desk, not just memorized reproductions of some improvised recital by wandering minstrels’,⁴⁸ and ‘[n]one of the grounds alleged as evidence of minstrel authorship is to be trusted’.⁴⁹ There was little information about authorship of romances, unless a scribe added a note indicating his name. Some authors may have written their own drafts while some dictated to scribes, although some of them preferred oral recitation from their memories.⁵⁰ It is impossible to know the exact number of lost manuscripts. Extant manuscripts may be commercially produced, or made by amateurs (like Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, MS Advocates 19.2.1 (Auchinleck MS);

⁴⁴ Mehl, *The Middle English Romances*, p. 18.

⁴⁵ Northrop Frye, *The Secular Scripture: A Study of the Structure of Romance* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976), p. 15; Finlayson, ‘Definitions of Middle English Romance’, p. 57.

⁴⁶ Mehl, *The Middle English Romances*, pp. 20-1.

⁴⁷ Griffin, ‘Definition of Romance’, p. 56; Finlayson, ‘Definitions of Middle English Romance’, p. 168.

⁴⁸ Mehl, *The Middle English Romances*, p. 10.

⁴⁹ Baugh, ‘Middle English Romance’, p. 4. For a discussion of authorship and audience see also Albert C. Baugh, ‘The Authorship of the Middle English Romances’, *Modern Humanities Research Association Annual Bulletin*, 22 (1950), 13-28; Karl Brunner, ‘Middle English Metrical Romances and Their Audience’, in *Studies in Medieval Literature in Honour of Professor A. C. Baugh*, ed. by MacEdward Leach (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1962), pp. 219-27.

⁵⁰ Boffey, ‘From Manuscript to Modern Text’, pp. 109-10.

Lincoln, Lincoln Cathedral Library, MS 91 (Lincoln Thornton MS); London, British Library, MS Cotton Caligula A.ii). These are mixed compilations, which include substantial romance texts along with other secular and religious materials arranged in accordance with personal taste,⁵¹ or perhaps commissioned or written by a private individual, for entertainment or instruction (like the Lincoln Cathedral Library manuscript).⁵² The Church was very influential in popularizing texts in the Middle Ages, and although the saints' legends and *exempla* were popularized by the Church to give religious instruction, romances were regarded with suspicion - except for the Charlemagne romances which served the Church's purpose.⁵³ Thus, the intermingling of secular and religious material in manuscripts by their authors may be deliberate 'to make them more acceptable to moralists, partly because there was a real popular demand for such kind of instruction, or simply because it was usually the same scribe who copied romances and saints' legends'.⁵⁴

In addition to the romances which were contextually based on their French originals, and those not intended for oral recitation, there were romances performed orally by minstrels in the fourteenth century.⁵⁵ Lay literacy was limited in the Middle Ages; therefore, entertainment was performed through telling, a process which involved a 'combination of memory and improvisation'.⁵⁶ Like *chansons de geste* and Breton lays which were accompanied by musical instruments like harp and fiddle, it is possible that romances could be recited or even sung.⁵⁷ Furthermore, the extant manuscripts known as holster books, which were designed to be carried in a holster, are thought to be 'minstrel manuscripts'. An example is Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Ashmole 61.⁵⁸ These were supposedly designed for oral recitation, as they were easy to carry because

⁵¹ Gibbs, *Middle English Romances*, p. 28; Sylvia Huot, 'The Manuscript Context of Medieval Romance', in *The Cambridge Companion*, ed. by Krueger, pp. 60-77 (p. 63). For a discussion of the manuscript collections and individual copyists see John J. Thompson, 'Collecting Middle English Romances and Some Related Book-Production Activities in the Later Middle Ages', in *Romance*, ed. by Mills, Fellows and Meale, pp. 163-73.

⁵² Maldwyn Mills and Gillian Rogers, 'The Manuscripts of Popular Romance', in *A Companion*, ed. by Radulescu and Rushton, pp. 49-66 (p. 50).

⁵³ Harriet E. Hudson, 'Toward a Theory of Popular Literature: The Case of the Middle English Romances', *Journal of Popular Culture*, 23.3 (1989), 31-50 (pp. 38-9).

⁵⁴ Mehl, *The Middle English Romances*, p. 19.

⁵⁵ Hudson, 'Toward a Theory', pp. 38-9.

⁵⁶ Albert C. Baugh, 'Improvisation in the Middle English Romance', *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, 103.3 (1959), 418-54 (p. 434).

⁵⁷ Karl Reichl, 'Orality and Performance', in *A Companion*, ed. by Radulescu and Rushton, pp. 132-49 (pp. 135-9).

⁵⁸ Reichl, 'Orality', p. 142.

of their narrow format, which also made it easy for the reciter to read the columns.⁵⁹ Expressions such as ‘Lystyngs, lordyngs’ and ‘Herkneþ to me’ in romances,⁶⁰ together with the variations in content and language between the surviving manuscripts of many romance texts,⁶¹ also hint at their oral transmission and possible ‘minstrel’ circulation. Romances passed ‘from the hands of readers to the memories of minstrels or listeners, and from the oral recitations of minstrels or amateurs back into the writings of scribes’.⁶² Meanwhile, they were varied by minstrels through improvisations during their recitations,⁶³ because ‘they wrote down parts of their repertoire to add their memories’.⁶⁴

Romance audiences throughout the Middle Ages ranged from noble patrons, who commissioned the composition of romances which presented their ideals and circulated among their households, to the gentry and bourgeoisie. Medieval England was trilingual, since Latin was the language of the Church, English was the language of the ‘people’ and French was the language of the court.⁶⁵ The earlier English romances, being mostly translations and adaptations from French originals,⁶⁶ appealed to aristocratic audiences who knew French, whilst romances in English were intended for an audience who spoke English and did not know French.⁶⁷ Yet, English replaced the dominance of French even in court in the fourteenth century. Literature written in English became popular in the Middle Ages after the French influence in politics and language began losing power.⁶⁸ In the fourteenth century, romances in Middle English became ‘overwhelmingly popular and non-courtly’ as they addressed themselves primarily to ‘a lower or lower-middle-class audience, a class of social aspirants who

⁵⁹ Gisela Guddat-Figge, ‘Introduction’, in *Catalogue of Manuscripts Containing Middle English Romances* (Munich: Fink, 1976), pp. 15-55 (p. 31). See also Andrew Taylor, ‘The Myth of the Minstrel Manuscript’, *Speculum*, 66.1 (1991), 43-73.

⁶⁰ Reichl, ‘Orality’, pp. 135-9.

⁶¹ Murray McGillivray, *Memorization in the Transmission of the Middle English Romances* (New York, London: Garland, 1990), pp. 4-5; Anthony S. G. Edwards, ‘Middle English Romance: The Limits of Editing, the Limits of Criticism’, in *Medieval Literature: Texts and Interpretation*, ed. by Tim William Machan (Binghamton, New York: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1991), pp. 91-105 (p. 93).

⁶² Ad Putter, ‘Introduction’, in *The Spirit of Medieval English Popular Romance*, ed. by Ad Putter and Jane Gilbert (Harlow: Longman, 2000), pp. 1-38 (p. 13).

⁶³ Baugh, ‘Improvisation’, pp. 439-40.

⁶⁴ Guddat-Figge, ‘Introduction’, p. 34.

⁶⁵ Gail Ashton, *Medieval English Romance in Context* (London: Continuum, 2010), pp. 16-7.

⁶⁶ George Ellis, *Specimens of Early English Metrical Romances: To Which is Prefixed an Historical Introduction on the Rise and Progress of Romantic Composition in France and England* (London: Bohn, 1848), p. 14; William P. Ker, ‘Metrical Romances, 1200-1500, I’, in *The Cambridge History*, ed. by Ward and Waller, I, 277-300 (p. 282). See also Strohm, ‘Origin and Meaning’, pp. 1-28.

⁶⁷ Albert C. Baugh, ed., *A Literary History of England: The Middle Ages*, 2nd edn (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1967), p. 174; Finlayson, ‘Definitions of Middle English Romance’, p. 51.

⁶⁸ William J. R. Barron, *English Medieval Romance* (Harlow: Longman, 1987), p. 53.

wished to be entertained with what they consider to be the same fare, but in English, as their social betters', while the fifteenth-century romance was 'directed at a more sophisticated bourgeois audience'.⁶⁹ In the fifteenth century, several significant manuscript collections including romances were owned by gentry families, demonstrating the popularity of romance among this class.⁷⁰ Family and marriage became significant issues in romance in addition to chivalric concerns from the thirteenth century onwards, with this spread of romance to the bourgeois households from the court.⁷¹ The romances preserved in manuscripts as household collections were intended for family reading and were used as instructive texts for the children in households. They attracted children and adolescents, as well as their elders, and provided the young readers with role models with whom they might identify themselves in order to learn through their heroes' experiences; therefore, 'young readers should be taken into account among the potential target audience of Middle English romance'.⁷²

Due to the fact that there were few literate lay people, even written literary works were read aloud to appeal to more people, a fact which blurs the distinction of folk and elite literature.⁷³ Although romances were intended 'primarily for the entertainment of a listening audience',⁷⁴ it was the increase in book production which made oral culture turn into book culture, especially in the fifteenth century.⁷⁵ The extant English romances belonged to this period; they were products of a transition period 'from poetry for recital [...] to poetry for private reading'.⁷⁶ Manuscripts were individualized by their owners' practice of marking them with their names or with shields bearing their coats of arms.⁷⁷ However, they retained the traces of minstrel performance through references to the narrator, addressing his audience by using the

⁶⁹ Pearsall, 'Development of Middle English Romance', pp. 11-2. See also Derek Pearsall, 'The Audience of the Middle English Romances', in *Historical and Editorial Studies in Medieval and Early Modern English for Johan Gerritsen*, ed. by Mary-Jo Arn and Hanneke Wirtjes (Gröningen: Wolters-Noordhoff, 1985), pp. 37-47.

⁷⁰ Hudson, 'Toward a Theory', p. 45.

⁷¹ Krueger, 'Introduction', pp. 3-5.

⁷² Phillipa Hardman, 'Popular Romances and Young Readers', in *A Companion*, ed. by Radulescu and Rushton, pp. 150-64 (pp. 152-4); Nicholas Orme, 'Children and Literature in Medieval England', *Medium Ævum*, 68.2 (1999), 218-46 (p. 230).

⁷³ Hudson, 'Toward a Theory', pp. 38-9.

⁷⁴ Severs, *Manual*, I, 11; Sands, *Middle English Verse Romances*, p. 1.

⁷⁵ Fewster, *Traditionality and Genre*, p. 26.

⁷⁶ John Speirs, *Medieval English Poetry: The Non-Chaucerian Tradition* (London: Faber and Faber, 1957), pp. 105-6.

⁷⁷ Anthony S. G. Edwards, 'Manuscripts and Readers', in *A Companion*, ed. by Brown, pp. 93-106 (p. 93).

term ‘herkneth’, and the use of verse to make recalling easier.⁷⁸ From then on, romances were both heard as public readings and read by private readers.⁷⁹

The popularity of reading in public created a demand for printed romances, and changed the romance audience. Thus, literate rural gentry, burgesses, merchants and craftsmen gained access to the printed texts, along with noble women who read and patronized romances.⁸⁰ The introduction of the printed versions of romance texts made them commercial by the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, since the printers responded to the demands of their audiences to produce printed versions of favourite romances. The Middle English verse romances were composed at a time when English was re-establishing itself as a suitable language for literature after long years of French and Latin dominion. Although prose emerged in France in the late twelfth century, the verse format was maintained by the English romance writers until the very end of the fifteenth century. Prose established itself as an alternative to verse in the second half of the fifteenth century, with the demands of an audience interested in the new literary fashion.⁸¹ After Elizabeth I’s accession to the throne, the production of metrical romances declined, and some of them were re-written in prose versions (like *Gamelyn*, *Robert the Devil*, *Guy of Warwick*).⁸² Prose romances became very popular and commercial from the late fifteenth to the early seventeenth century, especially with the publication of Sir Thomas Malory’s prose *Morte Darthur*.⁸³ Although William Caxton neglected verse romances, Wynkyn de Worde, Richard Pynson and William Copland published modernized versions of *Bevis*, *Guy*, *Triamour*, *Degaré* and *Generides* in verse.⁸⁴

A number of scholars take the view that the romance audience was plebeian;⁸⁵ yet, it is discredited by others who believe that romances were composed only for an aristocratic, sophisticated⁸⁶ and educated audience.⁸⁷ Romance audiences were supposed

⁷⁸ Ashton, *Medieval English Romance*, p. 19.

⁷⁹ Reichl, ‘Orality’, p. 134. See also Ad Putter, ‘Middle English Romances and the Oral Tradition’, in *Medieval Oral Literature*, ed. by Karl Reichl (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2011), pp. 335-52.

⁸⁰ Velma Bourgeois Richmond, *The Popularity of Middle English Romance* (Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green University Popular Press, 1975), p. 6; Ashton, *Medieval English Romance*, p. 21.

⁸¹ Ad Putter, ‘The Metres and Stanza Forms of Popular Romance’, in *A Companion*, ed. by Radulescu and Rushton, pp. 111-31 (pp. 111-2); Bradbury, ‘Popular Romance’, p. 289.

⁸² Helen Cooper, *The English Romance in Time: Transforming Motifs from Geoffrey of Monmouth to the Death of Shakespeare* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), pp. 33-6.

⁸³ Helen Cooper, ‘Malory and the Early Prose Romances’, in *A Companion to Romance*, ed. by Saunders, pp. 104-20 (p. 104); Jennifer Fellows, ‘Printed Romance in the Sixteenth Century’, in *A Companion*, ed. by Radulescu and Rushton, pp. 67-78 (pp. 67-8).

⁸⁴ Reiss, ‘Romance’, p. 113.

⁸⁵ Finlayson, ‘Definitions of Middle English Romance’, p. 51; Bruce A. Rosenberg, ‘Medieval Popular Literature: Folkloric Sources’, in *The Popular Literature*, ed. by Heffernan, pp. 61-84 (p. 66).

⁸⁶ Gibbs, *Middle English Romances*, p. 20.

to comprise the upper class,⁸⁸ the English speaking bourgeoisie,⁸⁹ newly emerged merchant class,⁹⁰ the nobility and prosperous middle class,⁹¹ the gentry in the fourteenth century and the bourgeoisie in the fifteenth century.⁹² On the other hand, there are critics who suggest that romances appealed to both elite and folk audiences, because there were minstrels ‘who were employed at the court different from the wandering minstrels, the former addressing themselves to a courtly audience, while the latter to a non-courtly one’.⁹³

In addition to the romances written in English in the fourteenth century,⁹⁴ translations of romances from French into English widened the romance audience. It ‘attracted an increasingly broad selection of readers’, including members of the merchant class who emulated the literary taste of their social superiors at the court, and women for whom romances were not only a means of entertainment but also books of practical concerns related to their everyday lives.⁹⁵ The multiple versions of the romances were also believed to be intended by their authors for the different ranks of medieval society,⁹⁶ especially for the female audience which ‘formed part of romance audiences at all levels of medieval society [...], from elite to the lowly’.⁹⁷

Classification

About three-fifths of the extant Middle English romances of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries appear in four manuscript miscellanies (London, British Library, MS Cotton Caligula A.ii; Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, MS Advocates 19.3.1; Lincoln, Lincoln Cathedral Library, MS 91 (Lincoln Thornton MS); Cambridge, Cambridge University Library, MS Ff.2.38), along with secular and religious tales, saints’ legends and travel writings.⁹⁸ They survive in manuscripts in a diverse spectrum of narratives, among other religious and secular works; however, these compilations

⁸⁷ Baugh, ‘Middle English Romance’, p. 2; Stephen Knight, ‘The Social Function of the Middle English Romances’, in *Medieval Literature: Criticism, Ideology and History*, ed. by David Aers (Sussex: Harvester, 1986), pp. 99-122 (p. 101); Barron, *English Medieval Romance*, pp. 87-8.

⁸⁸ Anna Hunt Billings, *A Guide to the Middle English Metrical Romances Dealing with English and Germanic Legends, and with the Cycles of Charlemagne and of Arthur* (New York: Holt, 1901), pp. x-xi.

⁸⁹ Field, ‘Romance in England’, p. 168; Crane, *Insular Romance*, p. 9.

⁹⁰ Field, ‘Romance in England’, p. 168.

⁹¹ Lee C. Ramsey, *Chivalric Romances: Popular Literature in Medieval England* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983), p. 2.

⁹² Brewer, ‘Popular English Metrical Romances’, p. 45.

⁹³ Mehl, *The Middle English Romances*, p. 7.

⁹⁴ Hudson, ‘Toward a Theory’, pp. 33-5.

⁹⁵ Carol M. Meale, ‘‘Gode men / Wiues maydnes and alle men’’: Romance and Its Audience’, in *Readings*, ed. by Meale, pp. 209-25 (pp. 220-1).

⁹⁶ Reiss, ‘Romance’, p. 114.

⁹⁷ Jane Gilbert, ‘Introduction’, in *Spirit*, ed. by Putter and Gilbert, pp. 1-38 (p. 24).

⁹⁸ Ashton, *Medieval English Romance*, p. 25.

cannot be said to characterize the whole romance corpus due to the fact that so much has been lost.⁹⁹ There are more than a hundred romances composed from the thirteenth to the sixteenth centuries in forms of verse and prose, which have different themes and provenances. The diversity of these romances makes it difficult to make generalizations about them as a group. Since it is difficult to identify romance in its entire corpus, romances are classified by various taxonomic strategies to offer a better understanding of their nature. These classifications are made by tracing the recurring themes, incidents or structures in the romances to reveal the compositional similarities and differences. They usually depend on which specific thematic or structural aspects of romances modern editors wish to highlight.¹⁰⁰ Some classify romances in accordance with their being translations or adaptations, their audiences, their authorship, their textual communities, their being in prose or verse, and their associations with other genres. Some critics classify them on the basis of dominant and recurring features in generic and linguistic terms, such as their ‘matters’¹⁰¹ (Rome, Britain, France, England), meters and rhyme-schemes (tail-rhyme, alliterative), length (long or short), incidents and characters, date and area of composition.¹⁰² The variety of classifications presents problems in generalizing from one Middle English romance to the other and in selecting a set of criteria to define a single romance, since its reception changes once it is grouped together with other romances in different taxonomies. Due to the fact that their subject matters or structures vary, a single romance can be grouped under several different classifications.¹⁰³

Thirteenth-century French poet Jehan Bodel’s classification of romances by their subject ‘matters’ is the earliest approach to defining romances. The term ‘matter’ indicates ‘a general body of narrative material usually centered about legendary or quasi-historical figures associated with a geographical area’.¹⁰⁴ Bodel’s categorization of the subjects of narrative into the three matters of France, Rome and Britain has become a universally accepted division, being used in the arrangement of several romance anthologies or critical studies on romance texts. William Henry Schofield defines the subject matter of each ‘matter’ as follows:

⁹⁹ Barron, *English Medieval Romance*, p. 55.

¹⁰⁰ Hudson, ‘Toward a Theory’, p. 32.

¹⁰¹ See Laura Hibbard Loomis, *Medieval Romance in England: A Study of the Sources and Analogues of the Non-Cyclic Metrical Romances* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1924); Severs, *Manual*, I; Barron, *English Medieval Romance*.

¹⁰² Barron, *English Medieval Romance*, p. 58.

¹⁰³ Putter, ‘Introduction’, p. 12.

¹⁰⁴ Sands, *Middle English Verse Romances*, p. 1.

We now use the term ‘matter of France’ to denote the narratives chiefly concerned with the Emperor Charlemagne, his peers and vassals, the struggles of French heroes. The ‘matter of Britain’ has to do chiefly with King Arthur and his knights, the chivalrous exploits of British warriors, accounts based largely on tales of Celtic origin, or on traditions current in Great or Little Britain. Finally the ‘matter of Rome’ suggests at once that the stories it embodies deal with the wonderful achievements of antiquity.¹⁰⁵

Apart from the popularity of the ‘Matter of Britain’ romances, the recognition of ‘Matter of French’ romances in England derives from their Christian militancy which stems from the Saracen versus Christian conflict shared by the English and the French.¹⁰⁶ They disregard the rivalry between England and France, and they praise the chivalric display of the ‘true Christian knights’ fighting against the infidel rather than one another.¹⁰⁷ However, they were not very popular in England because of their close connection to the French king Charlemagne. The ‘Matter of Rome’ romances, which take their subject matters from the histories of Trojan War and Rome and the well-known figures of antiquity, caused a generic ambiguity because of their being close to chronicles; yet, they were appreciated and provided inspiration for Chaucer and Lydgate.¹⁰⁸

Bodel’s classification leaves some romances outside any category, and these romances that are not grouped within the matters familiar to Bodel’s taxonomy ‘do not generally localize themselves in theme or tradition’; therefore, they belong to a group of miscellaneous romances.¹⁰⁹ The inclusion of the Matter of England into classifications of romance by metre brought ‘some order into the unwieldy taxonomy of Middle English romance, reducing the number consigned to the bin of ‘Miscellaneous’’.¹¹⁰ The ‘Matter of England’ has been added by modern scholars to Bodel’s three ‘matters’ to describe the medieval English romance more accurately. It includes a group of romances ‘celebrating the ideals of a military aristocracy in the legends of exemplary heroes set in the context of Germanic history’.¹¹¹ Although ‘[t]he three matters have a pan-European dimension beyond their national boundaries and are an official and

¹⁰⁵ William Henry Schofield, *English Literature from the Norman Conquest to Chaucer* (London: Macmillan, 1931), p. 145.

¹⁰⁶ Thomas H. Crofts and Robert Allen Rouse, ‘Middle English Popular Romance and National Identity’, in *A Companion*, ed. by Radulescu and Rushton, pp. 79-95 (p. 87).

¹⁰⁷ Robert Warm, ‘Identity, Narrative and Participation: Defining a Context for the Middle English Charlemagne Romances’, in *Tradition and Transformation in Medieval Romance*, ed. by Rosalind Field (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1999), pp. 87-100 (p. 87).

¹⁰⁸ Craft, ‘Romance’, pp. 362-4.

¹⁰⁹ Sands, *Middle English Verse Romances*, p. 5.

¹¹⁰ Rosalind Field, ‘The Curious History of the Matter of England’, in *Boundaries*, ed. by Cartlidge, pp. 29-42 (p. 31).

¹¹¹ Barron, *English Medieval Romance*, p. 63.

recognizable part of European culture [...] ‘Matter of England’ lacks international status’,¹¹² because the romances included are concerned with the earlier, traditional, Anglo-Norman heroes like Horn, Havelok, Beves of Hamptoun, and Guy of Warwick, and also Richard the Lionheart, Athelston, and Gamelyn.¹¹³ However, even this classification is problematic because of the diversity of geographies, figures and themes recurring in its group of romances.¹¹⁴

Romances, in addition to being edited in separate volumes, are grouped in collections by preferences of their editors.¹¹⁵ Even if some editors do not prefer any grouping like Henry Weber, J. A. W. Bennett and G. V. Smithers who present the romance texts they edited without grouping them by their ‘matter’,¹¹⁶ the classification of romances according to their matters is well accepted by several scholars. Although George Ellis does not name any ‘matters’ in his classification, he is concerned with the contents of the romances, and he discusses them in relation to the Danes, the Arabs, or the Britons as the suppliers of their subject matters.¹¹⁷

Schofield classifies romances under the titles of ‘matters’ and follows Bodel’s classification; yet, he adds a new ‘matter’ of the Orient. He groups romances into the ‘Matter of France’ (*Chanson de Roland, Otuel, The Siege of Milan, The Sowdone of Babylon, Sir Ferumbras, etc.*), the ‘Matter of Britain’ (including origins and development, the Breton lays in English, the Cycle of Tristram; the Cycle of Gawain, Guinglain, Perceval, and Ywain; the Cycle of Lancelot, the Quest of the Holy Grail, the Cycle of Merlin, the Death of Arthur), the ‘Matter of England’ (*King Horn, Havelok the Dane, Guy of Warwick, Beves of Hampton, etc.*), the ‘Matter of Greece and Rome’ (including The Story of Troy, The Story of Thebes), the ‘Matter of the Orient’ and ‘Other Romances’¹¹⁸ including Byzantine and Early French, Reminiscent, Legendary and Historical, ‘The Nine Worthies’ (*Floris and Blancheflour, Parthenopeus de Blois, Amis and Amiloun, Sir Generides, The Squire of Low Degree, Sir Degrevant, King of*

¹¹² Field, ‘Curious History’, p. 35.

¹¹³ Herbert L. Creek, ‘Character in the Matter of England Romances’, *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 10.3 (1911), 429-52 (p. 429); Diane Speed, ‘The Construction of the Nation in Medieval English Romance’, in *Readings*, ed. by Meale, pp. 135-57 (p. 145); Robert Allen Rouse, *The Idea of Anglo-Saxon England in Middle English Romance* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2005), p. 52.

¹¹⁴ Rosalind Field, ‘Waldef and the Matter of/with England’, in *Medieval Insular Romance*, ed. by Weiss, Fellows and Dickson, pp. 25-39 (p. 30).

¹¹⁵ Romance titles differ in spelling in different editions. In this thesis, the spellings in the editions referred to are retained. For manuscript descriptions of each romance see Guddat-Figge’s *Catalogue*, and the individual editions of the romances in the EETS and TEAMS series.

¹¹⁶ *Metrical Romances of the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Centuries: Published from Ancient Manuscripts*, ed. by Henry Weber, 3 vols (Edinburgh: Archibald Constable, 1810); *Early Middle English Verse and Prose*, ed. by J. A. W. Bennett and G. V. Smithers, 2nd edn (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968).

¹¹⁷ Ellis, *Specimens*, pp. 24-38.

¹¹⁸ Schofield, *English Literature*, pp. 145-319.

Tarsus, Le Bone Florence de Rome, Sir Isumbras, Torrent of Portugal, Sir Eglamour of Artois, Robert of Sicily, Richard Coer de Lyon, etc.). He defines the ‘Matter of England’ romances as stories of pre-Conquest Saxon warriors by British minstrels (*Havelok the Dane, The Geste of King Horn, Horn Child, Guy of Warwick, Beves of Hampton, The Gest of Robin Hood, Gamelyn*),¹¹⁹ the ‘Matter of Greece and Rome’ as stories of Trojan war and Thebes.¹²⁰ The ‘Matter of Orient’ includes the stories of Alexander the Great’s exploits.¹²¹ He groups romances which he cannot link with the main cycles under the title of ‘Other Romances’, including *Floris and Blancheflour, Parthenopeus de Blois, Amis and Amiloun*.¹²²

William R. J. Barron adopts classification of romances by ‘matter’ in his analysis of the romance texts. He groups his study under titles of ‘Matter of England’ (*King Horn, Havelok the Dane, The Tale of Gamelyn*), ‘Matter of France’ (*Song of Roland, Otuel and Rouland, The Sege of Melayne, The Sowdon of Babylone, Firumbras*), ‘Matter of Rome’ (*The Gest Historiale of the Destruction of Troy, The Seege of Troye, The Wars of Alexander, Kyng Alisaunder*), and ‘Matter of Britain’ (Layamon’s *Brut, Morte Arthure, Morte Arthur, Morte Darthur, Sir Tristrem, Sir Perceval of Galles, Ywain and Gawain, Golagrus and Gawain, Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*). He also groups some romances in accordance with their derivatives under titles of ‘A Derivative of the Matter of England’ (*Richard Coer de Lyon*), ‘Derivatives of the Matter of France’ (*Rauf Coilyear, Chevalere Assigne*), ‘The Matter of the Orient’ (*Floris and Blanchflur*), ‘A Derivative of the Matter of Rome’ (*Sir Orfeo*), ‘The Breton Lay in English’ (*Sir Launfal*), ‘The Dominance of Genre’ (*William of Palerne*), ‘Romance as a Didactic Genre’ (*Amis and Amiloun*).¹²³

Rosalind Field discusses the relationship between romance and history, and she notes that ‘Matter of England’ romances derive from English history, especially from the Anglo-Norman history.¹²⁴ She includes *Romance of Horn, Gui de Warewic, Amis e Amilun, Lai d’ Haveloc, Boeve, Amadas* in the Anglo-Norman romance corpus, and she names them as ‘ancestral romances’ with an Anglo-Norman courtly audience. The hero of the Anglo-Norman romance is often a landless bachelor who struggles to win back his rightful place in society; these romances lack strong pious tones, whilst

¹¹⁹ Schofield, *English Literature*, pp. 258-82.

¹²⁰ Schofield, *English Literature*, pp. 182-298.

¹²¹ Schofield, *English Literature*, p. 298.

¹²² Schofield, *English Literature*, p. 305.

¹²³ Barron, *English Medieval Romance*, pp. 11-207.

¹²⁴ Rosalind Field, ‘Romance as History, History as Romance’, in *Romance*, ed. by Mills, Fellows and Meale, pp. 163-73 (p. 163).

foregrounding themes of love and family.¹²⁵ Judith Weiss, on the other hand, suggests that Anglo-Norman romances were written for a provincial audience rather than a royal court one, as they have local references; and ‘the heroes of these romances from the thirteenth century onward refer repeatedly to their Englishness: a growing pride in nationality distinguishes these narratives’.¹²⁶ Field refers to the early English romances *King Horn*, *Havelok*, *Sir Tristrem*, *Amis and Amiloun*, *Kyng Alisaunder*, *Guy*, and *Bevis* as insular romances, and indicates that *Arthour and Merlin* and *Floris and Blancheflur* have continental French originals.¹²⁷ However, despite lacking any surviving evidence, she suggests Anglo-Norman origins for *Richard Cœur de Lion*, *Athelston* and *Gamelyn*.¹²⁸ She compares ‘the Matter of France’ romances with the Arthurian ones by stating that the Arthurian romances suggest an interest in insular history for English audiences, unlike the Charlemagne romances which ‘displace their matter into an exotic, distancing romance mode in which it can easily topple into absurdity or banality’, similar to the ‘Matter of Rome’ romances which have exotic and unfamiliar settings.¹²⁹

Bodel’s ‘matters’ are mostly adopted but renamed by some editors as ‘legends’. Anna Hunt Billings presents information about the subject, origin, meter, dialect, author and date of each romance, in addition to adding a plot summary, manuscript details and a select bibliography. In her introduction, Billings also outlines the production of the verse romances in four periods, and she discusses the changes of concerns in romances from different periods by means of general examples.¹³⁰ She classifies thirty-seven romances under groups of ‘English and Germanic Legends’ (*King Horn*, *Horn Childe and Maiden Rinnild*, *Havelok the Dane*, *Guy of Warwick*, *Athelston*, *Sir Beues of Hamtoun*, *William of Palerne*), the ‘Charlemagne Legends’ (*The Sowdone of Babylone*, *Sir Firumbras*, *Roland and Vernagu*, *The Sege of Melayne*, *Otuel*, *Duke Rowlande* and *Sir Otuell of Spayne*, *The Song of Roland*, *The Taill of Rauf Coilgear*), and the ‘Arthurian Legends’ (*Sir Tristrem*, *Joseph of Arimathie*, *The Holy Grail*, *Arthour and Merlin*, *Merlin*, *Sir Perceval of Galles*, *Libeaus Desconus*, *Sir Launfal*, *Ywain and Gawain*, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, *Golagrus and Gawain*, *The AunTERS of*

¹²⁵ Field, ‘Romance in England’, pp. 152-61.

¹²⁶ Judith Weiss, ‘Insular Beginnings: Anglo-Norman Romance’, in *A Companion to Romance*, ed. by Saunders, pp. 26-44 (pp. 40-1). For an examination of genealogical concerns in insular romances see Raluca L. Radulescu, ‘Genealogy in Insular Romance’, in *Broken Lines: Genealogical Literature in Medieval Britain and France*, ed. by Raluca L. Radulescu and Edward Donald Kennedy (Turnhout: Brepols, 2008), pp. 7-25.

¹²⁷ Field, ‘Romance in England’, p. 166.

¹²⁸ Field, ‘Romance in England’, p. 167.

¹²⁹ Field, ‘Romance in England’, pp. 172-3.

¹³⁰ Billings, *A Guide*, pp. xii-xv.

Arthur, The Avowyng of King Arthur, Morte Arthure, Arthur, Lancelot of the Laik, Le Morte Arthur), and ‘Romance poems on Gawain’ (*The Grene Knight, The Turk and Gowin, The Jeaste of Syr Gawayne, Syr Gawayne and the Carle of Carlile, The Weddyng of Syr Gawayne*).¹³¹

John Edwin Wells, like Billings, uses the term ‘legend’ instead of ‘matter’ in his categorization of romances. He presents manuscript details and plot summaries of romances along with his classification. Wells groups romances under titles of ‘English and Germanic Legends’ (*King Horn, Horn Childe and Maiden Rimmild, The Lay of Havelok, Guy of Warwick, William of Palerne, Sir Beues of Hamtoun, Athelston, The Tale of Gamelyn*), ‘Arthurian Legends’ (‘The Whole Life of Arthur’- *Brut, Arthur, Morte Arthure*; ‘Merlin and the Youth of Arthur’- *Arthour and Merlin*, the prose *Merlin*, the verse *Merlin*; ‘Lancelot and the Last Years of Arthur’- *Le Morte Arthur, Lancelot of the Laik*; ‘Gawain’- *Sir Gawayne and the Grene Knight, Ywain and Gawain, The Weddyng of Sir Gawen and Dame Ragnell, Libeaus Desconus*, etc.; ‘Perceval’- *Sir Percyvelle of Galles*; ‘The Holy Grail’- *Joseph of Arimathie, Lovelich’s History of the Holy Grail*; ‘Tristram’- *Sir Tristem*), ‘Charlemagne Legends’ (‘Firumbras’- *The Sowdone of Babylone, Sir Firumbras, Charles the Grete*; ‘Otuel’- *Roland and Vernagu, The Sege of Melayne, Otuel*, etc.; ‘Detached Romances’- *The Song of Roland, The Taill of Rauf Coilgear*, etc.), ‘Legends of Godfrey of Bouillon’ (*Chevalere Assigne and Godefroy of Boloyn*), ‘Legends of Alexander the Great’ (*King Alisaunder*, etc.), ‘Legends of Troy’ (*The Gest Historiale of the Destruction of Troy, The Seege of Troye*, etc.), ‘Legends of Thebes’ (Lydgate’s *Siege of Thebes*, the Rawlinson prose *Siege of Thebes*), ‘Eustace-Constance-Florence-Griselda Legends’ (*Sir Isumbras, Sir Eglamour of Artois, Sir Torrent of Portyngale, Octovian, Sir Triamour, The King of Tars, Le Bone Florence of Rome, Chaucer’s Man of Law’s Tale, Clerk’s Tale*, and Gower’s *Confessio Amantis* Book II 3), ‘Breton Lais’ (*Lai Le Freine, Sir Orfeo, Emaré, Sir Launfal, Sir Landeval, Sir Lambewell, Sir Lamwell, Sir Degaré, Sir Gowther, The Earl of Toulous, Chaucer’s Franklin’s Tale*), ‘Miscellaneous Romances’ subtitled ‘Romances of Greek or Byzantine Origin’ (*Apollonius of Tyre, Floris and Blancheflur*), ‘Composites of Courtly Romance’ (*Sir Degrevant, Generydes, Parthenope of Blois, Ipomadon, The Lyfe of Ipomydon, Ipomedon, The Squyr of Lowe Degre*), ‘Romances on Historical Themes’ (*Richard Coer de Lyon, Titus and Vespasian or The Siege of Jerusalem, Barbour’s Bruce*), ‘Romances from Family Tradition’ (*Partenay, Melusine, The Knight of Curtesy*), ‘Legendary Romances of Didactic Intent’

¹³¹ See Billings, *A Guide*.

(*Amis and Amiloun, Sir Amadace, Sir Cleges, Roberd of Cisyle*).¹³² *A Manual of the Writings in Middle English, 1050-1500: I Romances* contains details about romances including date, dialect, source, form, extent, summary and critical views concerning each romance. Its classifications of romances are based on Wells's groupings in *Manual*, except for the addition of the 'Arthur of Little Britain' group with the romance of *Arthur of Little Britain*.¹³³

There are scholars who believe that Bodel's classification is unsatisfactory for grouping and defining romances. John W. H. Atkins points out that Bodel's classification falls into groups corresponding to Carolingian or Old French, Old English, classical, oriental and Celtic.¹³⁴ However, apart from these groups of romances focusing on knightly characters, there are also romances building up the perfect knight and Christian hero as in *Ipomedon, Amis and Amiloun* and *Sir Cleges, Sir Isumbras, The Squire of Low Degree*; and romances praising national heroes like Richard Cœur de Lion and King Alisaunder.¹³⁵ Likewise, William P. Ker states that classification under the three matters of Rome, France and Britain is not comprehensive, since there are romances which are outside these groupings, such as *Flores and Blancheflour, The Seven Sages of Rome, and Robert of Sicily* which take their plots from the Far East or saints' legends.¹³⁶ Although there are conventional stories and characters in romances, 'at the same time, in reading the romances one has a continual sense of change and experiment; there is no romantic school so definite and assured as to make any one type into a standard'.¹³⁷

Derek Pearsall, John Finlayson and George Kane question the classification of romances by matter.¹³⁸ Pearsall believes that the classification by matters is inadequate as it leaves twenty three of the fifty romances as miscellaneous, whilst grouping dissimilar romances because of their coincidental plot materials. He claims that an objective analysis of the history of romance can be made through the study of its formal and stylistic aspects. He offers a classification which takes into consideration both the form and the content of the romance, as well as its 'date, dialect, manuscript provenance, metrical form, exact class of audience, type of source, type of story, and the

¹³² See John Edwin Wells, *A Manual of the Writings in Middle English, 1050-1400* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1916), pp. 1-163.

¹³³ Severs, *Manual*, I, 79.

¹³⁴ Atkins, 'Metrical Romances', p. 302.

¹³⁵ Atkins, 'Metrical Romances', pp. 313-7.

¹³⁶ Ker, 'Metrical Romances', pp. 285-6.

¹³⁷ Ker, 'Metrical Romances', p. 299.

¹³⁸ See Finlayson, 'Definitions of Middle English Romance', pp. 168-81.

range of the art'.¹³⁹ Finlayson draws attention to the variety of subject matters, style and form of romances, and he agrees with the uselessness of classification by matters by referring to Bodel's classification, which excludes many texts that are accepted as romances, despite its including *chansons de geste*.¹⁴⁰ Although the classifications have several elements in common, they may be misleading. Finlayson says that any attempt to define romance through classifications is futile as each of them has contradictions, and they create confusion in meaning rather than clarification.¹⁴¹ He rejects labelling anything involving knights and supernatural as romance, since they are in fact romanticized folktales, like *Amadace*.¹⁴² For him, at least, half of the works listed as romance in *The Manual of the Writings in Middle English* are not romances in a meaningful sense, since they have the romance characteristic of adventure, but lack courtly love.¹⁴³

Kane offers a subjective, unhistorical classification based on aesthetic merit since '[t]he arrangement of the romances according to their literary and artistic qualities cuts across all the other classifications'.¹⁴⁴ He rejects the classification of romances by subject matter or metrical form, asserting that:

Wherever we turn, the usefulness of classifications of the romances according to their subject, kind, form or manner is diminished for our purpose of evaluation by their refusal to run true to form. The impression of similarity conveyed by their common end of entertainment, their repeated uses of the same subject matter, and their common faults does [*sic*] not extend to their literary quality.¹⁴⁵

Kane evaluates over sixty English verse romances to differentiate between 'good' and 'bad' romances, claiming that the artistic failures stem from faults in the presentations of stock characters, incidents and forms, because of unskilful authors who cannot develop their stories, and misconceived stories.¹⁴⁶ For instance, he believes that *Sir Isumbras* fails because of its being didactic in intent; yet, lacking in the credibility of its story, while *Amadas*, *Sir Cleges*, *Robert of Cysylle* and *King of Tars* fail since their didacticism overtaxes their intent to entertain. *Partonope of Blois* is excessively long,

¹³⁹ Pearsall, 'Development of Middle English Romance', p. 16.

¹⁴⁰ Finlayson, 'Definitions of Middle English Romance', p. 45.

¹⁴¹ Finlayson, 'Definitions of Middle English Romance', pp. 47-8.

¹⁴² Finlayson, 'Definitions of Middle English Romance', p. 177.

¹⁴³ Finlayson, 'Definitions of Middle English Romance', pp. 178-9.

¹⁴⁴ George Kane, *Middle English Literature: A Critical Study of the Romances, the Religious Lyrics, 'Piers Plowman'* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1970), p. 11.

¹⁴⁵ Kane, *Middle English Literature*, p. 9.

¹⁴⁶ Kane, *Middle English Literature*, p. 12.

William of Palerne features a disguise (bearskins) which is incredible.¹⁴⁷ On the other hand, he suggests that the artistic values of romances depend on the merit of their authors in selecting and arranging their material, rather than their conformity to any form or subject matter. For him, the treatment of the marvellous in romance is not a conventional feature of the genre, but a device to enhance the imagination of the audience, and its success depends on the skill of the author.¹⁴⁸ The romances written by such authors are ‘successful’ romances such as *The Siege of Jerusalem*, *The Seven Sages of Rome*, *Sir Degrevant* and *The Squire of Low Degree*.¹⁴⁹

The classification of romances by subject matter and metrical form is also questioned by Dieter Mehl and Albert Booth Taylor, on the basis that there is too much variety of subject-matter and metrical form to justify a specific classification.¹⁵⁰ However, the classification of romances according to their metrical forms is offered by some critics as a more reliable definition of the romance corpus. The metrical classification of romance contains ‘three classes: romances in rhyming couplets (generally four-beat); those in tail-rhyme stanza or a variant of it; and the alliterative romances’.¹⁵¹

The couplet form was believed to descend from the French narratives including *chanson de geste* in the twelfth and the thirteenth century.¹⁵² The earliest English romances were in couplets (like *King Horn*), while tail-rhyme stanzas became popular in the late thirteenth century, due to their suitability for public recitations (like *Amis and Amiloun*, *Sir Degrevant*). On the other hand, alliterative romances (the earliest of which are *Joseph of Arimathie* and *William of Palerne*) contain ‘a large body of pseudo-historical epic material’.¹⁵³ Albert C. Baugh notes that it is a ‘conditioned reflex’ of the romance poet or reciter to use couplets, as ‘the couplet is the basic unit of most Middle English romances, even the stanzaic romances’.¹⁵⁴ By mainly basing his argument on *Beves of Hamptoun*, *King Horn*, *Havelok*, *Athelston*, *Richard Coer de Lyon* and *Guy of Warwick*, Baugh believes that romances have common metrical patterns and themes like a knight arming himself, questioning and answering his name and hometown, descriptions of fighting. Middle English versions of some romances are faithful

¹⁴⁷ Kane, *Middle English Literature*, pp. 13-51.

¹⁴⁸ Kane, *Middle English Literature*, p. 102.

¹⁴⁹ Kane, *Middle English Literature*, pp. 52-94.

¹⁵⁰ Mehl, *The Middle English Romances*, p. 15; Albert Booth Taylor, *An Introduction to Medieval Romance* (London: Heath Cranton, 1930), p. 111.

¹⁵¹ Gibbs, *Middle English Romances*, p. 23.

¹⁵² Bradbury, ‘Popular Romance’, p. 296.

¹⁵³ Gibbs, *Middle English Romances*, p. 26.

¹⁵⁴ Baugh, ‘Improvisation’, p. 428.

translations of French romances, as if they were translated from the original French copies open in front of the translators, like the Middle English *Beves of Hamptoun*; yet, their metrical forms undergo a change, such as the change in the versification of the Anglo-Norman *Beves of Hamptoun* from six-line stanza to couplets.¹⁵⁵

Middle English romance 'is usually metrical, and the most favoured prosodic convention is the iambic tetrameter couplet'.¹⁵⁶ Although couplets are common in medieval literary works, many romance texts employ a six-line stanza- tail-rhyme meter which is 'distinctive of romance'.¹⁵⁷ The tail-rhyme stanza is '[n]amed for the shorter rhyming lines (the 'tails') embedded among the longer lines of each stanza'.¹⁵⁸ Although Taylor defines the tail-rhyme stanza as 'the worst and the most monotonous verse-form of the period', tail-rhyme form was popular.¹⁵⁹ A. McI. Trounce notes the undeniable similarities of dialect and theme in the romances. He examines twenty three tail-rhyme romances written in twelve-line stanzas.¹⁶⁰ He states that 'the tail-rhyme romances are the first poems to use alliteration in the manner of modern English'.¹⁶¹ The writers of the tail-rhyme popular romances are dubbed 'hack-writers' by some critics to indicate the poor style in their composition of romance texts,¹⁶² and their degradation of aristocratic subjects.¹⁶³ However, their poetic skills are praised by Trounce, who believes that tail-rhyme romances are homogeneous, both linguistically and stylistically, as the body of these romances 'can be located with certainty, and can be shown to be characteristic of the area in which it was developed'.¹⁶⁴ He locates the tail-rhyme romances to East Midlands/East Anglia. This geographic provenance is questioned by Gisela Guddat-Figge, who claims that there is not enough information to prove this localization. Although Guddat-Figge refers to Trounce's localization of the

¹⁵⁵ Baugh, 'Improvisation', pp. 421-32.

¹⁵⁶ Sands, *Middle English Verse Romances*, p. 1.

¹⁵⁷ Fewster, *Traditionality and Genre*, p. 6. For a discussion of the tail-rhyme romances of the fourteenth century see Caroline Strong, 'History and Relations of the Tail-Rhyme Strophe in Latin, French, and English', *PMLA*, 22.3 (1907), 371-421.

¹⁵⁸ Bradbury, 'Popular Romance', p. 299.

¹⁵⁹ Taylor, *An Introduction*, p. 158.

¹⁶⁰ A. McI. Trounce, 'The English Tail-Rhyme Romances', *Medium Ævum*, 1 (1932), 87-108, 168-82; 2 (1933), 34-57, 189-98; 3 (1934), 30-50. For the list of the romances Trounce examines see p. 87, n. 1.

¹⁶¹ Trounce, 'English Tail-Rhyme Romances', p. 36. See also James P. Oakden, *Alliterative Poetry in Middle English*, 2 vols (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1930-5).

¹⁶² Laura Hibbard Loomis, 'The Auchinleck Manuscript and Possible London Bookshop of 1330-1340', *PMLA*, 57.3 (1942), 597-627 (p. 608); Severs, *Manual*, I, 127; Karl Reichl, 'The Middle English Popular Romance: Minstrel versus Hack Writer', in *The Ballad and Oral Literature*, ed. by Joseph Harris (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991), pp. 243-68 (p. 245).

¹⁶³ Nicola McDonald, 'A Polemical Introduction', in *Pulp Fictions of Medieval England: Essays in Popular Romance*, ed. by Nicola McDonald (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), pp. 1-21 (p. 9).

¹⁶⁴ Trounce, 'English Tail-Rhyme Romances', pp. 88-9.

tail-rhyme romances to the East Midlands, she also notes that ‘the spread of romances from their place of origin is extremely difficult to trace’.¹⁶⁵

Rhiannon Purdie also questions Trounce’s localisation of the tail-rhyme romances by studying the difference of dialect in some of the early tail-rhyme romances such as *Horn Childe* (Northern or North Midland), *Guy of Warwick* (Middlesex or London) and *Bevis of Hampton* (Southern or London).¹⁶⁶ She notes that only over one third of the thirty-six surviving Middle English verse romances are wholly or partially in tail-rhyme, whilst another third are in rhyming couplets, and the last third are in alliterative long lines and rhymed, or rhymed-alliterative stanzas.¹⁶⁷ Purdie, in her explanation of the development of the tail-rhyme stanza as the meter of romances in English, suggests that the tail-rhyme form bridges an association between the religious works and romance, since both genres make use of tail-rhyme; therefore, the pious association of romance makes it appealing to the audience of religious didactic texts.¹⁶⁸ The use of tail-rhyme form in romances is also a means of emphasizing the Englishness of romance heroes.¹⁶⁹ The tail-rhyme romancers were inspired by Latin and Anglo-Norman material instead of English history; however, in Purdie’s words, ‘the authors of the first tail-rhyme romances nevertheless succeeded in ‘anglicising’ romance’.¹⁷⁰ Purdie also describes the designs of tail-rhyme romance manuscripts and lists the manuscripts containing tail-rhyme romances, with their probable composition dates and linguistic features, emphasizing that ‘the tail-rhyme romance had no single geographic point of origin’, which calls into question Trounce’s localisation of the tail-rhyme romances.¹⁷¹

The alliterative revival/survival is part of a long-running discussion in Middle English studies, and metrical classification is well regarded by several other scholars. In order to make a generic description, Susan Wittig suggests a linguistic and structural analysis of the non-cyclic verse romances, which are presented in various dialects and metrical forms (the four-stress couplet, the tail-rhyme stanza, and the alliterative line). She believes that such an analysis not only clarifies structural affiliations, but also

¹⁶⁵ Guddat-Figge, ‘Introduction’, pp. 51-2.

¹⁶⁶ Rhiannon Purdie, *Anglicising Romance: Tail-Rhyme and Genre in Medieval English Literature* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2008), p. 127.

¹⁶⁷ Purdie, *Anglicising Romance*, p. 1.

¹⁶⁸ Purdie, *Anglicising Romance*, p. 6.

¹⁶⁹ Purdie, *Anglicising Romance*, pp. 96-102.

¹⁷⁰ Purdie, *Anglicising Romance*, p. 9.

¹⁷¹ Purdie, *Anglicising Romance*, p. 9. See also Urs Dürmüller, *Narrative Possibilities of the Tail-Rhyme Romance* (Berne: Francke, 1975).

departs from the conventional patterns used to define romance.¹⁷² Nancy Mason Bradbury also discusses the tail-rhyme and couplet forms in romances, and points out that in addition to folk tale and fairy tale elements, *King Horn* has the structure of couplet romance and epic romance. *Athelston* and *Sir Isumbras* are tail-rhyme romances, whilst the Breton lays (*Sir Orfeo*, *Sir Degaré*, *Lai le Freine*, *Florys and Blancheflour*, *Emaré*, *Erl of Tolous*, *Sir Launfal*) are in couplet in form, but they share the lyrical qualities of tail-rhyme romances.¹⁷³ Ad Putter draws attention to the metrical analysis of romance contexts to provide information about the date and provenance of romance texts. He notes that alliterative verse was inherited from Old English poetry and octosyllabic couplet was the form used by the poets of *Havelok*, *Sir Tristrem* and *Amis and Amiloun*.¹⁷⁴ The tail-rhyme stanza was the form most closely associated with romance, and the most favoured were the six-line stanza form (as that of *Amis and Amiloun*) and the twelve-line stanza form. They were the favourite forms used by minstrels in recitation, and even by Middle English hagiographers, who added romance ‘lyrical and liturgical potency’.¹⁷⁵ However, he concludes that this classification is problematic, because Middle English romances are not homogenous, and they lack established metrical forms, since ‘even forms that are superficially similar, such as the couplet or the tail rhyme stanza, conceal large differences’.¹⁷⁶

Different from a classification in accordance with matter or meter, some scholars offer to group romances according to their length. For Baugh, ‘the number of what are really separate versions of a story is in direct proportion to the length of the story’, and he puts the Matter of England romances into two groups according to their lengths. While *Havelok*, *King Horn* and *Athelston* are short, and have fairly unified stories, they survive in fewer manuscripts and versions; whilst *Beves of Hamptoun*, *Guy of Warwick* and *Richard Coer de Lyon* are long, have adventures of individual characters, appear in several manuscripts and in different versions.¹⁷⁷ As with Baugh’s grouping of the Matter of England romances according to length, Mehl suggests studying romances by a

¹⁷² Susan Wittig, *Stylistic and Narrative Structures in the Middle English Romances* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1978), pp. 5-6. See also Ronald A. Waldron, ‘Oral-Formulaic Technique and Middle English Alliterative Poetry’, *Speculum*, 32.4 (1957), 792-804.

¹⁷³ Bradbury, ‘Popular Romance’, pp. 297-304.

¹⁷⁴ Putter, ‘Metres and Stanza Forms’, pp. 113-7. For a discussion of metre of alliterative romances see Hoyt Duggan, ‘Stress Assignment in Middle English Alliterative Poetry’, *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 89.3 (1990), 309-29; Ad Putter, Judith Jefferson and Myra Stokes, *Studies in the Metre of Alliterative Verse*, Medium Ævum Monographs, n.s., 25 (Oxford: Society for the Study of Medieval Languages and Literature, 2007); Jakob Schipper, *History of English Versification* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1910; repr. New York: AMS Press, 1971).

¹⁷⁵ Putter, ‘Metres and Stanza Forms’, pp. 117-25.

¹⁷⁶ Putter, ‘Metres and Stanza Forms’, p. 131.

¹⁷⁷ Baugh, ‘Improvisation’, pp. 434-5.

combination of their length and theme, through separating them as ‘the shorter romances’ and ‘the longer romances’ which makes it possible to decide whether they were intended for recitation or private reading.¹⁷⁸ He believes that the classification of romances in accordance with their matters, metrical forms or only by their contents is superficial, due to the fact that these classifications are ‘often arbitrary collections of names with no pretence to completeness or clear-cut definition’.¹⁷⁹ He groups ‘The Shorter Romances I’ (The Breton Lays, *Sir Landevale*, Thomas Chestre’s *Sir Launfal*, *King Horn* and *Horn Childe*, *Reinbrun*, *Roland and Vernagu* and *Otuel*, *Ipomedon*), ‘The Shorter Romances II’ (*Libeaus Desconus*, *Sir Eglamour of Artois*, *Torrent of Portyngale*, *The Erl of Tolous*, *Sir Degrevant*, *Sir Perceval of Gales*, *Amis and Amiloun*, *Octavian*), ‘The Longer Romances’ (*Havelok the Dane*, *Sir Tristrem*, *Ywain and Gawain*, *Le Morte Arthur*, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*), and ‘Novels in Verse’ (*Sir Beues of Hamtoun*, *Guy of Warwick*, *Kyng Alisaunder*, *Arthour and Merlin*, *Richard Coeur de Lion*, *William of Palerne*). In addition to these groupings, he classifies the shorter romances by their affinity with the saints’ legends under the title of ‘Homiletic Romances’ (*King of Tars*, *Robert of Sicily*, *Sir Gowther*, *Sir Ysumbras*, *Emaré*, *Le Bone Florence of Rome*, *Athelston*, *The Sege off Melayne*, *Cheuelere Assigne*). He explains that this group of romances can be described as secularized saints’ legends or legendary romances ‘because they occupy a position exactly in the middle between these two genres’.¹⁸⁰ These romances are close to the saints’ legends, as they describe miraculous divine intervention to chastise mankind, or they portray innocent people who ‘have to endure great hardships and persecution, but at last withstand all suffering and dangers by their exemplary constancy and piety’.¹⁸¹

Pearsall, alternatively, groups the Middle English romances by their date to explain the growth of couplet-romance, which developed from the French metrical form before the tail-rhyme tradition. He refers to *Havelok*, *Guy of Warwick*, *Beves of Hamtoun*, *Richard Cœur de Lion*, *Kyng Alisaunder* and *Arthour and Merlin*. He indicates there are nineteen romances in four-stress rhyming couplets and twenty-five in tail-rhyme stanzas. While the short couplet was the medium for prosaic, historical and non-fictional works, the tail-rhyme stanza was applied to emotive texts concerned with love and faith. He also discusses the development of Breton lays in rhymed couplets before the growth of a tail-rhyme tradition in Britain, the decline in short couplet

¹⁷⁸ Mehl, *The Middle English Romances*, pp. 36-7.

¹⁷⁹ Mehl, *The Middle English Romances*, p. 31.

¹⁸⁰ Mehl, *The Middle English Romances*, p. 121.

¹⁸¹ Mehl, *The Middle English Romances*, pp. 60-1.

romances after 1320 with the rise of tail-rhyme romance, and the revival of short couplet romance in the fifteenth century, with reference to romances such as *Partonope of Blois* and the *Squyr of Lowe Degre*.¹⁸² He treats *King Horn* as a ‘lyric romance’, even a song, in which we see ‘the first germination of the form’, and he considers it as a non-alliterative text in couplets.¹⁸³ He believes that *Sir Tristrem* adopts secular conventions with its eleven-line stanza based on a three stress line.¹⁸⁴ He notes that *Amis and Amiloun*’s tail-rhyme form fixes the text to the romance convention, and suggests that ‘*Amis* has some claim to be regarded as the typically best English romance’.¹⁸⁵ Pearsall offers a thematic grouping in relation to the plot materials of the romances, in addition to their metrical forms. *King of Tars* and *Le Bone Florence* are presented as romances with hagiographical material, while *Roland and Vernagu* is pietistic, *Sir Amadas* and *Sir Cleges* are short moral *exempla*, and *Sir Gowther* is a Breton lay, in addition to their being tail-rhyme romances. He remarks on the unity of plot material - rejection, exile, constancy, trial and reward - in *Octavian*, *Athelston*, *Sir Isumbras*, *Sir Eglamour*, *Torrent of Portyngale* and *Sir Triamour*.¹⁸⁶ He praises *Ipomedon*, *Sir Degrevaunt* and *Sir Perceval of Gales* for being ‘technically highly gifted’ texts.¹⁸⁷

Apart from the classification of romances according to their matters, metrical forms, length and dates of composition, a different taxonomy is espoused by a number of scholars, and romances are categorized in relation to their recurring motifs. This taxonomy is useful in considering how a particular motif is handled in a particular romance, what details differ, and what meanings emerge from the use of these motifs. Edith Rickert groups *Amis and Amiloun*, *Sir Amadas*, *Athelston*, *The Tale of Gamelyn*, *Roswall and Lillian*, and *The Story of Grey-Steel* as ‘romances of friendship’ by indicating that ‘love, war, and adventure are subordinated to an ideal of friendship [...] In all of them friendship is a veritable passion, and the betrayal of friendship becomes for the time the supreme sin’.¹⁸⁸ Charles Sears Baldwin groups romances according to their motifs, in addition to their cycles and developments over time. His ‘Three Ideal Motifs of Romance’ involve ‘Love’, ‘Adventure and Fairy’, and ‘Chivalry’ and he considers the use of these major motifs in general. ‘The Spread of Romance’ describes the development of romance in English. It is followed by subtitles of ‘History and

¹⁸² Pearsall, ‘Development of Middle English Romance’, pp. 16-24.

¹⁸³ Pearsall, ‘Development of Middle English Romance’, pp. 24-6.

¹⁸⁴ Pearsall, ‘Development of Middle English Romance’, pp. 26-7.

¹⁸⁵ Pearsall, ‘Development of Middle English Romance’, p. 29.

¹⁸⁶ Pearsall, ‘Development of Middle English Romance’, pp. 29-31.

¹⁸⁷ Pearsall, ‘Development of Middle English Romance’, p. 33.

¹⁸⁸ Edith Rickert, *Early English Romances in Verse* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1908), p. xi.

Legend', 'Cycles of Romance' (without grouping romances in matters but giving general details about the corpus of matters), and 'The Grail Legend in the Arthurian Cycle'. Baldwin also offers a main title of 'Forms of Romance in Medieval French and Latin', which are 'Long and Collective Romances', 'Short, or Selective Romances', 'Undeveloped Short Romances' (which are component parts of the long romances), 'Exempla' (which are short tales with illustrative anecdotes), 'The Selective Romance as a Distinctly Developed Form: Marie de France and Walter Map', 'Chrétien de Troyes', 'Fabliaux' (as a popular form of verse short tale), 'Histories' (histories which are indistinguishable from romance in matter and form), 'Satires' (of defects of chivalric society), and 'Beast Tales' (to satirize human behaviours). According to his classification in terms of 'time', there are 'Earlier English Verse-Romances' which are 'Romances Imitating French Types' following French models (*Sir Bevis of Hampton*, *Guy of Warwick*), and 'Romances Keeping English Epic Traditions' with a strong sense of Englishness (*King Horn*, *Havelok the Dane*). 'Later English Arthurian Verse-Romances' are subtitled as 'Conventional Versions' (*Arthur and Merlin*, *Libeaus Desconus*), 'Versions Showing English Development' (*Sir Tristrem*, *Sir Perceval of Galles*, *Le Morte Arthur*) and 'The Revival of Alliteration' (*Joseph of Arimathie*, *Morte Arthure*). Baldwin presents 'Barbour's Bruce' (*Bruce and The War Songs of Laurence Minot*), '*Gawain and the Green Knight*', and 'Malory's *Morte D'Arthur*' under separate titles, without grouping them with other romances.¹⁸⁹ Maldwyn Mills, likewise combines metrical and motif-based classification, noting that, although there are exceptions, 'detailed stories of love and adventure are told in the couplet form; accounts of large-scale fighting, in the alliterative line; tales of suffering and piety, in stanza of one kind or another'.¹⁹⁰

Sarah F. Barrow examines courtly romances produced in the twelfth and the thirteenth centuries, distinguishing the 'romances of adventure', which are stories of chivalric deeds, and the 'romances of sentiments and love', which she calls the 'society romances'. In society romances, the interest shifts from chivalric deeds to the emotional motif of love, in other words to *fine amor*.¹⁹¹ She examines how love originates, develops and is presented in romances by emphasizing the significance of the marriage ceremony at the final stage of love. It represents harmony between the lovers and the

¹⁸⁹ Charles Sears Baldwin, *An Introduction to Medieval English Literature* (London: Longmans, 1914), pp. 113-69.

¹⁹⁰ *Six Middle English Romances*, ed. by Maldwyn Mills (London: Dent, 1973), p. viii. See also Maldwyn Mills, '*Sir Isumbras* and the Style of the Tail-Rhyme Romance', in *Readings*, ed. by Meale, pp. 1-24.

¹⁹¹ Sarah F. Barrow, *The Medieval Society Romances* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1924), pp. 4-5.

harmony in society, and symbolizes the honouring of the lovers' sentiments by the social institution of marriage.¹⁹² Love, especially the courtly love presented in romances, is not only the lovers' affection for each other, but also a feeling developed in relation to conventional social ideals. Therefore, romances embody the fact that 'love is a great social force' as well as a personal one.¹⁹³

Laura Hibbard Loomis groups thirty-nine romances as 'Romances of Trial and Faith' (*Sir Isumbras, Florence of Rome, Emaré, The Erle of Tolous, King of Tars, Gowther, Robert of Cisyle, Amis and Amiloun, Amadas, Cleges*), 'Romances of Legendary English Heroes' (*King Horn, Horn Childe, Havelok the Dane, Beves of Hampton, Guy of Warwick, Reinbrun, Athelston, Richard Coeur de Lion, Gamelyn*), and 'Romances of Love and Adventure' (*Apollonius of Tyre, Seven Sages of Rome, Floris and Blancheflur, Sir Orfeo, Partonope de Blois, William of Palerne, Ipomedon, Generides, Chevalere Assigne, Knight of Courtesy, The Squyr of Lowe Degre, Octavian, Sir Eglamour, Torrent of Portyngale, Sir Triamour, Roswall and Lillian, Lay le Freine, Sir Degaré, Sir Degrevant, The History of Sir Eger, Sir Grime, and Sir Graysteele*), by providing information about their versions, analogues and origins.¹⁹⁴ John Stevens discusses romances in relation to motifs of love, gentility, women, God and supernatural.¹⁹⁵

Mills renames Loomis's 'Romances of Love and Adventure' as 'chivalrous' romances, 'Romances of Legendary English Heroes' as 'heroic' romances, and 'Romances of Trial and Faith' as 'edifying' romances.¹⁹⁶ Velma Bourgeois Richmond also prefers a classification of romances within 'Fortune's Heroes' (*The Gest Hystoriale of the Destruction of Troy, Kyng Alisaunder, The Prose Life of Alexander, Morte Arthure*), 'Fiendish Origins Transformed' (*Emaré, Sir Gowther, Robert the Deuyll, Partenay*), 'Friendship and Brotherhood' (*Athelston, Amis and Amiloun, Valentine and Orson*), 'The Delights of Love' (*Ywain and Gawain, Le Morte Arthur, Paris and Vienne*), and 'The Most Popular Hero' (*Guy of Warwick*).¹⁹⁷

Lee C. Ramsey makes use of several sub-motifs in his classification of romances according to several major motifs. He calls these 'The Child Exile', 'The Old King and the Kingdom', 'Invaders and Traitors', 'Beauty and Power: The Hero and Heroine', 'Trials and Adventures', 'The Best Knight in the World', 'The Enemy', 'Combat', 'The

¹⁹² Barrow, *The Medieval Society Romances*, p. 31.

¹⁹³ Barrow, *The Medieval Society Romances*, p. 33.

¹⁹⁴ See Loomis, *Medieval Romance in England*.

¹⁹⁵ See Stevens, *Medieval Romance*.

¹⁹⁶ Mills, *Six Middle English Romances*, p. vii.

¹⁹⁷ See Richmond, *Popularity*.

Hero: Disguises and False Identities’, ‘Lovers, Friends, Family’, ‘Service to Man and Society’, ‘History and Politics’, ‘Warriors of God’, ‘Marvels and Magic’, ‘Lawkeepers and Lawbreakers’, ‘Violence’, ‘Romances of Rebellion’ and ‘Remedies for Misrule’, ‘Love Stories’, ‘Love and Religion’, ‘The Fairy Princess’, ‘Family Affairs’, ‘Giants and Other Monsters’, ‘Cast Adrift’, ‘World Travellers’, ‘The Monstrous Churl and Other Arthurian Themes’, ‘Satire, Sermons, and Sentiment’, ‘Faith, Humility, and Charity’, and ‘Sentimentality and Sensationalism’.¹⁹⁸

Stephen Knight, in his essay on the social function of romances, offers three romance types based on specific motifs. According to Knight:

The first is that in which a lonely hero wins honour, wife and property; the second is that in which a whole family is disrupted and through difficulties re-establishes itself in honour and power, whilst the third type contains romances which, in both theme and form, interrogate and cast doubt upon the ideological pattern of most romances.¹⁹⁹

In the first group, he discusses Chrétien de Troyes’s *Le Chevalier au Lion*, *Libeaus Desconus*, *Sir Percival*, *Sir Degaré*, *The Squire of Low Degree*, *Sir Gowther*, *Sir Degrevant*, *Sir Launfal*, *Havelok*, *Gamelyn*. He offers *Emaré*, *The King of Tars*, *Sir Eglamour of Artois*, *Lai le Freine*, *The Erl of Tolous*, *Le Bone Florence of Rome*, *Sir Triamour*, *Octavian*, *Sir Beves of Hamtoun*, *Guy of Warwick*, *Partenaye*, *William of Palerne*, *Amis and Amiloun*, *The Awoving of Arthur*, *King Horn* and *Athelston* for the discussion of his second grouping. His third grouping includes *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, *Sir Tristrem*, *Morte Arthure*, *Sir Amadace*.²⁰⁰

Susan Crane coins the term ‘insular romance’ to define the romances written under the influence of the Anglo-Norman dialect, and to explore the relationship between Anglo-Norman and English romances. She states that ‘Anglo-Norman romances and their Middle English versions form a distinctively ‘insular’ body of works’, and she examines the conceptualizations of order, justice and power in these romances.²⁰¹ Crane studies romances in thematic classifications such as romances of ‘Land and Lineage’ (*Havelok the Dane*, *Lai d’Havelok*, *King Horn*), ‘Land, Lineage, and Nation’ (*Fouke le Fitz Waryn*, *Boeve de Haumtone*, *Sir Beves of Hamtoun*, *Gui de Warewic*, and the multiple versions of *Guy of Warwick*), ‘Religion in Pious Romances’ (*Gui de Warewic*, *Guy of Warwick*, *Amis e Amilun*, *Amis and Amiloun*, *Sir Ysumbras*, *Richard Coer de Lyon*, *Alexander*, *King Alisaunder*, *Athelston*), ‘Measuring

¹⁹⁸ See Ramsey, *Chivalric Romances*, pp. 26-231.

¹⁹⁹ Knight, ‘Social Function’, p. 102.

²⁰⁰ See Knight, ‘Social Function’, pp. 102-19.

²⁰¹ Crane, *Insular Romance*, pp. 1-2.

Conventions of Courtliness’ and ‘Adapting Conventions of Courtliness’ (both chapters discuss Thomas’s *Tristan, Sir Tristrem, Amadas et Ydoine*, Hue de Rotalande’s *Ipomedon*).²⁰² Siân Echard also distinguishes the insular romances (*Beves of Hamtoun, Launval* and the Arthurian romances) by discussing their language, audience, and threads of place, politics and piety.²⁰³

Donald B. Sands adds ‘The Matter of England’ grouping (*King Horn, Havelok the Dane, Athelston, Gamelyn*) to the other groups of ‘The Breton Lai’ (*Sir Orfeo, Sir Launfal, Lai le Freine*), ‘Chivalry and Sentiment’ (*The Squire of Low Degree, Floris and Blancheflour*), ‘Burlesque and Grotesquerie’ (*The Tournament of Tottenham, The Wedding of Sir Gawain and Dame Ragnell, Sir Gawain and the Carl of Carlisle*).²⁰⁴ Jennifer Fellows presents her collection of romances (*King Horn, Florys and Blauncheflour, Amis and Amiloun, Sir Tryamowre, Syr Launfal* and *The Earle of Tolous*) as ‘Tales of Love and Chivalry’.²⁰⁵ Noël James Menuge groups *King Horn, Havelok the Dane, Beues of Hamtoun, William of Palerne* and *Gamelyn* under the title of ‘the wardship romances’, which share issues relating to medieval guardianship.²⁰⁶ Felicity Riddy lists *King Horn, Horn Child and the Maiden Rymenhild* as romances of ‘courtship and marriage’, *Sir Orfeo* and *Sir Amadace* as romances of ‘married love’, *Floris and Blancheflor, William of Palerne* and *Cheuelere Assigne* as romances of ‘childbirth, infants and children’, *Octovian, Torrent of Portyngale* and *Sir Isumbras* as romances of ‘separated and reunited families’, *Sir Percyvell of Galles, Sir Degaré* and *Havelok* as romances of ‘sons and foster-sons’, *Gamelyn, Amis and Amiloun* and *Athelston* as romances of ‘brotherhood or sworn brotherhood’, *Lai le Freine* as a romance of ‘sisterhood’, and *Emaré* as a romance of ‘motherhood’.²⁰⁷

Geraldine Heng questions whether geography and place are subjects of romances, and she divides romances into several well-accepted categories. She explains the development of romance from Geoffrey Monmouth’s *History of the Kings of Britain* and discusses ‘history as romance’. She groups ‘popular romance’ (*Richard Coer de Lyon*), ‘chivalric/heroic romance’ (*Morte Arthure*), ‘family romance/hagiographic romance’ (‘The Man of Law’s Tale’ and its versions), and ‘travel romance/ethnographic

²⁰² See Crane, *Insular Romance*.

²⁰³ Echard, ‘Insular Romance’, pp. 160-80.

²⁰⁴ Sands, *Middle English Verse Romances*, p. 1.

²⁰⁵ See *Of Love and Chivalry: An Anthology of Middle English Romance*, ed. by Jennifer Fellows (London: Dent, 1993).

²⁰⁶ Noël James Menuge, ‘The Wardship Romance: A New Methodology’, in *Tradition and Transformation*, ed. by Field, pp. 29-43.

²⁰⁷ Felicity Riddy, ‘Middle English Romance: Family, Marriage, Intimacy’, in *The Cambridge Companion*, ed. by Krueger, pp. 235-52 (p. 237).

romance' (*Mandeville's Travels*).²⁰⁸ Helen Cooper's comprehensive study traces the changes in romance conventions. She examines the transformations of romance motifs by examining them under headings of 'quest and pilgrimage', 'providence and the sea', 'magic that does not work', 'fairy monarchs, fairy mistresses', 'desirable desire', 'women on trial', 'restoring the rightful heir', and 'unhappy endings'.²⁰⁹ As an alternative to all motif-oriented taxonomies, *Floris and Blancheflour*, *Sir Degrevant*, *The Squire of Low Degree*, *The Tournament of Tottenham* and *The Feast of Tottenham* are grouped as 'Sentimental and Humorous Romances' by Erik Kooper.²¹⁰

The categorization of romances under titles of 'homiletic', 'chivalric', and 'popular' is highly regarded by several scholars. The classification of some Middle English romances according to their religious context is adopted by several critics, who have labelled them 'pious/homiletic/penitential/religious romances'.²¹¹ In these romances, the didactic and religious interact, in accordance with sentiments found in religious writings which were widely regarded in the Middle Ages. Romance and hagiography are forms of 'exemplary biography', both of which are morally edifying, but the former integrates instruction and entertainment.²¹² Unlike hagiography, romance has an earthly goal, which ends with the regaining of social and family order.²¹³

As in other romance classifications, there is a debate over the canon of romances that can be classified in this group. Pious romances 'adopt from religious writing [...]; tacitly they resist or subvert the full implications of the same religious material',²¹⁴ such as the generic complexity of *Sir Gowther*, which is defined as a 'secular hagiography' by Margaret Bradstock.²¹⁵ Roger Dalrymple presents 'A Catalogue of the Pious

²⁰⁸ See Geraldine Heng, *Empire of Magic: Medieval Romance and the Politics of Cultural Fantasy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003).

²⁰⁹ See Cooper, *The English Romance in Time*.

²¹⁰ See *Sentimental and Humorous Romances*, ed. by Erik Kooper (Kalamazoo, Michigan: Medieval Institute Publications, 2006).

²¹¹ For a discussion of the similarities between hagiography and secular romance see Margaret Hurley, 'Saints' Legends and Romance Again: Secularization of Structure and Motif', *Genre*, 8 (1975), 60-73; Paul Strohm, 'Passioun, Lyf, Miracle, Legende: Some Generic Terms in Middle English', *The Chaucer Review*, 10.2 (1975), 62-75; Jennifer Fellows, 'St George as Romance Hero', *Reading Medieval Studies*, 19 (1993), 27-54; David Salter, 'Romance and Hagiography: *The Vision of St Eustace* and *Sir Isumbras*', in *Holy and Noble Beasts: Encounters with Animals in Medieval Literature*, ed. by David Salter (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2001), pp. 55-70.

²¹² Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, 'Bet... to... rede on holy seyntes lyves...: Romance and Hagiography Again', in *Readings*, ed. by Meale, pp. 83-97 (pp. 84-5).

²¹³ Kathryn Hume, 'Structure and Perspective: Romance and Hagiographic Features in the *Amicus and Amelius* Story', *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 69.1 (1970), 59-107 (pp. 92-3).

²¹⁴ Crane, *Insular Romance*, p. 102. For a discussion of *Guy of Warwick* and *Amis and Amiloun* as insular and pious romances see Crane's Chapter Three: 'Religion in Pious Romances', pp. 92-133.

²¹⁵ Margaret Bradstock, '*Sir Gowther*: Secular Hagiography or Hagiographical Romance or Neither?', *Journal of the Australasian Universities Language and Literature Association*, 59 (1983), 26-47. For a detailed generic discussion of *Sir Gowther* see Laurel Braswell, '*Sir Isumbras* and the Legend of St Eustace', *Mediaeval Studies*, 27 (1965), 128-51; Shirley Marchalonis, '*Sir Gowther*: The Process of a

Formulae of the Middle English Verse Romances' composed before 1500.²¹⁶ Mehl's group of 'Homiletic Romances', and Loomis's classification of 'Romances of Trial and Faith'²¹⁷ (as mentioned above) are named 'edifying romances' by Mills.²¹⁸ Andrea Hopkins's detailed study on penitential romances (*Guy of Warwick, Sir Ysumbras, Sir Gowther, Roberd of Cisyle*) treats them as 'secular hagiographies' by emphasizing the fact that they 'have a strong affinity with saints' lives'.²¹⁹ In these romances, it is common that 'the hero is suddenly cut from all he has known and everyone he loves, and embarks on a period of journeying, seeking, and suffering in solitude'.²²⁰

Diana Childress points out the edifying nature of pious romances, and she states that, 'instead of entertaining their audiences with the exploits of admirable men, the authors of the secular legends aim to teach moral lessons'.²²¹ On the other hand, the didacticism of this group is argued by Ojars Kratins, who claims that romance and hagiography are different genres. Therefore, *Amis and Amiloun* is not to be read as a romance or as a hagiography, but as a secular legend due to the fact that '[a]lthough the heroes are pious, they are not saints because their virtue is a bond between men and not between man and God'.²²² Finlayson distinguishes between two types of religious romances and he suggests that:

There are, however, a number of works designated 'religious romances' which, in my view, violate, rather than adapt, the romance. These are largely the 'homiletic' or 'didactic romances.' Clearly, the impulse which generates the Grail romances is generally the same as that of the homiletic romances, but the results are very different: in one, the religious truth is reached through the quest, through the imaginative world of romance; in the other, certain events have a romance dress imposed on them, and the

Romance', *The Chaucer Review*, 6.1 (1971), 14-29; Margaret Bradstock, 'The Penitential Pattern in *Sir Gowther*', *Parergon*, 20 (1978), 3-10; Salter, 'Romance and Hagiography', pp. 55-70; Rhiannon Purdie, 'Generic Identity and the Origins of *Sir Isumbras*', in *The Matter of Identity in Medieval Romance*, ed. by Philippa Hardman (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2002), pp. 113-24. For a political debate over the penitential romances see Raluca L. Radulescu, 'Pious Middle English Romances Turned Political: Reading *Sir Isumbras, Sir Gowther, and Robert of Sicily* in Fifteenth-Century England', *Viator*, 41.2 (2010), 333-59.

²¹⁶ Roger Dalrymple, *Language and Piety in Middle English Romance* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2000), pp. 149-250.

²¹⁷ See Loomis, *Medieval Romance in England*.

²¹⁸ Mills, *Six Middle English Romances*, vii.

²¹⁹ Andrea Hopkins, *The Sinful Knights: A Study of Middle English Penitential Romance* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), p. 12.

²²⁰ Hopkins, *The Sinful Knights*, p. 20.

²²¹ Diana Childress, 'Between Romance and Legend: 'Secular Hagiography' in Middle English Literature', *Philological Quarterly*, 57.3 (1978), 311-22 (p. 319). Childress lists *Roland and Vernagu, Otuel and Roland, Sege of Melayne, Joseph of Armathie, Chevalere Assigne, Sir Gowther, Sir Isumbras, Robert of Sicily, Athelston, Le Bone Florence of Rome, Emaré, The King of Tars, Chaucer's Man of Law's Tale, Amis and Amiloun* as secular legends (p. 319).

²²² Ojars Kratins, 'The Middle English *Amis and Amiloun*: Chivalric Romance or Secular Hagiography?', *PMLA*, 81.5 (1966), 347-54 (p. 354).

truths proposed are equally imposed. That is, certain characteristic elements of romance are added to a story which is told primarily for its moral significance.²²³

Finlayson claims that *The Siege of Jerusalem* and *Joseph of Arimathie* are pious legendary histories rather than romance, and *Amis and Amiloun* and many other homiletic or religious romances (*Athelston*, *Emaré*, *Isumbras*, the *Man of Law's Tale*, *The King of Tars*, and *The Seven Sages of Rome*)²²⁴ should, in fact, be seen as *exempla*.²²⁵

A chivalric context is another well accepted unifying factor for grouping romances, and the romances sharing chivalric motives are regarded as 'chivalric romances'. The texts keeping their subject matters from Anglo-Norman material and French *chansons de geste* can be defined as chivalric romances, including the Matter of England romances.²²⁶ They are heroic narratives adapted to English feudalism and Christianity. The solitary adventure is replaced by the military expedition in chivalric romance in an exotic or otherworldly setting, and 'the adventures are not there for their own sake, but to call forth the very essence of the knight's ideal of manhood'.²²⁷ Chivalric romances produce 'a literature written for courtly patrons, for affluent princes with strong pretensions to chivalric prowess [...] to fulfil the fantasies of young audiences with knightly aspirations'.²²⁸ In chivalric romances, adventure destined for an individual hero is didactic, either to depict his moral progression or the aristocratic way of life, and love is decorative rather than central.²²⁹

Chivalric romances celebrate being a knight, they have 'the distinct advantage of close linkage to an identifiable social class', and they are read as a literature of the courtly audience.²³⁰ The chivalric and courtly codes are the most important aspects in romances because the chivalric code serves to define the relationship between king and knight and sets their duties, while the courtly code exemplifies the idealized heterosexual relationships in romances.²³¹

Finlayson refers to Charlemagne romances as heroic works; yet, unlike Arthurian romances, they have little interest in courtly love and manners and in the self-

²²³ Finlayson, 'Definitions of Middle English Romance', p. 175.

²²⁴ Finlayson, 'Definitions of Middle English Romance', p. 180-1, n. 48.

²²⁵ Finlayson, 'Definitions of Middle English Romance', p. 177.

²²⁶ Gibbs, *Middle English Romances*, pp. 18-9.

²²⁷ Gibbs, *Middle English Romances*, p. 8.

²²⁸ Jennifer Robin Goodman, *Chivalry and Exploration, 1298-1630* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1998), p. 34.

²²⁹ Finlayson, 'Definitions of Middle English Romance', pp. 57-9.

²³⁰ Heng, *Empire of Magic*, p. 128.

²³¹ Robert B. Burlin, 'Middle English Romance: The Structure of Genre', *The Chaucer Review*, 30.1 (1995), 1-14 (pp. 3-5).

development of their heroes.²³² Courtly romances are preoccupied with courtly love and spiritual quest as in *Ywain and Gawain*, *Sir Gawain*, the *Knight's Tale*, *Sir Degrevant*, Malory, and even in *William of Palerne*, although love is not the dominant theme, but is inseparable from adventure. The simple romance of adventure is transformed into the adventure of a courtly romance within a love story in *The Squire of Low Degre*, while the elaborate descriptions of the hero in hunts, love and prowess transform *Sir Degrevant* into a courtly romance. However, *Sir Perceval of Galles* differs from these courtly romances by lacking courtesy and love, which makes it a romance of adventure.²³³

The category of 'popular romance' to define romance texts partially makes use of the argument on the romance audience to define its boundaries. Nicola McDonald defines popular romance as 'the pulp fiction of medieval England [...] for an enormously diverse audience'.²³⁴ They were mostly found in the entertainment sections of household miscellanies and they were 'medieval bestsellers'.²³⁵ Pearsall defines popular romance 'as the primary extant literary manifestation of the newly enfranchised vernacular'.²³⁶ The extant popular romances circulated in miscellanies like Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, MS Advocates 19.2.1 (Auchinleck MS); London, British Library, MS Cotton Caligula A.ii; Lincoln, Lincoln Cathedral Library, MS 91 (Lincoln Thornton MS); Cambridge, Cambridge University Library, MS Ff.2.38; London, British Library, MS Egerton 2862. They circulated among friends and relatives of the prosperous middle class and the provincial gentry for entertainment.²³⁷ The circulation of the Middle English romance texts in several manuscripts proves that they were not exclusively produced for the elite class who spoke and read French, but they were popular among the ordinary people who spoke English.²³⁸ The social groups addressed in these romances 'are not often in the most powerful or central positions of their society'.²³⁹ Popular romances are viewed as 'substandard' and even 'mass' works because of their failure in sophistication and artistic quality in the presentation of

²³² Finlayson, 'Definitions of Middle English Romance', p. 169.

²³³ Finlayson, 'Definitions of Middle English Romance', pp. 171-4.

²³⁴ McDonald, 'A Polemical Introduction', p. 1.

²³⁵ Putter, 'Introduction', p. 5.

²³⁶ Pearsall, 'Development of Middle English Romance', p. 12.

²³⁷ Putter, 'Introduction', p. 6.

²³⁸ Bradbury, 'Popular Romance', p. 295.

²³⁹ Gilbert, 'Introduction', p. 23.

courtly issues;²⁴⁰ however, the perception of their quality differed among their lower and upper class audience.²⁴¹

In his discussion of popular English metrical romances, Derek Brewer explains that, they ‘deal in a fantasy world of adventure and love by knights and ladies. Giants and dragons and the ever-present enemy, the Saracen, quest and desire are their base. They are secular but unfailingly pious’.²⁴² In his essay, Brewer focuses on both structural and thematic aspects of romances. He mentions that Anglo-Norman *Guy of Warwick* is a wish-fulfilment story, as well as the story of the maturation of its protagonist. The maturation of the protagonist can also be observed in popular metrical romances like *Libeaus Desconus* and *Sir Perceval of Galles*, which have the basic theme of ‘The Fair Unknown’; in addition to *Sir Launfal*, *Octavian* and *Havelok*, which end with the typical celebration of the hero’s success towards the end of the romance.²⁴³ He believes that the medieval English understanding of romance stresses ‘adventure story’, ‘history of conquest’, before the love interest, as it can be inferred from the list of the romance heroes presented by the clerical author of the *Cursor Mundi*,²⁴⁴ the bloodthirsty representations in *Richard Coer de Lyon* and Chaucer’s tail-rhyme romance *Sir Thopas* which parodies chivalric romance conventions.²⁴⁵

Brewer notes that there are romances with a love interest along with the romances of war and adventure like *King Horn* and *Floris and Blancheflur*, romances of love and its pain leading to a faithful marriage as in the Breton lai *Sir Orfeo*, romances centring on family relationships like the Breton lays *Sir Degarré*, *Lai le Freine*, *Emaré*, *Launfal*, *Sir Gowther* and *The Erl of Tolous*. While *Sir Isumbras* is an early fourteenth-century pious romance encouraging endurance, *Sir Eglamour*, *Sir Torrent*, *Sir Octavian* and *Beues of Hampton* are romances in which children are lost but recovered in maturity. *Sir Gowther*, *Guy*, *Isumbras* and *Amadas* are romances of the fall of proud men who can be restored through repentance.²⁴⁶ He refers to *Sir Eglamour of Artois* and *Emaré* as romances of the calumniated wife, *Sir Gowther* as a romance with the theme of the conception of an evil child, *Guy of Warwick* and *King Horn* as romances of true and treacherous friends, *Athelston*, *Le Bone Florence of Rome* and *Amis and Amiloun* as romances of brotherhood. The virtue of generosity, the testing of

²⁴⁰ Gilbert, ‘Introduction’, pp. 19-20.

²⁴¹ Gilbert, ‘Introduction’, p. 21.

²⁴² Brewer, ‘Popular English Metrical Romances’, p. 61. See also Derek Brewer, ‘The Nature of Romance’, *Poetica*, 9 (1978), 9-48.

²⁴³ Brewer, ‘Popular English Metrical Romances’, pp. 48-9.

²⁴⁴ Brewer, ‘Popular English Metrical Romances’, p. 50.

²⁴⁵ Brewer, ‘Popular English Metrical Romances’, pp. 51-2.

²⁴⁶ Brewer, ‘Popular English Metrical Romances’, pp. 53-7.

the hero's generosity and the exchange of the gifts are the themes apparent in *Sir Amadas*, *Sir Cleges* and *Sir Launfal*.²⁴⁷ He stresses the fact that although most of the romance protagonists are males, there are romances centring on female characters like *Emaré*, Chaucer's *Griselda* and *Constance* who represent patient endurance. He excludes the romances giving historical accounts of Troy and Rome, but he refers to Arthurian romances like *Sir Perceval of Galles* which has chivalric tones, stories of Lancelot and Tristram which are the stories of adulterous love, and *Ywain and Gawain* which is the story of the inner maturation of the hero.²⁴⁸

Radulescu and Cory James Rushton suggest that popular romances are to be judged 'according to evidence of their widespread appeal in their own period (judged not just by number of copies, but through cross-references, evidence of readership and circulation) and the legacy they left in the post-medieval period', and they define popular romances as 'texts in Middle English, sometimes with origins in Anglo-Norman versions, which show a predominant concern with narrative at the expense of symbolic meaning' which address a non-aristocratic audience.²⁴⁹ Harriet E. Hudson believes that the term 'popular', refers to something 'widely known and well liked'.²⁵⁰ Popular romances were popular because they appealed to a varied audience ranging from the lower-class (anyone who had neither wealth nor title) to the country gentry and merchants, who were neither middle-class nor courtiers. They were the retellings of the stories with which the audience was already familiar. The term 'popular' does not imply an author's lack of creativity or an audience's poor taste, but the choice of the author and the audience response.²⁵¹

Bradbury points out that popular romances invite their audience to look beyond the surface story, since a sudden change of fortune is possible. They question norms like gender and other worlds derived from clerical literature.²⁵² Field also draws attention to the symbolic depth and the lack of authorial voice in popular romances.²⁵³ She notes the two main facts that 'the very size and categoric slipperiness of the corpus of popular romance become part of its particular quality', and their audience does not look for 'artistic experimentation and literary innovation', unlike Chaucer's audience.²⁵⁴ Popular

²⁴⁷ Brewer, 'Popular English Metrical Romances', pp. 57-9.

²⁴⁸ Brewer, 'Popular English Metrical Romances', pp. 59-61.

²⁴⁹ Raluca L. Radulescu and Cory James Rushton, 'Introduction', in *A Companion*, ed. by Radulescu and Rushton, pp. 1-8 (p. 7).

²⁵⁰ Hudson, 'Toward a Theory', p. 35.

²⁵¹ Hudson, 'Toward a Theory', pp. 36-42.

²⁵² Bradbury, 'Popular Romance', p. 305.

²⁵³ Field, 'Popular Romance', p. 11.

²⁵⁴ Field, 'Popular Romance', p. 28.

romances ‘deal with the bases of human existence in society’ like birth, childhood, family, threats and justice.²⁵⁵ She stresses the popularity of even the Anglo-Norman versions of *Beves of Hamptoun* and *Guy of Warwick* in the fourteenth century.²⁵⁶ She also points out the popularity of the Breton lays (*Sir Orfeo*, *Emaré*) among readers in the fourteenth century, which are symbolic and require interpretation.²⁵⁷ Different from *Octovian*, *Emaré*, *Floris* and *Blancheflour* which are named as popular romances, they ‘lack any direct engagement with the social world of their audiences’ as they deal with aristocratic identities. *Havelok the Dane* is a popular romance dealing with life outside the courtly circle,²⁵⁸ like *Gamelyn* which appeals to non-aristocratic interests. Both *Havelok* and *Gamelyn* ‘present a popular hero and are read as appealing to a popular audience’.²⁵⁹

Radulescu notes the difficulty of having a precise definition of popular romance (also named by critics as non-cyclic or metrical) like romance itself, and points out that, popular romances are categorized by theme, a combination of length, theme and format; however, these categories are insufficient, since some of the common themes are not found in all romances.²⁶⁰ Like courtly romances, they deal with the issues of penance, salvation and domestic relationships; however, they are not mainly concerned with chivalric adventures or the maturation process of male protagonists, but with disempowered heroines (as in *Lai le Freine*).²⁶¹ Popular romances also slightly touch upon piety to involve their audience by calling them to pray for the hero, and they address concerns over heredity and ruling authority, as in *Havelok*, *Sir Gowther*, *King Horn* and *Robert of Sicily*.²⁶² Penitential romances are concerned with ‘social reintegration, healing and peaceful resolution, at the end of a long sequence of highly disturbing events’, which can be assigned to the unexpected developments in the popular romances, as in *Sir Isumbras*.²⁶³ They combine their pious material with unsophisticated or non-courtly elements, ‘including inhuman social behaviour and taboo desires’, and thereby they achieve popularity.²⁶⁴ Popular romances favour family values; therefore, adulterous relationships and illegitimate births are rarely contextualized in these romances. The heiresses in popular romances struggle against hardships, like the

²⁵⁵ Field, ‘Popular Romance’, p. 29.

²⁵⁶ Field, ‘Popular Romance’, pp. 12-6.

²⁵⁷ Field, ‘Popular Romance’, p. 16.

²⁵⁸ Field, ‘Popular Romance’, p. 24.

²⁵⁹ Field, ‘Popular Romance’, p. 27.

²⁶⁰ Radulescu, ‘Genre and Classification’, p. 38.

²⁶¹ Radulescu, ‘Genre and Classification’, p. 39.

²⁶² Radulescu, ‘Genre and Classification’, pp. 40-1.

²⁶³ Radulescu, ‘Genre and Classification’, p. 42.

²⁶⁴ Radulescu, ‘Genre and Classification’, p. 43.

heroines in *Emaré*, *The Erle of Tolous*, *Lai le Freine*, *Amis and Amiloun*, *King Horn*, *Ipomadon*, *Sir Degrevant*, *The King of Tars*, *Sir Isumbras*, and *Le Bone Florence of Rome*.²⁶⁵ For McDonald, popular romance is ‘dirty’ and ‘provocative’ and ‘it forges its meanings out of the clash between the marvellous and the mundane’, since they treat everyday life experiences *in extremis* by unsettling issues of gender, race and faith.²⁶⁶ Popular romances test the limits of romance as a genre by focusing on non-traditional concerns. *Sir Amadace*, for instance, deals with a lower ideal than that of chivalry with its concern over money. *Sir Degaré*, *Libeaus Desconus*, *Sir Degrevant* and *Gamelyn* explore the issues of identity, social mobility and violence. *King of Tars* presents the anxieties related to the Saracen ‘Other’.²⁶⁷ Furthermore, popular romances have flexible generic boundaries, as they make use of genres like history (*Sir Bevis of Hampton*, *Guy of Warwick*, *Richard Coeur de Lion*) and prophecy (*Romance of Thomas of Erceldoune*).²⁶⁸

In addition to these classifications of romance, romance is defined by comparison and contrast to the Breton lay, which is close to romance, especially in its contexts. In general, ‘the Breton lay may refer to any of the poems produced between approximately 1150 and 1450 which claim to be literary versions of lays sung by ancient Britons to the accompaniment of the harp’; yet, the Middle English lays were composed between the late thirteenth or early fourteenth and the early fifteenth century.²⁶⁹ Middle English lays were derived from French sources and only nine poems survive in English against thirty- four in French.²⁷⁰ Breton lays are attributed to Anglo-Norman writer Marie de France who wrote on ‘matters of courtesy, chivalry, and courtly love’ for an aristocratic audience in the twelfth century. They mostly appealed to a sophisticated, possibly female audience.²⁷¹

²⁶⁵ Radulescu, ‘Genre and Classification’, pp. 43-5. See also Harriet E. Hudson, ‘Construction of Class, Family, and Gender in Some Middle English Popular Romances’, in *Class and Gender in Early English Literature*, ed. by Britton J. Harwood and Gillian R. Overing (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994), pp. 76-94.

²⁶⁶ McDonald, ‘A Polemical Introduction’, pp. 15-7.

²⁶⁷ Radulescu, ‘Genre and Classification’, pp. 45-6.

²⁶⁸ Radulescu, ‘Genre and Classification’, pp. 46-8.

²⁶⁹ Anne Laskaya and Eve Salisbury, ‘Introduction’, in *The Middle English Breton Lays*, ed. by Anne Laskaya and Eve Salisbury (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 1995), pp. 1-14 (p. 1).

²⁷⁰ John B. Beston, ‘How Much was Known of the Breton Lai in Fourteenth-Century England?’, in *The Learned and the Lewed: Studies in Chaucer and Medieval Literature*, ed. by Larry D. Benson (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1974), pp. 319-36 (pp. 319-20). Beston lists *Sir Landevale*, *Sir Launfal*, *Lay le Freine*, *Sir Orfeo*, *Sir Degaré*, *Sir Gowther*, the *Erle of Tolous*, *Emaré* and Chaucer’s *Franklin’s Tale* as Breton lays.

²⁷¹ Pearsall, ‘Development of Middle English Romance’, p. 22.

Defining Breton lay as a genre is ‘at least as slippery a business as attempting to define the romance’; yet, it can be delineated as ‘a sub-genre of romance’²⁷², ‘a short romance’ which usually involves supernatural elements or ‘an ordeal tale which generally involves coincidences’.²⁷³ Like romances, they are ‘stories of lovers whose happy ending resides in marriage’ and they reflect English family values. Similar to romances, they were ‘read aloud for entertainment and instruction in familial matters’.²⁷⁴ In addition to love and the interference of fairy elements, romances and Breton lays have familiar subject matters, such as ‘weal or woe, joy and mirth, treachery and guile’.²⁷⁵ There are several types of recurring story patterns in the Breton lays, such as the liaison between a mortal and a fairy, a child born out of this liaison and the child’s reuniting with his parents after a combat with his father.²⁷⁶

Although they are closer to romance in subject matters and motifs, the Breton lays are ‘shorter, simpler, less diffuse in their effects, more reliant upon pure folklore motifs and fairy lore; and [...] the lays tended to be more dramatic than the romances’.²⁷⁷ Breton lays are brief and occasionally lack chivalric exploits; yet, they fit into the romance genre with the inclusion of supernatural elements and the emergence of unexpected happenings.²⁷⁸ Moreover, ‘the subject matter in the lay could be expanded into a romance, or a romance would be shortened into a lay’.²⁷⁹ *Sir Orfeo*, *Sir Degaré*, *Lay le Freine*, Thomas Chestre’s *Sir Launfal*, *Sir Gowther*, *Emaré* and *The Erle*

²⁷² John Finlayson, ‘The Form of the Middle English Lay’, *The Chaucer Review*, 19.4 (1985), 352-68 (p. 352). For a discussion of Breton lay as a genre see also Geoffrey V. Smithers, ‘Story-Patterns in Some Breton Lays’, *Medium Ævum*, 22.2 (1953), 61-92; Pearsall, ‘Development of Middle English Romance’, pp. 11-35; Christopher Page, *Voices and Instruments of the Middle Ages: Instrumental Practice and Songs in France, 1100-1300* (London: Dent, 1987), pp. 95-107.

²⁷³ Finlayson, ‘Form of the Middle English Lay’, p. 367. For a discussion of the recurring story patterns see also Hume, ‘Formal Nature’, pp. 158-80.

²⁷⁴ Laskaya and Salisbury, ‘Introduction’, p. 5. Laskaya and Salisbury list *Sir Orfeo*, *Lay Le Freine*, *Sir Degaré*, *Emaré*, *Sir Launfal*, *Sir Gowther*, the *Erle of Tolous*, *Sir Cleges* as Breton lays.

²⁷⁵ Baugh, *A Literary History*, p. 196. Baugh refers to the opening lines of *Sir Orfeo* in order to define what a Breton lai is: ‘We redeth oft and findeth y-write, / And this clerkes wele it wite, / Layes that ben in harping / Ben y-founde of ferli thing: / Sum bethe of wer and sum of wo, / And sum of joie and mirthe also, / And sum of trecherie and of gile.’. See *Sir Orfeo*, in *The Middle English Breton Lays*, ed. by Laskaya and Salisbury, pp. 15-59 (p. 15), lines 1-7. All references are to this edition, cited by the editors’ page and line number.

