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*An Investigation of the differences in ideas and emphases in five middle English romances (Floris and Blancheflour; King Horn; Havelok the Dane; Amis and Amiloun; Ipomadon) and the old French versions of the same subjects, with special reference to narrative technique, characterisation, tone and background*

J. E. Burnley

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Abstract of a Thesis presented for the degree of  
Master of Arts in the University of Durham, entitled:  
'An Investigation of the Differences in Ideas and  
Emphases in five Middle English Romances (Floris  
and Blancheflour; King Horn; Havelok the Dane;  
Amis and Amiloun; Ipomadon) and the Old French  
Versions of the same Subjects, with special refer-  
ence to Narrative Technique, Characterisation, Tone  
and Background.

J.D. Burnley.

May 1967.

Comparative criticism of Old French and Middle English Romance has usually been incidental to other concerns, and either extremely general or narrowly specific. The aim of the present study is closely and systematically to compare the important English and French versions of the chosen romances, and to ascertain any consistent differences. The approach to each story has been divided into two sections: firstly on tone and background, secondly on characterisation and narrative technique. Within these divisions, sub-headings are suggested by critical expediency, but an attempt is made to establish the setting and tone of each poem from the opening scenes and interesting discoveries are pursued by selection from the rest of the work. The study of characterisation involves an examination of the poet's presentation of the main characters, their emotions and their relationships. Finally, a comparison is made of the employment of stylistic devices in the narrative.

The results of a study of this kind suffer in originality in proportion to their condensation. Nevertheless, it may be said that the chief differences between the English and French romances reflect

a difference in traditions, expressible either in social or literary terms.

The earlier English poems, lacking description and psychological exposition, simple in structure, formulaic in diction, their narrator vigorous and assertive, their setting ordinary and their battle-scenes wrought from popularised epic, reveal a descent from a popular, oral tradition.

The French poems, with their delicate narrative irony, didactic and thematic concerns, psychological subtlety, graceful amplification of literary themes and allusions, and their courtly ethos, clearly belong to a courtly and literary tradition.

The later Middle English Ipomadon exemplifies an interesting coalition of the two traditions; yet, a hundred and eighty years after the composition of its original, it can not equal the subtle psychology and courtly grace of the Anglo-Norman poem.

An Investigation of the Differences in Ideas and Emphases in five Middle English Romances (Floris and Blancheflour; King Horn; Havelok the Dane; Amis and Amiloun; Ipomadon) and the Old French Versions of the same Subjects, with special reference to Narrative Technique, Characterisation, Tone and Background.

A Thesis  
presented for the Degree of Master of Arts  
in the University of Durham.

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J.D. Burnley.

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Preface.

The history of the literary criticism of mediaeval English romance is neither a long nor very eventful one. Valuable contributions have been made from time to time, but they have usually been in the form of general characterisations or, conversely, of highly specific studies of some outstanding topic. Only the Arthurian cycle has received consistent attention, and a large section of metrical romance, the tail-rhyme romances, long suffered almost universal contumely; partly as a result of Chaucer's parody of them in Sir Thopas. When comparison with the extant French versions has arisen it has, again, been in the form of either a general impression or else a minute comparison of passages in the introduction to an edition of one of the poems. Such comparisons may make sporadic observations on style and matter, but often they are primarily intended to illustrate the affiliation of the versions of the poem. Literary history has been of greater importance than critical assessment. Even now, it is rare to find a full and systematic comparison of the artistic achievement of the authors of two related poems. Indeed, a closer comparative study, in their own right, of the style, tone and content of the analogues of a given poem,

might arm critics against some of the perils which assail them in the interpretation of Middle English romances.

In the following study an attempt has been made to impose a system on the comparison of the ideas and emphases in the English and French versions of five romances. To this end, the approach to each poem has been divided into a comparison between, firstly the tone and background, and secondly, the characterisation and narrative techniques. Subdivisions have been included within these headings to accommodate the demands of the individual works. The poems chosen cover a wide range of interest and date, and include one composite romance, two 'Matter of England' romances, a 'roman d'aventure' with its source in the East, and a didactic story of loyalty.

In a work of the present kind, the main value must be in the specific discovery of differences in treatment and content which results from the close comparison of the poems; for all summaries of such discoveries will be subject to the weaknesses of generalisation, and will reduce the comparison to the level of the impressions about the differences between early English and French romance which have become familiar to most students of

mediaeval literature. Therefore, in order to throw small individual differences into relief, wherever possible the closest - either in actual affiliation or in magnitude of achievement - of the extant versions have been chosen for comparison. This frequently leads to the comparison of Anglo-Norman and Middle English versions; a situation which invites deductions from the results other than purely literary ones, based firmly on stylistic evidence.