²⁷⁶ Smithers, ‘Story Patterns in Some Breton Lays’, pp. 61-6.

²⁷⁷ Thomas C. Rumble, ‘Introduction’, in *The Breton Lays in Middle English*, ed. by Thomas C. Rumble (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1965), pp. xiii-xxx (p. xxx). Rumble omits *Sir Cleges*, but he includes Chaucer’s *Franklin’s Tale* as a Breton lay.

²⁷⁸ Radulescu, ‘Genre and Classification’, p. 38.

²⁷⁹ Robert Thomas Lambdin and Laura Cooner Lambdin, eds, *Encyclopaedia of Medieval Literature* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2000), p. 349.

of *Tolous*, which are included in romance miscellanies, have been identified as Breton lays, and they have been considered within the corpus of romance.²⁸⁰

In her essay, Liu attempts to identify romance by not defining its boundaries but its best example (prototype) which provides information about the concerns of the romance poets and their audience.²⁸¹ Liu makes use of the *Cursor Mundi*, *Richard Coer de Lyon*, the *Speculum Vitae*, Chaucer's *The Tale of Sir Thopas*, and the *Laud Troy Book*, which include lists of Middle English texts used to describe the subject matter of romance. The close reading of *Richard Coer de Lyon* reveals how its poet understands romance, which is close to chronicle and epic. Moreover, the stories associated with Bodel's three matters of Britain, France, Rome can be typified by certain names of individuals, and the most commonly used names of the romance heroes help to identify the representatives of the genre, such as Alexander, Charlemagne, Arthur and Gawain. *Richard Coer de Lyon* introduces Richard's name into this list of names. It differs from continental romances, especially from those by French poets which primarily mention chivalric display and courtly love.²⁸²

Manuscript Contexts and Indexes

The study of the manuscript contexts and indexes of the romances is another way of grouping romance texts. There are several detailed studies of the facsimiles of single manuscript collections.²⁸³ Mehl believes that the examination of romance manuscripts 'could provide much valuable information about the provenance and transmission of the romances'.²⁸⁴ Murray J. Evans examines fifteen manuscript collections that contain romances, keeping company with hagiographical, historical and political works, to discuss their generic and structural details.²⁸⁵ He studies *Sir Isumbras* as a homiletic romance, and *Sir Orfeo* and *Sir Degaré* as Middle English lays with reference to their

²⁸⁰ See *Middle English Metrical Romances*, ed. by W. H. French and C. B. Hale (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1930); Gibbs, *Middle English Romances*; Mills, *Six Middle English Romances*; Sands, *Middle English Verse Romances*.

²⁸¹ Liu, 'Middle English Romance', p. 347.

²⁸² Liu, 'Middle English Romance', pp. 340-4.

²⁸³ See *The Auchinleck Manuscript, National Library of Scotland Advocates MS 19.2.1*, intro. by Derek Pearsall and I. C. Cunningham (London: Scholar Press, 1977); *Cambridge University Library MS Ff.2.38*, ed. by Frances McSparran and P. R. Robinson (London: Scholar Press, 1979); *The Findern Manuscript: MS Cambridge University Library Ff.1.6*, intro. by Richard Beadle and A. E. B. Owen (London: Scholar Press, 1977); *The Thornton Manuscript (Lincoln Cathedral Library MS 91)*, intro. by D. S. Brewer and A. E. B. Owen (London: Scholar Press, 1975); *The Heege Manuscript: A Facsimile of National Library of Scotland MS Advocates 19.3.1*, intro. by Phillipa Hardman, Leeds Texts and Monographs, n.s., 16 (Leeds: Leeds Studies in English, 2000).

²⁸⁴ Mehl, *The Middle English Romances*, p. 257.

²⁸⁵ Murray J. Evans, *Rereading Middle English Romance: Manuscript Layout, Decoration, and the Rhetoric of Composite Structure* (Montreal, London: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1995). See the list of these manuscripts in Table 1 (p. 17).

manuscript contexts, whilst he groups romances in relation to their composite manuscript layouts and decorations, offering this as a means to define romance as a genre.²⁸⁶ Evans offers an alternative grouping by offering to classify single romances in their manuscript contexts. He suggests that this grouping provides information about the compilers and readers of the manuscripts.²⁸⁷ Although *Sir Isumbras* is grouped as a homiletic romance by Barron²⁸⁸ and by Mehl,²⁸⁹ a tail-rhyme romance by Pearsall,²⁹⁰ an *exemplum* by Finlayson,²⁹¹ Evans examines ‘eight manuscript contexts for members of the *Isumbras*-group, six of which contain *Sir Isumbras* itself’.²⁹²

Guddat-Figge believes that any attempts to arrange romances chronologically and locally are bound to fail due to a lack of reliable data, and she discusses romances in different manuscript contexts by referring to manuscript details and contents.²⁹³ Mills points out the diversity of content and style in several manuscripts containing romance texts, their audience and scribes, how romances are grouped in these manuscripts (Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, MS Advocates 19.2.1 (Auchinleck MS); Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, MS Advocates 19.3.1; Cambridge, Cambridge University Library, MS Ff.2.38; Lincoln, Lincoln Cathedral Library, MS 91 (Lincoln Thornton MS); London, British Library, MS Cotton Caligula A.ii; London, British Library, MS Additional 31042; Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Ashmole 61; Cambridge, Gonville and Caius College, MS 175; Manchester, Chetham’s Library, MS 8009; London, Lincoln’s Inn, MS Hale 150; Naples, Biblioteca Nazionale, MS XIII.B.29) with respect to subject matter and style, and how ‘popular’ the texts were. Mills draws attention to the detail that very few romance texts are named as romance in these manuscripts. He restates the difficulty in exact dating of these romance collections, although it is possible to identify them geographically through their linguistic features.²⁹⁴

Several manuscript indexes and catalogues have been published to facilitate research on ‘romance’ manuscripts. Some of them concentrate on prose works produced

²⁸⁶ See Chapter Three: ‘Romances in Composite Manuscript Contexts I’, pp. 51-82, and Chapter Four: ‘Romances in Composite Manuscript Contexts II’, pp. 83-102 in Evans, *Rereading*.

²⁸⁷ Evans, *Rereading*, pp. 113-4.

²⁸⁸ Barron, *English Medieval Romance*, pp. 204-5.

²⁸⁹ Mehl, *The Middle English Romances*, pp. 128-35.

²⁹⁰ Pearsall, ‘Development of Middle English Romance’, pp. 30-2.

²⁹¹ Finlayson, ‘Definitions of Middle English Romance’, pp. 175-7.

²⁹² Evans, *Rereading*, pp. 109-10.

²⁹³ Guddat-Figge, ‘Introduction’, p. 17.

²⁹⁴ Mills and Rogers, ‘Manuscripts’, pp. 53-7. See also Gillian Rogers’s contribution to the same article with a specific focus on London, British Library, MS Additional 27879 (Percy Folio MS) (p. 66).

in the Middle Ages, while others concentrate on texts in verse.²⁹⁵ Harry L. D. Ward and John A. Herbert's catalogue of romances is a very early example, which gives accounts of the manuscripts in the British Museum by their connection with the cycles. In the first volume, they present 'Classical Romances' including the cycles of Troy and Alexander. The romances of 'British and English Tradition' include not only the Arthurian cycle but also some detached romances like *Emaré*, *Havelok*, *King Horn*, *The Tale of Gamelyn*. The romances of the 'French Traditions' consist of the Charlemagne cycle, along with several individual texts like *Melusine* and *Partonopeus de Blois*. They are followed by the 'Miscellaneous Romances' which have uncertain nationality, such as *Ipomedon*, *Sir Isumbras*, *King Robert of Sicily* and *The King of Tars*; and 'Allegorical and Didactic Romances' like the *Roman de la Rose*.²⁹⁶

The indexes and catalogues of Middle English texts are valuable tools of research for scholars studying the corpus of texts produced in Middle English. They enable the scholar to access information regarding manuscripts, subject matters, and dates of the surviving Middle English texts. They may also list the publications related to the texts they contain. They mostly include romance texts in the corpus of other texts in Middle English, and provide scholars with new areas of research. The bibliographical and literary information in Carleton Fairchild Brown and Rossell Hope Robbins's arrangement of the *Index of Middle English Verse* provides a research tool for researchers with 4,365 entries in over 2,000 manuscripts all over Britain by listing them under their *incipits* in alphabetical order, including manuscript information and publication references for each heading. It is an expansion of Brown's *A Register of Middle English Religious and Didactic Verse*.²⁹⁷ Although they do not classify romances, but include them among other works produced in the Middle Ages, they stress the relatively low numbers of non-religious verse texts, compared to the religious works.²⁹⁸ The *Supplement to the Index of Middle English Verse*, which is the revised

²⁹⁵ This thesis concentrates on only metrical romances; however, scholars interested in prose texts may search the catalogues and indexes of Middle English prose, such as Robert E. Lewis, N. F. Blake and A. S. G. Edwards, *Index of Printed Middle English Prose* (New York: Garland, 1985); Linne R. Mooney, *The Index of Middle English Prose, Handlist XI: Manuscripts in the Library of Trinity College, Cambridge* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2007); Valerie Edden, *The Index of Middle English Prose, Handlist XV: Manuscripts in Midland Libraries* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2000); Ralph Hanna, *The Index of Middle English Prose, Handlist XII: Manuscripts in Smaller Bodleian Collections* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2007).

²⁹⁶ Harry L. D. Ward and John A. Herbert, *Catalogue of Romances in the Department of Manuscripts in the British Museum*, 3 vols (London: British Museum, 1883-1910), I (1883).

²⁹⁷ Carleton Fairchild Brown, *A Register of Middle English Religious and Didactic Verse*, 2 vols (Oxford: Bibliographical Society, 1916-20).

²⁹⁸ Carleton Fairchild Brown and Rossell Hope Robbins, *Index of Middle English Verse* (New York: Columbia University Press for Index Society, 1943), p. ix.

edition of Brown and Robbins's index, was prepared by Robbins and John L. Cutler and adds about 1,500 new entries. It re-catalogues the entries listed in the index. It provides an update for the manuscript locations and additions, corrects some errors, and includes the materials printed after 1500.²⁹⁹ Richard Frederick Sanger Hamer notes that Robbins and Cutler's indexes are invaluable; yet, they lack an index to the manuscripts cited, and he attempts to fill this gap by listing the location of each manuscript followed by smaller indexes listing printed books containing Middle English verses, missing or unidentified manuscripts in his *A Manuscript Index to the Index of Middle English Verse*.³⁰⁰ William A. Ringler's *Bibliography and Index of English Verse Printed 1476-1558* was completed by Michael Rudick and Susan J. Ringler, who prepared *Bibliography and Index of English Verse in Manuscript 1501-1558*: it examines 2,045 poems from manuscripts and printed books, two thirds of which are anonymous.³⁰¹ Julia Boffey and Anthony S. G. Edwards's recent *A New Index of Middle English Verse* removes all post-1500 and erroneous entries in the previous Brown and Robbins's *Index* and its *Supplement*, deletes the entries which do not seem to be verse, and the entries like Chaucer's *Parliament of Fowls*. It inserts new entries into the established sequence of the *Index* and its *Supplement*, provides authors' names, and indicates the genre of the entry. Unlike the *Index*, it cites the manuscripts by collection and manuscript numbers instead of only the latter. Boffey and Edwards do not include a comprehensive list of early printed editions of the manuscripts; however, they provide a separate index after the *Index to Manuscripts* to verify the 'inscriptional verses' which neither appeared in manuscript nor were printed, but were painted or incised on tombstones, walls or stained glass windows.³⁰²

There are catalogues dealing specifically with romance texts like Ward and Herbert's *Catalogue of Romances*,³⁰³ and Guddat-Figge's *Catalogue of Manuscripts Containing Middle English Romances*, which is a recent and detailed index examining

²⁹⁹ Rossell Hope Robbins and John L. Cutler, *Supplement to the Index of Middle English Verse*, (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1965), pp. xi-xiii.

³⁰⁰ Richard Frederick Sanger Hamer, *A Manuscript Index to the Index of Middle English Verse* (London: The British Library, 1995), p. 4.

³⁰¹ William A. Ringler, *Bibliography and Index of English Verse Printed, 1476-1558* (London: Mansell, 1988); William A. Ringler, Michael Rudick and Susan J. Ringler, *Bibliography and Index of English Verse in Manuscript, 1501-1558* (London: Mansell, 1992). See also Margaret Crum, ed., *First-Line Index of English Poetry, 1500-1800, in Manuscripts of the Bodleian Library, Oxford*, 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969).

³⁰² Julia Boffey and Anthony S. G. Edwards, *A New Index of Middle English Verse* (London: The British Library, 2005), pp. xii-xvi. Boffey and Edwards's *NIMEV* is particularly considered in the discussion of romance indexes due to the fact that it provides the scholars with a relatively recent and revised study of Middle English verse texts.

³⁰³ Ward and Herbert, *Catalogue of Romances*.

the manuscript layouts and contents of Middle English romances.³⁰⁴ All these indexes and catalogues are invaluable references for assessment of the Middle English verse corpus; however, they do not offer any narrative information about the romance texts. Folklorist Stith Thompson's *Motif-Index of Folk Literature* attempts to classify the motifs of medieval romances in addition to the traditional narratives of folktales, ballads, myths, fables, *exempla*, *fabliaux*, jest-books and local legends. Thompson compiles a six volume list to cover the motifs in these narratives, culled from all over the world. He makes use of twenty-three grand divisions, each of which has tens or groups of ten subdivisions to present the arrangement of particular motifs. He uses letters to list the main twenty-three motifs in alphabetical order, and uses numbers to refer to each motif's variation, followed by an expression to define the motif. He gives motif numbers for similar or occasionally confused motifs, the name of the country in which the motif usually occurs, and presents information about the collections which have this motif. His classification of the motifs begins with the mythological and the supernatural, moving towards the realistic and the humorous. He lists mythological motifs, animals, tabu, magic, the dead, marvels, ogres, tests, the wise and the foolish, deceptions, reversal of fortune, ordaining the future, chance and fate, society, rewards and punishments, captives and fugitives, unnatural cruelty, sex, the nature of life, religion, traits of characters, humour and a miscellaneous group (including formulae, symbolism, heroes, unique exceptions, horror stories, historical, genealogical or biographical motifs). He employs cross references at the beginnings of many major divisions to indicate their connections to the other parts of the work, and furnishes his index reference with books and monographs about the motifs. In the sixth volume of his study, Thompson prepares an index to his motif-index to help researchers discover a variety of motifs which may be similar or related to the motifs they are seeking.³⁰⁵

Gerald Bordman's *Motif-Index of the English Metrical Romances* is intended to fill the gaps in Thompson's *Motif-Index* by introducing new motifs, correcting its errors, and omitting some romance motifs catalogued inaccurately by Thompson. Bordman's index, differing from Thompson's comprehensive focus on various narratives, contains only metrical romances. It excludes the prose romances and romances of Chaucer and Gower. He includes *The Seven Sages of Rome* although it is excluded by Wells in *A Manual of the Writings in Middle English, 1050-1400*, which is employed by Thompson

³⁰⁴ Guddat-Figge, *Catalogue*.

³⁰⁵ Stith Thompson, *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature: A Classification of Narrative Elements in Folktales, Ballads, Myths, Fables, Medieval Romances, Exempla, Fabliaux, Jest-Books, and Local Legends*, 6 vols (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1955-58).

for the summaries of the romances in his index. Bordman also presents an alphabetic index of motifs by using keywords at the end of the motif-index. His *Motif-Index* somehow fits in Thompson's index, since he uses his twenty-three major division headings and his enumeration whilst identifying the motifs; yet, the new listings are marked by asterisks. Unlike Thompson, Bordman does not provide information about locations where these motifs originated from; yet, he includes the abbreviated names of the romances after the descriptions of the motifs. Both scholars avoid including the names of characters and places, whilst describing the handling of the motifs.³⁰⁶

This Study

Whilst all classifications, indexes and catalogues of romances enable the scholars to develop their own methodologies for their researches, it is obvious that these groupings also provide them with multiple definitions of romance. The corpus of Middle English romances also reveals the difficulty of setting parameters to the definition of romance by employing fixed categories, since each category fails to define romance satisfactorily. Furthermore, none of the romance classifications can offer a set definition of romance, since it is possible to classify each romance text in different groupings, with regard to its content and structure. This flexibility of classifications and the unique nature of each romance text (despite its affinity to several groupings) call for individual attention to each. Therefore, in this thesis the representations of pain and suffering are examined in Middle English anonymous verse romances regardless of any classifications, through inspection of individual texts, to present romance as an 'ordeal narrative'.

The study of medieval romance has proved increasingly popular, and there is a great interest in the studies of gender, chivalry, structural features, social and historical facts, and analogues of romances. In these, the subject of pain and suffering *per se* is given very little attention. This investigation of representations of pain and suffering in Middle English metrical romances is driven by the principal question of how a text of entertainment is also a text of ordeal. Romance texts are examined in order to understand the reasons for, and the reactions to, ordeals in connection with gender and faith. Villainy and victimhood are also categorized in themselves, as the morality of villainy in the former, and the submission to, or resistance against, victimhood in the latter. Conventional romance motifs related to family, chivalry, journey, divine and

³⁰⁶ Gerald Bordman, *Motif-Index of the English Metrical Romances* (Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedekatemia, 1963).

supernatural interferences are studied within the framework of their relationship to the ordeals. The study of the representations of ordeals is intended to highlight the manifestation of the painful experiences which are commonly experienced through romance characters, but not explicitly stated. Ordeal is a hidden, but a dominant issue, enriching and reinforcing the narrative in romance by attracting the audience's attention with sudden reversals of fortune. The diversity present in representations of pain and suffering exposes not only a blend of actual and fictional human experiences, but also reveals that these colourful and entertaining texts are, indeed, dressed in black and full of tears and sighs.

Although romances are mainly concerned with the experiences of courtly protagonists, they are loaded with religious references which regard suffering as a means of salvation. This stems from the fact that 'the great age of romance was also the great age of faith'.³⁰⁷ As Cooper points out:

The doctrine of salvation, in which the terrible events of the Passion and Crucifixion were made the means by which fallen mankind was restored and the bliss of heaven once more became possible, received its full theological formulation in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Romance, with its typical pattern of an opening disruption of a state of order, followed by a period of trial and suffering, even an encounter with death, yet with a final symbolic resurrection and better restoration, offers a secular equivalent to that divine order.³⁰⁸

Religious desires for repentance and salvation in romances provide evidence for the distinctive authority of religious teachings in medieval society. As Mills points out, in an 'edifying' romance, the focus is primarily on suffering and endurance, 'which comes as either a just punishment for a past sin, or because of quite gratuitous human malice; at the end of the story the hero or heroine may even achieve a measure of sanctity'.³⁰⁹ The hero's means of achieving sanctity is presented as a role model for the Christian audience listening to or reading their ordeals. Protagonists in penitential romances do not experience mutilations similar to those of Christ; however, representations of suffering are inspired by the dominant religious teachings of the medieval Church on the Passion of Christ. Through the representation of the suffering Christ, the Crucifixion has become an allegorical image for 'representing violence, pain and torture, even if Jesus's suffering on the cross were wholly fictional, the figure of the Crucifixion would

³⁰⁷ Cooper, *The English Romance in Time*, p. 5.

³⁰⁸ Cooper, *The English Romance in Time*, p. 29.

³⁰⁹ Mills, *Six Middle English Romances*, p. vii.

remain a useful device for focusing attention on the suffering of human beings' to generate an emotional response and to make people identify themselves with the suffering Christ.³¹⁰ Kent L. Brintnall explains:

The cross has been understood as a site from which to derive insight into God's perspective on human suffering. In addition, these understandings have almost always linked the human and the divine through the events of the cross. This linking goes beyond any Christian proclamation that human and divine natures meet in the person of Jesus of Nazareth; the point here is that humanity has the potential to understand something about the divine nature through the cross. This aspect of the image and the narratives that surround it mean that no Christian believer can be neutral or indifferent to the cross.³¹¹

Christ becomes an example of, and for, suffering human beings, whilst any human being becomes like Christ during suffering, by erasing the line between the two. Suffering is not only a painful experience but also a means to mend the broken relationship between humans and God, and to achieve restoration of that which was lost through Original Sin.³¹² Inevitably, these religious assumptions are reflected in the literature of the period, and a variety of devotional works were produced which placed particular emphasis on the significance of suffering in this world for the sake of eternal salvation. Therefore, a 'literature' on suffering was produced with an emphasis on how to be a good Christian by *willing* suffering in this world, to avoid suffering in the afterlife. In those exemplary works, the saints' legends are very significant, with their representations of suffering of religious men and women for the sake of their faith and their emphasis on willing suffering.³¹³ Apart from being the sufferers themselves, these religious men and women also relieve the suffering of others. As Eamon Duffy points out:

The miracle stories associated with the shrines of the saints in the fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries England opened a window of hope on a daunting world of sickness, pain and natural calamity. Men and women fled to the protection of saints from a world in which children fall from trees or tumble down wells, crawl into fires, or jump in play

³¹⁰ Kent L. Brintnall, 'Regarding the Pain of Christ: Susan Sontag at the Foot of the Cross', *Discourse*, 27.1 (2005), 119-40 (p. 129).

³¹¹ Brintnall, 'Regarding the Pain of Christ', p. 134.

³¹² Langdon Gilkey, 'The Christian Understanding of Suffering', *Buddhist-Christian Studies*, 5 (1985), 49-65 (p. 57). See also Ulrike Wiethaus, 'Christian Spirituality in the Medieval West (600-1450)', in *The Blackwell Companion to Christian Spirituality*, ed. by Arthur Holder (Singapore: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), pp. 106-21.

³¹³ Jo Ann McNamara, John E. Halborg and E. Gordon Whatley, 'Introduction', in *Sainted Women of the Dark Ages*, ed. by Jo Ann McNamara, John E. Halborg and E. Gordon Whatley (Durham: Duke University Press, 1992), pp. 1-16 (pp. 3-15).

unto sharpened sticks or untended metal spits. Workmen are crushed or ruptured by heavy loads or blinded by branches, women died in the agonies of child birth.³¹⁴

Suffering in saints' legends is 'arduous and difficult, involving not only trial and human suffering but also abnegation, renunciation, and self-sacrifice, leading not only to a knowledge of self but also to a knowledge of God'.³¹⁵ In these works, the regenerative and ennobling power of willing suffering for the sake of faith is praised, while earthly suffering is presented as a means of avoiding eternal suffering after death. These texts, describing Christian suffering and death, were treasured, and offer the Christian audience a particular self-understanding. The martyr texts script a narrative part for Christians for welcoming death. They exemplify that to 'be Christian was to suffer and die'.³¹⁶

A parallel can be seen between the images of the suffering Christ on the Cross and the chivalric conduct of a knight in medieval romances.³¹⁷ However, in romance it is not religious but noble characters who suffer, not mainly for the sake of their faith but because of the villainies of other people or because of their own mistakes. It is apparent that 'most of the secular romance heroes also provide models of behaviour to be imitated'.³¹⁸ Romance victims, with their submission or resistance to suffering, in fact represent all human beings who experience similar suffering in real life; therefore, the romance victim's experience reflects, or becomes a foil to, the reaction of an actual or potential sufferer in real life. In other words, the romance audience/reader identifies himself with the romance victim, in order to learn how to control his ordeal. This identification is essential for the realization that it is only after experiencing suffering that happiness or salvation is achieved. As in hagiography,³¹⁹ in romances:

³¹⁴ Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England, 1400-1580* (New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 2005), p. 198.

³¹⁵ Stanley C. Aston, 'The Saint in Medieval Literature', *The Modern Language Review*, 65.4 (1970), 25-62 (pp. 39-40).

³¹⁶ Judith Perkins, *The Suffering Self: Pain and Narrative Representation in the Early Christian Era* (London: Routledge, 1995), pp. 24-5.

³¹⁷ See Brewer, 'Popular English Metrical Romances', p. 62; Rosemary Woolf, 'The Theme of Christ the Lover-Knight in Medieval English Literature', *The Review of English Studies*, n.s., 13.49 (1962), 1-16 (p. 3); Elizabeth Fowler, 'The Romance Hypothetical: Lordship and the Saracens in *Sir Isumbras*', in *Spirit*, ed. by Putter and Gilbert, pp. 97-121 (p. 99); Bliss, *Naming and Namelessness*, p. 8.

³¹⁸ Childress, 'Between Romance and Legend', p. 312.

³¹⁹ For a discussion of the Passion in relation to female spirituality see Elizabeth Ann Robertson, *Early English Devotional Prose and the Female Audience* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1990), p. 38; Lynda L. Coon and Katherine J. Haldane, 'Introduction', in *That Gentle Strength: Historical Perspectives of Women in Christianity*, ed. by Lynda L. Coon, Katherine J. Haldane and Elisabeth W. Sommer (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1990), pp. 1-18 (pp. 2-4); Barbara Newman, *From Virile Woman to WomanChrist: Studies in Medieval Religion and Literature* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995), p. 3; Theresa Coletti, *Mary Magdalene and the Drama of Saints: Theatre, Gender, and Religion in Late Medieval England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), p. 1; Jennifer Bryan, *Looking Inward: Devotional Reading and Private Self in Late Medieval England*

Hero and heroine undergo nearly all of their culture's most dreaded experiences, [and] [t]hey encounter burials alive, shipwrecks, capture by pirates, purchase as slaves, one disaster on top of another, only to emerge unscathed, unchanged, ready to reenter their society once again just as if nothing has happened to them. The implicit message of romance is clear, [...] pain and hardship did not matter. It is a moral for self understanding, a self immune to the effects of pain and suffering.³²⁰

Yet, 'a saint suffers martyrdom and is rewarded in heaven, while his knightly counterpart retrieves his fortunes and enjoys the remainder of his life in comfort and security'.³²¹ Although the romance hero achieves self-realization by means of suffering, he mostly suffers in order to become either a perfect knight or to gain revenge on his victimizers, while the main motivation for suffering in a hagiography is to defend the faith. Moreover, '[r]omance projected as its goal an ideal human community without suffering. Hagiography constructs a human community focused on suffering and made up of sufferers'.³²² The comparison between the handling of pain and suffering in both genres exposes the fact that representations of pain and suffering are apparent in both secular and religious writings of the period, and the experiences of suffering in romances are secular 'alternatives' to those in hagiography.

Apart from the religious motivation for *willingness* to undergo suffering in some romances, romance characters mostly suffer for secular reasons such as jealousy, treason and false accusation. As Michel-André Bossy indicates, '[b]ody and soul debates can be thematically divided into two categories: either the Soul argues with the Body from a position of moral superiority or it shares guilt with the Body', and deserves the blame.³²³ Romance sufferers experience suffering due to the fact that their body and soul share the guilt. Several of them suffer willingly in order to repent of their sins, to ask for God's forgiveness or to punish themselves; however, most of them suffer for the sake of reunion with their lovers, to prove themselves as worthy knights, to regain their noble status and to reclaim their wealth (or to gain wealth and status which they did not initially possess). Rather than victims of God, romance victims are either victims of their own mistakes and sins, or victims of the villainous characters in their households or environment.

(Philadelphia: University Press of Pennsylvania, 2008), p. 110; Emma Campbell, *Medieval Saints' Lives: The Gift, Kingship and Community in Old French Hagiography* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2008), p. 92.

³²⁰ Perkins, *The Suffering Self*, p. 90.

³²¹ Hopkins, *The Sinful Knights*, pp. 77-8.

³²² Perkins, *The Suffering Self*, p. 208.

³²³ Michel-André Bossy, 'Medieval Debates of Body and Soul', *Comparative Literature*, 28.2 (1976), 144-63 (p. 145).

Romances mainly make use of pain and suffering to invest in life and redemption on earth, while they continually remind their audience of the religious significance of patience during ordeals. Romance protagonists undergo destruction, lose dignity, and suffer physically and emotionally. As a result, they realize that the world is threatening and hostile, whilst they also experience the fact that even if they are privileged in society, they are still vulnerable and circumscribed. However, through these ordeals, they realize that ‘great achievement comes only with great suffering, that nobility of character needs testing in the furnace of affliction’.³²⁴ Suffering is presented as a means of achieving a happy ending as well as a means of teaching that ‘by suffering, man can learn wisdom’.³²⁵ As Paul Murray argues:

Suffering [...] is destructive and heartbreaking. But it also can break open, like almost nothing else, the shell of our ego. Suffering is a teacher like no other, and it is a hard teacher. [...] [B]ut our *experience* is—that God in time can use this lesson we are learning to liberate us from our bondage [...] and initiate us into an awareness of reality.³²⁶

Whilst raising this awareness, romance makes use of its ‘self-referentiality’, by representing ‘realistic’ life stories and presenting them in a fictional setting, and by the use of fictional characters who think, feel and respond not unlike people in real life.³²⁷ The romance heightens the drama of these events by introducing fantasy settings, past settings, and royal courts. The romance audience/reader empathizes with the suffering romance protagonist by shattering himself in the victim’s destructed world, and witnessing the process of his restoration. The victim’s survival process is a form of catharsis for the audience, who can reinvent themselves through it, although they do not actually experience the ordeals personally.³²⁸ This cathartic experience provides them with an understanding of the divine, and the more the victim suffers, the more the audience/reader achieves self-realization, the knowledge of their own susceptibility to temptation, trial and the actions of others, and to the general insufficiency of being a human being.

This thesis is founded upon an exploration of representations of pain and suffering within the corpus of the anonymous (*Libeaus Desconus*, *Lay le Freine* and *Sir*

³²⁴ Francis A. Sullivan, ‘Virgil and the Mystery of Suffering’, *The American Journal of Philology*, 90.2 (1969), 161-77 (p. 177).

³²⁵ Sullivan, ‘Virgil’, p. 162.

³²⁶ Paul Murray, ‘The Task of Happiness: A Reflection on Human Suffering and Christian Joy’, *Logos*, 4.4 (2001), 11-32 (p. 21).

³²⁷ Liu, ‘Middle English Romance’, pp. 347-8.

³²⁸ Richard Kearney, ‘Narrating Pain: The Power of Catharsis’, *Paragraph*, 30.1 (2007), 51-66 (pp. 54-5).

Launfal have uncertain authorship)³²⁹ and non-Arthurian Middle English verse romances. It excludes the romances written by named and well-known authors like John Gower, John Lydgate and Geoffrey Chaucer due to the fact that each has a recognizably discrete and distinctive corpus of work.³³⁰ The poetic practice of these writers is commonly studied in its own corpus, focusing on the individual writer's handling and presentation of romance and its motifs. Although not included in this study, which concentrates on 'anonymous' and 'miscellaneous' works, it is to be hoped that studies of these famous Middle English writers will benefit from comparison with the work offered here.

Arthurian romances are likewise excluded, since the corpus of the Arthurian material is a very distinctive group in itself, with sub-corpus of Gawain, Perceval, Tristrem, Lancelot, Merlin and Arthur. Each sub-cycle of the Arthurian romances is usually studied within, and by comparison with the texts of the Arthurian cycles. Barron points out that:

[E]ven within the limited Arthurian corpus in English, his protean image is mirrored in a bewildering variety of forms: texts in prose and verse, in a few dozen lines and in many thousands, some in the simple linear structure of folktale and others as elaborately interlaced as their French exemplars, many patently derivative and a few highly original.³³¹

Again, it is hoped that this thesis will furnish Arthurian scholars with a tool to enable further research.

There are two texts included in this thesis which are controversial in their generic classification. *The Seven Sages of Rome* which exemplifies this, was transmitted to Europe from the East, probably from a fifth-century Indian or an eighth-century

³²⁹ For a discussion of Thomas Chestre's authorship see Trounce, 'English Tail-Rhyme Romances'. Trounce believes that verbal similarities are not enough to establish a common authorship and he objects to the attribution of *Sir Launfal* and *Lybeaus Desconus* to Chestre since both romances are different in style (p. 195); Maldwyn Mills, 'The Composition and Style of the Southern *Octovian*, *Sir Launfal*, and *Libeaus Desconus*', *Medium Ævum*, 31 (1962), 88-109. Mills notes that there is no evidence that the romances attributed to Chestre were composed simultaneously since there are linguistic and structural differences in them, and he suggests that the simultaneous composition of these romances 'must remain no more than a plausible theory' (p. 109); Putter, 'Introduction', pp. 1-38. Putter stresses that Chestre's surname was so common in the Middle Ages that his identification as the author of *Lybeaus Desconus*, *Sir Launfal*, and *Octovian* (Southern version) remains speculative (p. 13).

³³⁰ Nancy Mason Bradbury, 'Chaucerian Minstrelsy: *Sir Thopas*, *Troilus and Criseyde* and English Metrical Romance', in *Tradition and Transformation*, ed. by Field, pp. 115-24 (p. 116). For a discussion of Chaucer's use of the generic romance elements see Derek Brewer, 'The Relationship of Chaucer to the English and European Traditions', in *Chaucer and Chaucerians: Critical Studies in Middle English*, ed. by Derek Brewer (London: Nelson, 1966), pp. 1-38; Barry Windeatt, 'Troilus and the Disenchantment of Romance', in *Studies*, ed. by Brewer, pp. 129-47.

³³¹ William R. J. Barron, 'Arthurian Romance', in *A Companion to Romance*, ed. by Saunders, pp. 65-84 (p. 63).

Arabic version. It became popular on the continent in several languages like Latin, French, Greek, Swedish, Dutch and English.³³² Killis Campbell suggests the text was derived from Hebrew and transmitted to Europe in the twelfth century when romances became popular in France, when it was adapted to European history and legend.³³³ The Middle English versions of it exist in nine manuscripts written between the fourteenth and the sixteenth centuries.³³⁴ Guddat-Figge does not include the text among romances in the *Catalogue*, although it exists in Cambridge, Cambridge University Library, MS Ff.2.38, which contains many religious texts and romances. John Jaunzems believes that classifying it as a romance ‘invites the reader to approach it with the wrong set of expectations’.³³⁵ Loomis defines it as ‘a collection of tales rather than a romance’.³³⁶ She believes that it is closer to *fabliau* and *exemplum*, classifying it among other romance texts by pointing out the romance analogues in four of the tales framed in the main text.³³⁷ It is accepted as a didactic work by Wendy Clein,³³⁸ an *exemplum* by Kane because of its discussion of conflicting moral points.³³⁹ Piero Boitani believes it is a moral secular *exemplum* intermingled with female shrewdness through the character of the Empress who brings the text close to comic mode.³⁴⁰

Although it is regarded as an *exemplum* and ‘a collection of tales within a tale’;³⁴¹ the text is also included in several modern editions.³⁴² Thomas Wright calls it a ‘romance’;³⁴³ George Watson puts it among ‘Miscellaneous romances’ in his

³³² Loomis, *Medieval Romance in England*, pp. 174-9.

³³³ *The Seven Sages of Rome*, ed. by Killis Campbell (Boston: Ginn & Company, 1907), pp. xvii- xxii.

³³⁴ Campbell lists these manuscripts: London, British Library, MS Cotton Galba E.ix; Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Rawlinson Poetry 175; Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, MS Advocates 19.2.1 (Auchinleck MS); London, British Library, MS Arundel 140; London, British Library, MS Egerton 1995; Oxford, Library of Balliol College, MS 354; Cambridge, Cambridge University Library, MS Ff.2.38; Cambridge, Cambridge University Library, MS Dd.I.17; Malahide Castle, Library of Lord Talbot de Malahide, MS Asloan (p. xxxvi).

³³⁵ John Jaunzems, ‘Structure and Meaning in *The Seven Sages of Rome*’, in *Studies on the ‘Seven Sages of Rome’ and Other Essays in Medieval Literature*, ed. by H. Niedzielski, H. R. Runte and W. L. Hendrickson (Honolulu: Educational Research Associates, 1978), pp. 43-62 (p. 46).

³³⁶ Loomis, *Medieval Romance in England*, p. 174.

³³⁷ Loomis, *Medieval Romance in England*, pp. 180-1.

³³⁸ Wendy Clein, *Concepts of Chivalry in ‘Sir Gawain and the Green Knight’* (Norman: Pilgrim Books, 1987), pp. 33-4.

³³⁹ Kane, *Middle English Literature*, p. 61.

³⁴⁰ Piero Boitani, *English Medieval Narrative in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries*, trans. by Joan Krakover Hall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp. 116-7.

³⁴¹ Albert E. Hartung, gen. ed., *A Manual of the Writings in Middle English, 1050-1500*, 11 vols (New Haven: Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1967-2005), IX: *Proverbs, Precepts, and Monitory Pieces; English Mystical Writings; Tales*, ed. by Cameron Louis and others (1993), pp. 3272-3, 3561-3.

³⁴² See, Weber, *Metrical Romances*, I, 3-153; Ellis, *Specimens*, pp. 23-101; French and Hale, *Middle English Metrical Romances*, pp. 759-85.

³⁴³ Thomas Wright, ‘Introduction to *The Seven Sages*’, in *Percy Society: The Early English Poetry, Ballads, and Popular Literature of the Middle Ages*, 30 vols (London: C. Richards, 1840-52), XVI: *The Seven Sages in English Verse*, ed. by Thomas Wright (1845), pp. i-lxxii (p. i).

bibliography,³⁴⁴ and Bordman lists the text as a romance in his index.³⁴⁵ The text has romance affiliations, since it has conventional romance motifs such as the Empress who is a threat to the familial lineage and the succession of the rightful heir to the throne, and the victim who is a deprived boy struggling to win his heritage. Besides, as Jill Whitelock points out, the text is preserved among romances in several manuscripts like Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, MS Advocates 19.2.1 (Auchinleck MS) and Cambridge, Cambridge University Library, MS Ff.2.38, which reinforces its romance affiliation.³⁴⁶ Cooper claims that the text has ‘a powerful frame story that could exist in its own right as a romance’.³⁴⁷ Geraldine Barnes regards it as a romance, since ‘its *modus operandi* of counsel and strategy gives it a place among romances’.³⁴⁸ The text has aristocratic personages, and the tales narrated in the text reveal the Empress’s deception and false accusation of her stepson, rather than simply collecting different tales within the main frame story. It is a romance and frame-tale hybrid in which a romance forms the frame, and the frame-tale convention serves to highlight the romance motifs of deception, treason and false accusation. Therefore, *The Seven Sages of Rome* is regarded as a romance for the purposes of this thesis.

Joseph was a well-known figure in the Middle Ages due to his association with the Holy Grail and his being the person who took down the body of Christ from the Cross. In Finlayson’s words:

Joseph of Armathie, which deals with the early, pre-Arthurian history of the grail, is largely no more than pious legend, but in the section dealing with the King of Babylon’s invasion of Evalak’s realm it is fitfully successful in uniting legendary history with the concepts and attitudes of the romance of adventure.³⁴⁹

Although Joseph is not a knight, he acts like a knight to defend and spread his faith, and to glorify it by victory against non-Christians. In this respect, Joseph is not different from Richard Coer de Lyon, King Alisaunder, Roland and the other romance heroes who fight to defend and glorify their faith. Moreover, *Joseph of Aramathie* is included in this study since it provides a comparison to *Robert of Cisyle*, which is a secular

³⁴⁴ George Watson, ed., *The New Cambridge Bibliography of English Literature*, 5 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969-77), I: 600-1660, ed. by George Watson (1974), pp. 453-4.

³⁴⁵ Bordman, *Motif-Index*, p. 15.

³⁴⁶ *The Seven Sages of Rome (Midland Version)*, ed. by Jill Whitelock, EETS o.s., 324 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. xv-xvi.

³⁴⁷ Helen Cooper, *The Structure of ‘The Canterbury Tales’* (London: University of Georgia Press, 1983), p. 24.

³⁴⁸ Geraldine Barnes, *Counsel and Strategy in Middle English Romance* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1993), p. 117.

³⁴⁹ Finlayson, ‘Definitions of Middle English Romance’, p. 175.

romance with hagiographical connotations. *Joseph of Aramathie*, in subject matter, is close to hagiography; yet, like *Robert of Cisyle*, the secular and religious division of the text is loose and flexible. Therefore, although their definition as romance is dubious like that of the romance genre itself, both *The Seven Sages of Rome* and *Joseph of Aramathie* are accepted as romances, along with *Robert of Cisyle*, and thus are included in the discussion of the representation of ordeals.

This thesis consists of five chapters, followed by an index in the appendix. The first chapter covers representations of ‘domestic’ villains (mother, father, daughter, son, mother-in-law, stepmother), ‘stranger’ villains from outside the victims’ immediate family (stewards, allies, friends, unknown people, Christians, Saracens, Jews, unwanted Christian and Saracen suitors and commoners). The reasons for their villainies are studied in detail. Villains are grouped as ‘pure’ villains who are inherently evil, ‘justified’ villains who have a stated reason to be evil, ‘catalyst’ villains who move the plot despite their insignificance, and who appear briefly in a secondary and supportive role, and ‘good’ villains who are unintended villains. At the end of each grouping, the fates of villains (divine punishment, physical and psychological punishment, no punishment, possibility of redemption) are studied in terms of poetic and divine justice.

The second and the third chapters are related to the first, as they concern the victims of the villains mentioned in the first chapter. The second chapter studies ‘Female Victims’ and the third chapter focuses on ‘Male Victims’. Victims of ‘domestic’ and ‘stranger’ villains are studied in relation to their reactions to suffering, either as ‘submissive’ victims who submit without struggle or who accept fate, or as ‘resisting’ victims who show some kind of verbal or physical resistance, in addition to ‘self-victimizers’ who mostly go into voluntary exile in order to punish themselves. ‘Domestic’ and ‘stranger’ relievers of suffering are also studied, in addition to suffering’s rewards for both sexes - that is, what they achieve at the end of their suffering.

In the fourth chapter, representations of journey, exile, quest and pilgrimage are studied as the means for suffering. It examines why a person takes a journey, is exiled, goes on a quest or a pilgrimage, and how expulsion, banishment, or prolonged separation from one’s homeland make him/her suffer. It is also concerned with the nature of the changes a traveller, pilgrim, an exiled or questing person experiences during and at the end of his experience. These displacements appear as separation, alienation and seeking redemption. Though suffering is inherent in experiencing them, they are also represented as opportunities for change and growth for the victims.

The fifth chapter provides a discussion comparing divine intrusion as a relief of suffering (through appearance of angels and religious figures, prophetic dreams foretelling suffering and reliefs, miraculous healings and miscellaneous extraordinary phenomena) with the interference of supernatural or fairy beings and happenings as reasons for and reliefs of suffering. Divine and supernatural interventions are compared, and the supernatural world is presented as an alternative to the mortals' world. The role of God is substituted by the role of supernatural beings and objects. Bargains between mortals and supernatural beings, the function of enchantment, visits to fairy lands, omens, encounters with giants and dragons, and magical objects are examined in relation to their function as initiators and relievers of suffering.

The index included in the thesis appendix is also intended to serve as a research tool for scholars researching ordeals in Middle English romance texts, or romances in general. The motif indexes prepared by Thompson and Bordman list the motifs in extant romance texts as characters, objects, and incidents. However, Thompson's index is not specifically concerned with romance motifs, but with a variety of genres, and like Bordman's index, it does not (as does this index) focus on a particular motif or theme. They, rather, present a general list of romance motifs. The Suffering Theme Index presented at the end of this thesis, unlike Thompson and Bordman's indexes, attempts to designate the conventional romance characters and circumstances with particular relation to representations of suffering.

The distinct utility of an index of motifs related to suffering is its presenting familiar content in an orderly framework. The index lists villains, victims and motivations behind ordeals, and presents an outline for the discussion of these issues. It classifies and identifies characters and circumstances to enable quick access and comparison, by presenting their similarities and differences, and reveals the richness of romance representations of the ordeal through thematically related groupings. The list of relevant themes assists the user of the index in interpreting romance events and characters in relation to the main idea of ordeal, and in developing their understanding of variants and types of pain and suffering in romance representations. Characters and circumstances circulating in medieval romances are catalogued in the index with an emphasis on their relation to suffering, how they are represented as a means of suffering either by inciting, relieving or ending it. Noble characters as protagonists may have different names; yet, why they suffer and how they overcome their suffering does not change enormously. The index treats suffering as its major focus, relating it to conventional romance motifs. Main headings are given numbers, and their sub-groups

are assigned letters, which are occasionally divided numerically in order to create more specific sub-groups. The index has thirteen major headings. Each heading has subheadings, and most of the subheadings also have subdivisions. Thompson and Bordman's major headings are partially made use of, but they have been modified and adapted to the survey of the suffering theme. The major headings are children, commoners, divine intrusions, dreams, endings with revelations, journeys, punishments and rewards, religion, relievers of suffering, supernatural intrusions, taboos, tests, and victimizers. The names of the romances under each heading are arranged alphabetically, disregarding initial definite or indefinite articles. Each entry includes the romance's name, then a basic description in relation to a character, a circumstance or an action. Bibliographical, editorial and manuscript details are excluded to keep the focus only on the representations of ordeals in romances, although each text's reference number from the *New Index of Middle English Verse* (which does provide all of these) is given in the index, in order to facilitate further research into these elements.

The 'Correspondences between Romances and Numerations' section at the end of the index lists the related suffering motifs in each romance itself. It is intended to be a 'short cut' to enable the researcher to find motifs without searching each title separately in the motif index. Through this, it is possible to find each motif easily in the index by tracking the numbers, and relating them to the titles in the index.

Chapter One: Angelic Demons and Demonic Angels: Representations of Villains in Middle English Metrical Romances

Most medieval English verse romances are contained in relatively unpretentious unbound volumes, a fact which makes their survival unpredictable (and raises questions concerning what may, or may not, have been lost), since their preservation was arbitrary due to the loss of manuscripts or their heavy usage.³⁵⁰ However, copies provide readers with many examples of stereotypical and individualized representations of villains. These characters, their motivations and their activities demonstrated to the romance audience how to recognize and to survive potential villainy on earth. Despite their fictional elements, romances are full of ‘realistic’ details, especially in their representations of human relationships. Therefore, a study of villains in the Middle English metrical romances reveals what makes a villain, how a villain relates to his victim, the reasons for and results of his villainy, and how society experienced villainy during the Middle Ages.

As Joanne A. Charbonneau and Désirée Cromwell suggest, romance ‘is not a genre of simple-minded adherence to a chivalric *ethos* but rather one that allows slipperiness and an intense recognition of accepted values and gendered roles’.³⁵¹ By examining, and expanding on this definition, this chapter provides a detailed comparison and classification of villains in accordance with their gender, class and faith, in order to reveal in what sense they are presented as types, or as individual characters with subverted values. The villains serve to reveal the binaries between ‘us’ and ‘them’, ‘Christian’ and ‘heathen’, ‘humane’ and ‘inhumane’, ‘victimizer’ and ‘victim’. Conventional romance motifs such as false accusers, traitors, corrupt Christian nobles and Saracens are studied in relation to their roles as villains. Villains are grouped as ‘domestic’ villains - including villainous mothers, fathers, daughters, sons, mothers-in-law, stepmothers; and ‘stranger’ villains such as wicked stewards, commoners, Christian allies, friends, Saracen rulers or suitors and persons formerly unknown to the protagonists. Villains are presented from domestic to stranger, male to female, Saracen/Jewish to Christian, commoner to aristocrat. Meanwhile, comparisons are made to classify the reasons for villainy and to differentiate pure villains who are inherently evil, those who have reason to be evil, those who are merely catalysts and those who are

³⁵⁰ Field, ‘Romance in England’, p. 169; Brewer, ‘Popular English Metrical Romances’, p. 51; Simon Horobin, ‘The Professionalization of Writing’, in *The Oxford Handbook*, ed. by Treharne and Walker, pp. 57-67 (pp. 57-8).

³⁵¹ Joanne A. Charbonneau and Désirée Cromwell, ‘Gender and Identity in Popular Romance’, in *A Companion*, ed. by Radulescu and Rushton, pp. 96-110 (p. 99).

unintended villains ('good' villains). Each category of villains concludes with a study of the fates of these villains, their divine, physical and psychological punishment, lack of punishment or the possibility of their redemption.

There are various kinds of subject matter in romances - such as subjects from English history, secularized legends or even long-drawn-out anecdotes, often of a very moral character. Moreover, the range seems to have widened steadily and included stories that were not primarily concerned with knighthood at all.³⁵² This variety in characterization is also apparent in representations of villains. Romance heroes and heroines are mostly victims of these villains, so the villains are not generally the protagonists in the romances (they are not what we might call 'antiheroes'). Their characters are not developed in detail and their existence is presented as a means of initiating the suffering of the protagonists, whose psychological and physical pains and suffering are the main focus of the stories. In all categories of villainy, male villains predominate over the female; yet, surprisingly the number of domestic 'pure' female villains exceeds the number of the 'pure' male villains. 'Pure' is used to stress that they are 'inherently evil' and their villainy is the only real characteristic allowed to these victimizers, which also implies that their function within the story is restricted purely to villainy. Villainous women in the household, despite their angelic pretensions, are demonic and more dangerous than 'stranger' villains. They are mothers, stepmothers, daughters, wives and mostly mothers-in-law, who pretend innocence until their villainy is revealed. They are stereotypically presented as jealous, uncaring, false accusers, adulterous, blinded with desire for power, pretending innocence. They are 'outsiders' inside the family whose villainy remains unrevealed until the very end of the story, when they are mostly punished.

'Pure' female domestic villains are all noble Christian women who desire power either for themselves or for their children, and they achieve it by disempowering their husbands, stepchildren or daughters-in-law through false accusations. The villainous mother-in-law figures in romances developed from folk tales,³⁵³ and their role as the protective mother figure is subverted into that of a victimizer of their innocent daughters-in-law, in addition to being a denier of the social and political positions of their grandchildren.³⁵⁴ The evil representation of the mother-in-law figures splits the

³⁵² Mehl, *The Middle English Romances*, p. 15.

³⁵³ Ramsey, *Chivalric Romances*, p. 183; Jennifer Ward, *Women in England in the Middle Ages* (London: Hambledon Continuum, 2006), p. 42.

³⁵⁴ Angela Florschuetz, 'Women's Secrets: Childbirth, Pollution, and Purification in Northern *Octavian*', *Studies in the Age of Chaucer*, 30 (2008), 235-68 (p. 248).

mother image into two opposed halves, by putting the mothers-in-law on the evil side in opposition to loving and gentle mothers who care for their children.³⁵⁵ The evil mothers-in-law manipulate the innocence and weakness of their family members, break the trust between them, and abuse husbands, stepchildren or daughters-in-law by pretending innocence but destroying them. Stepmothers break fathers' trust in their children, mothers-in-law break the trust of their sons in their wives, and once the tie of trust is broken their victim is vulnerable not only to the villain's victimization but also that of others in whom he trusts. The villains abuse en/trusted and protective people as co-victimizers, in order to victimize their main victims more easily and to make them suffer more, as the victim is left without protection and trust. They use 'mediator victims' rather than acting effectively on their own. Some of them function as 'catalysts', because they initiate suffering for the victim at the beginning of the romances and then disappear or are rarely mentioned, reappearing towards the very end of the story, when their villainy is revealed, and in most cases, they are suitably punished.

In stories such as *Octovian*, *Emaré*, and *Cheuelere Assigne*, having a suitable heir makes it easier for the wicked mothers-in-law to accuse their daughters-in-law, by involving their sons in the victimization of their wives. Fellows observes that, 'the more active the mother's part, at least in the initiation of events, the more likely she is to be in some degree the villain'.³⁵⁶ The Empress's mother-in-law is evil because she has 'a will of her own'.³⁵⁷ She is represented in contrast with the innocent Empress who has no will of her own and who submits to misfortunes patiently. Her active involvement in events for her self-interest makes her not only a powerful, but a villainous woman. In terms of medieval hegemony, the one is the other. In the wider context of this survey, this type of villain has the effect of 'closing down' the debate and emphasizing the good/evil dichotomy. What is interesting about these romances is that so many villains are not 'pure' at all.

The subversion of the mother figure into a jealous and dangerous victimizer leaves the daughters-in-law lonely, unsupported and vulnerable to the false accusations of their mothers-in-law. The mother-in-law in *Octovian* makes use of adultery to accuse

³⁵⁵ Derek G. Neal, *The Masculine Self in Late Medieval England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), p. 205.

³⁵⁶ Jennifer Fellows, 'Mothers in Middle English Romances', in *Women and Literature in Britain, 1150-1500*, ed. by Carol M. Meale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 41-60 (pp. 43-4).

³⁵⁷ David Salter, 'Born to Thralldom and Penance': Wives and Mothers in Middle English Romance', in *Writing Gender and Genre in Medieval Literature: Approaches to Old and Middle English Texts*, ed. by Elaine M. Trehearne (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2002), pp. 41-60 (p. 50).

her daughter-in-law. She claims that her twin sons have been born as the result of an adulterous affair with a servant. The accusation of adultery provides the mother-in-law with the opportunity to trick her own son into believing his wife's infidelity, which results in the banishment of the Empress with her twin sons. Similarly, the mother-in-law in *Emaré*, who is 'mirroring the wicked father and also providing the figure of the missing dysfunctional parent'³⁵⁸ substitutes for Emaré's dead mother; yet, the mother-in-law is purely villainous in her attempt to victimize Emaré. Despite Emaré's father Sir Artyus's repentance of his incestuous desire after Emaré's exile, the wicked mother-in-law has no remorse for her villainy.³⁵⁹ Ross G. Arthur observes that:

[G]ood and the evil characters in the story reveal their natures and even pass judgement on themselves by their responses to Emaré's beauty. The good see it as an outward sign of her inward personal worth [...] the bad see it as a thing in itself, and respond with either sinful love or sinful hate.³⁶⁰

The mother-in-law's inner villainy exposes a hatred, which is already present in her; therefore, she treats Emaré cruelly. When she cannot avoid her son's marriage to Emaré:

Another lettur she lette make,
That men sholde the lady take,
And lede her out of towne,
And putte her into the see,
In that robe of ryche ble,
The lytyll chylde her wyth;³⁶¹

She uses a forged letter in her son's name to separate the couple by falsely accusing Emaré of giving birth to a monstrous child, and then pretends that her *son* has ordered Emaré's exile. She victimizes not only her daughter-in-law but also her own son by separating him from his family. Like Emaré's mother-in-law, the mother-in-law Matabryne in *Cheuelere Assigne* falsely accuses her daughter-in-law Beatrice of giving birth to whelps, because of her jealousy of Beatrice's children's establishment in the

³⁵⁸ Marijane Osborn, *Romancing the Goddess: Three Middle English Romances about Women* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1998), p. 29.

³⁵⁹ Anne Laskaya, 'The Rhetoric of Incest in the Middle English *Emaré*', in *Violence against Women in Medieval Texts*, ed. by Anna Roberts (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1998), pp. 97-114 (p. 108).

³⁶⁰ Ross G. Arthur, 'Emaré's Cloak and Audience Response', in *Sign, Sentence, Discourse: Language in Medieval Thought and Literature*, ed. by Julian N. Wasserman and Lois Roney (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1989), pp. 80-92 (p. 84).

³⁶¹ *Emaré*, in *Six Middle English Romances*, ed. by Mills, pp. 46-74, (p. 62), lines 586-91. All references are to this edition, cited by Mills's page and line number.

family succession. She urges her son to burn his wife and sends her servant Marcus to drown her grandchildren:

And seyde, 'þou moste kepe counselle & helpe what þou may:
The fyrste grymme watur þat þou to comeste,
Looke þou caste hem þer-In & lete hym forthe slyppe³⁶²

Matabryne, like the other mother-in-law figures in these romances, chooses villainy by her own free will, as if making an alliance with the devil.³⁶³ In all three romances, the mothers-in-law pretend that their daughters-in-law are 'outsiders within the family' and accuse their children of being the products of monstrous births. They cleverly make use of the false accusation of adultery and the concept of a monstrous birth, presenting it as a 'monstrous' invasion of the family. Their so-called concern about the birth of their grandchildren originates from the idea of conception in the Middle Ages. It was believed that only children born during the marriage counted as potential heirs.³⁶⁴ The birth of more than one child made people suspicious of the conception of the children and of their possible illegitimacy, that a lover might have been involved in the conception apart from the husband.³⁶⁵ The purity of the bloodline would be contaminated if an illegitimate heir succeeded to the throne since 'the offspring fails to conform to elite social expectations'.³⁶⁶ The wicked mothers-in-law make use of this argument to victimize their daughters-in-law, by stating falsely that the children born in that union must be destroyed, along with the mother. In such cases, the romance writers appear to concede the view that more than one child may be conceived on the same occasion, troubling the claimed hegemony of the former belief.

Mothers-in-law and stepmothers, despite victimizing their daughters-in-law and stepsons, are not as strong as they are represented, because their empowerment is possible only by victimizing another *woman* in their family. They are not strong enough to effectively challenge a man in order to empower themselves; they remain the weaker sex physically and socially, even in their household. They compensate for their lack of physical power by practising verbal power (including the clandestine manipulation of

³⁶² *The Romance of the Cheuelere Assigne*, ed. by Henry H. Gibbs, EETS e.s., 6 (London: Trübner, 1868), p. 3, lines 50-2. All references are to this edition, cited by Gibbs's page and line number.

³⁶³ Diane Speed, 'The Pattern of Providence in *Chevelere Assigne*', in *Romance Reading on the Book: Essays on Medieval Narrative Presented to Maldwyn Mills*, ed. by Jennifer Fellows and others (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1996), pp. 143-54 (p. 149).

³⁶⁴ Ward, *Women*, p. 45.

³⁶⁵ Margaret Schlauch, *Chaucer's Constance and Accused Queens* (New York: New York University Press, 1927; repr. New York: Gordian Press, 1969), p. 89.

³⁶⁶ Alcuin Blamires, 'The Twin Demons of Aristocratic Society in *Sir Gowther*', in *Pulp Fictions*, ed. by McDonald, pp. 44-62 (p. 50).

the written word, legitimately the preserve of men). Their cunning and persuasive speech makes them convincing and helps them to abuse sons or husbands, in order to victimize their wives or children. The false accusation of ‘monstrous birth’, which the mothers-in-law make use of in accusing their daughters-in-law, in fact mirrors their own ‘monstrosity’ by means of which they seek to empower themselves. They are themselves the ‘monstrous invader’ of the family. Their making use of enchantments to victimize their stepchildren, on the other hand, reveals their inability to empower themselves by ‘natural’, or non-supernatural, means.

Putting out a false accusation is the easiest way of victimizing, which is also made use of by stepmothers. Contrary to the personal empowerment of mothers-in-law, the reason for stepmothers’ villainy is also to empower their own children. Even if their intention of protecting their own children’s interest makes them ‘good parents’, they are bad examples for society.³⁶⁷ Their maternal concern pretends to be innocent; yet, their means of achieving it is villainous. They abuse their husbands while accusing their stepsons by breaking the trust between the fathers and the sons. They leave their stepsons lonely, vulnerable and defenceless by pretending that they are the stepsons’ victims. In *Generydes*, Auferius’s wife Serenydes is not only unfaithful to her husband but also a liar, who pretends that Auferius’s son Generydes has hurt her when *she* fails to seduce *him*:

‘It is,’ quod she, that fals Generydes,
Be cause he myght not haue his will of me;
ffor by noo prayour he wold neuer sese,
But thus he hath arayed me as ye se.’³⁶⁸

Similarly, the Empress in *The Seven Sages of Rome* falsely accuses her stepson Florentyne of attempting to ravish her, and of committing treason against his father, because of her jealousy of the son’s wisdom and his future succession to the throne after his father’s death:

For j me drad, sayde she,
That [h]e shulde dystrye me
Whenne that he to age come,
And take fro me the Emperice of Rome;

³⁶⁷ Noël James Menuge, ‘A Few Home Truths: The Medieval Mother as Guardian in Romance and Law’, in *Medieval Women and the Law*, ed. by Noël James Menuge (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2000), pp. 77-103 (p. 103).

³⁶⁸ *Generydes, A Romance in Seven-Line Stanzas*, ed. by W. Aldis Wright, EETS o.s., 55 (London: Trübner, 1878), p. 17, lines 512-5. All references are to this edition, cited by Wright’s page and line number.

Therefore hit was alle in my thought
 Hym to dethe ha[u]e jbrought.³⁶⁹

In addition to accusing him falsely, the Empress casts a week-long spell on Florentyne, which will kill him if he speaks. By trapping Florentyne in between silence and death, the Empress makes judicial use of his muteness to accuse him since ‘in cases of high treason, standing mute resulted of itself in a judgement of guilty and a death sentence’.³⁷⁰ While the seven sages struggle to avoid Florentyne’s execution by his father through their tales during Florentyne’s silence, she makes use of her persuasive verbal skill and tells contrary tales, full of descriptions of villainous sons. Several critics note that her tales are full of linguistic puzzles, negative portrayals of women and figures of emperors, which reflect the malign counsel and treachery of the Empress herself.³⁷¹ She pretends that not only the Emperor, but she herself will be the sufferer if his son is not killed. On the other hand, she likens herself to a dishonoured woman because of the alleged rape, and she claims she will suffer if Florentyne is not slain because she will be hanged after he is enthroned. She *pretends* to suffer because her husband does not pay attention to her warnings, and is thus (she claims) preparing future suffering for both him and her.

Like the Empress in *The Seven Sages of Rome*, the stepmother in *William of Palerne* makes use of enchantment alone to prevent her stepson’s enthronement. Her attempt, for Mengue, indicates ‘the helplessness of mothers and stepmothers as second wives in feudal society’.³⁷² However, although her helplessness makes her a victim, her victimizing an innocent boy so that her own son would not suffer makes her a villain instead of a victim. The Queen Braunden is afraid of Alphonse’s being the heir after his father the King of Spain; therefore, she enchants him and changes him into a werewolf to make her own son the heir to the throne. She thinks:

I haue þe gretli a-gelt to god ich am a-knowe,
 for redili þe to reue þi rizt eritage;
 þat þis man min owne sone miȝt it haue hadde

³⁶⁹ *The Seven Sages of Rome (Southern Version)*, ed. by Karl Brunner, EETS o.s., 191 (London: Oxford University Press, 1933), p. 189, lines 3520-5. Brunner’s page and line numbers are retained.

³⁷⁰ Ojars Kratins, ‘Treason in Middle English Metrical Romances’, *Philological Quarterly*, 45.4 (1966), 668-87 (pp. 675-6).

³⁷¹ Cynthia Ho, ‘Framed Progeny: The Medieval Descendants of Shaharizad’, *Medieval Perspectives*, 7 (1992), 91-107 (p. 93); Barnes, *Counsel and Strategy*, p. 118; Katya Skow-Obenaus, ‘The Whole is the Sum of Its Parts: Misogyny as a Unifying Factor in *Die Sieben Wisen Meister*’, *Fifteenth-Century Studies*, 26 (2001), 169-82 (pp. 172-3). See also Robert M. Lumiansky, ‘Thematic Antifeminism in the Middle English *The Seven Sages of Rome*’, *Tulane Studies in English*, 7 (1957), 5-16.

³⁷² Menuge, ‘A Few Home Truths’, pp. 94-5.

feipli after þi fader ich forschop þe þanne
 In þise wise to a werwolf and wend þe to spille;³⁷³

Jealousy is the main motivation for her villainy, which drives her to separate her stepson from his father and make him look a villain, while preserving the pretended innocence which covers her own villainy. Besides, this also presents a social reality in relation to marriage. As Menuge points out:

The werewolf himself is a maltreated stepson who is turned into a werewolf by his wicked stepmother in an attempt to gain his inheritance for her first-born. This echoes quite strongly the apparent concern medieval lawyers had with the safety of the custody of wards upon the remarriage of the surviving parent.³⁷⁴

When the father fails in his role as the protector of his child, he provides the wicked stepmother with an opportunity to abuse the father/son relationship in order to empower herself. These villainous mothers-in-law and stepmothers display the Seven Deadly Sins in the course of realizing their wicked plans, and they thus become sinners as well as villains. Doryjane Birrer asks, ‘when a werewolf can be a compassionate and humane friend, and a parent can be a malevolent and inhumane enemy, how can ‘humanity’ be identified or persuasively characterized within bodies that would be recognizably ‘human’?’³⁷⁵ This questioning reminds the audience of the role of humanity as the victimizer of itself, which is explored in all romances through human villains. It undermines ‘humanity’ as a civilized and peaceful unity and rather presents it as full of deceit, highlighting the inhumanity of humans who victimize each other.³⁷⁶

Mothers-in-law and stepmothers are greedy for power, lustful as they attempt to ravish their stepsons, envious of their establishment within the succession, proud of their pretended innocence, full of wrath when their wicked plans are revealed and gluttonous for their husbands’ trust in them. However, it is wrong to assume that they are pure villains as they are not the *real* mothers of their victims. A real mother who is a villain is described as being far worse than a stepmother or mother-in-law in *Beves of Hamptoun*. The Countess is not only the victimizer of her son Beves but also of her husband, the Earl of Southampton. However, she does not misuse them to victimize

³⁷³ *The Romance of William of Palerne: Otherwise Known as the Romance of ‘William and the Werwolf’*, ed. by Walter W. Skeat, EETS e.s., 1 (London: Kegan Paul, 1867; repr. 1898), p. 140, lines 4391-5. All references are to this edition, cited by Skeat’s page and line number.

³⁷⁴ Menuge, ‘Wardship Romance’, p. 40.

³⁷⁵ Doryjane Birrer, ‘A New Species of Humanities: The Marvelous Progeny of Humanism and Postmodern Theory’, *Journal of Narrative Theory*, 37.2 (2007), 217-45 (p. 218).

³⁷⁶ A man may legitimately seek to empower himself, but when a woman does this, it is usually ‘sin’, or villainy, unless she is being passive under threat or in exceptional circumstances. In these cases, she reverts to societal ‘norms’ when the threat is removed. See the chapter on ‘victims’.

each other. She makes her lover Devoun kill her husband as she is not happy in her marriage to an elderly man, then orders Saber to kill her son Beves, when Beves accuses her of his father's murder. She then sells him to merchants when Saber spares his life. Thus, she not only 'oversteps her boundaries and makes decisions that affect a child's inheritance and future'³⁷⁷ but also provides Beves with a focus on revenge.³⁷⁸ Like Gary Lim, Fellows and Corinne J. Saunders believe that she is a threat to patriarchal values³⁷⁹ and Christian morals. Saunders states that:

The supposedly Christian princess is rapidly revealed to be evil, betraying both husband and son, and perverting the ideals of chaste wife and loving, nurturing mother that are so central to romance, and more generally to Western cultural *mores* and understanding of gender.³⁸⁰

However, it is not her overstepping of the gender roles or of Christian morals, but her blindness to her husband and son's suffering in return for the satisfaction of her personal pleasure, which brings out the villain in her. Menuge points out that, '[a]s soon as she expresses intent to murder, she becomes all the things evil in womanhood, in motherhood'.³⁸¹ The Countess sacrifices her husband and son (to whom she should owe her ultimate loyalty before God) for the sake of her personal pleasure, and disregards her role as a wife and mother. Amiloun's wife in *Amis and Amiloun* also does this, by ignoring her role as a wife and as a good Christian, and dismissing her husband from home when he becomes a leper, in order not to have to take care of him. On the other hand, Amiloun's wife can also be accepted as 'justified villain' because she has a reason to dismiss her husband from his court: 'she regards her husband guilty of killing the steward who is innocent in her perspective, she interprets Amiloun's subsequent contraction of leprosy as a divine punishment for his wrongdoing'.³⁸² The poet also stresses her villainy when she blames her husband for *ignoring* a divine warning and fighting against the steward:

So wicked and schrewed was his wiif,

³⁷⁷ Gary Lim, 'In the Name of the (Dead) Father: Reading Fathers and Sons in *Havelok the Dane*, *King Horn*, and *Bevis of Hampton*', *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 110.1 (2011), 22-52 (p. 37).

³⁷⁸ Ivana Djordjević, 'Original and Translation: Bevis's Mother in Anglo-Norman and Middle English', in *Cultural Encounters in the Romance of Medieval England*, ed. by Corinne J. Saunders (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2005), pp. 11-26 (p. 13).

³⁷⁹ Fellows, 'Mothers', pp. 52-3.

³⁸⁰ Corinne J. Saunders, 'Gender, Virtue and Wisdom in *Sir Bevis of Hampton*', in '*Sir Bevis of Hampton*' in *Literary Tradition*, ed. by Jennifer Fellows and Ivana Djordjević (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2008), pp. 161-75 (p. 163).

³⁸¹ Menuge, 'A Few Home Truths', p. 86.

³⁸² Ju Ok Yoon, 'Leprosy, Miracles, and Morality in *Amis and Amiloun*', *Medieval and Early Modern English Studies*, 18.1 (2010), 29-56 (p. 40).

Sche brac his hert withouten kniif,
 With wordes harde and kene,
 And seyde to him, 'Thou wreche chaitif,
 With wrong the steward les his liif,
 And that is on the sene;
 Therefore, bi Seyn Denis of Fraunce,
 The is bitid this hard chaunce,
 Dathet who the bimene!'³⁸³

Her support of Christian ideas of righteousness over and above her duty to her male relatives may, indeed, be said to exonerate her in this case.

Villainy in order to achieve personal power is introduced not only by wives and mothers but also by daughters in a family, although it may be justified, as in the case of Amiloun's wife. Saracen daughters are represented as merciless victimizers of their fathers and other Saracens, and their villainy is a dominant feature through the texts in which they appear. They are very dynamic and focused throughout all the incidents, and unlike other female villains, they achieve what they wanted by marrying their lovers, converting to Christianity and punishing their fathers. In *Sir Ferumbras* and *The Sowdone of Babylone*, which represent parallel versions of the same story, daughters called Floripas betray their father and their people by denying paternal authority, humiliating and verbally abusing their fathers whilst helping their enemy. Floripas, in both romances, commits murders in cold blood in order to destroy anyone whom she sees as a threat to her plan. The villainous representation of Floripas in both romances serves to define the ideal Christian woman by contrasting her with the exotic and demonic one. Weiss justly points out that the Saracen princess has been described as the product of male fantasy, beautiful and available, unlike her Christian counterpart, who could not decently behave in such a way. Alternatively, she has been described as the product of 'a fantasy of revolt against parental authority',³⁸⁴ since she accepts conversion without enforcement, with a personal choice for a woman,³⁸⁵ in a society where fathers determine the fate of their daughters. The villainy in exotic and non-Christian women may be used to highlight the angelic qualities and behaviour of Christian women. Floripas's behaviour signifies her Saracen identity, which is

³⁸³ *Amis and Amiloun*, in 'Amis and Amiloun', 'Robert of Cisyle', and 'Sir Amadace', ed. by Edward E. Foster, 2nd edn (Kalamazoo, Michigan: Medieval Institute Publications, 2007), pp. 1-74 (p. 45), lines 1561-9. All references are to this edition, cited by Foster's page and line number.

³⁸⁴ Judith Weiss, 'The Wooing Woman in Anglo-Norman Romance', in *Romance*, ed. by Mills, Fellows and Meale, pp. 149-61 (p. 152).

³⁸⁵ Heng, *Empire of Magic*, p. 186.

demonized or masculinised.³⁸⁶ She is described as ‘a dangerous combination of masculine and feminine qualities [...] neither wholly Saracen nor wholly Christian’.³⁸⁷

In *Sir Ferumbras*, Floripas kills the gaoler, who prevents her from visiting the imprisoned French knights, in cold blood:

As sche wolde þe dore to-breke sche gan þo hebbe & pyngē:
 þe iayler þan þyderward gan to reke to letten hur of þat þyngē;
 Sche lefte þe dore & wend him ner & lifte vp þ° staf with mayne,
 & so on þe heued sche set him þer þat out sterte al is brayne.³⁸⁸

Similarly, in *The Sowdone of Babylone*, she throws her mistress Maragounde out of the window when she refuses to help her to provide food for the imprisoned French knights. In both romances, she wants the French to behead her father, who rejects conversion. Barron asserts that her assistance to the French knights and her victimization of the Saracens in her father’s castle is for ‘showing herself worthy of a Christian company’.³⁸⁹ Yet, Jacqueline de Weever states that Floripas’s conversion is not mainly for a religious reason. She does not convert because she is fully convinced by the Christian faith, but because she is in love with a Christian man.³⁹⁰ Following this argument, it is apparent that Floripas is on the side of Christians well before her conversion, and that her taking the side of the Christians results from her love for the French knight Guy, rather than from her desire to be a Christian. Her victimization of the Saracens even before her conversion proves that her main motivation for villainy is not her devotion to the Christian faith. However, her alliance with the Christians justifies her villainy and exempts her from guilt and punishment, which might otherwise be meted out to a powerful, ruthless, female warrior and patricide.

de Weever suggests that the Saracen woman’s conversion is ‘a journey from darkness to light’ and her baptism serves ‘as entrance into a new life’.³⁹¹ However, Floripas’s conversion does not change her into a merciful Christian from a demonic Saracen, because she never feels mercy for her father and the Saracens when they reject conversion. Her conversion cannot erase her inward villainy, but puts her under the

³⁸⁶ Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, ‘On Saracen Enjoyment: Some Fantasies of Race in Late Medieval France and England’, *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, 31.1 (2001), 113-46 (p. 121).

³⁸⁷ Suzanne Conklin Akbari, *Idols in the East: European Representations of Islam and the Orient, 1100-1450* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2009), p. 175.

³⁸⁸ *Sir Ferumbras*, ed. by Sidney Herrtage, EETS e.s., 34 (London: Kegan Paul, 1879; repr. 1903), p. 46, lines 1248-51. All references are to this edition, cited by Herrtage’s page and line number.

³⁸⁹ Barron, *English Medieval Romance*, p. 102.

³⁹⁰ Jacqueline de Weever, *Sheba’s Daughters: Whitening and Demonizing the Saracen Woman in Medieval French Epic* (New York: Garland, 1998), p. xvii.

³⁹¹ de Weever, *Sheba’s Daughters*, p. 40.

control of a Christian husband who will disempower and tame her with her implied consent (love). On the other hand, it makes her a 'justified villain' rather than a 'pure villain' because all Saracens, including her father, are 'others' for her after conversion and they all deserve suffering because of their heretical faith. Floripas becomes a model for conversion to Christianity, who is able to absorb her energy, resourcefulness and vigour, on the understanding that it will be both controlled and rerouted, as is the demonic potential of Richard Coeur de Lion, into the promotion of the (militant/evangelical) Christian faith. Within these parameters, loyalty to the new faith is perceived as more 'moral' than loyalty to family bonds, which justifies her villainy.

'Pure' female villains are almost always close to the family, which provides them with a better opportunity to victimize family members, because they know their victims' weaknesses and vulnerabilities very well. While villains seek to obtain social prestige in general in addition to personal power, they try to get it through victimizing an individual. They achieve great power temporarily but most of them lose it by becoming victims, and being punished in the end. Punishment of the villains is necessary to preserve the social order. Philippa Maddern explains the significance of violence for medieval English people as an instrument and a sign of social order, remarking that '[s]ermons, moral literature, vernacular poetry and personal reflections assumed that God's care for humankind involved the use of direct and effective violence, to punish the wicked, to protect the righteous'.³⁹²

In the thirteenth century there was a tendency to punish rebellions and treason severely by the penalties of drawing, hanging, disembowelling, burning, beheading and quartering.³⁹³ The distinction between petty and high treason became clear only after the statute of 1352; it has been said that romances do not reflect this legal development of the concept of treason.³⁹⁴ However, there is evidence of different types and levels of punishment for 'treason' and betrayal in romances. Even if their historical correctness is dubious, romances contain a variety of punishments for the villains. It is significant that there is a dominant 'domestic justice' for the punishment of 'domestic villains', as they are punished either by their son, grandchild or husband. In the Middle Ages, burning

³⁹² Philippa Maddern, 'Interpreting Silence: Domestic Violence in King's Courts in East Anglia, 1422-1442', in *Domestic Violence in Medieval Texts*, ed. by Eve Salisbury, Georgiana Donavin and Merrall Llewelyn Price (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2002), pp. 31-56 (p. 38).

³⁹³ John G. Bellamy, *The Law of Treason in England in the Later Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 23.

³⁹⁴ Kratins, 'Treason', pp. 669-70.

was ‘the biblical penalty for bestiality and for incest’.³⁹⁵ It was also a manner of execution both in life and in romance if a woman involved in adultery or seduction.³⁹⁶ Burning is a punishment for women³⁹⁷ in romances, and their punishment is ‘left to private revenge, or to the jurisdiction of the family; the husband or the father of the offending wife was allowed to put her to death’.³⁹⁸ Even if she has been ‘coerced into an abusive situation, killed her husband as a last resort, she would still be burnt at the stake’.³⁹⁹ In romances, all ‘pure’ female domestic villains are punished when their villainies are revealed at the very end of the romances, except for the daughters whose villainy is justified by their conversion to Christianity, who are rewarded with marriage to their lovers, and becoming queens.⁴⁰⁰

Two out of three villainous mothers-in-law are sentenced to burning, whilst one of them is spared from burning, though she has been sentenced. In *Emaré*, the mother-in-law is spared from burning but is stripped of her possessions by her son and she is exiled, after he learns about her forged letters and the sending of Emaré and her son into exile. In *Cheuelere Assigne*, the wicked mother-in-law, Matabryne’s treason is disclosed by her grandson, and she is burned. Similarly, the false accuser mother-in-law in *Octovian* and the stepmother in *The Seven Sages of Rome* are punished by burning. Amiloun’s disloyal wife is put into a stone lodge to die, where she is given only bread and water, in return for dismissing her leprous husband. Contrary to ‘domestic punishments’, the Countess who is the wicked natural mother and disloyal wife in *Beves of Hamptoun* is punished by God when she falls from the top of the castle and breaks her neck, demonstrating that domestic wickedness is also a deadly ‘sin’.

‘Repentance’ is the main factor determining punishment or forgiveness for the villains. In two out of three romances with wicked stepmothers, their villainy is forgiven after their repentance; although one of them is still punished by her husband. In *The Seven Sages of Rome*, the Empress is sentenced to burning by the Emperor after her false accusation against her stepson Florentyne is revealed. In *Generydes*, Generydes

³⁹⁵ Mia Korpiola, ‘Rethinking Incest and Heinous Sexual Crime: Changing Boundaries of Secular and Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction in Late Medieval Sweden’, in *Boundaries of the Law: Geography, Gender and Jurisdiction in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, ed. by Anthony Musson (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), pp. 102-17 (p. 108).

³⁹⁶ Kratins, ‘Treason’, p. 686.

³⁹⁷ John R. Reinhard, ‘Burning at the Stake in Mediaeval Law and Literature’, *Speculum*, 16.2 (1941), 186-209 (p. 199).

³⁹⁸ Reinhard, ‘Burning at the Stake’, p. 194.

³⁹⁹ Eve Salisbury, ‘Introduction’, in *Domestic Violence*, ed. by Salisbury, Donavin and Price, pp. 1-27 (p. 22).

⁴⁰⁰ In both *Sir Ferumbras* and *The Sowdone of Babylone*, the villainous Saracen princesses named Floripas, after their conversions to Christianity, are rewarded with marriage to their French lover (Guy), and they become Queen of Spain.

forgives his wicked stepmother Serenydes after she tears her hair in repentance, and asks Generydes to kill her to end her pain, since she has well deserved it:

‘I yow requere for goddis loue,’ quod she,
 ‘haue here this swerd, and make an ende of me
 Now or ye goo, and bryng me owt of payn,
 ffor I haue well deseruyd it for certayn.’⁴⁰¹

Likewise, in *William of Palerne*, the idea of mercy is praised, the sufferers are presented as forgivers rather than tyrants, and repentance is presented as a means of avoiding punishment. Alphonse’s enchantress stepmother goes unpunished because she repents of having enchanted Alphonse, confesses that she has sinned, and begs for forgiveness. She then disenchants Alphonse, and her life is spared.

The number of domestic male ‘pure’ villains is lower compared with that of female ones in romances; yet, they are as wicked as the females. Brothers in romances are the commonest ‘pure’ villains, because of their greed and desire for power. King Catryus, living in France, and his brother Dayre, who is Lord of Loreayne, fight against each other because of their envy in *Ipomadon*. Similarly, Sir John is envious of his brother Gamelyn’s properties inherited from their father in *The Tale of Gamelyn*. Sir John is a selfish and unreliable brother, and also a sheriff. He imprisons Gamelyn, accuses him of madness, and bribes members of the judiciary against him. He disinherits Gamelyn by ignoring their father’s will, whilst pretending to protect him. He is also guilty of gluttony in that he has the major part of the patrimony, but wants to add Gamelyn’s share of the inheritance (not part of the patrimony) to it.

Some critics maintain that the reason for Sir John’s villainy is the feudal system. For Thomas A. Shippey, Sir John is a part of the corrupt justice system, as a sheriff of ‘bastard feudalism’, and treats his brother Gamelyn ‘as a servant, a male Cinderella’.⁴⁰² John Scattergood and Knight agree that the social and political issues of fourteenth-century England are behind the text. Scattergood states that the romance ‘concerns a dispute (not untypical for the period) about inherited property within a provincial gentry family and how the law can be corrupted, manipulated and subverted in relation to such a dispute’.⁴⁰³ This idea is supported by Knight, who believes that the romance presents

⁴⁰¹ *Generydes*, ed. by Wright, 210. 6586-9.

⁴⁰² Thomas A. Shippey, ‘*The Tale of Gamelyn*: Class Warfare and the Embarrassments of Genre’, in *Spirit*, ed. by Putter and Gilbert, pp. 78-96 (pp. 86-7).

⁴⁰³ John Scattergood, ‘*The Tale of Gamelyn*: The Noble Robber as Provincial Hero’, in *Readings*, ed. by Meale, pp. 159-94 (p. 163).

the realities of the fourteenth-century possession of land among the gentry.⁴⁰⁴ Richard W. Kaeuper believes that Sir John represents the real medieval sheriffs who corrupted justice by empanelling false juries, and he ‘pales in evil invention before such actual sheriffs’.⁴⁰⁵ However, Ramsey argues that ‘the romance maintains that social evil is the result of evil individuals or inadvertence on the part of the powerful, not of defects in the system itself’.⁴⁰⁶ Ramsey’s argument objects to the villainy of the feudal system itself, and focuses on the villainy of Sir John as an individual. Consequently, Sir John is a villain both socially and individually. He is not only an unjust sheriff on account of his being a part of a corrupt system, but also an uncaring and selfish brother on account of his attempt to obtain more power and land, which makes him forget his brotherly responsibilities. In this respect, Sir John resembles other romance villains, such as Emere’s brother Miles in *Le Bone Florence of Rome*. Miles is a trickster and ‘false accuser’ brother, who victimizes not only his brother Emere but also Emere’s wife Florence. He falsely accuses Emere of fighting on the side of Garcy, who is the enemy of Florence’s father, so that Miles can wed Florence. When his trick fails, he forges a letter from Emere telling Florence to marry Miles. Moreover, he abducts Florence, beats her and abandons her alone in the forest. Hence, he becomes worse, more violent and ruthless, than their common enemy, Garcy.

Male children victimize their family members because of the lack of a brotherhood bond and filial loyalty. However, they may also be victimized by male members of their own family. In two romances, a male child is victimized by his stepfather, and in one romance, another male is victimized by his uncle only; yet, none of them have ‘purely’ villainous fathers. Stepfathers put their own good above that of the family, and abuse their stepsons to make themselves secure. Emere and Miles’s stepfather disinherits them in *Le Bone Florence of Rome*, whilst Lord Ganelon insists on his stepson Roland’s fighting instead of King Charles, so that Roland will be slain and he will get rid of him in *The Sege off Melayne*. Surprisingly, in view of the traditional trope of the ‘wicked uncle’, *William of Palerne* is the only romance to feature a villainous uncle. King Embrons’s brother bribes Gloriande and Acelone, who nurse his brother Embrons’s son William, to poison Embrons and his son William.

⁴⁰⁴ Stephen Knight, ‘‘harkeneth aright’’: Reading *Gamelyn* for Text not Context’, in *Tradition and Transformation*, ed. by Field, pp. 15-27 (p. 20).

⁴⁰⁵ Richard W. Kaeuper, ‘An Historian’s Reading of *The Tale of Gamelyn*’, *Medium Ævum*, 52.1 (1983), 51-62 (p. 56).

⁴⁰⁶ Ramsey, *Chivalric Romances*, p. 95.

Male children's pain and suffering on account of their stepfathers' and uncles' villainy are not narrated in detail in romances, but just presented in a few lines in the texts. This runs counter to detailed descriptions of the suffering of daughters at the hands of their own fathers. Paternal villains mostly victimize their daughters instead of their sons, especially alongside their lovers. Fathers, who victimize their daughters by preventing their union with their lovers, are the most obscure villains because their reasons for villainy are ambiguous. It is unclear whether the villainous father does not love his daughter, loves her too much or loves her in the wrong way; yet, it is obvious that his 'love' is perverted in some way, because he victimizes his daughter instead of giving comfort and protection. Such fathers pretend to be protective of their daughters; however, they victimize not only their daughters but also their daughters' lovers. In order to separate the lovers, to prevent their marriage or to punish their daughters, fathers set tasks to be accomplished by their daughters' lovers. They are very good at manipulating people, single minded, without regret, and yet not 'purely' demonic. The idea of their daughters having a lover brings the villain out in them; yet, as stated by Hudson, their authority is undermined by their own treachery.⁴⁰⁷ They cannot prevent the reunion of the lovers, but they delay it. In *Sir Eglamour of Artois*, Cristabell's father Sir Prynsumour is the victimizer of Cristabell's suitors. He assigns superhuman tasks for his daughter's lover Eglamour to prevent their marriage:

And sayde, 'Ther may no devell the slo,
 Be Mary, so I wene!
 Thow art abowte, I undirstande,
 To wynne all Artas of my honde
 And my dowghtyr schene!'⁴⁰⁸

Yet, after his daughter gives birth to Eglamour's son, he punishes her by exiling her on the sea with her child. Mehl suggests '[e]verything the Earl did to prevent the union of the lovers was, as it turns out, only a blasphemous attempt to run counter to the providence of God'.⁴⁰⁹ Therefore, the Earl is not only victimizing his daughter and her lover, but also denying them their destiny as preordained by God.

Similarly, in *Torrent of Portyngale*, Calamond assigns superhuman tasks for his daughter Desonell's lover Torrent, because he is envious of him and he wants to prevent

⁴⁰⁷ Hudson, 'Construction of Class', p. 84.

⁴⁰⁸ *Sir Eglamour of Artois*, in *Four Middle English Romances*, ed. by Harriet Hudson (Kalamazoo, Michigan: Medieval Institute Publications, 2006), pp. 97-143 (p. 116), lines 644-8. Hudson's page and line numbers are retained.

⁴⁰⁹ Mehl, *The Middle English Romances*, p. 79.

their marriage. He sends Torrent away on a quest, and meanwhile exiles Desonell on a boat, after she has given birth to Torrent's twin sons Leobertus and Antony. Unlike Cristabell and Desonell's fathers, the King of Hungary in *The Squire of Low Degree* pretends that the Squire, whom his daughter loves, is dead because he does not want his daughter to marry a man of lower rank. He acts as a caring father, comforting his daughter by trying to cheer her up, whilst reminding her that she shall not forget all her vows, and shall marry a king. Hudson claims that the father is not a victimizer of his daughter, since he 'offers her various delights and blandishments to cheer her'.⁴¹⁰ Nevertheless, as Anthony C. Spearing objects to this idea, the father is cruel because 'the daughter must undergo at her father's hands an extreme emotional and spiritual test' before marrying her lover.⁴¹¹

The issue of class and family survival is also apparent in the father's rejection of his son's marriage to a lower class girl in *Floris and Blancheflour*. Floris's father, the King of Spain, does not approve of his son Floris's affair with Blancheflour, a non-Christian slave girl. Therefore, he sells her to merchants and pretends that she is dead. Yet, he is persuaded by his wife to reunite them so that their son will not suffer from lovesickness. Apart from the difference in social rank, the difference of race and faith is presented as a reason for rejection of the lovers' union. As Marla Segol says, 'it does mime ideality, dramatizing identity, difference, and cultural conflicts and priorities central to the community in question'⁴¹² and implies the significance of keeping the bloodline 'pure'.

According to Robert P. Adams, in the Renaissance romances were criticized by 'humanists' on account of their glorification of villainy. Adams explains that:

In the romance world they found the glorification of passion and unreason, carried over into the glamorization of tyrants, of conquerors, and of a militarism that resulted in unmeasurable suffering to the commonwealth. [...] In the romances they found, typically, a thinly disguised pagan social order that glorified injustice, violence, and war-and they attacked it as both unchristian and absurd. To them the romances sought to glamorize (and the vogue of romance to perpetuate) antisocial concepts of the

⁴¹⁰ Hudson, 'Construction of Class', p. 84.

⁴¹¹ Anthony C. Spearing, *The Medieval Poet as Voyeur: Looking and Listening in Medieval Love-Narratives* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 192.

⁴¹² Marla Segol, 'Floire and Blancheflor: Courtly Hagiography or Radical Romance?', *Alif: Journal of Comparative Poetics*, 23 (2003), 233-75 (p. 239).

superman-hero, together with equally false ideas of 'honor' of 'glory'; and of the 'greatness' (not to say the dignity) of man.⁴¹³

Despite the cruelty of physical and emotional violence in romances, the violence of the villains can be seen as justifiable for some other reasons, such as protection of the family's bloodline. Bloodline is very important for a family and has to be protected, although family protection turns into villainy when daughters are victimized by their fathers in order to prevent them from marrying lovers rejected by their fathers. So, protecting the purity and continuity of the family's bloodline is not seen, by the writers of romances, to justify cruelty to the vulnerable; this is in accordance with contemporary Christian teachings. The law of God comes before the societal, or other, needs of human beings, even noble ones. Warnings of mothers and their attempts to persuade their husbands to allow the marriage of their daughters to their lovers are ignored in order to keep the bloodline (however 'impure' or 'disrupted') under the father's authority. The significance of bloodline lies beneath religious texts of Abraham's sacrificing Isaac for the sake of God. 'When Abraham and God refer to Isaac as Abraham's 'blood,' the word 'blood' figuratively names a familial relationship, as in a way the genealogy is described as a bloodline',⁴¹⁴ which is a proof of lineage and a father's authority over his child.

Due to the fact that a father is believed to have authority over his child, and he can establish his authority firmly in order to preserve his bloodline, his villainy to his child is somehow justifiable. In addition to the fathers whose villainies are justifiable for the sake of preserving the bloodline of their families, Sir Guroun's villainy to his lover Freine in *Lay le Freine* is also justified, since his intention is the preservation of his bloodline. Although he lets Freine down by agreeing to marry a lady of noble birth, in order to legitimize his future heir, and then humiliates her by calling her as a servant for his wedding preparations, nobody blames him for his decision. His villainy is unpunished anyway, which reveals that it is licit, and he marries Freine after her noble identity is revealed.

Different from the justifiable, hence unpunished, villainies of fathers or lovers for the sake of keeping their bloodline pure, villainies of wicked brothers are punished, and the victimizers turn into helpless victims. In *The Tale of Gamelyn*, Gamelyn cuts his

⁴¹³ Robert P. Adams, 'Bold Bawdry and Open Manslaughter: The English New Humanist Attack on Medieval Romance', *The Huntington Library Quarterly*, 23.1 (1959), 33-48 (p. 48).

⁴¹⁴ Peggy McCracken, 'Engendering Sacrifice: Blood, Lineage, and Infanticide in Old French Literature', *Speculum*, 77.1 (2002), 55-75 (pp. 70-1).

brother Sir John's cheek and breaks his arm in return for his unjust disinheritance by him. The wicked brother Miles in *Le Bone Florence of Rome* suffers from leprosy, then he is burned, in return for his betrayal to his brother Emere and his mistreatment to Florence. However, the validity of the imposition of villainy for the sake of keeping the bloodline pure is ambiguous, as some of the villainous fathers are left unpunished. In *Torrent of Portyngale*, Desonell's father Calamond is exiled by her daughter's lover Torrent, after he learns that Desonell has been exiled by him, along with her children. Cristabell's father Sir Prynsamour in *Sir Eglamour of Artois* falls down from a tower and dies after breaking his neck. Contrary to the punishment of most of the 'pure' male domestic villains, no punishment is indicated for the wicked uncle in *William of Palerne*, the stepfathers in *The Sege off Melayne* and *Le Bone Florence of Rome*, or the wicked fathers in *The Squire of Low Degree* and *Floris and Blancheflour*. The lack of punishment for these villains reminds the audience that there is still some justification for villainy in the interests of preserving the purity of their bloodlines. In other words, their villainies are understood to be harmless, carried out to prevent possible, social and genealogical, villainies in their household.

Compared with the villainous mothers-in-law and stepmothers, there is a hint of this desire to protect their family from polluting intruders in fathers' rejection of their daughters' lovers. In all romances except for *Floris and Blancheflour*, in which the beloved girl (being a slave) is treated differently and disposed of, the male suitors are assigned chivalric tasks to perform. While males are given heroic tasks and a chance to prove their worthiness to become a family member, regardless of their rank -as happens in *The Squire of Low Degree*- the beloved slave girl is disposed of, sold and humiliated. This double standard displays the fact that males are privileged to prove their value to the family bloodline, unlike the females, who are discarded without any such chances. It is not clearly stated but implied through the father in *The Squire of Low Degree* that the bloodline is vulnerable to invasion, and it must be kept secure by choosing a right and noble husband for his daughter. The same idea is repeated in *Floris and Blancheflour* when a noble son's marriage to a lower class lover is rejected by his father. Daughters are sacrificed in favour of securing the bloodline, and they become vessels for family transmission instead of loved children. Although it seems that the father does what is necessary to secure his family, these concerns replace the happiness of his daughter. This replacement makes the daughter a victim of her father as well as making the father a villain who abuses his daughter's feelings. However, their intention of securing their bloodline is an excuse for their villainy, and makes them 'justified villains' who have

reasons to victimize their victims; therefore, they cannot be seen (from a medieval perspective) to be ‘purely’ villainous.

A justified villain is mainly a misguided person who is corrupted by a pure villain so that he can be abused to victimize someone else. In the meantime, he is also victimized without being aware of it. Household members are easy targets for creating justified villains, through false accusations made by pure villains against their victims. They make use of someone powerful in the family to victimize someone who they see as a threat or of whom they are jealous. Therefore, they not only pretend to be innocent but also make their victims victimize each other. The justified villain becomes both a victim and a victimizer in the hands of a sinister and clever pure villain.

There are only a few justified female villains in romances, compared to the very large number of males. In *The Siege of Jerusalem*, the Jewish mother eats her infant child to survive starvation⁴¹⁵ when the town is under siege by Christians:

þan saiþ þat worþi wif in a wode hunger,
 ‘Myn owen barn haue I brad and þe bones gnawen,
 3it haue I saued 3ou som’, and + a side feccheþ
 Of þe barn þat 3o bare, and alle hire blode changeþ.⁴¹⁶

Like purely villainous domestic Christian females, the Jewish mother is depicted as an ‘anti-Mary’, an anti-Christian mother lacking love for her child. In Suzanne Conklin Akbari’s words, she is ‘the parody of Virgin Mary’ who sacrificed ‘her son to nourishing others’⁴¹⁷ since, unlike Mary, she sacrificed him to feed herself.

The anti-Christian representation of the Jewish mother originates from the prejudices and assumptions about the Jews in the Middle Ages. Like Saracens, Jews were believed to be ‘putatively demonic, bestial subhumans’⁴¹⁸ who were accused by some Christians of ‘well- and food-poisoning in attempts to end Christendom’.⁴¹⁹ Moreover, ‘cannibalism and the use of human blood (the ‘blood libel’) were also accusations often levelled against Jews’.⁴²⁰ Therefore, violence against the Jews was not

⁴¹⁵ The story of the mother who eats her child in order to survive is not uncommon in sermon literature.

⁴¹⁶ *The Siege of Jerusalem*, ed. by Ralph Hanna and David Lawton, EETS o.s., 320 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 74, lines 1093-6. All references are to this edition, cited by the editors’ page and line number.

⁴¹⁷ Suzanne Conklin Akbari, ‘Placing the Jews in Late Medieval English Literature’, in *Orientalism and the Jews*, ed. by Ivan Davidson Kalmar and Derek J. Penslar (Lebanon: University Press of New England, 2005), pp. 32-50 (p. 42).

⁴¹⁸ Heng, *Empire of Magic*, p. 95.

⁴¹⁹ Samuel K. Cohn, Jr, ‘The Black Death and the Burning of Jews’, *Past and Present*, 196.1 (2007), 3-36 (p. 13).

⁴²⁰ Bettina Bildhauer, ‘Blood, Jews and Monsters in Medieval Culture’, in *The Monstrous Middle Ages*, ed. by Bettina Bildhauer and Robert Mills (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2003), pp. 75-96 (p. 80).

uncommon in the Middle Ages, in addition to the negative representations of the Jews in medieval literature. Even if Elisa Narin van Court believes that the poet is sympathetic to the suffering of the Jews in *The Siege of Jerusalem*,⁴²¹ it is apparent that there is a ‘cheerfully sanctified violence’⁴²² against the Jews in the romance. Although her being an ‘other’ for the Christians because of her Jewish blood may be the reason for her ‘villainy’, it is clear that the Jewish mother is forced to eat her child by the Christians keeping the town under siege and leaving the Jews to starve. As Christine Chism points out, the siege is a means of destroying and exploiting the Jews to disperse them from Jerusalem.⁴²³ Therefore, the Jewish mother, though she is an ‘other’, is not purely evil but provoked to villainy by Christian invaders. In addition to this, ‘[t]he mother’s bond with her child is figured in the maternal body, and this blood is imagined as a dangerous blood, a polluting blood, even a sinful blood’.⁴²⁴ Therefore, different from fathers who victimize their daughters for a better good to keep their lineage safe, a mother’s victimizing her child is presented as ‘monstrous’ as ‘[t]he blood shed by the mother is maternal blood, and a mother’s murder of her child can be explained as a demonic act’.⁴²⁵ Her association with evil because of her faith makes her a ‘justified’, or at least an ‘explained’ villain as she is not Christian. Therefore, she has no motivation to be patient in suffering or merciful to the powerless, although her villainy is tinged with the demonic act of infanticide. Although she knows no better, this is still a deadly, sinful crime.

Similar to the ambiguity of the Jewish mother’s villainy, it is unclear whether the mother advocating the death of her son in *The Romans of Partenay* is also a justified villain or a pure villain. Melusine advises her husband Raymond to kill their son Horrible to prevent the suffering he may bring into their family if he survives. Celia M. Lewis calls Melusine’s warning ‘the most dramatic lesson’ given by a mother,⁴²⁶ to stress her suffering while giving her counsel. Her care for her family’s suffering more than her child’s life, and making this the reason for victimizing her child, brings her closer to justified villainy than pure villainy. Neither of the females is punished for victimizing their children, which also brings them closer to justified villains.

⁴²¹ Elisa Narin van Court, ‘*The Siege of Jerusalem* and Augustinian Historians: Writing about Jews in Fourteenth-Century England’, in *Chaucer and the Jews: Sources, Contexts, Meanings*, ed. by Sheila Delany (London: Routledge, 2002), pp. 165-84 (p. 167).

⁴²² Ralph Hanna, ‘Contextualizing the *Siege of Jerusalem*’, *Yearbook of Langland Studies*, 6 (1992), 109-21 (p. 111).

⁴²³ Christine Chism, *Alliterative Revivals* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), p. 155.

⁴²⁴ McCracken, ‘Engendering Sacrifice’, p. 74.

⁴²⁵ McCracken, ‘Engendering Sacrifice’, p. 74.

⁴²⁶ Celia M. Lewis, ‘Acceptable Lessons, Radical Truths: *Méluſine* as Literature for Medieval Youth’, *Children’s Literature*, 39 (2011), 1-32 (p. 19).

Freine's mother in *Lay le Freine* is another ambiguous representation in terms of pure or justified villainy. The lady is a 'pure' villain since she wants to destroy her infant daughter, in order to escape from the accusation of adultery after she gives birth to twins. However, her repentance of having accused her neighbour, who also gave birth to twins, of adultery, her desperation and consent to her maid's offer to abandon the child at a convent instead of killing her makes her pitiable, and a 'justified' villain who is trapped between keeping her child and being accused of adultery. Her compassion for Freine, when her twin sister is about to marry Freine's lover Sir Guroun, also reveals that the lady is sympathetic rather than villainous. Thus, she is not only spared punishment, but also rewarded by reunion with her daughter Freine.

Justified male villains are mostly not the victims of situations but of other people, who are deceived by someone close to their family. They are abused as tools to victimize someone in their households. At the beginning of the romance *Athelston*, King Athelston is a justified villain because he victimizes his wife, his sworn brother Sir Egelond and his family on account of a false accusation by his other sworn brother Sir Wymound. Wymound falsely accuses them of treason to Athelston, because of his jealousy over their close relationship. According to Richard Firth Green, treason was a popular concept during the fourteenth century and the term 'traitor' was 'meant primarily someone who had betrayed a trust'.⁴²⁷ The first attempts to define this in legal terms were made by Edward III and Richard II, in order to secure their royal authority.⁴²⁸ As Helen Young indicates, '[t]reason was a particularly charged issue during the reign of Richard II, a situation that was reflected in the literature of the time'⁴²⁹ and '[t]reason was held to be such an abomination in the Middle Ages that it was frequently punished in horrific ways, such as flaying alive, hanging, drawing, and quartering'.⁴³⁰ In the Middle Ages, 'persons accused of certain crimes were forced to prove their innocence by walking blindfold among burning ploughshares, or by holding heated iron in their hands', a practice known as trial by ordeal.⁴³¹ Athelston gets very angry and imprisons the Egelond family because they are traitors, and even if he *is* willing to execute them without an ordeal (by which they may prove their innocence or treachery), he puts them to trial by fire after he is threatened by the Archbishop with

⁴²⁷ Richard Firth Green, *A Crisis of Truth: Literature and Law in Ricardian England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), p. 214.

⁴²⁸ Helen Young, 'Athelston and English Law: Plantagenet Practice and Anglo-Saxon Precedent', *Parergon*, 22.1 (2005), 95-118 (pp. 108-9).

⁴²⁹ Young, 'Athelston', p. 108.

⁴³⁰ Young, 'Athelston', p. 112.

⁴³¹ J. S. Forsyth, *Demonologia; or, Natural Knowledge Revealed* (London: John Bumpus, 1827), p. 383.

excommunication. Young explains that the betrayal and ordeal story has a historical association with King Athelstan:

It was related to a story, originally recounted by William of Malmesbury, concerning the death of Athelstan's brother Eadwin. Eadwin was falsely accused of treason by the king's cupbearer, and although he denied the charge on oath he was driven into exile in a boat with no oars and only one attendant. Eadwin subsequently drowned, although the attendant survived and brought the body to shore. Athelstan was horrified by his own deed, did seven years' penance, and executed the instigator.⁴³²

The issues of treason, false accusation and sworn brotherhood are treated in the romance in relation to this historical association. However, unlike his historical counterpart, Athelston in the romance does not repent of the victimizations he initiates.

Athelston's unrepentance exposes his villainous nature, which is revealed especially after his authority is threatened. After his sworn brother Sir Wymound falsely accuses his other sworn brother Sir Egelond of treason against Athelston, Athelston turns into a victimizer of whoever he sees as a threat against his authority - even his wife, who strives to prove the Egelond family's innocence- without questioning the reality of the threat. Through misjudgement and a desire to maintain his authority, Athelston orders their punishment; yet, he proves to be a worse villain than Sir Wymound and does not repent of it. Athelston's desire to maintain his authority blinds him to the fact that he is victimizing his wife, sister and her family. According to Richard Hovarth, 'the narrative increasingly questions and even undermines King Athelston's authority'.⁴³³ He is presented as a non-ideal husband, ruler and Christian. In this respect, the romance, as Bradbury suggests, 'announces itself as a tale of 'falseness'⁴³⁴ since its hero represents all non-ideals.

It is significantly implied that Athelston's villainy is not only of secular interest but also a religious one, because of his ignoring the Archbishop's warnings against the sinfulness of bad judgement. He kicks his pregnant wife and kills their unborn baby when she wants to prevent his making a bad judgement:

'A, dame,' he sayde, 'verrayment
Hast thou broke my comaundement
Abyyd ful dere thou schalle.'

⁴³² Young, 'Athelston', p. 99.

⁴³³ Richard Horvath, 'Romancing the Word: Fama in the Middle English *Sir Launfal* and *Athelston*', in *Fama: The Politics of Talk and Reputation in Medieval Europe*, ed. by Thelma Fenster and Daniel Lord Smail (New York: Cornell University Press, 2003), pp. 165-86 (p. 184).

⁴³⁴ Nancy Mason Bradbury, 'The Erosion of Oath-Based Relationships: A Cultural Context for *Athelston*', *Medium Ævum*, 73.2 (2004), 189-200 (p. 189).

With hys foot – he wolde nought wonde –
 He slowgh the chyld ryght in here wombe,⁴³⁵

His justified villainy turns into pure villainy and, as Bradbury points out, Athelston's villainy becomes a 'self-inflicted spiritual, social, and dynastic collapse'⁴³⁶ because he is blinded by his pride, and he abuses his roles as a protective husband, father, sworn brother and just king. Although Athelston is punished by being excommunicated and he kills his heir, he reconciles with the bishop and declares the new-born baby of his sister as his heir. There is no specific indication of, or monologue about, his acknowledging his evil judgement, or any self-realization. 'In herte he was ful woo' (l. 252) is the only line which states the feeling of Athelston for the suffering of his sister and her family, when she asks for mercy and asks for the reasons of his desire to kill them. Hence, the romance writer stresses Athelston's sadness in order to arouse sympathy for him, in that he is also the victim of Sir Wymound. In other words, he is a justified villain, even if a really malicious and dangerous one. Therefore, through arousing sympathy for his victimization by Sir Wymound and sparing Athelston from punishment in return for his villainy, the romance questions 'when does justification become valid? At what point does justified villainy/victimization become pure villainy?'

Like Athelston, the husband in the *Erle of Tolous* is deceived by false accusers, which makes him a justified villain. However, he, too, is purely villainous because of his role as an unjust ruler. Despite his imprisonment of the Empress after an accusation of adultery against her by her guardian knights being some justification for his punishment of her, Sir Dyoclysyen reveals his villainy when he does not allow his wife to defend herself and prove her innocence. His decision in favour of her death is immediate:

The two traytours answeryd anone,
 'Yf ye wyste how sche had done,
 To dethe sche schulde be dyght.'

'A, devyll!' he seyde, 'how soo,
 To dethe that sche ys worthy to go?
 Tell me, in what manere.'⁴³⁷

⁴³⁵ *Athelston*, in *Four Romances of England*, ed. by Ronald B. Herzman, Graham Drake and Eve Salisbury (Kalamazoo, Michigan: Medieval Institute Publications, 1999), pp. 341-84 (pp. 356-7), lines 279-83. All references are to this edition, cited by the editors' page and line number.

⁴³⁶ Bradbury, 'Erosion', p. 189.

⁴³⁷ *Erle of Tolous*, in *The Middle English Breton Lays*, ed. by Laskaya and Salisbury, pp. 309-65 (p. 342), lines 845-50. All references are to this edition, cited by the editors' page and line number.

Both Athelston and the Emperor have reasons to be justified villains, but they change into pure villains through their insistence on quick, prejudiced and evil judgements.

Contrary to justified villains who turn into pure villains, there are several justified villains in romances who repent of their villainy after they realize that they have misjudged because they themselves have been deceived by other, pure villains. King Arduus in *Sir Tryamour* is a justified villain, who is deceived by his steward Marrok's allegation that Arduus's wife Margaret has conceived her child with a knight whom Marrok has killed when he caught them in bed together. Marrok deceives the King by lying that:

The quene hath done the trayne!
Another knyght, so mote Y spede,
Gat the chylde syth thou yede
And hath the quene forlayne!⁴³⁸

King Arduus trusts his steward and exiles Margaret by making a quick and false judgement, without allowing Margaret to defend herself. After the falsehood of Marrok's accusation against Margaret is revealed, King Arduus realizes his bad judgement and villainy, punishes Marrok, and suffers from sorrow until he is reunited with his wife. Similarly, Florentyne's father the Emperor in *The Seven Sages of Rome* is another justified villain who makes his son suffer in prison under threat of execution because of his misjudgement, after being deceived by his wife with a false accusation of ravishment against Florentyne. He sees his son as a threat, both to his marriage and to his authority as a ruler. His trust in his wife overshadows his confidence in his son, which turns him into the victimizer of his son; yet, he regains his protective paternal role after his wife's villainy is revealed, and she is burned for her treason.

Justified male villains usually take action to defend themselves when under sexual threat, or the threat of losing their societal or familial authority, when threats to their authority and the sexuality of their women may transform them into pure villains, although some of them realize their villainy and compensate for the suffering they perpetrate. By contrast, the justified villainy of Sir Gowther in *Sir Gowther* is related to his adulterous and implicitly demonic birth. Since the popularity of tales about fairy mistresses and lovers was at its height in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, Sir Gowther's story 'was a salutary warning against the dangers of entering into such

⁴³⁸ *Sir Tryamour*, in *Four Middle English Romances*, ed. by Hudson, pp. 145-93 (p. 153), lines 171-4. All references are to this edition, cited by Hudson's page and line number.

liaisons'.⁴³⁹ Furthermore, the romance, as Radulescu points out, is 'a reminder of the troubled questions about parentage [...] as well as anxieties over unruly, unchristian noble heirs, whose wild behaviour [...] was not so uncommon in medieval England'.⁴⁴⁰ The duke and his wife lack an heir after ten years of happy marriage, but the devil in disguise appears to the duke's wife in the shape of her husband and impregnates her. Afterwards, she gives birth to Sir Gowther who 'metaphorically feeds on violence'⁴⁴¹ even when he is an infant boy. He bites off his mother's nipple and causes the death of nine of his nurses whilst they are suckling him. As Shirley Marchalonis and Neil Cartlidge observe, Sir Gowther 'proves himself to be God's enemy, as the devil's son should be. Therefore, his knighthood is false; it is a parody or perversion of the ideal',⁴⁴² and he represents 'the Devil's manifestations in this world'.⁴⁴³ He disregards the ideals of chivalry and subverts what he has been entrusted to uphold. He grows into a tyrannical ruler who burns nunneries, ruins marriages by raping women and slaying husbands, and hangs people on hooks:

Meydyns' maryage wolde he spyll
 And take wyffus ageyn hor wyll,
 And sley hor husbondus too.
 And make frerus to leype at kraggus
 And parsons forto heng on knaggus,
 And odur prestys sloo.⁴⁴⁴

Sir Gowther realizes his villainy only after one of his earls reminds him that he may be the devil's offspring, apparent from his cruelty. After learning the truth about his conception, he isolates himself to repent of the misdeeds caused by being a demonic son and a tyrannical ruler (again, partially justified by his unknown demonic ancestry and conception), and he is forgiven by God on account of his repentance and patient suffering. His demonic birth and resulting cruelty are similar to those of Richard Coer de Lyon, but Richard is more easily excused, if demonic and cruel, due to the fact that he is persecuting Saracens, not Christians.

⁴³⁹ Smithers, 'Story-Patterns', p. 77.

⁴⁴⁰ Raluca L. Radulescu, 'How Christian is Chivalry?', in *Christianity and Romance in Medieval England*, ed. by Rosalind Field, Phillipa Hardman and Michelle Sweeney (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2010), pp. 69-83 (p. 82).

⁴⁴¹ Anna Czarnowus, *Inscription on the Body: Monstrous Children in Middle English Literature* (Katowice: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego, 2009), p. 117.

⁴⁴² Marchalonis, 'Sir Gowther', p. 18.

⁴⁴³ Neil Cartlidge, 'Therof Seyus Clerkus': Slander, Rape and *Sir Gowther*', in *Cultural Encounters*, ed. by Saunders, pp. 135-48 (p. 137).

⁴⁴⁴ *Sir Gowther*, in *Six Middle English Romances*, ed. by Mills, pp. 148-68 (p. 153), lines 193-8. All references are to this edition, cited by Mills's page and line number.

Apart from pure domestic villains and justified villains, there are domestic villains who act like catalysts. They either initiate suffering and disappear or are involved in inflicting suffering for only a short time span in the narrative. Although their involvement is fleeting, they create justified villains or contribute to the course of events significantly. The number of domestic catalyst villains is very low compared to those of 'stranger' catalysts; yet, they are not less effective in terms of initiating suffering and they are all males.

Converted sons of Saracen rulers in *Sir Ferumbras* and *The Sowdone of Babylone* are catalysts, initiating suffering for their fathers. In both romances, sons betray their fathers by siding with the French enemy and preparing for their fathers' destruction. As Carol F. Heffernan states:

The subject of conversion of the infidel is a popular theme in the English Charlemagne romances that appears to develop out of the underlying assumption of all Middle English crusading romances: the Christian faith is superior to that of the infidels just as Christian knights are superior to Saracen warriors.⁴⁴⁵

However, in both romances, betrayals by these sons are not mainly caused by their accepting the superiority of Christian faith, but by their desire to survive the execution with which they are threatened if they refuse conversion. In both romances, sons convert to Christianity after they are defeated by French knights in duels, and they become victimizers of Saracens, who represent 'the enemies of Christianity'.⁴⁴⁶ They give up their role as 'enemy of Christianity' in order not to be 'enemy of Christians', and they are forced to choose either death or conversion. In the Middle Ages, it was considered that, the word 'Saracen' could be used interchangeably as 'Muslim' or 'infidel'⁴⁴⁷ to represent 'Christ's supposed enemies' who had to be defeated and destroyed⁴⁴⁸ because the 'Saracen bodies exist to menace Christian integrity and as a consequence to be spectacularly destroyed'.⁴⁴⁹ Alternatively, they were forced to convert, and the Christian demands for the conversion of Saracens were 'accompanied by threats of violence or promises of rewards, and the outcome may be the desired

⁴⁴⁵ Carol F. Heffernan, *The Orient in Chaucer and Medieval Romance* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2003), p. 10.

⁴⁴⁶ de Weever, *Sheba's Daughters*, p. xxx.

⁴⁴⁷ Ashton, *Medieval English Romance*, p. 12.

⁴⁴⁸ For a discussion of the Saracens as the victimizers of Christ see David Nicolle, 'Hattin 1187', in *God's Warriors: Crusaders, Saracens and the Battle for Jerusalem*, ed. by Helen Nicholson and David Nicolle (New York: Osprey, 2005), pp. 6-85.

⁴⁴⁹ Cohen, 'On Saracen Enjoyment', p. 126.

conversion or the death of the Saracens'.⁴⁵⁰ Although conversion saves the sons, it victimizes their fathers, as both Balan and Laban are defeated and executed by the French with the help of Ferumbras in each romance – in spite of Ferumbras's begging for mercy for his father in *Sir Ferumbras*.

Survival and siding with the powerful are also the main concerns of the catalyst villains in *Beves of Hamptoun* and *Athelston*. The Saracen giant Ascopart, who submits to Beves's service in *Beves of Hamptoun*, betrays him by abducting Beves's lover Josian when King Yvor asks him to. Melissa Furrow suggests that the reason for Ascopart's betrayal is unclear because 'it is up to the listener or reader to see the betrayal either as the inherent treachery of a Saracen giant who has been only nominally Christianized or as the pique of a servant who thinks himself insufficiently valued as a companion by his master'.⁴⁵¹ However, there is no implication in the romance that Beves mistreated Ascopart, and his betrayal depends more on his Saracen nature, which is unreliable. In *Athelston*, King Athelston's sworn brother Sir Wymound (who is jealous of Athelston's fondness for their other sworn brother Sir Egelond and his family) falsely accuses the Egelond family of plotting against the king, thus initiating all suffering in the romance. As Mehl depicts him, he is 'an allusion of Cain',⁴⁵² since Sir Wymound intends to destroy his brother by abusing his obsession with his authority. He not only reminds Athelston that he is vulnerable to treason despite his being powerful but also breaks his loyalty to Athelston and abuses his judgement as a ruler. Therefore, he not only victimizes Athelston as a sworn brother but also as a just king, thereby exploiting the values of both brotherhood and kingship.

Catalyst domestic male villains in *Sir Gowther* and *Emaré* attempt to spoil the bloodline through adulterous and incestuous affairs. The devil embodies the position of the father and 'exerts the paternal authority governing Gowther's behaviour'.⁴⁵³ He spoils the purity of the bloodline by impregnating the Duke's wife and becomes the reason for their son Gowther's villainy in *Sir Gowther*, while Emaré's father Sir Artyus exiles her after she rejects his offer of incestuous marriage. John R. Reinhard points out that:

The motives which lie behind Sir Artyus' actions are easy to discern; they were obvious to every mediaeval man and woman who listened to the tale, but in a less robust age

⁴⁵⁰ Diane Speed, 'The Saracens of *King Horn*', *Speculum*, 65.3 (1990), 564-95 (p. 558).

⁴⁵¹ Melissa Furrow, 'Ascopard's Betrayal: A Narrative Problem', in *Sir Bevis of Hampton*, ed. by Fellows and Djordjević, pp. 145-60 (p. 146).

⁴⁵² Mehl, *The Middle English Romances*, p. 149.

⁴⁵³ Francine McGregor, 'The Paternal Function in *Sir Gowther*', *Essays in Medieval Studies*, 16 (1999), 67-78 (p. 72).

they must be baldly stated: Anger at his daughter's stubbornness, fear lest she make public his proposal, and revenge.⁴⁵⁴

He is decisive in taking revenge; yet, as Gail Ashton states, he repents after realizing that he has 'an obligation of care to Emaré and the world he rules'.⁴⁵⁵ Reinhard and Ashton avoid describing Sir Artyus as a villain, since he repents of his sinful attempt and goes to Rome on a penitential journey to save his soul from this shame. However, he *is* a villain, since he is a perverted father who fails in his role of protection of his daughter and of his bloodline. What blurs the category of his villainy- whether he is a catalyst or a good villain- is Emaré's robe, because it is implied in the romance that he offers incest when he is under the influence of a spell cast by the magic robe given him as a present. He sees Emaré in this robe, which shines and dazzles the eyes and causes the onlooker to think that the lady who wears it is not an earthly one. It implies that her father does not victimize her willingly, but because he is mesmerized by the magical garment, and this is supported by his repentance immediately after her being sent to exile, as he no longer sees her in that garb. His immediate repentance, his being unpunished at the end of the romance and the existence of the spellbound robe, present him not only as a catalyst villain but also a 'good' villain, a person with essentially good motivations, who introduces suffering without intending it.

Romances have a thematic and structural pattern in which there is 'a moral pattern, a strong sense of poetic justice. The good are rewarded and the bad punished. Even the hero, if he commits a sin, must suffer for it'.⁴⁵⁶ However, contrary to the cruel punishment of pure villains, catalyst domestic villains are not generally severely punished. Commonly, catalyst domestic villains are mentioned only in a few lines in the romances. Their role is merely to initiate suffering for the victims, and they are not portrayed in depth like pure villains. Therefore, they are presented only as 'extra' villains who have minor functions alongside those of pure villains; this spares them from severe punishments. They are rewarded after suffering temporarily if they are repentant, or if they convert by acting in accordance with Christian ideals. Sir Artyus is rewarded by reunion with his daughter in *Emaré*. The unrepentant catalyst villain Sir Wymound in *Athelston* is executed by drawing, hanging, and the public display of his body. Walter Ullmann points out that an accuser used to suffer the same punishment for

⁴⁵⁴ John R. Reinhard, 'Setting Adrift in Mediæval Law and Literature', *PMLA*, 56.1 (1941), 33-68 (p. 42).

⁴⁵⁵ Gail Ashton, 'Her Father's Daughter: The Realignment of Father-Daughter Kinship in Three Romance Tales', *The Chaucer Review*, 34.4 (2000), 416-27 (p. 423).

⁴⁵⁶ Kathryn Hume, 'Amis and Amiloun and the Aesthetics of Middle English Romance', *Studies in Philology*, 70.1 (1973), 19-41 (p. 27).

the same crime with which he charged the accused, even if there was no complete obedience to this principle in the Middle Ages.⁴⁵⁷ In this respect, Sir Wymound's punishment is historically accurate within the legal procedures of the period. Different from the other villains, the sons who betray their fathers in *Sir Ferumbras* and *The Sowdone of Babylone* are exempted from punishment because they convert to Christianity, and they victimize Saracens, who deserve suffering. Therefore, instead of being punished, they are given half of Spain as rewards.

'Good' domestic villains, in other words 'unintended villains', are another group of villains who are spared from punishment, but their getting away with punishment depends on the level of goodness of their intention. They are mostly lovers or other family members who have no intent for villainy, but they inflict suffering unknowingly on their victim. In contrast to their 'pure' villainous counterparts, 'good' villains are sympathetic and their victimizations are not meant to inflict suffering, but to prevent it. They are foils to 'pure' female domestic villains who victimize or enchant to inflict suffering, and they help to mollify the idea that the household might all be mischievous or malicious. They victimize while trying to relieve or prevent suffering, and they are not punished as a result of their 'good villainy'. Maternal love and care, and passionate love for a male or female, are the main motivations which make them villains unintentionally. In *The Squire of Low Degree*, the King of Hungary's daughter wants her lover the Squire to quest for seven years in order to prove that he is worthy of her hand. The princess is not villainous when she asks for the Squire to leave, because she wants him to prove his chivalric excellence and nobility; yet, she is unaware that her lover will be abused, imprisoned and then sent on quest by her father. In *Ipomadon*, Lady Fere and Ipomadon blame each other, and they do not realize that their love is mutual. Lady Fere humiliates Ipomadon as a coward because of his refraining from chivalric deeds to prove himself as the best knight on earth, who is worthy enough to marry her. She is so proud that she thinks she is peerless:

Fro she come to here above,
That may wax so provde of love,
Her thought no prynce her pere.
Yf she were semelyeste vnder schrovde
Of other poyntys, she was namyd prowde

⁴⁵⁷ Walter Ullmann, 'Some Medieval Principles of Criminal Procedure', *The Juridical Review*, 59 (1947), 1-28 (pp. 4-5).

But of love to lere.⁴⁵⁸

In return for her humiliation, Ipomadon punishes Lady Fere by forsaking her for a long time, although he is always around her in disguise, until he reveals his identity and she reveals her love for him.

A mother as a ‘good’ villain is the victimizer of her child unintentionally, while desiring to protect him in *Partonope of Blois*. When Partonope’s mother is worried about her son’s being enchanted by a fairy (when she learns about his lover Melior’s forbidding Partonope to see her for a year and a half), she makes him drink an enchanted wine to make him fall in love with the king’s niece and forget Melior. When she fails, she gives him an enchanted lantern to reveal Melior’s wickedness, which ends with Melior accusing Partonope of distrusting her. This leads to the separation of the lovers for a while. During this separation, Melior’s sister Urike acts like a ‘good villain’ by victimizing her sister, so that Melior can realize that she is making her lover suffer. She helps Partonope because she sees that he has suffered greatly and he is truly repentant; however, Urike torments Melior emotionally so that Melior will realize Partonope’s suffering. They will then be reminded that Partonope and Melior are mistaken in distrusting one another. Neither Partonope’s mother nor Melior’s sister are intentionally villainous. Even if neither Partonope’s mother nor Urike are malevolent, they are ‘good’ villains since their attempts make the lovers suffer to have a good outcome; the end, or the intention, justifies the means.

Like his female counterparts, in *The Romans of Partenay*, Geoffrey, who is Melusine and Raymond’s son, is a ‘good’ villain who unknowingly separates his family while trying to keep it together. He believes that the monks are indulgent lechers, and they have enchanted his brother to become a monk, so he burns their monastery with his brother Fromont in it in order to punish them. Lewis believes that Geoffrey causes ‘a family tragedy’ since he loses his self-control, and consequently divides his family.⁴⁵⁹ However, although Geoffrey’s temper has divided his family, he has no malevolent intentions. He proves this when he repents of the villainy triggered by his temper, and he builds an abbey to compensate for it.

Like domestic villains, stranger villains can be grouped as ‘pure’, ‘justified’ and ‘good’ villains by their intent and how they function in the suffering of their victims. ‘Pure’ male stranger villains are predatory, seeking personal empowerment. Stranger

⁴⁵⁸ *Ipomadon*, ed. by Rhiannon Purdie, EETS o.s., 316 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 5-6, lines 103-8. All references are to this edition, cited by Purdie’s page and line number.

⁴⁵⁹ Lewis, ‘Acceptable Lessons’, p. 16.

villains are all males, except for one romance where Queen Guenevere is represented as a temptress and false accuser, full of pride. Queen Guenevere in *Sir Launfal* is a trickster and promiscuous wife who cuckolds her husband King Arthur. Sir Launfal leaves King Arthur's court to escape from her victimization (he has also been deprived of his wealth); yet, she revenges herself on Sir Launfal for rejecting her love and boasting of his fairy lover Lady Tryamour, by abusing her husband King Arthur's authority to put Sir Launfal to trial and execution.

Steward Marrok is the 'pure' male stranger villain in *Sir Tryamour*, and is dominant all through the romance. As Kratins explains, '[i]n romances we meet numerous accusations brought on grounds ranging from mere suspicion to discovery in the act. Most often these accusations, aiming at murder under the cloak of justice, are themselves treason'.⁴⁶⁰ Marrok exemplifies this statement perfectly because all suffering in the romance is triggered by his chain of villainies which makes him a 'pure' villain rather than a 'catalyst', unlike many of the stewards represented in other romances. Marrok persuades King Arduus to exile his wife, whilst pretending to be merciful and advising that the lady should be accompanied by a friendly protector when exiled and given some money. However, he follows Margaret's boat, kills Sir Roger who accompanies her, defaces his corpse disrespectfully, and wants to kill the Queen but cannot find her, as she hides in the forest. He maintains his status as a trustworthy man and as the king's steward until he is killed, appropriately, by Sir Roger's dog, and his villainy is revealed.

Paired stranger 'pure' villains are Maboune and Jayne in *Lybeaus Desconus*, who curse the Lady of Synadowne by practising necromancy. They transform her into a monstrous shape which can only be lifted by a kiss of Sir Gawain or someone of his blood. Other paired 'pure' villains are presented in *The Lay of Havelok the Dane*. These are presented as selfish, greedy and unreliable. As Charbonneau and Cromwell point out, 'negative representations of the abuse of male privilege and authority are equally possible in this genre that accommodates views that speak against idealized male portraits of heroism and military strength'.⁴⁶¹ Godard and Godrich 'represent those of the newly powerful propertied classes: they hoped to share the privilege of government, but had no intention of extending that privilege beyond themselves'.⁴⁶² Their treason indicates that medieval 'formal guardianship procedures may have ensured guardianship

⁴⁶⁰ Kratins, 'Treason', p. 671.

⁴⁶¹ Charbonneau and Cromwell, 'Gender and Identity', p. 108.

⁴⁶² Sheila Delany, 'The Romance of Kingship: *Havelok the Dane*', in *Medieval Literary Politics: Shapes of Ideology*, ed. by Sheila Delany (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990), pp. 61-73 (p. 68).

for fatherless children, but it also shows us that they were readily open to abuse'.⁴⁶³ Even if the romance authors have no knowledge of the legal procedures, '[t]hrough the similarities between the situations of characters in romances and participants in legal cases, we may see medieval people responding to legal situations in terms defined for them by imaginative literature'.⁴⁶⁴ The romance author lays great emphasis on legal practices and social institutions, such as oaths taken by Godrich, his homage, and the sentence of execution on Godrich.⁴⁶⁵ Hence, the romance questions 'the legal fluency of their audiences and their concern with the just operation of law'.⁴⁶⁶

Havelok, his sisters and Goldborough are victimized by the nobles, who abuse their custody rights, the former by Godard and the latter by Godrich, to whom they have been entrusted by their fathers for protection before their deaths. Both villains are trustworthy until they realize that they can empower themselves, and this realization turns them into villains. Their transformation calls the idea of trusting other human beings into question, as human hypocrisy and cynicism are revealed under their angelic masks. When they become rich and authoritative, they refuse to pass the power on to Havelok and Goldborough, and they not only betray the kings (the children's fathers) by breaking their oaths but also by robbing their children of their noble identity and preventing their succession. As Ananya J. Kabir says, Havelok is treated as a 'male Cinderella' wrongfully deprived of his social prestige and wealth.⁴⁶⁷ Godard slays Havelok's sisters and wants Grim to drown Havelok; yet, his plan fails. Godrich imprisons Goldborough and forces her to marry Havelok because Godrich thinks he is a poor commoner, and Havelok is beaten and threatened with hanging by Godrich if he refuses to marry Goldborough. Mehl remarks that '[t]he subtle irony of the episode lays in the fact that Godrich means to be true to his oath, [...] by this literal fulfilling of his promise to marry Goldeboru to the strongest and the best man that can be found'.⁴⁶⁸ However, he does not arrange it intentionally, but rather aims to disparage her by marrying her to a lower class husband. As Havelok becomes older, experienced and invulnerable, the villains begin to lose power and look for allies to keep the rewards of their villainy. When Godrich hears that Havelok has invaded England and he is the King

⁴⁶³ Menuge, 'Wardship Romance', p. 36.

⁴⁶⁴ Menuge, 'Wardship Romance', pp. 32-3.

⁴⁶⁵ Thorlac Turville-Petre, 'Havelok and the History of the Nation', in *Readings*, ed. by Meale, pp.121-34 (pp. 122-3).

⁴⁶⁶ Robert Allen Rouse, 'English Identity and the Law in *Havelok the Dane*, *Horn Childe* and *Maiden Rimmild* and *Beues of Hamtoun*', in *Cultural Encounters*, ed. by Saunders, pp. 69-84 (p. 71).

⁴⁶⁷ Ananya J. Kabir, 'Forging an Oral Style? *Havelok* and the Fiction of Orality', *Studies in Philology*, 98.1 (2001), 18-48 (p. 38).

⁴⁶⁸ Mehl, *The Middle English Romances*, p. 169.

of Denmark, he decides to kill Havelok and Goldborough by hanging them. He provokes the people of Lincoln against Havelok, but he can neither catch nor kill them.

In *Sir Degrevant*, ‘the poet has told a plausible tale, based on the rivalries of landowning neighbours’,⁴⁶⁹ which evokes the problems of the crusader knights who experienced similar troubles when they were away from their estates in the Middle Ages.⁴⁷⁰ It is developed through the earl’s villainy and his unjust attack on Sir Degrevant’s lands and property when Sir Degrevant is away in Spain. The earl’s contempt for Sir Degrevant identifies his desire to maintain social power through destruction.⁴⁷¹

Therinne he made a sory pley:
The fattest he feld, in fey,
By sixty on a day,
Such maystries he made.

He drowhe reveres with fysh
And slogh hys forsteres ywys.⁴⁷²

Despite his desire for empowerment through capturing Sir Degrevant’s lands, the Earl is afraid that Degrevant will take revenge; therefore, he pretends to compromise by offering his daughter Melidor’s hand in a tournament. At the same time, he hopes for Sir Degrevant’s murder by other suitors; yet, he cannot - and does not try to - prevent Sir Degrevant’s victory. Technically speaking, he is ‘rewarded’ by having his daughter marry into Degrevant’s family. However, as a villain and a sinner, his evil must be punished somehow. He gains property for his family, but loses his ‘name’. The inheritor children will bear Degrevant’s name, not his; and ‘identity’ is more important than possessions, which just support it.

‘Pure’ male stranger villains and the ‘pure’ female stranger villain are all punished in return for their villainy. In *Sir Launfal*, Guenevere is blinded by Lady Tryamour’s breath in return for her false accusation against Sir Launfal. This punishment is, indeed, nominated by Guenevere before her villainy is revealed because she asks to be blinded if she is wrong. ‘[P]ronouncing sentence on themselves for their

⁴⁶⁹ William A. Davenport, ‘*Sir Degrevant* and Composite Romance’, in *Medieval Insular Romance*, ed. by Weiss, Fellows and Dickson, pp. 111-31 (p. 130).

⁴⁷⁰ Anthony S. G. Edwards, ‘Gender, Order and Reconciliation in *Sir Degrevaunt*’, in *Readings*, ed. by Meale, pp. 53-64 (p. 55).

⁴⁷¹ Arlyn Diamond, ‘*Sir Degrevant*: What Lovers Want’, in *Pulp Fictions*, ed. by McDonald, pp. 82-101 (p. 92).

⁴⁷² *Sir Degrevant*, in *Sentimental and Humorous Romances*, ed. by Kooper, pp. 53-126 (p. 63), lines 109-14. All references are to this edition, cited by Kooper’s page and line number.

own-wrong doing' is a common folk tale motif, which foretells the means of punishment and suffering for the villain.⁴⁷³ Apart from that, Guenevere's punishment by Lady Tryamour 'dislocates the story from the domain of fantasy and inscribes it in a real social space' since it provides a moral justification by punishing the corruption in family and court.⁴⁷⁴ In *Sir Tryamour*, Marrok is killed by Sir Roger's dog, which thereby avenges its master's death. In *Sir Degrevant*, the Earl surrenders, has to become reconciled with Sir Degrevant, and is forced to give Degrevant his daughter Melidor as his wife.

Interestingly, the punishment is publicly performed in *The Lay of Havelok the Dane*. Godrich and Godard are victimized by Havelok in public as examples to potential villains. Public executions provided medieval people with a 'strong signal of justice in action'.⁴⁷⁵ Christopher Stuart states, in addition, that the romance appealed to Roger Bigod, Earl of Norfolk, and Humphrey de Bohun, Earl of Hereford, who led baronial opposition against King Edward I in 1297 on account of his heavy taxation. Therefore, both nobles were deprived of their hereditary positions, and 'the fall of two powerful earls in *Havelok* [...] might be used as a warning to discontented earls'.⁴⁷⁶ On the other hand, as Lim states, it is 'a means of restoring symbolic fatherhood to its proper status'⁴⁷⁷ since Havelok punishes the wicked surrogate fathers. Godard is killed after being tortured by being drawn on a mare's back:

And drowen him un-to þe galwes,
Nouth bi þe gate, But ouer þe falwes;
And henge [him] þore Bi þe hals:
Daþeit hwo recke! He was fals!⁴⁷⁸

In the thirteenth century, treason was punished by 'drawing (dragging by the tail of a horse to the gallows) and hanging'.⁴⁷⁹ Similarly, Godrich is drawn by a mare, burned and shamed in front of the people. The reasons for their punishment are written out and hung up along with the villains; these punishments are legalized by the king's order. Their children are also deprived of their heritage, in the manner of later medieval

⁴⁷³ B. K. Martin, 'Sir Launfal and the Folk Tale', *Medium Ævum*, 35 (1966), 199-210 (p. 208).

⁴⁷⁴ Horvath, 'Romancing the Word', p. 177. See also Myra Stokes, 'Lanval to Sir Launfal: A Story Becomes Popular', in *Spirit*, ed. by Putter and Gilbert, pp. 56-77 (p. 72).

⁴⁷⁵ Anthony Musson, *Medieval Law in Context: The Growth of Legal Consciousness from Magna Carta to the Peasants' Revolt* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001), p. 19.

⁴⁷⁶ Christopher Stuart, 'Havelok the Dane and Edward I in the 1290s', *Studies in Philology*, 93.4 (1996), 349-64 (p. 358).

⁴⁷⁷ Lim, 'In the Name of the (Dead) Father', p. 35.

⁴⁷⁸ *The Lay of Havelok the Dane*, ed. by Walter W. Skeat, EETS e.s., 4 (London: Trübner, 1868), p. 71, lines 2508-11. All references are to this edition, cited by Skeat's page and line number.

⁴⁷⁹ Kratins, 'Treason', p. 685.

treason convictions, where the traitor's lands became forfeit to the king, thereby punishing the traitor's family as well as himself.⁴⁸⁰

The role of Saracens as victimizers is ambiguous, as in the representation of the Saracen Sultan in *Sir Isumbras*. As Thomas H. Crofts and Robert Allen Rouse point out, '[b]y adhering to the binary paradigm of Christian as good and Saracen as evil, the oppositional model of identity formation produces a construction of identity that, while reductive, allows a clearer and less problematic definition of self and nation'.⁴⁸¹ According to this definition, the Saracen Sultan, lacking Christian ideals of mercy and kindness, is a 'pure' villain, as he humiliates and victimizes Sir Isumbras because he is 'other' to him. However, the Sultan is also a 'catalyst' for Sir Isumbras to suffer in penance, a function which Sir Isumbras cannot see. He forgets the main reason for his suffering - which is his pride - and makes the Saracen Sultan a scapegoat who is responsible for all the misfortunes which befall him; yet, the Sultan actually functions as a catalyst, a divine tool. Through victimizing him, Sir Isumbras is doomed by God to suffer on his exile. Therefore, the Sultan's death and Sir Isumbras's gaining his lands are not so much a sign of divine justice against the Sultan, but more a sign that his *victim* has been forgiven and rewarded by God, after his penitential suffering. The same binary of pure and catalyst villainy is valid for Tholomer, who is the King of Babylone in *Joseph of Aramathie*. As a pure villain, Tholomer attacks Sir Evelak's land, slays his men and imprisons Evelak. However, his villainy is foretold by Joseph as a punishment for Evelak, because of Evelak's heretical faith. Evelak converts to Christianity after being victimized by Tholomer, which justifies Tholomer's villainy since it is a means for Evelak's salvation. At the end of both romances, the villains are punished with death because of their being of the wrong faith, rather than their having victimized Sir Isumbras and Sir Evelak.

There was no Saracen threat to England in the Middle Ages, but the idea was strengthened by the *idea* of the crusades, which 'caused the English romances, like those of France, to use the term 'Saracen' for any non-Christian enemy'.⁴⁸² Besides, 'the French forces can become 'our' forces when what they represent is Christendom rather than a French national identity'.⁴⁸³ Consequently, the villainous representations of Saracen 'others' victimizing Christians not only make them pure villains but also

⁴⁸⁰ This replaces cruder punishments such as those in the Old French *Chanson de Roland*, where Ganelon's relatives are executed as well. Similar corporate guilt can also perhaps be seen in the hanging of the jury along with Gamelyn's brother in *The Tale of Gamelyn*.

⁴⁸¹ Crofts and Rouse, 'Middle English Popular Romance', p. 83.

⁴⁸² Ramsey, *Chivalric Romances*, p. 32.

⁴⁸³ Ailes and Hardman, 'How English are the Charlemagne Romances?', p. 53.

justified villains, who defend themselves against being victims of Christians. However, they are always doomed to fail against Christians, even if they are victims, because of their having the ‘wrong faith’ and because of their association with the devil himself. As Hopkins suggests:

What is more certain is a general identification of Saracens with the forces of evil. [...] Saracens threaten, or harm, or destroy, or despise Christianity. Their inspiration in doing so is, of course, the Devil himself, whom they worship in the form of their gods. The Devil’s aim, through his servants the Saracens, is to destroy Holy Church, and the frustration of this aim, whether or not accompanied by personal ambition or the desire for revenge, is a good and laudable thing.⁴⁸⁴

As they are believed to serve the devil’s purpose, Saracens are represented as well deserving of punishment because of their villainy. As followers of the wrong religion, they were ‘automatic enemies of Christendom’,⁴⁸⁵ and there was a common belief that they worshipped many gods, goddesses and demons, frequently represented by idols.⁴⁸⁶ They are represented as very strong and challenging, but they are defeated by Christian rivals, despite inferior Christian numbers or lesser physical power in battle. The pronounced strength of non-Christians is used to prove the ‘worthiness’ of Christians who defeat them because ‘you gain no credit for defeating the weak and vulnerable’.⁴⁸⁷ Of course, the weaker the Christian is physically, the greater is the grace of God which allows him to win. Barron defines the enmity between believers of both faiths: ‘good and evil are opposed in black and white terms requiring only physical effort for their solution’.⁴⁸⁸ Therefore, both sides see each other as ‘pure’ villains.

In fact, it is Christians who create monstrous Saracens by making them ‘monstrous others’. In crusading literature and historical accounts, the Islamic peoples of Spain and the Middle East were depicted as monstrous enemies.⁴⁸⁹ Despite their monstrosity, Saracen villains and Christian villains are also ‘justified villains’, as they victimize each other in order to impose their faith, of the superiority of which faith, be it Christianity or Islam, they are convinced. They dominate events throughout and are

⁴⁸⁴ Hopkins, *The Sinful Knights*, p. 142.

⁴⁸⁵ Debra Higgs Strickland, *Saracens, Demons, and Jews: Making Monsters in Medieval Art* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2003), p. 165.

⁴⁸⁶ John Victor Tolan, *Saracens: Islam in the Medieval European Imagination* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), p. 127.

⁴⁸⁷ Arlyn Diamond, ‘The Alliterative *Siege of Jerusalem*: The Poetics of Destruction’, in *Boundaries*, ed. by Cartlidge, pp. 103-13 (p. 112).

⁴⁸⁸ Barron, *English Medieval Romance*, p. 102.

⁴⁸⁹ Asa Simon Mittman and Susan M. Kim, ‘Monsters and the Exotic in Early Medieval England’, in *The Oxford Handbook*, ed. by Treharne and Walker, pp. 677-706 (p. 700).

more dynamic compared to other purely demonic villains. Their dynamism makes them dangerous, but also seductive. They do things which ordinary people cannot, and their dynamism is the driving force in their romances. Their villainy is somehow seen as 'heroic', because they are presented as self-confident and ignorant of the violence of what they practise. They desire 'the idea of being heroic' rather than actually *being* heroic to justify their 'villainy'. It is also common that Saracens who make Christians suffer turn out to be victimizers of Saracens after their conversions. This transformation does not change their role as victimizers, but changes their victims, because their hostility and violent treatments are directed to the members of their former faith.

In the Middle Ages there was a conviction that heathens deserved defeat and death at the hand of the righteous Christians, and this belief justified Christian action against the heathens during the crusades, 'the invasion, slaughter, and pillage of the non-Christian inhabitants of the Holy Land and elsewhere'.⁴⁹⁰ Defeat and glory stand for the glorification of all Christians and the degradation of all heathens. Although they are victimizers of each other, both Christians and Saracens need each other to justify the superiority of their faith, and to demonstrate that their faith is justified and acceptable even to their enemies. Saracens have to be presented as villainous to justify Christians' right to victimize their enemies in general, which also justifies Christians victimizing Saracens in particular. Thus, Saracens in romances are presented as hostile, uncivilized, devilish, unkind, merciless, strong but not invincible even by a small number of Christians. The number of Saracens always exceeds Christians, as is stated in *Richard Coer de Lyon*; half of the people on 'middle earth' are there to fight on the side of Saladyne when they besiege Jaffe; yet, victory is inevitable for the Christians.

Saracen versus Christian conflict is frequently represented by a duel between individual warriors of both faiths, as in *Roland and Vernagu* and *The Romance of Otuel*. Finlayson appropriately defines the duel as a 'dramatic climax in which the struggle becomes directly one between the champion of Christ and the champion of Mohammed, literally a struggle of the gods'.⁴⁹¹ The duel has scholastic overtones, with an exchange of theological questions and answers, and it is 'a kind of catechesis, whether for the Saracen or the Christian reader, for whom the debate reiterates and rationalizes central

⁴⁹⁰ Strickland, *Saracens*, p. 157.

⁴⁹¹ John Finlayson, 'Richard, Coer de Lyon: Romance, History or Something in Between?', *Studies in Philology*, 87.2 (1990), 156-80 (p. 178).

Christian doctrines'.⁴⁹² Here the participants act as representatives of their faith groups – romances reveal that whilst it is generally evil for an individual Christian to victimize another individual, it is perfectly acceptable – and good, even – for Christians as a group to victimize non-Christians, as a group. Individual knights who convert after defeat, such as Ferumbras, are given much more individuality and personality than those who are simply killed. Like the duel, the motif of the converted Saracen 'provides a natural opportunity for catechesis as Christian knights seek to convey the essential truths of the Christian faith to unbelievers. No doubt one aim of such passages was to remind the reader or listener of these same truths'.⁴⁹³ On the other hand, these teachings are divine warnings to non-Christian knights, who are doomed to suffer both on the battlefield and in the Otherworld. This motivation makes Christians stronger against Saracens, despite their physical inferiority, and makes them victimizers of those with false faith rather than being their victims.

Saracen and Christian conflict in romances is, indeed, exemplary for its presenting never-ending mutual victimizations which follow on from one another. Apart from a fight to overcome the 'other' because of faith, the main motivation for their never-ending villainy is presented as desire for revenge for previous ordeals they have inflicted on each other, which triggers much of their hostility to each other. *Roland and Vernagu* is a romance of Saracen and Christian victimization motivated by avenging their previous mutual victimizations. After hearing of the victimization of the Christians by heathens, King Charles marches to Constantinople to avenge and punish the Saracen King Ebrahim, the King of Spain. The role of the victim and the victimizer changes afterwards, as Charles conquers Spain and kills the Saracens.

The mutual victimization of Saracen and Christian forces is also exemplified by the duel between the Christian knight Roland and a Saracen knight, Vernagu, during which Roland talks about Christianity to Vernagu, then slays him, in return for his ignorance and humiliation of the Christian faith (which is presented as more important than Vernagu as a person). A similar duel takes place in *The Romance of Otuel* between a merciless and unkind Saracen knight Otuel, who 'demonstrates all the defects of the unenlightened'⁴⁹⁴ and Roland, who is a Christian knight. Otuel mocks King Charles, and challenges Roland to single combat, saying that he represents the Saracen King

⁴⁹² Diane Vincent, 'Reading a Christian-Saracen Debate in Fifteenth-Century Middle English Charlemagne Romance: The Case of *Turpines Story*', in *The Exploitations of Medieval Romance*, ed. by Laura Ashe, Ivana Djordjević and Judith Weiss (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2010), pp. 90-107 (p. 95).

⁴⁹³ Phillipa Hardman, 'The *Sege of Melayne*: A Fifteenth-Century Reading', in *Tradition and Transformation*, ed. by Field, pp. 71-86 (p. 86).

⁴⁹⁴ Barron, *English Medieval Romance*, p. 95.

Garsie's threat to make King Charles and his men his vassals. In contrast to the courageous representation of Christians in romances against Saracens, King Charles is afraid of Otuel's strength and he is worried that he may kill Roland in the duel. He offers Otuel riches and his daughter Belecant as wife, and Otuel accepts conversion to Christianity after a white dove descends miraculously onto his head (as at the baptism of Christ). So, the result is achieved by a combination of unchristian fear, self-interest, greed and a heavenly sign, implying that any means to this end will do in these romances. After Otuel's conversion, he fights on the side of the Christians and slays Saracen knights.

Although it is a secular story mainly concentrating on the adventures and successes of Otuel, *The Romance of Otuel* has significant religious implications, with the story of Otuel's miraculous conversion through divine intervention and his capturing of the Saracen King Garsie. Garsie is, by implication, punished by one of his men that he trusts most in attacking the Christians; however, ironically this man turns out to be Garsie's victimizer, thus justifying the right cause of the Christian faith. Otuel becomes a nobler and kinder knight after his conversion. He is presented as an ideal Christian knight, with perfect military skills and mercy for those who ask for it. It is even more apparent when compared with his rude and combative manners towards the French before his conversion. He becomes a forgiving knight, more 'Christian' than the Christians, showing mercy to Garsie when he asks for it and agreeing to pay homage to Charles.

The supremacy of the Christian cause and the rightness of Christian 'villainy' are mirrored in heroic representations of Christians, despite the 'monstrosity' of their villainy. Even if in other romances it is always the non-Christians who are represented as rude and villainous, in *Richard Coer de Lyon*, it is Richard who is presented as a rude and villainous Christian. Although Richard is 'monstrous' for the Saracens, he is 'heroic' for the Christians because of his personal prowess against all treachery and enemies surrounding him.⁴⁹⁵ All controversial situations come together in Richard's heroic, but also cruel, nature. Richard's brutality and mercilessness is 'pure' villainy in a secular reading of the text, because he kills all Saracens regardless of age and sex. He refers to the Saracens as 'hounds', since the Saracens in the Middle Ages were associated with dogs, to stress their beastly character, as opposed to rationality.⁴⁹⁶ He

⁴⁹⁵ Finlayson, 'Richard, Coer de Lyon', p. 172.

⁴⁹⁶ Michael Uebel, 'Unthinking the Monster: Twelfth-Century Responses to Saracen Alterity', in *Monster Theory: Reading Culture*, ed. by Jeffrey Jerome Cohen (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press,

rides ‘To slee þe houndes non ne sparde’,⁴⁹⁷ and he orders his men to kill the Saracens until valleys run all in blood.

Heng and Pearsall point out that Richard’s description is influenced by the rising nationalism in the thirteenth century and the idea of the Crusades,⁴⁹⁸ and his cannibalism is a military tactic as ‘[i]n devouring the heirs of Muslim kings and princes of the Orient, English Christians will swallow up lineages and sweep away succession, consuming the future itself, in world domination’.⁴⁹⁹ However, when the text is read in a religious sense, his brutality and mercilessness turn out to be the means to accomplish his holy mission and to avenge Christ’s foes. Ironically, the text is somehow paradoxical in a religious reading, because it presents the child of a mother with demonic nature as the avenger of Christ. In other words, although Richard is the son of a woman who cannot tolerate hearing Mass, he adopts a holy mission. Lee states that Richard combines God’s power with that of the devil, and he is a creation of ‘this strange and unholy mixture’.⁵⁰⁰ He becomes the devil himself for the Saracens that he kills without pity, though Christ sends him grace when he does so. Thus, despite the inconsistency, Richard embodies both evil and Christian devotion at the same time, and this justifies his villainy. On the other hand, the Saracens are presented as ‘no longer as human beings, but as personifications of all that is unchristian and of the malice of Satan’,⁵⁰¹ who thus deserve their punishment.

The humiliation of the Saracens is present in detail throughout the romance. In contrast to Richard (and unlike many other romances), the Saracen Sawdan, Saladyn, is presented as a weak person who escapes when Christians attack, a cowardly ruler asking for mercy and offering treasures to Richard to spare his life. Christian nobles are superior to Saracen nobles in every sense. When Christian nobles are on the best steeds, Saracen nobles are described riding on ‘rabbits’, in order to humiliate and belittle them. This total contrast between Saladyn and Richard is empowering for Richard whilst weakening Saladyn. Like their rulers, the Saracens are inferior to the Christians.

1996), pp. 264-91 (p. 268); John Block Friedman, *The Monstrous Races in Medieval Art and Thought* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2000), p. 69.

⁴⁹⁷ *Der mitttelenglische Versroman*, ed. by Brunner, 294. 4054.

⁴⁹⁸ Geraldine Heng, ‘The Romance of England: *Richard Coer de Lyon*, Saracens, Jews, and the Politics of Race and Nation’, in *The Post-Colonial Middle Ages*, ed. by Jeffrey J. Cohen (New York: St Martin’s Press, 2000), pp. 135-72 (p. 139); Derek Pearsall, ‘The Idea of Englishness in the Fifteenth Century’, in *Nation, Court and Culture: New Essays on Fifteenth-Century English Poetry*, ed. by Helen Cooney (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2001), pp. 15-27 (p. 15).

⁴⁹⁹ Heng, ‘Romance of England’, p. 141.

⁵⁰⁰ Ramsey, *Chivalric Romances*, pp. 79-80.

⁵⁰¹ Mehl, *The Middle English Romances*, p. 245.

Richard says one Christian man equals the worth of nineteen Saracens; and ‘þe moo þer be, þe more j schal sloo, / And wreke Jhesu off hys ffoo.’⁵⁰²

Richard has an unending appetite for victory over the Saracens and for their flesh as meat, which makes him not a typically ‘heroic’ figure in a Christian sense. As McDonald points out, ‘Richard as a ‘lionheart’ is rendered baldly literal: it is recast as a simple act of (alimentary) cause and effect: you are what you eat’.⁵⁰³ This, then, makes Richard not only of demonic descent, but a beast. Richard makes himself a real monster for the Saracens when he orders his men to kill the Saracens of most renown, who have the richest relatives, to smite off their heads, write their names on a parchment, cook them and strip them of their beard and lip. As Heffernan states, ‘[t]he cannibalism is a significant part of what makes the king demonic to his opponents’.⁵⁰⁴ He wants them to be served to the Saracen nobles who have brought Saladyne’s treasure to him in return for the lives of their sons. Richard wants the heads of the Saracens to be put on a plate:

Lay euery hed on a plater,
 Bryng it hoot forþ al in þyn hand,
 Vpward hys vys, þe teþ grennand;
 And loke þey be nothyng rowe!⁵⁰⁵

He ignores the mourning Saracens, eats the meat with relish, then humiliates the Saracens by saying that the English do not need to go back to England because they have plenty of Saracens to eat there.

Despite Richard’s continual reminders that he is the avenger of God’s enemies and he fights in the name of God, he acts inhumanly and outside the moral codes and understandings of the religious faith he fights for. His brutal treatment of the Saracens is incompatible with the Christian doctrine of mercy. His inhumanity whilst pretending to be the warrior hero of the Christian faith is paradoxical, and makes him not so much the defender of faith, but a mere man in search of ultimate military power in the world, like Alexander. This conflict is reflected in the text by the different expressions used by the Christians and the Saracens to define Richard. He is defined as a king with a lion’s heart, the defender of Christianity and avenger of Christ’s foes by the Christians, and is praised a lot for his bravery:

He may be callyd, be ryzt skylle,

⁵⁰² *Der mittlenglische Versroman*, ed. by Brunner, 410. 6469-70.

⁵⁰³ Nicola McDonald, ‘Eating People and Alimentary Logic of *Richard Cœur de Lion*’, in *Pulp Fictions*, ed. by McDonald, pp. 124-50 (p. 139).

⁵⁰⁴ Heffernan, *Orient*, p. 13.

⁵⁰⁵ *Der mittlenglische Versroman*, ed. by Brunner, 267. 3428-31.

Kyng jcrystenyd off most renoun,

Stronge Rychard Coer de Lyoun!⁵⁰⁶

However, in contrast to these statements, he is defined by the Saracens as ‘It is a deuyll wipoute ffayle’⁵⁰⁷ who has come to earth to kill them. When an angel’s voice is heard from heaven bidding Richard to behead all Saracens pitilessly, Richard’s victimization and brutality are sanctified by God, and the suffering he inflicts cruelly on the Saracens is justified as the order of God. This justification is supported by the statements, repeated several times in the text, that the Christians have fewer losses in the fight against the Saracens. The great difference in the number of deaths on both sides reflects the justness of the Christian cause, and those on the ‘wrong’ side are punished through death (and by implication, hell) in great numbers.

However, it is not only the Saracens but other Christians who are victimized by Richard. He gains his title as ‘king with a lion’s heart’ after slaying a lion sent to eat him, when he is imprisoned by the King of Almany. Besides, Richard’s treatment of mercy is not consistent, even for Christians. He pities the King of France when he asks for mercy after his treason. However, he cuts the Duke of Ostryke’s breast and accuses him of cowardice, when he refuses to help build the walls of the city of Chaloyne. Richard’s violent deeds are justified because he fights in a holy cause, and his brutality is overshadowed by his generous personality as a good king in addition to his devotion and courtesy. These make him a ‘justified’ villain for the Christians but a ‘pure’ villain for the Saracens. Maybe he is an ‘old style’ villain who has to be ‘forgiven’ and adopted into a ‘new style’ romance discourse about the Saracens. His qualities would be more acceptable in an earlier *chanson de geste*, but he looks very awkward in the fourteenth-century version of this story.

The vicious cycle of Christian and Saracen victimization is repeated in *Kyng Alisaunder*; yet, the Christian ruler is not depicted as being as ‘monstrous’ as Richard, and his main motivation is not victimizing the heathens, either. The romance mainly concentrates on his role as a Christian warrior whose main intention is to conquer the world. He claims King Nicholas’s lands in Carthage, invades Mantona, and wins Thrace, Sicily, Italy, Rome, Libya and Arabia, burning their cities and slaying the folk in them without pity. When Alisaunder destroys Thebes, there are many unpleasant descriptions of suffering people in the town during a mass slaughter. He assaults day and night with all his might, and then destroys Thebes with all its inhabitants. Unlike

⁵⁰⁶ *Der mittlenglische Versroman*, ed. by Brunner, 139. 1116-8.

⁵⁰⁷ *Der mittlenglische Versroman*, ed. by Brunner, 277. 3664.

Richard in *Richard Coer de Lyon*, Alisaunder shows mercy towards the Saracen victims. He captures Darrye's mother, wife and daughter, but treats them with courtesy. Richard is killed ten years after his return to England without suffering in return for his 'monstrosity', which makes him a 'justified' villain because of his fight against the Saracens. Alisaunder, by contrast, whose main intention is to conquer the world rather than victimizing the Saracens, suffers greatly in India from the attack of supernatural beasts, and he is ultimately poisoned to death by his men. While Richard's painless death implies that his violence is excusable only for God's sake, Alisaunder's painful death highlights that villainy for self-empowerment and worldwide fame is inevitably punished.

However, violence of the Saracens against their enemies even for self-defence is never justifiable as they have the wrong faith. Their villainy is always punished with their defeat in their fights against Christians. This is presented in *Octovian* by the defeat of the Saracen Sultan's forces by Octovian with the help of the King of France's army, and in *King Horn* by the defeat of the Saracens who have invaded Christian lands and killed Horn's father. The heroes in romances are not only English, but also French knights, fighting against the Saracens to emphasize Christian unity against non-Christians. Therefore, '[t]he world they portray always seeks to emphasise the importance of Christian, as opposed to national'.⁵⁰⁸ Unlike the unity of the Christians against victimization by the Saracens, the Saracens fighting against the Christians are fragmented, because they are worried about themselves rather than about their faith. This is represented by the sons in *Sir Ferumbras* and *The Sowdone of Babylone*. Sons named Sir Ferumbras in both romances convert to Christianity by betraying their Saracen fathers, in order to avoid execution. Through their conversions, the representation of the 'other' also changes because the 'Saracen other' becomes 'Christian', which blurs the representation of villainy. Akbari believes that, before his conversion, Ferumbras 'exhibits Saracen behaviour: he is violent and aggressive. Once he becomes a Christian, his acts are governed by compassion rather than aggression'.⁵⁰⁹ However, Sir Ferumbras is still violent against his enemy. Sir Ferumbras is:

Fifteuene fet hol & sound & wonderliche mucche of strengþe.
Had he ben in cryst be-leued & y-vollid on þe haly fant,
A better knyzt þan he was preued þo was þer non lyuand.⁵¹⁰

⁵⁰⁸ Warm, 'Identity', p. 88.

⁵⁰⁹ Akbari, *Idols*, p. 168.

⁵¹⁰ *Sir Ferumbras*, ed. by Herrtage, 22. 547-9.

Although the Saracen Sir Ferumbras is described in *Sir Ferumbras* as a monstrous, threatening, rude and brutal person, even a ‘monster in appearance’, fifteen feet tall, wonderfully strong with broad shoulders, he becomes ‘monstrous’ for the Saracens after he converts. Subsequently, his monstrosity and violence against the Saracens is justified since he is no more an infidel. This serves to draw attention away from the fact that Christians might still be afraid of him, despite his conversion. It also makes him a potentially problematic Christian, and raises problems with the nature of Christian knighthood, which is not different from Saracen knighthood in its physical demands, nor in its violence against the enemy.

The Sowdone of Babylone begins with a story pretending justification of the Saracen Sultan Laban’s violent revenge for his victimization by Christian Romans. He attacks and slays Christians when he learns that the vessel full of riches brought to him as a present has been robbed by the Romans. In return for his ‘just’ attack (though the desire for rich presents indicates the Sultan’s greed), the Pope of Rome assembles his council to ask for help. The unity against the Saracens is ‘a model of Christendom defending both its secular and spiritual identity against invasion by heathendom’.⁵¹¹ This need for Christian unity against a Saracen threat is also presented in *The Sege off Melayne*. The Lord of Milan asks for King Charles of France’s help after a prophetic dream when the Saracens besiege his city. King Charles, who is also warned by a dream, refuses to fight as a result of his advisor Ganelon’s ill advice. However, Bishop Turpin summons an army consisting of clergy and fights against the Saracens. King Charles takes over the fight only after Turpin excommunicates him, and the French defeat the Saracens with the help of the Britons despite the military superiority of the Saracens.

The Sege off Melayne differs from other romances narrating Christian versus Saracen conflicts because of the shift of authority from nobles to men of religion in the holy fight. As stated by Akbari, Turpin’s wounds in the fight against the Saracens are not personal but stand for ‘visible signs of the damage inflicted upon the crusaders by the Saracen enemy’.⁵¹² In that sense, Turpin represents all Christians by proclaiming a crusade, while Charles stands only for himself as long as he refuses to take part in the fight because of his cowardice. Charles’s refusing to fight against the Saracens, and his late involvement in the fight in order not to lose his fame, makes him a ‘coward’ rather

⁵¹¹ Malcolm Hebron, *The Medieval Siege: Romance, Theme and Image in Middle English Romance* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), p. 90.

⁵¹² Suzanne Conklin Akbari, ‘Incorporation in the *Siege of Melayne*’, in *Pulp Fictions*, ed. by McDonald, pp. 22-44 (p. 32).

than a ‘hero’, contrary to Turpin whose actions are presented as ‘heroic’. He only victimizes Charles by excommunicating and humiliating him to guide him as to how he should behave as a Christian king, which is moral and religious chastisement for a good purpose.

Although romances present predominantly Christian versus Saracen conflict, villainy against Jews is also justified as fitting revenge for Christ’s death.⁵¹³ In addition to this, the accusations of poisoning wells, ritual murders and cannibalism⁵¹⁴ make Jews ‘pure’ villains who deserve to suffer. In *Joseph of Aramathie*, Vespasian and his father make the Jews leap down the pit in which they had imprisoned Joseph for forty-two years before Vespasian released him. In *The Siege of Jerusalem*, the villainy of the Jews against Christ is avenged by their punishment by Christians. After Roman Emperor Vaspasian is cured of his leprosy by Veronica’s veil, he curses the Jews for victimizing Christ and occupying Jerusalem, he judges and punishes the Jews by drawing them behind horses and executing them by hanging. He keeps up the siege longer, so that the Jews suffer more when their food supplies end and they suffer from hunger.

Christians and non-Christians are motivated by the idea of ‘revenge’ in their mutual victimization, which makes them ‘justified’, or at least ‘self-justified’, villains. They avenge the humiliation of their faiths and military defeats by justifying them through their right for vengeance. Apart from being a pretext of ‘justified’ villains, revenge is a common feature of almost all of the ‘catalyst’ villains in romances whose villainies are unjustifiable. Rejection of unreasonable sexual demands is a frequent cause of false accusation and the urge for revenge by the ‘catalyst’ villains.

‘Catalyst’ villains lack authority or love, and they are jealous of the people who have it. Therefore, through their schemes and interventions, they attempt to deprive their victims who have authority, love or both. They are not mentioned in detail in romances, and mostly disappear after they introduce their false accusations or treason. They are either stewards or knights, who are stereotypically represented by their jealousy, treason, false accusation and lack of remorse. They attempt to empower themselves by dividing their masters’ households or deceiving them by their false political tactics, by breaking the trust of people for each other. They, in fact, create two victims by provoking one victim to victimize their other victim. They make use of frequent absences of husbands to make false accusations of adultery against female

⁵¹³ Elisa Narin van Court, ‘*The Siege of Jerusalem and Recuperative Readings*’, in *Pulp Fictions*, ed. by McDonald, pp. 151-70 (p. 156).

⁵¹⁴ Ashton, *Medieval English Romance*, p. 13.

victims, while they abuse trust in friendships and sworn brotherhoods. Their being in close relationship with the family and being trusted people facilitates all of this.

In the Middle Ages, stewards had great responsibilities since they ‘directed the management of land, crop and livestock productivity and manorial finances, and might oversee village judicial proceedings. At court, in addition to the administrative steward, there was the household steward in charge of domestic affairs’.⁵¹⁵ Their loyalty and goodwill are acknowledged in some romances, like *Sir Orfeo*, *The Tale of Gamelyn* and *Emaré*, in which the stewards are presented as confidants and relievers of suffering. Sir Orfeo’s steward proves his loyalty when Orfeo trusts him to protect his lands when he exiles himself, and Orfeo rewards his loyalty by naming him as his successor. The King’s steward Sir Kadore takes care of Emaré after she is exiled by her father in *Emaré*, and Gamelyn’s father’s steward Adam Spencer helps Gamelyn to escape from his wicked brother Sir John. However, this is reversed in numerous romances, and stewards are often portrayed negatively as ‘catalyst’ villains because of their jealousy, greed for power and disloyalty.⁵¹⁶ Stewards are the closest men to those in power, which makes them dangerous, since they are trusted to the utmost by their victims. They represent the best examples of the enemy within the circle of the reliable people, since they easily manipulate and abuse their victims. Their betrayal is didactic for the noble romance audience, since they exemplify the potential threats from within the audiences’ trustworthy circles.

The stewards who are ‘catalyst’ villains are losers in love and friendship. They are jealous of those who have a lover, a close friend and authority, and they attempt to deprive their victims of these. In *King Horn*, the steward Athelbrus substitutes Athulf for Horn and makes King Westernesse’s daughter Rymenhild think that she is in her bedroom with Horn. King Edgar’s steward in *Beves of Hamptoun* is jealous of Beves’s power, and accuses him of being an outlaw and a traitor, which makes King Edgar imprison Beves. The steward in *Amis and Amiloun*, as Edward E. Foster points out, ‘is eager to replace Amiloun in Amis’s favor’⁵¹⁷ because of his jealousy of their close friendship:

‘Sir Amis,’ he seyde, ‘the is ful wo
For that thi brother is went the fro,

⁵¹⁵ Dinah Hazell, ‘“Trew Man” or “Wicke Traitour”: The Steward in Late Middle English Literature’, *Medieval Forum*, 6 (2007) < <http://www.sfsu.edu/~medieval/volume6.html> > [accessed 10 February 2012] (para. 3 of 45).

⁵¹⁶ See also the negative representation of the steward figure in *Sir Tryamour* as a ‘pure male stranger villain’, which is discussed above.

⁵¹⁷ Foster, ‘Simplicity’, p. 412.

And, certes, so is me.
 Ac of his wendeing have thou no care,
 Yif thou wilt leve opon mi lare,
 And lete thi morning be,
 And thou wil be to me kende,
 Y schal the be a better frende
 Than ever yete was he.⁵¹⁸

However, when he is rejected by Amis, he tells the duke about Amis's affair with his daughter Belisaunt. In the *Stanzaic Guy of Warwick*, the steward Berard casts Guy adrift in the middle of the night, so that he cannot fight to save Tirri from imprisonment. King Ardu's steward Marrok falsely accuses King Ardu's wife Margaret of adultery in *Sir Tryamour*, and persuades the King to exile his wife. King Auferius's steward Sir Amelok in *Generydes* is also a 'catalyst' villain. Sir Amelok has an adulterous affair with Auferius's wife Serenydes. He captures Auferius's lands by treason, and attempts to kill Auferius's son Generydes. The Saracen King Sornegour's steward Mares in *Partonope of Blois* is a traitor who accepts gifts from the French enemy, and disgraces Sornegour by spreading the false news that Sornegour does not dare to fight against the French (the reverse of King Charles's cowardice in not fighting the Saracens). As exemplified by Mares, representations of Saracen stewards are no different from those of Christian stewards.

The steward who is also a 'catalyst' villain on account of his revelation of the relationship between the lovers in *The Squire of Low Degree* becomes a victim when he attempts to victimize the lovers. The King of Hungary makes use of his steward's jealousy of his daughter and her lover the Squire in order to victimize the steward, while at the same he uses him to victimize the Squire. The King orders the steward to watch the lovers secretly, and when the jealous steward informs the King about the conversation of the lovers, the King pretends to approve their relationship. However, despite the King's portentous warning that the steward is not allowed to attack the Squire unless he enters the lady's room, the steward attacks the Squire and is killed. His clothes are exchanged with those of the Squire, and his corpse is presented to the King's daughter as her lover's dead body. Like the wicked steward whose jealousy brings his death, the stewards who are 'catalyst' villains are punished in return for their villainies since their intentions are 'evil'. The jealous and treacherous stewards are killed by their

⁵¹⁸ *Amis and Amiloun*, ed. by Foster, 17. 352-60.

victims or their avengers in *Beves of Hamptoun*, *Amis and Amiloun*, *Generydes*, *Partonope of Blois*, and *Sir Tryamour*.

Apart from the stewards, ‘catalyst’ villains may be a wicked advisor, as is Ganelon in *The Sege off Melayne*, who tries to weaken King Charles by advising him to avoid fighting, which weakens Charles’s authority as a king. Other ‘catalyst’ villains are the guardians who are supposed to protect, or even close friends. In the *Erle of Tolous*, the guardian knights, who are motivated by lust, not love,⁵¹⁹ accuse the Empress of being disloyal to the Emperor when their seduction is rejected by her:

‘We are here, thou false hore:
 Thy dedys we have aspyedd!
 Thou haste betrayed my lorde;
 Thou schalt have wonduryng in thys worde:
 Thy loos schall sprynge wyde!’⁵²⁰

Although they expect the Emperor to punish the Empress, the knights themselves are punished by being burned after their treason is revealed, which is a major form of punishment in romances for treason.⁵²¹ Likewise, in *King Horn*, Fikenhild, who pretends to be Horn’s close friend, woos Horn’s lover Rymenhild, falsely accuses Horn of plotting to murder the King and marry his daughter. He is a ‘catalyst’ villain whose false accusation separates Horn and Rymenhild. Esha Niyogi De suggests that Fikenhild’s involvement in Horn’s life enables his maturity, which implies that he is not villainous.⁵²² However, Fikenhild has no such instructive intention when he accuses Horn and lusts after Rymenhild, which makes him a villain. His being slain by Horn also implies the punishment of his villainy.

In the Middle Ages, fathers would arrange marriages of their daughters to respectable lords to ensure the protection of their own lands,⁵²³ and it was believed that even if the couple did not love each other, they would find love in marriage.⁵²⁴ In romances, Christian and Saracen suitors are often represented as relatively old noblemen seeking a political alliance through an arranged marriage. They are mostly

⁵¹⁹ Robert Reilly, ‘*The Earl of Toulouse: A Structure of Honour*’, *Mediaeval Studies*, 37 (1975), 515-23 (p. 521).

⁵²⁰ *The Middle English Breton Lays*, ed. by Laskaya and Salisbury, 341. 786-90.

⁵²¹ Kratins, ‘Treason’, p. 686.

⁵²² Esha Niyogi De, ‘Patterns of Coherence: A Study of the Narrative Technique in *King Horn*’, *Essays in Medieval Studies*, 3 (1986), 149-61 (p. 152).

⁵²³ Léon Gautier, *Chivalry*, trans. by D. C. Dunning and ed. by Jacques Levron (London: Phoenix, 1965), pp. 135-7.

⁵²⁴ Frances Gies and Joseph Gies, *Women in the Middle Ages* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1980), p. 36.

kings, who lack affection and sympathy towards their brides, and they threaten to invade lands and dishonour the ladies if their proposals are rejected.

Like Josian in *Beves of Hamptoun*, Desonell in *Torrent of Portyngale* and Rymenhild in *King Horn*, who are all forced into arranged marriages, Lady Fere in *Ipomadon* is wooed by Sir Lyolyne, who threatens to destroy her lands if she rejects his proposal. The nameless lady of the castle in *Sir Degaré*, Lady Helen in *Sir Tryamour* and Melior in *William of Palerne* are also wooed by unwanted Christian suitors. In *William of Palerne*, besides the Greek prince who asks for Melior's hand, the King of Spain attacks Apulia when his son's proposal to the princess is refused. Threatening Christian suitors are punished only in *Beves of Hamptoun*, when Josian strangles her arranged husband Earl Miles on their wedding night, and the King of Spain and his son are imprisoned by William in *William of Palerne*. Most of them escape punishment, because their villainy mostly remains only a 'threat', and they are not the main 'villains' in the romances.

Compared to Christian suitors, Saracen suitors are more threatening and villainous in romances. Unlike the Saracens fighting against the Christians because of religious conflicts, they desire to expand their lands and marry beautiful ladies. They are depicted as monstrous, in common with other Saracens who fight against Christians. In *Sir Gowther*, the Emperor's daughter is threatened by a heathen king who wants to marry her. In *The King of Tars*, the Saracen Sultan of Dammas massacres Christians and besieges Tarsus, when he is rejected by the daughter of the King of Tarsus because of his faith. Before the siege, he promises to take revenge if he is rejected:

& seyd he wald, houso it bifalle,
 His douhter cloþe in riche palle,
 & spouse hir wiþ his ring.
 & 3if he nold, wiþouten feyl,
 He wald hir win in batayl
 Wiþ mani an heye lording.⁵²⁵

His violent nature and rage, which turn him into 'a senseless beast',⁵²⁶ symbolize his 'sinful and demonic characteristics'.⁵²⁷ However, he ignores his bestiality and accuses

⁵²⁵ *The King of Tars*, ed. from the *Auchinleck MS*, *Advocates 19.2.1*, ed. by Judith Perryman, Middle English Texts 12 (Heidelberg: Winter, 1980), p. 73, lines 28-33. All references are to this edition, cited by Perryman's page and line number.

⁵²⁶ Czarnowus, *Inscription on the Body*, p. 80.

⁵²⁷ Strickland, *Saracens*, p. 173.

the princess of being of the wrong faith when they have a child in shape of a lump, since he believes that the child's monstrosity is related to the maternal bloodline.⁵²⁸

Apart from Christian and Saracen suitors, there are various other 'catalyst' male villains who contribute to the suffering of male and female victims. In *Lybeaus Desconus*, Lybeaus Desconus fights against two giants and a Saracen giant to save Lady Violet and Dame Amoure. He also defeats Sir William, his three cousins, Jeffron le Freudos, Sir Otys and Constable Lanwarde, while he is on a quest to release the Lady of Synadowne. He has to overcome these obstacles before completing his mission, in order to prove his worth as a knight. In *Cheuelere Assigne*, Malkedras serves the wicked grandmother by removing the chains on the necks of her grandchildren, in order to transform them into swans. Knight Malichias, the Saracen 'catalyst' villain in *Generydes*, reveals the relationship between Generydes and the Sultan's daughter Clarionas, and makes the Sultan imprison Generydes. In *Kyng Alisaunder*, in order to victimize her husband, Neptanabus abuses King Philip of Macedon's wife Olympias by casting a spell on her and convincing her that she will conceive Jupiter Ammon's child. Similarly, the 'catalyst' villains in *Le Bone Florence of Rome* attempt sexual exploitation. Florence is targeted as a murderer and exiled, after being falsely accused by Knight Machary of murdering Betres by cutting her throat:

When he wyste they were on slope
To Betres throte can he grope,
In sonder he schare hyt tyte.
And 3yt the thefe or he wolde leue,
He put the hafte in Florence neeve,
For sche schulde haue the wyte.⁵²⁹

In addition to this, thief Clarebalde, who Florence saves from hanging, sells her to a mariner although he has sworn to serve her.

'Catalyst' villains are punished, except for the villainous suitors whose villainies are only threats. The giants are killed by Lybeaus Desconus in *Lybeaus Desconus*, while the knights are sent to serve King Arthur. In *Kyng Alisaunder*, Neptanabus breaks his neck when he is pushed into a hole by his son Alisaunder. In *Le Bone Florence of*

⁵²⁸ For a discussion of the maternal contribution to bloodlines in romances see Peggy McCracken, *The Curse of Eve, The Wound of the Hero: Blood, Gender, and Medieval Literature* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003); Angela Florschuetz, 'A Mooder He Hath, but Fader Hath He Noon': Constructions of Genealogy in the *Clerk's Tale* and the *Man of Law's Tale*, *The Chaucer Review*, 44.1 (2009), 25-60.

⁵²⁹ *Le Bone Florence of Rome*, ed. by Carol Falvo Heffernan (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1976), p. 105, lines 1630-5. All references are to this edition, cited by Heffernan's page and line number.

Rome, the villains are punished with sicknesses that can only be healed by their victim Florence, and after their recovery they are burned by her husband Emere. In *Generydes*, Malichias is slain by Generydes. Malkedras in *Cheuelere Assigne* is slain by Enyas. Unlike ‘catalyst’ villains who are all human beings, the villain in *Sir Orfeo* is a male fairy king who threatens and humiliates Sir Orfeo and abducts his wife Heurodis. He keeps Heurodis in his fairy land until he gives her back to Sir Orfeo in return for his harp-playing. This king is not punished, except in that he loses Heurodis, and the implication is that there are plenty more beautiful women in his possession anyway. The fairy king is beyond human and also divine punishment, because it is he who sets his own rules in his fairy land in accordance with his own morals. Although he is not an alternative to God as rule maker due to lack of mercy, the fairy king reminds the romance audiences that they are vulnerable against those who have authority but lack mercy.

The only stranger ‘good villain’ of all the studied metrical romances is the Sultan in *Floris and Blancheflour*. He is not monstrous but merciful, although he is not a Christian. In this romance, exceptionally, the Saracens are depicted as sympathetic people through the representation of the Emir, who is ‘a malleable father-figure’.⁵³⁰ He is depicted as more affectionate, compassionate and sensible than Floris’s father, who sends Floris away with merchants in order to prevent Floris and Blancheflour’s marriage. Heffernan asserts that the representation of the Emir is as villainous as Floris’s father because ‘[t]he king of Spain threatens to cut off the maiden’s head, while the emir tries to steal her ‘maidenhead’’.⁵³¹ However, although the Emir at first seems to be a victimizer, because of his role in the separation of the lovers (he puts Blancheflour in his harem and intends to kill them when he learns of their secret meetings in his tower), he becomes their friend and he understands their love for each other. Afterwards, he not only lets the lovers marry but he also knights Floris and offers to give his kingdom to him:

Thanne bispak the Ameral:
 ‘Yif thou wilt do, Florice, bi mi conseil,
 Dwelle here, and wend nowt hom.
 Ich wille thee given a kyngdom
 Also longe and also brod,

⁵³⁰ Field, ‘Romance in England’, p. 165.

⁵³¹ Heffernan, *Orient*, p. 102.

Als evere yit thi fader bod.⁵³²

It is apparent from these varied representations of villains that both males and females are victimizers of one another both within the household and outside the family; however, the number of female domestic victimizers is greater when compared to the number of male domestic villains. Domestic female villains are generally ‘pure’ villains who empower themselves in their households by victimizing mostly their daughters-in-law or stepsons, while male domestic villains mostly victimize each other over matters such as accession to the throne. Most of the male domestic victimizers are ‘justified’ villains whose main concern is to keep their bloodline pure, mostly from intrusion by a lower-class male or a noble male who is not worthy enough to insert himself (literally) into their families. The only ‘pure’ female stranger villain has a desire for unjustifiable revenge. The ‘pure’ male villains abuse ‘justified’ villains to empower themselves through putting forward false accusations and practising treachery on their victims. The ‘good’ villains are very rare in romances; they unintentionally introduce suffering while trying to prevent it, and all are left unpunished.

Apart from the ‘good’ villains who are spared punishment because they do not deserve it, and the ‘justified’ villainies of Christians against Saracens, the threats of the ‘catalyst’ villains and those who repent of their villainies are often left unpunished, since they are not as malevolent as the ‘pure’ villains. These villains may also be victims of other ‘pure’ villains. In addition to this, the fairy male is also exempt from punishment, since he has his own moral realm beyond the human understanding of morals. However, the ‘catalyst’ villainies of the Saracens are punished and their victimization of the Christians is never justified, even if they are also victimized by them, since they are of the ‘wrong’ faith.

The role of Saracens as villains is blurred in romances as they are presented as ‘catalyst’ villains when they are portrayed as unwanted suitors of Christian ladies; however, when they are represented in conflict with the Christians, they are presented both as ‘villains’ and ‘victims’ because both sides continually victimize each other for revenge over previous villainies. The religious and secular outlook on the Christian and the Saracen ‘villainies’ differs. Saracens are ‘pure’ villains as they are of the ‘other’ and ‘wrong’ faith; however, from a secular perspective, both Saracens and Christians are ‘justified’ villains because they victimize each other to avenge their previous victimizations. Romances support the Christian viewpoint through punishing the

⁵³² *Floris and Blancheflour*, in *Sentimental and Humorous Romances*, ed. by Kooper, pp. 1-52 (p. 37), lines 1206-11. All references are to this edition, cited by Kooper’s page and line number.

Saracens and rewarding the Christians, by concentrating on the ‘morality’ of defending the ‘right faith’, justifying and glorifying its villainy and violence against that of the Saracens. The very few Jews in English romances are simply ‘fair game’ because of their historical and theological role as Christ-killers.

Villains in romances attempt to break the bond of trust between their victims and the justified villains they abuse, while victimizing their victims. They embody evil in human beings, and represent non-ideal stereotypes, while on the other hand they reveal the weaknesses of human beings by the suffering they initiate. Villains victimize others so that they themselves do not suffer. They ignore the suffering of their victims; yet, they are also blind to their own desperation. They seem to survive, even to thrive, when they victimize, because they feel themselves powerful and masterful; yet, they are lonely and disempowered by their solitude, power and greed. They do not realize that what they think of as ‘power’ is actually their weakness. Their cunning and opportunism help them to survive for a while, because unlike their victims they know exactly what they want and they think before they act; but they cannot avoid punishment in the end, as they become victims of their own sinful desires. They are also sinners because of their greed, lust, pride, envy and gluttony. Through them, romances give moral/religious messages by means of secular characters, teaching the audience how to survive on earth (in a secular and a spiritual sense) by warning them against becoming victims. The romances offer advice on how to spot potential villains, the situations in which they might arise, how to identify them by their characters and actions, how not to be deluded by them, and ultimately also warn against the temptations to villainy by highlighting the self-destructiveness of the sins they commit.

Grouping villains according to gender and place in society (domestic/stranger) in addition to ‘pure’, ‘justified’ and ‘good’ villainy, reveals anxieties of gender which relate to different categories of villainy. Noble women who are ‘purely’ evil are presented as desiring power in their households, while noble men who are ‘pure’ villains have a desire for thrones, or for dominant positions in the patriarchal succession of families. This distinction makes both sexes ‘pure’ villains in different social positions. While there are plenty of female villains in the domestic arena, there are no female villains who interfere in the empowerment or victimization of Saracens (except Floripas), because while female villains are entrapped in their household, war and politics (and the public sphere in general) are kept as male areas for practising villainy.

Dividing villains in accordance with their intention under titles of ‘pure’ villains, ‘justified’ villains and ‘good’ villains provides us with a ‘moral’ analysis of villains,

which evaluates them according to their sinfulness, so that their punishments can be defined in relation to the category of their villainy. While 'pure' villainies of non-Christian faith, treason and false accusation are severely punished, lesser villainies like threats which are not realized may be left unpunished. Most of the 'catalyst' villains are punished, because it is not the significance of the villain's role but the level of evil intent, which decrees who should and who should not be punished, in addition to the degree of severity of punishment. Although the category of villainy changes, the suffering experiences of the victims do not change. Victims encounter their 'foils' within the representations of the villains. Villains in each category, both domestic and stranger, remind the victims that neither the familiar nor the unfamiliar person is necessarily reliable; they are potentially threatening, with potential for disguised villainy. All villainies provide the villains with temporary empowerment which they gain through dominating their victims; yet, this temporary superiority runs out when they are punished for their villainy and become victims. Becoming villain and victim is a vicious circle in romances, and the change in the status of being a victim or a villain reminds the audience that power obtained through villainy is doomed to failure. It will eventually lead to punishment and victimization of the victimizer. Despite their villainies, all villains unintentionally contribute to the physical and psychological growth of their victims, as they become the means of teaching the victim worldly wisdom in dealing with other people, and how to survive in ordeals. Encounters with 'the angelic demons' and 'the demonic angels' are didactic experiences as they make victims 'know their enemies' and 'submit weakly' or 'resist boldly', which is the subject of the next two chapters.

Chapter Two: Submit Weakly or Resist Boldly I: Representations of Female Victims in Middle English Metrical Romances

This chapter and the next will examine the reactions of the sufferers who are victimized by the villains, according to gender. Reasons for and reactions to suffering can be categorized according to gender, and the representations of both sexes can be exposed effectively by splitting the discussion of male and female victims into separate chapters. This split also avoids commitment to a single representation of ‘heroic’ males, on whose suffering romances mainly focus; therefore, it enables to present stereotypical representations of both sexes by comparison. Victims of domestic and stranger villains are studied in relation to whether they may be classed as either resisting or submissive victims. Victims (including self-victimizers) are discussed in relation to their gender, class, and faith. Domestic and stranger relievers of suffering are also studied. Each chapter concludes with a discussion of rewards for both sexes, that is, what they achieve at the end of their suffering. Most of the victims have names; yet, some of them are nameless, which ‘indicates universality or exemplarity’.⁵³³

In several romances female characters, even if they are not protagonists, have significant roles in imposing or relieving the suffering of males or of other females. Compared to the male characters, most of the female characters are victims. Despite the abundance of silent and submissive females who are falsely accused or exiled, there are several women who are ‘ready to suffer’ or ‘ready to relieve suffering’, who are protective, loyal, innocent, and witty, with reasoned speech. They are given voices to state their ideas and break their normative gender roles, in order to exceed the limitations imposed by those roles, and to reach for the rights and privileges of male status. They plan everything, in order to empower themselves for the avoidance or ending of suffering. Women in romances are not presented only as passive victims, but also as courageous figures ready, even eager, to sacrifice themselves for the sake of others or to victimize the villains. Although powerful women are mostly represented as villainous, using false accusations (originating in jealousy) in order to empower themselves, there are several female victims who are powerful in resisting suffering. The pain and suffering of a female victim tend not to vary in type, even if they are occasionally episodic, with periods of happiness or peace in between. A female’s suffering is generally introduced at the beginning of the romance, after which it mostly

⁵³³ Bliss, *Naming and Namelessness*, p. 51.

continues without respite until the end of the story, even if she herself is rarely mentioned until the truth is revealed at the end.

Compared to the male victims, who resist suffering inflicted by their family members, the female victims who resist their domestic victimizers fail to prevent or end their suffering. In fact, their attempts introduce more suffering, since although they have a voice through resistance, ‘they still do so against a background of violence’.⁵³⁴ There is a connection between the romance of *Athelston* and an eleventh-century chronicle of England about Queen Emma, mother of Edward the Confessor. Emma was accused of treason against her son by Robert of Jumièges, Bishop of London and later Archbishop of Canterbury. She wrote to the bishops she trusted when she was imprisoned to ask for their help to prove her innocence by an ordeal. She proved her innocence in her ordeal, during which she was led by two bishops. After her innocence was proved, Robert fled to Jumièges where he died.⁵³⁵ The story of Queen Emma bears some resemblance to *Athelston*, especially in the episode related to the false accusation against Dame Edyff and her family. Also, Athelston’s wife writes to the Archbishop to ask for his help for the resolution of the conflict.

The romance is also associated with the early medieval English King Athelston, who succeeded to the English throne after his father King Edward’s death in 924.⁵³⁶ The late fourteenth-century romance *Athelston* is a fictionalized account of his reign, which was widespread and well-known throughout the Middle Ages.⁵³⁷ There is a connection between Athelston’s excommunication and ‘the clash between Henry II and Thomas Becket, since their conflict was over judicial rights, specifically the right of the King to try the clergy’.⁵³⁸ In addition to these, the mediation of Thomas Arundel, Bishop of Ely, between Richard II and the parliament in the late fourteenth century is also implied, through the Archbishop in the romance.⁵³⁹

In *Athelston*, King Athelston’s wife performs an act of bravery in a life-threatening situation when she questions her husband’s misjudgement of his sister

⁵³⁴ Angela Jane Weisl, ‘“Quitting” Eve: Violence against Women in the *Canterbury Tales*’, in *Violence*, ed. by Roberts, pp. 115-36 (p. 117).

⁵³⁵ Laura A. Hibbard [Loomis], ‘*Athelston*, A Westminster Legend’, *PMLA*, 36.2 (1921), 223-44 (pp. 227-8); Young, ‘*Athelston*’, p. 100.

⁵³⁶ *English Historical Documents*, gen. ed. by David C. Douglas, 12 vols (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1953-77), I: c. 500-1042, ed. by Dorothy Whitelock (1955), p. 218.

⁵³⁷ Young, ‘*Athelston*’, pp. 96-7. For the chronicles associated with Athelston’s story see *English Historical Documents*, gen. ed. by Douglas, IV: 1327-1485, ed. by A. R. Myers (1969); Elaine M. Treharne, ‘Romanticising the Past in the Middle English *Athelston*’, *The Review of English Studies*, n.s., 50.197 (1999), 1-21.

⁵³⁸ Young, ‘*Athelston*’, p. 100; Hibbard, ‘*Athelston*’, p. 223.

⁵³⁹ Young, ‘*Athelston*’, pp. 101-2.

Dame Edyff and her husband Sir Egelond. She sends a letter to the Archbishop to settle the conflict; yet, Athelston disregards the Archbishop, and when she insists on her husband's wrong judgement, she is kicked by him and loses not only her unborn baby but also her 'voice' in return for questioning his authority. Horvath believes that the kick is a means to 'diagnose the narrative's masculine as malignant',⁵⁴⁰ and Mary Housum Ellzey stresses the murder of the child with the kick;⁵⁴¹ yet, both critics ignore the fact that it is, indeed, a violent treatment of a woman. Unlike Athelston's wife, Dame Edyff is put to trial by fire with her unborn child in her womb, for questioning her brother Athelston over their imprisonment. Even if Athelston is willing to execute her and her family without a trial, he consents to it when he is threatened with excommunication by the Archbishop. Historically, Magna Carta forbade execution without trial in England in 1215.⁵⁴² Elaine M. Treharne stresses the historical significance of the trial scene, claiming that the inclusion of the trial scene in the romance is 'an attempt to impart authenticity to the text' to Anglo-Saxon judicial and cultural features, thus connecting medieval English history to its Anglo-Saxon past.⁵⁴³ Despite its anachronism, the trial scene is important, since it exemplifies Athelston's means of punishing treason against his authority in both domestic and institutional sphere.

Trial by ordeal had been officially banned in England in 1219;⁵⁴⁴ yet, knowledge of the ordeal never disappeared throughout the Middle Ages.⁵⁴⁵ Although the trial by ordeal in *Athelston* is a departure from contemporary English law due to the prohibition of trials by ordeal, the punishments offered for treason are accurate. According to the law, the traitor's offspring should also be disinherited; therefore, neither the proposed punishment for treason nor the inclusion of the children in the process was outside English law.⁵⁴⁶ In this respect, the trial of the family is a 'legitimized suffering' which is to be endured in order to clear themselves of the false accusation. The justification of the trial along with the kick reveals the widespread late

⁵⁴⁰ Horvath, 'Romancing the Word', p. 181.

⁵⁴¹ Mary Housum Ellzey, 'The Advice of Wives in Three Middle English Romances: *The King of Tars*, *Sir Cleges*, and *Athelston*', *Medieval Perspectives*, 7 (1992), 44-52 (p. 50).

⁵⁴² Young, '*Athelston*', pp. 109-10.

⁵⁴³ Treharne, 'Romanticising the Past', p. 15. See also Christopher R. Fee, 'Trial by Ordeal and the Nature of the Soul: Influences of Popular Justice in the Middle English Verse Romance of *Athelston*', in *The Growth of Authority in the Medieval West*, ed. by M. Grosman, A. Vanderjagt and J. Veenstra (Groningen: Egbert Forsten, 1999), pp. 27-37.

⁵⁴⁴ Young, '*Athelston*', p. 116.

⁵⁴⁵ Robert Bartlett, *Trial by Fire and Water: The Medieval Judicial Ordeal* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), p. 134.

⁵⁴⁶ Young, '*Athelston*', p. 112.

fourteenth-century cultural anxiety that ‘women might leave bower for hall to intervene constructively in public affairs’⁵⁴⁷ which legitimizes ‘the application of physical violence on them’⁵⁴⁸ in order to exclude them from positions of authority.

Unlike Athelston’s wife and sister who are disempowered through their resistance, Felice in the *Stanzaic Guy of Warwick* grows stronger after submitting to her suffering. Felice experiences powerful emotional suffering after she is abandoned by her husband Guy when she is pregnant. Her son is abducted by merchants, and her father dies. She mourns for her husband, even thinks of suicide, but she gives up in order not to be punished in hell, and she grows into a powerful woman who devotes herself to helping the poor and the needy.

Daughters in several romances are victimized by their fathers when they disobey them by having affairs with their lovers. The female lovers in these romances stand firmly against their fathers, who separate them from their lovers. Their endless love for their lovers, and also their maternal concern, empowers them and drives them to resist their fathers, even if they have to endure ordeals to be reunited with their lovers. In *Sir Degrevant*, Melidor resists her father’s disapproval of her marriage to Sir Degrevant, whose lands he has attacked unjustly, and she says she is ready to suffer or die for Degrevant’s sake:

He is my love and my lorde,
Myn hele and my counforde.
Hyt is gode ye be acorde,
And yowre wyllus ware.
And giff ye holde us agret
Shall I never ete mete.’⁵⁴⁹

Unlike Melidor, Cristabell in *Sir Eglamour of Artois* gives birth to her lover’s child. Her father Sir Prynsamour rejects their affair, and she is exiled by her father with her son. As Hudson states, *Torrent of Portyngale* questions ‘whether power may be wielded by women in a patriarchal society’.⁵⁵⁰ The daughter’s resistance against her father Calamond’s disapproval of her relationship with her lover Torrent, and her getting pregnant with her lover’s children, indicates that she is empowered against her father, since she acts according to her own free will. However, the temporality of this

⁵⁴⁷ Nancy Mason Bradbury, ‘Beyond the Kick: Women’s Agency in *Athelston*’, in *Cultural Encounters*, ed. by Saunders, pp. 149-58 (p. 157).

⁵⁴⁸ Gerda Lerner, *The Creation of Feminist Consciousness: From the Middle Ages to Eighteen-Seventy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 7.

⁵⁴⁹ *Sentimental and Humorous Romances*, ed. by Kooper, 102. 1781-6.

⁵⁵⁰ Hudson, ‘Construction of Class’, p. 77.

resistance becomes apparent, as it fades when Calamond sets Torrent dangerous trials in combat, and exiles Desonell on the sea in a boat with her children Leobertus and Antony.

The sea was ‘an arbiter of justice or righteousness’,⁵⁵¹ and it was believed that ‘if God would, He might give the criminal his life’.⁵⁵² Therefore, the daughters exiled on the sea are left to the judgement of God. They survive because they are pious, despite the physical and emotional suffering they experience during their exile. Desonell prays to God to lead her to a secure Christian land so that she may ‘Christianize’ her twin sons; yet, a griffin and a leopard abduct her children. Her resistance to her father is replaced by her submission to suffering in exile, especially after consoling herself that her children are safe in God’s hand, although she is separated from them. Resistance against suffering turns into submission to suffering also in *Emaré*, after Emaré’s realization of the unavoidability of suffering. As Field defines, Emaré is a ‘passive-aggressive heroine’.⁵⁵³ Emaré means ‘purified’, ‘gracious’, or ‘adorned with all the rarest qualities’⁵⁵⁴ which imply the virtues that make her powerful, and even ‘an embodiment of Christian ideals’,⁵⁵⁵ but she is also weak because she is a woman. She rejects her father’s incestuous attempts by warning him that her submission would bring suffering and dishonour to their family:

‘Nay syr, God of heven hyt forbede,
That ever do so we shulde!
Hyf hyt so betydde that ye me wedde
And we shulde play togedur in bedde,
Bothe we were forlorne!’⁵⁵⁶

Incest is ‘the perversion of the proper rite of passage for a young woman, which should be marriage and transfer from the protection of a father to that of a husband’.⁵⁵⁷ Emaré resists this perversion; yet, it makes her a victim of exile on the sea instead of a victim of incest. Mehl compares her with the female martyrs since Emaré ‘is not exiled in consequence of any unjust accusation, but because she refuses to trespass against God’s law by committing incest. Her situation is that of a Christian martyr who suffers for her

⁵⁵¹ Reinhard, ‘Setting Adrift’, p. 67.

⁵⁵² Reinhard, ‘Setting Adrift’, p. 64.

⁵⁵³ Field, ‘Popular Romance’, p. 19.

⁵⁵⁴ Arthur, ‘Emaré’s Cloak’, p. 81.

⁵⁵⁵ Richmond, *Popularity*, p. 63.

⁵⁵⁶ *Six Middle English Romances*, ed. by Mills, 52-3. 251-5.