The resulting social and historical comparison is inevitable in the study of mediaeval romance, for its subject is so frequently the society in which it flowered. To go beyond criticism only to literary history is to accept only half of the help proffered by scholarship in understanding these poems. For this reason I have tried, while criticising the poems, to bear in mind some of the social history of the times to which they belong and to see them in historical perspective and, in consequence, I have ventured occasionally to interpret the fruits of criticism in terms other than those of literary or stylistic history. For, though the passing of centuries has obscured the ready understanding of these poems, and, though we can never hope to see them by the same light as did their first audience, we can at least turn to other works of the period

and to the books of later scholars and, so hope to amend our critical judgement, both of the works themselves and of their world, that it may correspond in some degree to that of their mediaeval authors.

"Thane mote we to bokes that we fynde,  
 Thurgh whiche that olde thinges ben in mynde,  
 And to the doctrine of those olde wyse,  
 Yeve credence, in every skylful wise,  
 That tellen of these olde apprevd stories  
 Of holynesse, of regnes, of victories,  
 Of love, of hate, of other sondry thynges,  
 Of whiche I may not maken rehersynges.  
 And yf that olde bokes were aweye,  
 Yloren were of remembraunce the keye."<sup>1</sup>

1. The Legend of Good Women (Text F) ll. 17-26.

Acknowledgements.

My debt to 'auctoritee', old and new, is attested in general throughout the work. I should like to thank in particular Mr. V.E. Watts and Professor G.V. Smithers; the former for his constant help and advice as my supervisor during the preparation and writing of this thesis, and the latter both for his encouragement and also for his generosity in making available from his own collection two of the texts which proved difficult to obtain by ordinary means.

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KING HORN

THE ROMANCE OF HORN AND KING HORN

I Introduction

The story pattern of Horn, in which a young prince is exiled from his country, nourished at the court of a friendly monarch, banished after some love commerce with that monarch's daughter, and finally returns to claim both his bride and his inheritance, is extant in several mediaeval versions. The oldest and most distinguished of these is the Anglo-Norman version, The Romance of Horn, edited by M.K.Pope for the Anglo-Norman Texts Society, with Introduction and Notes by T.B.W.Reid. The poem is extant in three manuscripts:

Ff. 6. 17 of the University Library, Cambridge.

(4519 lines).

Douce 132 of the Bodleian Library, Oxford.

(3042 lines).

Harleian 527 of the British Museum, London.

(2761 lines).<sup>1</sup>

Professor Pope uses the Cambridge MS. as basis of her text but, from the beginning to line 97, and from line 4585 to the end, she uses the Oxford MS. She gives the date of composition of the poem as shortly after 1170 (Intro. p.124).<sup>2</sup>

1. In addition, two fragments, of 21 and 238 lines were published in M.L.R. 1921 by Professor Brauholtz.
2. Earlier she had dated it as 1170-80 ('The Romance of Horn and King Horn', Medium Aevum 25 1956). M.D. Legge, Anglo-Norman Literature (Oxford 1963), thinks it was written in 1171-2.

The middle English King Horn is edited by Joseph Hall (Oxford 1901) with the three extant MSS. printed alongside each other. These are:

Gg. iv 27.2 of the University Library, Cambridge.  
(1530 lines).

Laud Misc. 108 of the Bodleian Library, Oxford.  
(1569 lines).

Harleian 2253 of the British Museum, London.  
(1546 lines).

The text used in this study is predominantly the Cambridge one, but reference has frequently been made to the others. Quotations refer, as far as possible, to the Cambridge text.

The story is also treated in Horne Childe and the Maiden Rimenhild, extant only in the Auchinleck MS., and printed by Hall as an appendix. Eight fragmentary versions of a Lowland Scots ballad of Hind Horn are printed in: Child, The English and Scottish Popular Ballads, Part i, Pp.187-208.