⁵⁵⁷ Elizabeth Archibald, ‘“Worse Than Bogery”: Incest Stories in Middle English Literature’, in *Incest and the Literary Imagination*, ed. by Elizabeth Barnes (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2002), pp. 17-38 (p. 25).

obedience to the laws of God'.⁵⁵⁸ However, Mehl's comparison disregards the fact that her suffering is introduced by her father, and her final obedience after her resistance is not a test of her piety, but a punishment for resisting patriarchal authority.

Marijane Osborn compares Emaré to Florence in *Le Bone Florence of Rome* and suggests that the survivals of both women 'are heroic not because they slay monsters but because they survive alone against enormous odds',⁵⁵⁹ which imply their overcoming sexual abuses and false accusations instead of physical ordeals like the male victims. Osborn emphasises the importance of survival, even regardless of an efficient resistance; yet, she ignores the fact that both women 'pay a price'.⁵⁶⁰ Whilst Emaré is forced into exile twice, Florence's maidenhood is vulnerable to constant sexual abuse,⁵⁶¹ since she is abducted by her husband's brother Miles, falsely accused of murdering Betres by the Knight Machary whose love she rejects, betrayed by the thief Clarebalde, whom she has saved from hanging, and sold to a mariner.

Although Emaré survives exile and marries the King in Galys, she experiences another exile on the sea with her son Segramor, after she is accused by her mother-in-law of being an evil spirit and giving birth to a monstrous child. Emaré's isolation, and being exiled from her family twice, make her think that she herself is the reason for her own misfortunes. This initiates her submission to the chain of suffering she experiences. Emaré is pathetic whilst drifting in storms and starving on the boat. She asks for divine help, praying to God to preserve her on the sea and to keep her son alive. Although Fellows suggests that 'attitudes towards mothers in Middle English romances are on the whole not characterized by the extremes of idealization',⁵⁶² Emaré's maternal concern for the survival of her child not only presents her as a caring mother, but also as a helpless woman who has only prayers to help her survive. In this respect, although she has also displayed 'resistance' before this submission, her experience exemplifies 'the life to which the medieval woman saw herself condemned: [...] accepting what happened because there was no other choice'.⁵⁶³

Romance victims who submit to suffering frequently display the belief that they are sinful, and it is God's ordeal that they have to suffer because of their sins. The idea of suffering being preordained by God, and the necessity of submission to it, is

⁵⁵⁸ Mehl, *The Middle English Romances*, pp. 135-6.

⁵⁵⁹ Osborn, *Romancing the Goddess*, p. 9.

⁵⁶⁰ Heng, *Empire of Magic*, p. 185.

⁵⁶¹ Felicity Riddy, 'Temporary Virginity and the Everyday Body: *Le Bone Florence of Rome* and Bourgeois Self-Making', in *Pulp Fictions*, ed. by McDonald, pp. 197-216 (pp. 204-5).

⁵⁶² Fellows, 'Mothers', p. 55.

⁵⁶³ Ramsey, *Chivalric Romances*, p. 177.

exemplified by several female victims who submit to their domestic victimizers because they believe them to be motivated by divine punishment. These ideas are driven by the belief that Eve is the central figure of disobedience against God,⁵⁶⁴ and women have a tendency to disobey as ‘daughters of Eve’,⁵⁶⁵ which makes all women sinful and necessitates their submission to their husbands, to whom they are subordinate.⁵⁶⁶ Female submission to suffering suggests the vulnerability of goodness and innocence against the epitome of evil, rather than punishment of disobedience. As a matter of fact, romance women have no strength to fight against evil physically, and they do not usually engage even in verbal battle. However, their submission complicates their role as ‘victims’ or ‘survivors’ because even if they suffer meekly, they are rewarded with earthly and religious rewards such as reunion with their families and regaining their status, in return for their being innocent, virtuous, pious and patient.

As with Emaré’s lack of resistance to her two exiles, and her view of them as a deserved ordeal, the Empress in *Octovian* submits to exile by putting her trust in God to end her suffering. As Mehl observes, ‘[t]here is no suggestion in the poem that the lady has deserved her hard fate and her sense of guilt does not spring from any particular act she has committed, but from a deeply Christian insight into her own sinfulness’.⁵⁶⁷ In that sense, the Empress suffers physically when she is exiled in the wilderness; yet, she suffers more emotionally because of her sense of guilt that she is a sinner. At the beginning of the romance it is indicated that the Empress’s suffering exceeds that of martyrs, and there is emphasis on the reversal of her fortune throughout the romance because of her pious resignation to the will of God, without questioning it. In this respect, it is right to assume that she is associated with the Virgin Mary.⁵⁶⁸ She is silent even after she has been falsely accused of adultery by her mother-in-law and after she is exiled by her husband. She is a good Christian praying to the Virgin Mary to overcome her sorrow. Her separation from her children after they have been taken by beasts in the wilderness convinces her of her sinfulness, and she feels obliged to cleanse her soul. Consequently, she submits to her ordeal and decides to go on pilgrimage to the Holy Land to be cleansed of her sins.

⁵⁶⁴ Deborah F. Sawyer, *Women and Religion in the First Christian Centuries* (London: Routledge, 1996), pp. 148-51.

⁵⁶⁵ Maureen Fries, ‘Feminae Populi: Popular Images of Women in Medieval Literature’, in *Popular Culture in the Middle Ages*, ed. by Josie P. Campbell (Bowling Green: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1986), pp. 48-55 (p. 49).

⁵⁶⁶ Emma Hawkes, ‘The “Reasonable” Laws of Domestic Violence in Late Medieval England’, in *Domestic Violence*, ed. by Salisbury, Donavin and Price, pp. 57-70 (p. 60).

⁵⁶⁷ Mehl, *The Middle English Romances*, p. 114.

⁵⁶⁸ Salter, ‘Born to Thralldom’, p. 49.

Although God appears to be the punisher of the female victims in *Lay le Freine* and *Cheuelere Assigne*, they are indeed self-victimizers who have deserved their ordeals, and they are mostly punished by separation from their children. In *Lay le Freine*, the lady is envious of the birth of her neighbour's twin sons, and accuses her of adultery; yet, in return, she gives birth to twin daughters. This entraps her in the dilemma of confessing that she has lied about her neighbour's adultery, accepting her own involvement in an adulterous affair, or slaying one of her children. She repents of her false accusation against her neighbour, since she may potentially be subjected to the same accusation:

‘Allas,’ sche seyde, ‘that this hap come!
 Ich have ygoven min owen dome.
 Forboden bite ich woman
 To speken ani other harm opon.
 Falsliche another y gan deme;
 The selve happe is on me sene.’⁵⁶⁹

The lady chooses to suffer personally instead of publicly, and decides to slay her child Freine rather than being blamed as a liar or an adulterous lady. Yet, the child is spared by the lady's maid who leaves her at a convent, and she is reunited with her years after, when her other daughter Codre is about to marry Freine's lover Sir Guroun.

Children separated from their mothers not only remind the audience of the Virgin Mary's separation from Christ but also help their mothers to realize the importance of redemption. The eponymous character in *Emaré*, the Empress in *Octovian* and the lady in *Lay le Freine* are separated from their children, which intensifies their emotional suffering and makes them believers in their own sinfulness. Likewise, the divine punishment of the female victim is apparent in Beatrice's patient suffering in *Cheuelere Assigne*. She is also victimized by her mother-in-law. Beatrice gives birth to seven children after denying God's power to make a woman conceive more than one child at once, and she is accused of giving birth to monstrous children in the shape of whelps by her mother-in-law Matabryne. Beatrice is accused of being a non-human, which deserves burning, a penalty ‘provided for witches and other persons tainted by the supernatural’.⁵⁷⁰ She is separated from her children and imprisoned for eleven years by her husband. While in prison, she asks for her children, ‘Whenne she

⁵⁶⁹ *Lay le Freine*, in *The Middle English Breton Lays*, ed. by Laskaya and Salisbury, pp. 68-78 (p. 70), lines 89-94. The editors' page and line numbers are retained.

⁵⁷⁰ Reinhard, ‘Burning at the Stake’, p. 188.

myssede hem þer grete mone she made.⁵⁷¹ She prays to God to save her from her miserable fate, until she is saved from burning by her son Enyas, who fights instead of his father to end his mother's ordeal.⁵⁷²

In *Amis and Amiloun*, the reason for the female victim's submission to suffering is that she is showing gratitude to a sufferer who has previously suffered for her sake. When Amis is told in a dream by God that the only way to cure his sworn brother Amiloun's leprosy is his children's blood, Amis's wife Belisaunt consents to Amis's cutting their throats to cure Amiloun's leprosy, in gratitude for Amiloun's sacrifice, and for fighting against the steward to save her from burning. She is a model of integrity and perseverance, and a foil to Amiloun's villainous wife who mistreats her husband, whilst comforting her husband who hesitates to sacrifice their children. Her sacrifice is also a test of her love for her husband,⁵⁷³ since she consents to the ordeal because her husband is Amiloun's sworn brother. In this respect, her sacrifice may be construed as a sacrifice 'for a higher good'.⁵⁷⁴

However, Belisaunt's sacrifice has already been deserved because of her being the reason for Amiloun's leprosy. This occasioned the fight in the first place, as a result of her fornication with Amis. It proceeded with Amiloun's replacing Amis in the fight against the steward. Ju Ok Yoon blames Belisaunt for being the reason for all suffering in the romance because of her fornication with Amis;⁵⁷⁵ however, as Foster points out, there is a contrast between Belisaunt's 'amorality and her later generosity',⁵⁷⁶ which presents her as a victim who is aware that she has to endure her ordeal. Belisaunt's ordeal is 'a test of both her love for her husband and her loyalty to Amiloun, the two parties she has wronged'.⁵⁷⁷ Childress's observation that the 'story glorifies not the human heroes but the workings of divine justice and mercy'⁵⁷⁸ is right because although Belisaunt is at the centre of all suffering by fornicating with Amis, and Amiloun is the sufferer for the sake of the morally weak Belisaunt, they are rewarded with the revival of Belisaunt's sacrificed children and healing of Amiloun's leprosy.

Sir Isumbras's wife also submits to the ordeal willingly by accompanying her husband, who is punished with exile by God because of his hubris in his wealth. She is

⁵⁷¹ *The Romance of the Cheuelere Assigne*, ed. by Gibbs, 5. 83.

⁵⁷² Tony Davenport, 'Abbreviation and Education of the Hero in *Chevalere Assigne*', in *The Matter of Identity*, ed. by Hardman, pp. 9-20 (p. 15).

⁵⁷³ Richmond, *Popularity*, p. 98.

⁵⁷⁴ McCracken, 'Engendering Sacrifice', p. 56.

⁵⁷⁵ Yoon, 'Leprosy', p. 45.

⁵⁷⁶ Foster, 'Simplicity', p. 415.

⁵⁷⁷ Hume, '*Amis and Amiloun*', p. 34.

⁵⁷⁸ Childress, 'Between Romance and Legend', p. 319.

forced to leave her husband when he is threatened by the Saracen Sultan, who buys her despite Isumbras's unwillingness. She is a chaste and pious woman, who suffers patiently both in exile with her husband and when she leaves with the Saracen Sultan. Even if she is victimized by the Sultan, it 'ironically turns out to be the means for Isumbras's accession to imperial dominion', ⁵⁷⁹ in other words, ending of their suffering. She is empowered because, as Radulescu stresses, she becomes an example of 'good governance and of qualities previously lacking in her husband; she is generous with the poor, mindful of the situation of her subjects and possesses a strong personality both in the way she governs and when she supports her husband'.⁵⁸⁰ In *Sir Amadace*, Sir Amadace's wife submits to suffering to protect her husband as Sir Isumbras's wife does. She is used by the White Knight as an object to test her husband's obedience to his promise. She is also foil to the dead merchant's mourning wife who cannot end his suffering, as she can neither pay his debts nor bury him. Sir Amadace's wife consents to be cut in two with her child without any resistance or weeping, to realize her husband's promise when the White Knight pretends to ask for his share of whatever Sir Amadace owns, as they agreed:

Thenne bespeke that ladi brighte,
 Sayd, 'Ye schalle him hold that ye have highte,
 Be God and Sayn Drightine!
 For his lufe that deet on tre,
 Loke yaure covandus holdun be,
 Yore forward was full fyne.
 Sithun Crist will that hit be so,
 Take and parte me evun in toe;
 Thou wan me and I am thine.⁵⁸¹

Unlike the wives who suffer to protect their husbands, the wife in *The Romans of Partenay* submits to suffering after her husband accuses her. Melusine is a fairy lady but she is also a devoted Christian, despite transforming into a serpent every Saturday. She can live like a mortal woman and die naturally on condition that her husband does not see her on Saturdays. Although her marriage provides a chance for her to live as a mortal woman with a husband and children, it becomes the reason for her suffering as

⁵⁷⁹ Fowler, 'Romance Hypothetical', p. 109.

⁵⁸⁰ Radulescu, 'Pious Middle English Romances', p. 344.

⁵⁸¹ *Sir Amadace*, in *Six Middle English Romances*, ed. by Mills, pp. 169-92 (p. 189), lines 733-41. All references are to this edition, cited by Mills's page and line number.

her fate 'is subject to her husband's human weakness'⁵⁸² when Raymond sees her snake body, accuses her of being the reason for unrest in their family, and she is forced to leave forever.

In *Lay le Freine*, Freine's unquestioning submission to her lover Sir Guroun's marriage to another bride makes her a victim of both her lover and social expectations. Freine's unknown lineage is an obstacle to their marriage because 'an illegitimate child in the royal family subverts the proper succession of the crown and opens the possibility of political chaos'.⁵⁸³ When Guroun's knights advise him to take a lord's daughter as wife, in order to have a legitimate heir so that he can secure his bloodline, he unknowingly arranges a marriage to Freine's twin sister Codre and calls Freine to prepare the wedding, an order to which she yields without any resentment. Freine's ordeal, indeed, is initiated when her mother prefers to sacrifice her rather than face accusations of adultery and hypocrisy. In that respect, like her mother, Freine is a victim of social expectations and concerns, and she has no option but to yield since she is not strong enough to resist.

Sir Gowther's mother submits to victimization not only by her husband and the devil but also by her son. Her husband the Duke wants to get another wife since his kingdom is 'vulnerable' because of their lacking an heir; however, he ignores the fact that his wife suffers emotionally because of his social concern. Her desperation makes her a victim of the devil, who appears to her in the orchard in the guise of her husband and impregnates her. Gowther, born out of this union, has a demonic nature. In infancy, Gowther tears her nipple when sucking and later threatens to kill her with a sword. Margaret Robson suggests that, since the lady is aware that the devil in disguise is not her husband, 'she is not being deceived, but is allowing herself to appear to be deceived for her own ends' because it is not only 'a remedy to her threatened position as a childless woman' but also 'revenge for her husband's treatment of her'.⁵⁸⁴ However, even if the lady avenges her victimization by her husband by deceiving him, it neither empowers nor comforts her, since she becomes vulnerable to the sexual abuse of the devil in order to secure her position as a wife, and the child who is the product of this union is also her victimizer.

⁵⁸² Lewis, 'Acceptable Lessons', p. 23.

⁵⁸³ Peggy McCracken, *The Romance of Adultery: Queenship and Sexual Transgression in Old French Literature* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998), p. 27.

⁵⁸⁴ Margaret Robson, 'Animal Magic: Moral Regeneration in *Sir Gowther*', *The Yearbook of English Studies*, 22 (1992), 140-53 (p. 141).

Apart from the females and the males who resist or submit to their domestic victimizers, female and male victims similarly resist or submit to their victimizers outside their families. Charbonneau and Cromwell point out that:

There are many romances that seem to support the over-simplified, over generalized view that women are passive, patient, pietistic with no subjectivity; as objects of male desire or thoroughly marginalized figures, so have no voice and no names. But even in such romances, women are rarely completely passive even when they seem to have the least control over their lives.⁵⁸⁵

This passive resistance is commonly directed towards the outsider victimizers who are unwanted Christian or Saracen suitors, and ‘false accuser’ knights. Empowerment of the female sufferers is possible only by verbal resistance, although their attempt is scorned and associated with ‘shrewdness’.⁵⁸⁶ Female wisdom is comparable to male bravery, nevertheless female ‘verbal’ resistance against suffering never equates to the ‘heroic’ resistance of a male, as women do not fight against suffering physically. As Charbonneau and Cromwell point out, ‘women’s search for identity outside the parameters of the domestic sphere’ always ends within their household ‘in their gendered roles as good wives and potential or actual mothers’.⁵⁸⁷ Females are never overtly masculine, even if they incorporate their resistance into a public world. They resist mostly for emotional and private reasons, and compared to the males, their resistance is not recounted at any length. No matter how strongly they resist, they never lose their femininity or their status as ‘women’ in society. They are always mothers and wives who care about their family members more than themselves. The dominance of maternal concern is apparent in *Lybeaus Desconus*, in which the female figure is not a victim herself but a caring mother who wants to protect her child. She keeps her son Bewfiȝ (Lybeaus Desconus) close to her all the time, so that he cannot come across a knight and be harmed by deeds of arms.

Some of the female victims endure patiently for years, until they overcome their ordeals and are rewarded by reunion with their lovers at the end of the waiting process. Goldborough in *The Lay of Havelok the Dane* is deprived of her status as the King’s daughter since Godrich, who her father appointed as her guardian after his death, humiliates her by forcing her to marry Havelok, whom he thinks is of low rank. In *King Horn*, Rymenhild is ‘set up’ to be sexually abused by her lover Horn’s friend Athulf, to

⁵⁸⁵ Charbonneau and Cromwell, ‘Gender and Identity’, p. 103.

⁵⁸⁶ Judith M. Bennett, *History Matters: Patriarchy and the Challenge of Feminism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), p. 147.

⁵⁸⁷ Charbonneau and Cromwell, ‘Gender and Identity’, p. 103.

whom Horn has entrusted her during his absence. Apart from the steward Athelbrus's persuading Athulf to sleep with Rymenhild by deceiving her that he is Horn, she is troubled by several suitors asking for her hand. Even so, she waits for Horn for seven years before she can marry him. In *Beves of Hamptoun*, Josian strangles her arranged husband Earl Miles on their wedding night in order to preserve her virginity for her lover Beves, and she wanders in the guise of a palmer for seven years to find Beves by reversing 'the usual romance structure of female desired chased by male desirer'.⁵⁸⁸ In *William of Palerne*, the Queen of Apulia does not surrender to the King of Spain, who invades her lands after her daughter has rejected his son's hand. She makes a truce with him in order to secure her daughter's free passage, and meanwhile she asks for help from her father, the Emperor of Greece. Menuge suggests that the Queen is in total contrast with Alphonse's wicked stepmother because of her maternal protection. She can protect her daughter because 'William's mother is a queen. She is ruler of her land, and as such, answers to no higher feudal power'.⁵⁸⁹ Although Menuge relates her resistance to her status, he ignores the fact that the Queen is still powerless, as her resistance provides her only a temporary relief and she is in need of her father's help. In the same romance, Melior is another lady escaping from an unwanted marriage. When the Greek prince asks for Melior's hand, she escapes with her lover William into the forest in a guise of white bear skins, led by a werewolf (Alphonse) who takes care of them.

A female victim may fail in her resistance against an unwanted suitor, unlike a male who is never defeated in battle against his enemy. However, she may overcome him when she manages to control him with divine help, after her submission. Until then, the marriage is an 'ordeal' for her, since she is forced to marry an unwanted husband and is entrapped in a loveless, passionless, relationship. In *The King of Tars*, even if the lady is forced into a marriage to a Saracen suitor, it is the female victim's piety and patience which help her to overcome suffering, as 'God is always on the side of the believers and intervenes on their behalf'.⁵⁹⁰ The princess feels herself responsible for the suffering of innocent Christians because of her rejection of the Sultan's hand. She consents to marry him, and wants her parents to consent, too:

þe maiden preyd hem boþe þo
þat þai schuld bi her conseyl do

⁵⁸⁸ Myra J. Seaman, 'Engendering Genre in Middle English Romance: Performing the Feminine in *Sir Beves of Hamptoun*', *Studies in Philology*, 98.1 (2001), 49-75 (p. 56).

⁵⁸⁹ Menuge, 'A Few Home Truths', p. 98.

⁵⁹⁰ Mehl, *The Middle English Romances*, p. 122.

To sauen Cristen kende.
 'For y wil suffre no lenger þrawe
 þat Cristen folk be for me slawe.'⁵⁹¹

When she submits to the Sultan, she is more concerned with preventing the suffering of Christians, than with her own suffering in this marriage. She is innocent, although she consents to the miscegenation, because the sin is perpetrated by the Sultan who has created the situation in which she has no other way out. She pretends to be a heathen, but she practises her faith secretly. Her piety is never tested by God; rather, as Judith Perryman states, she is presented as 'an impersonal agent of God'.⁵⁹² Although she is presented as a desperate sufferer at the beginning of the romance, without any intention of converting her husband but of saving the suffering Christians, her patient suffering in a heathen land and her refusal to stop practising her religion is rewarded by her final victory over the Saracens. She releases Christian prisoners, persuades her husband to convert to the Christian faith, and effects the transformation of their child from a lump of flesh into human shape by her Christian prayers.

The princess's silent resistance in *The King of Tars* is replaced by the verbal resistance of the Empress in the *Erle of Tolous*. The Empress is a strong woman who boldly proclaims her opinion that her husband is wrong, as he attacked the Earl of Tolous's land unjustly. She acts as a mediator between her husband Sir Dyoclysyen and the Earl of Tolous, trying to reconcile them and end their enmity. Despite her verbal resistance to the unjust victimization of the Earl of Tolous by her husband, she needs the Earl's help to prove her innocence when she is falsely accused of adultery by her two guardian knights, whose sexual attempts she has rejected. However, her dependence on morality cannot save her from being a victim, and she needs physical resistance (the preserve of males) to exculpate her. She is accused of being a whore, of betraying the Emperor, and she is condemned to be punished with imprisonment and exile, so that her infamy will be known under 'the judgement of God'.⁵⁹³ She does not punish her victimizers by informing her husband about their sexual attempts because she is merciful, but as Arlyn Diamond points out '[h]er moral strength is turned into a social weakness',⁵⁹⁴ which makes her a victim instead, since her forgiveness of their villainy makes her both the guardian knights' and her husband's victim.

⁵⁹¹ *The King of Tars*, ed. by Perryman, 82. 328-32.

⁵⁹² Judith Perryman, 'Introduction', in *The King of Tars*, ed. by Perryman, pp. 7-69 (p. 58).

⁵⁹³ Kratins, 'Treason', p. 673.

⁵⁹⁴ Arlyn Diamond, 'The Erle of Tolous: The Prince of Virtue', in *Medieval Insular Romance*, ed. by Weiss, Fellows and Dickson, pp. 83-92 (p. 86).

Although Christian males resist heroically against the Saracen and the Jewish villains and they ensure their military and religious superiority over them, the female victims obediently submit to the Saracen suitors who threaten them, when their proposals for marriage are rejected. They cannot resist Saracen suitors themselves and they can avoid marriage only if a male can fight against the unwanted suitor to save them from the threat.

Female victims not only submit to Saracen suitors but also to the Christian suitors they are forced to marry by their fathers, or by the suitors themselves. Diamond notes that, '[w]hat certain romances identify as especially problematic for women is their enforced passivity as objects of exchange within medieval marriage',⁵⁹⁵ which means 'the impossibility of independent female existence'.⁵⁹⁶ The physical and emotional vulnerabilities of the females are exposed by the males' desire for sexual empowerment over them. Thus, female vulnerability is presented as a male opportunity, both for enforcing male desires on females and for male displays of heroic action to save them. Therefore, female vulnerability becomes a means for the males, both to inflict suffering and to display their power to overcome suffering. In the romance, female vulnerability and male invulnerability are exalted as pitiful females are saved by heroic males.

In *Beves of Hamptoun*, Josian is abducted by Ascopart (sent by King Yvor), but she is saved by her lover Beves. In *Le Bone Florence of Rome*, Florence is intimidated by Sir Garcy, who threatens to rape her and give her to his chamberlain after dishonouring her when she rejects his proposal. In *Torrent of Portyngale*, Torrent fights against the Prince of Aragon in a duel for Desonell's hand, in order to save her from unwanted suitors. In *William of Palerne*, Melior is wooed by a Greek prince and the Queen of Apulia's lands are invaded by the King of Spain after her daughter rejects his son's hand. In *Sir Gowther*, the Emperor's daughter escapes from marriage to an unwanted heathen suitor only by Sir Gowther's help. In *Sir Degaré*, a lady is threatened with ravishment by a marauding knight. In *King Horn*, apart from Rymenhild who is forced to marry King Mody, the King of Ireland's daughter Reynild is offered as a wife by her father to King Horn to cement their allegiance. In *Ipomadon*, several kings ask for Lady Fere's hand. Even a non-Christian lady suffers from unwanted suitors in

⁵⁹⁵ Arlyn Diamond, 'Unhappy Endings: Failed Love/Failed Faith in Late Romances', in *Readings*, ed. by Meale, pp. 65-81 (p. 72).

⁵⁹⁶ Corinne J. Saunders, 'A Matter of Consent: Middle English Romance and the Law of *Raptus*', in *Medieval Women*, ed. by Menuge, pp. 105-24 (p. 115).

Generydes. Belen, the King of Egypt and his son Gwaynan ask for the Sultan's lands and his daughter Clarionas's hand.

In *Lybeaus Desconus*, Lady Violet and Dame Amoure are saved from their giant suitors by Lybeaus Desconus. In the same romance, the curse put on the Lady of Synadowne by Maboune and Jrayne is lifted when Lybeaus Desconus releases her after she asks for King Arthur's help. In *Sir Degaré*, apart from a lady suffering from a giant knight's threat of ravishment, the King of Brittany's daughter suffers physically and emotionally after she is raped and impregnated by a fairy knight, who disregards her pain:

Thou best mi lemman ar thou go,
Wether the liketh wel or wo.'
Tho nothing ne coude do she
But wep and criede and wolde fle;
And he anon gan hire at holde,
And dide his wille, what he wolde.
He binam hire here maidenhod,⁵⁹⁷

He leaves her with a child and with the anxiety of concealing the truth about her pregnancy. Although Cheryl Colopy suggests that the rape is 'a fantasy of wish fulfilment: the daughter 'dreams' that her father appears in the forest and rapes her, a projection of her own intense feelings for him',⁵⁹⁸ there is no evidence in the romance that the lady is sexually attracted to her father. On the contrary, she is afraid of being accused of incest, and she hides herself as her womb grows. Donna Crawford assumes that 'the rape scene serves as a narrative necessity; after all, it results in the begetting of the poem's hero'.⁵⁹⁹ Nevertheless, this idea disregards the lady's ordeal and presents the rape as an ordinary and necessary occasion for conception of the hero of the romance, instead of an ordeal for the female victim. In the Middle Ages, children born after rape were defined as illegitimate, without a family name, right of inheritance and family. Therefore, several women murdered their children by cutting their throats, abandoning them in a field or leaving them in a ditch.⁶⁰⁰ After giving birth to her son, the lady leaves him at a hermitage following the advice of her maid. She meets her ravisher

⁵⁹⁷ *Sir Degaré*, in *The Middle English Breton Lays*, ed. by Laskaya and Salisbury, pp. 89-144 (p. 104), lines 107-13. All references are to this edition, cited by the editors' page and line number.

⁵⁹⁸ Cheryl Colopy, 'Sir Degaré: A Fairy Tale Oedipus', *Pacific Coast Philology*, 17.1 (1982), 31-9 (p. 33).

⁵⁹⁹ Donna Crawford, ' "Gronyng wyth grysly wounde": Injury in Five Middle English Breton Lays', in *Readings*, ed. by Meale, pp. 35-52 (p. 41).

⁶⁰⁰ Bonnie S. Anderson and Judith P. Zinsser, *A History of Their Own: Women in Europe From Pre-History to the Present* (London: Penguin, 1988), p. 139.

years after in a tournament and marries him without any resentment for his exploiting her, because she thinks ‘That hi scholde ispoused ben / To a knight that sche never sen’.⁶⁰¹ She believes that the knight whose child she gave birth is already her husband, although he raped her and abandoned her afterwards.

The abduction of women was common in medieval times and ‘[t]he legal term for abduction of a woman was *raptus*. [...] [I]t was a kind of theft, a wrong against the man under whose authority the female victim lived’.⁶⁰² Therefore, the female’s ordeal is also presented as the victimization of her husband, which equates their victimhood. In *Sir Orfeo*, Heurodis’s submission to the fairy king who abducts her victimizes not only Heurodis but also her husband. The invincible fairy king takes her to his fairy land despite her husband’s effort to prevent it, after she has been forewarned about her abduction in her dream. When she learns of the unavoidability of her capture, Heurodis mutilates herself; she rubs her hands and feet, scratches her face, tears her robe and is driven out of her mind:

Ac, as sone as sche gan awake,
Sche crid, and lothli bere gan make;
Sche froted hir honden and hir fete,
And crached hir visage – it bled wete –
Hir riche robe hye al to-rett
And was reveyd out of hir wit.⁶⁰³

Ellen M. Caldwell suggests that Heurodis’s self-mutilation is ‘a strategy to protect her chastity’.⁶⁰⁴ However, her reaction is a ‘natural’ way of stating desperation rather than a strategy, since she is aware that nothing can prevent her ordeal. Spearing, interestingly, believes that Heurodis’s self-mutilation is schizophrenic, since her actions are ‘symptoms of madness’.⁶⁰⁵ Nevertheless, Heurodis’s capture proves that her experience is real. As R. H. Nicholson evaluates Heurodis’s situation, ‘the abduction of Heurodis is remarkably like a daemonic rape; her first encounter with the faerie king leaves her ‘reueyd’, or ‘ravysed’, out of her wits’.⁶⁰⁶ Even if she suffers before her capture, there is

⁶⁰¹ *The Middle English Breton Lays*, ed. by Laskaya and Salisbury, 116. 587-8.

⁶⁰² Kathryn Gravdal, *Ravishing Maidens: Writing Rape in Medieval French Literature and Law* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1991), p. 6.

⁶⁰³ *The Middle English Breton Lays*, ed. by Laskaya and Salisbury, 28. 77-82.

⁶⁰⁴ Ellen M. Caldwell, ‘The Heroism of Heurodis: Self-Mutilation and Restoration in *Sir Orfeo*’, *Papers on Language and Literature*, 43.3 (2007), 291-310 (p. 296).

⁶⁰⁵ Anthony C. Spearing, ‘*Sir Orfeo*: Madness and Gender’, in *Spirit*, ed. by Putter and Gilbert, pp. 258-72 (p. 262).

⁶⁰⁶ R. H. Nicholson, ‘*Sir Orfeo*: A ‘Kyniges Noote’’, *The Review of English Studies*, n.s., 36.142 (1985), 161-79 (p. 176).

no mention of her suffering later in the fairy king's land, until she is taken back by her husband Orfeo.

Some of the female sufferers are abused by the male victimizers in order to victimize their husbands or their fathers. In *Kyng Alisaunder*, after Philip's unjust attack on Neptanabus's lands, King Philip of Macedon's wife Olympias is stripped of her dignity and she becomes 'an object of sexual desire'⁶⁰⁷ when she is deceived by Neptanabus. Likewise, the female victim in *Richard Coer de Lyon* is abused to empower Richard against her father. The German princess provides food, money and comfort for Richard when he is imprisoned by her father, and she warns Richard against a lion that will be sent to eat him; yet, in return for her favours she is left by Richard after being used as a means of compounding with her father for his release, although she expects Richard to marry her - which would be the honourable course for him to take as a Christian hero.

Apart from noble women who are vulnerable to abuse by their family members and that of outsiders, both noble and commoner females are vulnerable and submissive to suffering in times of war and siege. In *King Horn*, Horn's mother retreats into a cave with her son to save her child from death, after her husband is killed by Saracens in war. In the *Stanzaic Guy of Warwick*, Tirri's wife retreats into a nunnery to escape from disgrace when her husband is imprisoned by the Emperor after a war. In *The Sege off Melayne*, the vulnerability of women during battles is represented by women slain or widowed when Milan is captured. Man's glory in fight is presented as woman's suffering, and their death is worthless compared to the death of males. Although dead males are rewarded with heaven because of their bravery in battle or duel, there is no mention of the female victims rising to heaven. Pain and suffering of women as a result of battle, duel and war are mostly ignored and in *The Siege of Jerusalem*, a woman's being a victim is disregarded by portraying her as a victimizer instead. A specific representation of a Jewish woman as a victim of war is pathetic but also 'monstrous' in *The Siege of Jerusalem*. A mother eating her own child and another woman's unborn child flowing from her body after she is hit by a stone are good examples of the severity of the suffering going on in the city. In addition, many beaten and burned Jewish women starve, turn pale and faint. The suffering images of the Jews are presented in detail in order to emphasize their having deserved it by crucifying Christ, the reason for the siege of the city in the romance. The detailed descriptions of suffering women and even their children highlight the severity of the ordeal of those who have the wrong

⁶⁰⁷ Fellows, 'Mothers', p. 57.

faith, in addition to emphasizing that Christ's suffering is well avenged, regardless of sex and age, and without presenting the Jews as pitiable victims.

Although male and female victims mostly suffer for different reasons, love is the only reason which victimizes and empowers female and male victims. Myra J. Seaman suggests that the representation of love in English romances is 'base and clumsy';⁶⁰⁸ however, love is presented as a strong bond between the lovers, which makes them sacrifice themselves for each other's sake. Love empowers the lovers and helps them to endure their suffering. It is not base but honourable, since it gives a voice even to the silent females and makes the male lovers challenge obstacles, mostly through quests, so that they can be reunited with their lovers. Diamond accurately suggests that love is an important theme uniting male and female and offering happiness, which 'encourages us to sympathize with the wishes of the lovers, it is also inviting us to share their implicit critique of the religious and secular rules and rulers which would deny them their happiness'.⁶⁰⁹ Love's empowering effect is apparent when female victims, punished by their fathers for inappropriate relationships, resist being separated from their lovers.

Joan M. Ferrante states that the female lover becomes 'a personification of love',⁶¹⁰ which is actually true, since the female lovers are encouraged to resist their submissiveness, because love empowers them and makes them challenge their fathers. They endure the trials set by their fathers. In *Sir Degrevant*, Melidor says she is ready to die for her lover Sir Degrevant's sake. Melior in *William of Palerne* escapes with her lover William, Cristabell in *Sir Eglamour of Artois* gives birth to her lover Sir Eglamour's children, like Desonell in *Torrent of Portyngale* who gives birth to her lover Torrent's child. In *Amis and Amiloun*, Belisaunt is willing to be torn into pieces instead of Amis.

In *Ipomadon*, Lady Fere of Calabere victimizes herself as a result of her pride, which also makes her a victim of love. She is so proud of herself that she thinks no prince is worthy enough of her hand; therefore, she makes a public vow promising that she will marry the best knight in the world. However, when she falls in love with Ipomadon, who hides his chivalric skills and nobility within his guise of a fool, she repents the great folly of her vow and blames herself for her foolishness. As Weiss points out, Ipomadon's disguise exposes the 'actual folly of those who think themselves

⁶⁰⁸ Seaman, 'Engendering Genre', pp. 51-2.

⁶⁰⁹ Diamond, 'Unhappy Endings', p. 68.

⁶¹⁰ Joan M. Ferrante, *Woman as Image in Medieval Literature: From the Twelfth Century to Dante* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1936), p. 66.

wise'.⁶¹¹ When she realizes her folly after Ipomadon's leaving the court, Lady Fere feels desperate when she is asked to choose a husband from among noble knights who attend the tournament held for her hand. She prays for Ipomadon's return to save her from Sir Lyolyne, who threatens to destroy her lands if she refuses to marry him.

For female victims, love is the main motivation which empowers them to raise their voice against the authority not only of domestic victimizers but also that of outsiders. In *King Horn*, Rymenhild patiently waits for her lover Horn for seven years, although she is forced to marry King Mody. In *Beves of Hamptoun*, Josian strangles her arranged husband and searches for Beves for seven years. Weiss suggests that Floripas's representation in *Sir Ferumbras* and *The Sowdone of Babylone* contributed substantially to the portrayal of Josian,⁶¹² which is true since both women are converts, they both commit murders, and both masculinise their resistance through physical resistance for the sake of their lovers.

Love is presented as a strong bond between the lovers, which highlights their *willingness* to suffer regardless of the threat of death. In *Floris and Blancheflour*, Blancheflour is sold to merchants by the King of Spain to prevent her marriage to his son Floris. When the Emir catches the lovers secretly meeting in his tower, they are willing to die for each other's sake:

His swerd he braid out of his sschethe,
The children for to do to dethe.
And Blauncheflour pult forth hire swire,
And Florice gan hire agein tire.
'Ich am a man, ich schal go bifore.
Thou ne aughtest nought mi deth acore.'
Florice forth his swire pulte
And Blauncheflour agein hit brutte.⁶¹³

Although she is regarded as a 'commodity' by Floris's father⁶¹⁴ and a sexual object by the Emir, Floris's love for her and the Emir's compassion for the lovers after he realizes that they are ready to die for each other's sake make her reunion with Floris possible.

⁶¹¹ Judith Weiss, 'Ineffectual Monarchs: Portrayals of Regal and Imperial Power in *Ipomadon*, *Robert le Diable* and *Octovian*', in *Cultural Encounters*, ed. by Saunders, pp. 55-68 (p. 59).

⁶¹² Judith Weiss, ' "The Courteous Warrior": Epic, Romance and Comedy in *Boeve de Haumtone*', in *Boundaries*, ed. by Cartlidge, pp. 149-60 (p. 157).

⁶¹³ *Sentimental and Humorous Romances*, ed. by Kooper, 36. 1128-35.

⁶¹⁴ Kathleen Coyne Kelly, 'The Bartering of Blancheflour in the Middle English *Floris and Blancheflour*', *Studies in Philology*, 91.2 (1994), 101-10 (p. 104).

Different from the female lovers empowered by love in other romances, the female lover in *The Squire of Low Degree* is weakened by love against her father the King of Hungary, who abuses her feelings to prevent her marriage to her lover the Squire. The princess mourns as her father pretends that her lover is dead, although he imprisons him and then sends him on a quest. Although there is no mention of the Squire's suffering in prison and on the quest, the princess's mourning after her lover is presented in detail. The unnamed princess keeps the dead body which her father says belongs to her lover - but is in fact that of the steward who is her lover's enemy- in her room for seven years, loses her joy of life and beauty:

She put him in a marble stone,
With quaynt gynnes many one,
And set hym at hir beddes head,
And every day she kyst that dead.⁶¹⁵

She is isolated in her room, which is 'a closed and ornamented space'⁶¹⁶ full of physical comfort but lacking in emotional consolation. She refrains from involving herself in any entertainments arranged by her father to cheer her up, and she decides to lead an anchoress's life in order to suffer more.

Romance has a specific structure which delineates how suffering is introduced, endured and ended. As Kathryn Hume explains:

As a rule, there is a 'prologue' which gives us the information we need regarding the hero, heroes, heroine, or hero and heroine. In it, we see the hero at peace with his world, though the nature of the trouble that is to follow is usually indicated. From this ideal state, the hero passes to one in which there is a discrepancy between what is and what should be. The main body of the romance recounts the endeavours of the hero to close this gap, reimpose order on his life, and gain his goal. The romance generally ends with an epilogue showing the hero once again at peace with the world around him, politically, socially, and mentally or spiritually. There may be a brief reference to his eventual death, but the essence of the end of such romances is worldly peace and prosperity.⁶¹⁷

Patient sufferers are rewarded with earthly goods and divine blessings at the end of their trials. Even repentant sinners are assured of the justice of God's mercy so that they do

⁶¹⁵ *The Squire of Low Degree*, in *Sentimental and Humorous Romances*, ed. by Kooper, pp. 127-71 (p. 150), lines 691-4. All references are to this edition, cited by Kooper's page and line number.

⁶¹⁶ Fewster, *Traditionality and Genre*, p. 145.

⁶¹⁷ Hume, 'Amis and Amiloun', p. 26.

not despair, and ‘repent in the trust that they will not be rejected’.⁶¹⁸ At the end of experiencing suffering, either within their household or away from it, the female victims are rewarded by reunion with their families, regaining their wealth and status, being cleansed of false accusations, or they are sanctified with a divine gift.

In *Athelston*, the innocence of the Egelond family is proved following the efforts of Athelston’s wife to exonerate them. In the *Erle of Tolous*, the Empress’s innocence of an accusation of adultery is proved. The eponymous heroine in *Emaré*, the Empress in *Octovian* and Margaret in *Sir Tryamour* are reunited with their families, their noble statuses are restored, besides their innocence being proved. In *Cheuelere Assigne*, Beatrice is reunited with her children after they regain human shapes. In *Lay le Freine*, the eponymous heroine is reunited with her mother after many years of their separation. In *Sir Orfeo*, Heurodis is reunited with her husband after he saves her from the fairy king. In *The King of Tars*, the piety of the lady is rewarded by the transformation of her child into a human shape and by her husband’s conversion. In *Le Bone Florence of Rome*, Florence’s piety is rewarded with a divine gift, since she becomes a healer of incurable sicknesses.

The victims (both male and female) in romances suffer alone; however, some of them have friends, family members, maids or strangers they meet during their ordeal who have ‘golden hearts’, because they either provide the victims with physical support during their resistance to their victimizers, or comfort them emotionally by providing wise council. They are not only of noble birth, but may also be commoners, or liminal figures such as hermits. They are occasionally rewarded in return for their favours. Their involvement in the narratives of suffering, although often contained within a few lines, is significant in that they provide temporary relief for the sufferers. They cannot end the suffering completely; however, they soothe the victims’ pain and they provide them with emotional support.

The females in the household commonly function as mediators, offering emotional support with their wise speech and persuasion skills. Caroline D. Eckhardt suggests that:

To male members of the audience, then, the role of woman as mediator may have functioned almost as it did for female members of the audience, since it provided a

⁶¹⁸ Hopkins, *The Sinful Knights*, p. 177.

heightening of normal expectations without threatening any fundamental principle of the established relationships between men and women.⁶¹⁹

Therefore, women do not exceed their gender roles by resisting males whilst they state their opinions to prevent or relieve suffering. In *Athelston*, Athelston's wife's intervention on behalf of the Egelonds provides a respite for them, and the sense that they are 'not alone'. In *Floris and Blancheflour*, the Queen persuades her husband to allow the reunion of their son Floris with his lover Blancheflour. Likewise, in *Sir Degrevant*, the Countess reminds the Earl that their daughter Melidor is his only heir, and she persuades him to allow Melidor's marriage to Sir Degrevant. In *Sir Cleges*, Sir Cleges's wife Clarys comforts her husband and gives him hope with her wise speech while they are living in poverty:

Ye se wele, sir, it helpys nought,
To take sorow in your thought;
Therefore I rede ye stynte.
Let your sorowe awaye gon
And thanke God of Hys lone
Of all that He hath sent.⁶²⁰

It is she who sends her husband to the King with the miraculous cherries which God has given them – which in turn leads to reconciliation and the return of their wealth and status by the amazed and mollified King.

The female stranger relievers of suffering are not only noblewomen but also commoners. In *Partonope of Blois*, although Partonope is her husband's prisoner, Armant's wife secretly allows Partonope to attend a tournament, and when her husband dies, she releases Partonope from prison. In *Sir Gowther*, the Emperor's daughter sends food to Sir Gowther when he retreats into her father's court to suffer in penitence, and she marries him at the end of his ordeal, thereby making her 'self' (body and lineage) the means of his reintegration into the social position which is his birthright. In the *Erle of Tolous*, the Empress attempts to persuade her husband not to victimize the Earl of Tolous by attacking his lands unjustly. In *Sir Ferumbras* and *The Sowdone of Babylone*, the Saracen ruler's daughter Floripas helps the imprisoned French knights to defeat her father. In *Sir Launfal*, Lady Tryamour provides Sir Launfal with magical items to end his poverty. In *The Romans of Partenay*, Melusine relieves Raymond's suffering in

⁶¹⁹ Caroline D. Eckhardt, 'Woman as Mediator in Middle English Romances', in *Popular Culture*, ed. by Campbell, pp. 63-76 (p. 74).

⁶²⁰ *Sir Cleges*, in *The Middle English Breton Lays*, ed. by Laskaya and Salisbury, pp. 367-407 (p. 380), lines 127-32. The editors' page and line numbers are retained.

return for his marrying her. In *Partonope of Blois*, Melior's sister Urike comforts Partonope, who suffers after betraying his lover Melior, and she arranges a tournament to reunite the lovers. In *Richard Coer de Lyon*, Richard is helped by Margery, the Emperor's daughter, to outwit her father. In *William of Palerne*, Melior's friend Alexandrine, the daughter of the Duke of Lombardy, advises Melior and William to disguise themselves in the white bearskins in order not to be recognized when they escape from Melior's father:

& 3ef 3e were disgised & di3t on any wise,
 I wot wel witerli 3e wold be aspied.
 seþþe no noþer nel be but nedes to wende,
 craftier skil kan i non þan i wol kuþe.⁶²¹

Although Randy P. Schiff suggests that Alexandrine and Alphonse's stepmother are similar, since Alexandrine moves Melior and William into 'a state of temporary exception, as they pass out of the court into the wild' (through the disguise) like Alphonse who has been transformed into a werewolf by his stepmother,⁶²² Alexandrine's intention is friendly, intended to protect the lovers, unlike Alphonse's stepmother.

In *Lay le Freine*, the abbess and the porter's daughter take care of and nurse the infant Freine. In *William of Palerne*, a cowherd's wife takes very good care of William after he is abandoned by his stepmother. In *Floris and Blancheflour*, when Floris is kept in the Emir's tower, Blancheflour's maid Clarice lets Floris in secretly to reunite the lovers. In return for her help, she marries the Emir and becomes the Queen of Babylone, after she has been suggested to the Emir as a potential wife by Blancheflour. In *Ipomadon*, Lady Fere's maid Imayne comforts Lady Fere after Ipomadon leaves her court. In *Generydes*, Clarionas's maid Mirabell senses Yvell's trick to abduct Clarionas, and Serenydes's plans to separate Clarionas and Generydes, so she warns Generydes. In *Sir Degaré*, the lady's maid advises her to leave her baby at a hermitage door so that he can be fostered by a hermit, in order to save her from an accusation of incest. In *Sir Degrevant*, Melidor's maid is a cunning woman, acting as go-between for Melidor and her lover Degrevant. Edwards suggests that 'she also embodies impulses that stand in sharp contrast to the masculine world of violence and discord [...] offering instead one

⁶²¹ *The Romance of William of Palerne*, ed. by Skeat, 60. 1677-80.

⁶²² Randy P. Schiff, 'Cross-Channel Becomings-Animal: Primal Courtliness in *Guillaume de Palerne* and *William of Palerne*', *Exemplaria*, 21.4 (2009), 418-38 (p. 428).

of hospitality and reflection and -above all- conversation'.⁶²³ She teaches Degrevant how to enter the castle secretly in which Melidor is being held and she warns Degrevant that Melidor's father expects his death in the tournament that will be held for Melidor's hand. In return for her help, she is engaged to Degrevant's squire.

On the other hand, Floripas kills her maid in *The Sowdone of Babylone*, fearing that she will tell her father about her liaison with Guy, and her sympathy for the French Christians. Although maids are mostly helpful (part of an unofficial and unrecognised female support network within - and outside - the household), they can also act as spies for those in power (usually male). Stewards, their male equivalent, are usually malicious and treacherous, although they can, like Sir Orfeo's steward in *Sir Orfeo*, be loyal and helpful.

⁶²³ Edwards, 'Gender', p. 57.

Chapter Three: Submit Weakly or Resist Boldly II: Representations of Male Victims in Middle English Metrical Romances

Male victims, like their female counterparts, are subjected to victimizations in their households, suffering on account of their children, stepmothers, brothers, sworn brothers, mothers and wives. Like female victims, male victims are also threatened and victimized by outsiders, such as wicked stewards who deceive them or falsely accuse them of treason, Christian nobles who invade their lands unjustly, and Saracen rulers who murder their fathers, threaten and fight against them. Besides, they suffer from the attacks of beasts, incurable sicknesses, divine punishment as a response to self-victimizations occasioned by their own pride and/or lovesickness. Compared with female victims, it is obvious that male victims endure more physical suffering in fights and self-exiles, whilst the females experience physical suffering in *enforced* exile. Male victims' resistance to suffering is more effective, and they are more successful in preventing, relieving and ending suffering. Apart from suffering for their own sake, to avenge parents or to save an 'outsider' male sufferer, the males usually suffer for the sake of a female, or in order to relieve her suffering. Although females mostly suffer alone on their own account, male victims share the suffering of a friend, sworn brother, or a stranger noble, male or female. Besides, females rarely experience extreme changes in the nature of their suffering, although males swing from one misfortune to another. Male sufferers experience considerable variety in the type of suffering throughout the course of a single narrative. They may experience a number of different misfortunes or misadventures, almost all of which are related to one another.

All domestic experiences of suffering for males have 'secular' reasons. A noble male victim suffers because of a treacherous and/or jealous mother, stepmother, uncle, brother, wife, son or daughter, some of whom are resisted. In *Beves of Hamptoun*, disinheritance provides a means of putting Beves in the right, because he has been disinherited by tyranny, and is reclaiming an inheritance which has been misappropriated by his mother and her lover. Beves is captured and sold to Saracen merchants. After his victory over the Saracens, Beves returns to England to avenge his disinheritance and fights against the usurping Emperor, who is his mother's lover Devoun, and regains his status and inheritance.

In *The Seven Sages of Rome*, Florentyne not only saves himself from execution but also saves his father, who is being victimized by his treacherous wife. Compared to Florentyne, the Emperor is weaker, and suffers from misjudgement in victimizing his

son, until Florentyne's innocence is revealed. Florentyne reveals his stepmother's treason. He forgives his father, since his father is deceived by the Empress. In *Generydes*, Generydes leaves his father's court after his stepmother Serenydes provokes her lover Sir Amelok to murder Generydes.

In medieval romances, male victims may help other victims who are also victimized by their family members, by ending each other's suffering through mutual help. In *William of Palerne*, although enchanted by his stepmother and turned into a werewolf, Alphonse wants to regain his identity and human shape. Meanwhile, he proves that '[a]ffection, devotion and loyalty are traits perhaps not exclusive to man',⁶²⁴ and helps other people in need of help. He abducts the infant William, helping him to avoid his being poisoned by his uncle. Later on, he guides William in the forest with his lover Melior when they escape from Melior's father. In return for Alphonse's help, William reveals Alphonse's identity and makes his stepmother disenchant him so that he can regain human shape.

Despite stranger victims' helping each other to overcome their suffering in *William of Palerne*, the blood brother victimizes Gamelyn in *The Tale of Gamelyn*. Gamelyn's experience involves 'exile and return, and the general theme of the young man's quest to take his proper place in society'.⁶²⁵ Gamelyn realizes the rightness of avenging his suffering, which empowers him against his wicked brother's injustice and villainy, after defeating his opponent in a tournament. He escapes with the steward Adam Spencer's help, becomes an outlaw, is arrested by judges bribed by his brother John, but is saved by his brother Ote. His empowerment is sudden and through 'an escape from the more intractable facts of life into a simple world where physical might can determine right and wrong'.⁶²⁶ While Gamelyn 'makes his own way in the world by strength',⁶²⁷ and ironically becomes an outlaw leader after he is deprived of his inheritance, his violence and illegal actions are justified since John seeks to disinherit and even execute him. Even if their father is concerned with the well-being of all his sons and leaves properties to all his children, Sir John violates their father's will and establishes his own primogeniture rule by stripping his younger brother Gamelyn of his inheritance.⁶²⁸

⁶²⁴ Dalrymple, *Language and Piety*, p. 74.

⁶²⁵ Scattergood, 'The Tale of Gamelyn', p. 162.

⁶²⁶ Barron, *English Medieval Romance*, p. 82.

⁶²⁷ Knight, 'harkeneth aright', p. 20.

⁶²⁸ See Colleen Donnelly, 'Aristocratic Veneer and the Substance of Verbal Bonds in *The Weddyng of Sir Gawen and Dame Ragnell and Gamelyn*', *Studies in Philology*, 94.3 (1997), 321-43.

The Tale of Gamelyn, a relative of the Robin Hood legend, exemplifies the process of justice in fourteenth century England which was corrupted by treacherous officers, the criminal law for the outlaws, and the procedure of trial by jury.⁶²⁹ In addition to these, it recalls the Peasants' Revolt in terms of the idea of rebellion.⁶³⁰ Therefore, rather than a merely personal avenger, Gamelyn acts like an 'avenger for preserving the social order' and creating an alternative justice to prevent potential suffering caused by 'official' corrupt judges:

The justice and the shirreve both honged hie,
To weyven with the ropes and the winde drye;
And the twelve sisours (sorwe have that rekke!)
Alle thei were honged fast by the nekke.⁶³¹

As Field points out, Havelok and Gamelyn have this self-created justice in common, as '[b]oth heroes are displaced from the world of established power by corrupt usurpers who re-invent them as criminals'.⁶³² Although Scattergood believes that Gamelyn's justice is unjust,⁶³³ since he ironically turns into an outlaw victimizer who assaults 'justice', it is justifiable since it is achieved in circumstances where 'the law and justice appear to be opposed'.⁶³⁴ Gamelyn creates his own justice (which is morally 'righteous') to take revenge and punish his brother, the bribed judges and men of religion acting in his brother's favour and manipulating the law. Although his role changes from a victim to a victimizer, Gamelyn challenges these corrupt powers by using violence, and 'the violence in the *Tale of Gamelyn* is justified, for the author and its audience, by the fact that it is done in the cause of right in the battle against injustice'.⁶³⁵ According to medieval law, those who were deservedly outlawed could not recover their lands, or the chattels which were theirs before their outlawry.⁶³⁶ However, Gamelyn is pardoned by the king, and he recovers his inheritance, which justifies the application of his own 'outlawed' justice against the corrupted 'legal' one.

Apart from the male children who are victimized by their family members, fathers may be victims of their sons and daughters, who betray them by allying with

⁶²⁹ Edgar F. Shannon, Jr, 'Mediaeval Law in the *Tale of Gamelyn*', *Speculum*, 26 (1951), 458-64 (p. 463).

⁶³⁰ Ramsey, *Chivalric Romances*, p. 94.

⁶³¹ *The Tale of Gamelyn*, in *Robin Hood and Other Outlaw Tales*, ed. by Stephen Knight and Thomas H. Ohlgren (Kalamazoo, Michigan: Medieval Institute Publications, 1997), pp. 184-226 (p. 218), lines 875-8. The editors' page and line numbers are retained.

⁶³² Field, 'Popular Romance', p. 26.

⁶³³ Scattergood, '*The Tale of Gamelyn*', p. 167.

⁶³⁴ Angela M. Lucas, 'Fair Play, Justice and the Law in *The Tale of Gamelyn*', *The Maynooth Review*, 5.2 (1979), 45-9 (p. 48).

⁶³⁵ Maurice Hugh Keen, *The Outlaws of Medieval Legend* (London: Routledge, 2000), pp. 90-1.

⁶³⁶ Shannon, 'Mediaeval Law', pp. 462-3.

their enemies. This is restricted to Saracens whose children convert. Unlike victimized children, who end their suffering by their resistance, the victimized fathers who resist their children fail and are executed. In *Sir Ferumbras*, the heathen ruler Balan is defeated and executed by the French enemy because his children betray his faith and authority. His son Ferumbras converts to Christianity in order to be accepted into Christian service, which was a requirement of the Crusader states in the Middle Ages,⁶³⁷ and he fights on the side of the French, whilst his daughter Floripas also helps the French and converts to Christianity. Balan is disgraced by Floripas, who gives his treasure to the French, then advises them to use her father's idols against the Saracens. Although he is captured by the French and must be baptized in order to survive and regain his status, he prefers beheading to conversion. Likewise, in *The Sowdone of Babylone*, the heathen ruler Laban is betrayed by his son Ferumbras, and his daughter Floripas. Laban curses Floripas and Ferumbras:

‘Ye and thou, hore serpentyne,
And that fals cursed Ferumbras,
Mahounde gyfe hem both evel endyng,
And almyghty Sathanas!’⁶³⁸

Laban rejects conversion, smites Bishop Turpyn who wants to baptize him, and curses all Christians; yet, he is beheaded in return for his resistance.

Although the male victims mostly resist suffering by comparison with female victims, there are a few male victims who submit to suffering inflicted by their family members. Their submission makes them pathetic rather than heroic; therefore, the idea of male superiority in overcoming suffering through resistance is undermined. Through their submissive portrayal, romances could be said to provide a ‘realistic’ representation, by presenting both sexes with weaknesses rather than presenting all males as powerful. In *Le Bone Florence of Rome*, although Miles pretends to be loyal to his brother Emere, Emere is imprisoned because of Miles, who betrays and dethrones him and then abducts his wife. Emere submits and appears weak, until he exacts punishment at the end by burning Miles after he abducts and victimizes his wife Florence.

Like the female victims who suffer obediently, the male victim in *Athelston* does not try to prevent or end his suffering, and he consents to his ordeal. Sir Egelond,

⁶³⁷ David Nicolle, *Essential Histories: The Crusades* (Oxford: Osprey, 2001), p. 18.

⁶³⁸ *The Romaunce of the Sowdone of Babylone and of Ferumbras His Sone who Conquered Rome*, ed. by Emil Hausknecht, EETS e.s., 38 (London: Kegan Paul, 1881; repr. 1898), p. 91, lines 3171-4. All references are to this edition, cited by Hausknecht's page and line number.

falsely accused of treason, is weak and submissive to Athelston's judgement, compared to his wife and Athelston's wife, who ask for mercy and fair judgement. Indeed, he represents all nobles who are favoured by a king but are falsely accused by their opponents, like Gaveston, the Despencers and the Earl of Arundel who were all favourites of Edward II, but were accused of high treason by Edward's opponents.⁶³⁹ Bradbury suggests that Sir Egelond's submission to his ordeal implies his innocence which needs no defence, as '[t]he poet's characterization of Egelond in fact resembles the contemporary depiction of *trouthe* itself. Egelond 'was trewe' '.⁶⁴⁰ However, his lack of resistance, despite his innocence, presents him as a weak character lacking both the physical and the verbal power to prevent his own and his family's suffering. The exchange of vows between Athelston and Sir Egelond is based on a friendship rooted in mutual respect and equality; yet, Athelston takes centre stage and speaks in rage, unlike Sir Egelond, who keeps silent, an indication of his *trouthe*. In other words, he 'speaks his truth without saying'. Sir Egelond's '*trouthe*' makes him vulnerable as he does not defend himself; yet, his vulnerability, despite his being true, reveals the dichotomy of 'truth' which can be both victimizer and reliever. It is Athelston who is untrue to his oath, which abuses Sir Egelond's *trouthe* and makes him vulnerable. Although the idea of *trouthe* is encouraged as a virtue, it is controversially presented in *Athelston* since Sir Egelond (who keeps the truth), is victimized by Athelston (who abuses it).

Trouthe was regarded as an aristocratic honour, a social bond, particularly associated with chivalry and sworn relationships in medieval feudal society, and in its simplest terms may be defined as 'verity and fidelity', 'a promise, a pledge of loyalty', apart from its definition of 'divine righteousness in Christian dogma' and 'accuracy'.⁶⁴¹ According to the canon of Bridlington in 1308, the political significance of oath keeping is emphasized by the indication that 'the king is bound by his oath to govern the people'.⁶⁴² In 1344, after the tournament at Windsor, Edward III laid the foundations of his Order of the Garter, which was to be a 'fellowship of knights, bound together as companions by their oaths to aid and support one another, and the sovereignty of the order', which was modelled on the fellowship of King Arthur's Round Table.⁶⁴³ In the Ricardian period, *trouthe* 'remained strongly tied to the quality of keeping one's given

⁶³⁹ Maurice Hugh Keen, *England in the Later Middle Ages: A Political History* (London: Methuen, 1973), p. 89.

⁶⁴⁰ Bradbury, 'Erosion', p. 195.

⁶⁴¹ Green, *A Crisis of Truth*, pp. 8-9.

⁶⁴² Keen, *England*, p. 87.

⁶⁴³ Keen, *England*, p. 145.

word'.⁶⁴⁴ Richard II took a personal oath from each of his lords to uphold all the judgements of the 1397 parliament.⁶⁴⁵ Richard II was accused by Thomas Arundel, Archbishop of Canterbury, of overthrowing 'the law of the realm to which he was sworn', a reference to Richard's coronation oath.⁶⁴⁶ Oath giving was highly regarded in the Middle Ages since legally '[m]edieval society was prolific in creating forms of association to which entry was obtained by some form of oath',⁶⁴⁷ and keeping oath was also praised as a moral virtue.⁶⁴⁸ It is a significant motif associated with honour. It is important for the development of pain and suffering in several of the romances, as it motivates characters to choose between their honour and its counterpart, and bolsters mutual trust.

As in *Athelston*, the failure of *trouthe* is apparent in *The Lay of Havelok the Dane*, since neither Godrich nor Godard keeps their promises to Havelok's father and Goldborough's father that they would protect their children until they became mature enough to succeed to throne. Both guardians strip the children of their noble identity and position to empower themselves. In contrast to the failure of *trouthe* in *Athelston* and in *The Lay of Havelok the Dane*, in *Amis and Amiloun*, Amis and Amiloun prove that they are true to their oath of brotherhood, since both of them make sacrifices and endure ordeals for each other. While Amiloun becomes a leper after he fights for Amis, Amis cuts the throats of his children to heal Amiloun's leprosy.

The fairy king in *Sir Orfeo* is reliable, contrary to untrue human beings who fail to keep their promises, and he allows Orfeo to take Heurodis with him according to his promise, although he initially tries to argue his way out of this. In addition to this, Orfeo's steward also proves his *trouthe* by ruling Orfeo's land justly when Orfeo entrusts his kingdom to him, then loyally hands it back on his master's return. The representation of Orfeo's steward historically serves as a template for the representation of Edward II's treacherous steward who contrasts with Orfeo's steward's loyalty. Unlike Orfeo's steward who is true to his lord and is rewarded with being his heir to the throne, Edward II's steward Bartholomew Badlesmere sided with the rebellious Marcher lords in June 1321, and earned Edward's uncompromising enmity⁶⁴⁹ because of his betrayal of *trouthe* and loyalty.

⁶⁴⁴ Green, *A Crisis of Truth*, p. 16.

⁶⁴⁵ Keen, *England*, p. 293.

⁶⁴⁶ Bradbury, 'Erosion', p. 192.

⁶⁴⁷ Richard William Southern, *The Making of the Middle Ages* (Virginia: Book Crafters, 1953), p. 110.

⁶⁴⁸ Green, *A Crisis of Truth*, p. 18.

⁶⁴⁹ Oren Falk, 'The Son of Orfeo: Kingship and Compromise in a Middle English Romance', *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, 30.2 (2000), 247-74 (p. 254).

In fact, it is not only the one who promises but also the people related to him who are bound by the consequences of the promise, and they are sympathetic, as in *Amis and Amiloun*. Amis's children are sacrificed to heal their father's sworn brother, in order to prove the *trouthe* of Amis and Amiloun's brotherhood bond. Likewise, Sir Amadace's wife and child act as objects to test his loyalty to his promise, when the White Knight asks for the share he was promised. The *trouthe* turns out to be a test of the wife's marriage promise of fidelity to her husband. In Green's words, 'the oathworthiness is tested by an extreme moral dilemma which only an unwavering adherence to *trouthe* can resolve'.⁶⁵⁰ The lady consents to be cut in two with her child without any resistance in order to keep her husband's *trouthe*, and submits in order to prove his honour by sacrificing her personal love, which in fact proves her keeping *trouthe* to her marriage vow.

Keeping *trouthe* can be accompanied by an ordeal; yet, breaking it also creates painful consequences, as occurs in *Sir Launfal*, *The Romans of Partenay* and *Partonope of Blois*. Sir Launfal makes a deal with Lady Tryamour that he will not boast of her existence; yet, when he breaks his *trouthe*, Lady Tryamour vanishes and leaves him vulnerable to the evil Queen Guenevere's false accusations. The breaking of a promise is forgiven once in *The Romans of Partenay*, when Raymond breaks his promise to Melusine that he will not see her on Saturdays when her half-snake body is revealed. Although Melusine does not punish him immediately, she disappears after he holds her half-snake nature against her as the reason for the suffering in their family. In *Partonope of Blois*, Melior refuses to forgive Partonope for a long time after he betrays her, despite her forbidding him seeing her for a year and a half.

Unlike vows exchanged between friends or couples, it is Lady Fere's promise to herself which makes her a victim. She is aware that she has to keep *trouthe* to her promise that she will marry the best knight in the world; yet, she suffers emotionally when she falls in love with Ipomadon, who is indeed the best knight in the world; yet, hides his chivalric skills under a coward's disguise. Lady Fere is trapped between her word and her deed, torn between her love and the social pressure of her *trouthe*. Consequently, she ironically keeps *trouthe* to her vow, since Ipomadon reveals his identity and they get married.⁶⁵¹

⁶⁵⁰ Green, *A Crisis of Truth*, p. 334 (Green's italics).

⁶⁵¹ The idea of *trouthe* is a motif developed especially in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, Geoffrey Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*, *The Franklin's Tale* and *The Knight's Tale*. See Alan Gaylord, 'The Promises in the *Franklin's Tale*', *English Literary History*, 31.4 (1964), 331-65; Veronica L. Skinner, 'The Concept of "Trawþe" in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*', *Massachusetts Studies in English*, 2

Like the bond of *trouthe*, social status and power do not make males invulnerable, even in their households, and their respect for their mothers may make them submissive victims as well as making them victimizers of their wives and children. Sons are abused by their mothers, who in fact want to victimize their daughters-in-law. They realize their victimhood only after the betrayal by their mothers is revealed, and they subsequently repent of victimizing their own families. In *Octovian*, the Emperor exiles his wife and his twin sons after his mother forces him to exile them by accusing his wife of adultery. In *Emaré*, the eponymous heroine's husband is deceived by his mother, who exchanges the letter ordering his wife and so-called monstrous child to be cared for, with a letter ordering their exile. After their exile, nothing can cheer him whenever he sees a child playing, as the child reminds him of his own son. In *The Romans of Partenay*, it is not his mother but Raymond who makes himself a sufferer, since he fails to accept 'what is beyond obvious reason- like Melusine's non-human quality'.⁶⁵² Raymond submits to the suffering he has caused by accepting his wife Melusine's disappearance. His penance moves him 'toward a higher level of self-awareness and faith'.⁶⁵³ He accepts suffering by rightly blaming himself:

'Alas! alas!' thys ther saide Raymounde,
 'A more purer man in the worlde ne is
 Off verray trought then I am this stounde!
 Alas! Melusine! this day haue don Amys,
 That by my diffaute you haue I loste this!'⁶⁵⁴

He cries, tears his hair, smites his breast and wails, and retreats to a hermitage in devotion to God until he dies.

The number of male victims who resist the suffering inflicted by strangers is greater than the number of the female victims who refuse to submit to victimizing

(1969), 49-58; Willaim R. J. Barron, *Trawthe and Treason: The Sin of Gawain Reconsidered* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1980); Gregory W. Gross, 'Secret Rules: Sex, Confession, and Truth in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*', *Arthuriana*, 4.2 (1994), 146-74; Carol A. Pulham, 'Promises, Promises: Dorigen's Dilemma Revisited', *The Chaucer Review*, 31.1 (1996), 76-86; Francine McGregor, 'What of Dorigen? Agency and Ambivalence in the *Franklin's Tale*', *The Chaucer Review*, 31.4 (1997), 365-78; Eve Salisbury, 'Chaucer's "Wife", the Law, and the Middle English Breton Lays', in *Domestic Violence*, ed. by Salisbury, Donavin and Price, pp. 73-93; Derek Brewer, 'Chivalry', in *A Companion to Chaucer*, ed. by Peter Brown (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), pp. 58-74; Andrea Schutz, 'Negotiating the Present: Language and Trouthe in the *Franklin's Tale*', in *Speaking in the Medieval World*, ed. by Jean E. Godsall-Myers (Leiden: Brill, 2003), pp. 105-24; Owen Boynton, 'The *Trouthe/Routhe* Rhyme in Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*', *The Chaucer Review*, 45.2 (2010), 222-39.

⁶⁵² Richmond, *Popularity*, p. 80.

⁶⁵³ Lewis, 'Acceptable Lessons', p. 17.

⁶⁵⁴ '*The Romans of Partenay*', or of '*Lusignen*': *Otherwise Known as 'The Tale of Melusine'*, ed. by Walter W. Skeat, EETS o.s., 22 (London: Kegan Paul, 1866; repr. 1899), p. 102, lines 2871-5. All references are to this edition, cited by Skeat's page and line number.

outsiders. As a result of upbringing, and the uncertainties of both child and adult survival, male children in the Middle Ages learned how to survive even when very young. ‘Medieval parents and their surrogates were realistic about training youths to provide for themselves in a harsh world. [...] [T]hey did train their children to work, to take responsibility for themselves.’⁶⁵⁵ Compared to the males who resist their domestic victimizers, the male victims resisting stranger victimizers display more physical resistance; therefore, their resistance is more ‘heroic’ than ‘pathetic’, and they not only save themselves or avenge their own suffering but also help other male and female victims to overcome theirs. The male sufferers resist treacherous stewards, untrustworthy Christian nobles, Saracen rulers and knights; and although they are victimized, they are able to end suffering, or to safeguard themselves and others from more.

The stewards in romances are mostly presented as jealous and treacherous men who abuse and undermine their victims to empower themselves. Their victims are either victimized by the steward in person, or they are misjudged and victimized by other people, who are themselves deceived by the wicked stewards. Although the male victims punish the stewards who inflict suffering, they also reveal their own misjudgements and moral weaknesses. Thus, the revenge they mete out by punishing the treacherous stewards is also an attempt to empower themselves and to punish their own moral weakness by predicating this onto outsider ‘others’.

In *Beves of Hamptoun*, commoners are abused and provoked by King Edgar’s steward, to prevent Sir Beves from leaving London. Beves’s entrapment historically is reminiscent of Henry III’s shutting the gates of London to capture Simon de Montfort on 11 December 1263. Yet, people favouring Montfort in London broke the chains of the gate to help him, and a truce was made between Henry and Montfort. This is somewhat like the reconciliation between Beves and King Edgar in the romance.⁶⁵⁶ In *Partonope of Blois*, the Saracen King Sornogour is dishonoured by his steward Mares, who spreads the false news that Sornogour does not dare fight against the French. However, Sornogour is reconciled with the French king, and orders the murder of the steward in return for his betrayal. King Ardus in *Sir Tryamour* regrets his misjudgement in exiling his wife Margaret with their child in her womb, after being falsely accused of

⁶⁵⁵ Barbara A. Hanawalt, ‘Medievalists and the Study of Childhood’, *Speculum*, 77.2 (2002), 440-60 (p. 456).

⁶⁵⁶ Judith Weiss, ‘The Major Interpolations in *Sir Beves of Hamtoun*’, *Medium Ævum*, 48.1 (1979), 71-6 (p. 74).

adultery by his steward Marrok, so he orders Marrok to be drawn and then hanged on a gallows so that everyone will know his treason.

It is not only treacherous stewards but also unreliable Christian nobles who are resisted by the male victims, mostly in order to avenge their suffering rather than to prevent or end them. In medieval society, the king was the guarantor in the process of the distribution of lands and maintenance of order. However, in between 1386 and 1388, anxiety surrounding Richard II's interpretation of this brought about his deposition. When Richard II extended Henry Bolingbroke's (the future Henry IV) exile to life, Henry reclaimed first his inheritance, then expanded his claim to include England. Thus, Henry justified his *coup d'état* to overthrow Richard II in 1399, leading many English nobles sympathize with his cause,⁶⁵⁷ as happens in *Sir Degrevant*. In *Sir Degrevant*, when the Earl attacks Sir Degrevant's lands, he asks for compensation, defeats the Earl in a battle and avenges his loss rather than mourning for it. As Mehl observes, 'Degrevant's most striking trait is his reckless daring and his undaunted spirit in the face of any danger, particularly where his right or his love are at stake'.⁶⁵⁸ This enables him to be victorious over the Earl and his lover Melidor's suitors.

The letter Degrevant writes to the earl asking for compensation for his losses and the reasons for the Earl's trespass imitates that of English writs issued by Chancery under Henry V. Thus, Degrevant assumes juridical authority by appropriating the language of the royal government to insist that the Earl explain his actions.⁶⁵⁹ On the other hand, by his avenging the loss of his tenants, Sir Degrevant in historical terms stands for the medieval landlords who address their tenants' problems in times of trouble. Especially after the Black Death in the late fourteenth century, landowners faced a severe labour shortage as a consequence of the decline in the population of the peasant class and the demand for higher wages, which eroded the feudal land-holding system. By the late fourteenth century, 'a lord's revenues depended substantially upon rents paid for lands worked by freemen. If a lord wished to retain a workforce, he had to compete against other lords'.⁶⁶⁰ Degrevant, in the romance, competes with the Earl to protect his workforce, and represents the ideal medieval landlord, who is protective and helpful in the event of suffering.

⁶⁵⁷ C. D. Fletcher, 'Narrative and Political Strategies at the Deposition of Richard II', *Journal of Medieval History*, 30.4 (2004), 323-41 (pp. 325-8).

⁶⁵⁸ Mehl, *The Middle English Romances*, p. 96.

⁶⁵⁹ Sheryl L. Forste-Grupp, '“For-Thi a Lettre Has He Dyght”: Paradigms for Fifteenth-Century Literacy in *Sir Degrevant*', *Studies in Philology*, 101.2 (2004), 113-35 (p. 123).

⁶⁶⁰ Forste-Grupp, 'For-Thi a Lettre Has He Dyght', p. 119.

Likewise, in the *Erle of Tolous*, the Earl of Tolous's use of force against Sir Dyoclysyen is justified, in return for Sir Dyoclysyen's capturing his lands unjustly and killing his people when he is away. The Earl of Tolous rejects reconciliation and attacks the Emperor's lands to avenge his undeserved loss. Therefore, it is right to assume that 'the wronged heroes' like Beves in *Beves of Hamptoun*, Sir Degrevant in *Sir Degrevant*, the Earl of Tolous in the *Erle of Tolous*, Gamelyn in *The Tale of Gamelyn*, and Havelok in *The Lay of Havelok the Dane* represent all 'wronged nobles' like Henry Bolingbroke (Henry IV), who justified his return to England in arms to avenge his disinheritance and claimed the throne by challenging the basis for this.

Apart from avenging unjust attacks and loss of land, the male victims of unreliable Christian nobles avenge the losses and suffering of their family members. In *The Lay of Havelok the Dane*, Havelok is deprived of his noble identity and wealth when he is a child. He is imprisoned with his sisters and witnesses their mutilation by Godard, to whom they have been entrusted. It is 'childhood' which makes Havelok vulnerable but his vulnerability as a child empowers him. As Julie Nelson Couch explains:

Medieval romance often separates the knight from any weakness, upholding him as the one who rescues others and solves their problems. In *Havelok*, though, no separation between hero and vulnerability is proffered. The child Havelok is the one who is imprisoned, starved, ill-clothed, and mishandled. One could say that the child-hero is both 'knight errant' and 'maiden in distress' who must be rescued.⁶⁶¹

Yet, 'Havelok becomes king *through* vulnerability, not in spite of it'.⁶⁶² Havelok is rewarded for his suffering at the end of the romance. Mehl states that 'Havelok does not prove his superiority by any marvellous feats of knighthood or in courtly surroundings, but by rather down-to-earth exploits',⁶⁶³ and Barron points out that Havelok as 'a naïve hero becomes a leader of men by force of circumstances, motivated by good sense rather than any awareness of natural superiority'.⁶⁶⁴ Both Mehl and Barron's emphasis on Havelok's overcoming his suffering through his humility is true since he starves, is threatened with drowning, forced to live a commoner's life in poverty, and grows up in Grim's poor but friendly family. Havelok not only suffers as a noble man but also as a commoner when he lives with Grim's family, because he is bound up 'in the 'relentless

⁶⁶¹ Julie Nelson Couch, 'The Vulnerable Hero: *Havelok* and the Revision of Romance', *The Chaucer Review*, 42.3 (2008), 330-52 (p. 336).

⁶⁶² Couch, 'Vulnerable Hero', p. 331.

⁶⁶³ Mehl, *The Middle English Romances*, p. 171.

⁶⁶⁴ Barron, *English Medieval Romance*, p. 70.

repetition' of daily struggle for sustenance',⁶⁶⁵ and meanwhile learns modesty. In the romance, there is an emphasis on Havelok's bodily suffering which recalls the suffering of the saints and the Passion of Christ which are commonplace in hagiography.⁶⁶⁶ He is beaten by Godrich and threatened with hanging:

And seyde, 'But þou hire take,
 þat y wole yeuen þe to make,
 I shal hangen þe ful heye
 Or y shal þristen vth þin heie.'⁶⁶⁷

Afterwards, he consents to marry Goldborough, who has also been deprived of her noble status. Havelok avenges his suffering and the betrayal of his parents by Godard by killing him, thus he 'becomes the natural agent of God to end the tyrant's rule'.⁶⁶⁸

The nature of kingship that dominated English public life in the thirteenth century was given literary expression in *The Lay of Havelok the Dane*, since 'Havelok reigns by divine right and also by consensus; he is born to rule, but, unaware of this, he earns the right to rule'.⁶⁶⁹ Although Havelok is victimized as a child, his suffering helps him grow into a brave man, who not only avenges his victimization but also that of Goldborough, who is victimized like him. In fact, both Havelok and Goldborough suffer similarly at the hands of the traitor males who deprive them of their noble identities. This doubling of plot, which presents the same reason for suffering, with both male and female reactions, is useful for presenting gender differences in the resistance to suffering. Although this doubled plot does make the story more dramatic (and enables Havelok's bride to be 'the right sort of girl in the right place at the right time'), at the same time it reveals that the male sufferer resists suffering successfully by physical means, whilst the female sufferer can resist only verbally. As in other examples, Goldborough's verbal resistance fails and she is in need of the help of a male to overcome her trouble. Unlike Goldborough, Havelok resists both verbally and physically against his victimizer Godard. He also fights against Goldborough's victimizer Godrich, in the face of whom Goldborough is desperately submissive.

⁶⁶⁵ Aaron Hostetter, 'Food, Sovereignty, and Social Order in *Havelok the Dane*', *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 110.1 (2011), 53-77 (p. 54).

⁶⁶⁶ For a discussion of *The Lay of Havelok the Dane* as hagiography see Kimberly K. Bell, 'Resituating Romance: The Dialectics of Sanctity in MS Laud Misc. 108's *Havelok the Dane* and *Royal Vitae*', *Parergon*, 25.1 (2008), 27-51 (pp. 42-51); Julie Nelson Couch, 'Defiant Devotion in MS Laud Misc. 108: The Narrator of *Havelok the Dane* and Affective Piety', *Parergon*, 25.1 (2008), 53-79.

⁶⁶⁷ *The Lay of Havelok the Dane*, ed. by Skeat, 35. 1149-52.

⁶⁶⁸ David Staines, '*Havelok the Dane*: A Thirteenth-Century Handbook for Princes', *Speculum*, 51.4 (1976), 602-23 (p. 616).

⁶⁶⁹ Delany, 'Romance of Kingship', p. 63.

Weiss draws attention to Havelok's 'absorption into and acceptance of peasant life',⁶⁷⁰ whilst John Halverson states that the romance is 'a peasant fantasy of class ambition',⁶⁷¹ since it exemplifies a rise of status through Havelok's diligent hard work. Roy Michael Liuzza believes the romance unites 'the concerns of courtly and bourgeois society',⁶⁷² while Crane suggests that it reflects 'the barony's concern for landed stability and the middle class's affinity for social order'.⁶⁷³ For David Staines, with his concern for the welfare of his people and his justice, Havelok is 'the embodiment of the ideal king from the point of view of the lower classes'.⁶⁷⁴ The romance, indeed, describes the idealized members of both the lower classes who labour willingly and the ideal king through the representation of Havelok, both before his regaining of noble status and in his just rule afterwards, along with villainous barons who usurp authority, who are represented by Godard and Godrich.

The Lay of Havelok the Dane fuses historical elements within a fictional framework and reflects the political climate of the 1290s and early 1300s with regard to monarchic control and the problems of the last two decades of Edward I's reign. During the late thirteenth century, the return of the ideal monarch was a deeply felt need, as this was a period of social turmoil for all social classes in England. Edward's persistence in war and heavier taxes, crusading ventures in Sicily, the conquest of Wales, and wars against Scotland resulted in discontent and protest not only by the clergy and the aristocracy but by the merchant class.⁶⁷⁵ The romance is also a warning to the anti-royalists,⁶⁷⁶ and it sanctions the use of violence by members of the upper classes to control the 'masses'.⁶⁷⁷ In Edward's reign, it was perceived that justice was corrupt, laws favoured the rich and England was full of thieves. Like Havelok, Edward was concerned with maintaining law and order in his kingdom, and he began to correct any abuses after his coronation in 1274 by a survey of the country to determine illegal activities, imposing penalties on corrupt officers by the Statute of Westminster of 1275.⁶⁷⁸

⁶⁷⁰ Judith Weiss, 'Structure and Characterization in *Havelok the Dane*', *Speculum*, 44.2 (1969), 247-57 (p. 254).

⁶⁷¹ John Halverson, 'Havelok the Dane and Society', *The Chaucer Review*, 6.2 (1971), 142-51 (p. 150).

⁶⁷² Roy Michael Liuzza, 'Representation and Readership in the Middle English *Havelok*', *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 93.4 (1994), 504-19 (p. 518).

⁶⁷³ Crane, *Insular Romance*, p. 52.

⁶⁷⁴ Staines, 'Havelok the Dane', p. 623.

⁶⁷⁵ Stuart, 'Havelok the Dane', p. 353.

⁶⁷⁶ Kabir, 'Forging an Oral Style?', pp. 42-3.

⁶⁷⁷ Michael Prestwich, *Edward I* (London: Methuen, 1988), p. 202; Kabir, 'Forging an Oral Style?', pp. 43-4.

⁶⁷⁸ Staines, 'Havelok the Dane', pp. 617-8.

Havelok's outspoken stance and harsh treatments of villainous Godrich and Godard recall Edward's treatment of the traitors who disturbed the peace in England, such as his beheading of Llewellyn, the Prince of Wales and having Llewellyn's brother David drawn by horses.⁶⁷⁹ Richard, Earl of Cornwall (younger brother of Henry III, who became Earl of Cornwall in 1225 and later King of Almaine), whose title was applied to Godrich in the romance, opposed the King with an armed rebellion.⁶⁸⁰ The representations of Godrich and Godard, who seize power from the rightful heirs to the throne, are particularly relevant to Edward I's earls, who were displeased by Edward's military and taxation policies.⁶⁸¹ They have parallels in Roger Bigod, Earl of Norfolk, and Humphrey de Bohun, Earl of Hereford, who led the opposition against the King, and were subsequently dismissed from their official positions, although they were later on pardoned by the request of parliament.⁶⁸² Therefore, historically, the fall of Godrich and Godard in *The Lay of Havelok the Dane* might be read as a warning to discontented earls in general, at this particular historical time.

Unlike Havelok's struggle to regain his noble status, the knight in *Lybeaus Desconus* strives to prove his chivalric skill, empowered by his latent nobility. In the romance, with his bold resistance to several human and giant knights, Lybeaus Desconus proves that he is not a weakling but a bold knight, despite his inexperience and young age. He does not seek a personal revenge, but he is motivated by the Lady of Synadowne's request for help in securing her release from imprisonment, which he achieves. As with Lybeaus Desconus, who saves the lady, Guy, on his pilgrimage to repent of ignoring God, ends the suffering of Tirri and Earl Jonas, who look for Guy to save them after they are imprisoned and about to be executed in the *Stanzaic Guy of Warwick*.

In *King Horn*, Horn avenges himself on both his and his father's victimizers when he grows up, although he has been exiled from Suddene by the Saracens so that he will not avenge his father's death. He is a brave child even when he is exiled, and he consoles the other twelve noble children exiled with him:

Ich telle you tithinge:
 Ich here foyeles singe
 And that gras him springe.

⁶⁷⁹ Staines, 'Havelok the Dane', p. 620.

⁶⁸⁰ Caroline D. Eckhardt, 'Havelok the Dane in *Castleford's Chronicle*', *Studies in Philology*, 98.1 (2001), 1-17 (pp. 11-2); Scott Kleinman, 'The Legend of Havelok the Dane and the Historiography of East Anglia', *Studies in Philology*, 100.3 (2003), 245-77 (p. 272).

⁶⁸¹ Stuart, 'Havelok the Dane', pp. 356-7.

⁶⁸² Stuart, 'Havelok the Dane', pp. 357-8.

Blithe beo we on lyve;
 Ure schup is on ryve.⁶⁸³

Horn is knighted by King Almair, but he is accused by his false friend Fikenhild of plotting against Almair, and goes on a quest to prove his chivalric worth. He fights against the Saracens for seven years to avenge his father's death, and he kills the treacherous Fikenhild who has introduced disorder into his life. Horn's self-struggle against his victimization and his experiences testify that 'success is possible through repeated efforts'.⁶⁸⁴

Unlike the resistant males who avenge their family members' suffering and even that of strangers, Sir Orfeo abandons resistance and never considers avenging the abduction of his wife by the fairy king, after he failed to prevent it - even with the help of hundreds of knights - in *Sir Orfeo*. As Oren Falk points out, '[n]ot only has he suffered a grievous and inexplicable personal loss, he has also been humiliated in the public eye',⁶⁸⁵ something which places immense psychological pressure on Orfeo. *Sir Orfeo* may allude to the political atmosphere of the early 1320s, since Orfeo's deposition and pathos recall King Edward II, who was humiliated and forced by parliament to leave his throne in January 1327, and was divorced from both his wife and his dominion.⁶⁸⁶ Edward delivered himself into the power of those who humiliated him,⁶⁸⁷ similar to Orfeo's submission to the fairy king's humiliating him by abducting his wife. After Heurodis's separation, Orfeo exiles himself in the wilderness in the guise of a minstrel, lives in poverty and harsh conditions for long years, and comforts himself by playing his harp until he meets the fairy king and makes a deal with him to take his wife back. Orfeo's rejecting his kingly life not only confirms the devotion of Orfeo and his wife Heurodis for each other, but also demonstrates his lack of 'heroic' resistance. It is Orfeo's harp playing and disguise as a minstrel which enable him to make peace with the fairy king. In Nicholson's words, Orfeo is 'able to control the faerie kingdom by his harp and sleight of tongue'⁶⁸⁸ instead of physical resistance. Mary Hynes-Berry also notes Sir Orfeo's non-physical resistance and states that:

⁶⁸³ *King Horn*, in *Four Romances*, ed. by Herzman, Drake and Salisbury, pp. 11-70 (p. 20), lines 132-6. All references are to this edition, cited by the editors' page and line number.

⁶⁸⁴ Anne Scott, 'Plans, Predictions, and Promises: Traditional Story Techniques and Configuration of Word and Deed in *King Horn*', in *Studies*, ed. by Brewer, pp. 37-68 (p. 44).

⁶⁸⁵ Falk, 'Son of Orfeo', p. 253.

⁶⁸⁶ Caldwell, 'Heroism of Heurodis', p. 308; Falk, 'The Son of Orfeo', p. 251.

⁶⁸⁷ Falk, 'Son of Orfeo', p. 261.

⁶⁸⁸ Nicholson, '*Sir Orfeo*', p. 165.

Though it is still a chivalric world, fighting is not critical. The armed knight of Orfeo and the Fairy King are only in the background. The conflicts are of will, and Orfeo demonstrates the spiritual intellectual and cultural attributes and achievements of a knight and a lover rather than the physical ones.⁶⁸⁹

Despite his submission to Heurodis's abduction and the abandonment of his noble role, Orfeo realizes his latent nobility and strength when he sees the fairy ladies hawking. Afterwards, he finds the courage to enter the fairy land and take his wife back. Viewed in the light of the 'acceptance of sinfulness' motif, which can be seen in some other romances, Orfeo's self-exile may also be seen as a pilgrimage rewarded by God's grace, and the point of epiphany in the 'meeting' scene as his realization of God's forgiveness for his sins.

In *Sir Launfal*, Sir Launfal's resistance to a female victimizer ends with his submission to another female, who relieves his suffering. He resists Queen Guenevere's temptations but leaves King Arthur's court after he is driven from his wealth and status. Sir Launfal is the type of an 'impoverished knight', and represents those 'who must find some means of topping up their coffers in order to regain knightly respect'.⁶⁹⁰ After his former mayor refuses to accommodate Sir Launfal since he learns that he no longer belongs to the court, Sir Launfal isolates himself from society and submits to a fairy lady's support. His situation, in fact, reflects that view of society of late fourteenth-century England, in which the chivalric values of friendship, hospitality and mercy were replaced with monetary value and self-interest,⁶⁹¹ and king and nobility were more concerned with wealth rather than birth.⁶⁹²

Sir Launfal looks for economic prosperity and personal advancement by means of the fairy lady's help since he is aware that he cannot achieve them through chivalric ideals, which have become perverted. Therefore, he submits to a deal with a fairy lady, which recalls the binding by oath in a legal agreement. After Sir Launfal leaves the court, Lady Tryamour provides him with an opportunity to regain it. However, his deal with her is risky because Lady Tryamour warns him that he will suffer more if he ignores her warning and boasts of her existence in his life. Sir Launfal, rather like Melusine's husband Raymond, compounds his suffering by attempting to take an 'easy way out', a most dangerous and ultimately ineffective course. He ignores the fact that

⁶⁸⁹ Mary Hynes-Berry, 'Cohesion in *King Horn* and *Sir Orfeo*', *Speculum*, 50.4 (1975), 652-70 (p. 665).

⁶⁹⁰ Marijane Osborn, *Nine Medieval Romances of Magic Re-Rhymed in Modern English* (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 2010), p. 82.

⁶⁹¹ Yejung Choi, 'Sir Launfal: A Portrait of a Knight in Fourteenth-Century England', *Medieval and Early Modern English Studies*, 18.1 (2010), 1-28 (p. 9).

⁶⁹² Choi, 'Sir Launfal', pp. 21-2.

suffering must be acknowledged and overcome, however hard this may be for male or female; it cannot be sidestepped. He mistakenly considers that it is the only means to keep him away from Guenevere's villainy and he boasts of Lady Tryamour's beauty, which results in her disappearance and his repentance:

‘Alas!’ he seyde, ‘my creature,
How schall I from the endure,
Swetyng Tryamour?
All my joye I have forelore,
And the – that me ys worst fore –
Thou blyssfull berde yn bour!’⁶⁹³

Lady Tryamour leaves him vulnerable to Guenevere's punishments, until she reappears and takes him to her fairy land.

Christian females are threatened by Saracen nobles if they reject their proposals, and they are abducted or forced to marry them without their consent, as the ladies threatened in *The King of Tars*, *Sir Gowther*, *Sir Isumbras*, *Generydes*, *Lybeaus Desconus*, *Le Bone Florence of Rome* and *Beves of Hamptoun*. Unlike their female counterparts who submit, the male victims resist physically to challenge Saracen victimizers. In fact, the reactions of resistance and submission to their victimizers blur when Christian and Saracen males victimize each other. Both sides victimize, resist and submit to each other; yet, it is always Christians who are victorious in the end.

The Christian males who are victims of Saracens are represented as bold and victorious by divine help, even if they are physically weaker than their Saracen victimizers. On the other hand, the Saracen male victims are depicted as strong knights who seem invincible; yet, they are defeated by the Christians, and most of them consent to conversion to Christianity in order to avoid being beheaded. For both Christians and Saracens, invading a land or besieging a city is a means of imposing their faith, more than a military achievement. Conversion was imposed in the Middle Ages ‘through the concept of the Holy War and preaching and justification of the crusades. It was pleasing to God if one fought to recover Christian property, or to defend the Christian Church, or to defend Christian people’.⁶⁹⁴ Those who are ready to suffer for God's sake are depicted as brave men who ignore individual suffering to prevent the suffering of their co-religionists. Their mutual combat makes them victims and victimizers of each other

⁶⁹³ *Sir Launfal*, in *The Middle English Breton Lays*, ed. by Laskaya and Salisbury, pp. 201-62 (p. 231), lines 745-50. All references are to this edition, cited by the editors' page and line number.

⁶⁹⁴ Judith Weiss, ‘The Exploitation of Ideas of Pilgrimage and Sainthood in *Gui de Warewic*’, in *The Exploitations*, ed. by Ashe, Djordjević and Weiss, pp. 43-56 (p. 44).

at the same time; yet, the Saracens are dominantly presented as victimizers of the Christians in the romances, and their pain and suffering are presented as well deserved punishments. Unlike their Christian counterparts, the Saracens are rude, violent, conceited and their suffering, as they are chastised through punishment and conversion, is justified. Their role as victimizers of Christians changes into victimizers of Saracens after they are converted, and although they are degraded as brutal knights when they are Saracens, they are praised as noble and powerful victimizers of Saracens after conversion.

Although the Saracens and the Christians are hostile to each other because of the difference of their faiths instead of personal conflicts, the pain and suffering of individuals are mostly focused on in romances rather than the suffering of all Christians. The details of the Christians in general who mourn and are mutilated are rare, contrary to the detailed presentations of suffering individuals. The battles of armies are replaced with individuals fighting against one another, or against many Saracens, to avenge their own suffering or that of other Christians. The male individuals victimized by Saracens undeservedly turn into their victimizers in future, as happens in *King Horn*. The Saracen rulers invade England (although this is historically incorrect since the only non-Christian invaders were the Scandinavians, who are replaced by the Saracens in the romances)⁶⁹⁵ and exile Horn after his father is slain, which not only motivates him for revenge but also helps his growth to maturity as a worthy knight.

In the *Stanzaic Guy of Warwick*, the lands of the heathens are depicted as unsafe for Christians by means of Earl Jonas and Tirri being imprisoned and despairing in heathen lands. In *The King of Tars*, many Christians are imprisoned by the heathen Sultan, but they are all released after his conversion. In *Octovian*, the King of France, the Emperor and Florent are released after Octovian defeats the Saracens. In *Sir Isumbras*, Sir Isumbras is beaten and humiliated by a Saracen Sultan:

And beten hym and his rybbes braste,
 And made his flessch full blo.
 His yonge sone on the londe satte;
 He syghe men his fader bette;
 He wepte and was full wo.⁶⁹⁶

⁶⁹⁵ Speed, 'Saracens', pp. 564-8.

⁶⁹⁶ *Sir Isumbras*, in *Six Middle English Romances*, ed. by Mills, pp. 125-47 (p. 133), lines 293-7. All references are to this edition, cited by Mills's page and line number.

There is a vicious circle of suffering between the Christians and the Saracens in romances where they fight over the superiority of religions. In *The King of Tars*, the Saracens turn into victims of their Sultan after he converts to Christianity and victimizes Saracens, whilst providing Christians with whatever they need. They are compelled to convert, and those refusing conversion are hanged or beheaded and their cities are burned. In *The Romance of Otuel*, the Saracens are either drowned or killed while escaping from the French knights. In common with the other romances in which the two faith communities are ‘represented’ by extraordinary individuals, the fates of whole armies and communities are decided by the shifts in faith and loyalty of one man, as in the case of the Saracen knight Otuel, who humiliates the King of France and the Christians; yet, he converts to Christianity and becomes the victimizer of Saracens.

The Saracens before their conversions resist the Christians, but they submit to them after their conversions, while those resisting submission and conversion are slain. Therefore, even if they consent to conversion, they are mostly ‘circumscribed’ victims as they convert after they are threatened with execution. In *Sir Ferumbras*, Ferumbras, at the beginning of the romance, is presented as a proud victimizer of Christians who humiliates the French King, Charles. However, he is disgraced when he is defeated by the French knight, Sir Oliver. He begs Oliver not to kill him, and he promises not only to be a Christian, but also to persecute Mahomedans:

For wer ich mad a cristenman & my wounde faire y-helid,
 Heþemen schold y so greue þan þat þay shulle sore y-felid,
 & þay þat now buþ Sarasyns schold turne to cristene lay,
 & elles þay scholde þolye pyns for hure false fay.⁷⁰³

After his conversion, he encourages the French to attack the Saracens, and he submits even to their executing his father. In *The Sowdone of Babylone*, Sir Ferumbras, unlike this other Ferumbras, is not described as a great conqueror, but in both romances, Sir Ferumbras is presented as a victim and a victimizer, and his roles change after his conversion. In *Roland and Vernagu*, King Charles avenges the victimization of Christians by Saracens by capturing Spain, destroying Saracen idols and building churches. The Christian versus Saracen conflict and the punishments of those rejecting conversion are exemplified in the duel between the Christian knight Roland and the Saracen knight Vernagu. Both men represent their faiths. During the fight, Roland teaches Vernagu the Christian faith to prove its supremacy, although this is ignored by

⁷⁰³ *Sir Ferumbras*, ed. by Herrtage, 41. 1052-5.

Vernagu, whose god does not respond to his prayers. Vernagu is beheaded by Roland, representing the ultimate powerlessness of all Saracens against Christians, and of the Saracen gods against the one Christian God.

The Saracens who are victimized by the Christians resist like the Christians victimized by the Saracens; yet, they are destined to fail and their pain and suffering are presented as deserved pain and suffering, because of their victimizing Christians and believing in the wrong faith. To be a Muslim is equated to committing a capital crime. It is a form of ‘treason’ against God, who is the only divine ruler for the Christians, and those rejecting conversion are executed as they deserve it. In *Beves of Hamptoun*, Beves kills Yvor because he rejects conversion to Christianity. Although the romance does not mainly focus on the Christian versus Saracen conflict, Beves’s action is ‘heroic’, and it not only establishes the borders between Christianity and Saraceness⁷⁰⁴ but also ‘describes the inviolability of his Christian identity upon the bodies of the Saracens’.⁷⁰⁵ In *The Sege off Melayne*, Saracens are blinded by the miraculous bursting of the fire, when they attempt to burn Roland. In *Sir Ferumbras*, the Saracen ruler Balan is executed because of his refusal to convert to Christianity. Saracen gods are humiliated, Saracen belief is degraded and scorned and their shrines are destroyed. Even the Saracen ruler Balan smashes his gods when they fail to help him to overcome the French. The Saracens are described as being led by the devil in the form of Mahoun, and ordered to assault Christians by this demonic god. Similarly, in *The Sowdone of Babylone*, Sultan Laban blames his gods for their failure to help him when he needs them:

I shalle you bren, so mote I spede,
In a fayre fyre ful stronge;
Shalle I neuer more on you bileve,
But renaye you playnly alle.⁷⁰⁶

His threat to burn them and not to believe in them anymore is in total contrast with the Christians, who pray to and thank their God for their achievements. Unlike Laban and Balan who strictly reject conversion, Sir Evelak, the King of Sarras, is willing to convert after Joseph teaches him, and he defeats Tholomer, the King of Babylone, by the help of Christian God in *Joseph of Aramathie*. Joseph’s son Josaphe warns Evelak

⁷⁰⁴ Siobhain Bly Calkin, ‘The Anxieties of Encounter and Exchange: Saracens and Christian Heroism in *Sir Beves of Hamptoun*’, *Florilegium*, 21 (2004), 135-58 (p. 136).

⁷⁰⁵ Robert Allen Rouse, ‘For King and Country? The Tension between National and Regional Identities in *Sir Bevis of Hampton*’, in *Sir Bevis of Hampton*, ed. by Fellows and Djordjević, pp. 114-26 (p. 120).

⁷⁰⁶ *The Romaunce of the Sowdone of Babylone*, ed. by Hausknecht, 70. 2433-6.

beforehand that God is displeased with his wrong faith; therefore, he will be visited with vengeance. Evelak realizes that he is 'wrong' when he is imprisoned, and an angel helps him to defeat Tholomer. There is a significant difference between Balan and Laban, who are 'forced' into conversion, and Evelak who is 'encouraged' into it. While Balan and Laban's hatred for Christianity is triggered by their children's betrayal in fighting against them with the Christians, Evelak is encouraged to learn about Christian faith through Joseph's teaching. Therefore, Balan and Laban's resistance is not only to the Christian faith but also to their children's treason. On the other hand, Evelak has every reason to yield to the Christian faith wholeheartedly, since he is supported not only by Joseph, but also by God himself.

Richard Coer de Lyon is different from other romances in its representation of the Saracens as real victims because the Saracens, apart from the justification of their suffering in the romance by their being of the wrong faith, are 'consumed' literally and figuratively in the romance. Historically, Richard I's initial success as a crusader king was followed by his humiliation and captivity after his failure to take Jerusalem in the Third Crusade, being imprisoned by Duke Leopold of Austria in 1193 and then handed over to Henry VI, to whom he became a vassal.⁷⁰⁷ However, in the romance, fictional and historical issues are blended to create glamour for Christian heroism, and it is only Richard's bravery, military success and the role as the victimizer of the Saracens which are featured and praised. Some facts of Richard's life serve as a magnet for the romance. For example, Richard's imprisonment is presented as a display of bravery since he achieves his title of the 'lion-heart' after his defeating a lion when he is imprisoned. On the other hand, the emphasis on the Christian glory, competence and exploits in the romance are intended as an indirect comparison of the glorious past and very recent (perceived) miserable decline experienced during Edward III's reign, when the romance was compiled.⁷⁰⁸ In the romance, the Saracens are not only slain regardless of sex and age, but also robbed of their treasures, which are distributed among the Christians:

He gaff hem destrers and coursours,
And delte among hem his tresours.
So Richard partyd hys purchas,
Off al Crystyndom belouyd he was.⁷⁰⁹

⁷⁰⁷ Michael T. Clanchy, *England and Rulers, 1066-1272* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), p. 95.

⁷⁰⁸ Finlayson, 'Richard, Coer de Lyon', p. 163.

⁷⁰⁹ *Der mittelenenglische Versroman*, ed. by Brunner, 413. 6529-32.

The captured Saracens are cooked and eaten by the Christians, and the heads of the Saracen nobles are served to their relatives as a meal. Richard's leadership reflects several historical facts; yet, his cannibalism is fictitious⁷¹⁰ and it serves to highlight the ordeal of the Saracens. Lesley A. Coote stresses the bloodthirstiness of Richard, and humorously likens the anonymous slaughtered Saracens to 'the 'citizens' trampled by Godzilla or the numerous 'brides' bitten by Count Dracula'.⁷¹¹ The representation of the sorrowing relatives realizing that they are being fed their young relatives is individualized and 'pathetic', almost sympathetic, presenting them, intentionally or not, as human beings with similar emotional responses to Christian fathers, uncles and family members.

It is not only the Saracens but also the Jews who are punished and doomed to suffer because of their victimization of Christ. Jews in the Middle Ages lived in autonomous communities and they were regarded as 'people apart'.⁷¹² The belief that 'Jews knowingly killed Christ' was used to justify the violent attacks on Jewish communities and also supported the Christian claims of their punishment. This created a 'stereotype of the Jew as both blasphemer and murderer' who commits crimes both against God and men.⁷¹³ These negative assumptions about the Jewish people caused their expulsion from England in 1290.⁷¹⁴ In the fourteenth century, Jews were punished by burning, since they were believed to be the reasons for the catastrophic plague known as the Black Death.⁷¹⁵

The representations of the Jews and the Saracens are similar, since the Jew and the Muslim are interlinked within the definition of the 'Other'.⁷¹⁶ The Saracen 'other' is constructed through contrasting stereotypes in order to form a Christian identity. Like the Saracen 'other', which provides 'a powerful racial, cultural and religious Other'⁷¹⁷ who has hostile ambitions, the wicked Jewish 'other' is used in order to define the ideal Christian. In *The Siege of Jerusalem*, the Jews are demonized in order to 'offer insights

⁷¹⁰ Finlayson, 'Richard, Coer de Lyon', p. 174.

⁷¹¹ Lesley A. Coote, 'Laughing at Monsters in Richard Coeur de Lyon', in *Grant Risee? The Medieval Comic Presence / La Présence comique médiévale: Essays in Memory of Brian J. Levy*, ed. by Adrian Tudor and Alan Hindley (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006), pp. 193-211 (p. 196).

⁷¹² Norman Solomon, 'Reading Intolerant Texts in a Tolerant Society', in *Philosemitism, Antisemitism and 'the Jews': Perspectives from the Middle Ages to the Twentieth Century*, ed. by Tony Kushner and Nadia Valman (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), pp. 49-68 (p. 54).

⁷¹³ Robert Chazen, *Medieval Stereotypes and Modern Antisemitism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), p. 59.

⁷¹⁴ Ashton, *Medieval English Romance*, p. 13.

⁷¹⁵ Cohn, 'The Black Death', p. 15.

⁷¹⁶ Mary Hamel, 'The Siege of Jerusalem as a Crusading Poem', in *Journeys Toward God: Pilgrimage and Crusade*, ed. by Barbara N. Sargent-Baur (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 1992), pp. 177-94 (p. 187); Akbari, 'Placing the Jews', p. 42.

⁷¹⁷ Rouse, *The Idea of Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 76.

into how medieval Christians used Jewish identity in order to define the borders of Christian community'.⁷¹⁸ As Frank Grady states, 'Roman virtue is celebrated in the poem precisely because of its antagonism towards the Jews'.⁷¹⁹ In the Middle Ages, the Jews were accused of causing the plague of 1347-1351, known as the Black Death.⁷²⁰ However, the main reason for medieval anti-Semitism was the fact that the Jews were known as the victimizers of Christ. The Jews were punished severely because of their cruelty to Christians and their crucifying Christ. In addition to this, the medieval fascination with the destruction of Jerusalem originates from Christ's prophecy of the city's downfall in Luke 19. 43-44.⁷²¹ Accordingly, the Jews in the romance are drenched in blood and their dead bodies spread over the field, while Romans, protected by Christ, are invulnerable.⁷²² Jews starve during the siege, their temple is destroyed, and they lose their dignity and humanity:

[Now] of þe tene in þe toun were [tore] forto telle,
 What moryne and meschef for mete is byfalle.
 For four[ty] dayes byfor þey no fode hadde.
 Noþer fisch ne flesch freke on to byte-
 Bred, browet ne broþe, ne beste vpon lyue,
 Wyn ne water to drynke bot wope of hemself.
 Olde scheldes and schone scharply þey eten:
 þat liflode for ladies was luþer to chewe.⁷²³

The emphasis on starvation is significant, since starvation was one of the worst miseries experienced in the Middle Ages, especially in times of bad harvests and famines, as happened between 1315 and 1317.⁷²⁴ Apart from being victimized by being left to starve during the siege, the Jews are judged by the Christians, bargained for, bought and taken out of the city. The suffering inflicted on the Jews by the Romans indicates that, despite the Romans' enmity to the Christians before their conversion, they become the

⁷¹⁸ Akbari, 'Placing the Jews', p. 36.

⁷¹⁹ Frank Grady, *Representing Righteous Heathens in Late Medieval England* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), p. 130.

⁷²⁰ Séraphine Guerchberg, 'The Controversy over the Alleged Sowers of the Black Death in the Contemporary Treaties on Plague', in *Change in Medieval Society*, ed. by Sylvia L. Thrupp (Toronto, Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1988), pp. 208-24 (p. 208).

⁷²¹ Suzanne M. Yeager, 'The Siege of Jerusalem and Biblical Exegesis: Writing about Romans in Fourteenth-Century England', *The Chaucer Review*, 39.1 (2004), 70-102 (p. 78).

⁷²² For the historical and military perspectives of the 'siege' in relation to the fifteenth-century prose version of *The Sege off Melayne*, and the prose version of *The Siege of Jerusalem* see Hebron, *The Medieval Siege*.

⁷²³ *The Siege of Jerusalem*, ed. by Hanna and Lawton, 72-3. 1069-76.

⁷²⁴ Keen, *England*, p. 188. See also Henry S. Lucas, 'The Great European Famine of 1315, 1316 and 1317', *Speculum*, 5.4 (1930), 343-77.

victimizers of the Jews after their conversion to Christianity. Likewise, the Jews in *Joseph of Aramathie*, who are the ‘sons of the crucifiers’ become victims although they were once victimizers, and they are punished by Vespasian, who represents the ‘heirs of the crucified Christ’, by making them leap down the pit where they imprisoned Joseph for forty-two years.⁷²⁵

Both female and male victims in romances are vulnerable to sicknesses, most of which are painful and difficult to heal. As Saunders suggests, ‘the process of sickness and health becomes a narrative of affective and didactic power’.⁷²⁶ This provides the victim with an understanding of his vulnerability or sinfulness. In fact, the ideas of sinfulness and of sickness as its punishment were prevalent in the Middle Ages. The Black Death, the great epidemic of plague, which struck England and almost all parts of the European continent in the fourteenth century by killing a third of the population, was also associated with the ideas of sinfulness and of sickness as its punishment. The plague generated a consciousness among people that ‘whatever we suffer is the just reward of our sins’.⁷²⁷ Sickness was regarded as a punishment for sin, whilst healing was the proof of divine forgiveness.⁷²⁸ In romances, the male victims submit to pains of sickness like the female victims, but they suffer from sickness either as a divine punishment for their sins or as a means of self-penance. In *Sir Gowther*, the Emperor’s daughter suffers from muteness, and she loses her consciousness until her miraculous healing. Her sickness is a kind of ‘journey’, in Robson’s words, a ‘private state of unconsciousness’⁷²⁹ from which she comes back with a divine message heralding the end of Sir Gowther’s ordeal.

In *Amis and Amiloun*, Amiloun is sent away from home by his wife after he becomes a leper. There are different interpretations of the reasons for Amiloun’s suffering from leprosy. Yoon suggests that, ‘Amiloun himself accepts leprosy as a gift or blessing—‘sond’ (l. 1620)—from God, and endures the dreadful affliction patiently and meekly until [...] God grants him grace and heals him at the end of the poem’.⁷³⁰ Yoon believes:

⁷²⁵ For a discussion of the Jewish and Christian conflict in relation to the legend of the Holy Grail see Jon Whitman, ‘Transfers of Empire, Movements of Mind: Holy Sepulchre and Holy Grail’, *Modern Language Notes*, 123.4 (2008), 895-923 (p. 914).

⁷²⁶ Saunders, ‘Gender’, p. 175.

⁷²⁷ Rosemary Horrox, *The Black Death* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994), p. 24.

⁷²⁸ Ida B. Jones, ‘Popular Medical Knowledge in Fourteenth Century English Literature’, *Bulletin of the Institute of the History of Medicine*, 5.5 (1937), 405-51; 5.6 (1937), 538-88 (p. 442).

⁷²⁹ Robson, ‘Animal Magic’, p. 151.

⁷³⁰ Yoon, ‘Leprosy’, p. 32.

If Amiloun were morally wrong, then he could not win the combat; because Amiloun is morally right, God allows him to beat the steward. Though the warning voice brought him a moment of hesitation, Amiloun has never doubted the sacrificial meaning of his act, and his triumph in the duel implicates God's acknowledgment of the righteousness of his sacrificial performance.⁷³¹

According to Yoon, leprosy enables self-realization in the romance, because 'the dreadful disease makes not only Amiloun himself, who suffers directly from the disease, but also Amis and Belisaunt who indirectly suffer from the sacrifice of their children, realize God's grace as their final, most reliable recourse'.⁷³² Finlayson agrees that both Amis and Amiloun's trials resemble hagiography, since they are experienced 'partly as a punishment for transgression, partly as a test of faith'.⁷³³ However, Hume suggests that:

[L]eprosy was so thoroughly considered a divine punishment that the audience would have had trouble ignoring its ethical connotation. [...] Amis has betrayed his lord, lied, and helped bring about the steward's death, yet he escapes punishment, marries Belisaunt, and inherits the Duke's whole estate. Clearly if poetic justice is to be served, he owes something to God -penitential suffering- as well as to Amiloun.⁷³⁴

Dale Kramer, Barron, Sheila Delany and Mehl agree that Amiloun suffers because of his sin, his ignorance to the divine warning commanding him not to fight instead of Amis; therefore, leprosy is his punishment.⁷³⁵ Foster and Richmond also suggest that it is a sign of guilt,⁷³⁶ and the result of a failure to recognize that he is 'a fallible human being'.⁷³⁷ For Carol Fewster, leprosy is a 'God-given-control',⁷³⁸ which transforms Amiloun from a knight controlling his life to a sufferer controlled by God as 'Amiloun with leprosy cannot have a romance hero's control over adventures, but merely suffers helplessly'.⁷³⁹

John Spurr suggests that the miseries of Amis and Amiloun stem from their swearing oath for brotherhood since 'equivocal oaths were characteristically indicated

⁷³¹ Yoon, 'Leprosy', p. 38.

⁷³² Yoon, 'Leprosy', p. 44.

⁷³³ Finlayson, 'Definitions of Middle English Romance', p. 176.

⁷³⁴ Hume, 'Amis and Amiloun', pp. 28-9.

⁷³⁵ Dale Kramer, 'Structural Artistry in *Amis and Amiloun*', *Annuaire Mediaevale*, 9 (1968), 103-22 (p. 114); Barron, *English Medieval Romance*, p. 103; Sheila Delany, 'A, A and B: Coding Same Sex Union in *Amis and Amiloun*', in *Pulp Fictions*, ed. by McDonald, pp. 63-81 (p. 65); Mehl, *The Middle English Romances*, p. 108.

⁷³⁶ Foster, *Amis and Amiloun*, p. 6.

⁷³⁷ Richmond, *Popularity*, p. 104.

⁷³⁸ Fewster, *Traditionality and Genre*, p. 75.

⁷³⁹ Fewster, *Traditionality and Genre*, p. 80.

by an ordeal'.⁷⁴⁰ In order to keep their *trouthe*, Amis ignores a divine warning and sacrifices himself, but Amiloun obeys divine instruction and sacrifices his children to cure Amiloun with their blood:

He tok that blode, that was so bright,
And alied that gentil knight,
That er was hend in hale,
And seththen in bed him dight
And wreighe him wel warm, aflight,
With clothes riche and fale.⁷⁴¹

According to Peggy McCracken's point of view, the anointing with blood may also be seen as a symbolic redefinition of lineage which makes Amis and Amiloun 'blood brothers'.⁷⁴² It is also an act which conveys God's special grace on the recipient. It also implies that the person who anoints has the right to convey that grace on God's behalf. Consequently, Amiloun's leprosy is a divine punishment because of his ignorance of the divine warning, which makes his pain self-inflicted. However, it is far-fetched to assume that it is saint-like suffering, since there is no mention of Amiloun's repentance or piety. Alternatively, more than interpreting it as a punishment, it is right to assume that leprosy in this case is mainly a test of sworn brotherhood. Amiloun suffers from leprosy for Amis's sake, and passes the test by submitting to the ordeal. On the other hand, Amis is tested with his sacrifice for the cure of Amiloun's leprosy and he passes the test. Therefore, both of them prove their loyalty and self-sacrifice for their *trouthe*, by yielding to their ordeals through the test of leprosy. In this respect, as John C. Ford points out, both men exemplify 'the courtly idealization of same-sex friendship'.⁷⁴³

Sickness as a means of punishment was a culturally important idea in the Middle Ages, since it was believed to be a punishment for mankind, 'the natural condition of man after the Fall [...] that entered nature and history with Adam and through his sin'.⁷⁴⁴ In *Le Bone Florence of Rome*, Florence's victimizers are also punished by God with painful sicknesses that are curable only by her, as punishment for their sinfulness

⁷⁴⁰ John Spurr, 'A Profane History of Early Modern Oaths', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 6th ser., 11 (2001), 37-63 (p. 53).

⁷⁴¹ *Amis and Amiloun*, ed. by Foster, 63. 2341-6.

⁷⁴² McCracken, 'Engendering Sacrifice', p. 65.

⁷⁴³ John C. Ford, 'Merry Married Brothers: Wedded Friendship, Lovers' Language and Male Matrimonials in Two Middle English Romances', *Medieval Forum*, 3 (2003) <<http://www.sfsu.edu/~medieval/Volume3/Brothers.html>> [accessed 15 November 2010] (para. 20 of 20).

⁷⁴⁴ Jole Agrimi and Chiara Crisciani, 'Charity and Aid in Medieval Christian Civilization', in *Western Medical Thought from Antiquity to the Middle Ages*, ed. by Mirko D. Grmek (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998), pp. 170-96 (p. 173).

in victimizing her. Miles suffers from leprosy, the mariner limps on two walking sticks with bloody and deadly wounds and his limbs are rotten, whilst Clarebalde, the thief, is put in a wheel barrow as he has no feet.

Apart from being a divine punishment, sickness is a means of testing the patience of the sufferer as well as the power of God to relieve all suffering, a fact of which the sufferers are reminded. In *Sir Gowther*, Sir Gowther's muteness provides him with an opportunity to see himself as a sinner and a brutal ruler, when he isolates himself and suffers patiently in order to expiate his sins. Religious intervention in the healing process is significant in *The Siege of Jerusalem*. Waspasian's suffering from leprosy encourages him to avenge Christ's suffering by punishing the Jews, because it is only after his leprosy is healed by Veronica's veil (with Christ's image on it) that he decides to besiege Jerusalem:

þe pope availed þe vaile and his visage touched,
þe body suþ al aboute, blessed hit þrye.
þe waspys w[y]ten away and alle þe wo after:
þat er [w]as lasar-l[ich]e ly3tter was neuere.⁷⁴⁵

After he is healed of his own wound, he heals the 'wounds' of the Christians. Although sickness is an ordeal for the males, it may be a 'protection' for a female rather than 'suffering', as in *Beves of Hamptoun*. When Josian is abducted by Ascopart to be taken to her suitor Yvor, she eats a herb which has the power of making someone's complexion look like a leper, in order to make Yvor disgusted with her leprous skin.

Although male victims fight against suffering on behalf of themselves or other victims, or for both at the same time, they are mostly submissive to suffering which they believe they deserve as punishment for their own mistakes, or for their ignorance of God. A victim is 'suddenly cut off from all he has known and everyone he loves, and embarks on a period of 'journey, seeking and suffering' in solitude, in order to achieve something'.⁷⁴⁶ They are either punished by God, or they punish themselves willingly after repenting of a sin or a mistake. Moral messages are conveyed through their experiences and submissions, which enable self-realization and repentance, changing their lives completely. They give up their former way of life and they suffer from poverty, starvation, humiliations and loss of noble identity; yet, at the end of their penance and patient suffering they are rewarded either with earthly possessions or with divine salvation.

⁷⁴⁵ *The Siege of Jerusalem*, ed. by Hanna and Lawton, 17. 253-6.

⁷⁴⁶ Hopkins, *The Sinful Knights*, p. 20.

As Hopkins points out, '[p]iety and devotion are constantly encountered and referred to as essential qualities for a knight, as for any other member of medieval society; and this is reflected in romances'.⁷⁴⁷ In the *Stanzaic Guy of Warwick*, Guy is a humble and pious knight who rejects earthly goods offered to him after his achievements, walks barefoot, and begs for food. He repents neglecting devotion to God by indulging in chivalric activities; therefore, he leaves his new bride to go on a pilgrimage. On his way, Guy fights for Tirri who is falsely accused by the Emperor's steward Berard of his uncle's murder, and for Earl Jonas, who has been imprisoned for ransom with his fifteen sons after their defeat by King Triamour. Both noble men suffer in Guy's absence, and unlike Guy's self-inflicted suffering, they are in 'conflict and decline—they are overwhelmed by the social forces surrounding them'.⁷⁴⁸ They ask Guy to fight for their sake in order to end their suffering, which makes them foils to Guy because of their weakness and passive resistance (a characteristic of females in other romances), unlike Guy, who suffers willingly.

In *The Sege off Melayne*, submission to victimizers makes the victim realize his weakness, which motivates him to resist them. The romance does not denigrate the members of the nobility as a whole, rather it implies King Charles and the Lord of Milan's weaknesses in a satirical way. They are depicted as weak, indecisive, hesitant, selfish rulers who care about their own suffering rather than the suffering of others. Their cowardice, unlike many other Christian heroes in other romances, ironically empowers the clergy against the Saracens. The Lord of Milan escapes to another city when he sees that the Christians are oppressed by the Saracens. Likewise, King Charles refuses to fight against the Saracens who besiege Milan, in contrast to Bishop Turpin who summons an army of clergy to resist them. Charles has been described as 'on the whole a rather weak representative of earthly power'⁷⁴⁹ who has to make the 'choice between nation and religion',⁷⁵⁰ and who fails by acting to preserve his status as a king instead of defending his faith. This, ironically, undermines his status as a Christian king anyway.

The heroes in Middle English Charlemagne romances are French knights fighting against the Saracens along with the English, which presents 'Christianity' as a means for unifying all Christians against non-Christians. These romances are concerned

⁷⁴⁷ Hopkins, *The Sinful Knights*, p. 19.

⁷⁴⁸ Fewster, *Traditionality and Genre*, pp. 97-8.

⁷⁴⁹ Mehl, *The Middle English Romances*, p. 155.

⁷⁵⁰ Warm, 'Identity', p. 92.

with the ‘Christian militancy shared by England and France’.⁷⁵¹ Therefore, instead of the French hostility induced by the Hundred Years War,⁷⁵² ‘[t]he world they portray always seeks to emphasise the importance of Christian, as opposed to national, or secular, action’.⁷⁵³ This does not mean that an English romance need be over-generous to iconic French rulers or to the French aristocracy, who were frequently their enemies in war. However, the Christian faith of the romance heroes is emphasized rather than their French identity, to underline Christian unity and military superiority.

In *The Sege off Melayne*, King Charles is unable to realize the significance of Christian unity against the Saracens, preferring his own survival although other Christians suffer, until Bishop Turpin reminds him of Christ’s wounds, which are mirrored by his own, received on the king’s behalf. Christ’s suffering is praised, whilst Charles’s escape from suffering is condemned by this comparison:

Allas, þat þou was borne!
 Criste for the sufferde mare dere,
 Sore wondede with a spere,
 And werede a Crown of thorne.
 And now þou dare noghte in the felde
 For hym luke vndir thy schelde,⁷⁵⁴

After he realizes the significance of the holy fight and the necessity of ‘heroism’, which is ‘the sacrifice of the self in emulation of Christ’,⁷⁵⁵ Charles assembles an army of nobles in addition to the army of clergy assembled by Turpin in order to avenge the defeat of the French. He repents of avoiding a fight at first and fights to cleanse his soul.

In romances, achieving self-realization and redemption is common at the end of suffering. According to Hopkins, the idea of redemption originates from Christian teaching. For Christians:

The whole point of faith is that sins *can* be forgiven, men’s characters *can* be reformed, and the most damning faults can be redeemed. The great pre-Christian tragedy was the irredeemable loss of Paradise; but the succeeding generations overturned this with a promise of infinite potential for regaining it. God saves. There can always be a happy ending; providing that it is earned.⁷⁵⁶

⁷⁵¹ Crofts and Rouse, ‘Middle English Popular Romance’, p. 87.

⁷⁵² See Keen, *England*, pp. 122-42.

⁷⁵³ Warm, ‘Identity’, p. 88.

⁷⁵⁴ *The Sege off Melayne*, ed. by Herrtage, 23. 699-704.

⁷⁵⁵ Laura Ashe, ‘The Hero and his Realm in Medieval English Romance’, in *Boundaries*, ed. by Cartlidge, pp. 130-47 (p. 132).

⁷⁵⁶ Hopkins, *The Sinful Knights*, p. 11.

The male victims of divine punishments are submissive to suffering because they are repentant of their pride in money or status. They are also self-victimizers as they think they deserve suffering, and they atone for past failings ‘within an overtly Christian framework’⁷⁵⁷ by patient suffering. God forgives the penitents after they endure their ordeals and sincerely repent of their sins. Their experiences, as Childress states, ‘follow the pattern of the miraculous regeneration of a sinful man’.⁷⁵⁸ In *Sir Amadace*, when Sir Amadace meets the merchant’s corpse, which has been left unburied because of his unpaid debts, he regrets being a waster himself. He realizes that he will suffer exactly like the unburied merchant if he carries on with his extravagance:

‘Ye,’ the marchand sayd, ‘God gif him a sore grace,
And all suche waisters as he wasse,
For he sittus me nowe sare;
For he lise there with my thritti pownde
Of redy monay and of rownnde,
Of hitte gete I nevyr more.’⁷⁵⁹

He understands the significance of generosity, the worthlessness of earthly goods and the reason for his suffering, only after he buries the merchant, pays his debts and is tested by the merchant in the guise of the White Knight, and proves his generosity by agreeing to share whatever he owns. On the other hand, Putter suggests that Sir Amadace’s anxiety stems from the courtly idea of generosity, rather than a divine warning about it, because their ‘roles reversed: the White Knight will be as courteous to Amadace as Amadace was to him’.⁷⁶⁰ Putter’s suggestion is also true in the courtly context; yet, the idea of generosity in the romance is developed in relation to the religious idea of repentance and humility. Therefore, Sir Amadace is tested twice, first (and more importantly) by God, so that he realizes his extravagance by meeting the dead merchant, and the second by the White Knight, who tests his courtesy through generosity. He passes both tests and achieves both divine forgiveness and earthly possessions.

Historically, both the dead merchant and Sir Amadace have been presented as the embodiments of the nobles and merchants in the late fourteenth century. In Edward III’s reign, there were huge costs for war with France and Scotland, and some of the

⁷⁵⁷ Cooper, *The English Romance in Time*, p. 88.

⁷⁵⁸ Childress, ‘Between Romance and Legend’, p. 317.

⁷⁵⁹ *Six Middle English Romances*, ed. by Mills, 175. 247-52.

⁷⁶⁰ Ad Putter, ‘Gifts and Commodities in *Sir Amadace*’, *The Review of English Studies*, n.s., 51.203 (2000), 371-94 (p. 385).

costs were funded by taxation, along with loans to the king from the members of the nobility and merchants. Since these loans were mostly not repaid, they not only burdened the nobility and merchants, but also Edward III who went bankrupt.⁷⁶¹ In the romance, the reason for Sir Amadace and the dead merchant's financial problems is presented as their overspending their incomes through excessive charity instead of their providing the king with a loan. However, their suffering from financial problems may hint at the economic instability in Edward III's reign, and the suffering of the nobility and the merchant class of the period.

In *Sir Cleges*, Sir Cleges and his family's relief from suffering is possible only through piety and generosity. They lose their wealth through being spendthrifts, and they regain it after they pray to God for relief; then they generously offer the miraculously grown cherries sent them by God to the king in Cardiff. In *Sir Isumbras*, Sir Isumbras suffers because of his pride in his wealth, but his suffering makes him a humble and pious knight. He is punished by God, chooses to suffer when he is young and loses his property. As Evans states, Sir 'Isumbras is not merely a humble penitent under God'⁷⁶² because he also strives to restore his social standing and to regain his wife. As Radulescu points out, 'Isumbras is not a young knight errant, but a husband and a ruler, whose personal and public duties would be affected by his choice with immediate effect'.⁷⁶³ When he prefers to endure his ordeal at a young age, he exiles himself with his family rather than suffering on his own; in other words, his ordeal becomes their ordeal, too. As penance, Sir Isumbras cuts a cross on his bare shoulder with a knife like the medieval crusaders⁷⁶⁴ which implies his desire for suffering:

With his knyfe he share
A crosse on hys sholder bare,
In storye as clerkes seye.
They that wer here frendes byfore
They wepte and syked sore.⁷⁶⁵

Although he has no intention to victimize the Saracens but himself alone, it ironically turns into his 'single-man-army Crusade'. His wife and children accompany him at the beginning of his ordeal; yet, afterwards, his children are abducted by beasts and he is

⁷⁶¹ George W. Tuma and Dinah Hazell, 'Sir Amadace', 'Harken to Me': *Middle English Romances in Translation, Medieval Forum Special Edition*, (2009) <<http://www.sfsu.edu/~medieval/romances/amadace.html#amadacecomm>> [accessed 12 December 2011] (para. 51-2 of 57). See also Keen, *England*, pp. 122-65.

⁷⁶² Evans, *Rereading*, p. 55.

⁷⁶³ Radulescu, 'Pious Middle English Romances', p. 337.

⁷⁶⁴ Fowler, 'Romance Hypothetical', p. 101.

⁷⁶⁵ *Six Middle English Romances*, ed. by Mills, 129. 139-43.

humiliated by a Saracen Sultan who also buys his wife, much to Sir Isumbras's distress. He endures the ordeal alone, and turns his anger to avenge himself against the heathen king, rather than moan for his loss. He works with ironsmiths for seven years to make armour for himself and wages war against the heathens to regain his wife and his honour. His suffering teaches him that he is vulnerable but also strong enough to overcome his ordeal, and Isumbras becomes a reformed knight at the end of the romance, when he crusades against the Saracens. He not only takes his wife back but also defeats the Saracen king in the name of Christianity. As Lee Manion states, Sir Isumbras's resistance to the heathen king is like 'the reconquest of the Holy Land by self-signed crusader whose success does not depend upon the sanction of ecclesiastical authorities'.⁷⁶⁶ Elizabeth Fowler pays attention to the role of the medieval Church which preached that the time and miseries the soul suffered in Purgatory could be reduced by participating in the crusades, and points out that 'the close association between penance and crusade allows us to see the sufferings, pilgrimage, and military acts of Isumbras as one continuous penitential action'.⁷⁶⁷ Therefore, Isumbras's experience represents the belief in 'the rewards-for-suffering idea'⁷⁶⁸ in a context which is both secular and religious, since his relief from suffering is possible by his displaying his skills of knighthood and putting his trust in God. After his penance is rewarded with divine forgiveness and his victory against the Saracens, he also gets worldly rewards like reunion with his family and the restoration of his wealth, as well as proof of his worth as a powerful knight.

In *Sir Gowther*, the reason for Gowther's ordeal is dubious, as it is not clear whether his villainy is completely related to his inward hostility or his conception from the devil. His pride and cruelties to his parents and to the people he rules, Hopkins suggests, are related to his conception at the instigation of the devil that disguised himself as the duke and slept with his wife. Hopkins proposes that Sir Gowther 'is presented as having inherited from his father a really evil nature, from which he must struggle to escape' in order to become a new man.⁷⁶⁹ The romance poet says Gowther enacts his demonic nature:

Masse ne matens wold he non here
Nor no prechyng of no frere,

That dar I heyly hette;

⁷⁶⁶ Manion, 'Loss of the Holy Land', p. 78.

⁷⁶⁷ Fowler, 'Romance Hypothetical', pp. 114-5.

⁷⁶⁸ Ramsey, *Chivalric Romances*, p. 211.

⁷⁶⁹ Hopkins, *The Sinful Knights*, p. 147.

Erly and late, lowed and styyl,
 He wold wyrke is fadur wyll
 Wher he stod or sete.⁷⁷⁰

Similarly, Saunders and Alcuin Blamires believe ‘Gowther re-enacts the sins of his father’⁷⁷¹ as he is a ‘demonic heir’.⁷⁷² The idea of the inherited evil is justifiable, since Gowther is half-human and half-demon. After he is reminded of his cruelty and is accused of being the devil’s offspring, he realizes his inherited villainy and he repents, confesses his sins to the Pope and retreats into an Emperor’s court to suffer willingly and patiently. After he rids himself of his pride and evil nature with repentance, his renewal is from ‘a moral animal into a good Christian knight’,⁷⁷³ from ‘demon to saint’⁷⁷⁴ and from ‘a fiend’s spawn’ into ‘a God’s child’,⁷⁷⁵ but more importantly from a villain into victim of his own villainy. Meanwhile, ‘his nature develops from that of a wild beast to a tame one’.⁷⁷⁶ The regeneration of Gowther is possible only after his passive submission to his ordeal. He loses his voice; he is cared for by the Emperor’s daughter and he is fed by dogs:

Among tho howndys thus was he fed,
 At evon to a lytyll chambur led
 And hyllyd under teld;⁷⁷⁷

Although he victimizes Christians before his penance, he fights against Saracens after he repents of it, until he is forgiven by God. As Crawford states, the defeat of the Saracens by Sir Gowther suggests the superiority of Christian values.⁷⁷⁸ While Sir Gowther regains his faith, the Saracens who are enemies of his faith are destined to be destroyed. Similar to the change in his role from a demon’s son to God’s child, his role as the sufferer to which he submits willingly is replaced by his role as the victimizer of Saracens. The blood of the Saracens seems to wash and clean him like the water of baptism. Ramsey suggests that the romance is ‘a bit of pro-Church propaganda’ in order

⁷⁷⁰ *Six Middle English Romances*, ed. by Mills, 279. 172-7.

⁷⁷¹ Corinne J. Saunders, ‘“Symtyme the fende”: Questions of Rape in *Sir Gowther*’, in *Studies in English Language and Literature: ‘Doubt Wisely’: Papers in Honour of E. G. Stanley*, ed. by M. J. Toswell and E. M. Tyler (London: Routledge, 1996), pp. 286-303 (p. 298).

⁷⁷² Blamires, ‘Twin Demons’, p. 53.

⁷⁷³ Robson, ‘Animal Magic’, p. 145.

⁷⁷⁴ Joanne A. Charbonneau, ‘From Devil to Saint: Transformations in *Sir Gowther*’, in *The Matter of Identity*, ed. by Hardman, pp. 21-8 (p. 28).

⁷⁷⁵ McGregor, ‘Paternal Function’, p. 75.

⁷⁷⁶ Osborn, *Nine Medieval Romances*, p. 162.

⁷⁷⁷ *Six Middle English Romances*, ed. by Mills, 158. 364-6.

⁷⁷⁸ Crawford, ‘Gronyng wyth grysly wounde’, p. 45.

to emphasize the role of the Church as an instrument of God.⁷⁷⁹ Yet, even if the romance has high pious overtones, the transformation in Gowther is not merely within the religious context, because he not only becomes a good Christian but also a good knight.⁷⁸⁰ As Dinah Hazell explains, Gowther develops attributes needed for successful social relationships and leadership such as ‘respect, humility, reciprocity, charity and communal responsibility’⁷⁸¹ which he lacked before his transformation into a good Christian. Therefore, his restoration has not only a spiritual but also a social basis.

In *Robert of Cisyle*, the emphasis is on the importance of penance for achieving the forgiveness of God. The romance stresses the fact that humans are inferior to God even if they are superior to other humans in rank on earth. Robert, the proud King of Cisyle, is a self-victimizer who is punished by God because of his pride until he realizes the triviality of trust in worldly powers. Alexandra Hennessey Olsen suggests that Robert’s ordeal is like Christ’s, since his life emulates that of Christ, ‘the Hero who left His Heavenly Realm, underwent sore trials on earth, and eventually returned to His Kingdom’.⁷⁸² However, Robert is a sinner who submits to the ordeal to save his soul, unlike Christ, who endured the pain for the salvation of humanity.

Besides, as Radulescu states, ‘[f]rom a ‘fall of princes’ perspective, the romance presents the consequences kings who are guilty of not performing their duties well would have to face’.⁷⁸³ Robert experiences a descent in his status from a proud king to a humble repentant king’s fool. He is not recognized, even by his brothers, and (similar to Sir Gowther) he shares his food with hounds:

Houndes, how so hit bifalle,
 Schulen eten with the in halle;
 Thou schalt eten on the ground;
 Thin assayour schal ben an hound,
 To assaye thi mete bifore the;
 Wher is now thi dignité?⁷⁸⁴

Living like a dog indeed empowers rather than weakens him.⁷⁸⁵ As Foster says, ‘[t]he didactic point is sharpened by the insistent concentration on Robert, his position, his

⁷⁷⁹ Ramsey, *Chivalric Romances*, p. 219.

⁷⁸⁰ Marchalonis, ‘*Sir Gowther*’, p. 24.

⁷⁸¹ Dinah Hazell, ‘Sexuality, Love, and Loyalty: *Sir Gowther* as Secular Romance’, <<http://dhazell.com/sir-gowther.html>> [accessed 12 December 2010] (para. 41 of 46).

⁷⁸² Alexandra Hennessey Olsen, ‘The Return of the King: A Reconsideration of *Robert of Sicily*’, *Folklore*, 93.2 (1982), 216-9 (p. 218).

⁷⁸³ Radulescu, ‘Pious Middle English Romances’, p. 357.

⁷⁸⁴ *Robert of Cisyle*, in *Amis and Amiloun*, ed. by Foster, pp. 71-93 (p. 84), lines 163-8. All references are to this edition, cited by Foster’s page and line number.

suffering, his remorse, and his restoration'.⁷⁸⁶ He takes an ape as his advisor, he is mocked and degraded by people in a fool's costume, and he is called the 'mad man' because of his claims to be the real king. These painful experiences make him understand his vulnerability and limitation, despite his nobility and wealth. He suffers from lacking a name, power and respect when he is replaced by an angel in disguise. His suffering makes him mature, and he accepts the fact that he is really a 'fool' because of his ignorance of God and his ultimate trust in his high status when he was the king. Although Donna B. Hamilton believes that Robert is 'helpless either to regain his former identity or to locate a new one' in a fool guise,⁷⁸⁷ the 'life of the fool is one of the most startling and traditional metaphors for the man who is separated from worldly values'.⁷⁸⁸ Therefore, the 'fool' disguise provides Robert with a realization of the worth of worldly values. Meanwhile, in a fool's body, he realizes that the vanity of the world has indeed 'fooled' him.

As Hopkins suggests, the penitent heroes in *Sir Isumbras*, *Sir Gowther*, the *Stanzaic Guy of Warwick* and *Robert of Cisyle* feel 'self-reproach and contrition for their sins, but instead of turning from the world to God, their penances fit them for their places in the world, and it is only through the world that they can reach God'.⁷⁸⁹ Therefore, *Sir Gowther*, *Robert of Cisyle* and *Sir Isumbras* are reasonably interpreted as 'secular legends' by Childress who also explains that:

Another trait shared by Sir Gowther, Robert of Sicily, and Sir Isumbras is their passivity. The romance hero pursues his goals energetically, even aggressively, but the protagonist of secular legend must patiently endure humiliation, deprivation, and suffering. Only in childhood does the romance hero undergo similar misfortunes with patience; by the time he is twelve or fourteen he becomes actively engaged in regaining his rightful place in society. That he was ever denied that place is not depicted as an act of God to test his faith or to punish his sinfulness, but as the machinations of evil men and women whom the hero is destined to overthrow, thereby proving the righteousness of his cause. Havelok, Bevis of Hampton, King Horn, William of Palerne [...] are all unjustly estranged from their patrimonies and must

⁷⁸⁵ Weiss, 'Ineffectual Monarchs', p. 62.

⁷⁸⁶ Foster, 'Simplicity', p. 403.

⁷⁸⁷ Donna B. Hamilton, 'Some Romance Sources for *King Lear*: Robert of Sicily and Robert the Devil', *Studies in Philology*, 71.2 (1974), 173-91 (p. 176).

⁷⁸⁸ Richmond, *Popularity*, p. 73.

⁷⁸⁹ Hopkins, *The Sinful Knights*, p. 68.

fight to regain them. But the passive heroes of secular legend must wait for God to change their lives.⁷⁹⁰

As Radulescu points out, ‘as a reflection of medieval audiences’ concerns with spiritual matters and with the afterlife, chivalric romances also developed an awareness of, and sometimes even a narrow focus on, religion’.⁷⁹¹ In *Sir Owain*, the focus is directly on religion through the adventures of a pious knight. Chivalric adventure in romance is taken for religious salvation, and this romance hero, different from the other romance heroes, experiences ordeals in Purgatory in order to reach God. The romance focuses on pain and suffering in Purgatory instead of those on earth, and the knight who witnesses these pain and suffering visits Purgatory to experience them before he dies, in order to avoid them after his death. Unlike many other penitent victims who are unaware of their sinfulness until they endure ordeals, Sir Owain thinks he is sinful; therefore, he enters St. Patrick’s Purgatory in penance in order to experience a potential ordeal before he dies. In order to imply that everyone is responsible for his own deeds and each suffering is personal, Owain ‘must travel the whole distance unescorted’.⁷⁹² Consequently, he purges his soul by witnessing the pain and suffering of the sinners.

Sir Owain’s experience is narrated as a quest in which he fights against the temptations of the fiends; yet, he seeks divine salvation rather than chivalric renown. Although God is presented as the victimizer of sinful souls, God is also a fair judge differentiating the innocents who deserve bliss in heaven and the sinners who deserve suffering in hell. Katherine Clark points out that:

Concern for the fate of souls of purgatory enhanced the sanctity and intercessory potential of the new brand of lay saint -particularly female saints- that flourished in the urban movements of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries and invigorated mendicant and beguine expressions of piety.⁷⁹³

Hence, Owain’s experience and the images of the suffering souls in Purgatory are previews of the torments waiting for sinners, and all are warnings to believers. Owain’s hands and feet are bound by fiends; he is thrown into the fire and then he is driven to a land full of hunger, thirst and cold. He sees a large field of naked and wounded men and women destroyed regardless of social status, mourning and desperately asking for

⁷⁹⁰ Childress, ‘Between Romance and Legend’, pp. 317-8.

⁷⁹¹ Radulescu, ‘Genre and Classification’, p. 40.

⁷⁹² Carol G. Zaleski, ‘St. Patrick’s Purgatory: Pilgrimage Motifs in a Medieval Otherworld Vision’, *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 46.4 (1985), 467-85 (p. 480).

⁷⁹³ Katherine Clark, ‘Purgatory, Punishment, and the Discourse of Holy Widowhood in the High and Later Middle Ages’, *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 16.2 (2007), 169-203 (p. 169).

God's mercy, whilst they suffer because of their having committed the Seven Deadly Sins. Each sin has a specific punishment and each sinner suffers from torment and bodily mutilation in pain and repentance. The painful and violent descriptions of suffering in Purgatory are followed by descriptions of the blessings in heaven, where Sir Owain wants to remain forever, but he is taken back to earth to stay there until his death.

Like Sir Owain who victimizes himself for the love of God, the male victims of love also allow themselves 'a willed vulnerability'⁷⁹⁴ for their lover's hand. They are both 'pathetic' and 'heroic' because they submit to their suffering, and they willingly accept quests when they are forced by the fathers of their lovers, or they exile themselves after learning that their lovers have been exiled by their fathers. In *Sir Eglamour of Artois*, Sir Eglamour willingly undertakes a quest set by his lover Cristabell's father, and fights against giants and dragons for her hand. In *The Squire of Low Degree*, the Squire is willing to live as a hermit and to suffer rejection by the princess because of his lower status. At the end of seven years of lovesickness, he is accepted by the princess, on condition that he proves his worth on a quest. However, he is imprisoned and then sent to quest by the princess's father, the King of Hungary, who humiliates him because of his rank. In this way the emotional suffering of lovesickness is externalised, and he is offered an opportunity for social mobility after proving his worth as a knight by his chivalric prowess on a quest. Hence, the Squire is able to stop being passive, 'feminized', and to become active, to 'be a man'.

As Hudson points out, *The Squire of Low Degree* 'deals explicitly with matters of birthright and social advancement, in keeping with the class-consciousness of its usual title and the fact that its hero has no proper name'.⁷⁹⁵ Nobility was mainly dependent on lineage and wealth in medieval society; however, the penetration of the urban patriciate (the great city families) to the ranks of the privileged from the tenth century onwards became the irrefutable evidence of social mobility in the Middle Ages.⁷⁹⁶ The social mobility of the Squire represents fifteenth-century concerns over social boundaries at the time when the romance was probably composed, and implies that nobility is not necessarily to be acquired through lineage and wealth. Therefore, the Squire differs from other romance protagonists like Havelok, Horn and many more in his social standing and claim for nobility, which he does not have by birthright and

⁷⁹⁴ Neal, *The Masculine Self*, p. 199.

⁷⁹⁵ Hudson, 'Construction of Class', pp. 79-80.

⁷⁹⁶ David Herlihy, 'Three Patterns of Social Mobility in Medieval History', *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 3.4 (1973), 623-47 (pp. 624-5).

wealth. The Squire represents the new men penetrating into higher social orders regardless of his noble background, and he has to endure the ordeals set by his lover's father so that he can prove his worth as a 'noble' man. Hence, by upending the class hierarchy, the romance appeals to the medieval gentry and also the merchants who make their place rather than inherit it.⁷⁹⁷ The Squire assures his nobility, which he does not have by birthright, by his aspiration; thus, he 'creates' his position instead of 'inherits' it. In addition to his marriage to the princess, the hero achieves 'everything -even name-without a name',⁷⁹⁸ apart from a noble identity.

In *Floris and Blancheflour*, Floris desperately searches for his lover Blancheflour, who has been exiled by his father because of her being a slave girl. He refuses to eat and drink, and mourns until he finds her. He willingly submits to death for her sake when their affair is revealed by the Emir. In *Torrent of Portyngale*, Torrent, the Prince of Portugal, undertakes many dangerous adventures and fights against supernatural creatures for Desonell's hand, and overcomes each threat as bidden by her father Calamond, who allows their marriage unwillingly, as he is jealous of Torrent's renown. When Torrent learns that Desonell has been exiled by her father, he goes to the Holy Land and victimizes many infidels. Torrent is empowered by God during his trials by his prayers, and his achievements are obtained relative to his piety. Love of the woman becomes interchangeable with love of God, or it functions to lead the lover to a greater love, as in the case in the *Stanzaic Guy of Warwick* when Guy leaves his pregnant wife Felice and goes on pilgrimage for salvation of his sins. Afterwards, he retreats to a hermitage instead of being reunited with his family.

In *Ipomadon*, the poet explains lovesickness by saying that love is such a power that it overcomes kings and knights, earls and barons, as it may kill and turn upside down:

Love is so mekyll off myghte
 That it will davnte bothe kyng and knyght,
 Erle and bold barone;
 They that wyseste is of witte,
 Fro tyme they be takyne wyth it,
 Hit takythe fro them there reasone.
 Love may save, love may spille,

⁷⁹⁷ Myra J. Seaman, 'The Waning of Middle English Chivalric Romance in *The Squyr of Lowe Degre*', *Fifteenth-Century Studies*, 29 (2004), 174-99 (pp. 192-3). For a discussion of the social mobility in the sixteenth-century edition of *The Squire of Low Degree* see Kevin S. Kiernan, 'Undo Your Door and the Order of Chivalry', *Studies in Philology*, 70.4 (1973), 345-66.

⁷⁹⁸ Bliss, *Naming and Namelessness*, p. 71.

Love may do what þat he will,
And turne all vp and downe.⁷⁹⁹

At the very end of the romance, the poet says Ipomadon has made himself a messenger in order to tell lovers that there is no healing ointment to salve the wounds of love, and that is a pity. Ipomadon is despised and mocked for being a coward in his disguise as a coward servant serving Lady Fere, although he is a successful knight. As John A. Burrow points out, Ipomadon prefers to disguise himself because he feels the burden of Lady Fere's oath, to marry the best knight in the world.⁸⁰⁰ Under that burden, he underestimates his prowess by thinking that he is not worthy enough to be her husband, and leaves her court instead of revealing his feelings for her. He then decides to prove his worth as the best knight in the world to win her love. For this reason, he attends the tournament in different disguises for three days, revealing his identity only after he has defeated all his rivals. In fact, in disguise, 'he achieves more as 'himself' [...] rather than pretend to be someone else',⁸⁰¹ because he finds an opportunity to reveal his real strength, which he hides when he is in the lady's court. At the end of the tournament, he not only wins the lady's hand but also proves himself as the best knight in the world. In *Partonope of Blois*, Partonope blames himself for being the reason for his lover Melior's suffering when he betrays her trust, after being provoked by his mother to test her. Partonope curses himself:

'Allas,' þoʒte he, 'howe un-gracyously
To my loue haue I gouerned me!
A thowsande parte I had leuer be
Dedde þen lyffe as I nowe do.
My Ioye ys go for euer-mo.'
So yre and sorowe to[ke] hym by þe hatrelle,
þat downe to grownde on sownyge he felle.⁸⁰²

He believes his is a greater loss than that of Adam, who has lost paradise because of his folly. He does not wash his head and feet, his colour gets pale, his nails grow, his hair grows, he cannot rise from the bed alone and he suffers in pain for one year. He prays to God to have mercy on him, so that he can overcome his suffering. Eglamour, Torrent, the Squire, Floris, Ipomadon, and Partonope are all 'feminized' by their lovesickness,

⁷⁹⁹ *Ipomadon*, ed. by Purdie, 211-2. 7346-54.

⁸⁰⁰ John A. Burrow, 'The Uses of Incognito: *Ipomadon A*', in *Readings*, ed. by Meale, pp. 25-34 (p. 28).

⁸⁰¹ Bliss, *Naming and Namelessness*, p. 38.

⁸⁰² *The Middle-English Versions of 'Partonope of Blois'*, ed. by Trampe Böttker, EETS e.s., 109 (London: Kegan Paul, 1912), pp. 246-7, lines 6432-8. All references are to this edition, cited by Böttker's page and line number.

which makes them submit to the ordeal; yet, on the other hand, they become 'heroic' as well since they seek quests for their lovers' hand.

In fact, all rewards achieved by the sufferers and penitents are 'wish-fulfillments', because what is gained or achieved is the 'ideal' for the sake of which they have suffered. The sufferers who seek earthly rewards such as chivalric renown, noble status, possessions and those who suffer for love are rewarded with what they have sought, while those who seek penance and suffer for the sake of God are rewarded with divine forgiveness and heaven at the end of their ordeals. Similar to the punishments of the villains, the rewards of the victims and penitents also display divine and poetic justice.

In *Athelston*, King Athelston declares Sir Egelond's son as his heir to the throne in return for his loyalty. In the *Erle of Tolous*, the Earl of Tolous becomes the Emperor after his marriage to the Empress. In *Emaré*, the eponymous heroine's repentant father is reunited with Emaré and her son in Rome, when he visits there to ask for God's forgiveness. The lovers in *Floris and Blancheflour* and *Torrent of Portyngale* are happily reunited. In *Le Bone Florence of Rome*, the city of Florence is given to Tyrry for his loyalty to Emere and Florence. In *Generydes*, Generydes becomes the King of India after his parents' death. In *The Lay of Havelok the Dane*, after their help in Havelok's regaining his status, Grim's sons are given status and his daughters marry rich husbands, while Ubbe becomes Havelok's steward. In *William of Palerne*, William and Alphonse regain their noble identities, and Alphonse regains his human shape. The cowherd and his wife are given properties for their generosity in fostering William. In *The Tale of Gamelyn*, Gamelyn proves his innocence, regains his own inheritance, and ultimately the whole patrimony left by his father, in addition to marrying and having children to pass his inheritance on.

In *Joseph of Aramathie*, Christ consecrates Joseph as bishop. In *Richard Coer de Lyon*, Richard's piety and striving for Christian victory are rewarded by his conquest of many Saracen lands. In *Robert of Cisyle*, Robert regains his status after his repentance of his pride. In *Roland and Vernagu*, Roland beheads his heathen opponent Vernagu in their duel by God's help. In *Sir Amadace*, Sir Amadace regains his wealth and status, and keeps his family together after proving his piety and generosity. In *Sir Cleges*, Sir Cleges restores his noble status and wealth on account of his and his wife's piety, patience and generosity, and the King gives him lands and makes him his steward. In *Sir Gowther*, Sir Gowther regains his status, has a family after he repents and goes on pilgrimage to Rome, and becomes a saint after his death.

In *Sir Isumbras*, Sir Isumbras regains his wealth and status and is reunited with his family after his patient suffering. In *Sir Owain*, Sir Owain gets God's forgiveness after willingly visiting Purgatory to experience suffering before his death and his pilgrimage to Bethlehem. In *Sir Launfal*, Lady Tryamour reappears when Sir Launfal is about to be executed, and takes Launfal into her fairy land where he will be invulnerable. In the *Stanzaic Guy of Warwick*, Guy's piety is rewarded with his acceptance into heaven. In *The Seven Sages of Rome*, Florentyne's innocence and his stepmother's treason are revealed. In *The Siege of Jerusalem* and *The Sege off Melayne*, the Christians defeat the Saracens and the souls of the Christian knights who die during the fight rise into heaven. In *The Squire of Low Degree*, the Squire rises in social status with his marriage to the princess and is crowned king. In *Lybeaus Desconus*, Lybeaus Desconus proves himself in knighthood and marries the Lady of Synadowne. The lovers in *Partonope of Blois*, *Sir Degrevant*, *Sir Eglamour of Artois*, *Beves of Hamptoun*, *Torrent of Portyngale* all live happily ever after.

Whilst female helpers offer relief through emotional support and advice, the male domestic relievers of suffering provide the sufferers with physical support. They are also foils to the domestic villains, and contrary to them, the relievers represent the 'ideal' family members who protect and relieve, and highlight the significance of family unity in face of suffering. In particular, the children's interference is driven by the belief that 'it is the duty of children to aid their parents when they are old and helpless, as their parents cared for them as children'.⁸⁰³ They make use of physical force to help the sufferers and have a more effective part in the ultimate relief of their pain. In *Amis and Amiloun*, Amiloun's nephew Amourant accompanies Amiloun when he is exiled until he recovers, and in return for his loyalty, Amourant is given lands. In *Octovian*, Octovian releases his father, brother and barons imprisoned by Saracens. In *Generydes*, Generydes helps his father King Auferius to defeat his treacherous steward Sir Amelok. In *Beves of Hamptoun*, Beves helps his foster father to defeat his enemy. In *Kyng Alisaunder*, Alisaunder releases his mother from prison, saves her from a suitor and restores her noble status. In *Sir Eglamour of Artois*, Degrebelle saves his mother Cristabell from several unwanted suitors. In *William of Palerne*, William saves his mother the Queen of Apulia from the King of Spain's threat. In *Cheuelere Assigne*, Enyas fights to save his mother Beatrice and to restore his siblings' human shape. In *Sir Isumbras*, when Isumbras and his wife are fighting against heathens on the battlefield,

⁸⁰³ Shulamith Shahar, *Childhood in the Middle Ages* (London: Routledge, 1990), p. 168.

their children who were abducted by beasts years ago arrive to help them. In *Sir Tryamour*, Tryamour fights against the King of Almanye's man Moradas in his father's place when he asks for his help. In *The Tale of Gamelyn*, Gamelyn's brother Ote persuades their brother Sir John to release Gamelyn, and acts as his surety by replacing him when he is imprisoned, allowing Gamelyn to be set free on bail. In *Ipomadon*, Lady Fere's cousin Iason searches for her lover Ipomadon and comforts her with his support when she suffers from lovesickness. In *Sir Orfeo*, Sir Orfeo saves his wife Heurodis from the fairy king.

The male 'stranger' relievers of suffering are from all ranks, and rather than ending suffering, they try to prevent them. In *Athelston*, it is the Archbishop of Canterbury who works to settle the dispute between the Egelond family and King Athelston, in order to prevent the punishment of the innocent. In *Sir Amadace*, the dead merchant, in the guise of the White Knight, helps Sir Amadace to regain wealth and have a family. In *Kyng Alisaunder*, a palmer warns Alisaunder's men not to drink black water as it is poisonous, and tells them of a herb to heal poisoning. In *The Seven Sages of Rome*, the seven sages act *in loco parentis* for Florentyne's father as they defend Florentyne against his father's mistaken death sentence. In *Cheuelere Assigne*, Beatrice's son Enyas, saved from changing into a swan, is well cared for by a hermit. In *Sir Degaré*, a hermit educates the abandoned child (Degaré) in the hermitage until he is old enough to seek his real parents. In *Lay le Freine*, a porter takes care of the foundling Freine. In *Lybeaus Desconus*, Lybeaus Desconus lifts the curse on the Lady of Synadowne. In *Octovian*, the butcher Clement buys Florent from the outcasts and takes care of him in his family. In *Emaré*, the King's steward Sir Kadore in Galys and a merchant in Rome take care of Emaré after she is exiled by her father and her mother-in-law. In *Beves of Hamptoun*, the chamberlain Bonefas helps Beves and Josian to escape from Josian's suitor Yvor, and shows them a cave to hide in. Saber spares Beves's life when her mother attempts to murder him, fosters him and when Beves is sold to merchants, he sends his son to find him.

In *The Lay of Havelok the Dane*, fisherman Grim spares Havelok's life although he is ordered by Godard to drown him. Grim thinks both he and Havelok will be hanged because he has let Havelok live. Therefore, he sells his livestock, leaves Denmark with his family to escape from Godard's punishment and to save Havelok's life, and arrives Grimsby in England, a place later named after him. For Robert Levine, Grim's involvement in the story is significant as he represents the lower-class that is 'confined

to those who perform well and without social ambition'.⁸⁰⁴ This is true, since Havelok learns to be humble while growing into a young man in Grim's household. He assumes the qualities of the 'good' poor person, whilst avoiding the feminization of the poor male by regaining his chivalric, noble status. As K. Kimberly Bell points out, Havelok 'experiences a form of conversion, freeing himself from evil (Godard, worldly gain) and aligning himself with the forces of good, gaining spiritual salvation'.⁸⁰⁵ Lim suggests that Grim is an ineffectual father figure 'who is unable to advance the hero's cause even though he is sincere'.⁸⁰⁶ However, even if he spares Havelok's life, Grim is not totally sincere or angelic.⁸⁰⁷ He exchanges a boy's life with his freedom when Godard asks him to drown Havelok, so that he will let him be free. Despite sparing him, Grim and his wife treat Havelok roughly until they notice the miraculous light shining around him, which indicates that he is a king. Previously, Grim's wife throws Havelok down, where he lies until midnight:

Hwan dame [leue] herde þat,
 Vp she stirte, and nouht ne sat,
 And caste þe knaue adoun so harde,
 þat hise croune he þer crackede
 Ageyn a gret ston, þer it lay:⁸⁰⁸

Grim and his wife ask for Havelok's forgiveness only *after* they realize his noble identity, and leave Denmark to save both themselves and Havelok from Godard's wrath. In the same romance, the nobleman Ubbe hosts Havelok when Havelok comes to Denmark, and helps him to regain his noble status.

In contrast with the usually villainous representations of the stewards in the romances, in *The Tale of Gamelyn*, Gamelyn's father's steward Adam Spencer helps Gamelyn to escape from his wicked brother John by releasing him when he is bound and accused of madness, and by accompanying him when he retreats into a forest to become an outlaw. Adam thus takes on the part of wicked and good steward at the same time. He is a good friend to Gamelyn, whilst being a traitor to his master Sir John. Like Gamelyn, he acts badly in order to reinstate the good, not so much creating his own law,

⁸⁰⁴ Robert Levine, 'Who Composed *Havelok* for Whom?', *The Yearbook of English Studies*, 22 (1992), 95-104 (p. 102).

⁸⁰⁵ Bell, 'Resituating Romance', p. 50.

⁸⁰⁶ Lim, 'In the Name of the (Dead) Father', p. 42.

⁸⁰⁷ Maldwyn Mills, 'Havelok and the Brutal Fisherman', *Medium Ævum*, 36 (1967), 219-30 (p. 226); Maldwyn Mills, 'Havelok's Return', *Medium Ævum*, 45 (1976), 20-35 (p. 30); Bell, 'Resituating Romance', p. 48.

⁸⁰⁸ *The Lay of Havelok the Dane*, ed. by Skeat, 18. 565-9.

but re-creating the good law which existed before the death of Gamelyn's father. In the *Stanzaic Guy of Warwick*, Guy fights to save Tirri when he is accused of a murder. He also fights for Earl Jonas and his fifteen sons. In the *Erle of Tolous*, the Earl of Tolous helps the Empress to prove her innocence of adultery by taking the accuser knights to her husband to confess their accusation and treason. In *Floris and Blancheflour*, the Emir gives up victimizing Floris and Blancheflour and allows their marriage. In *Le Bone Florence of Rome*, Sir Tyrry saves Florence and takes care of her when he finds her in the forest, after being abducted and beaten by Miles. In *Joseph of Aramathie*, Vespasian releases Joseph from the pit where was put by the Jews forty-two years ago. In *Sir Eglamour of Artois*, Cristabell's son Degrebelle, who was abducted by a griffin, is found and cared for by the King of Israel. In *Torrent of Portyngale*, the King of Jerusalem and the King of Greece take care of Desonell and Torrent's twin sons after the children have been abducted by beasts.

In *Sir Tryamour*, Sir Roger accompanies Margaret on her exile and comforts her until he is killed by Marrok. However, Sir Roger's dog reveals Marrok's treason and Margaret's innocence of adultery when it kills Marrok, by which act, as suggested by Margaret Schlauch, the dog takes on the duty of a son⁸⁰⁹ as reliever of his mother's suffering:

He starte up verament,
The steward be the throte he hente:
The hownd wrekyd hys maystys dethe.
The stewardys lyfe ys lorne –⁸¹⁰

In *William of Palerne*, Alphonse, in the body of a werewolf, abducts the infant William to save him from poisoning by his uncle, leaves him to be well cared for by a cowherd and his wife, and protects William and his lover Melior when they retreat into a forest to escape from Melior's father. Besides, he leads William to Spain to reunite William with his mother and to save his sister from an unwanted suitor.

Although Middle English metrical romances are mainly centred on male protagonists, there are plenty of female victims whose pain and suffering have an effect on the actions of the male characters. Romances have more victims than victimizers. The number of male victims is greater than the number of female victims. Whilst there are thirty-nine male victims, there are thirty-two female victims. The number of female submissive victims is twenty-two; yet, there are eight male submissive victims, seven of

⁸⁰⁹ Schlauch, *Chaucer's Constance*, p. 105.

⁸¹⁰ *Four Middle English Romances*, ed. by Hudson, 161-2. 535-8.

whom are self-victimizers. Although ten females resist suffering verbally, thirty-one of the male victims resist it physically. While there are sixteen female villains victimizing both males and females, there are more than thirty female victims, which indicates that women suffer more than they victimize. Compared to male victims, female victims suffer more from the villainies of their family members. There are nine males, but sixteen females who are victims of their household, which indicates that there is a gender spread of those who suffer in their households.

The reasons for suffering and reactions of victims to it vary. A female is most likely to be the victim of a domestic or outsider male such as her father who rejects her lover, a husband deceived by a wicked steward, a lover who betrays her or delays marriage, or a steward or a knight who falsely accuses her of adultery. The female victim may be betrothed or married either to a threatening unwanted Christian, or to a Saracen suitor. Besides, there are several females victimized by mothers-in-law who falsely accuse them of adultery. Wars are also depicted as creating desperate suffering for women. Some of the female victims are strong, questioning their pain and suffering, thinking reasonably about how to overcome them, and resisting them boldly (especially when they are forced to separate from their lovers); but most submit to pain and suffering without questioning and accept them as divine punishments for their sinfulness, or because they are too weak and helpless to resist. Moreover, a female's misfortune may be a male's or another female's fortune, a means to escape from punishment or avoid his or her suffering. Falsely accusing a female victim makes it easier to escape their own punishment (deserved or not). Thus, an unwanted suitor can accuse a female who rejects him of committing adultery with another man, or a jealous mother-in-law can easily accuse her daughter-in-law of adultery out of jealousy. Similarly, male victims can easily be accused of treason, or adultery, by jealous or treacherous male and female victimizers. All ordeals are painful; yet, some of them are more painful because they are also humiliating. The female victims suffer emotionally when they are separated from their lovers or they are subjected to threats of their unwanted suitors. They are also humiliated when they are accused of adultery or forced into marriage despite their unwillingness, which makes their marriage an ordeal. Male victims are humiliated when they are mocked and degraded by male villains and Saracens; yet, almost none of them *submit* to stranger victimizers. Even those who submit (as Tirri in the *Stanzaic Guy of Warwick* and King Charles in *The Sege off Melayne*) are presented as foils to the other males who are courageous, and resist 'stranger' villains.

At the beginning of the narrative, the male or female victim is safe among his/her household until betrayed, falsely accused or expelled, isolated from the household (mostly by force for female victims or by his own decision for males). The female sufferer suffers alone or with her child after she is discarded from her household, but she is cared for or helped by an outsider male. Her meeting with a male stranger is a turning point in her life, as he either takes care of her well or helps her prove her innocence, regain her status and/or reunite with her family. On the other hand, the noble male victims suffer both physically and emotionally after they are victimized, and they are mostly alone (apart from the presence of God) throughout their suffering. Moreover, while suffering themselves, they help other sufferers, which makes their suffering more 'heroic' than 'pathetic'. Although the male sufferers are represented as pathetic if they are victims of their own mistakes, they are mostly represented as heroic, especially if they suffer for the sake of relieving another victim's pain and suffering. While the male victims suffer both physically and emotionally, the female victims mostly suffer emotionally. The female victims, despite their struggle to overcome suffering, are always pathetic as they are never strong enough to overcome suffering on their own, and they lack physical power to fight back physically, which is necessary for heroic representation.

Victims' experience of suffering is 'theologically' justified, because each suffering is followed by a relief/respice, and all ordeals end with a final reward. All sufferers, regardless of being resistant or submissive, are rewarded after experiencing physical and emotional pains, and they happily reunite with their families, have families, restore their status and dignity or achieve the divine salvation which they seek. While male victims are rewarded with regaining or having status, wealth and families as well as achieving divine forgiveness, female sufferers prove their innocence of accusations, are reunited with their families or their lovers. The relationship between the idea of suffering and reward reminds the audience of the Church's teachings on experiencing suffering on earth to achieve salvation in the afterlife. Romances, through their earthly suffering and rewards, provide 'secular' alternative narratives for discussing these religious ideas on suffering and reward, presenting them in a manner more attractive and accessible to their 'secular' audience. They were popular among the rising middle class, and were widely read as literacy spread among the laity. Romances became a means of 'public entertainment'⁸¹¹ of this new lay culture, in addition to their edifying role. They centre upon secular characters that have morally wrong or worldly

⁸¹¹ Ramsey, *Chivalric Romances*, p. 5.

pursuits, and they provide moral judgements through their representations, which are exemplary and edifying for the romance audience.

Suffering highlights several values in the victims. The female victims who resist suffering, but fail, realize that they cannot overcome suffering alone and it is impossible to avoid it, while resisting ones feel that they are empowered by their resistance. The male victims who resist suffering realize that they are more powerful than they think they are, and they may use violence to overcome or avenge their suffering. They also empathize with other sufferers and they are willing to challenge the suffering of other people, despite the fact that they are always vulnerable. Submissive males realize that they are weak and helpless despite physical and emotional resistance. The submissive male victims who suffer willingly for the sake of God or are punished by God because of their pride realize the unavoidability of suffering and the necessity for repentance, in addition to the sinful nature of earthly pleasures and 'power'. Both male and female victims are mainly victimized by those who seek to gain more power by weakening their victims. Unlike the female villains, who are ambitious, determined and powerful, the female victims are meek, easily abused and powerless, which makes them 'always already' potential victims. Unlike the female villains, the female victims' concern is 'how to survive in the short run' rather than 'how to survive overall'. Being weak justifies being someone's victim, just as being repentant justifies being a willing sufferer. Physical suffering is inseparable from psychological suffering for the female victims, regardless of their resistance or submission; yet, both are more painful for a resisting victim. Submission by a female victim is; therefore, both morally and theologically 'good', but is also cowardly, by the 'heroic' standards of the male.

The female sufferers generally emote if they resist suffering, especially when they question the reasons for their suffering, or display their anger to their victimizers. Those who submit suppress their emotions, considering that they have deserved suffering because of their sins, which directs their anger to themselves. The expression of emotions is a significant indicator of 'power' or lack of it. While a resisting female victim emotes to empower herself despite her failure to avoid suffering, a submissive female weakens herself against suffering, and she accepts failure to avoid it beforehand. On the other hand, male victims who resist suffering are physically strong, and they seek 'how to survive it all'. They also emote, but this is more than a verbal questioning, as the males make use of physical force to prevent or end suffering, displaying their physical 'power' more than verbal resistance. However, the submissive male sufferers (who mostly submit to divine ordeal) ignore resisting and emoting. Their submission is

not caused by the unavailability of suffering, but because they believe that they have deserved it.

Whilst male child victims are younger than the female ones and they are mostly exiled with their mothers when they are infants, the female children victimized by their fathers are mature and old enough to have lovers, husbands and even children who are exiled with them.⁸¹² Both fathers and mothers suffer from injury to or loss of their children, when the children are exiled or are abducted by beasts. A variety of beasts were associated with the saints in the Middle Ages. They were believed to be ‘given special abilities through God’s favour’ like saints,⁸¹³ and the beasts which abduct children in romances mostly take care of them rather than victimize.⁸¹⁴ However, separation from their children intensifies the victims’ suffering, making them more pathetic and arousing more audience sympathy. Generally, the male victims enter the story from a very early age; they experience hardships earlier than the females and successfully overcome them. On the other hand, the females enter the story and experience their misfortunes later than the male children. They exist always in relation to their father, lover or husband without any apparent social presence of their own. The male children are courageous even if they are very young, separated from their households and deprived of their noble status. They are exiled or abducted by their family members or strangers; however, they are cared for by beasts or strangers. They grow into powerful children who avenge the suffering of their parents. Like all male children, all female children are nobles. They suffer when they are older compared to the males, mostly exiled with their child by their father after a false accusation or forbidden love affair, and they suffer with their children until these are abducted. They are forced to marry unwanted suitors, separated from their lovers by their fathers, or imprisoned. Most are unaware of the reasons for their suffering, and they accept that ordeal is their fate.

The reasons for the suffering of the Saracen and the Jewish female victims are to some extent different from those of the Christians. Non-Christian females mostly suffer during wars against, and under siege by, Christians. Christian females are victimized by their household or by Christian or Saracen suitors, who make false accusations or threats. The non-Christian women are mostly represented as villains rather than victims;

⁸¹² See Christine Li Ju Tsai, ‘Parents and Children in Middle English Romance: Personal, National, and International Relations in the Thirteenth to Fifteenth Centuries’ (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Kent, 2006).

⁸¹³ Elizabeth Morrison, *Beasts: Factual and Fantastic* (Los Angeles: Getty, 2007), p. 45.

⁸¹⁴ Shahar, *Childhood*, pp. 67-8.

therefore, there are not detailed descriptions of them as sufferers, except for their murder, and their mourning in wars and sieges.

A victim's status in society dictates what kind of suffering he is subjected to. Romances focus on the suffering of noble people, who suffer mainly because of false accusations, treason or threats by other female and male nobles, except for those of a few commoners. On the other hand, the commoner female and male victims suffer from the destructive effects of wars and sieges (caused by noble men), and they are always pathetic, as they have no resistance to present them as heroic. Commoners of both sexes are presented as 'relievers' of suffering who either take care of the suffering noble infants, or give wise advice to the desperate victims on how to overcome their suffering.

None of the sufferers is directly victimized by God, because even those punished by God are sinful and mistaken. Therefore, all sufferers are victims of either themselves or of villainous people. God's punishment is only a warning, a reminder of self-realization, and the victim is rewarded with this awareness at the end of his ordeal. Apart from this, victims of villains also experience restoration after their misfortunes and all romances have happy endings, although each ending is achieved after a chain of ordeals to which they either resist or submit. Romance victims, regardless of their resistance or submission, suffer, and it is both the experience of suffering *and* the reaction of the victims on which the romance narrative focuses. These experiences and reactions are cautionary for romance audiences, because they provide them with probable real life circumstances and exemplary role models. Resistance against suffering is important to achieve relief; yet, it is also a reminder that 'innocent, patient, pious' victims are destined to relief at the end of their suffering through God's grace. The experience of ordeal is presented as the means for achieving a happy ending, while the resistance or submission of the victims adds a realistic aspect to the romances, as both the boldness and the weakness of mankind are presented through their representations, and the romance audience/readers have a chance to witness their own failures and bravery, represented through these bold and/or submissive sufferers.

Chapter Four: Suffering on the Way: Representations of Journey, Exile, Quest and Pilgrimage in Middle English Metrical Romances

In medieval romance a journey is a means of enforced and willing suffering, the process of realization of strength or weakness of a person. Its 'departure and return' pattern emphasizes the transformation of the hero by suffering, since whoever departs as weak mostly returns as powerful. A journey is 'a testing and re-forming of the inner man. [...] What begins as a journey of atonement becomes the vehicle for effecting the transformation and, indeed, the rebirth of the hero'.⁸¹⁵ During the journey, a victim is left on his or her own to survive and overcome difficulties by his or her patience and struggle. Therefore, the journey becomes their ordeal, through alienation from their household and society, in most cases after being deprived of their social identity and rank. The order disturbed by the journey in the hero's life is reaffirmed with the celebration of the return from the journey. Although journey initiates a 'departure' from family, friends, love, status and identity; these are all 'returned' by way of reward at the end of the experience, as the person who experiences the journey regains maturity.

Romance characters experience journeys, exiles, quests and pilgrimages as punishment, as an escape from suffering or as a means of imposing suffering. They can be either enforced or self-punishments, escapes or impositions. There are plenty of journeys, exiles, quests and pilgrimages in romances, in which most characters, situations and 'happenings' are similar, or repetitive. In relation to pain and suffering, this chapter examines why a person takes a journey, is exiled, goes on a quest or a pilgrimage, and how expulsion, banishment, or prolonged separation from one's homeland makes him suffer. What kind of changes does a traveller, pilgrim, exiled or questing person experience during and at the end of her experience? As Charbonneau and Cromwell also state, 'many characters in Middle English metrical romances are displaced figures [...] in disguise, in exile, in search of parents, in foreign lands, or on journeys seeking forgiveness'.⁸¹⁶ Their home territories lost and viewed with longing at their departure are regained at the end of their journeys.⁸¹⁷ These displacements appear as separation, alienation and seeking after redemption. Though suffering is inherent in experiencing them, they are also represented as opportunities for change and spiritual growth for the victims. Several of the travellers prefer disguised identities, because they

⁸¹⁵ Reiss, 'Romance', p. 118.

⁸¹⁶ Charbonneau and Cromwell, 'Gender and Identity', p. 97.

⁸¹⁷ Rosalind Field, 'The King over the Water: Exile-and-Return Revisited', in *Cultural Encounters*, ed. by Saunders, pp. 41-54 (p. 48).

‘have been so purified spiritually by their misfortunes that disguise and secrecy are really a manifestation of their desire for self-effacement and their willingness to renounce all worldly pleasure’.⁸¹⁸ The disguise is not a ‘narcissistic fantasy’ as Ramsey defines it,⁸¹⁹ but a means of providing them with ‘visual anonymity’,⁸²⁰ which makes their recognition impossible and allows them ‘to speak their mind’.⁸²¹ Disguise, indeed, highlights the hero’s inward virtues and redresses him with humility by stripping him off his sins.

Differences of gender, age, faith and class among travellers are significant factors in understanding the physical and psychological effects of journeys. Journey may be a metaphor, a process of growth or life itself. It may be undertaken for a religious purpose or as a search for chivalric adventures. Most travellers set off alone or with the guidance of friends into an unknown and mostly perilous land. There are always motivations which drive the traveller to begin his or her journey. As Ramsey says, ‘romance heroes and heroines begin to travel as soon as events at home have brought them into danger and [they] cease their travels only with the final solution of their problems’.⁸²²

In many Middle English metrical romances, journeys are presented either as a means of enforced⁸²³ or of self-punishment.⁸²⁴ The heroes achieve chivalric renown, spiritual self-realization and penance. This may emphasize either secular or spiritual aspects, or both. However, these journeys are filled with physical and emotional suffering for those in exile, on quest or on pilgrimage. While victims of enforced exiles suffer despite their innocence, self-exile victims actively *seek* suffering as punishment or remedy (or both) for their sinfulness. Although enforced exiles have secular reasons such as adultery, treason, pride, or disobedience, these can also be related to the Seven Deadly Sins, which makes them unacceptable according to Christian morality.

⁸¹⁸ Thomas McAlindon, ‘The Medieval Assimilation of Greek Romance: A Chapter in the History of a Narrative Type’, *The Yearbook of Research in English and American Literature*, 3 (1985), 23-56 (p. 46).

⁸¹⁹ Ramsey, *Chivalric Romances*, p. 55.

⁸²⁰ Bliss, *Naming and Namelessness*, p. 38.

⁸²¹ Weiss, ‘Exploitation of Ideas’, p. 50.

⁸²² Ramsey, *Chivalric Romances*, p. 184.

⁸²³ Amiloun’s exile in *Amis and Amiloun*, Emaré’s exile in *Emaré*, Blancheflour’s exile in *Floris and Blancheflour*, Horn’s exiles in *King Horn*, Florence’s exile in *Le Bone Florence of Rome*, the Empress’s exile in *Octovian*, Cristabell’s exile in *Sir Eglamour of Artois*, Balan’s exile in *Sir Ferumbras*, Sir Isumbras’s wife’s exile in *Sir Isumbras*, Heurodis’s exile in *Sir Orfeo*, Margaret’s exile in *Sir Tryamour*, Laban’s exile in *The Sowdone of Babylone*, Beves’s exile in *Beves of Hamptoun*, the Squire’s exile in *The Squire of Low Degree*, Desonell’s exile in *Torrent of Portyngale*.

⁸²⁴ Partonope’s exile in *Partonope of Blois*, Robert’s exile in *Robert of Cisyle*, Sir Amadace’s exile in *Sir Amadace*, Sir Eglamour’s exile in *Sir Eglamour of Artois*, Sir Gowther’s exile in *Sir Gowther*, Sir Isumbras’s exile in *Sir Isumbras*, Sir Orfeo’s exile in *Sir Orfeo*, Guy’s exile in the *Stanzaic Guy of Warwick*, Raymond’s exile in *The Romans of Partenay*, Torrent’s exile in *Torrent of Portyngale*.

Therefore, despite exile's being a secular punishment for the victim, it is also *ipso facto* a religious punishment for sinners and a process by means of which the victim may experience penance and self-awareness through the pain and suffering he experiences during exile. Therefore, all pain and suffering during exile in romances are didactic as they exemplify possible pains for a sinner and remind people that suffering is inevitable for all mortals, regardless of gender and class. At the same time, the importance of penance, piety and self-awareness are emphasized as requirements for restoration and forgiveness, not only in the extreme circumstances portrayed in the romance stories, but in everyday life. Hence, apart from being a process of punishment and suffering, exile turns suffering into an opportunity for achieving an earthly reward and God's forgiveness for those who 'suffer well'.

An exile, either on the sea or in the wilderness, may be forced out by a family member, either by a birth- or step-parent, a grandparent⁸²⁵ or a stranger.⁸²⁶ As Field points out, a victim is 'often unjustly exiled from his own lands and thereby from his rightful place in society'.⁸²⁷ In most cases, the exiled female is innocent and falsely accused. She suffers until found by a helpful stranger and is reunited with her family. Ladies, who are falsely accused of adultery, reject the attentions of their seducers,⁸²⁸ have lovers unwanted by their parents⁸²⁹ or disliked by their mothers-in-law,⁸³⁰ are exiled on the sea or in the wilderness by their fathers or husbands, mostly accompanied by their infant children.⁸³¹ They commonly suffer from desperation, loneliness,

⁸²⁵ Amiloun is exiled by his wife in *Amis and Amiloun*. Emaré is exiled by her father and mother-in-law in *Emaré*. The Empress is exiled by her mother-in-law in *Octovian*. Cristabell is exiled by her father in *Sir Eglamour of Artois*. Balan and Laban are dismissed from their castles by their daughters Floripas and sons Ferumbras (who cooperate with the French knights) in *Sir Ferumbras* and *The Sowdone of Babylone*. Margaret is exiled by her husband in *Sir Tryamour*. Desonell is exiled by her father in *Torrent of Portyngale*.

⁸²⁶ Blancheflour is exiled by Floris's father in *Floris and Blancheflour*. Horn is exiled by the Saracens in *King Horn*. Florence is exiled by Tyrry in *Le Bone Florence of Rome*. Sir Eglamour is exiled by Cristabell's father in *Sir Eglamour of Artois*. Heurodis is taken by force by the fairy king in *Sir Orfeo*. Sir Beves is exiled by King Edgar in *Beves of Hamptoun*. The Squire is sent to quest by the princess's father in *The Squire of Low Degree*.

⁸²⁷ Field, 'Romance in England', p. 161.

⁸²⁸ Margaret in *Sir Tryamour* is accused of adultery by her guardian knights.

⁸²⁹ Floris's father is against Floris's relationship with Blancheflour in *Floris and Blancheflour*. Cristabell's father is against Cristabell's relationship with Sir Eglamour in *Sir Eglamour of Artois*. The princess's father is against the princess's relationship with the Squire in *The Squire of Low Degree*. Desonell's father is against Desonell's relationship with Torrent in *Torrent of Portyngale*.

⁸³⁰ Emaré's mother-in-law in *Emaré* accuses Emaré of giving birth to a monstrous child. The Empress's mother-in-law in *Octovian* accuses the Empress of adultery.

⁸³¹ Emaré is exiled with her son in *Emaré*. The Empress is exiled with her twin sons in *Octovian*. Cristabell is exiled with her son in *Sir Eglamour of Artois*. Margaret is exiled with her son in her womb in *Sir Tryamour*. Desonell is exiled with her twin sons in *Torrent of Portyngale*.

hopelessness, and they care for their children (suffering with them) until found and cared for by nobles,⁸³² merchants, or commoners.⁸³³

Saunders points out that ‘the conventional action of the questing knight implies the intention of seeking adventure, honour and chivalry’.⁸³⁴ However, the experience of adventure is not the only motivation for a quest. In addition to a desire for achieving chivalric renown and spiritual renovation, a quest is sometimes undertaken to victimize non-Christians because of their faith, to relieve the suffering of a male or female victim who asks for help or to display worth to win a lady’s hand. Cooper defines quest as, ‘seeking, not finding; that placing of the emphasis, on the process rather than the end’.⁸³⁵ According to Cooper’s definition, the significance of this *process* is emphasized, which is full of suffering, rather than any happy resolution at the end. However, the ‘end’ of the quest is also significant since the conflicts are resolved, truths are revealed, the separated are united and order is restored.

Quests may be either enforced or self-motivated like exiles. However, as Field observes, the motivations of an exile and a quest are somehow different since ‘chivalric questers seek to escape or surpass the father, and in so doing often to defy him, exiled heirs seek to avenge and equal the father, and right the wrongs done to him’.⁸³⁶ On the other hand, like exiles, they take the traveller to unknown places; yet, unlike exiles, they introduce ordeals by battle against mortals and supernatural creatures. They function as the setting in which a male may prove his worth by chivalric skills, as well as depict his readiness to suffer despite his awareness of his own vulnerability. In that sense, quest and self-exile have a common function, as both experiences are motivated by a willingness to suffer in order to achieve earthly reputation⁸³⁷ or divine forgiveness.⁸³⁸

⁸³² Sir Kadore in Galys takes care of Emaré in *Emaré*. King Almair takes care of Horn in *King Horn*. The King of Jerusalem takes care of the Empress in *Octovian*. The King of Egypt, who is Cristabell’s uncle, takes care of Cristabell, her son Degrebelle is fostered by the King of Israel in *Sir Eglamour of Artois*. Sir Barnard takes care of Margaret in *Sir Tryamour*. The King of Jerusalem and the King of Greece take care of Desonell’s twin sons, and the King of Nazareth takes care of Desonell in *Torrent of Portyngale*.

⁸³³ The merchant Jordan takes care of Emaré in Rome in *Emaré*. The fisherman Grim takes care of Havelok in *The Lay of Havelok the Dane*. The butcher Clement buys the Empress’s son Florent from the outcasts, and takes care of him in *Octovian*.

⁸³⁴ Corinne J. Saunders, ‘Desire, Will and Intention in *Sir Beues of Hamtoun*’, in *The Matter of Identity*, ed. by Hardman, pp. 29-42 (p. 31).

⁸³⁵ Cooper, *The English Romance in Time*, p. 31.

⁸³⁶ Field, ‘King over the Water’, p. 42.

⁸³⁷ Ipomadon is on a quest to prove himself as the best knight in the world in *Ipomadon*. Alisaunder is on a quest to conquer the world in *Kyng Alisaunder*. Sir Degaré is on a quest to prove himself worthy enough to learn his father’s identity in *Sir Degaré*. Sir Eglamour is on a quest to prove himself worthy of Desonell’s hand in *Sir Eglamour of Artois*. Lybeaus Desconus is on a quest to release the Lady of Synadowne in *Lybeaus Desconus*. Sir Tryamour is on a quest to learn his father’s identity in *Sir Tryamour*. The Squire is on a quest to prove he is worthy of the princess’s hand in *The Squire of Low Degree*. Torrent is on a quest to prove he is worthy of Desonell’s hand in *Torrent of Portyngale*.

An exile may be seen as a 'quest' with the possibility of adventure, whilst the quest may be seen as an 'exile', with the possibility of self-realization, redemption and salvation. Although there is no exile in the romance, the same experience of self-realization is achieved by Robert in *Robert of Cisyle*, after he is replaced by an angel king until he acknowledges his pride and repents. Similarly, King Richard in *Richard Coer de Lyon* and King Alisaunder in *Kyng Alisaunder* achieve a similar self-awareness on their quests to foreign lands. They consider themselves as invincible rulers; yet, after experiencing suffering in foreign lands both rulers realize their vulnerability.

Contrary to enforced exile and quest, the decision to go on pilgrimage in romance is always a self-decision. In the Middle Ages, penitential pilgrimage was regarded as a journey to compensate for one's own sins,⁸³⁹ and a 'detachment from the world around' was a prerequisite for a spiritual growth.⁸⁴⁰ There were shrines all over Europe where pilgrims might make offerings, ask for penance, expiate their sins or fulfil vows,⁸⁴¹ which pilgrims visited after dangerous voyages involving 'storm, wrecks, seizure by the enemy in time of war, and piracy'.⁸⁴² In romances, a pilgrim sets off in order that God will forgive his sins, and he will achieve a spiritual renewal through physical suffering. He leaves behind his earthly pleasures, yields to suffering on earth in order to be cleansed of his sins. Pilgrims are either knights who repent of ignoring God whilst indulging in chivalric activities,⁸⁴³ or noble males who are sorry for their sins of pride and cruelty.⁸⁴⁴ Pilgrimage provides them with an opportunity to be cleansed of their sins, whilst functioning as a reminder to the audience that salvation and exemption from suffering (or mitigation of suffering) after death is possible, given repentance and willingness to suffer on earth for the sake of God.

⁸³⁸ Sir Owain visits Purgatory before his death, in order to cleanse his soul in *Sir Owain*. Guy goes on pilgrimage, in order to cleanse himself of his sin of ignorance of God in the *Stanzaic Guy of Warwick*.

⁸³⁹ Diana Webb, *Pilgrims and Pilgrimage in the Medieval West* (London: Tauris, 2001), p. 54.

⁸⁴⁰ Dee Dyas, *Pilgrimage in Medieval English Literature, 700-1500* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2001), p. 205.

⁸⁴¹ Jean J. Jusserand, *English Wayfaring Life in the Middle Ages*, trans. by Lucy Toulmin Smith (London: Methuen, 1961), p. 367.

⁸⁴² Wendy R. Childs, 'The Perils, or Otherwise, of Maritime Pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela in the Fifteenth Century', in *Pilgrimage Explored*, ed. by J. Stopford (Woodbridge: York Medieval Press, 1999), pp. 123-43 (p. 125).

⁸⁴³ Guy repents of ignoring God while fighting for chivalric renown in the *Stanzaic Guy of Warwick*.

⁸⁴⁴ Emaré's father repents of his incestuous desire for Emaré in *Emaré*. Sir Gowther repents of being a cruel ruler and son in *Sir Gowther*. Sir Owain repents of his sins in *Sir Owain*. Sir Isumbras repents of his pride in *Sir Isumbras*. Robert repents of his pride in *Robert of Cisyle*. Beves repents of his sins in *Beves of Hamptoun*.

Travel was an arduous and at times dangerous undertaking, a fact which is often recalled by medieval texts.⁸⁴⁵ The forest and the sea are the destinations for enforced and self-exiles, whilst the forest and unknown lands are the usual terrain chosen by a questing knight.⁸⁴⁶ They are ‘equivalent symbols for separation, chance and danger’.⁸⁴⁷ Especially for a lover, the forest’s untamed nature reflects his own emotional disturbance, ‘where he hopes to find a wild landscape in harmony with emotional chaos’.⁸⁴⁸ The sea, on the other hand, was regarded as the arbiter of justice in the Middle Ages; therefore, criminals and even presumed offenders were punished by setting them adrift in a boat equipped with only the most necessary provisions.⁸⁴⁹ Exposure at sea was believed to put their fate in the hands of God.⁸⁵⁰

For someone forced into exile, the forest is hostile, fearful and a place of suffering away from society. It is a boundless space full of wild animals and dangers, far away from comfort and protection. On the other hand, it is an adventurous place for a knight who is willingly on quest. It is also a silent retreat for a penitent who exiles himself away from worldly pleasures in order to achieve divine salvation. An errant knight wanders in the hostile wilderness to suffer willingly, so that he can be forgiven by God and ‘refine’ himself; or lovers escaping from unwanted suitors find refuge in its silence and vastness. As Saunders suggests:

The definition of the forest as uncultivated landscape, rather than simply as woodland, allowed the writers of the Middle Ages to equate easily the forest of their own times and the desert of the Bible. This desert landscape carried with it specific associations of solitude and divine inspiration which were to be appropriated as part of the forest’s symbolism in the romances.⁸⁵¹

The forest is an archetypal romance landscape with a dichotomy of danger and security. It is a place of suffering where female victims are deprived of their noble identities, comfort and protection, food and drink; on the other hand, the forest, which seems hostile and insecure, offers them a protection which they lack in their households.

⁸⁴⁵ See Robert Allen Rouse, ‘The Peace of the Roads: Authority and *Auctoritas* in Medieval Romance’, in *Boundaries*, ed. by Cartlidge, pp. 115-27.

⁸⁴⁶ The forest is the setting of enforced exile in *Amis and Amiloun*, *Le Bone Florence of Rome*, *Octavian*. The sea is the setting of enforced exile in *Emaré*, *King Horn*, *Sir Tryamour*, *Torrent of Portyngale*. The forest is the setting of self-exile in *Sir Amadace*, *Sir Isumbras*, *Sir Orfeo*. The Holy Land is the setting of self-exile in *Sir Eglamour of Artois*, the *Stanzaic Guy of Warwick*.

⁸⁴⁷ Field, ‘King over the Water’, p. 49.

⁸⁴⁸ Deirdre Kessel-Brown, ‘The Emotional Landscape of the Forest in the Mediaeval Love Lament’, *Medium Ævum*, 59.2 (1990), 228-47 (p. 229).

⁸⁴⁹ Sebastian I. Sobekki, *The Sea and Medieval English Literature* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2008), p. 100.

⁸⁵⁰ Cooper, *The English Romance in Time*, p. 108.

⁸⁵¹ Corinne J. Saunders, *The Forest of Medieval Romance* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1993), p. 10.

Therefore, '[t]he forest becomes a kind of alternative courtly world, a space in which wishes materialize and the ideal is possible'.⁸⁵²

In addition to a forest, exiled ladies experience the same insecurity and suffering when they are exiled on the sea, because they are left to starve in its boundlessness without hope of seeing the land again. A lady exiled in a rudderless boat is left to the judgement and mercy of God, and survives by divine protection because she is innocent of the accusation against her. Despite her innocence, suffering is inevitable for her on the way to the foreign land where she will be washed ashore. Sailing away is a process of physical and emotional suffering and her survival is like her rebirth, as she begins a new life, which (as in the forest) is safer than in her household. Although she has been victimized by her family members, and she suffers in the wilderness or on the sea, both the forest and the sea she initially considers as hostile turn out to offer security, since she finds protection and happiness among strangers at the end of her voyage. Although they are left helpless at the mercy of the sea, exile empowers female victims who submit to this ordeal. As Osborn points out:

Although these stories share with the male romance the theme of a journey into the wilderness, there is no quest as such and no dragon to be slain. Instead, the heroine is buffeted by the whims of fate and the whims of any man along the way who is attracted to her. [...] Strengthened by their optimism, faith, and staunch determination, these women who are victims of their male relatives in the beginning achieve control over their lives by the end; they become the authors of their own life stories.⁸⁵³

Ladies are falsely accused by selfish, jealous, treacherous mothers-in-law, fathers or husbands in their household and exiled as punishment for their presumed and 'assumed' sins. Unlike their male counterparts who exile themselves willingly, female victims are always forced into exile by their family members. Emaré experiences exile twice, the former by her father and the latter by her mother-in-law. As Putter says, the double exile serves to resolve the story, since 'the plot goes into reverse: separated first from her father and then from her husband, Emaré is reunited first with her husband and then with her father'.⁸⁵⁴ First, she is exiled on the sea alone, without food and drink because of her rejection of her father's incestuous attempts on her virginity. Robson suggests that Emaré may have an incestuous desire for her father and her exile is a means of punishing herself for her illicit desire as well as 'making herself an even more desirable

⁸⁵² Saunders, *Forest*, p. 145.

⁸⁵³ Osborn, *Romancing the Goddess*, p. 18.

⁸⁵⁴ Ad Putter, 'The Narrative Logic of *Emaré*', in *Spirit*, ed. by Putter and Gilbert, pp. 157-80 (p. 163).

partner because of her obedience to the ultimate male authority'.⁸⁵⁵ However, the romance lacks any hint of her incestuous feelings for her father. On the contrary, she wisely rejects it and submits to the punishment of her rejection. She is driven by strong wind and rainstorms, in distress for more than seven nights until she arrives in Galys, where she is found by the King's steward Sir Kadore, almost unconscious in her boat. Emaré suffers on the sea again when she is exiled by her mother-in-law, who falsely accuses her of giving birth to a monstrous child. She curses the sea for buffeting her although she is innocent:

And sayde, 'Myghth Y onus gete lond,
Of the watur that ys so stronge,
By northe or by sowthe,
Wele owth Y to warye the, see,
I have myche shame yn the!'⁸⁵⁶

Yet, she is also aware of her desperation and prays to the Virgin Mary and to Jesus. She believes that her misfortunes result from her sinfulness. When hunger is about to drive her crazy, she is driven to Rome and found by a merchant. In both exiles, suffering alone in desperation provides Emaré with an arena in which she can be seen to rely on her faith to end, and to some extent explain, her suffering. Ferrante points out that medieval women had limited power over their own lives; therefore, 'women in medieval literature and sometimes in real life find subtle or hidden ways to exercise such power [...] to spin out fictions which suit them better than their reality, fictions by which they can, or hope to, control reality'.⁸⁵⁷ Likewise, wanting to empower herself after she has been exiled, Emaré disguises her nobility by renaming herself as Egare in her first exile and Egarye in her second one:

He sayde, 'What hette ye, fayr ladye?'
'Lord,' she sayde, 'Y hette Egarye,
That lye her yn drede.'⁸⁵⁸

Changing her 'name' is the only way in which she can respond to the challenges, but also a means of self-protection, as she lacks the physical power to defend herself. It provides her with a better way of saying that she will not submit to what has happened

⁸⁵⁵ Margaret Robson, 'Cloaking Desire: Re-reading *Emaré*', in *Romance Reading*, ed. by Fellows and others, pp. 64-76 (p. 72).

⁸⁵⁶ *Six Middle English Romances*, ed. by Mills, 64. 664-8.

⁸⁵⁷ Joan M. Ferrante, 'Public Postures and Private Maneuvers: Roles Medieval Women Play', in *Women and Power in the Middle Ages*, ed. by Mary Erler and Maryanne Kowaleski (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1988), pp. 213-29 (p. 213).

⁸⁵⁸ *Six Middle English Romances*, ed. by Mills, 65. 703-5.

to her.⁸⁵⁹ In this respect, Emaré recalls pilgrims in disguise; yet, she is different from them; her name is ‘disguised’ so that she forgets her past suffering and avoids more of it.

Similar to Emaré’s inevitable submission to her suffering, the Empress in *Octovian* submits to her ordeal, as she believes that her suffering is ordained by God in return for her sins. She is exiled in the wilderness by her husband after her mother-in-law falsely accuses her of adultery. She consoles herself by saying prayers after her twin sons are abducted by beasts, and then sails to the Holy Land to ask for God’s forgiveness. Leigh Ann Craig states that there were not many female pilgrims in the Middle Ages because ‘women were believed to have more natural inclination toward misbehaviour than men, they were doubly suspect as pilgrims. This suspicion was reinforced by a general expectation that women should lead private and immobile lives’.⁸⁶⁰ The Empress’s pilgrimage is a self-imposed one, since she believes that she is sinful after she suffers in exile. The misfortunes she encounters convince her that she is a sinner and has to repent to relieve her pain. In *Le Bone Florence of Rome*, Florence also maintains her trust in God’s help. She keeps on praying and preserves her chastity when she is abducted by her husband’s brother Miles, and when she is exiled by Lord Tyrry, after being falsely accused by a seducer knight of murdering Tyrry’s daughter.