The final version is a prose romance written in praise of the Tour Landry family in French of the first half of the fifteenth century, Ponthus et Sidoine. This is to be found in:

Royal 15. E. vi of the British Museum, London.

and in English translation, in:

Digby 185 of the Bodleian Library, Oxford.<sup>1</sup>

The most considerable of these treatments, The Romance of Horn, is written in Anglo-Norman, and though it may have been written in

1. This version has been edited by F.J.Mather P.L.M.A. 1897

England, there is no evidence that the poet was familiar with either the English language or its literature. No more is known of the poet than can be gleaned from his work. He gives his name as Mestre Thomas, speaks of his other work - a vanished poem on the father of Horn, Aalof - and at the end promises that his son will complete the trilogy by writing a poem about Horn's son, Hadermod. The tone of his work often bears out his claim to be a clerk and his learning may be assumed to be beyond that of an ordinary layman. Whether or not he was an ordained priest is uncertain, but his claim to possess a son need not preclude this. At the date when he wrote, the Gregorian reforms of the Church seem not to have influenced many of the lower clergy. Indeed, there is good reason to believe that few except the more elevated prelates and occupants of religious foundations took their vows of celibacy very seriously. Marc Bloch writes:<sup>1</sup>

"...the 'priestess', the priest's wife in fact and sometimes in law, long continued to figure among the familiar personages of village folk-lore...in the England of Thomas Becket, dynasties of priests do not appear to have been much more uncommon than the descendants of 'popes' are today in Orthodox countries, nor as a general rule less respectable."

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1. Feudal Society (La Société Féodale) trans. L.A. Manyon (London 1965) Pp. 345-6. See also A.L. Poole, Domesday Book to Magna Carta (Oxford 1951) p. 183 n.3. Poole cites a mid 12th century charter which was witnessed by the wife and son of an abbot.

Mestre Thomas, with his enthusiasm for the spirit of vassalage, his repudiation of amour courtois, his regard for privilege and legitimacy and his taste for courtly ceremony, scarcely seems one of those simple ascetics who felt it necessary to repudiate the company of womankind for reasons of conscience. There is therefore no reason to regard his claim to be a clerk as incompatible with his possession of a son. We should probably not be wide of the mark if we imagine Thomas to have been some kind of minor official or chaplain connected with one of the important courts of twelfth century Europe. Miss Legge<sup>1</sup> inclines to the view that he was connected with the court of Henry II and Pope posits some family connection with Poitou.

His poem exhibits knowledge of courtly custom and regard for the organisation of courtly protocol. He shows especial interest in the duties of Herland, the seneschal, in arranging the hierarchies of nobles who are called to the king's court at Whitsun-tide. He expends many lines on an appreciation of the excellence of the 'service' at the tables, directing special attention to the youthful Horn as cup-bearer. In addition to his interest in the duties of a steward, he seems to have an appreciation of the professionalism of messengers, and three times goes out of his way to commend them on their accurate delivery of oral messages. Horn replies to a messenger from Lenburc:

11.2426-27. "As tu, beau valletun, escrit en parchemin?  
Meuz ne deist sa lecun nul clerc, sage devin."

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1. op. cit. Pp. 96ff

Thomas combines with this solicitude for contemporary courtly custom a deep interest in the manners of the heroes of the chansons de geste. Large tracts of his poem are occupied by stylised combats modelled on this source. It can confidently be stated that he was familiar with this world of vassalage, for he makes allusions to three of the chansons: Ogier le Danois (1995); La Chanson de Roland (1995); Gormont et Isembart (3466); He speaks of the reign of Pepin (751-68) as a golden age (733; 9456), and Reid traces points of contact with the Coronement de Loois.<sup>1</sup>

The story pattern of Horn is of very uncertain provenance. It is generally agreed that the French romance is drawn ultimately from an English source, but has undergone more than one previous redaction in French. Hall, in his edition of King Horn, finds the source in the history of south-western England during the Saxon invasions. In his hypothesis, King Horn springs from a primitive southern version of the story. This version has been successively modernised to correspond with contemporary events - firstly the Danish invasions, and in the present version, the Crusades. Each phase of evolution adds to the story. In Hall's opinion, the French work combines ideas from the northern version of the story (Horne Childe) and the southern (King Horn), though not from extant renderings. Hall allows for no French antecedent for King Horn, but Hibbard in 1924 thought this very

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1. Introduction to Pope's edition p.7.

possible.<sup>1</sup> Indeed some of the names and vocabulary seem to betray French influence, and Fikenhild's denunciation of Horn to Aylmer -

11.695-97            "He liþ in bure  
                      Vnder couerture  
                      By Rymenhild pi doʒter,"

- even echoes Thomas' oft-repeated formula:

1.726.            "Lee serreit ki l'avreit    suz covertur martrin."