Unlike ladies exiled after they are falsely accused, Desonell in *Torrent of Portyngale* is exiled by her father Calamond after she gives birth to her lover Torrent’s twin sons Leobertus and Antony. She survives on the sea with her children, lands on a foreign shore, but her twins are abducted by wild beasts. She curses the beasts:

‘Byrdus and bestis, aye woo ye be!
Alone ye haue lefte me,
My children ye have slone.’⁸⁶¹

Even if she is separated from her children, she lives in a foreign court for years until her reunion with them and Torrent. Cristabell in *Sir Eglamour of Artois* experiences the same suffering as Desonell after her separation from her lover Eglamour, as a result of her father Sir Prynsamour’s rejection of their affair. Her father exiles her with her son in a rudderless boat without food and drink. After six days of drifting, they reach Egypt, but her son is abducted by a griffin. Blancheflour in *Floris and Blancheflour* is exiled

⁸⁵⁹ Putter, ‘Narrative Logic’, pp. 171-2.

⁸⁶⁰ Leigh Ann Craig, *Wandering Women and Holy Matrons: Women as Pilgrims in the Later Middle Ages* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), p. 2.

⁸⁶¹ *Torrent of Portyngale*, ed. by E. Adam, EETS e.s., 51 (London: Trübner, 1887), p. 70, lines 2017-9. All references are to this edition, cited by Adam’s page and line number.

by her lover Floris's father, who does not approve of their relationship. In fact, her exile saves her life, because she would have been beheaded if she had not been sold to merchants sailing to Babylone. Unlike exiled ladies who are falsely accused by household members and exiled with their children, Queen Margaret in *Sir Tryamour* is accompanied by Sir Roger (who is an old knight loyal to King Ardus) when she is exiled on the sea by her husband King Ardus. Although Sir Roger comforts her until he is killed by Marrok, Margaret mourns after his death and in pain gives birth to her child alone in the wilderness.

The exiled lady in *Sir Isumbras* is strong, and does not bemoan her suffering or submit to it by thinking that she has deserved it. Sir Isumbras's wife's loyalty to her husband makes her stronger against the wicked Saracen Sultan they meet in exile. She accompanies her husband willingly when he exiles himself after God imposes suffering because of his pride. She consoles her desperate husband until she is forced to leave with the Saracen Sultan, who humiliates her husband by making him sell her to him. She is stronger than her husband when they starve for six days, two of their three children are abducted by beasts, and even after she is bought by the Saracen Sultan. She consoles her husband, gives him a ring to secure their reunion before being separated from him, and encourages him to empower himself:

But in what londe that I am inne,
Fonde the thyder forto wyne:
The hethen kyng shall ye slo;
And by crowned kyng of that londe,
And evury manne bowe to your hande;
So shall ye kevere your wo.⁸⁶²

Thus, she uses her verbal power to motivate her husband, since she is aware that both she and her husband lack physical power. It is thanks to her that a happy ending is ultimately made possible.

It is noticeable that the most common fate of exiled ladies is to be falsely accused of adultery by their family members, to be exiled with their children on the sea in a rudderless boat, starve, pray to God for survival, to be separated from their children when they arrive in a foreign land after the children's abduction by wild beasts. They are then found and cared for by noble men until they are reunited with their lovers, husbands and children. Although they are separated from their households through exile

⁸⁶² *Six Middle English Romances*, ed. by Mills, 134. 331-6.

and they suffer anxiety of survival on the sea, exile is also a means of relief for them. In contrast with their vulnerability, humiliation and victimization in the family households which they have left (usually temporarily) behind, despite their suffering on the sea and in the wilderness, exiled ladies find comfort in exiled lands, and they are treated with respect until they are reunited with their abducted children, lovers and husbands, after their innocence has been revealed, and their victimizers are either punished or repent.

Unlike the ladies, males forced into exile are usually expelled as a form of punishment for alleged wicked actions or violence. They may also be victims of the anxieties of others about the possibility of future violence. In *King Horn*, Horn is on a thin line between his mastery over his environment and victimization by it,⁸⁶³ and he experiences both through his exiles and his empowerment by them. First, when he is a child, Horn is cast adrift on the sea by Saracens who murder his father so that Horn will not avenge his death. He suffers from starvation on a rudderless boat with twelve boys until they reach land, and he is cared for by King Almair. His rescue from the sea is interpreted as ‘a vindication of Christianity against the distorted Islam’ by Sebastian I. Sobecki;⁸⁶⁴ yet, it is, indeed, the first experience which initiates a chain of ordeals in Horn’s life. Later on, Horn is exiled by Almair after his friend Fikenhild falsely accuses him of adultery with Almair’s daughter Rymenhild:

Fykenhild hadde envye
 And sede thes folye:
 ‘Aylmar, ich thee warne
 Horn thee wule berne:
 Ich herde whar he sede,
 And his swerd forth leide,
 To bringe thee of lyve,
 And take Rymenhild to wyve.⁸⁶⁵

As Fewster observes ‘[w]hile on the first part, Horn’s adventures are always with a social group, in the second his travels are alone. [...] First he proves his worth with the support of a group, then by himself’.⁸⁶⁶ Both exiles are important for Horn’s becoming mature in character and proving his worth in terms of his chivalry, in addition to giving him an opportunity to fight to save suffering nobles and to avenge his father’s murder. Although he is a vulnerable child when he is first exiled, he is a determined and strong

⁸⁶³ De, ‘Patterns of Coherence’, p. 154.

⁸⁶⁴ Sobecki, *Sea*, p. 101.

⁸⁶⁵ *Four Romances*, ed. by Herzman, Drake and Salisbury, 34-5. 691-8.

⁸⁶⁶ Fewster, *Traditionality and Genre*, p. 14.

knight in his second exile and avenges his suffering, thus realizing the fears of the Saracens who caused the initial exile.

Although Horn gains maturity and chivalric renown after he is forced into exile and he is empowered through his suffering, Generydes in *Generydes* seeks these things by exiling himself from his father King Auferius's court. Although he seeks safety from family hostility along with chivalric adventures to prove his worth as a knight, he is again falsely accused of dishonouring the Sultan he serves by fornicating with his daughter, and imprisoned. Although he suffers from false accusations and imprisonment during his exiles, Generydes develops his chivalric skills and saves noble men in need of help. In *Beves of Hamptoun*, Beves exiles himself – extraordinarily – in order to save his horse from death after King Edgar's son is kicked and killed by the horse, Arundel. This happens after the King's son attempts to untie and take Arundel, when Beves refuses to offer him the horse as a gift. The King's barons decide to kill the horse, but Beves exiles himself from England with his wife Josian to compensate for the sentence, choosing to suffer instead of witnessing his horse's death.⁸⁶⁷ With his sacrifice, Beves becomes a foil to the villains who abuse their victims' trust, and proves that loyalty and love need sacrifice without expecting anything in return, as in case of his suffering instead of his horse.

Males exiling themselves search for means of compensating for their desperation; therefore, they psychologically relieve their own suffering whilst physically ending the suffering of other victims, or by victimizing villains, as happens in *Torrent of Portyngale*. Torrent thinks that he is responsible for his lover Desonell's exile with their children, because he has not ended his affair with her, despite her father's disapproval; therefore, he exiles himself to suffer like her and to compensate for his grief by victimizing heathens in the Holy Land. Like Torrent, who is angry with himself and thinks he deserves suffering, Partonope in *Partonope of Blois* blames himself for his lover Melior's suffering after he betrays her, so he exiles himself in the wilderness to suffer and die in repentance. He avoids food and drink, ignores bodily care, rides alone among serpents and lions, refuses consolation and seeks for more suffering and death:

In shorte tyme God wole send me

⁸⁶⁷ This exploits the trope of the hero/horse relationship in romance in order to tie the 'person' of the hero to the geographical locality. Through his surrogate, the horse, Beves becomes personally associated with the place, in this case Arundel in West Sussex. See Echard, 'Insular Romance', pp. 160-80. Echard points out that the horse becomes the origin of Arundel the town, and 'in the eighteenth century, tourists were still visiting Arundel Castle to see Bevis's sword' (pp. 165-7).

More diseace þen I haue yite.
 For I haue wele deserved it.
 Of foule and Evyll deþe to dey
 I haue deserved, and þerfore I
 Desyre in no wise to haue comforte,
 Ne to myn eace neuer make resorte.
 Dethe I seke might I hym fynde.⁸⁶⁸

Despite Torrent and Partonope's willingness to suffer through exiling themselves to compensate for their loss, the motivation for self-exile in *Sir Orfeo* is ambiguous, but has been implied to be Orfeo's self-punishment after his failure to prevent his wife's being taken by the fairy king.⁸⁶⁹ Saunders suggests that the heroine raped by a fairy knight in *Sir Degaré* and Heurodis in *Sir Orfeo* suffer similarly because of their feeling 'secure' in their orchards, which are microcosms of the 'forest full of perils':

In both *Sir Orfeo* and *Sir Degaré* the characters manifest physically the violation which they have suffered through the cruelty of the faery world. Both have been deceived by their trust of the superficial tranquillity of their respective settings: they are unaware of the threat of the otherworld, and are thus 'deflowered' even within the flower-filled forest and orchard.⁸⁷⁰

After Heurodis's abduction from their 'insecure' orchard which is supposed to be safe as it is under her husband's control, Sir Orfeo retreats into a forest in the guise of a minstrel to live in poverty, away from his feudal and marital responsibilities. As Amanda Hopkins states, 'female vulnerability, defined by threats and violence, acts as a catalyst, changing the circumstances of the narratives and the lives of the protagonists'.⁸⁷¹ In this respect, Heurodis's abduction motivates Sir Orfeo to exile himself and suffer in the forest for ten years. Although he is a king, in the wilderness his

⁸⁶⁸ *The Middle-English Versions*, ed. by Bödtker, 288. 7330-7.

⁸⁶⁹ For the Boethian version of the story see Mortimer J. Donovan, 'Herodis in the Auchinleck *Sir Orfeo*', *Medium Ævum*, 27 (1958), 162-5 (especially p. 162). For an investigation of the story's classical origin see Robert Graves, *The Greek Myths* (Edinburgh: Penguin, 1955). The story of Orfeo and his wife Heurodis was a well-known story in the Middle Ages. It was told by the classical writers Virgil, Ovid and Boethius, apart from its appearance in the Celtic myths. The classical story shares the same plot of 'ordeals' with the romance version, except for the ending which excludes the happy reunion of the couple. In that respect, contrary to the classical story which lacks the Christian idea of ordeal which is rewarded after experiencing it submissively, the romance version emphasizes the significant function of suffering as a means of restoration and reward. Graves states that, in its classical version, Eurydice (Heurodis) follows Orpheus's music, yet when Orpheus turns to see whether she is following him, she is lost forever (pp. 111-2).

⁸⁷⁰ Saunders, *Forest*, p. 136.

⁸⁷¹ Amanda Hopkins, 'Female Vulnerability as Catalyst in the Middle English Breton Lays', in *The Matter of Identity*, ed. by Hardman, pp. 43-58 (p. 57).

body dwindles away because of hardships, he is covered with leaves and grass, sits with the snakes, digs to find food from roots, and feeds on roots and bark:

Al his bodi was oway dwine
 For missays, and al to-chine.
 Lord! who may telle the sore
 This king sufferd ten yere and more?⁸⁷²

Rather than seeking his wife, Orfeo travels nowhere specifically, but chooses to suffer patiently in the wilderness until he meets her unexpectedly and determines to get her back from the fairy king. It is also a means of acknowledging his own failings as a husband and as a ruler. In thirteenth-century England the abduction of a woman (*raptus*) was accepted as a crime against male property rather than a crime against the female person.⁸⁷³ Therefore, it was a matter of intruding into a man's authority to challenge and defeat him. Orfeo is obliged to suffer for his failure to prevent this intrusion. Heurodis's abduction enables Orfeo's regeneration and regaining of his status, since it allows him to resume his political status as king.⁸⁷⁴

Even if Spearing suggests that 'gendered roles in the story might have been reversed: Orfeo might have been carried off by the fairies, and Heurodis might have brought him back',⁸⁷⁵ there is no evidence in the texts that Orfeo might have been abducted. Rather, he is the one who suffers after Heurodis's abduction. He is willing to suffer the same ordeal with Heurodis, so he exiles himself. As Pearsall points out, 'Orfeo is attempting to repeat, as far as he can, his wife's experience, so that he may, as far as he can, share it'.⁸⁷⁶ His retreat into the wilderness is 'related to his desire to be always with Heurodis' even if he cannot join her.⁸⁷⁷ He shares Heurodis's ordeal by wandering in the wilderness, which eventually brings about his recovery.⁸⁷⁸ The forest turns out to be a place of expiation or redemption through suffering.⁸⁷⁹ Unlike other romance heroes, Orfeo does not strive to recover his wife and return to his court when

⁸⁷² *The Middle English Breton Lays*, ed. by Laskaya and Salisbury, 32. 261-4.

⁸⁷³ Kathryn Gravdal, 'Chrétien de Troyes, Gratian, and the Medieval Romance of Sexual Violence', *Signs*, 17.3 (1992), 558-85 (p. 566); Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, *Saints' Lives and Women's Literary Culture, c.1150-1300: Virginité and its Authorization* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 100.

⁸⁷⁴ Falk, 'Son of Orfeo', p. 255.

⁸⁷⁵ Spearing, 'Sir Orfeo', p. 266.

⁸⁷⁶ Derek Pearsall, 'Madness in *Sir Orfeo*', in *Romance Reading*, ed. by Fellows and others, pp. 51-63 (p. 56).

⁸⁷⁷ Kenneth R. R. Gros Louis, 'The Significance of Sir Orfeo's Self-Exile', *The Review of English Studies*, n.s., 18.71 (1967), 245-52 (pp. 248-9).

⁸⁷⁸ Thomas Honegger, 'Fantasy, Escape, Recovery, and Consolation in *Sir Orfeo*: The Medieval Foundations of Tolkienian Fantasy', *Tolkien Studies*, 7 (2010), 117-36 (pp. 122-3).

⁸⁷⁹ Kessel-Brown, 'Emotional Landscape', p. 231.

he exiles himself. As Dominique Battles states, Orfeo ‘lives entirely in the past’.⁸⁸⁰ He suffers because of his past failure in physical resistance to the fairy king, which has ended in Heurodis’s abduction. Therefore, he resigns himself to ‘passive endurance’.⁸⁸¹ However, his passive endurance is also ‘heroic’ despite its lacking physical resistance, since he has no formidable opponent but he faces, in James Wade’s words, ‘unknowableness of all he has encountered’⁸⁸² - which is much more challenging. Since Orfeo abstains from physical resistance after his failure to prevent Heurodis’s abduction, the recovery of Heurodis turns upon a short ‘battle of wits between her captor and her husband’.⁸⁸³

On the other hand, Orfeo’s journey to the fairy land and his harping which is the allegorical key to fairy land, allegorically implies Christ’s leaving paradise to save the suffering souls by harrowing hell.⁸⁸⁴ Furthermore, both Orfeo’s submission to Heurodis’s absence and his suffering unquestioningly in exile symbolically remind human beings of the unavoidability of death, and their helplessness in the face of this divine ordeal, as well as the fact that they must ‘suffer well’ to have divine forgiveness. Orfeo’s self-exile is ‘the process of restoration, penetrating the paper-thin barrier between this world and that other which so resembles it’.⁸⁸⁵ His self-exile teaches him to be obedient to fate and to the sudden reversal of fortune, and he becomes aware of ‘the possibility of the miraculous in everyday life’.⁸⁸⁶ Although the romance lacks any direct Christian teaching, the ideas of the helplessness in case of loss, the significance of self-realization as means of restoration and salvation, ‘gain’ after ‘pain’ are emphasized through Orfeo’s experience, which also recalls the protagonist’s ordeal in the Book of Job.⁸⁸⁷ It is also a note of how the mighty can fall, as in the case of King David, another gifted harpist like Orfeo.⁸⁸⁸

⁸⁸⁰ Dominique Battles, ‘*Sir Orfeo* and English Identity’, *Studies in Philology*, 107.2 (2010), 179-211 (p. 198).

⁸⁸¹ Lewis J. Owen, ‘The Recognition Scene in *Sir Orfeo*’, *Medium Ævum*, 40 (1971), 249-53 (p. 251).

⁸⁸² James Wade, *Fairies in Medieval Romance* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), p. 80.

⁸⁸³ Dorena Allen, ‘Orpheus and Orfeo: The Dead and the *Taken*’, *Medium Ævum*, 33.2 (1964), 102-11 (pp. 110-1).

⁸⁸⁴ David L. Jeffrey, ‘The Exiled King: *Sir Orfeo*’s Harp and the Second Death of Eurydice’, *Mosaic*, 9.2 (1976), 45-60 (pp. 51-2).

⁸⁸⁵ Barron, *English Medieval Romance*, p. 188.

⁸⁸⁶ Felicity Riddy, ‘The Uses of the Past in *Sir Orfeo*’, *The Yearbook of English Studies*, 6 (1976), 5-15 (p. 14).

⁸⁸⁷ Orfeo’s suffering recalls the suffering of Job in the Book of Job, in the Old Testament, since both men suffer without any particular reason, submit to their ordeal and regain their loss at the end of their ordeal. In the Book of Job, ‘There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil.’ (Job 1. 1). Satan challenges God to punish Job. In one day, he loses his livestock, his servants and ten children die. Rather than blaming God for his misfortunes, Job questions himself. ‘Teach me, and I will hold my tongue: and cause me to understand wherein I have erred.’ (Job 6. 24). Job wants to confront God and complain about his suffering, but ‘On

Sir Gowther's self-exile is a means of moral and social transformation through ordeal. It enables his recovery from the burden of his sinful birth and the sins he has committed as a cruel ruler, which are connected to his sinful birth. As Radulescu suggests:

Gowther's penitential journey can be read as atonement for his 'two' fathers' sins. The first is the devil's sin of pride, which evidently works in his son, the other is the spiritual blindness of the Duke, who is unable to recognize his weak governance, evident both in not producing an heir, and in later failing to control the one produced by his wife.⁸⁸⁹

Sir Gowther exiles himself to gain forgiveness for his sins, and suffers willingly in order to compensate for his being a tyrannical ruler and a disobedient son. His beastly appetite for violence is ironically replaced by a beastly humiliation when he is fed by dogs. The necessity of redemption is also stressed by the Pope:

Thou eyt no meyt bot that thou revus of howndus mothe,
 Cum thy body within;
 Ne no worde speke for evyll ne gud,
 Or thou reydé tokyn have fro God
 That forgyfyn is thi syn.⁸⁹⁰

Gowther suffers from poverty and muteness, and isolates himself from society and pleasures until he is forgiven by God and restores his status.

The idea that achieving salvation is possible only through experiencing suffering is also the motivation of Sir Owain's quest. Sir Owain's journey through Purgatory is exceptional, since the majority of visits to the otherworld in the Christian tradition are

the left hand, where he doth work, but I cannot behold him: he hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see him.' (Job 23. 10). Job and his friends have a theological discussion of the reasons for suffering. Job's friend Elihu explains that physical sufferings provide the sufferers with an opportunity to realize happiness. 'He is chastened also with pain upon his bed, and the multitude of his bones with strong pain.' (Job 33. 19). 'He shall pray unto God, and he will be favourable to unto him: and he shall see his face with joy: for he will render unto man his righteousness.' (Job 33. 26). Finally, God interrupts and questions Job to make Job realize how little he knows about Him. 'And, the LORD turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends: also the LORD gave Job twice as much as he had before.' (Job 42. 10).

⁸⁸⁸ The fairy king who initiates Sir Orfeo's misfortunes recalls the evil spirit which captures Saul, while Orfeo resembles David who helps him to overcome it through his harp playing as in the Old Testament 1 Samuel 16. 14-23. 'But the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD troubled him.' (1 Samuel 16. 14). David is presented as a harpist, whose playing dismisses evil spirits and provides comfort. When Saul's soul is troubled by an evil spirit, he asks for David's help to save him: 'And it came to pass, when the evil spirit from God was upon Saul, that David took an harp, and played with his hand: so Saul was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him.' (1 Samuel 16. 23).

⁸⁸⁹ Radulescu, 'Pious Middle English Romances', p. 355.

⁸⁹⁰ *Six Middle English Romances*, ed. by Mills, 156. 293-7.

experienced by monks or other ‘religious’ persons.⁸⁹¹ In *Sir Owain*, Sir Owain is a knight on a quest from St. Patrick’s Hall to Purgatory to witness the ‘afterlife’ suffering when still alive, so that he can avoid them after his death. Purgatory is believed to be the place where Christian souls can repent of their sins before they reach heaven. Therefore, Purgatory offers hope to fallible Christians to purge their souls so that they will be accepted into heaven.⁸⁹²

In the romance, Sir Owain realizes his weakness against the temptations of the fiends and Satan when he sees sinful souls suffering in torment. Purgatory is hostile and full of suffering, but is also a place of warning for Sir Owain, reminding him of the worthlessness of the earthly values and of the inevitability of suffering for sins committed before death. On his quest, Sir Owain seeks spiritual renewal by fighting against temptations, just like the knights fighting against Saracens, monsters and other enemies, and realizes the importance of being a better Christian rather than being a better knight (in chivalric terms). The pain and suffering he witnesses in Purgatory are narrated in great detail as warnings to the romance audiences, so that they avoid the Seven Deadly Sins. Sir Owain sees the Tree of Life from which Adam and Eve ate an apple, and as a result were expelled from Paradise, leading to the beginning of suffering on Earth. Adam and Eve’s expulsion from heaven, the existence of suffering on earth because of their disobedience to God’s commandment, and their suffering in hell until Christ saves them (as a result of the Harrowing of Hell)⁸⁹³ are narrated in the romance to remind the audience of Christ’s role as saviour of humankind, despite the sinfulness of human beings. The image of Christ as ‘a victorious warrior-king thus an essential component of the Harrowing of Hell’⁸⁹⁴ is replaced in the romance with Sir Owain’s journey into Purgatory to save himself from ordeals in the afterlife.

Christian virtues and morals, particularly the importance of avoiding sin in order to avoid suffering, are emphasized through Sir Owain’s quest. It is Christianity *per se* which is praised in Sir Otuel’s quest in *The Romance of Otuel*. Although Sir Otuel is the enemy of the Christians before his conversion, he quests against Saracens after he converts, in order to glorify the Christian faith. Crusaders were regarded as ‘armed

⁸⁹¹ Robert Easting, ‘Owein at St Patrick’s Purgatory’, *Medium Ævum*, 55 (1986), 159-75 (p. 169).

⁸⁹² John Shinnars, *Medieval Popular Religion, 1000-1500: A Reader* (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 1997), p. 504.

⁸⁹³ See Stephen L. Harris and Gloria Platzner, *Classical Mythology: Images and Insights* (California: Mayfield, 1995). Harris and Platzner point out that ‘[a]ccording to the New Testament [...] after his crucifixion, Jesus of Nazareth descended into Tartarus, preaching to spirits imprisoned there (1 Pet. 3:19; 2 Pet. 2:4). From these brief passages, a belief developed that Jesus entered the netherworld on Good Friday to retrieve righteous souls who had died before he had ascended and opened the way to heaven. In medieval theology, this doctrine was known as the *harrowing of hell*’ (p. 204).

⁸⁹⁴ Karl Tamburr, *The Harrowing of Hell in Medieval England* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2007), p. 30.

pilgrims',⁸⁹⁵ which sanctified their military 'quest'.⁸⁹⁶ This is apparent in many romances, where military power/dominance and Christian (therefore, also moral) power/dominance are inseparable; the military is the outward manifestation of the moral/religious.

Although the Crusades began as penitential warfare to liberate the Holy Land from the 'heathens', and to expand and unify the Christian world, the campaigns for the Crusades lost physical support by the later Middle Ages. Therefore, the Church changed its strategy and encouraged people to pray, to provide crusading armies with financial support, or even to read about crusades in romances, which were regarded as equally beneficial as any actual combat against non-Christians.⁸⁹⁷ Thus, the romances with battles against non-Christians became a means of crusade propaganda, with the added benefit of indulgences and remission from sins.

In *Richard Coer de Lyon*, Richard travels to the Holy Land on a mission to avenge Christ's death, and to secure a safe way for pilgrimage. As McDonald suggests, his journey provides him with 'an assured identity as a Christian'.⁸⁹⁸ His quest as a religious mission justifies his violence against Saracens. His murdering them regardless of age and sex, eating their flesh and humiliating them by forcing them to eat, make Richard embody both evil and Christian devotion on his quest. His inhuman treatment of others whilst pretending to be a fighter for the Christian faith appear paradoxical, and they make him not only the defender of faith but a man in search of ultimate military power in the world. Although his quest is sanctified as a holy mission, which justifies its violence, it is also a secular quest to earn more spoils. In the secular/spiritual value system of romance, this slippage is easily created and maintained.

As with Richard's determination to conquer Saracen lands with a motivation of Christian nationalism, Alisaunder is determined to conquer the world; therefore, he does not refrain from violence against his enemies. Unlike Richard's, Alisaunder's quest has no religious motivation, but is driven and maintained by personal ambition. He murders people mercilessly regardless of age and sex in the lands he conquers, wins Thrace, Sicily, Italy, Rome and Libya, marches to Arabia, destroys Tyre and Thebes, slays their inhabitants without any mercy and burns everything on his way to Armenia. Although

⁸⁹⁵ Giles Constable, *Crusaders and Crusading in the Twelfth Century* (Surrey: Ashgate, 2008), p. 195.

⁸⁹⁶ Jonathan Sumption, *The Age of Pilgrimage: The Medieval Journey to God* (New Jersey: Hidden Spring, 2003), p. 195. See also Andrew Jotischky, 'The Christians of Jerusalem, the Holy Sepulchre and the Origins of the First Crusade', *Crusades*, 7 (2008), 35-57.

⁸⁹⁷ Ashton, *Medieval English Romance*, pp. 10-1.

⁸⁹⁸ McDonald, 'Eating People', p. 141.

he victimizes many people in different lands, Alisaunder and his men also suffer from thirst, attacks by supernatural beasts and death in India:

Pey slowe mo of þe kyngis men
 Bestes þer ware þat todes eten
 And þe kyngis men faste þey freten
 Alisaunder as Y fynde
 Les þer þrytty þousand
 Of his knyztis mo þan ynowe
 Pat wilde bestis to drowe and gnowe⁸⁹⁹

Despite his victory over strangers, he is defeated by the hostility of the foreign lands themselves, and his role as the victimizer changes into victim through his and his men's experiencing suffering in the unknown landscape. The foreign lands are portrayed as 'places of ordeal' as a result of ideas derived from exotic explorations in the Middle Ages. The Western contact with the 'exotic' East became increasingly possible with the Crusades, and the expansion of Western trade and travel routes which were documented in the late thirteenth century by the literary narratives of those journeys in Marco Polo's *Travels (Divisament dou Monde)* and texts like *The Book of John Mandeville*.⁹⁰⁰ These narratives introduced the monstrous, ugly, wild and sinful representations of the non-Christians living on exotic lands, in contrast to the civilized and moral Christians who are blessed, while the 'others' are damned.⁹⁰¹

Quest, a very central motif of romance, is a 'physical undertaking' which may invite, or relieve, suffering. 'Religious' quests aim to victimize Saracens living in faraway lands, to punish them for their wrong faith and to glorify Christian faith and military skills. On the other hand, 'secular' quests are willing engagements to fight for a beloved lady's hand, as well as to prove chivalric skills by ordeal. Quest may also be undertaken to end the suffering of a male or female victim who is in need of help to overcome pain. Quest is 'the period of exile, of suffering and isolation, which the hero must undergo in striving to attain his goal, to embody the ideal'.⁹⁰² The hero on a quest takes up the challenge of survival irrespective of the distance of his destination, the difficulty of his task and the amount of physical effort required to overcome it. His

⁸⁹⁹ *Kyng Alisaunder*, ed. by Geoffrey V. Smithers, EETS o.s., 227 (London: Oxford University Press, 1952), p. 382, lines 5824-30. Smithers's page and line numbers are retained.

⁹⁰⁰ Mittman and Kim, 'Monsters', p. 680. See Marco Polo, *The Travels of Marco Polo*, trans. by Ronald Latham (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1958); *The Book of John Mandeville*, ed. by Tamarah Kohanski and C. David Benson (Kalamazoo, Michigan: Medieval Institute Publications, 2007); Anthony C. Spearing, 'The Journey to Jerusalem: Mandeville and Hilton', *Essays in Medieval Studies*, 25.1 (2009), 1-17.

⁹⁰¹ Strickland, *Saracens*, p. 8.

⁹⁰² Hopkins, *The Sinful Knights*, p. 3.

quest is voluntary, on insecure and hostile faraway lands, and his survival and victory through his physical prowess and bravery exemplify not only his extraordinary skill in chivalry, but also his endurance when tested by ordeals.

In *King Horn*, Horn refuses Rymenhild's proposal twice because he wants to prove his worth as a knight; he goes on a quest to Ireland to serve the king, and fights against Saracens in Suddene before his marriage. The Squire in *The Squire of Low Degree* prefers to suffer on quest rather than suffer from lovesickness and lose his lover's hand; therefore, he submits to a quest twice, the former by his lover to prove his worth for her hand, and the latter by her father the King of Hungary. The princess sets many challenging tasks for the Squire, and says 'quest' is a prerequisite in order to win her love and prove his worth to bear a coat of arms:

For and ye my love should wynne
With chyvalry ye must begynne,
And other dedes of armes to done,
Through whiche ye may wynne your shone,
And ryde through many a peryllous place,
As a venterous man to seke your grace,⁹⁰³

Before he departs for his first quest, the King imprisons the Squire secretly but then releases him on condition that he seeks adventures overseas for seven years, and promises him his daughter when he returns. The Squire willingly undertakes the quest in Tuskayne, Lumbardy and Portyngale, and not only wins the lady's hand but also a reputation as a worthy knight. The male lovers in *Torrent of Portyngale* and *Sir Eglamour of Artois* are forced to quest and fight against supernatural creatures to marry their lovers. *Torrent* has to undertake three quests to marry his lover Desonell. He fights against giants in Calabria, in Norway, on the Greek sea, on an island and in a forest. Likewise, *Sir Eglamour* is sent on quests by Cristabell's father, the King of Artois, to fight against supernatural creatures for Cristabell's hand. He defeats a giant in the forest, is sent to Sydon to fight against a boar, and kills a dragon in Rome. In *Ipomadon*, *Ipomadon* goes on a quest to end his lovesickness and to prove himself as the best knight for Lady Fere's hand.

Fighting against supernatural creatures on quest is more challenging than fighting against mortals; therefore, it exposes, and demonstrates, the physical strength and endurance of the man on quest against suffering. It is easier to overcome

⁹⁰³ *Sentimental and Humorous Romances*, ed. by Kooper, 138. 171-6.

supernatural creatures than to overcome the pain of lovesickness for the male on quest; therefore, they (unlike women) prefer to suffer physically than to suffer emotionally. The representation of emotional suffering is more touching and tragic than physical suffering in romances; therefore, protagonists prefer to ignore physical pain and suffering in order to relieve emotional ones. While the female victims worry about physical suffering and suffer both physically and emotionally when exiled, the male victims suffer emotionally, whilst also suffering physically, but they ignore the physical. Osborn puts it like this:

It seems, then, that the male hero of romance engages in an identity quest of an essentially spiritual nature; he typically encounters a monstrous or god-like antagonist whom he must overcome with moral integrity, thereby winning a beautiful damsel or treasure as a visible token of his success. The woman hero, on the other hand, typically faces male violence against which she must preserve her honour as it is inscribed in the integrity of her body, her inviolate body itself being the hidden sign of her achievement.⁹⁰⁴

Males on a quest, seeking out their true parentage, ignore physical suffering. They respond positively to ordeals since they are determined to be reunited with their families and regain their noble status. Sir Degaré, whose name is symbolically based on the French word *égaré*, which has the literal sense of ‘lost’ in English,⁹⁰⁵ sets off to seek his real parents after he learns that he is an orphan fostered by a hermit:

He knelede adoun al so swithe,
And thonked the ermite of his live,
And swor he nolde stinte no stounde
Til he his kinrede hadde ifounde.⁹⁰⁶

As Elizabeth Archibald points out, ‘[m]ale foundlings may have various rite-of-passage adventures during the search for their parents [...] but the next major plot twist that we expect is an unwitting encounter with a parent’,⁹⁰⁷ as happens in *Sir Degaré*. Degaré’s journey brings him unknowingly closer to his parents through his chivalric displays. He comes across with his mother and father coincidentally. On his quest, despite his wounds, he fights against a dragon and a giant knight to save an earl and a lady, until he is reunited with his mother and then his father; and apart from reunion with his parents,

⁹⁰⁴ Osborn, *Romancing the Goddess*, p. 22.

⁹⁰⁵ James Simpson, ‘Violence, Narrative and Proper Name: *Sir Degaré*, “The Tale of Sir Gareth of Orkney”, and the *Folie Tristan d’Oxford*’, in *Spirit*, ed. by Putter and Gilbert, pp. 122-41 (p. 124).

⁹⁰⁶ *The Middle English Breton Lays*, ed. by Laskaya and Salisbury, 109. 307-10.

⁹⁰⁷ Elizabeth Archibald, ‘*Lai le Freine*: The Female Foundling and the Problem of Romance Genre’, in *Spirit*, ed. by Putter and Gilbert, pp. 39-55 (p. 45).

he reveals himself to be a vigorous knight. His physical ordeal in battle brings him closer to the end of his emotional ordeal of lost parentage by providing him with a knight's skill and determination.

In *Sir Tryamour*, Margaret does not reveal to her son Tryamour that he is King Ardu's son until Tryamour goes on quests in many lands to prove his worth as a knight. Lybeaus Desconus seeks out chivalric adventures despite his mother's reluctance and his young age, not only in order to be admired as a knight but also to release the Lady of Synadowne, who has been captured and cursed. His glory in battle against Sir William, William's cousins, the giants, Sir Otys, Jeffron le Freudos and Sir Lanwarde on his way to rescue the Lady, and his humility by rejecting the goods offered to him in return for his victories but sending them to King Arthur, reveal that he is more willing to fight to punish the wicked and relieve the pain of the victim than to prove his physical strength.

The earthly objectives of quests are replaced by religious ones on pilgrimage. Pilgrimage is a 'devotional and penitential Christian practice', undertaken mostly voluntarily, as an act of devotion.⁹⁰⁸ It is, in Maribel Dietz's words, the 'religious explanation of homelessness and temporal exile' for the spiritual growth.⁹⁰⁹ Medieval people went on pilgrimage 'to insure an answer to particular prayers [...] expiation of sins and pardon for wrong. Pilgrimage became an act of obedience for a penitent'.⁹¹⁰ On quests, ordeals are endured, challenges are undertaken for the lover's hand and chivalric renown, in addition to relieving the ordeals of victims in need of help. Pilgrims prefer suffering for divine love and forgiveness, acceptance into heaven after death and being known as a good Christian, which makes their journey both a physical and a spiritual experience. Pilgrims actually submit to ordeals so that they will be exempt from them after death. A noble male is vulnerable to his enemy's attack when he is on pilgrimage, as happens in *Sir Degrevant*, when Sir Degrevant's lands are attacked by the nameless earl during his absence. Pilgrims are generally repentant sinners who believe that they deserve suffering, and they seek salvation. However, King Ardu in *Sir Tryamour* goes to the Holy Land to fight against the Saracens, so that God will grant him an heir:

For no chylde come them betwene,
Sore syghed bothe sche and hee.
Therefore the kyng, as Y undurstonde,

⁹⁰⁸ Webb, *Pilgrims*, p. 3.

⁹⁰⁹ Maribel Dietz, *Wandering Monks, Virgins, and Pilgrims: Ascetic Travel in the Mediterranean World, A.D. 300-800* (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2005), pp. 3-4.

⁹¹⁰ Heffernan, *Orient*, p. 17.

Hath made a vowe to go in to the Holy Londe
 To fyght and not to flee,
 That God almyghty schulde helpe them so
 A chylde to gete betwene them two⁹¹¹

A pilgrimage may also be an occasion for display, as in *The Sege off Melayne*, when King Charles comes to St. Denys on pilgrimage with his barons, not to ask for specific forgiveness, but to sanctify a political agreement.⁹¹²

All pilgrims are male, except the Empress in *Octovian*, who travels to Jerusalem to ask for God's forgiveness because she believes that she is a sinner. Like the Empress, medieval pilgrims visited the sites in Jerusalem, Bethlehem, and Nazareth associated with Christ and the Virgin Mary,⁹¹³ apart from the tombs of Christian martyrs in Rome where they could also seek absolution from the Pope.⁹¹⁴ However, among all, Jerusalem was the most popular destination due to the pilgrims' desire for 'the experience of visiting the scene of Christ's Passion'.⁹¹⁵ Pilgrims would seek divine forgiveness in these holy sites, by associating their experiences with the Passion of Christ. Pilgrims in *Emaré*, *Sir Eglamour of Artois* and *Torrent of Portyngale* seek a similar experience. They travel to the holy places to ask for forgiveness or to repent of being the reason for the suffering of those they love, and they want to endure the same ordeal with their victims. Emaré's father goes to Rome to ask for forgiveness from the Pope to cleanse his soul from the sin of incestuous desire. Eglamour's destination is the Holy Land, to ask for divine forgiveness for being the reason for his lover Cristabell's exile. Similarly, after his lover Desonell is exiled by her father Calamond, Torrent goes to the Holy Land as he blames himself for being the reason for Desonell's suffering:

For Desonell is love so bryght,
 His londis he takyth to a knyght,
 And sith he is boun to fare.
 'Portyngale, haue good day
 For Sevyn yere, parmaffay,

⁹¹¹ *Four Middle English Romances*, ed. by Hudson, 149. 29-35.

⁹¹² See Gabrielle M. Spiegel, *The Past as Text: The Theory and Practice of Medieval Historiography* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1999), especially pp. 163-77.

⁹¹³ Richard Barber, *Pilgrimages* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1991), pp. 16-7.

⁹¹⁴ Barber, *Pilgrimages*, pp. 49-50.

⁹¹⁵ Mary Baine Campbell, 'Spiritual Quest and Social Space: Texts of Hard Travel for God on Earth and in the Heart', in *The Oxford Handbook*, ed. by Treharne and Walker, pp. 707-24 (p. 711). See also Colin Morris, 'Pilgrimage to Jerusalem in the Late Middle Ages', in *Pilgrimage: The English Experience from Becket to Bunyan*, ed. by Colin Morris and Peter Roberts (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 141-63.

Par aventure som dele mare!⁹¹⁶

His pilgrimage is to compensate for his emotional suffering by physical achievement, so he fights against Saracens in the Holy Land until he is reunited with Desonell. In *The Romans of Partenay*, Raymond goes to Rome to ask for penance from the Pope for his treatment of Melusine, before retreating to a hermitage until his death.

Diana Webb suggests that pilgrimage is ‘a form of penance, a way of purging the soul of the dross of sin, either of particular sins or sin of general’.⁹¹⁷ Apart from pilgrims who go on pilgrimage to repent of causing suffering to their loved ones, there are pilgrims who repent of their more general sins, as in *Beves of Hamptoun* and *Sir Gowther*. Beves visits Jerusalem to confess his sins to the Patriarch after he has attended many battles. Sir Gowther goes to Rome alone and on foot to confess, and asks for forgiveness of his sins from the Pope, after he realizes that he has been a tyrannical ruler, and has had an evil origin:

‘Nay, holy fadur, be thou noght agrevyd:
 Y schall the truly swere
 At thi byddyng beyn to be
 And hald tho penans that thou leys to me,
 And never Cryston deyre.’⁹¹⁸

In *Sir Owain*, after he witnesses suffering sinners and comes out of Purgatory, Sir Owain goes to Bethlehem on pilgrimage to cleanse his soul, so that he may be accepted into heaven (avoiding Purgatory) after his death. Unlike the other romance characters, who achieve earthly wealth and status at the end of their suffering and are reunited with their loved ones, Guy of Warwick achieves these, but rejects them all before he goes on pilgrimage in the *Stanzaic Guy of Warwick*. Even if his rejection of reunion with his wife Felice at the end of his pilgrimage recalls a saint’s choosing celibacy, as Weiss points out, Guy displays ‘secular heroism’ by not rejecting the deeds and values of knighthood during his pilgrimage.⁹¹⁹ Therefore, he is both ‘saintly’ and ‘heroic’ at the same time in his ordeal. Guy’s pilgrimage to Bethlehem and Jerusalem is to cleanse his soul of his sin of neglecting his duty to God while fighting in battles, although God rewards him with glories. ‘Guy shifts from chivalric knight to knight of God’ through

⁹¹⁶ *Torrent of Portyngale*, ed. by Adam, 76. 2173-8.

⁹¹⁷ Diana Webb, *Pilgrimage in Medieval England* (Lancaster: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. xiv.

⁹¹⁸ *Six Middle English Romances*, ed. by Mills, 155. 281-5.

⁹¹⁹ Weiss, ‘Exploitation of Ideas’, p. 48.

his experience,⁹²⁰ and realizes that ‘marriage is an obstruction for his piety’.⁹²¹ His marriage to Felice is sinful because it fuels, or necessitates, his desire for knightly fame, which corrupts him.⁹²² Therefore, his pilgrimage provides him with an opportunity to cleanse himself by praying for forgiveness. In other words, it makes him an individual with emotional independence, since he prefers God’s love to his wife’s love. He rejects founding abbeys as penance for his sins, as suggested by his wife Felice, because he prefers ‘a painful experience’. He travels alone and barefoot, rejects earthly riches, begs for food, and repents of his involvement in earthly deeds and emotions, none of which were for God but for himself.

As Morgan Dickson states, ‘[d]isguise often functions in helping to define a character: he steps outside society in order to examine or communicate his own interior identity’.⁹²³ Guy disguises himself as a beggar not only to be unrecognized, but also to suppress his sinful identity within a new one which does not remind him of his sinfulness, and which demonstrates his desire to begin as new person, according to the requirements of the Christian gospel.⁹²⁴ Despite his repentance of over-involvement in military acts which made him neglect his religious duties, Guy is not totally kept away from bloodshed on his pilgrimage. In romances with religious context, ‘the progress of the knight is turned from a socioethical self-examination to a narrower, or loftier, examination of the soul’.⁹²⁵ However, as Paul Price states, ‘the Guy story’s ‘hagiographic’ half concerning a penitent is essentially identical to the ‘romance’ half concerned with a hardy knight’.⁹²⁶ Guy still maintains his public commitment as a knight, and fights against threatening strangers to save Tirri and Earl Jonas from unjust suffering.

Although Guy suffers willingly, on the other hand he saves other sufferers as a virtuous knight should. However, he never reveals his name during his fights, because

⁹²⁰ Rebecca Wilcox, ‘Romancing the East: Greeks and Saracens in *Guy of Warwick*’, in *Pulp Fictions*, ed. by McDonald, pp. 217-40 (p. 219).

⁹²¹ Neil Cartlidge, *Medieval Marriage: Literary Approaches, 1100-1300* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1997), p. 102.

⁹²² Hopkins, *The Sinful Knights*, p. 82.

⁹²³ Morgan Dickson, ‘Verbal and Visual Disguise: Society and Identity in Some Twelfth-Century Texts’, in *Medieval Insular Romance*, ed. by Weiss, Fellows and Dickson, pp. 41-54 (p. 42).

⁹²⁴ The desire for the purgation of the soul and becoming a ‘new’ man recalls Psalm 51 in the Old Testament. ‘Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.’ (Psalm 51. 2). ‘Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.’ (Psalm 51. 7). ‘Create me in a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit.’ (Psalm 51. 10-12).

⁹²⁵ Finlayson, ‘Definitions of Middle English Romance’, pp. 174-5.

⁹²⁶ Paul Price, ‘Confessions of a Godless Killer: *Guy of Warwick* and Comprehensive Entertainment’, in *Medieval Insular Romance*, ed. by Weiss, Fellows and Dickson, pp. 93-110 (p. 110).

he continues to repent of the chivalric fame which threatens to overshadow helping the needy. The unrevealed name also indicates Guy's desire to change his identity.⁹²⁷ During the single combats he not only fights against strong rivals, but also against the evil on earth and in his soul, which he believes mirror and complement one another. Fewster suggests 'Guy reverses the metaphors of physical travel as they are equated in romance with prowess, love and nobility, and substitutes a physical static spiritual journey'.⁹²⁸ However, Guy's journey is not 'static', since although he denies earthly pleasures and his fame, he continues to perform the chivalric deeds which he repents of over-indulging in. At the end of the romance, he begins a spiritual journey after he retreats to a hermitage, where he is totally isolated from the world and devotes himself to the service of God. Thus, his life itself becomes the journey, which is to be continued until his (re)union with God.

As well as personal devotion such as Guy of Warwick's desire to suffer in order to cleanse his soul, a pilgrimage may be inspired by a holy mission or Christian military propaganda to avenge Christ's suffering and to victimize Saracens and Jews, as is Richard's armed pilgrimage to the Holy Land in *Richard Coer de Lyon*, and the Romans' journey to Jerusalem in *The Siege of Jerusalem*. The literary reworking of the historical siege of Jerusalem turns out to be a metaphor for crusader activity in order to encourage fourteenth-century English and French interest in crusade.⁹²⁹ In addition to religious and personal motivations, going on pilgrimage may not be a personal decision but may be induced by a divine figure, as in *Roland and Vernagu*, where King Charles goes to Galacia to find James the Apostle's body after he miraculously hears the saint's voice, so that his sins will be forgiven.

Apart from exiles, quests and pilgrimages full of enforced but mostly willing ordeals, there are several journeys in romances undertaken in order to ask for help, survival or relief. A journey is either an ordeal or a relief 'in motion', and journeys apart from the exiles, quests and pilgrimages undertaken in romances mainly provide victims with an 'escape' from ordeals. Voyage, in particular, is full of dangers, as in *Le Bone Florence of Rome*, since Florence suffers from the mariner's sexual assaults on the ship on her way to Jerusalem:

In hys armes he can hur folde,
Hur rybbes crakyd as þey breke wolde,

⁹²⁷ Hopkins, *The Sinful Knights*, p. 105.

⁹²⁸ Fewster, *Traditionality and Genre*, p. 96.

⁹²⁹ Yeager, 'The Siege of Jerusalem', p. 74.

In struglynge can they stryve.
 Sche seyde, 'Lady Mary free,
 Now thou haue mercy on me,
 Thou faylyst me neuyr at nede.'⁹³⁰

Florence is vulnerable to sexual abuse during her journey, although she thinks she is on her way to Jerusalem on pilgrimage. Yet, her journey ends with a relief as she arrives in a nunnery where she remains safe and becomes a healer. Florence's journeys reveal villainy and mercy in men, who have potential either for suffering or for relieving it. They also justify 'the idea of God's justice which punishes the wicked and preserves the faithful'.⁹³¹ Her journeys provide opportunities for meeting wicked men who make her a sufferer, like the thief and the mariner who abuse her and who are punished in return for their villainies, in addition to meeting good men like Sir Tyrry who takes care of her. Therefore, the 'journey' forces her to encounter both the suffering introduced by the villains and relief offered by good men.

Journeys to avoid suffering or relieve it are mostly willingly undertaken. In *Sir Launfal*, Sir Launfal leaves his castle not only because he is deprived of his wealth, but also in order to escape from the temptations of Queen Guenevere. In *Amis and Amiloun*, Amis seeks Amiloun on foot in a forest, so that Amiloun will fight against the steward instead of him. In *Generydes*, there are many journeys undertaken by different characters to reveal truths or to help each other. Travellers in the romance do not suffer on their way; yet, they travel to avoid suffering. Generydes travels to Persia and India to fight, whilst Sereyne journeys to find Auferius when she hears that his lands have been captured by Sir Amelok. Apart from her search for Auferius, Mirabell undertakes another journey to find Generydes, in order to reveal Yvell's treason. When Sereyne learns that Auferius has been put out of his lands by his steward, she goes to India to find Generydes and Auferius.

The journey in *The Lay of Havelok the Dane* is an 'escape' from punishment. Grim leaves Denmark with his family and Havelok to avoid punishment by Godard, who has ordered him to kill Havelok. The journey is a social displacement more than a geographical one for Havelok,⁹³² because he adapts to the life of the lower classes exemplified by Grim's family. In Aaron Hostetter's words, Havelok moves 'from a world of perilous recognition to one of anonymity and backbreaking work'⁹³³ in which

⁹³⁰ *Le Bone Florence of Rome*, ed. by Heffernan, 112-3. 1849-54.

⁹³¹ Mehl, *The Middle English Romances*, p. 143.

⁹³² Speed, 'Construction of the Nation', p. 151.

⁹³³ Hostetter, 'Food', p. 62.

he has to struggle physically and emotionally to compensate for his loss of noble status. Although he has been threatened with death as a noble before his journey, Havelok is threatened with hard work and poverty as a commoner in his destination. Consequently, his rise to his rightful noble position from a commoner symbolically turns out to be a 'journey', during which he discovers his latent noble strength while fighting against the Danes, and enduring the hardships of a commoner's life.

The journey is the process of self-realization which empowers Gamelyn in *The Tale of Gamelyn*. Gamelyn, after travelling to attend a wrestling competition which he wins, realizes his power to stand against his traitor brother who has disinherited and humiliated him. Saunders suggests that Gamelyn offers a parallel to Sir Launfal, who is deprived of his wealth and forced to hide in the forest, treated as a criminal and despised, and 'the forest represents exile from an unjust society' for both characters.⁹³⁴ Gamelyn is a 'child' because of his minor age, with as little power as a woman in the household, which is run by his evil brother; however, after leaving his brother's house, he gains his status as the outlaws' leader despite being deprived of his status in his brother's household. In the forest, Gamelyn lives in the company of outlaws who have their own 'justice'.

The journey in *William of Palerne* also enables the victim to regain identity and status. Alphonse leads William and Melior to Spain not only to reveal that William is the King of Spain's son, but also to get rid of his werewolf shape and regain his human features by William's help. Meanwhile, the role of disguise as a protective shield on the journey is emphasized by Melior and William, who disguise themselves by putting on bearskins, so that they are not recognized by Melior's father's men. Even if Diamond points out that their public identities and places in human civilization are lost through the disguise,⁹³⁵ it is a protective shield, provided by nature for the lovers. All conflicts are resolved at the end of their journey, which occasions their getting married in addition to the revelation of Alphonse and William's noble identities, and werewolf Alphonse's regaining his human shape.

Penitential journeys in *The Romans of Partenay* and *Sir Amadace* end with restoration and relief. After repenting of burning his brother and monks in a monastery, and going to fight against a dragon in Norbeland, Geoffrey in *The Romans of Partenay* restores whatever he has destroyed. Sir Amadace's journey to find a solution to his

⁹³⁴ Saunders, *Forest*, p. 144.

⁹³⁵ Arlyn Diamond, 'Loving Beasts: The Romance of *William of Palerne*', in *Spirit*, ed. by Putter and Gilbert, pp. 142-56 (p. 148).

financial problem enables him to realize the significance of generosity and the evil of his extravagance.

Middle English metrical romances make use of journeys in the form of enforced exile, self-exile, quest and pilgrimage to build their stories. These journeys reveal how suffering is inflicted or avoided, both willingly and unwillingly. Suffering 'on the way' reminds the audience that suffering is not bound to any place or people. The journey itself seems to be 'suffering'; yet, at the end of it, it gives rise to a process of self-realization, and forms a pre-requisite for a happy reunion with family or lover, or revelation of truth about the victim. For exiled ladies, family problems are solved, their victimizers are punished, and they are safe and sound in the lands where they arrive after their exile. While the enforced exile of females reveals the vulnerability of women in their households, the self-exile of a male seeking chivalric adventures both exposes and demonstrates his physical power, even outside his domestic terrain. The females are exiled after false accusations as a means of punishment; yet, the males are exiled because of courtly conflicts. Whilst all females submit to compulsory journeys, the males generally submit to them only if they exile themselves in order to repent of their sins or to avenge previous suffering. During their journeys, males experience the physical and spiritual growth which they seek (although they may not have sought the means by which these are won or given), whilst females are mostly passive and under the control of men who abuse or take care of them. Compared with the females, who mourn and need a male to end their suffering on their journeys, men are stronger and self-sufficient. Although, generally, both females and males are reunited with their families or lovers at the end of their journeys, males who set off on their journey as self-inflicted penance may retreat into a religious life of life-long penance, like Guy of Warwick- which turns their life into a journey on which they have to keep travelling until they reach heaven.

The 'suffering' of the travellers depends on the purpose of their journeys. Whilst exiled females are made to suffer physically and emotionally by force, males who exile themselves suffer willingly. Those who exile themselves, the pilgrims and those on a quest for repentance consider suffering not only as a painful experience, but also a means for achieving divine forgiveness. Therefore, they do not offer resistance to it. Alternatively, journeys undertaken after false accusations and courtly conflicts introduce physical suffering, which is resisted and, as far as possible, avoided by those who experience it. In other words, while suffering is willingly accepted as an opportunity for good by those seeking divine forgiveness and self-penance, it is seen by

others as a painful experience which should be prevented or overcome, or at the very least borne in a socially and spiritually appropriate manner. For penitents, suffering is not painful, although they have to endure physical hardships in order to achieve divine salvation. Journeys for earthly rewards or journeys for divine rewards after death, and the suffering they entail, are compulsory in romance. Hence, the ‘no pain, no gain’ motto is valid for salvation in both realms. Temporal suffering ‘on the way’ to ‘heaven on earth’ or ‘heaven in Otherworld’ is preferable to eternal suffering after death. Romance heroes on secular quests believe that they are destined to suffer for earthly reasons, and they gain earthly rewards after their journeys, whilst those who choose to suffer both for earthly and divine reasons achieve both at the end of their ‘way’.

Overall, males forced into exile are young and inexperienced; yet, they discover their own inherent strength ‘on the way’, and as adults they are expected to suffer and even to die on quests. However, their journeys afford opportunities for chivalric display and renown, despite separation from family members or lovers, and happy reunions after journeys are the norm. The questing male may also seek divine penance alongside chivalric renown. A quest is a journey of physical suffering commonly motivated by psychological suffering (such as lovesickness, seeking identity and status, separation from the family or pity for other victims). However, a pilgrimage is almost always undertaken for repentance of sins. Pilgrimage is also a voluntary act, motivated by a sense of guilt. Pilgrimages may be a means of achieving salvation, or avenging Christ and destroying non-Christian faiths. Quests serve mostly to display personal chivalric prowess, combat lovesickness or, again, to avenge Christ’s suffering or destroy other faiths. The one may, in most cases, imply the other. The quest may be voluntary, but it is not as redemptive as self-exile and pilgrimage. It is a secular means of achieving salvation. The man on a quest directs his self-anger or desire for redemption onto the journey itself, and turns the process into a spiritual therapy as well as a chivalric display, and an opportunity for earthly renown and reward. Contrary to this, those on a quest for religious redemption seek recognition as ‘God’s knight’ and they justify their villainies to those of other faiths by claiming that they have already deserved suffering because of their adhering to the ‘wrong’ faith. In both secular and religious quests, the more the one on quest suffers, the more ‘chivalric’ and the more ‘sanctified’ he becomes.

The ‘way’ is not only a geographical space, but also a ‘process’. Those who force the protagonists into journey/exile/quest, rather than simply villains, turn out to be the means by which the victim achieves awareness of his capacity to fight against

villainy. Villains are catalysts ‘on the way’; they are agents resisted in order to survive, and they are essential to the victim’s physical and psychological growth. The threatening ‘sea’ purifies and the ‘forest’ turns into a ‘garden of Eden’. They relieve suffering at the end of the journey. Suffering ‘on the way’ makes the victims mature, self-resisting, and knowledgeable about how to stand on their own feet without depending on others to protect them. Although they may have the help of nobles or commoners to regain their identities and statuses, the victims actually achieve them through their own experiences, after they discover their own inherent powers to overcome suffering when they are ‘sent away’. Experiencing a journey is instructive because it teaches that any part of the world is threatening, and a place of potential suffering. Suffering ‘on the way’ reminds the audience that suffering is not geographically bound; but it is universal, as villainy and suffering are everywhere, inside and outside the household as well as the country or nation to which they belong. The actual setting does not really matter, because suffering is experienced ‘on the way’ and only reaching one’s destination provides comfort and maturity.

Although the experiences of suffering are individual, their didacticism is general. Journey becomes a ‘process’ and also ‘progress’ to achieve understanding, salvation, and restoration. Meanwhile, suffering equates with the teaching process itself. No matter whether travelling willingly or unwillingly, the journey becomes an instructor for survival, self-awareness and ultimate satisfaction. The travellers learn how to survive and improve themselves by painful experience. ‘Suffering’ is replaced with ‘learning’, and ‘pain’ is replaced with ‘gain’ in both types of journeys - experienced for secular and for religious intentions. The individuality of these experiences makes this process a private experience, but one which is also exemplary for all people. It demonstrates how to build a strong character, survive, and achieve earthly and divine rewards at the end of painful experiences. Even the weakest victims, like the ladies forced into exile, are empowered at the end of their experience, so they can reunite their families, and family tragedies are happily resolved. Journey becomes a process to solve all conflicts, and what is ‘found’ or ‘achieved’ at the end of it is presented as a ‘reward’. This makes the experience ‘positive’, although the traveller is unaware of this at the beginning, rather than ‘punitive’ and ‘painful’. Almost all of the journeys end where they start, which implies that there is actually nowhere else to go to be one’s ‘self’: what matters is not the destination but the process of the journey itself.

Journeys are not only acts of mobility, but experiences to be ‘read’ symbolically, because they are not only ‘mirror images of suffering’ but also catalysts for contemplating the reasons for and results of suffering. As indicated by Stevens:

The distinction between ‘radical allegory’ and ‘retrospective allegorizing’ lies in the degree of coherence between the story and the signification; in ‘radical allegory’ they fit like hand and glove, like a man and his reflection in a mirror, whereas ‘retrospective allegorizing’ can hardly be achieved without duress-story and signification fit, indeed, but like a man with his strait jacket, not with his glove, much less his reflection.⁹³⁶

With respect to this definition, romance journeys are ‘retrospective allegories’ with representative selections of individual ‘way’ experiences rather than explicit stories of pain and suffering. Once a journey is seen as the ‘process’ rather than mere ‘mobility’ it is apparent that it offers travellers renewal, whilst facing them with painful ordeals. They discover that suffering is not so painful, but redemptive and rewarding; therefore, it is not totally threatening and painful because it can be overcome through patience. Suffering experienced ‘on the way’, in fact, stands as a microcosm of suffering in life itself. Life is full of suffering, for both the innocent and the guilty, and at the end of their ordeals protagonists keep their patience and gain relief. Life’s journey ends with death, which is indeed not the end for an innocent and patient human being, as after death, the reward of heaven exempt from suffering waits. Thus, the journey in romances presents this metaphor of ‘life as a journey’ through the experiences of romance characters. The romance audiences realize that life is a journey and until death, which is life’s one-way destination, everyone is subjected to ordeals which can be overcome through patience and repentance, even if they themselves are by nature sinful, or at least ‘fallen’. They associate themselves with the romance characters ‘on the way’, witness their own journey in life as sinners or undeserved sufferers, and realize that they are experiencing the same ordeal.

⁹³⁶ Stevens, *Medieval Romance*, p. 157.

Chapter Five: Sanctifying and Enchanting the Ordeal: Representations of Divine Agents, Prophetic Dreams and Supernatural Factors in Middle English Metrical Romances

There are several instances of divine interference in romances. Mostly, these interferences serve to relieve suffering, whether inflicted by domestic and stranger villains, or by the sufferer themselves. They often occur in romances which focus on ‘Saracen versus Christian’ conflict. They appear as warnings to sinners, or as aids to sufferers, providing spiritual renewal and/or divine knowledge. This divine help is related through the appearance of angels, or through miraculous healings or transformations, arriving miraculously when the victim is helpless, or when he acknowledges the reasons for his punishment by God. These individual experiences are specific to sinners and sufferers; yet, their moral messages concerning the significance of divine forgiveness and the supremacy of divine power are public and general. They also remind audiences of human incapacity to overcome suffering alone, without help from religious figures. This contrasts with the exaltation of male physical power as the only means to end or prevent suffering in those romances with more secular emphasis.⁹³⁷

Angels often provide sufferers with extraordinary strength when they are desperate. As pointed out by Ivana Djordjević, ‘the belief in guardian angels, which spread significantly after the early thirteenth century, may perhaps have played a part in the proliferation of fictional angels God uses as errand-runners in popular narratives’.⁹³⁸ Enyas, despite his being inexperienced in battle, is empowered by an angel’s support (by God’s grace) in *Cheuelere Assigne*, as God spares him when his brothers and sister have the chains on their necks removed, transforming them into swans. An angel appears to the hermit fostering Enyas, revealing that Enyas’s mission is to prove his mother’s innocence of adultery and save his siblings from their transformation. Apart from empowering those whom it supports, an angel may miraculously provide the victim with what he desperately needs. Childress suggests that an angel’s interfering to help a sufferer demonstrates that the relief of suffering is ‘not performed by the hero at all but by God through him’ to emphasize God’s supremacy;⁹³⁹ however, the relief is performed both by the hero himself and by God through him in the romances with more

⁹³⁷ *Generydes, Ipomadon, King Horn, Octovian, Erle of Tolous, Lybeaus Desconus, Sir Degaré, Sir Degrevant, Sir Eglamour of Artois, Partonope of Blois, Sir Tryamour, Kyng Alisaunder, Beves of Hamptoun, The Squire of Low Degree, The Tale of Gamelyn, Torrent of Portyngale, William of Palerne.*

⁹³⁸ Ivana Djordjević, ‘Rewriting Divine Favour’, in *Boundaries*, ed. by Cartlidge, pp. 161-73 (p. 167).

⁹³⁹ Childress, ‘Between Romance and Legend’, p. 314.

religious emphasis. When Roland is about to be defeated by the Saracen knight Vernagu, an angel encourages him to kill Vernagu in *Roland and Vernagu*:

An angel com ful sone,
 & seyð 'herd is þi bone,
 Arise rouland & fiȝt,
 & sched þe schrewes blod,
 For he nas neuer gode,
 Bi lond no bi se:
 Þei alle prehours aliue,
 To cristen wald him schriue,
 Gode nold be neuer be.'⁹⁴⁰

Alisaunder is not empowered against his enemies by divine help; yet, he is directed to the healing herb by an angel in *Kyng Alisaunder*. The appearance of an angel may be a sign that the victim's prayer for relief has been heard by God, as in *The Sowdone of Babylone*, when an angel tells King Charles that God has heard his prayers and sent help to Sir Olyuer to defeat Sir Ferumbras. In the *Stanzaic Guy of Warwick*, when King Athelston prays to God to send him a noble knight to fight against Colbrond, God sends him an angel to foretell Guy's coming. In *Sir Isumbras*, the angel brings not only God's word but also comfort. When Sir Isumbras weeps in pain by a stream on his pilgrimage to Jerusalem, an angel brings him bread and wine, and announces that God has forgiven his sins. An angel may appear to deliver God's word to save Christians from Saracen victimization, as happens in *Roland and Vernagu*. When Ebrahim, the King of Spain, executes Christians, the Emperor of Constantinople prays to God to end their suffering, and an angel appears bidding him to ask for Charlemagne's help. Even Richard's merciless massacres and cannibalism are sanctified in *Richard Coer de Lyon* by the voice of an angel, bidding him not to spare any Saracens but behead them all:

þey were brouȝt out off þe toun,
 Saue twenty he heeld to raunsoun.
 þey wer led into a place fful euene,
 þere þey herden an aungele off heuene
 þat seyde: 'Seynyours, tuez, tuese,
 Spares hem nouȝt, behediþ þese!'⁹⁴¹

⁹⁴⁰ *Roland and Vernagu*, in 'The Taill of Rauf Coilzear' with the Fragments of 'Roland and Vernagu' and 'Otuel', ed. by Sidney J. H. Herrtage, EETS e.s., 39 (London: Trübner, 1882), pp. 35-61 (p. 59), lines 806-14. Herrtage's page and line numbers are retained.

⁹⁴¹ *Der mittelenenglische Versroman*, ed. by Brunner, 282. 3745-50.

While slaying Saracens regardless of sex and age, Richard is guided by angels instructing him how to fight. He is empowered by their advice on how to pierce his enemy's armour easily. Likewise, an angel in shape of a White Knight saves Sir Evelak from the King of Babylone's imprisonment in *Joseph of Aramathie*, slays the King and reinvigorates the Christians during the battle.

Angels not only empower human beings, but also weaken and victimize them to give a moral lesson and make them repent of their sins. In *Robert of Cisyle*, the angel, 'an idealized version of Robert',⁹⁴² who replaces Robert to punish his pride functions as a moral enabler, enabling him to achieve self-awareness and repentance. While the angel rules the country in Robert's guise, Robert is unrecognized even by his brothers. The angel torments him psychologically by asking 'where Robert's dignity is' while he is eating on the floor, and keeps reminding Robert that he is being punished because of his pride, until he repents of it:

'Thow art my fol,' seide the angel,
 'Thou schal be schoren everichdel,
 Lych a fool, a fool to be,
 Wher is now thi dignité?'⁹⁴³

Robert's mistaken confidence in temporal power is the reason why the angel gives Robert an ape as his companion, and his admission to the angel that he now knows he is a fool is necessary for the restoration of Robert to his former position.⁹⁴⁴ The angel king's reign in peace and order is a good role model for Robert to be a better king. Martin W. Walsh asserts that:

The poem, of course, is teaching. The point is not to feel pity for fools as a class but to endorse the fact that Robert deserves everything he gets [...] Robert is the inevitable 'loser' in his prideful match with God. He is consistently reminded throughout that his status now is that of *underlyng*, one of the most common terms applied to him along with *gadelyng*, *harlot*, and of course *fol*.⁹⁴⁵

The romance functions in a similar way to the 'king mirror', or to 'self-rulership advice' literature such as the *Secreta secretorum*, which would have formed part of the romance

⁹⁴² Foster, 'Simplicity', p. 404.

⁹⁴³ *Amis and Amiloun*, ed. by Foster, 84. 153-6.

⁹⁴⁴ Hopkins, *The Sinful Knights*, p. 193.

⁹⁴⁵ Martin W. Walsh, 'The King His Own Fool: *Robert of Cicyle*', in *Fools and Folly*, ed. by Clifford Davidson, Early Drama, Art, and Music Monograph Series, 22 (Kalamazoo, Michigan: Medieval Institute Publications, 1996), pp. 34-46 (p. 39).

audience's intertext.⁹⁴⁶ It was intended to present a picture of an ideal society, with rulers operating in the public good, rather than in pursuit of personal gain.⁹⁴⁷ This demonstrates the way in which romances may relate intertextually to moral and religious literatures, which are not necessarily biblical or scriptural, although these may be related to biblical sources. Like *Secreta secretorum* which is an advice book teaching how to be an ideal ruler so that no one suffers under the king's just rule,⁹⁴⁸ the angel in *Robert of Cisyle* teaches Robert how to be a good king so that his people do not suffer under his rule.

Apart from angels helping a sufferer or delivering God's words, religious figures and even Christ himself may appear to give comfort. The appearance of Christ in romances emphasises the humanity of Christ, an idea which was connected in the fourteenth century with a widespread desire for direct contact with God.⁹⁴⁹ In *Sir Owain*, thirteen men in white say that Sir Owain will be saved from his difficulties if he calls God's name when he suffers, and is about to be tempted by the fiends during his visit to Purgatory. In *Joseph of Aramathie*, Christ appears to Joseph to consecrate him as bishop. In *Richard Coer de Lyon*, when Christians fight against Saracens in the Holy Land, 'He sey3 come Seynt George þe kny3t, / Vpon a stede good and ly3t,'⁹⁵⁰ after Richard's prayers for divine help. St. George's appearance implies that Richard has achieved the status of 'a divinely guided Christian warrior'⁹⁵¹ and sanctifies his role as the victimizer of Saracens.

⁹⁴⁶ For the edited versions of *Secreta secretorum* see Lydgate and Burgh's '*Secrees of Old Philosoffres*': *A Version of the 'Secreta Secretorum'*, ed. by Robert Steele, EETS e.s., 66 (London: Kegan Paul, 1894); *Three Prose Versions of the 'Secreta Secretorum'*, ed. by Robert Steele, EETS e.s., 74 (London: Kegan Paul, 1898); '*Secretum secretorum*': *Nine English Versions*, ed. by M. A. Manzalaoui, EETS o.s., 276 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977).

⁹⁴⁷ See Steven J. Williams, *The Secret of Secrets: The Scholarly Career of a Pseudo-Aristotelian Text in the Latin Middle Ages* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2003). Williams points out that *Secreta secretorum* was prepared by Aristotle, Alexander's principal advisor, to substitute for his presence because he could not accompany Alexander on his campaign in Asia. Alexander conquered the world through Aristotle's counsel. 'Book I, 'On the Kind of Kings', is in the manner of a 'Mirror of Princes' (so called because rulers were expected 'to look in such books as in a mirror, and there see displayed the image of what they should truly be'), filled with political and moral advice on how Alexander should conduct himself as a king.' While generosity is respected; lust, avarice, and greed are condemned (pp. 1-11).

⁹⁴⁸ See Karma Lochrie, *Covert Operations: The Medieval Uses of Secrecy* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999). Lochrie points out that when Alexander conquered Persia, he was uncertain whether he should have killed them all in Persia, however Aristotle explained 'he should practice good government instead in order to foster the Persians' obedience to him'. Alexander followed Aristotle's advice with good results (pp. 101-2).

⁹⁴⁹ Keen, *England*, p. 230.

⁹⁵⁰ *Der mittlenglische Versroman*, ed. by Brunner, 328. 4889-90.

⁹⁵¹ Finlayson, '*Richard, Coer de Lyon*', p. 167. See also Olivier de Laborderie, 'Richard the Lionheart and the Birth of a National Cult of St George in England: Origins and Development of a Legend', *Nottingham Medieval Studies*, 39 (1995), 37-53.

‘White’ beasts are sometimes associated with divine help in romances, instead of angels. In *Sir Ferumbras*, a milk white female deer encourages Richard to swim across a river, while he is escaping from the Saracens following him. In *The Sowdone of Babylone*, Richard is sent a white hind, (which is said to be a provider of remedies for the wounds of arrows in the medieval bestiary),⁹⁵² to help him swim safely when he goes to help the besieged French knights. In *The Romance of Otuel*, after Charles’s prayer, a white dove, which in the medieval bestiary is believed to be a bird of paradise,⁹⁵³ descends from heaven on Otuel’s head to convert him to Christianity, in a manner similar to the baptism of Christ.⁹⁵⁴

Miraculous happenings, rather than appearances of angels, religious figures or white beasts, are the means of relief and of divine support in several romances. As Robert Bartlett suggests ‘Christian definitions of miracle have tended to revolve around three conceptions: miracles can be characterized by their causation, by the sense of wonder they arouse, or by their function as signs’.⁹⁵⁵ Miracles had begun with the miracles of Christ and later on had become associated with the Christian saints as proof of their sanctity; they were also used as ‘propaganda for veneration of the saints’.⁹⁵⁶ Miracles in romances give the romance audience the thrill of the ‘remote and mysterious’.⁹⁵⁷ They are unusual happenings which empower victims and make them invincible, in addition to protecting them against suffering. God saves the innocent, the needy and the falsely accused by sending miracles to save them in case of unjust

⁹⁵² P. Ansell Robin, *Animal Lore in English Literature* (London: Murray, 1936), p. 105.

⁹⁵³ Robin, *Animal Lore*, p. 157.

⁹⁵⁴ Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him. And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straight way out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting up on him: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased (Mathew 3. 13-17). And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan. And straightway coming out of the water, he saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon him: And there came a voice from heaven, *saying*, Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased (Mark 1. 9-11). Now when all the people were baptized, it came to pass, that Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened, And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased (Luke 3. 21-22). The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for her was before me. And I knew him not: but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water. And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost (John 1. 29-33).

⁹⁵⁵ Robert Bartlett, *The Natural and the Supernatural in the Middle Ages* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. 8.

⁹⁵⁶ Craig, *Wandering Women*, p. 85.

⁹⁵⁷ Everett, ‘Characterization’, p. 12.

punishments or suffering, even if they do not pray to him. In *Athelston*, Sir Egelond, his pregnant wife Edyff and their two sons are miraculously invulnerable during their trial by fire:

Whenne that here paynys slakyd was,
And sche hadde passyd that hydous pas,
Here nose barst on bloode.
Sche was unbleseschyd foot and hand:
That sawgh the lordys of the land,
And thankyd God on Rode.⁹⁵⁸

It demonstrates the intervention of God to prove the innocence of the falsely accused victim. In *Beves of Hamptoun*, Beves miraculously divests himself of his chains and escapes from a dungeon. In *The Siege of Jerusalem*, when Veronica's veil is brought to Waspasian, the idols in the temple, which are the representations of pagan gods, are broken into pieces. In *The Sege off Melayne*, Roland is spared from burning by God's interference, but the Saracens who attempt to burn him are blinded by the same fire, which confirms the 'favoured status' of Roland.⁹⁵⁹

In *Roland and Vernagu*, God blesses King Charles by ripening the grapes in abundance in March and giving him a miraculous power. Waters become red, fishes become black after Charles curses the Saracen towns for their indulgence in the Seven Deadly Sins. Charles is the passive recipient of the first miracle, but is the channel for God's wrath (even if unbidden by him) in the second. In *Sir Cleges*, the moral message of generosity is implied by God's sending miraculously blossoming cherries in winter to Sir Cleges, in order that he may present them to the King of Cardiff to restore his own prosperity. In *Joseph of Aramathie*, nature mirrors God through three trees with equal stems, each with a word on it saying 'this creates', 'this saves' and 'this purifies'. They seem to coalesce into one, which alludes to the Holy Trinity. This miraculous sign and the appearance of an angel in the fight against Saracens make Sir Evelak accept conversion willingly, which ends his ordeal. In most of these miraculous happenings, God uses the forces of nature to teach lessons to humans, who are expected to 'read' nature. They are 'marvels' rather than 'miracles', according to medieval definitions of those terms. In this respect, romances are like bestiaries in reading nature to understand

⁹⁵⁸ *Four Romances*, ed. by Herzman, Drake and Salisbury, 367. 639-44.

⁹⁵⁹ John Finlayson, 'The Marvellous in Middle English Romance', *The Chaucer Review*, 33.4 (1999), 363-408 (p. 377).

God, since both perceive nature through the lens of Christian allegory,⁹⁶⁰ and their symbolic associations contribute to religious didacticism.⁹⁶¹ They imply that '[t]he visible world is a book, a picture or a mirror in which the viewer can see an adumbration' of the divine.⁹⁶²

Strange miraculous happenings not only reveal Havelok's noble identity (of which he has been deprived by Godard through treason) but also save him from drowning by Grim, and foretell his relief from suffering in *The Lay of Havelok the Dane*. After Grim's wife notices a light shining around Havelok and they find a mark of a cross on his right shoulder, Grim says Havelok is to be a king. He then abandons plans to slay Havelok, though ordered by Godard. Similarly, Ubbe sees a light coming from Havelok's mouth while he is sleeping, and a bright cross on his right shoulder indicating his being a king:

And saw al þat mikel lith
Fro haelok cam, þat was so brith.
Of his mouth it com il del,
þat was he war ful swiþe wel.⁹⁶³

Havelok's wife Goldborough also sees a light coming out of Havelok's mouth when he sleeps and notices a red cross on his shoulder. At the same time an angel bids her not be sad because Havelok will be the king and she will be the queen. As Mehl suggests '[t]he effect of miracles on those around the prince helps to focus our attention on the hero and his exceptional fate',⁹⁶⁴ and he will, ultimately, be a king. A similar phenomenon associated with royalty in a contemporary text is the attribution of lights originating in the king's body to Edward II in *Adam Davy's Dreams*. In this text, red and white lights shine from Edward's ears indicate his inherent sanctity,⁹⁶⁵ illuminating the world around him in a beneficial way:

In eiþer ere of oure kyng
þere spronge out a wel fare þing:
Hij wexen out so briþth so glem
þat shyneþ of þe sonne-bem;

⁹⁶⁰ Willene B. Clark, *A Medieval Book of Beasts: The Second-Family Bestiary* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2006), p. 1.

⁹⁶¹ Debra Hassig, 'Introduction', in *The Mark of the Beast: The Medieval Bestiary in Art, Life and Literature*, ed. by Debra Hassig (New York: Garland, 1999), pp. xi-xvii (p. xi).

⁹⁶² Stevens, *Medieval Romance*, p. 150.

⁹⁶³ *The Lay of Havelok the Dane*, ed. by Skeat, 59. 2110-3.

⁹⁶⁴ Mehl, *The Middle English Romances*, p. 163.

⁹⁶⁵ Lesley A. Coote, *Prophecy and Public Affairs in Later Medieval England* (York: York Medieval Press, 2000), p. 86.

Of diuers coloures hij weren,
 þat comen out of boþe his eren
 ffoure bendes alle by rewe on eiþer ere,
 Of diuers colours, red & white als hij were;
 Als fer as me þou[3th] ich mi3th see,
 hij spredden fer & wyde in þe cuntre.⁹⁶⁶

In addition to this, the red cross on Havelok's shoulder is a sign of St. Edmund's martyrdom, whose body was mutilated by the heathen Danish enemies.⁹⁶⁷ These hagiographical associations and miraculous happenings are hints of Havelok's being blessed by God, but also of his kingship being divinely appointed.⁹⁶⁸ They hint at his being *Christus*, God's anointed. His restoration to his noble identity is foretold; yet, he has to endure physical and psychological hardships to achieve them.

When victims endure ordeals and they lack physical power to resist them, they turn to God to ask for relief through prayers. Even if the victim is totally helpless, desperate and lacks power, prayers function to transmit God's power to him or her, to prove the victim's righteous cause. Prayers are like 'mayday' calls when victims are trapped and oppressed by the illegitimate authority of villains. Divine intervention occurs as a form of *deus ex machina* to end the ordeal after prayer has been heard by God. Prayers, with their predominant emphasis on salvation,⁹⁶⁹ are personal pleas to avoid suffering or to end it. Historically, the clergy regularly offered prayers for the safety and success of royal armies.⁹⁷⁰ In romances, the protective aspect of prayer is emphasized not only for military encounters, but also for individuals. In *Sir Owain*, Sir Owain escapes from suffering in Purgatory after his prayers to God. In both *Emaré* and *Octovian*, Emaré and the Empress arrive safely on land after praying to God for help. St. George's appearance in *Richard Coer de Lyon* is a response to Richard's prayers for divine help, similar to the arrival of immediate divine help against the Saracen enemy after Roland's prayers in *Roland and Vernagu*.

In *Le Bone Florence of Rome*, through Florence's miraculous survival by God's help, the poet 'lays particular emphasis on the idea of God's justice, which punishes the wicked and preserves the faithful. This is particularly evident in the miracles by means

⁹⁶⁶ Adam Davy's *5 Dreams about Edward II*, ed. by F. J. Furnivall, EETS o.s., 69 (London: Trübner, 1878), p. 12, lines 25-34. Furnivall's page and line numbers are retained.

⁹⁶⁷ Bell, 'Resituating Romance', p. 46.

⁹⁶⁸ Stuart, 'Havelok the Dane', p. 359.

⁹⁶⁹ Giles Constable, *Three Studies in Medieval Religious and Social Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 148.

⁹⁷⁰ Keen, *England*, p. 144.

of which God intervenes to save the heroine'.⁹⁷¹ Florence is protected from rape by a storm, which rises suddenly in response to her prayers, and carries her to a land where she sees (or is shown by divine miracle) a nunnery. Likewise, the prayers of the Christian princess relieve her suffering in *The King of Tars*. She is able to prove the rightness of her faith to her husband after praying to God for a miracle. The Christian princess conceives a child by her Saracen husband and prays to Christ to shield the child from shame; yet, the child is born like a dead stone, like a flesh without blood and bone, without eyes and nose:

Atte fourti woukes ende
 þe leuedi was deliuerd o bende
 þurth help of Mari milde.
 & when þe child was ybore
 Wel sori wimen were þefore,
 For lim no hadde it non.
 Bot as a rond of flesche yschore
 In chaumber it lay hem bfore
 Wiþouten blod & bon.
 For sorwe þe leuedi wald dye
 For it hadde noiþer nose no eye,
 Bot lay ded as þe ston.⁹⁷²

The monstrous birth of the child is related to his conception in a Christian and Saracen marriage. Although in the Middle Ages the monstrous birth was explained by a child's conception through a mother's menstrual period,⁹⁷³ intermarriage in the romance is associated with bestiality and sodomy,⁹⁷⁴ and the birth of the child in shape of a lump is presented as a punishment. The child is 'the offspring of racial and religious miscegenation, [...] a thing outside the human species, unrecognizable as human'.⁹⁷⁵ As Jane Gilbert states, the lump-child is 'figuratively associated with a heathenism conceived as absence from the divine Father'.⁹⁷⁶ The Sultan blames the Christian princess for the monstrous birth because of her false faith; yet, his gods fail to restore

⁹⁷¹ Heffernan, *Orient*, p. 121.

⁹⁷² *The King of Tars*, ed. by Perryman, 88-9. 574-85.

⁹⁷³ McCracken, *The Curse of Eve*, p. 64.

⁹⁷⁴ Steven F. Kruger, 'Conversion and Medieval Sexual, Religious, and Racial Categories', in *Constructing Medieval Sexuality*, ed. by Karma Lochrie, Peggy McCracken and James Alfred Schultz (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), pp. 158-79 (p. 169).

⁹⁷⁵ Heng, *Empire of Magic*, p. 232.

⁹⁷⁶ Jane Gilbert, 'Putting the Pulp into Fiction: The Lump-Child and its Parents in *The King of Tars*', in *Pulp Fictions*, ed. by McDonald, pp. 102-23 (p. 112).

the child to human shape. He accepts conversion after the child transforms into a human shape following the princess's prayers to the Christian God.

Transformation of the lump of flesh into human shape and the Sultan's complexion's change from black (which displays his sinful and monstrous 'other' Saracen identity)⁹⁷⁷ to white are possible only after the child has been baptised and the Saracen Sultan converts. In its original form, the baby has an animal-like quality; in medieval bestiaries, bears give birth to something akin to a lump of flesh, to which the mother bear gives shape by licking it.⁹⁷⁸ These miraculous transformations are didactic, as they emphasize the roles of baptism and conversion to Christianity. The baptismal waters cleanse of the 'metaphorical filth of paganism and heresy',⁹⁷⁹ and change the child's shape.⁹⁸⁰ Baptism is presented as a means to avoid not only suffering from physical deformity but also suffering after death. The heathen Sultan's change in colour from black to white after baptism also implies his leaving the darkness of the wrong faith and entering the light by accepting the right faith.

Apart from the miraculous transformation of the lump-baby, God is presented as reliever of painful sicknesses through miraculous healings in several romances. In *Roland and Vernagu*, after Charles has prayed to God for proof of the authenticity of the relics in Constantinople, their odour heals three hundred people suffering from 'sicknesses'. In *Amis and Amiloun*, the only cure for Amiloun's leprosy is the blood of Amis's children. Amis cuts his children's throats; yet, the children miraculously revive after Amiloun heals. Although Foster ignores the divine interference in the romance and suggests that the revival of the children simply provides a happy ending,⁹⁸¹ their mutilation parallels Christ's sacrifice for mankind, since the children's 'innocent blood, like Christ's, restores the sufferer'.⁹⁸² According to Hume, there is a distinction between a romance situation and a real life situation, since the sacrifice and miracle effectively heighten the emotional effect. Hume suggests that:

⁹⁷⁷ Thomas Hahn, 'The Difference the Middle Ages Makes: Colour and Race before the Modern World', *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, 31.1 (2001), 1-37 (p. 12); Margaret Sinex, ' "Monsterized Saracens," Tolkien's Haradrim, and Other Medieval "Fantasy Products" ', *Tolkien Studies*, 7 (2010), 175-96 (p. 178); Heng, *Empire of Magic*, p. 76.

⁹⁷⁸ Terence H. White, *The Bestiary: A Book of Beasts* (New York: Capricorn, 1960), p. 45; Lillian Herlands Hornstein, 'A Folklore Theme in the *King of Tars*', *Philological Quarterly*, 20 (1941), 82-7 (p. 83).

⁹⁷⁹ Czarnowus, *Inscription on the Body*, pp. 55-6.

⁹⁸⁰ Lisa Lampert, 'Race, Periodicity, and the (Neo-) Middle Ages', *Modern Language Quarterly*, 65.3 (2004), 391-421 (p. 408).

⁹⁸¹ Foster, 'Simplicity', p. 416.

⁹⁸² Corinne J. Saunders, 'Bodily Narratives: Illness, Medicine and Healing in Middle English Romance', in *Boundaries*, ed. by Cartlidge, pp. 175-90 (p. 183).

There is a crucial distinction to be drawn between romance literature and real life: actions are possible in the former which would be unacceptable in the latter. A real-life Amis would probably not cut his children's throats -his bishop would have something to say about it if he did- but in a romance even this is possible, and so, too, is the miracle which revives the boys and brings earthly prosperity and happiness to all.⁹⁸³

Amis's willingness to suffer is not 'realistic', but it does function as a means of displaying Christian morality. This miraculous revival of the children proposes that 'God's grace can give us the ultimate happy ending'.⁹⁸⁴ As a more complicated intertext, it replays the sacrifice of Isaac by Abraham,⁹⁸⁵ the killing of the Paschal Lamb (the children as innocent lambs) by the Israelites at the Passover⁹⁸⁶ (enabling God to save them from the Angel of Death), and the massacre of the Holy Innocents on the orders of Herod.⁹⁸⁷ All of these were seen as types of the sacrifice of Christ by God, for the salvation of human beings from their sin.

A miraculous healing is the reason for a willing conversion in *Joseph of Aramathie*, since Sir Evelak's wife converts after her mother is healed by the prayers of a Christian hermit. In the same romance, the role of relics is also emphasized, with the restoration of a knight's cut-off arm by Sir Evelak's shield, on which Joseph's son Josaphe has made a cross. All miraculous recoveries prove that nothing is impossible for God, as in 'saints' lives' and 'miracles', its most powerful intertexts. In *The Siege of Jerusalem*, Christ's selected miracles (changing water into wine, healing ten lepers at once, curing paralyses, raising dead men, curing lameness, deafness and tumours, feeding five thousand people with two fishes) are recounted as indications of God's power acting through him, and of his care for Christian people. Likewise, Veronica's veil which heals severe wounds, tumours and stains on the face is received in Rome 'as if it were Christ himself'.⁹⁸⁸ In a sense, it is, as it has come into contact with Christ, and absorbed his body fluids (the sweat from his face). Therefore, its touch is the *actual* touch of Christ as if administered in person. In the Middle Ages, 'the discovery of relics, for which the crusaders naturally had a profound respect, helped to reinforce in their minds the message they thought they were receiving signs'.⁹⁸⁹ In this respect, the

⁹⁸³ Hume, 'Amis and Amiloun', p. 41.

⁹⁸⁴ Yoon, 'Leprosy', p. 51.

⁹⁸⁵ Genesis 22. 1-24.

⁹⁸⁶ Exodus 12. 1-51.

⁹⁸⁷ Mathew 2. 16-18.

⁹⁸⁸ Yeager, 'The Siege of Jerusalem', p. 72.

⁹⁸⁹ Riley-Smith, *First Crusade*, p. 93.

veil is also accepted as a sign for a holy military mission, and this is confirmed when Waspasian wages war against the Saracens after he is healed of his leprosy by the veil.

In *Le Bone Florence of Rome*, Florence becomes a healer of incurable sicknesses because of her spiritual perfection, and her role as a healer raises her to saintly status.⁹⁹⁰ This association of the female ‘saint’ with bodily illnesses, infected body fluids and the healing of ‘holy’ women resembles the lives and miracles of female saints and mystics of the later Middle Ages who, like Christ, were believed to have skills to heal the sick.⁹⁹¹ After her retreat in a nunnery, Florence begins healing the incurable sicknesses of many people, including her victimizers, who suffer from leprosy, bloody wounds, rotten limbs, crimped bodies and muteness. Florence’s role as a healer not only relieves the painful sicknesses of many sufferers, but also ends Florence’s own suffering, because it makes her invulnerable to threats; she is respected and nobody dares to harm her.

In *Sir Gowther*, miraculous healing indicates a spiritual regeneration, achieving God’s forgiveness and an end to suffering. Sir Gowther is struck dumb when he retreats into a castle. His muteness heals miraculously after he is forgiven by God, just like the miraculous healing of the Emperor’s daughter. After his death, Sir Gowther turns into a healer figure by the grace of God:

For he garus tho blynd to see
 And tho dompe to speyke, pardé,
 And makus tho crokyd ryght;
 And gyffus to tho mad hor wytte
 And mony odur meracullus yette,
 Thoro tho grace of God allmyght.⁹⁹²

In the Middle Ages, dreams were considered to be visions separating the saved from the damned, by presenting true understanding to those saved by God’s grace.⁹⁹³ Dreams had been considered significant even before Christianity by both Jews and Greeks, who built dreaming places at their shrines to interpret dreams which had been believed to relate

⁹⁹⁰ For a discussion of the role of saints in medieval healing practices see Jones, ‘Popular Medical Knowledge’, pp. 441-2.

⁹⁹¹ Christ is described as a ‘healer’ in the Bible. See Luke 4. 14-18, Luke 6. 17, Mathew 4. 23, Mathew 8. 16, Mathew 14. 14, Mathew 14. 35. For the exemplary miraculous healings by the female saints see Caroline Walker Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), pp. 136-9; Sabina Flanagan, *Hildegard of Bingen: A Visionary Life* (London: Routledge, 2001), p. 9; Bert Ghezzi, *Mystics and Miracles: Stories of Life Touched by God* (Chicago: Loyola Press, 2002), p. xvi.

⁹⁹² *Six Middle English Romances*, ed. by Mills, 168. 733-8.

⁹⁹³ Andrew Galloway, ‘Visions and Visionaries’, in *The Oxford Handbook*, ed. by Treharne and Walker, pp. 256-75 (p. 260).

messages.⁹⁹⁴ In medieval society dreams were considered to be revelatory, symbolic and open to interpretation.⁹⁹⁵ There were even dream handbooks providing interpretations of specific dreams such as the dream books attributed to Joseph and Daniel.⁹⁹⁶ All dreams were accepted to be potentially meaningful and put the dreamer in contact with God.⁹⁹⁷ As suggested by Steven F. Kruger:

Writers of the high and late Middle Ages treated the experience of dreaming with simultaneous anxiety and fascination. [...] [T]hey saw dreams as dangerous, associated with pagan practices and demonic seduction. On the other hand, they claimed that dreams could be divinely inspired and foretell the future.⁹⁹⁸

In romances, besides miraculous happenings, dreams are channels for transmitting divine warnings, because they foretell either a suffering or a relief. Divine warnings may be conveyed through the appearance of angels or of Christ to the dreamer. The dreamer is not necessarily the sufferer himself, but may be someone who is expected to help the victim. Although dreams are digressive in romances and are narrated in a few lines, they give important ‘hints’ of suffering or relief. The dreamers’ reactions to the dreams are essential to the story, because ignorance to warnings in dreams may bring misfortunes, whilst acting on the dream’s content may avoid suffering. All warnings through dreams are considered to be important by dreamers in the romances, and are usually heeded in order to prevent possible suffering or end it.

Dreams mostly foretell upcoming suffering or relief directly, or symbolically as visions. In *Cheuelere Assigne*, the dream offers a revelation of truth, proof of innocence and divine justice. The night before Beatrice is going to be burned, an angel appears to the hermit saying that Enyas, the child the hermit fosters (as a result of being forewarned), is spared by God’s grace, and he is fated to end the suffering of his mother and his siblings, ‘And criste hath formeth þis chylde to fyzte for his moder.’⁹⁹⁹ In *The Sege off Melayne*, the victim and the reliever have simultaneous dreams which foretell the necessity of combining forces against the Saracens. Alantyne dreams of an angel bidding him to go to King Charles to ask for his help against his Saracen foe. On the same night, King Charles dreams of an angel who says that Christ has sent him a sword,

⁹⁹⁴ Lynn Thorndike, *A History of Magic and Experimental Science*, 8 vols (New York: Columbia University Press, 1923-58), I (1923), p. 290.

⁹⁹⁵ Neal, *The Masculine Self*, p. 191; Hostetter, ‘Food’, p. 62.

⁹⁹⁶ See Alison M. Peden, ‘Macrobius and Medieval Dream Literature’, *Medium Ævum*, 54 (1985), 59-73 (pp. 59-60).

⁹⁹⁷ Jacques Le Goff, *The Medieval Imagination*, trans. by Arthur Goldhammer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), pp. 196-211.

⁹⁹⁸ Steven F. Kruger, *Dreaming in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 7.

⁹⁹⁹ *The Romance of the Cheuelere Assigne*, ed. by Gibbs, 10. 200.

and wants him to help Alantyne. When Charles wakes up he finds the sword by his side, and decides to conquer the heathen lands.

Divine intervention in a dream may foretell relief after a short period of suffering, and the relief may be foretold symbolically. In *The King of Tars*, the princess who consents to marry the heathen Sultan to prevent the suffering of Christians is informed by a dream before her marriage that her lifeless child will gain human shape after he is baptised, and her Saracen husband will convert to Christianity. In her dream, when the princess is attacked by a hundred black hounds and about to be bitten by a hound with a beard which stands for her husband, a knight in white clothes appears:

‘& seyde to hir, ‘Mi swete wigt,
 No þarf þe noþing drede,
 Of Teruagaunt no of Mahoun,
 þi lord þat suffred passioun
 Schal help þe at þi nede.¹⁰⁰⁰

He assures her that even if her vision foretells a threat and frightens her, Christ who suffered the Passion will help her.

The symbolic dream in *Amis and Amiloun* foretells a reward for a previous reliever of suffering, but also a trial and possible suffering for the dreamer. It also functions as a test of their loyalty as sworn brothers in face of this threat. Both Amis and Amiloun are tested through sacrifices, and as Hume states, ‘each test is preceded by a heavenly warning’.¹⁰⁰¹ Amiloun dreams that Amis is surrounded by a wild bear and other beasts, and sets off to find Amis in the forest. Amiloun becomes a leper when he ignores the divine warning against fighting the steward to save Amis, whilst an angel reveals Amis in a dream that sacrificing his children is the only cure for Amiloun.

A dream may be symbolic but also informative, since the victim in the dream suffers simultaneously in real life, as in *Le Bone Florence of Rome*. Tyrry dreams that a thunderbolt strikes at his daughter Betres, as she is stabbed by Machary:

Hur fadur thocht in a vysyon,
 Hys doghtur schulde be strekyn downe,
 Wyth a thonderblaste;
 And as a þyck leyʒtenyng abowte hur ware.
 Vp he starte wyth mekyll care,
 And a kyrtell on he caste;

¹⁰⁰⁰ *The King of Tars*, ed. by Perryman, 85. 452-6.

¹⁰⁰¹ Hume, ‘*Amis and Amiloun*’, p. 25.

A candyll at a lawmpe he lyght,
 And to hur chaumber rekyd he ryght,
 Thorowly on he thraste;

And fonde Betres hys doghtur dedd,
 The bedd was full of blode redd,¹⁰⁰²

In *William of Palerne*, Melior's dream symbolically foretells that she and William will be spared from possible suffering. At the same time, the woman, being less 'reasonable', weaker and more accessible to sin than the man, is empowered by dreams and prophecies. Melior dreams that beasts beset the cave in which she and her lover William hide from her father, led on by a lion and the lion's cub; but the werewolf helping them to hide catches up with the cub and runs off with it. William says it is only a fancy, but it comes true when they hear the sound of the horsemen seeking them, and the werewolf attacks their leader. The dream in *Sir Orfeo* is also a woman's dream, in which the dreamer's mind is accessed directly by a threatening fairy power:

And than thou schalt with ous go
 And live with ous evermo.
 And yif thou makest ous y-let,
 Whar thou be, thou worst y-fet,
 And totore thine limes al¹⁰⁰³

It is a direct warning about the impossibility of preventing her ordeal. Although the romance has a pagan setting and characters, a Christian idea of fate and God's ordeal are implied through the helplessness of Sir Orfeo and his wife Heurodis against fate. Heurodis is informed about her forthcoming suffering in her dream, and she is warned that nothing, even her husband's attempts to save her, will be able to prevent it. She dreams of a fairy king on his horse with his hundreds of men and damsels who asks her to ride to his palace to view it, then orders her to be ready tomorrow to go and live with them forever. He also warns her that if she hinders them, no one shall help her. Apart from the threats of physical mutilation, as Wade notes, it is a kind of 'psychological ravishing'¹⁰⁰⁴ since she suffers emotionally because of her helplessness.

Generydes and Clarionas are warned directly against Knight Malichias by means of dreaming in *Generydes*. When Clarionas dreams that Malichias slays her, Generydes

¹⁰⁰² *Le Bone Florence of Rome*, ed. by Heffernan, 106. 1639-49.

¹⁰⁰³ *The Middle English Breton Lays*, ed. by Laskaya and Salisbury, 30. 167-73.

¹⁰⁰⁴ Wade, *Fairies*, p. 77.

dreams that he is alone with Malichias in a place where he robs Generydes of his clothes. However, his relief from Malichias is also foretold; when he draws his sword to defend himself, the Sultan simultaneously wounds Malichias. In *Octovian*, before she is exiled with her twins, the Empress is directly warned by a dream that her children will be abducted by a dragon, when she dreams herself in the wilderness. A dream may foretell an ordeal indirectly, and the dreamer may not be the victim but someone who is a potential reliever of suffering, as in the *Erle of Tolous*. The suffering of a wife is revealed to her husband symbolically in a dream, when the Emperor dreams that the Empress's body is torn by two wild boars:

In hys slepe a swevyn he mett,
 The story telleth us soo.
 Hym thocht ther come two wylde borys
 And hys wyfe all toterys
 And rofe hur body in twoo;¹⁰⁰⁵

Meanwhile, the Empress is being subjected to the sexual attempts of two knights and their false accusation of adultery.

In several romances, dreams are interpreted not by the dreamer but by someone close to him or her, and they are regarded as warnings of forthcoming ordeals. In *Joseph of Aramathie*, Joseph's son Josaphe interprets Sir Evelak's dream that God is displeased with him because of his wrong faith; therefore, he will be visited with vengeance soon and killed by the King of Babylone. There may be 'cross dreams' in which dreamers are warned about each other's suffering. Horn and Rymenhild's dreams in *King Horn* are 'symbolic representations of the threat'.¹⁰⁰⁶ Rymenhild dreams of a big fish which breaks her net. Horn interprets this as someone who will do them harm. The big fish turns out to be Fikenhild, who accuses Horn of a plot against the King. Like Rymenhild's dream of Horn's forthcoming suffering, Horn dreams of Rymenhild's possible suffering. He dreams of Rymenhild being taken on to a ship which lurches and she is about to drown. Although she wants to swim, Fikenhild pushes her back with his sword's hilt. Athulf interprets it as Fikenhild's betrayal of Rymenhild, and Horn hurries to save her. Horn's dream also provides him with a glimpse of his destiny, by motivating him to resist his victimization.¹⁰⁰⁷

¹⁰⁰⁵ *The Middle English Breton Lays*, ed. by Laskaya and Salisbury, 341. 807-11.

¹⁰⁰⁶ Hynes-Berry, 'Cohesion', p. 661.

¹⁰⁰⁷ See De, 'Patterns of Coherence', p. 159; Hostetter, 'Food', p. 70.

The interpreted dream may foretell relief rather than suffering. Havelok dreams that he is on a high hill and everything in Denmark cleaves to his arms because his arms are so long, and England is enclosed in his hand in *The Lay of Havelok the Dane*. Goldborough says he will be the King of Denmark and England in a year. The dream establishes Havelok's place as a possessor and a protector, since his body takes a position above and outside the territories he will rule.¹⁰⁰⁸ In the *Stanzaic Guy of Warwick*, after Guy promises to help release him, Tirri dreams of a hill, which he enters through a hole and finds rich treasure, with a sword on top. Guy interprets that Tirri will recover his lands, which comes true after Guy and Tirri find the treasure and the sword, as in Tirri's dream. William's mother's dream in *William of Palerne* is interpreted by her priest Moses as an approaching relief from all suffering. She dreams that she and her daughter are attacked by a hundred thousand leopards and bears, but a werewolf and two white bears come to their assistance. The bears change into crowned harts as they come nearer, and hunt down the bears. Then, she goes back to her castle where her right arm stretches over Rome and her left lies on Spain. Moses interprets her dream that the beasts who besiege her are the men who threaten her. The white bears, or harts, with crowns mean that a knight will come to help her and take the King of Spain and his son as prisoners, and he will be king. The werewolf is also a knight from whom Queen Felice shall hear of her own son.

Different from dreams of warning or asking for the dreamer's help for the victim, there are dreams which warn the dreamer about ongoing events; they are informative rather than prophetic. In *Beves of Hamptoun*, Saber dreams twice that Beves is wounded, the former interpreted by his wife as the loss of either Beves's wife or child, and the latter as the loss of his horse Arundel. Both interpretations are true, because Arundel is stolen and given to King Yvor as a present. Saber believes that both dreams are warnings, so he sets off to find Beves to help him overcome his suffering.

Just as dreams may originate with demons and fairies, a deceitful dream may also be created by human beings using magic. It is demonic, and it plays an essentially different role for its recipient than does one which has been angelically inspired. In *Kyng Alisaunder*, Neptanabus treats Olympias as a sexual object, then abuses her to satisfy his sexual desire and to victimize her husband. He tells her that her husband King Philip of Macedon will abandon her for another wife and before that she is going

¹⁰⁰⁸ See Donna Crawford, 'The Vulnerable Body of *Havelok the Dane*', *Medieval Forum*, 1 (2002) <<http://www.sfsu.edu/~medieval/Volume%201/Crawford.html>> [accessed 08 December 2010] (para. 11 of 23); Staines, '*Havelok the Dane*', p. 609.

to give birth to a son of the god Jupiter Ammon (who is in fact Neptanabus himself in disguise), who will avenge her and conquer the world. He casts a spell on her waxen image which puts her in his power, and makes her dream that Jupiter Ammon in the shape of a dragon sleeps with her. When her pregnancy is revealed, Neptanabus makes Philip dream of a goshawk settling on Olympias's bed, which is interpreted by Clerk Antyfon that Olympias is Jupiter Ammon's mistress and she will give birth to a son who will conquer the world, but he will be poisoned.

The medieval imaginary was inseparable from religious and supernatural beliefs, both of which were presented as a means of understanding suffering and relief. Apart from divine interferences imparting a religious tone to the idea of pain and suffering in romances, supernatural agents invoke an otherworldly yet non-religious world to discuss the same ideas. As Saunders states, they are dualistic in nature since they are either idealized or menacing worlds with their own rules.¹⁰⁰⁹ Supernatural worlds definitely offer an 'otherworld'; yet, their otherworld is neither divine nor earthly. Supernatural realms break the limitations of ordinary life by offering glimpses of the actuality beyond reality.¹⁰¹⁰ This unfamiliar area provides a new place for the discussion of pain and suffering, which are represented not as divine ordeals but as secular tests. However, their teachings are not very different from religious teachings, as they also praise Christian virtues and condemn the sins. Therefore, both divine and supernatural interferences celebrate Christian morals, except for the latter's avoiding a religious tone.

'Penitential' or 'religious' romances and romances that do not deal with religious subject matter are not only essentially similar, but they appear in the same manuscripts.¹⁰¹¹ Romances with 'religious' concerns and those with 'secular' contents make use of similar means to highlight the wrongfulness of sinners and the necessity of being a good human being; the former by emphasizing the importance of divine salvation and the latter by imitating the divine power and mirroring it by means of supernatural interferences. In non-religious romances, supernatural powers replace the divine power, as authority figures and those who have magic have the control over people and circumstances. As Michelle Sweeney points out:

The success or failure of a character against a magical trial, for example, provides evidence against concerning his or her moral status. A magical trial also serves to reveal the position of a character on issues important to the community, such as when

¹⁰⁰⁹ Corinne J. Saunders, *Magic and the Supernatural in Medieval English Romance* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2010), p. 180.

¹⁰¹⁰ Reiss, 'Romance', p. 120.

¹⁰¹¹ Hopkins, *The Sinful Knights*, p. 198.

to maintain loyalty to a king over loyalty to a lover. In creating romances that employ magic in this way, the author exposes the audience to situations which stimulates its imagination and powers of analysis. Romance authors were also able to encourage the exploration of human motivation by using magic to create or expose complex scenarios that could not be readily resolved by any one set of established moral guidelines. This technique enabled a broader discussion of social issues than would have been allowed in situations constrained, for example, by the boundaries of Christian dogmatism.¹⁰¹²

A didactic tone is actually dominant in both divine and supernatural interferences, and similar to divine interferences, supernatural agents are active both in inflicting suffering and in overcoming it. Both may help a victim to achieve awareness of his mistakes or warn him to avoid suffering. As Cooper points out, romances ‘rarely make magic the driving factor in the plot, or the decisive factor in the hero’s or heroine’s success. Magic and the supernatural often appear oddly supplementary’,¹⁰¹³ unlike divine interferences which alter a victim’s life directly and positively at all times. Appearances of angels are replaced by appearances of fairy ladies, miraculous happenings are provided by magic, devoted prayers for relief are substituted by magical objects, fights against non-Christians are directed towards giants and dragons, prophetic dreams change into omens and the Holy Land is equated to fairy land.

Although Reinhard states that it is ‘frequently perilous to come too closely to grips with people of the Otherworld’,¹⁰¹⁴ fairy ladies and fairy lands in romances are not represented as purely demonic; on the contrary they are relatively helpful and peaceful. Their representation is ‘angelic’, and fairies substitute for angels, warning of suffering or helping a victim to overcome it. In this respect, ‘the otherworldly intervention is not a threat but a catalyst’ that helps aristocratic society to solve a problem that cannot be resolved.¹⁰¹⁵ However, fairy females may be threatening when they warn their men about the consequences of revealing their fairy identities, or they may victimize them if they ignore their warnings. The sufferers’ visits to fairy lands and castles are mostly searches for relief, comfort and protection, or the results of meeting a fairy lady who

¹⁰¹² Michelle Sweeney, *Magic in Medieval Romance from Chrétien de Troyes to Geoffrey Chaucer* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2000), p. 13.

¹⁰¹³ Cooper, *The English Romance in Time*, p. 143.

¹⁰¹⁴ Reinhard, ‘Setting Adrift’, p. 61.

¹⁰¹⁵ Jeff Rider, ‘The Other Worlds of Romance’, in *The Cambridge Companion*, ed. by Krueger, pp. 115-31 (p. 118).

falls in love with them. Even if the fairy lands represent dual worlds of reality and fantasy,¹⁰¹⁶ it is not in the fairy land but in the mortals' land where victims suffer.

While the fairy females, like secular/erotic angels, relieve the suffering of male victims by marrying them, providing them with earthly riches, protecting them from physical vulnerabilities and warning them against possible ordeals, the fairy male - like the devil - is represented as mischievous and his fairy land is not as peaceful as it seems. In that sense, the fairy male is similar to Saracen female who is mischievous, threatening and a potential victimizer, like Floripas in *Sir Ferumbras* and *The Sowdone of Babylone*.

In *Sir Degaré*, a fairy knight violates the chivalric ethos, exposes his violence by raping the King of Brittany's daughter in the forest, and afterwards leaves her in distress with a son in her womb. However, the romance shifts attention from the consequence of the fairy knight's violation of the princess in order to focus on the chivalric quest of Sir Degaré, the child born out of this conception. Hence, the sexual violence of the fairy knight is disregarded in favour of male heroism, and this is relatively justified when the princess marries her rapist years later. Alternatively, the intrusion of the male fairy does not highlight male heroism, but rather weakens and feminizes the male protagonist in *Sir Orfeo*. The fairy king in *Sir Orfeo* initiates suffering not only for Heurodis by abducting her, but also for her husband Sir Orfeo, who retreats into a forest after her abduction. Ramsey claims that the fairy world resembles the Otherworld; therefore, it implies death for Heurodis;¹⁰¹⁷ yet, Field believes it is only an 'other' land because 'the fairy world knows nothing of the death that defines the human. That Orfeo and Herodis do eventually die in the natural course of the events at the end of the romance is a signifier of their humanity'.¹⁰¹⁸ For Wade, it is a place where the ordinary rules of the mortal world do not apply.¹⁰¹⁹

On the other hand, Battles, Cartlidge and Finlayson suggest that the fairy land is 'worldly' since it mirrors a real kingdom.¹⁰²⁰ As Hynes-Berry points out, the fairy king 'is not really presented as evil; he seems to operate as much outside our judgement as he does outside of the human realm'.¹⁰²¹ He appears to Heurodis in a dream with his hundreds of knights and damsels, offers her a ride to his palace and orders her to be

¹⁰¹⁶ See Ramsey, *Chivalric Romances*, pp. 132- 47.

¹⁰¹⁷ Ramsey, *Chivalric Romances*, p. 153.

¹⁰¹⁸ Field, 'Popular Romance', pp. 18-9.

¹⁰¹⁹ Wade, *Fairies*, p. 80.

¹⁰²⁰ Battles, 'Sir Orfeo', p. 193; Neil Cartlidge, 'Sir Orfeo in the Otherworld: Courting Chaos?', *Studies in the Age of Chaucer*, 26 (2004), 195-226 (p. 226); Neil Cartlidge, 'Introduction', in *Boundaries*, ed. by Cartlidge, pp. 1-11 (p. 5); Finlayson, 'Marvellous', pp. 391-2.

¹⁰²¹ Hynes-Berry, 'Cohesion', p. 655.

ready to be taken to his palace to live there forever. Thus, neither the court nor the fairy land proves to be safe for Heurodis, since she is vulnerable to threats in her husband's house, from which she is taken by force and brought to a mysterious and unfamiliar court. The fairy king also reminds Heurodis that it is impossible to prevent her capture. Despite his threats, 'the true extent of the Fairy King's power is not clear'¹⁰²² since Sir Orfeo cannot prevent the fairy king's abducting Heurodis, but he can easily enter the fairy king's palace to play his harp, which implies that this land is not impenetrable, and it is not impossible to mollify him.

Although the fairy king's palace is described as peaceful and Heurodis is not presented as a victim, its peaceful appearance disguises its potential danger, and Heurodis's being taken there without her consent makes her the fairy king's victim. Indeed, her husband Sir Orfeo suffers more after her detention by retreating into a forest and living in poor conditions. The fairy world is attractive, but also threatening and dystopian, because it is full of bliss for fairies; however, full of violence and suffering for human beings. Inside the castle, Orfeo sees people who seem to be dead but are in fact not quite dead:

Than he gan bihold about al,
And seighe liggeand within the wal
Of folk that were thider y-brought
And thought dede, and nare nought.¹⁰²³

Each of them has been taken by enchantment and some of them have no heads, some have no arms, some have bodily wounds, some are drowned, some are armed on horseback, some are shrivelled by fire, some are dead and some are driven mad. For Pearsall, these bodies belong to people driven out of their minds through pain and suffering;¹⁰²⁴ but for Dorena Allen, they represent unexpected death by violence, accident or misadventures.¹⁰²⁵ The reason for the mutilated bodies is suggested to be wars, accidents or punishments by Alan J. Fletcher,¹⁰²⁶ while for Caldwell they replicate the self-mutilation practised by Heurodis and Orfeo in the wilderness.¹⁰²⁷

The representation of the mutilated bodies is ambiguous and open to various interpretations. If these mutilated bodies share the same fate as Heurodis and have been

¹⁰²² Hynes-Berry, 'Cohesion', p. 668.

¹⁰²³ *The Middle English Breton Lays*, ed. by Laskaya and Salisbury, 36. 387-90.

¹⁰²⁴ Pearsall, 'Madness', p. 59.

¹⁰²⁵ Allen, 'Orpheus and Orfeo', p. 105.

¹⁰²⁶ Alan J. Fletcher, 'Sir Orfeo and the Flight from the Enchanters', *Studies in the Age of Chaucer*, 22 (2000), 141-77 (p. 143).

¹⁰²⁷ Caldwell, 'Heroism of Heurodis', p. 301.

abducted by the fairy king, they are the undeserved victims; and unlike Heurodis who is saved by Orfeo, they are the real victims who are helpless in their ordeal. However, if the fairy land is accepted as the Otherworld, more specifically hell, then they are self-victimizers, who have deserved suffering. These bodies in mutilation are in total contrast to the heavenly atmosphere and appearance of the castle. According to Nicholson, there is ‘opposition of two worlds’ in the romance:

The human world of Orfeo’s court, a good society deserving its good king; and the faerie world whose operations are intelligible up to a point, but always as irrational, extra-human force. The fittest images for the second world are derived from experience of dream or nightmare, and popular iconography of Hell.¹⁰²⁸

Heurodis’s nightmare and the tortured bodies in the fairy land strengthen the image of the fairy land as hell, and hint that it is a place of pain and suffering. Actually, neither Orfeo’s land nor the fairy king’s land is secure enough for Heurodis, as the fairy land is ‘a world of artifice’.¹⁰²⁹ According to Seth Lerer:

Such a city presents itself to the viewer as an artefact: a construction designed only to awe, to direct the attention not to the moral bases which organize society but rather to the illusory trappings. [...] This is a world of illusion whose technical tricks and decorative richness fail to conceal the moral vacuity of its inhabitants.¹⁰³⁰

This world of artifice is symbolic because the fairy king’s determination to take Heurodis with him to his fairy land, his reminding her of the impossibility of avoiding her detention, and the suffering bodies in his fairy land, remind the audience of the almightiness of God, and the inevitability of suffering for sinners; whilst Sir Orfeo’s humble retreat demonstrates his submission to the divine ordeal. Although the fairy king resembles God or the devil, his fairy world is a combination of heaven, hell and earth as it is full of entertainment and suffering, a world of ‘play’.

The forest interpreted by Orfeo as the landscape of desolation is a hunting preserve and setting of pleasure for the fairies. The forest and the fairy land are places where the fairies live peacefully, as in heaven. They are busy with human activities, especially with noble forms of entertainment like hunting, hawking and minstrelsy; yet, although fairies live there happily, there is mutilation for human beings, as if torments in hell. Heurodis and Orfeo’s visits to the fairy land are not totally punitive as in hell, rewarding as in heaven, or ordinary as on earth. They are indeed a combination of the

¹⁰²⁸ Nicholson, ‘*Sir Orfeo*’, p. 178.

¹⁰²⁹ Seth Lerer, ‘Artifice and Artistry in *Sir Orfeo*’, *Speculum*, 60.1 (1985), 92-109 (p. 100).

¹⁰³⁰ Lerer, ‘Artifice’, p. 101.

experiences in heaven, hell and on earth which makes the fairy land a ‘neutral’ area where ordeal is soothed, the fairy is humanized, and the boundary between the worldly and the Otherworldly is blurred.

Unlike the hostile fairy land of the fairy king in *Sir Orfeo*, the fairy land in *Sir Launfal* is a sanctuary or a retreat for avoiding suffering. The fairy Lady Tryamour helps Sir Launfal to resist and endure suffering, and when he fails she saves him from further suffering.¹⁰³¹ In the human world, Sir Launfal is subjected to Queen Guenevere’s temptations and her attempts to punish him because of his rejecting her. However, Lady Tryamour carries him to her fairy land at the end of the romance, away from suffering on earth. Lady Tryamour’s fairy land is a pleasant isle which resembles the Garden of Eden with its security and primal pleasures. Lady Tryamour is protective like an angel, providing Sir Launfal with magical gifts (a purse, a horse, armour and a servant) to make him invulnerable and comfortable in the mortals’ world. However, she threatens him by warning that he is destined to suffer if he boasts of her to anyone:

‘But of o thyng, Syr Knyght, I warne the,
That thou make no bost of me
For no kennes mede!
And yf thou doost, I warny the before,
All my love thou hast forlore!’¹⁰³²

This liaison between human and fairy recalls the courtly principle that a noble lover shall never betray his beloved lady;¹⁰³³ yet, it also makes the fairy lady threatening even if she is the ‘giver/gift herself’.¹⁰³⁴ Keeping her existence secret makes it more tempting to reveal it. The reason for secrecy does not stem from her desire to protect herself from harm, since she has freedom and control over her actions.¹⁰³⁵ The deal for keeping her secret makes her the ruler over Sir Launfal, as he has to obey her in order not to suffer. Even if B. K. Martin states that ‘there is little attempt made to relate Tryamour to any specific order of being’ since she is presented as a mortal woman with a name,¹⁰³⁶ she is free from all social and moral constraints. After Sir Launfal’s boasting of her to Queen

¹⁰³¹ For a discussion of Sir Launfal and the fairy lady in different versions of *Sir Launfal*, see Elizabeth Williams, ‘“A Damsel by Herself Alone”: Images of Magic and Femininity from *Lanval* to *Sir Lambewell*’, in *Romance Reading*, ed. by Fellows and others, pp. 155-70; Stokes, ‘*Lanval*’, pp. 56-77.

¹⁰³² *The Middle English Breton Lays*, ed. by Laskaya and Salisbury, 220. 361-5.

¹⁰³³ Neil Cartlidge, ‘The Fairies in the Fountain: Promiscuous Liaisons’, in *The Exploitations*, ed. by Ashe, Djordjević and Weiss, pp. 15-27 (p. 21).

¹⁰³⁴ Wade, *Fairies*, p. 115.

¹⁰³⁵ Shirley Marchalonis, ‘Above Rubies: Popular Views of Medieval Women’, in *Popular Culture*, ed. by Campbell, pp. 56-62 (p. 62).

¹⁰³⁶ Martin, ‘*Sir Launfal*’, p. 205.

Guenevere, Lady Tryamour disappears as she foretold, which is ‘a sudden reminder of violence of the faery world’¹⁰³⁷ ruled by her orders. After her disappearance, Sir Launfal suffers because he is feminized and becomes vulnerable to Guenevere’s threat and punishment; yet, his suffering is ended by the reappearance of Lady Tryamour when he is about to be punished. Lady Tryamour blows a breath which blinds Guenevere, and she takes Sir Launfal to her fairy land where he will be removed from suffering forever.

Historically, although punishment by mutilation, including blinding, was legal in the thirteenth century, it ‘probably ceased by the turn of the century’.¹⁰³⁸ All the same, the punishment of Guenevere by Lady Tryamour represents the administration of justice within the historical background of ‘judicial inquiry, emphasis on the witness, concern over the king’s authority, and the judicial abuses’ in the fourteenth century in a time of unsettled monarchical control; therefore, ‘the intervention of a supernatural being in the administration of justice condemns the failure of ruler and court and presents a model for emulation: perfect moral and humane value and action’.¹⁰³⁹ Guenevere’s desire for empowerment through perverting justice and her punishment are reminiscent of Richard II, whose vengeful policy brought about his disposition.¹⁰⁴⁰ It is significant that the execution of Guenevere’s sentence is performed by a supernatural agent, which historically implies that ‘no one in the court would do so despite the legal demands of justice’.¹⁰⁴¹

Finlayson suggests that there is very little attempt in the romance to elaborate on the magical elements;¹⁰⁴² yet, magic is significant in revealing the threatening nature of Lady Tryamour. Her punishing Guenevere with magic reveals Lady Tryamour’s menacing and violent nature, and the unavoidability of ordeal if she is wrathful. It is also emphasized in the romance that Sir Launfal suffers mainly because of his failure in keeping *trouthe*. Therefore, despite Lady Tryamour’s threatening fairy nature, it is also Launfal’s fallibility which makes him more vulnerable to her magical power.

A similar ‘fairy protection’ and ‘fairy threat’ dichotomy is experienced by the male victim in *Partonope of Blois*. Although Melior is not a fairy lady, she has ‘a

¹⁰³⁷ Saunders, *Forest*, p. 146.

¹⁰³⁸ John G. Bellamy, *Crime and Public Order in England in the Later Middle Ages* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973), p. 181.

¹⁰³⁹ Dinah Hazell, ‘The Blinding of Gwennere: Thomas Chestre as Social Critic’, in *Arthurian Literature XX*, ed. by Keith Busby and Roger Dalrymple (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2003), pp. 123-44 (p. 135).

¹⁰⁴⁰ Keen, *England*, pp. 300-1.

¹⁰⁴¹ George W. Tuma and Dinah Hazell, ‘*Sir Launfal*’, ‘*Harken to Me*’: *Middle English Romances in Translation*, *Medieval Forum* Special Edition, (2009)

<http://www.sfsu.edu/~medieval/romances/sir_launfal_rev.html#sir_launfalcomm> [accessed 18 December 2011] (para. 48 of 49).

¹⁰⁴² Finlayson, ‘Marvellous’, p. 389.

female fantasy of secret power’;¹⁰⁴³ therefore, she creates a fairy land by using magic, in order to live in peace with her lover. The mystical atmosphere of her enchanted ship carrying the voyager into her mysterious place, the sea journey to a deserted castle full of service without any human in it, seem to be demonic at first, until Melior appears, declares her love for Partonope and helps him to overcome his enemies. Melior’s land is a down-to-earth place of worldly punishment, since Melior rejects forgiving Partonope after he betrays her, despite her previously forbidding him to see her for a year and a half. Partonope’s mother suspects her son’s lover of being an evil spirit, and enlists the help of magic to expose her nature by an enchanted lantern. Magic used to reveal magic makes the mortal lovers victims, even if previously the representation of Melior’s enchanted ship and palace appear to be perilous. Partonope’s lack of trust and his disobedience against Melior is more devastating than Melior’s practice of magic. Since Melior is not a fairy lady but undeniably empowered by magic, she is not as threatening as the other fairy ladies in other romances, and she suffers as well, since she loses her magical power. More importantly, Melior loses control of her own destiny when she loses her magical power, since she becomes an ordinary woman whose ‘fate then becomes to be ‘won’ and married’¹⁰⁴⁴ rather than the determiner and controller of her own life and that of her lover.

Since fairies do not fit into the Christian world view, they were explained as ‘manifestation of devils’ in the Middle Ages,¹⁰⁴⁵ and they were believed to ‘represent the utmost danger to production and reproduction in case of imbalance between the fairy world and the world of humans’.¹⁰⁴⁶ However, the fairy lady in *The Romance of Partenay* blends characterizations of fairy, mortal and divine, which cleanses her of the purely demonic representation. The snake represents the ‘Christian sinner seeking spiritual renewal’ within context of Christianity.¹⁰⁴⁷ Unlike other fairy ladies, Melusine has a half-snake body, which associates her with death and decay,¹⁰⁴⁸ as well as the devil.¹⁰⁴⁹ Indeed, Melusine is not purely demonic in her half-human and half-snake body. She lives with mortals on earth, looks angelic, and she is a devoted Christian.

¹⁰⁴³ Spearing, *The Medieval Poet*, p. 148.

¹⁰⁴⁴ Colleen P. Donagher, ‘Socializing the Sorceress: The Fairy Mistress in *Lanval*, *Le Bel Inconnu*, and *Partonopeu de Blois*’, *Essays in Medieval Studies*, 4 (1987), 69-88 (p. 79).

¹⁰⁴⁵ Ramsey, *Chivalric Romances*, p. 147.

¹⁰⁴⁶ Ann Helene Bolstad Skjelbred, ‘Rites of Passage as Meeting Place: Christianity and Fairylore in Connection with the Unclean Woman and the Unchristened Child’, in *The Good People: New Fairylore Essays*, ed. by Peter Narváez (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1997), pp. 215-24 (p. 217).

¹⁰⁴⁷ J. Holli Wheatcroft, ‘Classical Ideology in the Medieval Bestiary’, in *The Mark of the Beast*, ed. by Hassig, pp. 141-54 (p. 145).

¹⁰⁴⁸ Sarah Alison Miller, *Medieval Monstrosity and the Female Body* (New York: Routledge, 2010), p. 7.

¹⁰⁴⁹ Wade, *Fairies*, p. 124.

Although Melusine is a reliever of suffering and victimizer of Raymond, she is a sufferer as well. She is punished, with her sisters, by her mother after she encloses her father King Helmas in an enchanted mountain, because he has broken his promise to his wife and has seen her giving birth to their daughters, although she warned him not to look. Although Lewis claims that Melusine's adolescent revolt represents female aggression against male power to overthrow patriarchal dominance,¹⁰⁵⁰ she has rather been victimized because of her revolt, which initiated the chain of ordeals in the romance, not only for herself but also for her family members.

Melusine is destined to be half-snake every Saturday; yet, she can live like a mortal woman and die naturally unless her secret is revealed. Her double nature generates both a mysterious (fairy) and ordinary (mortal) woman in the same body; however, her fairy side dominates over her mortal side. As an ordinary woman Melusine comforts Raymond who mourns after accidentally killing his uncle, marries him, provides him with lands and even forgives him, although he ignores her warning and sees her on a Saturday. However, after their son burns his brother Fromont, Raymond blames Melusine's inherent evil, her half-snake nature, for the cause of suffering in their family. As Saunders states, '[t]he taboo is broken, the monstrous revealed'.¹⁰⁵¹ Melusine blames Raymond for causing her suffering although she helped him when he suffered. Subsequently, her mortal nature and her role as reliever of suffering change into her fairy nature and her role as victimizer, and Melusine punishes Raymond by withdrawing all comforts she has provided. She has already prophesied that Raymond is destined to suffer great pains, if he ignores her warning:

Iff iit be, ye shall haue gretly to doo
 huge noisaunt pannes with aduersite,
 And desherite be wrechedly also
 Of tennementes, landes, the beste to se;¹⁰⁵²

However, Melusine is not evil, since she advises Raymond on family matters so that he will not suffer much after her disappearance. Then, she leaps out of the window and changes into a serpent. Exposure of her monstrous side not only victimizes her as she loses her chance to live like a mortal, but also makes her husband vulnerable without her support.

¹⁰⁵⁰ Lewis, 'Acceptable Lessons', p. 20.

¹⁰⁵¹ Saunders, *Magic*, p. 190.

¹⁰⁵² *The Romans of Partenay*, ed. by Skeat, 42. 1044-7.

It is obvious that fairy ladies define their restrictions and make agreements on their own terms with people whose suffering they relieve, and they punish them if they disobey or disregard them. The punishments meted out by fairy ladies following disobedience to them evoke divine punishment after disobeying God's order. They resemble the punishments of an Old Testament God.

Similar to the agreement with a fairy lady which leads to punishment for the male who violates it, an agreement between a haunted male and a mortal male is also threatening. It is also didactic in terms of the Christian ideals of trustworthiness and generosity, which are tested through a threat of suffering, as in *Sir Amadace*. Sir Amadace is haunted by the dead merchant in the shape of the White Knight, whom he buries after paying his debt, relieving not only his soul but also his mourning wife. The White Knight helps Sir Amadace to regain his wealth and have a family, on condition that whatever Sir Amadace gains half of each, including his wife and children, will be shared with him:

Ther schall thou wynne full mekille honowre,
 Fild and frithe, towne and towre,
 That lady schall thou wedde.
 And sithun I schall come ayayne to the,
 Qwen thou hase come thi frindus to see,
 In stid quere thou art stadde.
 Butte a forwart make I with the or that thou goe,
 That evyn to part betwene us toe
 The godus thou hase wonun and spedde.¹⁰⁵³

As stated by Elizabeth Williams, Sir Amadace 'highlights the moral discrepancy between the two plot-motifs of the so-called 'Grateful Dead' and the testing of the hero's readiness to stand by his bargain to divide winnings'.¹⁰⁵⁴ Thus, Sir Amadace is torn between honouring his oath and his role as a caring husband and father. He suffers emotionally from the dilemma of losing either his wife or his renown as a man disloyal to his promise. His emotional dilemma is relieved by the White Knight's revealing his identity and giving up his claim on Amadace's wife and child, after Amadace keeps *trouthe* and consents to his ordeal. Although Foster claims that the White Knight is duplicitous, since he both helps Amadace and insists on half of whatever he has,¹⁰⁵⁵ the White Knight is a catalyst for Amadace's realization of the significance of *trouthe* and

¹⁰⁵³ *Six Middle English Romances*, ed. by Mills, 182. 484-92.

¹⁰⁵⁴ Williams, 'A Damsel', p. 64.

¹⁰⁵⁵ Foster, 'Simplicity', pp. 407-8.

generosity. Like other males tested by fairy ladies, Sir Amadace is tested for his loyalty to his word by the White Knight.

In *Sir Orfeo*, Sir Orfeo's deal with the fairy king is not punitive; on the contrary, it provides him with an opportunity to take his wife back and restore his noble life. Sir Orfeo enters the fairy king's land, and he offers to entertain the king by playing his harp in return for taking Heurodis. Sir Orfeo's harp functions as a charmed or magical object as well as a musical instrument, which brings harmony throughout the romance.¹⁰⁵⁶

Like Orfeo's harp which has a harmonious sound which soothes even the fairy king, and which becomes a key for his regaining his wife and status, there were objects in the Middle Ages which were believed to be enchanted. Specific gems were attributed with magical powers, which made medieval lapidary popular at court.¹⁰⁵⁷ The fascination with such beliefs triggers an interest in the experience of such wondrous objects in romances.¹⁰⁵⁸ In romances, magical or enchanted objects are usually worn or carried to protect their owners against suffering. There are magical rings for protection from bodily wounds or death, rings providing invulnerability, armour providing invisibility, a purse never running out of gold, a robe for enchanting, and girdles for refreshment. In the Middle Ages, something like 'magic' was practised by monks for healing purposes in monasteries; therefore, it was difficult to distinguish the evil magical practices from the religious ones, because prayers play a role in magical practices, too.¹⁰⁵⁹ The magical objects in romances have no divine associations; therefore, they are not protective in a religious sense, but they are, indeed, like prayers said for protection and invulnerability. Even if they do not relieve suffering as effectively as prayers do, they are trusted and used to avoid ordeals.

Magical rings in particular are given to sons, lovers or friends to make them invulnerable. In Cooper's words, '[t]he magic of the ring has served no plot function in itself, and we have never seen it in action'.¹⁰⁶⁰ Finlayson concurs that the magical objects are not directly functional in romances.¹⁰⁶¹ According to this idea, sufferers, especially if they are protagonists, are not totally dependent on supernatural interferences to overcome their pains. It is always the hero's physical power which overcomes suffering. Childress also agrees with Cooper and indicates that:

¹⁰⁵⁶ See the discussion in Robert M. Longworth, 'Sir Orfeo, The Minstrel, and the Minstrel's Art', *Studies in Philology*, 79.1 (1982), 1-11.

¹⁰⁵⁷ Richard Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 105.

¹⁰⁵⁸ Saunders, *Magic*, p. 134.

¹⁰⁵⁹ Kieckhefer, *Magic*, pp. 69-70.

¹⁰⁶⁰ Cooper, *The English Romance in Time*, p. 147.

¹⁰⁶¹ Finlayson, 'Marvellous', p. 393.

When we look closely at the actions of the heroes of the Middle English verse romances, we find that [...] [t]he hero's superiority to other men and his environment is most frequently expressed by exaggeration of human capabilities, not by the attribution of magical or divine powers. He may slay dozens or even hundreds of opponents single-handedly, but he uses no magical trickery to do so. When he kills a giant or a dragon (whose existence represents the suspicion of 'the ordinary laws of nature' in the world the hero inhabits), he depends on his sword and lance, not on magical incantations or supernatural aid. He uses 'physical,' not 'magical,' means.¹⁰⁶²

This is true for many romances, since magical rings are worn by the romance characters for protection; yet, they are only supplementary objects. It is the determination or the physical power of their bearers which makes them invulnerable against wounds or death. In this respect, magical rings highlight the fact that the actual invulnerability is directly related to individual power. However, it is impossible to ignore the relieving function of the magical objects totally. In *Ipomadon*, while fighting, Ipomadon looks at the ring given to him by his mother, and his bleeding stops when he touches his wound with the ring. In *Floris and Blancheflour*, the Queen gives her son Floris a ring to protect him against injuries, burning and drowning. In *King Horn*, Horn is protected against any physical harm in battle by looking at the ring given to him by his lover Rymenhild. In *Richard Coer de Lyon*, after Richard and King Mordard become allies, Mordard gives Richard two golden rings, protecting their wearer from drowning and the feeling of fear.

In *Sir Eglamour of Artois*, in return for his victory, King Edmund gives Eglamour a horse on which he will be protected from deadly blows, in addition to a golden ring given by Edmund's daughter Organate, which protects him from death. In *Sir Launfal*, the magical gifts (a purse, a horse, armour and a servant) given by Lady Tryamour to Sir Launfal make him rich and invincible in tournaments. In *Sir Ferumbras* and in *The Sowdone of Babylone*, there is a magic girdle which refreshes whoever wears it. In *The Sowdone of Babylone*, when French knights are about to starve under a siege by the Saracen ruler Laban, Floripas offers to wear it in order not to suffer starvation:

I have a girdil in my Forcer,
 Who so girde hem ther-with aboute,
 Hunger ner thirste shal him neuer dere,

¹⁰⁶² Childress, 'Between Romance and Legend', pp. 313-4.

Though he were vij yere with-oute.¹⁰⁶³

Although it is intended for protection from suffering, a magical intervention may victimize rather than relieve, as happens in *Partonope of Blois*. Partonope's mother wants to prevent possible ordeals for her son by using magic, but it victimizes him instead. The enchanted wine prepared by Partonope's mother to make him forget his lover Melior and the magical lantern to reveal Melior's evil nature cause Melior to blame Partonope for his distrust in her.

In *Emaré*, the King of Cesyle gives a robe to the Emperor as a present, which is excellently made with precious stones:

The Emperour lokede therupone,
 And might hyt not se;
 For glysteryng of the ryche ston
 Redy syght had he non,
 And sayde, 'How may thys be?'
 The emperour sayde on hygh,
 'Sertes thys ys a fayry,
 Or ellys a vanyté!¹⁰⁶⁴

When he looks at the robe, the Emperor is dazzled and thinks it has been made by enchantment. The King of Cesyle says the daughter of a heathen emir made this robe in seven years with golden stones and splendid images on each side. The robe itself is an intertext, since it is decorated with several images illustrating well-known characters who are victims of lovesickness. On each corner, there are ornaments representing honourable lovers like 'Ydone and Amadas, Trystram and Isowde, Florys and Dam Blawnche flour', all of whom suffer willingly for the sake of their lovers. Whenever Emaré wears the robe, she mesmerizes whoever looks at her. Her father and the King of Galys want to marry her when they see her with the robe on, which makes her look like an unearthly woman. As Anne Laskaya suggests:

The robe, -its history, its imagery, and its status as the father's inappropriate gift-creates both dissonance and harmony within the moralizing framework. The robe functions, perhaps, like patriarchy does, by blinding men to Emaré's real body 'worthy under wede' and covering over the realities of women's suffering: it weighs

¹⁰⁶³ *The Romaunce of the Sowdone of Babylone*, ed. by Hausknecht, 66. 2303-6.

¹⁰⁶⁴ *Six Middle English Romances*, ed. by Mills, 48. 98-105.

heavily on Emaré herself, as patriarchy also does, by handing her a conceptual structure that prefers death to sexual violation.¹⁰⁶⁵

The idea that the robe represents Emaré's chastity is highlighted by the decoration of gems and a unicorn image, which is associated with virginity and chastity in the medieval bestiaries.¹⁰⁶⁶ There are different interpretations of the function of the robe by several critics. Putter ignores the robe's role as the initiator of all ordeals and believes that the robe 'helps to individuate the heroine and her story'.¹⁰⁶⁷ Mehl states that the robe's decoration symbolizes Emaré's exceptional character 'as a kind of secularized Saint, the incorporation of chastity and constant faith'.¹⁰⁶⁸ In this respect, the function of the robe as introducer of suffering or implication of chastity is blurred, since it occasions both 'love and hate' and 'pure and perverse desire'.¹⁰⁶⁹

Hopkins believes that the robe weakens 'the emperor's culpability by blurring the morality of his actions, transmuting base, incestuous desire into a passion'.¹⁰⁷⁰ Hopkins also asserts that the robe is 'an ironic emblem of Emaré's vulnerability and of the wrongs done to her'.¹⁰⁷¹ It empowers her to oppose her father, as she rejects his incestuous appeal when the robe is on her body, which implies that the robe itself represents the suffering which she bears. For Ashton, the robe highlights Emaré's beauty which makes her vulnerable to potential sexual threats.¹⁰⁷² Arthur believes that the robe represents 'the spiritual progress of those who behold and respond to it'.¹⁰⁷³ This uncertainty blurs whether it is the robe's charm or Emaré's father's incestuous desire which initiates Emaré's suffering. Interestingly, Robson suggests that the robe stands for Emaré's hidden sexual desire for her father, which is represented by the portraits of the forbidden lovers on it.¹⁰⁷⁴ However, this idea can be refuted, since Emaré never inclines to the incestuous affair offered by her father, and it is her father who repents of his incestuous inclination after he exiles her.

The robe is enigmatic, since it highlights the idea of chastity in relation to the ordeal of lovers. Although the unicorn image on the robe represents Emaré's chastity, it also represents her vulnerability to sexual exploitation. Besides, the images of the

¹⁰⁶⁵ Laskaya, 'Rhetoric of Incest', p. 109.

¹⁰⁶⁶ Robin, *Animal Lore*, p. 74; White, *Bestiary*, pp. 20-1.

¹⁰⁶⁷ Putter, 'Narrative Logic', pp. 175-6.

¹⁰⁶⁸ Mehl, *The Middle English Romances*, p. 139.

¹⁰⁶⁹ Saunders, *Magic*, p. 139.

¹⁰⁷⁰ Amanda Hopkins, 'Veiling the Text: The True Role of the Cloth in *Emaré*', in *Medieval Insular Romance*, ed. by Weiss, Fellows and Dickson, pp. 71-82 (p. 76).

¹⁰⁷¹ Hopkins, 'Veiling the Text', p. 81.

¹⁰⁷² Ashton, 'Her Father's Daughter', p. 425.

¹⁰⁷³ Arthur, 'Emaré's Cloak', p. 91.

¹⁰⁷⁴ Robson, 'Cloaking Desire', p. 68.

victims of love on the robe and Emaré's father's immediate repentance after exiling her imply that the robe is 'tempting' and a probable initiator of perverted love which turns paternal love into an ordeal. The robe also materializes Emaré as she turns into an object exchanged between her father and husband without her self-control. Consequently, excessive paternal control over his daughter develops into an incestuous attempt at seduction by the father, which is embodied in the robe itself, which initiates the ordeals of both parties.

Magic and enchantment are related to the miracles of Christianity, which are associated with the saints and Christ himself, through 'Christian magic' assumed to be miracle. However, unlike the miraculous happenings which occur for the well-being of human beings, magic is not always practised with good intent. The Middle Ages inherited 'a complex range of ideas of magic and supernatural, popular and learned, classical, Biblical and Germanic, which incorporated ideas both of healing or protective, natural magic (not always so termed), and more dangerous, harmful or deceitful magic'.¹⁰⁷⁵ In *The Romans of Partenay*, Melusine is enchanted by her mother as a punishment. In *Kyng Alisaunder*, magic is used by Neptanabus to punish King Philip of Macedon by making his wife conceive a child through an evil dream. The deceit through the dream associates it closely with Satan, since 'false beliefs were believed to be introduced by the Devil himself'.¹⁰⁷⁶ In *Sir Gowther*, the devil in the shape of the Duke has sexual intercourse with the Duke's wife which is interpreted by Hopkins as 'the Devil [...] making another attempt to create anti-Christ'.¹⁰⁷⁷

In the Middle Ages, educated but lowly-placed members of the clergy engaged in necromancy in order to empower themselves in political courts.¹⁰⁷⁸ However, the altered appearances were commonly explained as illusions, and 'medieval theologians disputed the power of sorcerers and the demonic magic they invoked to transform a creature from one substance to another or to create new creatures, as only God could create or alter substances'.¹⁰⁷⁹ Although there is no direct reference in the romance, the representation of Maboune and Jrayne in *Lybeaus Desconus* recalls the debate on the sorcery by the Church. Jrayne and Maboune, curse and transform the Lady of Synadowne into a monstrous shape with wings and a tail, which can only be changed by

¹⁰⁷⁵ Saunders, *Magic*, p. 14.

¹⁰⁷⁶ Le Goff, *The Medieval Imagination*, p. 212.

¹⁰⁷⁷ Hopkins, *The Sinful Knights*, p. 168.

¹⁰⁷⁸ Michael D. Bailey, 'The Meanings of Magic', *Magic, Ritual, and Witchcraft*, 1.1 (2006), 1-23 (p. 10).

¹⁰⁷⁹ James Weldon, 'Naked as she was bore': Naked Disenchantment in *Lybeaus Desconus*', *Parergon*, 24.1 (2007), 67-99 (p. 79, n. 35). See also Kieckhefer, *Magic*, p. 184.

the kiss of Gawain or someone of his kin, and imprison her in a palace, by practising necromancy.

Occasionally, spells cast for victimizing can be reversed, so that suffering is ended or prevented. In *The Seven Sages of Rome*, the Empress casts a spell on her stepson Florentyne that will kill him if he speaks in the next seven days; yet, her dark magic is noticed by one of the seven ages who educated Florentyne, and he is warned to keep silent for seven days until the spell disappears. In *William of Palerne*, Alphonse's stepmother transforms Alphonse into a werewolf by enchantment; yet, she disenchant him after she is threatened by Alphonse's friend William with execution. Even if shape shifting was associated with the devil and thirst for blood in the Middle Ages,¹⁰⁸⁰ the beast in Alphonse never takes over, and he keeps his humanity in werewolf shape.¹⁰⁸¹ As a victimizer, the stepmother is associated with the devil by losing her humanity; but ironically, her victim Alphonse preserves his humanity in shape of a beast. Hence, her demonization brings her victim closer to human nature, which cannot be suppressed for so long.

Although Alphonse in a beast shape remains humane, dragons and giants which are associated with either Saracens or the devil himself are represented as beastly and hostile. Saracens who victimize Christians are replaced with marginal figures such as dragons and giants in several romances, embodying the idea of extraordinary human violence and monstrous appearance. Their hostility is associated with medieval beliefs and the manifestation of fear that giants and dragons symbolize the devil,¹⁰⁸² since they are born of the unnatural mingling of fallen angels and daughters of men (Gen. 6. 1-4).¹⁰⁸³ Therefore, they represent uncivilized and potentially demonic qualities, which represent threats to Christians, since they are associated with the monstrous representation of the Saracen 'other'.¹⁰⁸⁴

In romances, fighting against supernatural creatures, giants and dragons causes suffering but is also a means of self-awareness, and proof of extraordinary strength and worth for a knight. Dragon and giant slayers prove that they are invulnerable to physical suffering caused by any mortal enemy. As with Christians' victory over Saracens, defeats of giants and dragons result in relief for sufferers besides punishment for

¹⁰⁸⁰ Brian J. Frost, *The Essential Guide to Werewolf Literature* (Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 2003), p. 10.

¹⁰⁸¹ For a detailed discussion of Alphonse's keeping his humanity see Kate Watkins Tibbals, 'Elements of Magic in the Romance of *William of Palerne*', *Modern Philology*, 1.3 (1904), 355-71 (p. 360); Myra J. Seaman, 'Becoming More (than) Human: Affective Posthumanisms, Past and Future', *Journal of Narrative Theory*, 37.2 (2007), 246-75 (p. 254); Leslie A. Sconduto, *Metamorphoses of the Werewolf: A Literary Story from Antiquity through the Renaissance* (North Carolina: McFarland, 2008), pp. 118-25.

victimizers, as well as banishing whatever is threatening and hostile. In several romances, there are giants or dragons represented as opponents of the protagonists, who have to defeat them to prove their chivalric skill and deserve the beloved lady's hand as powerful husbands.

In *Sir Degaré*, Sir Degaré fights against a dragon to save an Earl and defeats a giant to save a lady from an unwanted suitor. Even if Finlayson suggests that the supernatural aspect of the dragon is not emphasized in the romance,¹⁰⁸⁵ its extraordinary strength is presented as a physical challenge to the protagonist. On the other hand, despite Colopy's idea that the dragon is the symbol of the protagonist's unconscious fears of incest with his mother and killing it is only a step to move on to his quest,¹⁰⁸⁶ the dragon indicates more than the protagonist's anxieties about his parentage since it is literally a physical obstacle he has to overcome to be reunited with his parents. In *Sir Tryamour*, Sir Tryamour fights against the giant Burlonde for Lady Helen's hand. In *Torrent of Portyngale*, Torrent fights against giants for Desonell's hand, at the end of which he 'moves from killing giants to killing Saracens' in the Holy Land.¹⁰⁸⁷ In *Sir Eglamour of Artois*, Sir Eglamour fights against giants which slay men with their eyes in order to prove his worth to marry Cristabell. Fighting against giants with bare hands becomes the means of proving Eglamour's love for Cristabell, and although he suffers, he does not give up since it is easier to suffer from the pains of fighting against giants and dragons than to suffer from the pain of lovesickness.

Defeating a giant not only relieves the suffering of its victims, but also provides an opportunity for displaying chivalric skills and gaining renown as a giant slayer. In the *Stanzaic Guy of Warwick*, Guy's fighting against the giant can be interpreted symbolically by associating him with 'God and with justice, while his opponents are equally associated with Hell and the Devil',¹⁰⁸⁸ which also likens him to a crusader.¹⁰⁸⁹

¹⁰⁸² Pamela Gravestock, 'Did Imaginary Animals Exist?', in *The Mark of the Beast*, ed. by Hassig, pp. 119-35 (p. 126).

¹⁰⁸³ Akbari, *Idols*, p. 172.

¹⁰⁸⁴ See Speed, 'Saracens', p. 578; Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, *Of Giants: Sex, Monsters, and the Middle Ages* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), p. 167; Saunders, *Magic*, p. 214; Dana M. Oswald, *Monsters, Gender and Sexuality in Medieval English Literature* (Woodbridge: D. S. Brewer, 2010), p. 160.

¹⁰⁸⁵ Finlayson, 'Marvellous', p. 390.

¹⁰⁸⁶ Colopy, 'Sir Degaré', p. 34.

¹⁰⁸⁷ Roger Dalrymple, 'Torrent of Portyngale and the Literary Giants', in *Cultural Encounters*, ed. by Saunders, pp. 159-70 (p. 168).

¹⁰⁸⁸ Hopkins, *The Sinful Knights*, p. 108.

¹⁰⁸⁹ Ivana Djordjević, 'Saracens and Other Saxons: Using, Misusing, and Confusing Names in *Gui de Warewic* and *Guy of Warwick*', in *The Exploitations*, ed. by Ashe, Djordjević and Weiss, pp. 28-42 (p. 30).

On the other hand, the giant stands for a real enemy who is a member of a ‘non-English, non-Christian, Eastern ‘race’’,¹⁰⁹⁰ and the defeat of the giant represents the defeat of the ‘hostile other’. After defeating the Sultan’s giant to save Tirri from imprisonment, Guy fights against Colbrond, the gigantic champion of the King of Denmark, which is so strong that no one dares to fight against it. In *Sir Ferumbras*, King Charles defeats a Saracen giant, which is an embodiment of Saracen devil worship.¹⁰⁹¹ In *The Sowdone of Babylone*, King Charles cleaves the giantess Barrok’s brain. In *Lybeaus Desconus*, Lybeaus Desconus defeats three giants, one of which is a Saracen giant. In these romances, the giants become victims though they indeed intend to victimize.

Like Saracens who are represented as monstrous, King Alisaunder’s victimizers are frightening, strange and threatening. In *Kyng Alisaunder*, it is not giants or dragons, but supernatural beasts with extraordinary and evil features (which are believed to exist in the distant North or the exotic East) that make King Alisaunder and his men suffer.¹⁰⁹² His ordeals in this hellish land (India) are introduced by these ‘other’ creatures, which are unfamiliar, hostile, demonic and unusual. Their monstrous representations emphasize ‘medieval alterity and Orientalist discourses stressing ethnic, racial and religious difference’.¹⁰⁹³ India indeed tests Alisaunder’s own capability in the face of the ordeal. This ‘different’ land is full of flying dragons in different colours which kill by breathing fire, white lions, hundreds of tigers with fire in their mouths, birds with black feathers on their wombs and teeth like men, crying like peacocks, which slay many knights. There are beasts called dentyrauns, which are higher than elephants, having black heads, and long, sharp horns on their foreheads, terrifying foxes, black birds eating men. Aleks Pluskowski suggests that ‘[t]he proliferation of animals may also be related to [...] particular transgression with particular punishment, as the church sought to codify belief and classify sin’.¹⁰⁹⁴ In this respect, suffering from attacks of these supernatural creatures is indeed Alisaunder’s punishment. Apart from punishing him, they stand for his means of self-realization. Although Akbari argues that Alisaunder remains the same man, even after his coming to this marginalized part of the world,¹⁰⁹⁵ India and its extraordinary nature make Alisaunder realize his vulnerability

¹⁰⁹⁰ Wilcox, ‘Romancing the East’, p. 231. See also Finlayson, ‘Marvellous’, p. 383.

¹⁰⁹¹ For a discussion of physical deformities in romances see Sinex, ‘Monsterized Saracens’.

¹⁰⁹² For the representations of exotic creatures see Bartlett, *The Natural and Supernatural*, p. 108.

¹⁰⁹³ Bettina Bildhauer and Robert Mills, ‘Introduction’, in *Monstrous*, ed. by Bildhauer and Mills, pp. 1-27 (p. 3).

¹⁰⁹⁴ Aleks Pluskowski, ‘Apocalyptic Monsters: Animal Inspirations for the Iconography of Medieval North European Devourers’, in *Monstrous*, ed. by Bildhauer and Mills, pp. 155-76 (p. 165).

¹⁰⁹⁵ Akbari, *Idols*, p. 104.

despite his military invincibility. Therefore, he does not resist his own death when it is prophesied.

Dragons symbolize lust, evil or any forms of sinfulness, and act as foils to their human antagonists.¹⁰⁹⁶ Giants, dragons and beasts with extraordinary features are like fiends in disguise, and the knights fighting against them are like pious souls resisting temptations, particularly in Beves's resistance against dragons and snakes for seven years with a stick when imprisoned in a dungeon in *Beves of Hamptoun*. Although Djordjević suggests that divine help makes the hero less heroic,¹⁰⁹⁷ divine help empowers Beves when he is victimized and provides him with an opportunity to display Christian heroism in a Saracen world, which Siobhain Bly Calkin likens to a saintly experience.¹⁰⁹⁸ In addition to this, the significance of baptism is symbolically mentioned through a fight against a dragon, apart from the implication of Beves's saintly status with his glorious fight against the dragon, like St. George.¹⁰⁹⁹ There is a well filled with holy water after a virgin bathed in it, which keeps dragons away. Beves cuts off a dragon's head after he refreshes himself with the holy water and prayers. The virgin whose bathing sanctifies the water resembles the Virgin Mary, and the holy water sanctified after her bathing recalls baptismal water for cleansing sins. Beves is a sinner, who can be cleansed of his sins and end his ordeal only after his washing in and drinking from it.

Similar to prophetic dreams, there are several omens foretelling suffering or relief in romances; yet, different from the dreams, suffering prophesied by means of an omen is unavoidable. In *Kyng Alisaunder*, Alisaunder consults the Tree of Moon and the Tree of the Sun, which foretell his suffering with details such as where, when and how they are going to happen, making him understand his vulnerability. Although hundreds of people submit to him, he realizes that he is submissive to his fate and he is also a victim despite his military invincibility. The trees of omen foretell that Alisaunder will have great glory and renown by winning a third of the world. However, he shall never go back to Greece because he is destined to die the next year by his treacherous men's poison.

Future suffering and death are predicted by non-Christian oracles; yet, they serve to reveal Alisaunder's response to preordained suffering. Alisaunder gets woeful, but

¹⁰⁹⁶ Samantha J. E. Riches, 'Encountering the Monstrous: Saints and Dragons in Medieval Thought', in *Monstrous*, ed. by Bildhauer and Mills, pp. 196-218 (p. 198).

¹⁰⁹⁷ Djordjević, 'Rewriting Divine Favour', p. 168.

¹⁰⁹⁸ Calkin, 'Anxieties of Encounter', p. 144.

¹⁰⁹⁹ Weiss, 'Major Interpolations', p. 72.

like a good Christian who submits to God's order, he comforts his men who mourn his fate by saying that he must suffer by God's will. Alisaunder's realization reminds the audience of the futility of the earthly trusts. Learning his fate transforms him from victimizer to a victim, and it reveals that he is also vulnerable although he is glorious all over the world against strong enemies. Barron asserts that 'Alexander, his fate foreknown, undergoes no development and is subject to no spiritual conflicts';¹¹⁰⁰ yet, Alisaunder's unresponsiveness indicates his acceptance of his fate and vulnerability. He neither grieves for his fate nor resists it. Despite his unresponsiveness, his transformation from a conqueror of the world to a victim of treacherous men reminds the romance audience of the inevitability of suffering and transience of earthly achievements regardless of status and power.

In *The Romans of Partenay*, just before her transformation into a snake, Melusine foretells what her husband Raymond is destined to suffer after she disappears:

All-way thy dedes shall go to decline,
 Ne neuer shal be wrought ne made again,
 And thi land shal be, After thi discesse plain,
 Parted in partes I beleue shal be,
 Neuer to-geders hold in seueralte,¹¹⁰¹

Melusine says Raymond's lands will be divided after his death, and some of his men will lose their lands. She warns him to beware of Horrible, as he will waste all the country and make him suffer from poverty. After Melusine's disappearance, Raymond loses all his riches and joy, and his pain does not end until he dies as Melusine prophesied.

Although foretelling many ordeals, Melusine also comforts Raymond by saying that bemoaning their son Geoffrey's burning of his brother Fromont and the monks in the abbey is in vain, as this was a punishment for the monks, who indulged in lechery. Historically, there were moral corruptions recorded in monasteries in the Middle Ages. There were also monks who had adulterous affairs, like Brother Thomas Barton who was accused of adultery with a washerwoman when Bishop Alnwick visited Bardney in 1438.¹¹⁰² In the romance, it is implied that the English monasteries needed spiritual cleaning, and the monks because of their lechery are the deservers of suffering.

¹¹⁰⁰ Barron, *English Medieval Romance*, p. 126.

¹¹⁰¹ *The Romans of Partenay*, ed. by Skeat, 127. 3636-40.

¹¹⁰² Keen, *England*, p. 222.

Omens may be informative rather than foretelling suffering. In *Generydes*, when King Auferius loses his way in the forest while hunting, he comes to a house where a maiden named Sereyne tells him that she is supposed to beget a child from him that night. She also warns him that his wife Serenydes is untrue to him, and is plotting his death with his steward Sir Amelok. In *Kyng Alisaunder*, Neptanabus prophesies that King Philip of Macedon will abandon his wife Olympias for another wife. Besides this, Philip consults an oracle to learn which of his sons is to succeed him, and he is told that the one who can mount and ride his horse shall rule after him.

While divine interventions like the appearance of angels, religious figures, miraculous happenings and prophetic dreams are presented as warnings against ordeals or help the sufferers relieve their pain, the role of supernatural agents is blurred. Fairy ladies, like angels, provide emotional and physical support to the suffering males; yet, unlike angels, they threaten them in case of disobedience to their rules, which makes their role ambiguous as relievers of suffering or inflictors of it. While a miracle of God may function as a *deus ex machina* to relieve suffering, magic can be practised either for victimizing or relief depending on the intention of its practitioner. Magical objects which are used or carried to prevent suffering are not the main reasons of relief, unlike prayers which comfort sufferers by the resulting divine interference. Omens foretell unavoidable ordeals, while prophetic dreams mostly warn against them or foretell how to relieve or avoid them. In this case, it is obvious that supernatural agents are not exactly alternatives to divine interferences, especially for the relief of suffering.

God is the 'master magician' who uses 'enchanting' miracles to end or prevent suffering, interrupting to help victimize non-Christians or to save righteous and innocent people. His miraculous interference through the appearance of angels, instant miraculous happenings or answers to prayers remind the audience that God helps overcome suffering whenever and wherever he is asked for help. God's protection and support provide relief for believers in case of ordeal. God's interference as reliever of ordeals reveals that humans make other humans suffer, while God interferes to end or prevent this villainy. God's interference to overcome suffering undermines the fact that it is a human's individual struggle which actually overcomes the suffering; yet, it is also clear that God does not end any suffering immediately. He only interferes to warn, guide and encourage the victim, to help overcome some obstacles during the ordeal, and leaves it to the victim to overcome his ordeal on his own. The appearance of angels and miraculous happenings demonstrate that even if human beings experience physical ordeals, there is always a spiritual hand protecting and supporting them against

suffering as long as they are right and innocent. They resemble human relievers of suffering who help victims, but they are non-human agents of God; and although they cannot end ordeals completely like their human counterparts, they encourage the victims and provide them with confidence that God is on their side. Angels provide spiritual help by encouraging the victims to discover their inherent powers to overcome suffering, in addition to relating God's ordeals for sinners. On the other hand, miracles prove that it is not impossible to overcome unjust ordeals, and they function where human experiences fail to explain this.

The supernatural agents mediating divine intrusions serve to highlight divine interference. They break up normal experiences and change them into a new world, still full of human experiences, but also beyond them. This non-human world is also full of suffering, even for non-mortals, which demonstrates that pain and suffering can be found beyond human existence. While 'white' magic relieves or prevents suffering as an alternative to divine protection, 'dark' magic is villainous, an initiator of suffering and a replacement for the mortal villain. Magic replaces relievers and initiators of suffering in an alternative world where there is no religious interference to relieve or end suffering.

Sufferers in fairy worlds are on their own, or are dependent on their fairy mistress/master. The threatening rules of the fairies, though unfair, are valid in these realms, making the victim an 'other' who is doomed to suffer. Lack of divine interference from God as protector and reliever makes the fairy world threatening and obscure. Despite its pretended heavenly appearance and fairy ladies saving and helping male sufferers, the victims are bound to live in accordance with fairy rules, which make them lose their individuality, and the power to overcome their suffering on their own. None of them have divine relief or individual resistance to help overcome their own suffering, but they are forced to obey their fairy master/mistress. This human dependence on non-human beings is disturbing and threatening, reminding the audience of the role of God in suffering as the forgiver, protector and saviour of repentant and innocent sufferers. 'Absence' of God in the fairy realm becomes the means of understanding God's significance, and his 'existence' as the reliever of suffering for human beings.

When fairies are presented as victimizers, the boundary between the mortal and the non-mortal world is erased, and villainy on earth is also reflected in the fairy world, but unlike human villains, fairies warn against suffering beforehand. Rather than fairies, it is mortals who bring about their own misfortunes by breaking deals with the fairies or

ignoring their warnings. The fairy world is an alternative universe for the mortals where they meet 'ideal' villains (fairies) whose villainies are justifiable compared to the villainies of many mortals. In this alternative world, fairies also suffer because of mortals' mistakes, which make them victims of mortals rather than victimizers of themselves, and victimizing and becoming a victim are presented as a vicious circle. Women are stronger, not weak and submissive in a fairy world, where their gender roles are exchanged with those of human men, who are represented as submissive to females. Fairy ladies are victimized when the males break their deals with them despite their warnings; yet, they also punish the males for their mistakes. Their role as the punisher of the mistaken brings them close to God, but rather they act as foils to God who is merciful to repentant sinners. This playful and ambiguous nature of the fairy worlds which hints suffering for humans beside the comfort they provide, acts as a reminder that suffering is not bound to geography, as does the 'journey' motif in romances. Representations of suffering in the mortal world and also in an alternative fairy world make people realize that they are vulnerable both in this world and out of it, and the alternative realm of the fairy world becomes Purgatory, both heavenly and hellish. The fairies represent angels and demons, relievers and temptresses, providing comfort or suffering, as well as testing with ordeals. Dragons, giants and monstrous beasts represent suffering coming from the 'unknown' like those from the fairy 'unknown'; yet, they are more threatening, and something to be resisted or suffered physically. Both 'alternative' and 'unknown' worlds are threatening and full of suffering like the mortal world itself, which again reminds us that ordeal is not bound to any space.

Dreams provide other 'alternative' universes and apart from being warnings, they are informative or symbolic means of heralding suffering. Dreams are places and times where and when ordeals are experienced by the dreamer himself or herself, or by someone who is expected to prevent suffering or warn the potential victims. They are revelatory experiences, illustrating an alternative fate for the characters, and informing the romance audience/reader that if divine warnings are ignored, suffering is unavoidable. The necessity of paying attention to warnings through dreams is emphasized by narrating these painful alternative fates, while it is also highlighted that God warns and protects the innocent, patient and pious against painful experiences. Like the binary of white and dark magic, dreams coming from the divine are in contrast to those coming from the devil. Dreams of black magic, rather than presenting a vision of an alternative universe with a potential for suffering, create this painful world in flesh and blood, and the dreamer experiences suffering as they are dreamt (as in *Kyng*

Alisaunder). The dream world and fairy world have several things in common, as they are both angelic and demonic, depending on the existence and absence of God. While the presence of God secures relief or provides protection against suffering, absence of God makes a victim vulnerable as much in the fairy and visionary realms as in the mortal world.

The binary of 'threat' and 'warning' in the mortal, divine and alternative worlds of fairies and dreams places suffering mortals in the middle of this 'sanctified' and 'enchanted' trinity, with an awareness of their vulnerability. These multiple realms of suffering, which distance humankind from the familiar world, in fact remind them that they have latent power of their own in this mortal realm. Even if he is aware of his vulnerability, the romance protagonist can overcome suffering by divine help, and he is surrounded by divine favour. If he follows and reads the signs of God correctly, he is able to avoid or end suffering. No matter whether the ordeal is 'sanctified' or 'enchanted', both divine and magical interferences remind the romance audience that ordeals can be avoided and can be overcome, and the 'golden shot' to do it is left to the sufferers themselves.

Conclusion

Stories of suffering in romances are a counter to the reverence and privilege which people of higher social status expected to enjoy in real life. In romances, the noble household is presented in chaos, encompassing treacherous and selfish people who fall short of accepted ideals, and who ignore those whom they are supposed to protect. In a romance family, there are many treacherous and jealous mothers, stepmothers, mothers-in-law, fathers, stepfathers, brothers, sons, daughters, lovers, and spouses, who inflict pain and suffering despite their angelic pretensions. All romance protagonists are noble or aristocratic, mostly royal, and thus address the aspirations of the romance audiences, who are mainly aristocratic, or aspiring to be noble. The experiences of these protagonists not only demonstrate where anxieties lie in the life of the aristocratic or governing classes, but also warn them to be careful and make wise choices while choosing marriage partners, servants, allies and friends, by presenting the fact that if these are selected wrongly or unfortunately, they can do much harm.

The romances, in general, indicate that the reasons for suffering in this world are jealous, treacherous and false human beings, who are represented as villains. The most dynamic characters in the romances are villains, and all villains are full of desire to empower themselves through devious means, by making others suffer and by destroying the lives of their victims. They may be ‘pure’ villains who are inherently evil, ‘justified’ villains who have reasons for villainy or who are also victimized, ‘catalyst’ villains who initiate suffering without any other significant function in the romance, or ‘good’ villains who victimize unintentionally. There is gendered representation of villainy, due to the fact that most of the ‘pure’ villains are women, while many male villains are ‘justified’ or ‘catalyst’ villains. Although romances do not directly depict women as monstrous, they present ‘powerful’ and ‘ambitious’ women as villainous, contrary to the ‘heroic’ representation of powerful and ambitious males who use their power and ambition to victimize those who deserve it, or to end unjust suffering. The villains, in general, are representations of the Seven Deadly Sins with their wrath, greed, pride, lust, envy, sloth and gluttony, who are punished according to their deeds either by their victims or by God. On the other hand, villains are ‘perverted heroes’ from whom the victims learn to survive. Therefore, in common with their painful experiences, villains are ‘instructive’ for their victims. Like their victims, the villains are stereotypically represented, and their ‘means of victimization’ are as important as ‘who they are’;

therefore, romances focus on the ordeals, why the ordeals are initiated and how victims react, in addition to the characters who experience or initiate them.

The abundance of domestic victimizers undermines aristocratic family life and the ideal of familial protection in many romances. Apart from the domestic victimizers, there are plenty of strangers as villains who falsely accuse, threaten or murder mainly because of jealousy. The villains and the victims are connected although they are not necessarily related. There are knights and stewards who are jealous of sworn brothers, or those who falsely accuse their lords' wives of adultery. Some of them accuse loyal men of treason against the king, or blame murder on innocent people. Trusted people may turn out to be villains and victimize rather than protect, while there are also avengers of previous defeats. Although some of them do not cause any physical harm, they threaten to invade, murder or ravish to arouse fear and impose their own authority. In numerous romances, Saracens and Christians are presented as 'monstrous' victimizers of each other; yet, it is always the Christians whose monstrosity and violence are justified, as they believe that Saracens deserve suffering for believing in the wrong faith, invading Christian lands, threatening, and capturing Christian nobles and slaying them. Despite Saracens victimizing Christians, at the end of each romance, Christians have the victory over them.

In addition to domestic and stranger victimizers in romances, there are many self-victimizers who are willing to suffer in order to punish themselves because of causing suffering to other people. They victimize themselves to repent of their pride in money, power or perfection; to punish their greed, over self-confidence and tyranny, to seek compensation for their faults, especially in financial matters, or they accept suffering for others' sake. Reasons may include self-sacrifice or a desire to end the suffering of the falsely accused, the needy, their lover or beloved, or to protect Christians from Saracens. At the end of the romances, the victimizers mostly become sufferers, except for several cases in which they are left unpunished. Justice works efficiently and the victimizers are punished in return for their false accusations, jealousy, impiety and treason by being dragged by horses, hanging, burning, exile, being deprived of property, sickness, blinding, imprisonment until death, mutilation and death.

In general, each pain and suffering is a test of innocence, faith, loyalty, patience and self-awareness. While some people accept it without complaining by convincing themselves that pain and suffering are deserved, some of them struggle to overcome it on their own. There is gendered representation of victimhood in romances, similar to the

representations of villains. Men and women are by no means equally protected from, or defended against, pain and suffering; therefore, they do not react identically to their suffering. Although self-victimizers submit to suffering willingly, those victimized by domestic and stranger villains do not always submit to their ordeal, and rather resist it. While female victims mostly offer verbal resistance and lack physical resistance, male victims offer both verbal and physical resistance to suffering. Although females offer more resistance in their households, they mostly and inevitably submit to stranger villains, whilst the male victims always resist strangers, although they sometimes submit to their domestic victimizers.

The pain and suffering of the victims (mainly self-victimizers) may be introduced by God in order to warn, chastise, and to punish pride or neglect of God, or another sin committed by the victim. However, God restores order, and relieves pain and suffering by means of a variety of extraordinary phenomena. He is presented as the reliever of suffering, and his intervention or warnings are mostly related through the appearance of angels, miracles and prophetic dreams. Prophetic dreams herald divine warnings against ordeals and provide means to relieve suffering. These dreams may foretell approaching illnesses, mutilation, forthcoming death, murder, exile, abduction, or separation from family. On the other hand, they may foretell relief from pain and suffering by heralding healing, punishment of traitors, invading new lands, victory over the enemy, revelation of identity, and God's forgiveness.

In medieval romances, many characters experience desperate ordeals during journeys, most of which are exiles. Pain and suffering are inherent in the experience of exile which is, in fact, separation from the family, alienation from the familiar, an enforced or voluntary displacement, for a variety of reasons. Although the person exiled experiences pain and suffering, exile may also represent an opportunity for restoration and a happy ending, through the revelation of truths, the reunion of families or the gaining of self-knowledge. While enforced exiles are undertaken as punishment, mostly because of poor judgements, self-imposed exiles seek punishment in a search for spiritual maturity and redemption. There are many reasons for exiles which are enforced by both domestic and stranger victimizers. The domestic reasons which motivate exiles are generally love, lack of love or the punishment of disobedience. The aims of strangers enforcing exile are mainly to weaken, dishonour, get rid of or punish the victims, to prevent marriages of sons and daughters to undesirable lovers, to prevent the future succession of a noble child, to abduct the wives of noble rivals or to prevent nobles from helping each other in battles. The most notable motivations for self-exile

are punishment of the self for a sin or mistake, self-sacrifice for loved ones, to escape from further suffering or seek self-knowledge or self-awareness. The favoured destinations are either the sea or the wilderness which, despite their hostility, turn out to be more secure than the victim's household, as the exiles are found and cared for by strangers. Apart from the victims of enforced exiles, the person who decides to exile himself experiences self-alienation, becomes hostile to himself and is willing to inflict pain, to suffer to redeem his sinful body and soul, and will ultimately rise from his own ashes to become a better son, lover or husband; or just to be reconciled with his past. Although the experience is a physical journey, the real quest is actually spiritual. This reminds the romance audience that although the ordeals are real, the experience is also symbolic, as 'life' itself is also a 'journey' destined to end with union with God in heaven, or punishment in hell with the devil. Life is full of ordeals; yet, at the end of this journey, there is a happy ending for the pious, the innocent and the patient, whilst there is eternal suffering for the unrepentant villain or sinner.

In some cases, the reason for self-exile or enforced exile of a male victim is to seek heroic adventures and quests to prove his chivalric worth. A man on a quest exiles himself because of his desire to display strength. He believes that the more he suffers, the more he is exalted. He is willing to suffer to prove he is worthy of a lady's hand, to conquer the world, to learn his real parentage, to seek chivalric adventures, to seek his banished lady and children, to victimize non-Christians, or to relieve suffering of male or female victims. The Holy Land is the most popular destination for those who exile themselves to seek salvation. A journey to the Holy Land may be made to conquer a new and sacred land, or ask for an heir from God. However, self-exiles and quests to the Holy Land are mostly pilgrimages to ask for God's forgiveness and to be cleansed of past sins. The pilgrims believe that they deserve their suffering, and are willing to suffer further to cleanse their sinful souls. All pilgrims are on a spiritual quest on earth and they want to purify their souls.

Generally, males exile themselves, whilst females who are falsely accused of adultery are forced into exile by their husbands or fathers. The exiled males are courageous and seek out quests on their exiles, but the exiled females are mostly desperate without food, drink or companions, except for their children. They are in need of males to take care of them, give them shelter and end their suffering. They cannot prove their innocence or avoid their unwanted suitors without male help. This female dependence on men to overcome suffering weakens the female image and displays females' insufficiency to overcome pain and suffering on their own. On the other hand,

the male sufferers, apart from fighting against suffering, are represented as courageous and fearless, dependent only on God to relieve their pain. Although the weak and submissive representations of females and the contrary representations of males give the impression that women suffer desperately but men fight against it, this is, in fact, deceptive because there are males who willingly suffer to punish themselves or suffer submissively because they are being punished by God for their sins. Women victims are too weak to overcome their suffering on their own. Despite the fact that men are presented as being stronger than women, neither of the sexes is glorified, because they all have weaknesses. Romance presents the process of physical and emotional growth for the victims by emphasizing that ordeals are necessary for self-improvement and the fulfilment of desires, and it exemplifies how these weaknesses can be overcome. Romance victims provide the audiences with very good examples of how to overcome difficulties and problems in their own lives.

Not only adults but also innocent children submit to suffering in romances. Apart from strangers, their victimizers are mainly family members who victimize their children because they threaten their authority. However, these ordeals become the means to prove the children's worth, to gain wealth and status or even to marry. Young children are expected to be cared for by women in the family; yet, many children in romances are separated from their parents when they are infants, and they learn how to survive on their own. Therefore, the victims mostly lack a maternal and paternal role model while they are growing up, which disrupts the familial roles; yet, this disruption enables the victims to turn out to be brave men (or self-sufficient women), who learn survival through their own experiences, rather than imitating the role models in their own households.

Almost all pain is taken away and every suffering is relieved at the end of the romances. There are stereotypical representations of happy endings, such as regaining wealth and status, reunion of family members, revelation of truths or identities, mostly achieved by means of tokens and occasionally by coincidental meetings. These happy endings are enriched by a variety of rewards for generosity, loyalty, patience, piety, penance and sacrifice. The people who help to overcome suffering are rewarded with a rise in status, new lands, wealth, property or right of succession. Although victims may submit or resist their ordeals, their misfortunes are didactic, not only for them but also for the romance audiences, who identify themselves with the victims. As the emphasis is on the ordeals, the ordeals offer exemplary instances of problems which people may suffer in real life. Therefore, witnessing these ordeals enables them to prepare for

similar experiences and teaches them how to survive. They are also reminded that the wicked are doomed to suffer, although the villains have temporary power until they are punished, and the pious, innocent and patient victims are destined to be rewarded at the end of their ordeals.

Witnessing their experiences, the romance audiences empathize with the suffering romance protagonist by immersing themselves in the victim's desolation and witnessing the process of his or her restoration. The victim's survival process is a catharsis for the audiences, a means by which to reinvent themselves and the world they live in. This experience also provides them with an understanding of the divine. The more the victim suffers, the more the audiences achieve an awareness of their own vulnerability and insufficiency as human beings. Meanwhile, the victimized protagonist disappears and his or her individual experiences are replaced by the empathizing audiences, who seek redemption through their pain and suffering. Although the audiences do not experience the physical suffering of the romance protagonists, they can feel their emotional pain when they cease thinking about the story and start thinking with it. Thereby, individual experiences become instructive morals, and they contribute to medieval people's interpretation of pain and suffering as essential to achieve salvation, both in this world and the Otherworld.

In romances, the major interest is apparently in this world, material things and gains, and the sufferers are rewarded with what they desire after they experience ordeals. It is noteworthy that at the end of the romances, what makes the victims happy is fulfilled without discrimination between what is good in this world and what is good in the Otherworld. However, it is also true that people have to suffer at the expense of the material world in order to fulfil their desires both in this world and the Otherworld. Romances mainly highlight physical and social experiences, and promise secular reward, power and blessing on earth. The romance protagonists submit to suffering patiently or struggle against pain by stating their suffering, feelings and complaints. Ordinary people cannot experience the Passions of Christ; however, they can suffer for a variety of other reasons. Each suffering nurtures a person's soul and brings the soul closer to God. Romance sufferers are not presented as religious characters; they live in accordance with social rules. Although they pray for divine help, they themselves struggle to overcome suffering or they seek for assistance. In the end, the suffering is relieved mostly by individual struggle, both by personal endeavour and assistance from sources other than the immediately divine.

Romances offer 'secularized' religious alternatives to people by making use of religious intertexts to relate the significance of ordeals. In that sense, representations of ordeals in hagiographies provide the romance with religious examples which are replaced with secular alternatives in romances. Both romance and hagiography present means of salvation, but through different types of statements and experiences, like two sides of the same coin. While romance represents the self as a human being, hagiography represents the faith, divine teaching; both genres present means of salvation, the former in this world, and the latter in the Otherworld. Although romance and hagiography differ in representations of suffering, they are structurally the same. Protagonists of both genres experience false accusations, suffer physically and emotionally and are rewarded at the end of their patient suffering. Despite its secular content, the romance genre makes use of a variety of hagiographical motifs and endings, although it handles them in a secular context. However, it similarly insists on the inevitability of pain and suffering, without *directly* promising heavenly salvation. Therefore, pain and suffering in romances can be defined as secularized versions of hagiographical suffering.

While pain and suffering have religious implications in hagiographical writings, they have secular functions in romances. As opposed to the religious function of suffering for the sake of salvation and reward in heaven after death, the main intention in the romances is survival on earth. Hence, pain and suffering in romances are investments for survival. Moreover, they are alternatives to the spiritual ordeals presented in religious writings. Like religious people who strive to be spiritually perfect, in order to be rewarded with heaven after death through suffering on earth, the sufferers in romances endure pain for reasons and objectives which are not mainly religious, but in order to be rewarded with heaven on earth.

The romance genre emphasizes the importance of lived experiences and lived morality; therefore, pain and suffering in romances primarily serve to create earthly moral alternatives to divine or saintly morality. Romances are religious intertexts relating similar spiritual messages to those presented in religious writings by exemplifying how to be good Christians in this world, through the representations of villains who stand for the Seven Deadly Sins. The victims are foils to the villains, and represent Christian virtues. Reading romances allegorically and anagogically makes the audience realize that there is a slippage between godly and worldly, and that the sufferers in romances, in fact, experience ordeals testing them as good human beings and good Christians. Meanwhile, the victims in romances either suffer for God's sake or

they are victimized by the villains; they have few differences because all pain and suffering, regardless of their being endured for this world or the other world, are presented as a means of fulfilment of desires.

Romance victims experience endless ordeals in fantastic or exotic settings, which provide exciting and interesting variety for a lay audience. Representations of ordeals in historical, pagan and fairy settings make moral and theological ideas more accessible by creating an entertainment which didactic religious writing often lacks. Besides, these realms relate to noble and aspirational lifestyles and interests, in order to capture the attention of men and women who are young and have desires to fulfil. Divine interference (both for inciting suffering and overcoming it) may be replaced with supernatural intrusion in some romances. Contrary to God's miracles to relieve suffering, there are mortals who make use of magic to create illusions and transformations to victimize. Sometimes mortals make bargains with fairies in order to gain relief from the suffering initiated by mortal villains, which in fact makes them potential victims of these fairies. In romances, there are a variety of supernatural motifs like omens prophesying forthcoming ordeals, giants and dragons' threats. There are magical objects which protect against suffering, such as magical rings protecting from physical harm or death, and rings providing invulnerability. However, these objects of protection and relief are not presented as the primary means of protecting the sufferer, rather reminding the victim that he is not totally desperate during an ordeal, and he is the true reliever of his own suffering.

Romances refer to what is familiar to people, as folktales, historical figures and events. This makes it easier to present 'ordeal' as something familiar, bringing the representations closer to 'reality' than fiction. Thus, romance becomes life and somehow history itself, while ordeals become incidents in this semi-realistic and semi-fictional account. This intermingling of fiction and reality makes romance an intertext, which may seem simple and repetitive, with stereotypical incidents and characters; yet, it contains a deep message. Although many representations are stereotypical, the romance audience can concentrate on different aspects of suffering. Each time, different reasons for and reactions to suffering are discovered through references to the Bible, history and other cultural texts. Therefore, the romance audience has to 'read between the lines' to understand the real message of romance, by referring to these intertexts. Romance motifs are related to other aspects of culture, ideas, images and also 'real' life. They resemble signs pointing to other signs, where they reach a 'final' understanding of how to 'survive' villainy as well as a realization of the boundary

between the mortal and the divine, the former as the reason of villainy on earth and the latter as the reliever of the sufferer. While emphasizing how to be a good human being, romances indirectly become didactic in a religious way and exemplify 'how to be a good *Christian* man or woman'. Though they are not religious texts or spiritual manuals, they present these religious ideas in a secular way. Where romances occur in clerically-owned or commissioned manuscripts, they may appear to be 'out of place'. This may be mistaken, as romances were meaningful for all classes in society. The romance is a splendid form of accessible teaching tool, and even the Church could invest in this. Romances are didactic both in a secular and a religious sense, because they demonstrate and emphasize their moral content through sufferers who are mostly aware of their errors and sins. Although romance is grounded in the human experience which is at the centre of the secular world, it offers a bridge between humankind and God by 'romancing the ordeal'.

Appendix

Suffering Theme Index of Middle English Metrical Romances

Introduction

This index presents the themes related to suffering in Middle English metrical romances in an orderly framework. It lists villains, victims and motivations behind ordeals by treating suffering as its major focus, in order to classify and identify characters and circumstances, and to provide researchers with a quick access to these representations. It categorizes how characters and circumstances in relation to pain and suffering circulate in metrical romances, and presents how ordeals are incited, relieved and ended.

Methodology

This index consists of forty-five Middle English metrical romances, with the exclusion of Arthurian and non-anonymous ones. It has thirteen major headings, in addition to numerous subheadings and subdivisions, providing guidance for the classification of the themes. Main headings are given numbers, whilst their subheadings are assigned letters, and subdivisions are divided numerically. The names of the romances are arranged alphabetically, disregarding initial definite or indefinite articles. Each entry includes basic circumstantial detail in a sentence.

The first major heading entitled *Children* (pp. 273-6) is grouped under subheadings and subdivisions of *Children as Victims* (pp. 273-5) (*Children Victimized by Parents*, pp. 273-4; *Children Victimized by Strangers*, p. 274; *Abducted Children*, p. 274 (*Abducted by Beasts*, p. 274; *Abducted by Strangers*, p. 274); *Abandoned Children*, p. 274; *Exiled Children*, pp. 274-5), *Children as Victimizers* (p. 275) (*Children as Victimizers of Their Country*, p. 275; *Children as Victimizers of Their Parents*, p. 275), and *Children as Relievers of Suffering* (pp. 275-6).

The second major heading entitled *Commoners* (pp. 276-7) is grouped under subheadings and subdivisions of *Commoners as Relievers of Suffering* (pp. 276-7) (*Advisors/Helpers*, p. 276; *Rescue of Abandoned Nobles*, pp. 276-7), *Commoners as Victims* (p. 277) (*Victims of Christians*, p. 277; *Victims of Saracens*, p. 277), and *Commoners as Victimizers* (p. 277).

The third major heading entitled *Divine Intrusions* (pp. 277-80) is grouped under subheadings of *Appearance of Angels* (pp. 277-8), *Confessions* (p. 278), *Conversions* (p. 278), *Miscellaneous Extraordinary Phenomena* (pp. 278-9), *Miraculous Healings* (p. 279), *Prayers* (p. 279), and *Religious Figures* (pp. 279-80).

The fourth major heading entitled *Dreams* (pp. 280-1) is grouped under subheadings of *Dreams of Divine Orders* (p. 280), *Prophetic Dreams Foretelling Suffering* (p. 280), and *Prophetic Dreams Foretelling Relief* (pp. 280-1).

The fifth major heading entitled *Endings with Revelations* (p. 281) is grouped under subheadings of *Identifications by a Token* (p. 281), and *Revelations of Identity* (p. 281).

The sixth major heading entitled *Journeys* (pp. 281-4) is grouped under subheadings and subdivisions of *Exiles* (pp. 281-3) (*Enforced Exiles*, pp. 281-2; *Self-Exiles*, pp. 282-3), *Otherworld Journeys* (p. 283), *Pilgrimages* (p. 283), and *Quests* (pp. 283-4) (*Physical Quests*, pp. 283-4; *Spiritual Quests*, p. 284).

The seventh major heading entitled *Punishments and Rewards* (pp. 284-9) is grouped under subheadings and subdivisions of *Punishments* (pp. 284-6) (*False Accusation Punished*, p. 284; *Jealousy Punished*, pp. 284-5; *Impiety Punished*, p. 285; *Murder Punished*, p. 285; *Treason Punished*, pp. 285-6; *Villains Fall into Their Own Traps*, p. 286), *Rewards* (pp. 286-8) (*Generosity Rewarded*, p. 286; *Loyalty Rewarded*, pp. 286-7; *Patience Rewarded*, p. 287; *Piety Rewarded*, p. 287; *Penance Rewarded*, pp. 287-8; *Pilgrimage Rewarded*, p. 288; *Sacrifice Rewarded*, p. 288), and *No Punishment* (pp. 288-9).

The eighth major heading entitled *Religion* (pp. 289-90) is grouped under subheadings and subdivisions of *Christians as Victims of People of Other Faiths* (p. 289), and *Christians as Victimiziers* (pp. 289-90) (*Christians as Victimiziers of Other Christians*, p. 289; *Christians as Victimiziers of People of Other Faiths*, pp. 289-90).

The ninth major heading entitled *Relievers of Suffering (not enders of suffering but providers of physical and emotional comfort)* (pp. 290-3) is grouped under subheadings of *Beasts as Nurses/Advisors/Attenders of Humans* (p. 290), *Domestic Relievers* (pp. 290-1), and *Stranger Relievers* (pp. 291-3).

The tenth major heading entitled *Supernatural Intrusions* (pp. 293-5) is grouped under subheadings and subdivisions of *Bargains Between Mortals and Supernatural Beings* (p. 293), *Enchantments* (p. 293), *Extraordinary Places* (p. 293), *Encounters with Extraordinary Creatures* (pp. 293-5) (*Objects with Omens*, p. 293; *People with Omens*, p. 294; *Dragons/Giants*, p. 294; *Ghosts*, p. 294; *Otherworld People*, p. 294 (*Fairy Ladies/Queens*, p. 294; *Fairy Kings*, p. 294); *Supernatural Beasts*, p. 295; *The Devil*, p. 295), *Encounters with Extraordinary People* (p. 295), *Magic Objects* (p. 295), *Monstrous Births* (p. 295), and *Mystical Rewards* (p. 295).

The eleventh major heading entitled *Taboos* (p. 296) is grouped under subheadings and subdivisions of *Incest* (p. 296) (*Incest of Mother and Son*, p. 296; *Incest of Father and Daughter*, p. 296), *Offending Supernatural Creatures* (p. 296), *Punishments for Breaking Taboos* (p. 296) (*Punishments by Inhibition*, p. 296; *Self-Punishments*, p. 296), and *Rape/Sexual Abuse* (p. 296).

The twelfth major heading entitled *Tests* (pp. 296-8) is grouped under subheadings and subdivisions of *Tests of Chastity/Innocence* (pp. 296-7), *Tests of Faith* (p. 297), *Tests of Marriage* (p. 297) (*Lady Testing Her Lover/Husband*, p. 297; *Parents Testing the Lover/Beloved*, p. 297), *Tests of Brotherhood/Friendship* (p. 297), *Tests of Patience* (pp. 297-8), *Tests of Self-Recognition* (p. 298), and *Tests of Truth* (p. 298).

The thirteenth major heading entitled *Victimizers* (pp. 298-312) is grouped under subheadings and subdivisions of *Accidents* (p. 298), *Beasts* (pp. 298-9), *Divine Victimizations of the Self-Victimizers/God as the Punisher of Self-Victimizers* (p. 299), *Domestic* (pp. 299-303) (*False Accusations*, p. 299; *Imprisonments*, p. 299; *Jealousy* (p. 300) (*Jealous of Lovers*, p. 300; *Jealous of Accession*, p. 300); *Misjudgements*, p. 300; *Murders*, p. 300; *Sacrifices*, p. 300; *Sharing Responsibility for Suffering*, p. 300), *Treacherous Relatives* (pp. 301-3) (*Brothers*, p. 301; *Daughters*, p. 301; *Fathers/Stepfathers*, pp. 301-2; *Lovers*, p. 302; *Mothers/Stepmothers*, p. 302; *Mothers-in-Law*, p. 302; *Sons*, pp. 302-3; *Spouses*, p. 303; *Uncles*, p. 303), *External/Strangers* (pp. 303-7) (*False Accusations*, pp. 303-4; *Jealousy*, p. 304; *Murders*, p. 304; *Threats*, pp. 304-5; *Treacherous Strangers* (p. 305) (*Treacherous Alliances/Friends*, p. 305; *Treacherous Nobles*, p. 305); *Unwanted Suitors*, pp. 306-7 (*Unwanted Christian Suitors*, p. 306; *Unwanted Saracen Suitors*, p. 306; *Threats of the Suitors*, pp. 306-7), *False Accusations* (p. 307) (*Accused Males*, p. 307; *Accused Princesses*, p. 307; *Accused Queens*, p. 307), *Jews* (pp. 307-8) (*Jews as Victimizers of Christians*, p. 307; *Jews Victimized by Christians*, pp. 307-8), *Love* (p. 308), *Mutilations* (pp. 308-9) (*Physical Mutilations*, pp. 308-9; *Beheadings*, p. 309), *Saracens* (pp. 309-10) (*Captivities*, p. 309; *Wars*, pp. 309-10), *Sicknesses* (p. 310), *Stewards* (p. 310) (*False Accusations*, p. 310; *Jealousy*, p. 310; *Treasons/Tricks*, p. 310), and *Self-Victimizers* (pp. 310-2) (*Hubris*, pp. 310-1; *Vows* (p. 311) (*Brotherhood*, p. 311; *Conversion*, p. 311; *Marriage*, p. 311); *Self-Injuries/Mutilations*, p. 311; *Self-Realizations*, pp. 311-2; *Self-Punishments*, p. 312; *Self-Sacrifices*, p. 312).

The *Correspondences Between Romances and Numerations* section (pp. 313-6) functions as a way of listing the themes in each romance separately. It is intended to be

a short cut for researchers to enable them to find out the related themes in each romance. Each text's reference number from the *New Index of Middle English Verse* is also provided in this section, in order to facilitate further research.

Suffering Theme Index of Middle English Metrical Romances

1- Children

A. Children as Victims

1. Children Victimized by Parents

*(*Athelston*) Athelston kicks his pregnant wife, and kills their unborn baby.

*(*Beves of Hamptoun*) The Countess orders the murder of her son Beves, but sells him when he is spared.

*(*Cheuelere Assigne*) Beatrice's mother-in-law Matabryne orders the drowning of her seven grandchildren.

*(*Emaré*) Emaré is exposed to her father Sir Artyus's incestuous desire.

*(*Floris and Blancheflour*) In order to prevent their marriage, Floris's father separates Floris by a trick from Blancheflour.

*(*Generydes*) Generydes is falsely accused of adultery by his stepmother Serenydes.

*(*Lay le Freine*) Freine is about to be slain by her mother, who wants to cleanse herself of the accusation of adultery.

*(*Octovian*) Twin sons Florent and Octovian are exiled in the wilderness with their mother by their father, after their mother is falsely accused by their grandmother.

*(*Partonope of Blois*) Partonope's mother uses magic to prevent his marriage to Melior without realizing that she is victimizing him.

*(*The Romans of Partenay*) (1) Melusine and her two sisters are punished by their mother for victimizing their father. (2) Raymond kills their son Horrible on his wife Melusine's advice.

*(*The Sege off Melayne*) In order to get rid of him, Lord Ganelon makes his stepson Roland participate in the fight instead of King Charles.

*(*The Seven Sages of Rome*) The Empress casts a spell on her stepson Florentyne, and falsely accuses him of treason.

*(*The Siege of Jerusalem*) In order to survive starvation, a Jewish lady eats her own child.

*(*Sir Cleges*) Sir Cleges's two sons suffer together with their parents because of their parents' extravagance.

*(*Sir Eglamour of Artois*) Degrebelle is exiled on the sea with his mother Cristabell by his grandfather Sir Prynsmour.

*(*Sir Tryamour*) Sir Tryamour is born in the wilderness, after his mother Queen Margaret has been exiled by her husband King Ardus.

*(*The Squire of Low Degree*) The King of Hungary victimizes his daughter for seven years by falsely telling her that her lover is dead.

*(*Torrent of Portyngale*) Desonell is exiled by her father Calamond on the sea with her twin sons Leobertus and Antony.

*(*William of Palerne*) Braunden transforms her stepson Alphonse into a werewolf.

2. Children Victimized by Strangers

*(*The Lay of Havelok the Dane*) (1) Goldborough is victimized by her protector Godrich. (2) Havelok and his sisters are imprisoned by their protector Godard.

*(*Le Bone Florence of Rome*) Knight Machary cuts Tyrry's daughter Betres's throat.

*(*Sir Amadace*) Sir Amadace's child is used to test his father's loyalty to his promise, when the White Knight asks for his share of the child.

*(*Stanzaic Guy of Warwick*) (1) Earl Jonas's fifteen sons are imprisoned by King Triamour with their father. (2) King Triamour's son is slain by the Sultan's son. (3) Guy and Felice's child is abducted by merchants.

3. Abducted Children

3.1. Abducted by Beasts

*(*Octovian*) The Empress's twin sons (Florent and Octovian) are abducted by a lioness and an ape in the wilderness.

*(*Sir Eglamour of Artois*) Sir Eglamour's son Degrebelle is abducted by a griffin.

*(*Sir Isumbras*) Sir Isumbras's three sons are abducted by a lion, a leopard and a unicorn.

*(*Torrent of Portyngale*) Torrent's twin sons (Leobertus and Antony) are abducted by a leopard and a griffin.

*(*William of Palerne*) William is abducted by a werewolf.

3.2. Abducted by Strangers

*(*Stanzaic Guy of Warwick*) Felice and Guy's son is abducted by merchants.

4. Abandoned Children

*(*Cheuelere Assigne*) Seven children are ordered to be drowned by their grandmother Matabryne, are left in the forest by Marcus, and are fostered by a hermit.

*(*Lay le Freine*) Freine is left at a convent by her mother's maid to keep her birth a secret, and is fostered by the abbess.

*(*Sir Degaré*) Degaré is left at a hermitage by his mother's maid to avoid gossip about his conception, and is fostered by a hermit and his wife.

5. Exiled Children

*(*Emaré*) (1) Emaré is exiled on the sea by her father Sir Artyus. (2) Emaré's son Segramor is exiled on the sea with her, and is fostered by a merchant in Rome.

*(*King Horn*) King Horn is separated from his mother, is exiled on the sea with twelve other boys by the Saracens who killed his father, and is fostered by King Almair.

*(*Octovian*) Florent and Octovian are exiled in the wilderness with their mother by their father, and Florent is fostered by Clement.

*(*Sir Eglamour of Artois*) Degrebelle is exiled on the sea with his mother by his grandfather, and is fostered by the King of Israel.

*(*Sir Isumbras*) Sir Isumbras's three children are exiled with their parents in the wilderness.

*(*Torrent of Portyngale*) Desonell is exiled on the sea with her twin sons Leobertus and Antony by her father Calamond, and her children are fostered by the King of Jerusalem and the King of Greece.

B. Children as Victimiziers

1. Children as Victimiziers of Their Country

*(*Sir Ferumbras*) Floripas and Ferumbras victimize Saracens after their conversion to Christianity.

*(*Sir Gowther*) Sir Gowther rules tyrannically after his succession to the dukedom.

*(*The Sowdone of Babylone*) Floripas and Ferumbras victimize Saracens after their conversion to Christianity.

2. Children as Victimiziers of Their Parents

*(*Kyng Alisaunder*) Alisaunder kills his father Neptanabus by pushing him into a hole.

*(*The Romans of Partenay*) Raymond kills his uncle by mistake in a hunt, after he has adopted him.

*(*Sir Ferumbras*) Floripas and Ferumbras connive at their father Balan's beheading.

*(*Sir Gowther*) Sir Gowther is cruel to his parents, and threatens to stab his mother.

*(*The Sowdone of Babylone*) Ferumbras and Floripas connive at their father Laban's beheading.

C. Children as Relievers of Suffering

*(*Amis and Amiloun*) (1) Amis's children's blood is a means to heal Amiloun's leprosy. (2) Amiloun's nephew Amourant accompanies Amiloun during his exile.

*(*Beves of Hamptoun*) In order to defeat his enemy, Beves helps his foster father.

*(*Cheuelere Assigne*) Enyas kills Malkedras who victimized his siblings, and saves his mother Beatrice from burning.

*(*Generydes*) In order to defeat his steward Sir Amelok, Generydes helps his father King Auferius.

*(*King Horn*) Horn finds his mother, takes his father's revenge by defeating the Saracens, and restores the churches destroyed by the Saracens.

- *(*Kyng Alisaunder*) Alisaunder releases his mother from prison, saves her from a suitor, and restores her noble status.
- *(*Octovian*) Octovian saves his father, twin brother Florent, and his father's noblemen, defeats the Saracens, and is reunited with his family.
- *(*The Seven Sages of Rome*) Florentyne reveals his stepmother's treason.
- *(*Sir Degaré*) Sir Degaré finds his parents, and is reunited with his family.
- *(*Sir Eglamour of Artois*) Degrebelle saves his mother Cristabell from several unwanted suitors.
- *(*Sir Isumbras*) In order to help their parents in a battle, three sons arrive on the backs of the beasts that have abducted them.
- *(*Sir Tryamour*) Sir Tryamour saves his father King Arduus from a siege.
- *(*Torrent of Portyngale*) Torrent's son Leobertus releases him from prison.
- *(*William of Palerne*) William saves his mother the Queen of Apulia from the King of Spain's threat.

2- Commoners

A. Commoners as Relievers of Suffering

1. Advisors/Helpers

- *(*Beves of Hamptoun*) Chamberlain Bonefas helps Beves and Josian to escape from Josian's suitor Yvor.
- *(*Floris and Blancheflour*) Maid Clarice arranges the union of Floris and Blancheflour.
- *(*Generydes*) Maid Mirabell saves Clarionas from marrying Gwaynan.
- *(*Ipomadon*) Maid Imayne advises Lady Fere to delay her marriage to unwanted suitors.
- *(*Kyng Alisaunder*) A palmer suggests a herb to Alisaunder to heal poisoning.
- *(*Lay le Freine*) The lady's maid abandons the infant Freine at a convent instead of slaying her.
- *(*The Lay of Havelok the Dane*) A fisherman Grim spares Havelok's life, although asked to kill him by Godard.
- *(*Sir Amadace*) The dead merchant in the guise of the White Knight helps Sir Amadace to regain his wealth.
- *(*Sir Degaré*) The maid advises her lady to abandon her new born child at a hermitage.
- *(*Sir Degrevant*) Melidor's maid helps Sir Degrevant to meet his lover Melidor.
- *(*The Tale of Gamelyn*) The steward Adam Spencer helps Gamelyn to reclaim his inheritance.

2. Rescue of Abandoned Nobles

- *(*Cheuelere Assigne*) A hermit takes care of Beatrice's son Enyas.
- *(*Lay le Freine*) A porter gives the abandoned Freine to his daughter to be nursed.

*(*Octovian*) Clement the butcher takes care of the abducted child Florent.

*(*Sir Degaré*) A hermit takes care of the abandoned Degaré.

*(*William of Palerne*) A cowherd and his wife take care of the infant William.

B. Commoners as Victims

1. Victims of Christians

*(*Kyng Alisaunder*) Alisaunder victimizes commoners during the siege of Thebes.

*(*The Siege of Jerusalem*) Jews are slain, humiliated and punished by Christians.

*(*Sir Degrevant*) The Earl plunders Sir Degrevant's lands, and kills Degrevant's people.

*(*Sir Gowther*) All commoners (including nurses and nuns) suffer under Sir Gowther's tyrannical rule.

*(*The Sowdone of Babylone*) Christians slay Saracen commoners in fights.

2. Victims of Saracens

*(*Joseph of Aramathie*) Sir Evelak's land is attacked, and his men are slain by Tholomer, the King of Babylone.

*(*King Horn*) Possessions are captured, and people are killed in Suddene by Saracens.

*(*The Sege off Melayne*) Christians are slain by Saracens.

*(*Sir Ferumbras*) Christians are victimized by Saracens, especially by Sir Ferumbras.

C. Commoners as Victimizerers

*(*Cheuelere Assigne*) Forester Malkedras informs Matabryne that her grandchildren are alive.

*(*Le Bone Florence of Rome*) (1) The thief Clarebalde sells Florence to a mariner. (2) The mariner has sexual desire for Florence.

3- Divine Intrusions

A. Appearance of Angels

*(*Cheuelere Assigne*) In order to make the son (Enyas) he fosters save his mother Beatrice from burning, an angel appears to the hermit in a dream.

*(*Joseph of Aramathie*) In order to help him in the fight against the King of Babylone, an angel appears to Sir Evelak.

*(*Kyng Alisaunder*) An angel directs Alisaunder and his men to a herb to cure poisoning.

*(*Richard Coer de Lyon*) (1) An angel bids Richard not to spare any Saracen. (2) An angel instructs Richard how to slay the Sawdan.

*(*Robert of Cisyle*) (1) An angel replaces Robert to rule his land. (2) An angel informs Robert of Robert's death.

*(*Roland and Vernagu*) (1) An angel bids Roland to kill Vernagu. (2) An angel bids King Charles to help the King of Constantinople in the fight against Saracens.

*(*Sir Isumbras*) An angel announces that Sir Isumbras is forgiven by God.

*(*The Sowdone of Babylone*) In order to tell that he will be victorious over Ferumbras, an angel appears to Olyuer in the fight.

*(*Stanzaic Guy of Warwick*) An angel foretells Guy's death to Guy.

B. Confessions

*(*Erle of Tolous*) The Empress confesses that she is not an adulteress.

*(*Generydes*) Sir Amelok and Serenydes confess their treason.

*(*Le Bone Florence of Rome*) Florence makes her victimizers (Miles, the thief Clarebalde and the mariner) confess that they victimized her.

*(*The Seven Sages of Rome*) The Empress confesses her jealousy of her stepson Florentyne's accession to the throne.

*(*Sir Gowther*) Sir Gowther confesses to the Pope for forgiveness of his sins.

C. Conversions

*(*Joseph of Aramathie*) (1) Sir Evelak converts to Christianity, which ends his ordeal. (2) Sir Evelak's wife converts to Christianity, after her mother is healed with the prayers of a Christian hermit.

*(*The Romance of Otuel*) Otuel converts to Christianity after the descent of a dove on his head.

*(*Sir Ferumbras*) (1) In order to survive, Ferumbras converts to Christianity. (2) In order to marry Guy, Floripas converts to Christianity.

*(*The Sowdone of Babylone*) (1) In order to survive, Ferumbras converts to Christianity. (2) In order to marry Guy, Floripas converts to Christianity.

D. Miscellaneous Extraordinary Phenomena

*(*Athelston*) Sir Egelond's family is invulnerable in trial by fire.

*(*Beves of Hamptoun*) (1) Beves's chains break following his prayers to God in a dungeon. (2) Beves resists dragons and snakes for seven years with a stick in a dungeon.

*(*Joseph of Aramathie*) Three tree trunks unite into one, which alludes to the Holy Trinity.

*(*The King of Tars*) The lifeless child of the Christian princess and the Saracen King is transformed into a human shape after baptism.

*(*The Lay of Havelok the Dane*) A light coming from Havelok's mouth while he is sleeping, and a bright cross on his right shoulder indicate his being a king.

*(*Le Bone Florence of Rome*) Florence is protected from rape by a storm, which rises suddenly in response to her prayers.

*(*Robert of Cisyle*) An angel replaces Robert, and rules until Robert is forgiven by God.

*(*Roland and Vernagu*) Water becomes red and fishes become black, after the Saracen towns are cursed by King Charles.

*(*The Romance of Otuel*) In order to make him accept conversion to Christianity, a white dove descends on Otuel.

*(*The Sege off Melayne*) (1) Saracens are blinded by the miraculous bursting of the fire, after they attempt to burn Roland. (2) Bishop Turpin fights against the Saracen enemy, despite his severe wounds.

*(*The Siege of Jerusalem*) Heathen idols are broken into pieces miraculously when Veronica's veil arrives at the temple.

*(*Sir Cleges*) In order to restore his wealth, God sends miraculously blossoming cherries in winter to Sir Cleges.

*(*Sir Ferumbras*) A white deer leads Richard to the other side of the river while escaping from his enemy.

*(*The Sowdone of Babylone*) In order to help him swim safely, a white hind appears to Richard.

E. Miraculous Healings

*(*Amis and Amiloun*) Amis's children revive, after their throats are cut by Amis.

*(*Joseph of Aramathie*) (1) Sir Evelak's wife's mother is healed, after a Christian hermit prays. (2) A knight's severed arm is restored by Sir Evelak's shield, on which Joseph's son Josaphe has made a cross.

*(*Le Bone Florence of Rome*) Florence has the power to heal sicknesses.

*(*Roland and Vernagu*) After Charles prays for proof of the authenticity of the relics in Constantinople, their odour heals three hundred people.

*(*The Siege of Jerusalem*) The Roman Emperor Waspasian is miraculously cured of leprosy by the touch of Veronica's veil.

*(*Sir Gowther*) (1) Sir Gowther's and the Emperor's daughter's muteness is miraculously healed. (2) Sir Gowther's shrine becomes a place of miraculous healing after his death.

F. Prayers

*(*Emaré*) Emaré prays to God to survive during her exile on the sea.

*(*The King of Tars*) The Christian princess's child is transformed into a human shape from a lump of flesh by her prayers.

*(*Le Bone Florence of Rome*) Florence's prayers protect her from more suffering.

*(*Octovian*) The Empress prays to God to end her suffering during her exile in the wilderness with her twin sons Florent and Octovian.

*(*Richard Coer de Lyon*) St. George appears after Richard's prayers for divine help in the fight against Saracens in the Holy Land.

*(*Roland and Vernagu*) Immediate divine help is given against the Saracen enemy after Roland's prayers.

*(*Sir Owain*) Sir Owain escapes from suffering in Purgatory by his prayers.

G. Religious Figures

*(*Joseph of Aramathie*) Christ appears to Joseph to consecrate him as bishop

*(*Richard Coer de Lyon*) St. George appears to fight with Richard against the Saracen enemy

*(*Roland and Vernagu*) King Charles hears James the Apostle's voice asking him to find his body in Galicia.

*(*Sir Owain*) Thirteen wise men in white clothes warn Sir Owain against the temptations of fiends.

4- Dreams

A. Dreams of Divine Orders

*(*Cheuelere Assigne*) The hermit dreams of an angel saying that Enyas, the child the hermit fosters, is spared by God's grace, and he is fated to end the suffering of his mother and his siblings.

*(*The Sege off Melayne*) (1) Alantyne dreams of an angel bidding him to ask for King Charles's help against his Saracen foe. (2) King Charles dreams of an angel bidding him to help Alantyne.

B. Prophetic Dreams Foretelling Suffering

*(*Amis and Amiloun*) Amiloun's dream foretells his sickness if he fights against the steward instead of Amis.

*(*Beves of Hamptoun*) Saber dreams twice that Beves is wounded, foretelling Beves's suffering.

*(*Erle of Tolous*) The Emperor dreams that the Empress's body is torn by two wild boars, foretelling the Empress's suffering.

*(*Generydes*) Generydes dreams that Malichias robs him of his clothes, foretelling Malichias's treason.

*(*Joseph of Aramathie*) Joseph's son Josaphe interprets Sir Evelak's dream that Sir Evelak will be visited with God's vengeance because of his wrong faith.

*(*King Horn*) (1) Rymenhild dreams of a big fish which breaks her net, foretelling Fikenhild's treason. (2) Horn dreams of Rymenhild's drowning, foretelling Fikenhild's threats against Rymenhild.

*(*Kyng Alisaunder*) Neptanabus makes King Philip of Macedon and his wife Olympias dream by using illusions, prophesying their suffering and Alisaunder's death by poisoning.

*(*Le Bone Florence of Rome*) Tyrry dreams that a thunderbolt strikes at his daughter Betres, foretelling Betres's death.

*(*Octovian*) The Empress dreams that a dragon abducts her twin sons Florent and Octovian, foretelling their abduction.

*(*Sir Orfeo*) Heurodis's dream foretells her abduction by the fairy king.

C. Prophetic Dreams Foretelling Relief

*(*Amis and Amiloun*) Amis's dream foretells his children's sacrifice to heal Amiloun's leprosy.

*(*The King of Tars*) The princess's dream foretells her husband's conversion to Christianity.

*(*The Lay of Havelok the Dane*) Havelok possesses Denmark and England in his dream, foretelling his future reign.

*(*Stanzaic Guy of Warwick*) Tirri dreams of a hill on which he finds a treasure, foretelling his regaining of his lands.

*(*William of Palerne*) (1) Melior dreams that a werewolf helps her and William, foretelling Alphonse's help. (2) William's mother dreams that she and her

daughter are attacked by beasts, but a werewolf and two white bears help them, foretelling her reunion with William.

5- Endings with Revelations

A. Identifications by a Token

*(*Generydes*) Clarionas recognizes Generydes (in the guise of a leper) when she sees his ring.

*(*Ipomadon*) Ipomadon's brother recognizes him when he sees his ring given by their mother.

*(*King Horn*) Rymenhild recognizes Horn (in the guise of a palmer) when she sees the ring she has given him.

*(*Lay le Freine*) Freine's mother recognizes Freine when she sees the embroidered cloth and the ring she has given her.

*(*Sir Degaré*) (1) The ravisher fairy knight leaves a pointless sword to the lady to be given to their child. (2) The lady leaves gloves and a letter to her son.

*(*Sir Eglamour of Artois*) Cristabell recognizes that Degrebelle is her son when she sees his mantle, which prevents their incest.

*(*Sir Isumbras*) Sir Isumbras's wife gives Sir Isumbras a ring and a mantle before she is forced to leave with the Saracen Sultan, who has bought her.

*(*Torrent of Portyngale*) Desonell recognizes Torrent when she sees his armour.

B. Revelations of Identity

*(*Emaré*) Emaré is reunited with her repentant father Sir Artyus and her husband in Rome.

*(*Generydes*) Generydes and Ismael recognize their brotherhood in a fight.

*(*Octovian*) Octovian is reunited with his parents and brother, after he saves his brother Florent and his father from the Saracen enemy.

*(*Sir Amadace*) The White Knight reveals his identity as the dead merchant.

*(*Sir Orfeo*) Sir Orfeo takes his wife Heurodis back from the fairy king in the guise of a minstrel.

*(*Sir Tryamour*) Queen Margaret reveals their son Tryamour's identity to King Arduus, after King Arduus is saved from a siege by Tryamour.

*(*William of Palerne*) Alphonse's identity as the King of Spain's son is revealed, after he is disenchanted by his stepmother.

6- Journeys

A. Exiles

1. Enforced Exiles

*(*Amis and Amiloun*) Amiloun is exiled in the wilderness by his wife.

*(*Beves of Hamptoun*) (1) Beves is sold by his mother. (2) King Edgar sends Beves out of England.

*(*Emaré*) (1) Emaré is first exiled on the sea by her father Sir Artyus. (2) Emaré is exiled on the sea a second time, with her son, by her mother-in-law. (3) Emaré's mother-in-law is punished by exile in return for her exiling Emaré.

*(*Floris and Blancheflour*) Floris's father exiles Blancheflour by selling her to merchants.

*(*King Horn*) (1) King Horn is exiled on the sea with twelve other boys by the Saracens. (2) Horn is exiled by Rymenhild's father.

*(*Le Bone Florence of Rome*) Tyrry sends Florence into the forest.

*(*Octovian*) The Empress is exiled in the wilderness by her husband.

*(*Sir Eglamour of Artois*) Sir Prynsmour exiles his daughter Cristabell and her child Degrebelle on the sea.

*(*Sir Ferumbras*) The Saracen Sultan Balan is sent away from his castle.

*(*Sir Isumbras*) The Saracen Sultan takes Sir Isumbras's wife to his country, after he has bought her from her husband.

*(*Sir Orfeo*) Heurodis is abducted by a fairy king to a fairy land.

*(*Sir Tryamour*) King Arduus sends his wife Margaret in the wilderness with Sir Roger.

*(*The Sowdone of Babylone*) The Saracen Sultan Laban is sent away from his castle.

*(*The Squire of Low Degree*) The princess and her father (the King of Hungary) send the Squire on a quest.

*(*Torrent of Portyngale*) Desonell is exiled on the sea by her father Calamond with her twin sons Leobertus and Antony.

2. Self-Exiles

*(*Amis and Amiloun*) Amiloun's nephew Amourant accompanies Amiloun during his exile.

*(*Beves of Hamptoun*) In order to save his horse Arundel from death, Beves leaves England.

*(*Floris and Blancheflour*) Floris seeks Blancheflour.

*(*Generydes*) Generydes escapes from his stepmother Serenydes's seduction.

*(*The Lay of Havelok the Dane*) In order not to be hanged by Godard for sparing Havelok's life, Grim leaves Denmark with his family and Havelok.

*(*Partonope of Blois*) Partonope mourns after his betraying Melior.

*(*The Romans of Partenay*) Raymond retreats to a hermitage in repentance for having caused Melusine's disappearance.

*(*Sir Amadace*) Sir Amadace seeks a solution to his financial problems.

*(*Sir Eglamour of Artois*) Sir Eglamour exiles himself, after he learns that Cristabell and Degrebelle have been exiled by Cristabell's father.

*(*Sir Gowther*) Sir Gowther isolates himself in repentance for his cruelty.

*(*Sir Isumbras*) Sir Isumbras exiles himself with his wife and children in repentance for his pride in his wealth.

*(*Sir Launfal*) Sir Launfal exiles himself, after he has been deprived of his wealth and status.

*(*Sir Orfeo*) Sir Orfeo exiles himself, after Heurodis has been abducted by the fairy king.

*(*Stanzaic Guy of Warwick*) Guy lives in a hermitage in repentance for his ignorance of God.

*(*The Tale of Gamelyn*) Gamelyn and Adam go into the forest, after Gamelyn beats his brother Sir John and his allies.

*(*William of Palerne*) In order to escape from Melior's father, William and Melior go into the wilderness with the werewolf.

B. Otherworld Journeys

*(*Sir Owain*) In order to cleanse himself of his sins, Sir Owain journeys to St. Patrick's Purgatory.

C. Pilgrimages

*(*Beves of Hamptoun*) In order to confess his sins, Beves goes to Jerusalem.

*(*Emaré*) In order to cleanse himself of his incestuous desire for Emaré, Emaré's father Sir Artyus goes to Rome.

*(*Octovian*) In order to cleanse herself of her sins, the Empress wants to go to Jerusalem.

*(*Richard Coer de Lyon*) In order to avenge Christ's death, Richard goes to the Holy Land.

*(*The Romans of Partenay*) In order to ask for divine forgiveness, Raymond goes to Rome.

*(*Sir Eglamour of Artois*) In order to punish himself after his lover Cristabell and their son Degrebelle's exile by Cristabell's father, Sir Eglamour goes on pilgrimage.

*(*Sir Gowther*) In order to ask for divine forgiveness, Sir Gowther goes to Rome.

*(*Sir Owain*) (1) Sir Owain makes his first pilgrimage to Purgatory. (2) In order to cleanse his soul, Sir Owain makes a second pilgrimage to Bethlehem.

*(*Sir Tryamour*) King Arthus goes to the Holy Land to fight against Saracens, so that God will grant him an heir.

*(*Stanzaic Guy of Warwick*) In order to cleanse himself of his sin of ignorance of God, Guy goes on pilgrimage.

*(*Torrent of Portyngale*) Torrent goes on pilgrimage, after he learns that Desonell and their sons Leobertus and Antony have been exiled.

D. Quests

1. Physical Quests

*(*Ipomadon*) In order to end his lovesickness, Ipomadon goes on a quest.

*(*King Horn*) In order to fight against the Saracens in Suddene, Horn goes on a quest.

*(*Kyng Alisaunder*) In order to conquer many lands, Alisaunder goes on a quest.

*(*Lybeaus Desconus*) In order to save Lady of Synadowne, Lybeaus Desconus goes on a quest.

*(*Richard Coer de Lyon*) In order to avenge Christ's death, Richard goes to the Holy Land.

*(*The Romance of Otuel*) In order to glorify the Christian faith and to punish Saracens, Sir Otuel goes on a quest against Saracens after his conversion.

*(*Sir Degaré*) In order to seek his real parentage, Degaré goes on a quest.

*(*Sir Eglamour of Artois*) In order to prove that he is worthy of Cristabelle's hand, Sir Eglamour goes on a quest.

*(*Sir Tryamour*) In order to prove his worth as a knight to learn his father's identity, Sir Tryamour goes on a quest.

*(*The Squire of Low Degree*) In order to prove that he is worthy of the princess's hand, the Squire goes on a quest.

*(*Torrent of Portyngale*) Torrent goes on a quest in the Holy Land, after Desonell and their sons Leobertus and Antony have been exiled.

2. Spiritual Quests

*(*Sir Owain*) Sir Owain seeks redemption through the suffering he experiences in Purgatory.

*(*Stanzaic Guy of Warwick*) Guy seeks redemption through the suffering he experiences on his pilgrimage.

7- Punishments and Rewards

A. Punishments

1. False Accusation Punished

*(*Athelston*) Sir Wymound is executed by being dragged by horses and hanging.

*(*Beves of Hamptoun*) Beves stabs King Edgar's steward with his lance.

*(*Emaré*) Emaré's mother-in-law is exiled, and deprived of her possessions.

*(*Erle of Tolous*) The guardian knights, who falsely accused the Empress of adultery, are burned.

*(*Generydes*) Generydes's stepmother Serenydes dies in repentance.

*(*King Horn*) Horn cuts off Fikenhild's head.

*(*Kyng Alisaunder*) Neptanabus is slain by his son Alisaunder.

*(*Le Bone Florence of Rome*) Miles becomes a leper, and he is burned by Emere.

*(*Octovian*) The mother-in-law is sentenced to death by burning in a ton of moulded copper, and her neck is cut with a dagger.

*(*The Seven Sages of Rome*) Florentyne's stepmother is burned by her husband.

*(*Sir Launfal*) Lady Tryamour blinds Queen Guenevere.

*(*Sir Tryamour*) Sir Roger's dog kills King Ardu's steward Marrok.

*(*Stanzaic Guy of Warwick*) Guy kills Berard, who falsely accused Tirri of murdering his uncle.

2. Jealousy Punished

*(*Amis and Amiloun*) The steward is slain by Amiloun.

*(*Cheuelere Assigne*) Matabryne is burned by her grandson Enyas.

*(*The Seven Sages of Rome*) The Empress is burned by her husband.

*(*The Squire of Low Degree*) The steward lying in ambush to kill the Squire is slain.

3. Impiety Punished

*(*Beves of Hamptoun*) Beves beheads Yvor.

*(*Joseph of Aramathie*) Sir Evelak defeats the King of Babylone by divine help.

*(*The King of Tars*) Saracens rejecting conversion are slain by the Sultan.

*(*Richard Coer de Lyon*) Saracens rejecting conversion are slain by Richard.

*(*Robert of Cisyle*) Robert is humiliated as a fool because of his pride.

*(*Roland and Vernagu*) Roland beheads the Saracen knight Vernagu.

*(*The Sege off Melayne*) Christians defeat Saracens.

*(*The Siege of Jerusalem*) Jews are defeated by Christians.

*(*Sir Ferumbras*) Saracens are defeated by the French knights.

*(*Sir Gowther*) Sir Gowther is rendered mute.

*(*Sir Isumbras*) Sir Isumbras defeats the Saracen Sultan.

*(*The Sowdone of Babylone*) Saracens are defeated by the French knights.

4. Murder Punished

*(*Beves of Hamptoun*) (1) Devoun mistakenly murders his own son. (2) Beves makes Devoun fall from his horse.

*(*Cheuelere Assigne*) Malkedras is slain by Enyas.

*(*Kyng Alisaunder*) Alisaunder's prophesied death is brought about by poisoning.

*(*The Siege of Jerusalem*) Jews are humiliated and murdered by Christians.

*(*Sir Tryamour*) Sir Roger's dog kills King Ardu's steward Marrok.

5. Treason Punished

*(*Amis and Amiloun*) Amiloun's wife is put in a stone lodge to die.

*(*Beves of Hamptoun*) (1) Beves's mother falls down from the castle. (2) Beves kills Ascopart.

*(*Generydes*) (1) Serenydes dies in repentance. (2) Generydes kills Malichias. (3) Generydes cuts off Sir Yvell's head. (4) Generydes deals out deadly wounds to Sir Amelok.

*(*King Horn*) Horn cuts off Fikenhild's head.

*(*Kyng Alisaunder*) Alisaunder slays two traitors for killing Darye.

*(*The Lay of Havelok the Dane*) Havelok kills Godard and Godrich by drawing, burning and hanging them.

*(*Le Bone Florence of Rome*) Florence's victimizers (Miles, the thief Clarebalde and the mariner) are punished with sicknesses that can only be healed by Florence, and they are burned by Emere.

*(*Partonope of Blois*) King Sornegour's steward Mares is slain.

*(*The Seven Sages of Rome*) The Emperor burns his wife.

*(*Sir Tryamour*) King Ardus's steward Marrok is drawn and hanged on a gallows.

*(*The Tale of Gamelyn*) Gamelyn punishes his brother Sir John and the false judges.

6. Villains Fall into Their Own Traps

*(*Athelston*) Sir Wymound is hanged and drawn.

*(*Beves of Hamptoun*) (1) Beves beheads Yvor. (2) Josian strangles Earl Miles on their wedding night.

*(*Cheuelere Assigne*) Matabryne is burned by her grandson Enyas.

*(*Emaré*) Emaré's mother-in-law is exiled, and deprived of her possessions.

*(*Erle of Tolous*) False accuser knights are burned.

*(*Joseph of Aramathie*) Vespasian imprisons the Jews in the pit where they kept Joseph for forty-two years.

*(*The Lay of Havelok the Dane*) Godrich and Godard's children are disinherited.

*(*Lybeaus Desconus*) (1) Maboune and Jayne are slain by Lybeaus Desconus. (2) Sir William, William's three cousins, Jeffron le Freudos, Sir Otys and Constable Lanwarde are forced to serve King Arthur by Lybeaus Desconus.

*(*Octovian*) The Empress's mother-in-law is burned.

*(*The Seven Sages of Rome*) The Empress is burned by her husband.

*(*Sir Eglamour of Artois*) Sir Prynsmour falls from the tower, and breaks his neck.

*(*Sir Launfal*) Queen Guenevere is blinded by Lady Tryamour.

*(*The Squire of Low Degree*) The steward lying in ambush to kill the Squire is slain.

*(*The Tale of Gamelyn*) Gamelyn punishes his brother Sir John and the false judges.

*(*Torrent of Portyngale*) Torrent exiles Desonell's father Calamond on the sea.

B. Rewards

1. Generosity Rewarded

*(*The Lay of Havelok the Dane*) Havelok makes Ubbe his steward.

*(*Sir Amadace*) Sir Amadace regains his wealth, and has a family.

*(*Sir Cleges*) Sir Cleges and his wife regain their wealth and status.

*(*William of Palerne*) The cowherd and his wife are rewarded with property.

2. Loyalty Rewarded

*(*Amis and Amiloun*) (1) Amis's children revive. (2) Amiloun is healed of leprosy. (3) Amiloun gives lands to Amourant.

*(*Athelston*) Sir Egelond's son is declared to be Athelston's heir.

- *(*Beves of Hamptoun*) Beves is reunited with Josian.
- *(*Erle of Tolous*) The Earl of Tolous proves the Empress's innocence.
- *(*Floris and Blanche flour*) Floris is reunited with Blanche flour.
- *(*Generydes*) Generydes is reunited with Clarionas.
- *(*Le Bone Florence of Rome*) Emere gives the city of Florence to Tyrry.
- *(*Sir Eglamour of Artois*) Cristabell is reunited with Sir Eglamour.
- *(*Sir Orfeo*) Sir Orfeo's steward is named as Orfeo's successor.
- *(*The Tale of Gamelyn*) Gamelyn reclaims his inheritance.
- *(*Torrent of Portyngale*) Desonell is reunited with Torrent.

3. Patience Rewarded

- *(*Emaré*) Emaré is reunited with her family.
- *(*King Horn*) Rymenhild is reunited with Horn.
- *(*Lay le Freine*) Freine reunites with her family and Sir Guroun.
- *(*The Lay of Havelok the Dane*) Havelok and Goldborough regain their noble statuses.
- *(*Lybeaus Desconus*) Lybeaus Desconus proves his chivalric skills.
- *(*Octovian*) The Empress is reunited with her family.
- *(*Robert of Cisyle*) Robert regains his status.
- *(*The Seven Sages of Rome*) Florentyne proves his innocence, and reveals his stepmother's treason.
- *(*Sir Isumbras*) Sir Isumbras is reunited with his family, and restores his status.
- *(*The Squire of Low Degree*) The Squire rises in social status.

4. Piety Rewarded

- *(*Joseph of Aramathie*) Sir Evelak defeats the Saracen king, Tholomer.
- *(*The King of Tars*) (1) The child who is a lump of flesh is transformed into human shape after baptism. (2) Saracen Sultan/husband is converted to Christianity. (3) Christian prisoners are released. (4) The Sultan achieves great military feats after his conversion.
- *(*Le Bone Florence of Rome*) Florence preserves her virginity, and becomes a healer of incurable sicknesses.
- *(*Octovian*) The Empress is reunited with her family.
- * (*Richard Coer de Lyon*) (1) Richard conquers many Saracen lands. (2) Souls of dead Christians rise to heaven.
- *(*Roland and Vernagu*) Roland beheads Vernagu.
- *(*The Sege off Melayne*) Christians defeat Saracens.
- *(*The Siege of Jerusalem*) Christians defeat Jews.
- *(*Sir Amadace*) Sir Amadace regains his wealth and status.
- *(*Sir Cleges*) Sir Cleges regains his wealth and status.
- *(*Stanzaic Guy of Warwick*) Guy is accepted into heaven after his death.

5. Penance Rewarded

- *(*Emaré*) Emaré's father Sir Artyus is reunited with Emaré.
- *(*Ipomadon*) Lady Fere is reunited with Ipomadon.
- *(*Partonope of Blois*) Partonope is reunited with Melior.

*(*Robert of Cisyle*) Robert regains his status.

*(*Sir Gowther*) Sir Gowther regains his status.

*(*Sir Isumbras*) Sir Isumbras is reunited with his family, and regains his wealth and status.

*(*Sir Launfal*) Lady Tryamour carries Sir Launfal to her fairy land, away from suffering on earth.

*(*Sir Owain*) Sir Owain is forgiven by God.

*(*Sir Tryamour*) King Arthus is reunited with his wife Queen Margaret.

*(*William of Palerne*) Gloriande and Acelone, bribed by King Embrons's brother to poison the king and his child, are forgiven.

6. Pilgrimage Rewarded

*(*Sir Gowther*) Sir Gowther regains his status, and is reunited with his family.

*(*Sir Owain*) Sir Owain is accepted into heaven.

*(*Stanzaic Guy of Warwick*) Guy is accepted into heaven.

7. Sacrifice Rewarded

*(*Amis and Amiloun*) Amis's children miraculously revive.

*(*The Lay of Havelok the Dane*) Havelok rewards Grim's sons with status and his daughters with rich husbands.

*(*Sir Amadace*) Sir Amadace's wife's life is spared by the White Knight.

C. No Punishment

*(*Athelston*) Athelston is left unpunished, since he is also Sir Wymound's victim.

*(*Emaré*) Sir Artyus is left unpunished, since he repents of his incestuous desire for Emaré.

*(*Floris and Blancheflour*) Floris's father is left unpunished for his attempts at separating Floris and Blancheflour, since he wants to keep his bloodline pure.

*(*King Horn*) Athulf is left unpunished.

*(*The Sege off Melayne*) Lord Ganelon is left unpunished, although he is a traitor.

*(*Sir Degaré*) Degaré's father marries his mother, whom he raped years ago.

*(*Sir Ferumbras*) Floripas marries Guy and Sir Ferumbras gains lands despite their betraying their father Balan, since they are justified by their conversion to Christianity.

*(*Sir Orfeo*) The fairy king who abducts Heurodis is left unpunished, since he is not of an earthly realm.

*(*The Sowdone of Babylone*) (1) The Christians who robbed Laban's vessel are left unpunished, since Saracens deserve victimization. (2) Floripas marries Guy and Sir Ferumbras gains lands despite their betraying their father Laban, since they are justified by their conversion to Christianity.

*(*The Squire of Low Degree*) The King/father (the King of Hungary) is left unpunished for separating his daughter from her lover the Squire, since he wants to keep his bloodline pure.

*(*William of Palerne*) Braunden is left unpunished for transforming her stepson Alphonse into a werewolf, since she repents and disenchants him.

8- Religion

A. Christians as Victims of People of Other Faiths

*(*Generydes*) Knight Malichias reveals the relationship between Generydes and the Sultan's daughter Clarionas, and makes the Sultan imprison Generydes.

*(*Joseph of Aramathie*) Jews crucify Christ, and imprison Joseph.

*(*King Horn*) Saracens invade Christian lands.

*(*Lybeaus Desconus*) A Saracen giant threatens Dame Amoure.

*(*Octovian*) Octovian's father, his noble men and his brother Florent are captured by Saracens.

*(*Roland and Vernagu*) Saracens slay Christians in Jerusalem.

*(*The Romance of Otuel*) The King of France (Charles) is mocked and threatened by the Saracen knight Otuel.

*(*The Sege off Melayne*) Christians are killed by Saracens during fighting.

*(*Sir Ferumbras*) Sir Ferumbras victimizes Christians before his conversion.

*(*The Sowdone of Babylone*) Christians are killed by Saracens during fighting.

B. Christians as Victimiziers

1. Christians as Victimiziers of Other Christians

*(*Erle of Tolous*) Sir Dyoclysyen of Almayn captures the Earl of Tolous's lands unjustly.

*(*Kyng Alisaunder*) Alisaunder is merciless towards the people in the lands he conquers.

*(*Richard Coer de Lyon*) Richard slays the Duke of Ostryke, who refuses to help him to build the wall of Chaloyne.

*(*Sir Degrevant*) The Earl attacks Sir Degrevant's lands when Sir Degrevant is in the Holy Land.

*(*Sir Gowther*) Sir Gowther victimizes his people, and insults the Church.

*(*Sir Tryamour*) The King of Almany besieges King Ardu's lands.

*(*Stanzaic Guy of Warwick*) (1) King Triamour imprisons Earl Jonas with his fifteen sons. (2) Berard falsely accuses Tirri of murdering his uncle. (3) King Athelston suffers from the threats of the Danish invaders.

*(*William of Palerne*) The King of Spain threatens the Queen of Apulia.

2. Christians as Victimiziers of People of Other Faiths

*(*The King of Tars*) The Sultan fights against Saracens, and slays those rejecting conversion.

*(*Kyng Alisaunder*) Alisaunder is merciless towards heathens.

*(*Richard Coer de Lyon*) (1) Richard slays Saracens brutally. (2) Richard forces Saracens to eat the flesh of their kinsmen.

*(*The Siege of Jerusalem*) (1) In order not to starve, a Jewish lady eats her child. (2) In order to victimize the Jews more, Christians keep the siege of Jerusalem long.

*(*Sir Ferumbras*) Christians slay Saracens refusing conversion.

*(*The Sowdone of Babylone*) (1) The Saracen Laban's vessel is robbed by Romans. (2) Christians execute the Saracens refusing conversion.

*(*Torrent of Portyngale*) Torrent victimizes Saracens in the Holy Land.

9- Relievers of Suffering (not enders of suffering but providers of physical and emotional comfort)

A. Beasts as Nurses/Advisors/Attenders of Humans

*(*Octovian*) A lioness nurses Florent, accompanies Florent and his mother on their way to Jerusalem, and fights against the Saracen enemy alongside Florent.

*(*Sir Isumbras*) Beasts (a lion, a leopard and a unicorn) bring Sir Isumbras's sons back to help him in the fight against the Saracen enemy.

*(*Sir Tryamour*) (1) Sir Roger's dog waits faithfully near his owner, even after his death. (2) Sir Roger's dog reveals Marrok's treason.

*(*William of Palerne*) The werewolf guides and protects William and Melior.

B. Domestic Relievers

*(*Amis and Amiloun*) (1) Amis sacrifices his children in return for Amiloun's replacing him in the fight against the steward. (2) Amiloun's nephew Amourant accompanies Amiloun during his exile.

*(*Athelston*) Athelston's wife intervenes on behalf of the Egelond family.

*(*Beves of Hamptoun*) Beves helps his foster father to defeat his enemy.

*(*Cheuelere Assigne*) Enyas fights to save his mother Beatrice and to restore his siblings' human shape.

*(*Floris and Blancheflour*) Floris's mother prevents her husband beheading Blancheflour, and helps to secure the reunion of Floris and Blancheflour.

*(*Generydes*) Generydes helps his father King Auferius to defeat his steward Sir Amelok.

*(*Ipomadon*) Lady Fere's cousin Iason comforts her, after Ipomadon leaves Lady Fere.

*(*King Horn*) Horn finds his mother, and revenges himself on the Saracens.

*(*Kyng Alisaunder*) Alisaunder releases his mother from prison, saves her from a suitor, and restores her noble status.

*(*The Lay of Havelok the Dane*) Havelok revenges himself on his wife Goldborough's victimizer Godrich.

*(*Octovian*) Octovian saves his father and brother Florent from the Saracen enemy.

*(*The Seven Sages of Rome*) Florentyne reveals his stepmother's treason.

*(*Sir Cleges*) Sir Cleges's wife Clarys gives wise advice to her desperate husband.

*(*Sir Degrevant*) (1) In order to end his unjust occupation of Sir Degrevant's lands, the Earl's wife gives wise advice to her husband. (2) The Earl's wife persuades the Earl to let their daughter Melidor's marriage to Sir Degrevant.

*(*Sir Eglamour of Artois*) Degrebelle saves his mother Cristabell from several unwanted suitors.

*(*Sir Isumbras*) In order to help their parents in battle, Sir Isumbras's three sons arrive on the backs of the beasts that have abducted them.

*(*Sir Orfeo*) Sir Orfeo saves his wife Heurodis from the fairy king.

*(*Sir Tryamour*) Sir Tryamour helps King Arthus to end a siege, without knowing that he is his father.

*(*The Tale of Gamelyn*) His brother Ote saves Gamelyn from imprisonment by their brother Sir John.

*(*William of Palerne*) William saves his mother (the Queen of Apulia) from the King of Spain's threat.

C. Stranger Relievers

*(*Athelston*) The archbishop of Canterbury works to settle the conflict between Athelston and his sworn brother Sir Egelond.

*(*Beves of Hamptoun*) (1) Saber spares Beves's life, despite the Countess's order to kill her son Beves. (2) Chamberlain Bonefas helps Josian to escape from Josian's suitor Yvor.

*(*Cheuelere Assigne*) (1) Marcus spares the lives of Beatrice's children. (2) A hermit fosters Beatrice's son Enyas.

*(*Emaré*) Sir Kadore in Galys and a merchant of Rome take care of Emaré and her son Segramor.

*(*Erle of Tolous*) (1) The Empress attempts to persuade her husband not to victimize the Earl of Tolous by attacking his lands unjustly. (2) The Empress proves her innocence by means of the Earl of Tolous's help.

*(*Floris and Blancheflour*) (1) The bridge-warden helps Floris to enter the tower where Blancheflour is kept. (2) Maid Clarice arranges the union of Floris and Blancheflour. (3) The Emir allows Floris and Blancheflour's marriage.

*(*Generydes*) (1) Generydes fights for the Sultan against his enemy. (2) Maid Mirabell saves Clarionas from marrying Gwaynan.

*(*Ipomadon*) In order to delay her marriage to unwanted suitors, maid Imayne gives wise advice to Lady Fere.

*(*Joseph of Aramathie*) Vespasian releases Joseph from the pit where he was put by the Jews forty-two years ago.

*(*Kyng Alisaunder*) (1) A palmer recommends a herb to Alisaunder to heal poisoning. (2) Alisaunder takes care of Darrye's family after Darrye's murder.

*(*Lay le Freine*) (1) The lady's maid leaves the infant Freine at a convent to save the child's life. (2) The porter takes care of the foundling Freine. (3) The abbess takes care of the foundling Freine.

*(*The Lay of Havelok the Dane*) (1) Grim saves Havelok's life after Godard's refusal to give him the riches he promised. (2) Ubbe helps Havelok to trade in Denmark.

*(*Le Bone Florence of Rome*) (1) Emere defeats Garcy, who victimizes the Roman Emperor and his daughter, and kills him to avenge Ote's death. (2) Sir Tyrry saves Florence when she has been abducted by Miles. (3) Florence saves the thief Clarebalde from being hanged, and makes him her servant. (4) Florence heals people's sicknesses.

*(*Lybeaus Desconus*) (1) In order to save Lady Violet and Dame Amoure, Lybeaus Desconus fights against giants. (2) Lybeaus Desconus lifts the curse on the Lady of Synadowne.

*(*Octovian*) Clement the butcher takes care of Florent.

*(*Partonope of Blois*) (1) Melior's sister Urike comforts Partonope. (2) Armant's wife releases Partonope from her husband's prison. (3) Partonope fights for the King of France against the Saracen enemy.

*(*Richard Coer de Lyon*) The King of Almany's daughter comforts Richard in her father's prison.

*(*The Romans of Partenay*) Melusine relieves Raymond's suffering in return for his marrying her.

*(*The Seven Sages of Rome*) Seven sages help Florentyne to reveal his stepmother's treason.

*(*Sir Amadace*) (1) Sir Amadace buries the dead merchant whose soul is restless, and pays his debts. (2) The dead merchant, in the guise of the White Knight, helps Sir Amadace to regain wealth and have a family.

*(*Sir Degaré*) (1) Sir Degaré saves the lady of the castle from an unwanted suitor. (2) The lady's maid advises the lady to abandon her new born child at a hermitage. (3) A hermit educates the abandoned child (Degaré) in the hermitage.

*(*Sir Degrevant*) Melidor's maid acts as go-between for Melidor and her lover Sir Degrevant.

*(*Sir Eglamour of Artois*) Cristabell's son Degrebelle, abducted by a griffin, is found and cared for by the King of Israel.

*(*Sir Ferumbras*) Balan's daughter Floripas helps the imprisoned French knights.

*(*Sir Gowther*) The Emperor's daughter sends food to Sir Gowther, and heralds his redemption.

*(*Sir Launfal*) (1) Lady Tryamour provides Sir Launfal with magical items to end his poverty. (2) Lady Tryamour saves Sir Launfal from punishment after his trial.

*(*Sir Tryamour*) (1) Sir Roger accompanies the exiled Queen Margaret. (2) Sir Tryamour saves Lady Helen from an unwanted giant suitor.

*(*The Sowdone of Babylone*) Laban's daughter Floripas helps the imprisoned French knights.

*(*Stanzaic Guy of Warwick*) (1) Guy saves Earl Jonas, with his fifteen sons, from King Triamour's prison. (2) Guy saves Tirri from Berard's false accusation (3) Guy kills the Danish giant threatening King Athelston.

*(*The Tale of Gamelyn*) (1) Adam Spencer releases Gamelyn, and helps him to fight against his brother Sir John. (2) The outlaws welcome Gamelyn and Adam Spencer in the forest.

*(*Torrent of Portyngale*) (1) Torrent releases a prince, an Earl and his four sons from prison. (2) Torrent helps the King of Norway by fighting against a giant (3) The King of Jerusalem and the King of Greece take care of Desonell and Torrent's twin sons.

*(*William of Palerne*) (1) Alphonse, in the shape of a werewolf, helps William and Melior. (2) The cowherd and his wife take care of William. (3) Alexandrine helps William and Melior to escape from Melior's father. (4) William fights against the King of Spain to help his mother.

10. Supernatural Intrusions

A. Bargains Between Mortals and Supernatural Beings

- *(*Partonope of Blois*) Melior forbids Partonope to see her for a year and a half.
- *(*The Romans of Partenay*) Raymond and Melusine make a deal that Raymond will not see her on Saturdays.
- *(*Sir Amadace*) Sir Amadace and the White Knight make a deal to share the riches which Sir Amadace will get by the White Knight's help.
- *(*Sir Launfal*) Sir Launfal and Lady Tryamour make a deal that Sir Launfal will not talk about Lady Tryamour in return for her helping him to overcome his suffering.
- *(*Sir Orfeo*) Sir Orfeo and the fairy king make a deal that Orfeo will play his harp in return for taking Heurodis back.

B. Enchantments

- *(*Cheuelere Assigne*) Chains on children's necks preserve their human shape, and if removed turn them into swans.
- *(*Kyng Alisaunder*) (1) Neptanabus, in the guise of Jupiter Ammon, sleeps with King Philip of Macedon's wife Olympias. (2) Neptanabus makes King Philip of Macedon and his wife Olympias dream by using illusions.
- *(*Lybeaus Desconus*) Maboune and Jrayne curse the Lady of Synadowne by using necromancy.
- *(*Partonope of Blois*) Melior practises necromancy, enchants a ship and a castle.
- *(*The Romans of Partenay*) Melusine changes into a snake on Saturdays, after she has been punished by her mother.
- *(*The Seven Sages of Rome*) The Empress casts a spell on her stepson Florentyne, so he will die if he speaks.
- *(*William of Palerne*) Braunden enchants her stepson Alphonse, and transforms him into a werewolf because she is jealous of his future accession.

C. Extraordinary Places

- *(*Partonope of Blois*) Partonope visits Melior's enchanted castle.
- *(*Sir Launfal*) Lady Tryamour takes Sir Launfal to her fairy land.
- *(*Sir Orfeo*) Orfeo's wife Heurodis is taken to the fairy land by the fairy king.

D. Encounters with Extraordinary Creatures

1. Objects with Omens

- *(*Kyng Alisaunder*) In order to learn about his fate and death, Alisaunder consults an idol.

2. People with Omens

*(*Kyng Alisaunder*) Neptanabus tells Olympias that she is going to give birth to a son of god Jupiter Ammon (who is in fact Neptanabus himself in disguise).

*(*The Lay of Havelok the Dane*) A light shines around Havelok, the mark of a cross appears on his right shoulder, and a light comes from his mouth while he is sleeping, implying his noble birth.

*(*The Romans of Partenay*) Melusine warns Raymond to beware of Horrible, as he will make him suffer from poverty.

*(*Sir Orfeo*) The fairy king informs Heurodis that no one can prevent his taking her to his fairy land.

3. Dragons/Giants

*(*Beves of Hamptoun*) Beves resists dragons and snakes for seven years with a stick in a dungeon.

*(*Lybeaus Desconus*) Lybeaus Desconus fights against two giants and a Saracen giant to save Lady Violet and Dame Amoure.

*(*Sir Degaré*) (1) The lady of the castle is afraid of a giant knight's threat of ravishment. (2) Degaré fights against a dragon to save the Earl.

*(*Sir Eglamour of Artois*) In order to prove he is worthy of Cristabell's hand, Sir Eglamour fights against dragons and snakes.

*(*Sir Ferumbras*) King Charles defeats a Saracen giant.

*(*Sir Tryamour*) Sir Tryamour fights against the giant Burlonde for Lady Helen's hand.

*(*The Sowdone of Babylone*) King Charles kills a giant and his wife, who are keeping a Saracen bridge.

*(*Stanzaic Guy of Warwick*) Guy fights against a Danish giant.

*(*Torrent of Portyngale*) In order to prove he is worthy of Desonell's hand, Torrent fights against giants.

4. Ghosts

*(*Sir Amadace*) Sir Amadace encounters the soul of the merchant in the guise of the White Knight whom he buried, and the White Knight helps him to gain wealth and status.

5. Otherworld People

5.1. Fairy Ladies/Queens

*(*The Romans of Partenay*) Raymond encounters Melusine in the woods, and makes a deal with her.

*(*Sir Launfal*) Sir Launfal encounters Lady Tryamour in the woods, and makes a deal with her.

5.2. Fairy Kings

*(*Sir Orfeo*) A fairy king abducts Sir Orfeo's wife Heurodis, and Sir Orfeo makes a deal with the fairy king.

6. Supernatural Beasts

*(*Kyng Alisaunder*) Alisaunder suffers from attacks by supernatural beasts in India.

7. The Devil

*(*Richard Coer de Lyon*) A devilish woman who cannot tolerate Mass gives birth to a bloodthirsty son (Richard).

*(*Sir Gowther*) The devil sleeps with the duke's wife in the guise of her husband.

E. Encounters with Extraordinary People

*(*Kyng Alisaunder*) Alisaunder encounters people with extraordinary features in India.

F. Magic Objects

*(*Emaré*) Emaré's robe, a gift to her father by a Sultan, is said to be enchanted.

*(*Floris and Blancheflour*) Floris's ring, given by his mother, protects him from injuries and death.

*(*Ipomadon*) Ipomadon's ring, given by his mother, heals bleeding wounds.

*(*King Horn*) Horn's ring, given by Rymenhild, protects him in combat.

*(*Partonope of Blois*) (1) Magical wine, prepared by Partonope's mother, makes Partonope fall in love with his niece, not with Melior. (2) A magical lantern, given to Partonope by his mother, reveals potential evil.

*(*Richard Coer de Lyon*) Two golden rings, given to Richard by King Mordard, make him invulnerable.

*(*Sir Eglamour of Artois*) (1) A golden ring, given to Sir Eglamour by Organate, protects him from death. (2) In order to be given to his child Degrebelle, Sir Eglamour leaves the ring given to him by Organate to Cristabell.

*(*Sir Ferumbras*) A magic girdle provides refreshment.

*(*Sir Launfal*) In order to make Sir Launfal invulnerable, Lady Tryamour gives magical gifts (a purse which fills with gold, a horse, armour and a servant).

*(*The Sowdone of Babylone*) A magic girdle provides refreshment.

G. Monstrous Births

*(*The King of Tars*) The Christian princess and the Saracen Sultan's child is born as a lump of flesh because of the Saracen Sultan's false faith.

*(*Kyng Alisaunder*) Alisaunder is born after his conception by means of necromancy.

*(*Richard Coer de Lyon*) Richard is the son of a woman who cannot tolerate hearing Mass.

*(*Sir Gowther*) Sir Gowther is the devil's child.

H. Mystical Rewards

*(*The Sege off Melayne*) Saracens are blinded by the miraculous bursting of the fire, which spares Roland from burning.

*(*Sir Cleges*) In order to help Sir Cleges's family to restore their wealth, cherries miraculously blossom in winter by God's grace.

*(*Sir Owain*) Sir Owain escapes from suffering in Purgatory by his prayers.

11. Taboos

A. Incest

1. Incest of Mother and Son

*(*Sir Degaré*) Degaré's marriage to his mother is prevented by his mother's recognition that Degaré is her son.

*(*Sir Eglamour of Artois*) Degrebelle's marriage to his mother Cristabell is prevented by Cristabell's recognition that Degrebelle is her son.

2. Incest of Father and Daughter

*(*Emaré*) Emaré's father Sir Artyus has incestuous desire for Emaré.

*(*Sir Degaré*) The King of Brittany's daughter is afraid of being accused of incest with her father, after she gives birth to a child as a result of being raped by a fairy knight.

B. Offending Supernatural Creatures

*(*The Romans of Partenay*) Raymond accuses Melusine of being demonic, followed by Melusine's disappearance.

*(*Sir Launfal*) Sir Launfal boasts of Lady Tryamour's existence, followed by Lady Tryamour's disappearance.

C. Punishments for Breaking Taboos

1. Punishments by Inhibition

*(*The Romans of Partenay*) Raymond accuses Melusine of being demonic, followed by Melusine's disappearance.

*(*Sir Launfal*) Sir Launfal boasts of Lady Tryamour's existence, followed by Lady Tryamour's disappearance.

2. Self-Punishments

*(*Emaré*) Emaré's father Sir Artyus repents of his incestuous desire for Emaré, followed by his pilgrimage.

*(*Partonope of Blois*) Partonope repents of having betrayed Melior's trust, followed by his self-exile.

*(*The Romans of Partenay*) Raymond retreats to a hermitage in penance, after Melusine disappears.

D. Rape/Sexual Abuse

*(*King Horn*) The steward Athelbrus makes Athulf sleep with Rymenhild by deceiving Rymenhild that he is Horn.

*(*Kyng Alisaunder*) Neptanabus sleeps with Olympias in the guise of Jupiter Ammon.

*(*Sir Degaré*) The King of Brittany's daughter is ravished by a fairy knight

*(*Sir Gowther*) The devil sleeps with the duke's wife in the guise of her husband.

12. Tests

A. Tests of Chastity/Innocence

*(*Athelston*) Sir Egelond's family members prove their innocence by undergoing a trial by fire.

*(*Erle of Tolous*) The Earl of Tolous helps to prove the Empress's innocence.

*(*The Seven Sages of Rome*) Florentyne proves his innocence after seven days of silence.

B. Tests of Faith

*(*The King of Tars*) The Christian princess and the Saracen Sultan test the reliability of their respective gods by praying for the transformation of their lump child into human shape, which proves the superiority of Christian God.

*(*Roland and Vernagu*) Roland and Vernagu's duel, representing a struggle of Christ and Mohammed, proves the superiority of the Christian faith.

*(*The Romance of Otuel*) Otuel and Roland's duel, representing a struggle of Christ and Mohammed, proves the superiority of the Christian faith.

*(*Sir Ferumbras*) Saracen ruler Balan smashes his gods for their failure to help him against the French.

*(*The Sowdone of Babylone*) Saracen ruler Laban blames his gods for their failure to help him against the French.

C. Tests of Marriage

1. Lady Testing Her Lover/Husband

*(*Partonope of Blois*) Melior tests her lover Partonope's loyalty to his promise by a deal.

*(*The Romans of Partenay*) Melusine tests her husband Raymond's loyalty to his promise by a deal.

*(*The Squire of Low Degree*) The princess sends her lover the Squire on a quest to prove he is worthy of her hand.

2. Parents Testing the Lover/Beloved

*(*Sir Eglamour of Artois*) In order to prove he is worthy of Cristabell's hand, Cristabell's father Sir Prynsmour sets tasks to be accomplished by Sir Eglamour.

*(*The Squire of Low Degree*) In order to prove he is worthy of the princess's hand, the princess's father the King of Hungary sends the Squire on a quest.

*(*Torrent of Portyngale*) In order to prove he is worthy of Desonell's hand, Desonell's father Calamond sets tasks to be accomplished by Torrent.

D. Tests of Brotherhood/Friendship

*(*Amis and Amiloun*) Amis and Amiloun prove their loyalty to their sworn brotherhood by their mutual sacrifices for each other.

*(*Athelston*) Sir Wymound betrays his sworn brother, since he falsely accuses Sir Egelond of treason.

E. Tests of Patience

*(*Emaré*) Emaré is patient during her double exile.

*(*Lay le Freine*) Freine is patient when her lover Sir Guroun decides to marry another woman (unknowingly Freine's sister).

*(*Le Bone Florence of Rome*) Florence patiently submits to her ordeals.

*(*Octovian*) The Empress is patient in exile, and accuses herself of being a sinner who has deserved punishment.

*(*Robert of Cisyle*) Robert patiently submits to his ordeal, and believes that he is a sinner.

*(*Sir Cleges*) Sir Cleges and his family members patiently submit to their ordeal.

*(*Sir Isumbras*) Sir Isumbras patiently submits to his ordeal, and repents of his pride in his wealth.

F. Tests of Self-Recognition

*(*Ipomadon*) Ipomadon delays revelation of his identity until Lady Fere repents of her pride.

*(*Robert of Cisyle*) In order to reveal his pride, Robert is humiliated as a fool by an angel.

*(*Sir Amadace*) Sir Amadace realizes his extravagance during his self-exile.

*(*Sir Gowther*) Sir Gowther patiently suffers after acknowledging his sinfulness.

*(*Sir Isumbras*) Sir Isumbras suffers after acknowledging his pride in his wealth.

*(*Sir Owain*) Sir Owain acknowledges his own sins, whilst witnessing suffering souls in Purgatory.

G. Tests of Truth

*(*Amis and Amiloun*) Amis and Amiloun prove their loyalty to their sworn brotherhood by their mutual sacrifices.

*(*Ipomadon*) Lady Fere suffers emotionally because of her promise that she will marry the best knight in the world, since she falls in love with Ipomadon, who pretends to be a coward.

*(*Partonope of Blois*) Partonope breaks his promise and sees Melior before a year and a half is up, despite Melior's forbidding Partonope to look at her.

*(*The Romans of Partenay*) Raymond breaks his promise to Melusine that he will not see her on Saturdays.

*(*Sir Amadace*) The White Knight tests Sir Amadace's loyalty to his promise by making a deal to share the riches that Amadace will gain with his help.

*(*Sir Launfal*) Sir Launfal breaks his promise to Lady Tryamour that he will not boast of her existence.

13. Victimiziers

A. Accidents

*(*The Romans of Partenay*) Raymond accidentally murders his uncle.

B. Beasts

*(*Kyng Alisaunder*) Alisaunder suffers from attacks by supernatural beasts in India.

*(*Octovian*) The Empress's sons Florent and Octovian are abducted by beasts (a lioness and an ape).

*(*Sir Eglamour of Artois*) Cristabell's son Degrebelle is abducted by a griffin.

*(*Sir Isumbras*) Sir Isumbras's three children are abducted by beasts (a lion, a leopard and a unicorn).

*(*Torrent of Portyngale*) Desonell's sons Leobertus and Antony are abducted by beasts (a leopard and a griffin).

C. Divine Victimizations of the Self-Victimizers/God as the Punisher of Self-Victimizers

*(*Amis and Amiloun*) Amiloun ignores God's warning that he will suffer if he fights instead of Amis, and is punished with leprosy.

*(*Cheuelere Assigne*) God punishes Beatrice with giving birth to seven children because of her disbelief in the possibility of conceiving multiple children from the same father.

*(*The King of Tars*) A child as a lump of flesh is born this way because of its Saracen father's false faith.

*(*Lay le Freine*) God punishes the lady with the conception of twins because of her false accusation of adultery against her neighbour's wife, who also gave birth to twins.

*(*Robert of Cisyle*) In order to make him realize his pride, God chastises Robert in a fool's body.

*(*Sir Amadace*) In order to make him realize his extravagance, God chastises Sir Amadace with poverty.

*(*Sir Cleges*) In order to make him realize his extravagance, God chastises Sir Cleges with poverty.

*(*Sir Isumbras*) In order to make him realize his pride in his wealth and his ignorance of God, God chastises Sir Isumbras by depriving him of his wealth.

*(*Sir Owain*) God is the punisher of the sinful souls in hell.

D. Domestic

1. False Accusations

*(*Cheuelere Assigne*) Matabryne falsely accuses her daughter-in-law Beatrice of giving birth to seven whelps.

*(*Emaré*) Emaré's mother-in-law falsely accuses Emaré of being an evil spirit, and of giving birth to a monstrous child.

*(*Generydes*) Serenydes falsely accuses her stepson Generydes of seducing her.

*(*Octovian*) The Empress's mother-in-law falsely accuses the Empress of adultery.

*(*The Seven Sages of Rome*) The Empress falsely accuses her stepson Florentyne of seducing her.

2. Imprisonments

*(*Athelston*) Sir Egelond and his family members are imprisoned by King Athelston, after they are falsely accused of treason.

*(*Erle of Tolous*) The Empress is imprisoned by her husband, after she is falsely accused of adultery.

*(*The Tale of Gamelyn*) Gamelyn is imprisoned by his brother Sir John.

*(*Torrent of Portyngale*) Leobertus unknowingly imprisons his father Torrent.

3. Jealousy

3.1 Jealous of Lovers

*(*Generydes*) Serenydes is jealous of her stepson Generydes and Clarionas's love.

3.2. Jealous of Accession

*(*Cheuelere Assigne*) Matabryne is jealous of her daughter-in-law Beatrice's children's future accession.

*(*The Seven Sages of Rome*) The Empress is jealous of her stepson Florentyne's future accession.

*(*William of Palerne*) Braunden is jealous of her stepson Alphonse's future accession.

4. Misjudgements

*(*Athelston*) King Athelston misjudges his sister Dame Edyff and her husband Sir Egelond because Sir Wymound falsely accuses Sir Egelond of treason.

*(*Octovian*) The Empress's father misjudges his daughter, and orders her to be burned, after her mother-in-law falsely accuses her of adultery.

*(*The Seven Sages of Rome*) The Emperor misjudges his son Florentyne, after his wife accuses Florentyne of treason.

*(*Sir Tryamour*) King Ardu misjudges his wife Margaret, after his steward Marrok falsely accuses her of adultery.

5. Murders

*(*Beves of Hamptoun*) The Countess makes her lover Devoun kill her husband, the Earl of Southampton, so that they can get married.

*(*Emaré*) Emaré's father Sir Artyus believes that Emaré's death by drowning is necessary to save his soul from death.

6. Sacrifices

*(*Amis and Amiloun*) (1) Amiloun fights in the tournament instead of Amis, although he is warned about how this will make him suffer. (2) In order to heal Amiloun's leprosy, Amis cuts the throats of his two children.

7. Sharing Responsibility for Suffering

*(*Partonope of Blois*) In order to make Melior understand her being the reason for her lover Partonope's suffering, Melior's sister Urike makes Melior suffer more.

*(*Sir Cleges*) Sir Cleges and his wife share responsibility for their suffering.

*(*Sir Isumbras*) Sir Isumbras shares responsibility for his own suffering with his wife and three sons.

8. Treacherous Relatives

8.1. Brothers

*(*Athelston*) (1) Sir Wymound falsely accuses his sworn brother Sir Egelond's family of treason against King Athelston. (2) King Athelston puts Sir Egelond's family to trial by fire.

*(*Ipomadon*) The King of France and his brother fight because of their enmity.

*(*Le Bone Florence of Rome*) (1) Miles falsely accuses his brother Emere of being on Garcy's side. (2) Miles forges a letter from his brother/Florence's husband Emere, wanting Florence to marry Miles. (3) Miles abducts and beats his brother's wife Florence.

*(*The Romans of Partenay*) Geoffrey burns his brother Fromont.

*(*The Tale of Gamelyn*) Sir John disinherits his brother Gamelyn.

8.2. Daughters

*(*The Romans of Partenay*) Melusine and her two sisters victimize their father on account of his breaking his promise to their mother.

*(*Sir Ferumbras*) Floripas betrays her father Balan by helping the Christians, and connives at her father's beheading.

*(*The Sowdone of Babylone*) Floripas betrays her father Laban by helping the Christians, and connives at her father's beheading.

8.3. Fathers/Stepfathers

*(*Emaré*) Emaré's father Sir Artyus has incestuous desire for Emaré.

*(*Floris and Blancheflour*) Floris's father has tricks to separate Floris and Blancheflour.

*(*Le Bone Florence of Rome*) Emere and Miles's stepfather disinherits them.

*(*Octovian*) The Empress's father allows her punishment by burning with her twin sons Florent and Octovian, after she is falsely accused of adultery by her mother-in-law.

*(*The Sege off Melayne*) In order to get rid of Roland, Lord Ganelon insists on his stepson Roland's fighting instead of King Charles.

*(*The Seven Sages of Rome*) Florentyne is imprisoned by his father.

*(*Sir Eglamour of Artois*) (1) In order to prevent his marriage to his daughter Cristabell, Sir Prynsmour sets tasks to be accomplished by Sir Eglamour. (2) Sir Prynsmour exiles his daughter Cristabell and his grandson Degrebelle on the sea, after Cristabell gives birth to Sir Eglamour's son Degrebelle.

*(*The Squire of Low Degree*) The princess's father hides the fact that the Squire, who is his daughter's lover, is still alive.

*(*Torrent of Portyngale*) (1) In order to prevent his marriage to Desonell, Desonell's father Calamond sets tasks to be accomplished by Torrent. (2) Desonell's father Calamond exiles Desonell, after she gives birth to her lover Torrent's twin sons.

8.4. Lovers

*(*Ipomadon*) Lady Fere humiliates Ipomadon, and Ipomadon punishes Lady Fere on account of her humiliating him.

*(*Lay le Freine*) In order to marry a lady of noble birth, Sir Guroun breaks up with Freine.

8.5. Mothers/Stepmothers

*(*Beves of Hamptoun*) The Countess sells her son Beves.

*(*Emaré*) Emaré's mother-in-law victimizes her own son by exiling Emaré and their son Segramor.

*(*Generydes*) Serenydes falsely accuses her stepson Generydes of ravishment. (2) Serenydes employs trickery to separate Generydes and Clarionas.

*(*Lay le Freine*) In order not to be accused of adultery, the lady decides to slay one of her twin daughters.

*(*The Romans of Partenay*) In order to prevent the suffering he may bring into their family if he survives, Melusine advises her husband Raymond to kill their son Horrible.

*(*The Seven Sages of Rome*) The Empress is jealous of her stepson Florentyne's future accession.

*(*The Siege of Jerusalem*) In order not to starve during the siege, a Jewish lady eats her child.

*(*William of Palerne*) Braunden turns her stepson Alphonse into a werewolf because she is jealous of his future accession.

8.6. Mothers-in-Law

*(*Cheuelere Assigne*) Matabryne falsely accuses her daughter-in-law Beatrice of giving birth to whelps, and orders the drowning of her seven children.

*(*Emaré*) (1) Emaré is exiled on the sea with her son Segramor by her mother-in-law, who falsely accuses her of giving birth to a monstrous child. (2) Emaré's mother-in-law exchanges letters from her son to exile Emaré.

*(*Octovian*) The Empress is exiled by her husband, after her mother-in-law falsely accuses her of adultery.

8.7. Sons

*(*Sir Ferumbras*) Sir Ferumbras is converted, and fights against his father Balan.

*(*The Sowdone of Babylone*) Ferumbras is converted, and fights against his father Laban.

8.8. Spouses

*(*Amis and Amiloun*) Amiloun's wife expels her leper husband.

*(*Athelston*) Athelston kicks his pregnant wife.

*(*Beves of Hamptoun*) The Countess makes her lover Devoun kill her husband, Earl of Southampton, in order to marry Devoun.

*(*Erle of Tolous*) The Emperor imprisons his wife, after she is falsely accused of adultery.

*(*Generydes*) King Auferius's wife Serenydes commits adultery with King Auferius's steward Sir Amelok.

*(*Octovian*) The Empress is exiled by her husband, after her mother-in-law falsely accuses her of adultery.

*(*The Seven Sages of Rome*) The Empress provokes her husband to kill his son Florentyne.

*(*Sir Launfal*) Guenevere cuckolds her husband King Arthur, and provokes him to punish Sir Launfal, who refuses her love.

*(*Sir Tryamour*) King Arduus exiles his wife Margaret, after his steward Marrok falsely accuses her of adultery.

8.9. Uncles

*(*Athelston*) Sir Egelond and Dame Edyff's unborn child is put to ordeal by fire in his mother's womb by King Athelston, who is Dame Edyff's brother.

*(*William of Palerne*) Gloriande and Acelone are bribed by King Embrons's brother to poison the king and his child.

E. External/Strangers

1. False Accusations

*(*Beves of Hamptoun*) King Edgar's steward falsely accuses Beves of treason.

*(*Erle of Tolous*) Two guardian knights, who fail to seduce the Empress, falsely accuse her of adultery.

*(*King Horn*) Horn's friend Fikenhild, who is jealous of Horn and Rymenhild, falsely accuses Horn of plotting against the King.

*(*Kyng Alisaunder*) Neptanabus falsely accuses King Philip of Macedon of adultery.

*(*The Lay of Havelok the Dane*) Godrich falsely accuses Havelok of destroying churches.

*(*Le Bone Florence of Rome*) The knight Machary falsely accuses Florence of killing Tyrry's daughter Betres.

*(*Sir Launfal*) Queen Guenevere falsely accuses Sir Launfal of seducing her.

*(*Sir Tryamour*) King Arduus's steward Marrok falsely accuses Queen Margaret of adultery.

*(*Stanzaic Guy of Warwick*) Berard falsely accuses Tirri of murdering his uncle.

*(*The Tale of Gamelyn*) The judges, bribed by Gamelyn's brother Sir John, decide in favour of John.

2. Jealousy

*(*Amis and Amiloun*) The steward is jealous of Amis and Amiloun's friendship.

*(*Athelston*) Sir Wymound is jealous of Athelston's fondness of their sworn brother Sir Egelond.

*(*King Horn*) Horn's friend Fikenhild is jealous of Horn and Rymenhild's love for each other.

*(*The Lay of Havelok the Dane*) Havelok and Goldborough are victimized by their protectors Godard and Godrich because they are jealous of Havelok and Goldborough's wealth and status.

*(*The Squire of Low Degree*) The steward is jealous of the princess's love for the Squire.

3. Murders

*(*Erle of Tolous*) In order not to reveal their own false accusation against the Empress, two false accuser knights kill Sir Antore, who they falsely accuse of adultery with the Empress.

*(*Richard Coer de Lyon*) Richard slays the Duke of Ostryke, who refuses to help him to build the wall around Chaloyne.

*(*Sir Tryamour*) Sir Roger is slain by King Arduus's steward Marrok.

*(*The Sowdone of Babylone*) (1) Floripas kills her maid, fearing that she will tell her father Laban about her liaison with the French knights. (2) In order to help the imprisoned French knights, Floripas kills the gaoler. (3) King Charles beheads Laban's messengers.

4. Threats

*(*Le Bone Florence of Rome*) (1) Garcy besieges Rome on account of the Emperor's daughter Florence's rejection of his hand. (2) Miles imprisons whoever rejects his accession to the throne.

*(*Lybeaus Desconus*) Maboune and Jayne threaten to kill the Lady of Synadowne, curse and imprison her.

*(*The Romance of Otuel*) The Saracen King Garsie sends Otuel to victimize Christians.

*(*The Sege off Melayne*) The Saracen Sultan Arabas threatens to kill the Lord of Milan's wife and three sons in front of the Lord of Milan.

*(*Sir Degaré*) The lady of the castle suffers from a giant knight's threat of ravishment.

*(*Sir Launfal*) Sir Launfal is threatened with hanging, drowning, and exile, unless he proves he is innocent of Queen Guenevere's accusation.

*(*The Sowdone of Babylone*) Laban blames his gods for his failure against the French knights, and threatens to burn them.

*(*William of Palerne*) The King of Spain threatens to destroy Apulia on account of the princess's rejection of his son's proposal.

5. Treacherous Strangers

5.1. Treacherous Alliances/Friends

*(*Beves of Hamptoun*) Ascopart betrays Beves, although Beves saves Ascopart's life.

*(*Generydes*) Sir Yvell deceives the Sultan by telling him that Generydes will abduct Clarionas.

*(*King Horn*) Fikenhild falsely accuses Horn of plotting the murder of Rymenhild's father.

*(*Kyng Alisaunder*) Alisaunder is poisoned by his men.

*(*Le Bone Florence of Rome*) The thief Clarebalde sells Florence to a mariner, despite Florence's saving Clarebalde from hanging.

*(*Richard Coer de Lyon*) (1) King Philip of France betrays Richard, since he has mercy to the Saracens who accept conversion. (2) King Philip writes a false letter to another Christian king, falsely informing him about Richard's intention to victimize him.

*(*The Sege off Melayne*) King Charles refuses to fight against Saracens as a result of his advisor Lord Ganelon's ill advice.

*(*The Tale of Gamelyn*) The judges, bribed by Gamelyn's elder brother Sir John, decide in favour of John.

5.2. Treacherous Nobles

*(*Generydes*) (1) King Auferius's steward Sir Amelok commits adultery with Auferius's wife Serenydes. (2) Knight Malichias reveals Generydes and Clarionas's relationship to Clarionas's father. (3) Sir Yvell abducts Clarionas to Gwaynan.

*(*The Lay of Havelok the Dane*) Havelok, his sisters and Goldborough are victimized by their protectors Godard and Godrich.

*(*Lybeaus Desconus*) Lybeaus Deconus defeats Sir William, William's three cousins, Jeffron le Freudos, Sir Otys and Constable Lanwarde on his quest to release the Lady of Synadowne.

*(*Richard Coer de Lyon*) Richard kills the King of Almanye's son, and has an affair with the king's daughter.

*(*The Sege off Melayne*) (1) In order to get rid of him, Lord Ganelon makes his stepson Roland replace King Charles in the fight against Saracens. (2) In order to empower himself by weakening King Charles, Lord Ganelon gives ill advice.

*(*Sir Degrevant*) The Earl attacks Sir Degrevant's lands when Degrevant is in the Holy Land.

6. Unwanted Suitors

6.1. Unwanted Christian Suitors

*(*Beves of Hamptoun*) (1) Beves saves Josian from an unwanted suitor. (2) Josian is forced to marry Earl Miles.

*(*Erle of Tolous*) Two guardian knights make failed attempts to seduce the Empress.

*(*Ipomadon*) Sir Lyolyne and many other knights ask for Lady Fere's hand.

*(*King Horn*) Several kings ask for Rymenhild's hand.

*(*Le Bone Florence of Rome*) (1) Miles desires Florence's hand. (2) Knight Machary wants to seduce Florence. (3) The mariner buys Florence.

*(*Sir Degaré*) A giant suitor threatens the lady of the castle.

*(*Sir Tryamour*) Knights fight for Lady Helen's hand in a tournament.

*(*Torrent of Portyngale*) The prince of Aragon duels with Torrent for Desonell's hand.

*(*William of Palerne*) (1) A Greek prince asks for Melior's hand. (2) The King of Spain's son asks for the princess's hand.

6.2. Unwanted Saracen Suitors

*(*Beves of Hamptoun*) Yvor wants to marry Josian.

*(*Floris and Blancheflour*) The Emir wants to marry Blancheflour.

*(*Generydes*) Belen, the King of Egypt and his son Gwaynan ask for the Sultan's lands and his daughter Clarionas's hand.

*(*The King of Tars*) A Saracen Sultan asks for the King of Tarsus's daughter's hand.

*(*Le Bone Florence of Rome*) Garcy, the King of Constantinople asks for Florence's hand.

*(*Lybeaus Desconus*) A Saracen giant woos Dame Amoure.

*(*Sir Gowther*) An unwanted heathen suitor threatens the Emperor's daughter.

*(*Sir Isumbras*) A Saracen Sultan buys Sir Isumbras's wife.

6.3. Threats of the Suitors

*(*Floris and Blancheflour*) The Emir threatens to burn Floris and Blancheflour when they are caught together in bed.

*(*Ipomadon*) Sir Lydyne threatens to destroy her lands if Lady Fere rejects his proposal.

*(*The King of Tars*) A Saracen Sultan threatens to destroy the King of Tarsus's lands if his proposal to the King's daughter is rejected.

*(*Le Bone Florence of Rome*) Sir Garcy intimidates Florence by threatening to rape her.

*(*Lybeaus Desconus*) Giant suitors threaten Lady Violet and Dame Amoure.

*(*Sir Degaré*) The giant knight threatens to ravish the lady of the castle if she rejects his proposal.

*(*Sir Gowther*) In order to force her into marriage, a heathen suitor threatens the princess in the Emperor of Almeyn's castle.

*(*Sir Isumbras*) The Saracen Sultan threatens Sir Isumbras and his wife.

*(*William of Palerne*) The King of Spain threatens to destroy Apulia if his son's proposal to the princess is rejected.

F. False Accusations

1. Accused Males

*(*Generydes*) Serenydes falsely accuses her stepson Generydes of seducing her.

*(*Le Bone Florence of Rome*) Miles falsely accuses his brother Emere of being on the side of their enemy Garcy.

*(*The Seven Sages of Rome*) The Empress falsely accuses her stepson Florentyne of seducing her.

*(*The Tale of Gamelyn*) Sir John falsely accuses his brother Gamelyn of madness.

2. Accused Princesses

*(*King Horn*) Horn's friend Fikenhild accuses Horn and Horn's lover Rymenhild of adultery.

*(*Le Bone Florence of Rome*) Knight Machary cuts Tyrry's daughter Betres's throat, but accuses Florence of the murder.

3. Accused Queens

*(*Cheuelere Assigne*) Beatrice is accused of giving birth to whelps by her mother-in-law Matabryne.

*(*Emaré*) Emaré is accused of giving birth to a monstrous child by her mother-in-law.

*(*Erle of Tolous*) The Empress is accused of adultery by her two guardian knights.

*(*Octovian*) The Empress is accused of adultery by her mother-in-law.

*(*Sir Tryamour*) Queen Margaret is accused of adultery by King Ardus's steward Marrok.

G. Jews

1. Jews as Victimizers of Christians

*(*Joseph of Aramathie*) Jews imprison Joseph in a pit for forty-two years.

2. Jews Victimized by Christians

*(*Joseph of Aramathie*) Vespasian makes the Jews leap down into the pit where they imprisoned Joseph for forty-two years.

*(*The Siege of Jerusalem*) In order to avenge Christ's suffering, Romans victimize the Jews.

H. Love

*(*Floris and Blancheflour*) (1) Floris and Blancheflour mourn, refuse to eat and drink, after they are separated by Floris's father. (2) Floris attempts suicide. (3) Floris and Blancheflour are willing to die for each other.

*(*Ipomadon*) Ipomadon and Lady Fere suffer from lovesickness because they cannot reveal their feelings for each other.

*(*King Horn*) Rymenhild suffers from lovesickness on account of Horn's delaying their marriage.

*(*Partonope of Blois*) Partonope and Melior victimize each other by distrusting each other.

*(*Sir Degrevant*) Sir Degrevant and Melidor suffer from lovesickness on account of Melidor's father's hostility to Sir Degrevant.

*(*Sir Eglamour of Artois*) Cristabell and Sir Eglamour suffer from lovesickness as a result of their separation by Cristabell's father.

*(*The Squire of Low Degree*) The Squire and the princess suffer from lovesickness as a result of their separation by the princess's father.

*(*Torrent of Portyngale*) Desonell and Torrent suffer from lovesickness as a result of their separation by Desonell's father.

I. Mutilations

1. Physical Mutilations

*(*Athelston*) Athelston kicks his pregnant wife.

*(*Beves of Hamptoun*) Josian strangles her husband Earl Miles on their wedding night.

*(*Cheuelere Assigne*) (1) Matabryne blinds Marcus for disobeying her. (2) The swan child, who cannot regain his human shape, makes his breast bleed with his bill.

*(*Kyng Alisaunder*) Alisaunder cuts hands, tramples corpses, slays women and children, and burns people during the siege of Thebes.

*(*The Lay of Havelok the Dane*) Godarad cuts the throats of Havelok's sisters.

*(*Le Bone Florence of Rome*) (1) Knight Machary cuts the throat of Tyrry's daughter Betres. (2) Miles beats Florence. (3) Miles beats a hermit.

*(*Richard Coer de Lyon*) Richard murders Saracens brutally.

*(*The Romans of Partenay*) Geoffrey burns his brother Fromont and the other monks.

*(*The Siege of Jerusalem*) Jews are brutally slain by Christians.

*(*Sir Amadace*) The dead merchant's unburied body is torn by hounds.

*(*Sir Gowther*) Sir Gowther tears his mother's nipples.

*(*Sir Isumbras*) (1) Sir Isumbras cuts a cross on his bare shoulder with a knife. (2) The Saracen Sultan beats Sir Isumbras.

*(*Sir Orfeo*) Heurodis rubs her hands and feet, scratches her face, tears her robe and loses her mind.

*(*Sir Owain*) Each sin is punished with a specific mutilation in purgatory and hell.

*(*Sir Tryamour*) King Arthus's steward Marrok tears Sir Roger's face.

*(*The Sowdone of Babylone*) (1) Floripas throws her maid out of a window. (2) Floripas strikes at the gaoler's brain.

*(*The Squire of Low Degree*) The steward's face is torn by the King of Hungary, so as not to be recognized after his death.

*(*The Tale of Gamelyn*) (1) Gamelyn breaks the neck of the porter who does not let him into his brother Sir John's house. (2) Gamelyn hangs the judges who have been bribed by his brother Sir John.

2. Beheadings

*(*Beves of Hamptoun*) Beves beheads Yvor because he rejects conversion.

*(*Roland and Vernagu*) Roland beheads Vernagu in a duel.

*(*Sir Ferumbras*) Christians behead Balan because he rejects conversion.

*(*The Sowdone of Babylone*) Christians behead Laban because he rejects conversion.

J. Saracens

1. Captivities

*(*Octovian*) Saracens capture Octovian's father, his twin brother Florent, and his father's noblemen.

*(*Sir Ferumbras*) Saracens captivate the French knights in return for Sir Ferumbras's capture by Christians.

*(*Sir Isumbras*) The Saracen Sultan buys Sir Isumbras's wife, and takes her to his land.

*(*The Sowdone of Babylone*) Saracens captivate the French knights in return for Sir Ferumbras's capture by Christians.

2. Wars

*(*Joseph of Aramathie*) The King of Babylone fights against Sir Evelak.

*(*King Horn*) King Horn's father is killed by Saracens.

*(*The King of Tars*) The Saracen Sultan besieges Tarsus.

*(*Partonope of Blois*) The King of France fights against Saracens.

*(*Roland and Vernagu*) Saracens fight against Christians.

*(*The Romance of Otuel*) Saracens fight against Christians.

*(*The Sege off Melayne*) Saracens fight against Christian allies.

*(*Sir Ferumbras*) Saracens fight against the French knights.

*(*Sir Gowther*) The Emperor fights against heathens.

*(*Sir Isumbras*) The Saracen Sultan ravages Christian lands for years.

*(*The Sowdone of Babylone*) Saracens fight against Romans.

*(*Torrent of Portyngale*) Torrent fights against Saracens in the Holy Land.

K. Sickesses

*(*Amis and Amiloun*) Amiloun suffers from leprosy.

*(*Kyng Alisaunder*) Alisaunder's men suffer from poisoning in India.

*(*Le Bone Florence of Rome*) Miles suffers from leprosy, the mariner limps on two walking sticks with bloody wounds, whilst Clarebalde, the thief, is put in a wheel barrow as he has no feet.

*(*Richard Coer de Lyon*) Richard and his men suffer from different food, drink, and the weather in Saracen lands.

*(*The Siege of Jerusalem*) The Emperor of Rome suffers from leprosy.

*(*Sir Gowther*) (1) The Emperor's daughter is mute. (2) Sir Gowther becomes mute.

L. Stewards

1. False Accusations

*(*Beves of Hamptoun*) King Edgar's steward falsely accuses Beves of treason.

*(*Sir Tryamour*) King Ardu's steward Marrok falsely accuses Queen Margaret of adultery.

2. Jealousy

*(*Amis and Amiloun*) The steward is jealous of Amis and Amiloun's friendship.

3. Treasons/Tricks

*(*Generydes*) (1) King Auferius's steward Sir Amelok commits adultery with Auferius's wife Serenydes. (2) Sir Amelok forces Generydes to leave his father's court.

*(*King Horn*) The steward Athelbrus substitutes Athulf for Horn, and makes Rymenhild think that she is in her bedroom with Horn.

*(*Partonope of Blois*) The Saracen King Sornegour's steward Mares spreads false news of Sornegour's cowardice.

*(*The Squire of Low Degree*) The steward lies in ambush to kill the Squire.

*(*Stanzaic Guy of Warwick*) The steward Berard casts Guy adrift in the middle of the night, so that he cannot fight to save Tirri.

M. Self-Victimizees

1. Hubris

*(*Beves of Hamptoun*) Beves has extreme self-confidence.

*(*Cheuelere Assigne*) Beatrice denies God's power to make a woman conceive more than one child at once.

*(*Ipomadon*) Lady Fere is proud of her perfection, and vows to marry the best knight in the world.

*(*Robert of Cisyle*) Robert is proud of his power and status.

*(*Sir Degrevant*) The Earl is proud of his power.

*(*Sir Isumbras*) Sir Isumbras is proud of his wealth.

*(*Sir Launfal*) Sir Launfal boasts of Lady Tryamour's existence.

2. Vows

2.1. Brotherhood

*(*Amis and Amiloun*) Sworn brothers Amis and Amiloun willingly suffer for each other.

*(*Athelston*) Sir Wymound betrays his vow, and falsely accuses his sworn brother Sir Egelond of treason.

2.2. Conversion

*(*Beves of Hamptoun*) Beves kills Yvor because he rejects conversion to Christianity.

*(*The King of Tars*) The Sultan slays those who reject conversion to Christianity.

*(*Richard Coer de Lyon*) Richard mercilessly slays Saracens rejecting conversion to Christianity.

*(*The Sege off Melayne*) Christians and Saracens slay those who reject conversion.

*(*Sir Ferumbras*) (1) In order not to be victimized by Christians, Sir Ferumbras converts to Christianity. (2) Balan is executed because he rejects conversion to Christianity.

*(*The Sowdone of Babylone*) (1) In order not to be victimized by Christians, Sir Ferumbras converts to Christianity. (2) Laban is executed because he rejects conversion to Christianity.

2.3. Marriage

*(*The Romans of Partenay*) Raymond breaks his promise and sees his wife Melusine on Saturday, despite her warning him not to do.

3. Self-Injuries/Mutilations

*(*The Siege of Jerusalem*) Jewish people victimize each other because they starve during the siege.

*(*Sir Isumbras*) Sir Isumbras cuts a cross on his bare shoulder with a knife.

4. Self-Realizations

*(*Ipomadon*) Lady Fere realizes her pride.

*(*Lay le Freine*) The lady realizes that she made a mistake when she accused her neighbour's wife of adultery.

*(*Partonope of Blois*) Partonope realizes that he made a mistake by distrusting Melior.

*(*Robert of Cisyle*) Robert realizes his pride in his power and status.

*(*The Romans of Partenay*) Raymond realizes that he is the reason for his wife Melusine's disappearance.

*(*Sir Amadace*) Sir Amadace realizes his extravagance.

*(*Sir Gowther*) Sir Gowther realizes his anti-Christian behaviour.

*(*Sir Isumbras*) Sir Isumbras realizes his pride in his wealth.

*(*Stanzaic Guy of Warwick*) Guy realizes his sinfulness.

5. Self-Punishments

*(*Partonope of Blois*) In order to punish himself for distrusting his lover Melior, Partonope exiles himself.

*(*The Romans of Partenay*) Raymond retreats into a hermitage after his wife Melusine's disappearance.

*(*Sir Eglamour of Artois*) In order to punish himself after Cristabell and their son Degrebelle's exile by Cristabell's father, Sir Eglamour goes on pilgrimage.

*(*Sir Gowther*) In order to punish his own sinfulness, Sir Gowther exiles himself.

*(*Sir Isumbras*) Sir Isumbras exiles himself, after he is punished by God because of his pride in his wealth.

*(*Sir Orfeo*) Sir Orfeo exiles himself, after his wife Heurodis has been abducted by the fairy king.

*(*Sir Owain*) Sir Owain experiences suffering in Purgatory before he dies.

*(*Torrent of Portyngale*) In order to punish himself after Desonell and their twin sons Leobertus and Antony's exile by Desonell's father, Torrent goes to the Holy Land.

6. Self-Sacrifices

*(*Amis and Amiloun*) In order to relieve each others' suffering, Amis and Amiloun suffer willingly.

*(*Athelston*) Athelston's wife attempts to reveal Sir Egelond's innocence of treason, despite her husband's violence to her and her unborn child.

*(*Floris and Blancheflour*) Floris and Blancheflour are willing to die for each other.

*(*The King of Tars*) In order to prevent the suffering of innocent Christians, the Christian princess consents to marry the Saracen Sultan.

*(*The Sege off Melayne*) Bishop Turpin fights against the Saracen enemies, despite his severe wounds.

Correspondences Between Romances and Numbering¹¹⁰³

- 1- *Amis and Amiloun* (NIMEV no. 821) 1C, 3E, 4B, 4C, 6A1, 6A2, 7A2, 7A5, 7B2, 7B7, 9B, 12D, 12G, 13C, 13D6, 13D 8.8, 13E2, 13K, 13L2, 13M 2.1, 13M6
- 2- *Athelston* (NIMEV no. 1973) 1A1, 3D, 7A1, 7A6, 7B2, 7C, 9B, 9C, 12A, 12D, 13D2, 13D4, 13D 8.1, 13D 8.8, 13D 8.9, 13E2, 13I1, 13M 2.1, 13M6
- 3- *Beves of Hamptoun* (NIMEV no. 1993) 1A1, 1C, 2A1, 3D, 4B, 6A1, 6A2, 6C, 7A1, 7A3, 7A4, 7A5, 7A6, 7B2, 9B, 9C, 10D3, 13D5, 13D 8.5, 13D 8.8, 13E1, 13E 5.1, 13E 6.1, 13E 6.2, 13I1, 13I2, 13L1, 13M1, 13M 2.2
- 4- *Cheuelere Assigne* (NIMEV no. 272) 1A1, 1A4, 1C, 2A2, 2C, 3A, 4A, 7A2, 7A4, 7A6, 9B, 9C, 10B, 13C, 13D1, 13D 3.2, 13D 8.6, 13F3, 13I1, 13M1
- 5- *Emaré* (NIMEV no. 1766) 1A1, 1A5, 3F, 5B, 6A1, 6A2, 6C, 7A1, 7A6, 7B3, 7B5, 7C, 9C, 10F, 11A2, 11C2, 12E, 13D1, 13D5, 13D 8.3, 13D 8.5, 13D 8.6, 13F3
- 6- *Erle of Tolous* (NIMEV no. 1681) 3B, 4B, 7A1, 7A6, 7B2, 8B1, 9C, 12A, 13D2, 13D 8.8, 13E1, 13E3, 13E 6.1, 13F3
- 7- *Floris and Blancheflour* (NIMEV no. 2288. 8) 1A1, 2A1, 6A1, 6A2, 7B2, 7C, 9B, 9C, 10F, 13D 8.3, 13E 6.2, 13E 6.3, 13H, 13M6
- 8- *Generydes* (NIMEV no. A-Version 70, B-Version 1515) 1A1, 1C, 2A1, 3B, 4B, 5A, 5B, 5B2, 6A2, 7A1, 7A5, 7B2, 9B, 9C, 13D1, 13D 3.1, 13D 8.5, 13D 8.8, 13E 5.1, 13E 5.2, 13E 6.2, 13F1, 13L3
- 9- *Ipomadon* (NIMEV no. A-Version 2635, B-Version 2142) 2A1, 5A, 5B1, 6D1, 7B5, 9B, 9C, 10F, 12F, 12G, 13D 8.1, 13D 8.4, 13E 6.1, 13E 6.3, 13H, 13M1, 13M4
- 10- *Joseph of Aramathie* (NIMEV no. 3117. 4) 2B2, 3A, 3C, 3D, 3E, 3G, 4B, 7A3, 7A6, 7B4, 8A, 9C, 13G1, 13G2, 13J2
- 11- *King Horn* (NIMEV no. 166) 1A5, 1C, 2B2, 4B, 5A, 5B1, 6A1, 6D1, 7A1, 7A5, 7B3, 7C, 8A, 9B, 10F, 11D, 13E1, 13E2, 13E 5.1, 13E 6.1, 13F2, 13H, 13J2, 13L3
- 12- *The King of Tars* (NIMEV no. 1108) 3D, 3F, 4C, 7A3, 7B4, 8B2, 10G, 12B, 13C, 13E 6.2, 13E 6.3, 13J2, 13M 2.2, 13M6

¹¹⁰³ The entry numbers of the romances in Boffey and Edwards's *A New Index of Middle English Verse* are indicated after each romance title.

- 13- *Kyng Alisaunder* (NIMEV no. 683) 1B2, 1C, 2A1, 2B1, 3A, 4B, 6D1, 7A1, 7A4, 7A5, 8B1, 8B2, 9B, 9C, 10B, 10D1, 10D2, 10D6, 10E, 10G, 11D, 13B, 13E1, 13E 5.1, 13I1, 13K
- 14- *Lay le Freine* (NIMEV no. 3869) 1A1, 1A4, 2A1, 2A2, 5A, 5B1, 7B3, 9C, 12E, 13C, 13D 8.4, 13D 8.5, 13M4
- 15- *The Lay of Havelok the Dane* (NIMEV no. 1114) 1A2, 2A1, 3D, 4C, 6A2, 7A5, 7A6, 7B1, 7B3, 7B7, 9B, 9C, 10D2, 13E1, 13E2, 13E 5.2, 13I1
- 16- *Le Bone Florence of Rome* (NIMEV no. 334) 1A2, 2C, 3B, 3D, 3E, 3F, 4B, 6A1, 7A1, 7A5, 7B2, 7B4, 9C, 12E, 13D 8.1, 13D 8.3, 13E1, 13E4, 13E 5.1, 13E 6.1, 13E 6.2, 13E 6.3, 13F1, 13F2, 13I1, 13K
- 17- *Lybeaus Desconus* (NIMEV no. 1690) 6D1, 7A6, 7B3, 8A, 9C, 10B, 10D3, 13E4, 13E 5.2, 13E 6.2, 13E 6.3
- 18- *Octovian* (NIMEV no. Souther version 1774, Northern version 1918) 1A1, 1A 3.1, 1A5, 1C, 2A2, 3F, 4B, 5B, 6A1, 6C, 7A1, 7A6, 7B3, 7B4, 8A, 9A, 9B, 9C, 12E, 13B, 13D1, 13D4, 13D 8.3, 13D 8.6, 13D 8.8, 13F3, 13J1
- 19- *Partonope of Blois* (NIMEV no. 4081) 1A1, 6A2, 7A5, 7B5, 9C, 10A, 10B, 10C, 10F, 11C2, 12C1, 12G, 13D7, 13H, 13J2, 13L3, 13M4, 13M5
- 20- *Richard Coer de Lyon* (NIMEV no. 1979) 3A, 3F, 3G, 6C, 6D1, 7A3, 7B4, 8B1, 8B2, 9C, 10D7, 10F, 10G, 13E3, 13E 5.1, 13E 5.2, 13I1, 13K, 13M 2.2
- 21- *Robert of Cisyle* (NIMEV no. 2780, 3638. 3) 3A, 3D, 7A3, 7B3, 7B5, 12E, 12F, 13C, 13M1, 13M4
- 22- *Roland and Vernagu* (NIMEV no. 823) 3A, 3D, 3E, 3F, 3G, 7A3, 7B4, 8A, 12B, 13I2, 13J2
- 23- *The Romance of Otuel* (NIMEV no. 1106) 3C, 3D, 6D1, 8A, 12B, 13E4, 13J2
- 24- *The Romans of Partenay* (NIMEV no. 819. 5) 1A1, 1B2, 6A2, 6C, 9C, 10A, 10B, 10D2, 10D 5.1, 11B, 11C1, 11C2, 12C1, 12G, 13A, 13D 8.1, 13D 8.2, 13D 8.5, 13I1, 13M 2.3, 13M4, 13M5
- 25- *The Sege off Melayne* (NIMEV no. 234) 1A1, 2B2, 3D, 4A, 7A3, 7B4, 7C, 8A, 10H, 13D 8.3, 13E4, 13E 5.1, 13E 5.2, 13J2, 13M 2.2, 13M6
- 26- *The Seven Sages of Rome* (NIMEV no. 3187) 1A1, 1C, 3B, 7A1, 7A2, 7A5, 7A6, 7B3, 9B, 9C, 10B, 12A, 13D1, 13D 3.2, 13D4, 13D 8.3, 13D 8.5, 13D 8.8, 13F1

- 27- *The Siege of Jerusalem* (NIMEV no. 1583) 1A1, 2B1, 3D, 3E, 7A3, 7A4, 7B4, 8B2, 13D 8.5, 13G2, 13I1, 13K, 13M3
- 28- *Sir Amadace* (NIMEV no. 3518. 5) 1A2, 2A1, 5B, 6A2, 7B1, 7B4, 7B7, 9C, 10A, 10D4, 12F, 12G, 13C, 13I1, 13M4
- 29- *Sir Cleges* (NIMEV no. 1890) 1A1, 3D, 7B1, 7B4, 9B, 10H, 12E, 13C, 13D7
- 30- *Sir Degaré* (NIMEV no. 1895) 1A4, 1C, 2A1, 2A2, 5A, 5B1, 6D1, 7C, 9C, 10D3, 11A1, 11A2, 11D, 13E4, 13E 6.1, 13E 6.3
- 31- *Sir Degrevant* (NIMEV no. 1953) 2A1, 2B1, 8B1, 9B, 9C, 13E 5.2, 13H, 13M1
- 32- *Sir Eglamour of Artois* (NIMEV no. 1725) 1A1, 1A 3.1, 1A5, 1C, 5A, 5B1, 6A1, 6A2, 6C, 6D1, 7A6, 7B2, 9B, 9C, 10D3, 10F, 11A1, 12C2, 13B, 13D 8.3, 13H, 13M5
- 33- *Sir Ferumbras* (NIMEV no. 593. 8, 944. 5) 1B1, 1B2, 2B2, 3C, 3D, 6A1, 7A3, 7C, 8A, 8B2, 9C, 10D3, 10F, 12B, 13D 8.2, 13D 8.7, 13I2, 13J1, 13J2, 13M 2.2
- 34- *Sir Gowther* (NIMEV no. 973) 1B1, 1B2, 2B1, 3B, 3E, 6A2, 6C, 7A3, 7B5, 7B6, 8B1, 9C, 10D7, 10G, 11D, 12F, 13E 6.2, 13E 6.3, 13I1, 13J2, 13K, 13M4, 13M5
- 35- *Sir Isumbras* (NIMEV no. 1184) 1A 3.1, 1A5, 1C, 3A, 5A, 5B1, 6A1, 6A2, 7A3, 7B3, 7B5, 9A, 9B, 12E, 12F, 13B, 13C, 13D7, 13E 6.2, 13E 6.3, 13I1, 13J1, 13J2, 13M1, 13M3, 13M4, 13M5
- 36- *Sir Launfal* (NIMEV no. 567) 6A2, 7A1, 7A6, 7B5, 9C, 10A, 10C, 10D 5.1, 10F, 11B, 11C1, 12G, 13D 8.8, 13E1, 13E4, 13M1
- 37- *Sir Orfeo* (NIMEV no. 3868) 4B, 5B, 6A1, 6A2, 7B2, 7C, 9B, 10A, 10C, 10D2, 10D 5.2, 13I1, 13M5
- 38- *Sir Owain* (NIMEV no. 303. 6) 3F, 3G, 6B, 6C, 6D2, 7B5, 7B6, 10H, 12F, 13C, 13I1, 13M5
- 39- *Sir Tryamour* (NIMEV no. 1177) 1A1, 1C, 5B, 6A1, 6C, 6D1, 7A1, 7A4, 7A5, 7B5, 8B1, 9A, 9B, 9C, 10D3, 13D4, 13D 8.8, 13E1, 13E3, 13E 6.1, 13F3, 13I1, 13L1
- 40- *The Sowdone of Babylone* (NIMEV no. 950) 1B1, 1B2, 2B1, 3A, 3C, 3D, 6A1, 7A3, 7C, 8A, 8B2, 9C, 10D3, 10F, 12B, 13D 8.2, 13D 8.7, 13E3, 13E4, 13I1, 13I2, 13J1, 13J2, 13M 2.2

- 41- *The Squire of Low Degree* (NIMEV no. 1644)¹¹⁰⁴ 1A1, 6A1, 6D1, 7A2, 7A6, 7B3, 7C, 12C1, 12C2, 13D 8.3, 13E2, 13H, 13I1, 13L3
- 42- *Stanzaic Guy of Warwick* (NIMEV no. 946) 1A2, 1A 3.2, 3A, 4C, 6A2, 6C, 6D2, 7A1, 7B4, 7B6, 8B1, 9C, 10D3, 13E1, 13L3, 13M4
- 43- *The Tale of Gamelyn* (NIMEV no. 1913) 2A1, 6A2, 7A5, 7A6, 7B2, 9B, 9C, 13D2, 13D 8.1, 13E1, 13E 5.1, 13F1, 13I1
- 44- *Torrent of Portyngale* (NIMEV no. 982) 1A1, 1A 3.1, 1A5, 1C, 5A, 5B1, 6A1, 6C, 6D1, 7A6, 7B2, 8B2, 9C, 10D3, 12C2, 13B, 13D2, 13D 8.3, 13E 6.1, 13H, 13J2, 13M5
- 45- *William of Palerne* (NIMEV no. 3281. 5) 1A1, 1A 3.1, 1C, 2A2, 4C, 5B, 6A2, 7B1, 7B5, 7C, 8B1, 9A, 9B, 9C, 10B, 13D 3.2, 13D 8.5, 13D 8.9, 13E4, 13E 6.1, 13E 6.3

¹¹⁰⁴ The entry number of the romance indexed as item 1644 in Brown and Robbins's *Index of Middle English Verse* is retained, although the entry itself has been deleted in Boffey and Edwards's *A New Index of Middle English Verse*.

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