Traces of cross-fertilisation are not surprising, for the story's popularity is warranted by the Norman poem Waldef. Here the name Aalof is mentioned as the name of a popular poem. Thomas claims this to be the first poem of his trilogy, but by references made to it in Horn, it seems to have been a mere variation of the Horn story.

The ultimate origin of the story is still largely a matter of inspired guess-work. McKnight and Schofield both favour a Scandinavian origin. The latter is responsible for a particularly coherent and imaginative localisation of the story in the area between the Wirral, the Isle of Man and Furness; all Norse areas.<sup>2</sup> Walter Oliver considers Suddene to lie in Roxburghshire; an opinion which he owes to his grandmother's memory of a local proverb, 'As proud as King H orn'.<sup>3</sup> Oliver overlooks the existence of the popular Scottish

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1. Mediaeval Romance in England (Oxford 1924). Hibbard was following the opinion of Morsbach and Schofield. The latter believed that the hypothetical French original was drawn from an even earlier English poem.  
2. W.H.Schofield, 'The Story of Horn and Rimenhild' P.M.L.A. XVIII 1903.  
3. P.M.L.A. 1931

ballads of Hind Horn. Others have found Suddene in Southern Denmark, Surrey or Sweden. An examination of the story pattern in a folk-tale motif index can quickly convince one that there is strong Irish influence in the story. It is as well to admit at the outset that the origin of the story is unknown and must remain a matter of private opinion. It is probable, too, that the last word has not been spoken on the relationship of the extant versions.

The two most important versions which are extant tally in many respects, but there are also wide differences. The French poem is almost four times as long as its English counterpart and includes almost all the outstanding incidents, adding others for its own ends. The aims of the Anglo-Norman author diverge sharply from those of the English minstrel throughout the poem. A comparison of related episodes in both versions will serve to illustrate this divergence and will emphasise the wholly different approach of the two poets.

## II Tone and Background.

In comparing individual episodes in the two poems, it is as well to begin at the beginning. In this way an appreciation of their different flavours can develop naturally; and nowhere are they more distinct than at the beginning.

The English minstrel begins in a workmanlike fashion. Before engaging his characters in the series of sharp moves which constitute the story, he sets them out before us so that we will recognise them and the part that they will play. The technique is very comparable to that of the author of a one-act play. He seeks to establish his characters as swiftly as possible for he knows that his chosen milieu will not admit extensive development. His players, then, should behave in character through a series of situations and events which come upon them. Murri, we are told, was the king, and Godild his fair queen. Their son was called Horn, an extremely fine-looking child; indeed the sun never shone upon a finer. The poet follows this commonplace with a list of three familiar similes, clumsily intensifying the impression of Horn's beauty.

11.14-16.        "He was briȝt so þe glas,  
                  He was whit so þe flur,  
                  Rose red was his colur."

Unforgivable awkwardness is avoided by the reversal of syntax in the last of the three. Both Harleian and Oxford preserve more sophisticated readings where his white-ness is compared specifically

with the lily flower.<sup>1</sup> Horn's comrades are the next to be introduced. They are the sons of rich men, and his constant companions. He apparently considers them as his equals, and they share all their games and amusements. Two especially are dear to him:

ll.25-28        "pat on him het hapulf child,  
                   & pat oper ffikenild:  
                   Apulf was pe beste  
                   And fikenhylde pe werste."

The simplicity of this introduction, with its antithesis of the best and the worst combined as equally loved by Horn, is pregnant with dramatic portent. An exciting narration is promised, with the conflict of loyalty and treachery, good and evil, uppermost in it. Accordingly, the poet starts to tell his story.

One day, as was his custom, Murri is riding along the beach. He meets fifteen Saracen ships and asks their business. The Saracen reply is scarcely a reasoned one. It is rather a summary of the mediaeval view of Islamic fanaticism. It is naively stated that the Saracens have come for the sole purpose of destroying Christians and their land. Their declaration of this intent is in no way dramatic and is simply a direct speech alternative to narrative, in which the Saracens exhibit the known nature of the infidel.

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1. A common simile in French romance. Cf. Ipomedon l.2246.  
Galeran de Bretagne l.1282

Murri is swiftly dispatched and the narrative hurries on to tell how the pagan horde swept over the country. Queen Godild is forced to flee. The poet uses a common and simple linguistic trick to introduce his hero.

11.69-70 "For Murri heo weop sore  
& for horn 3ute more."

He then goes on to point in very simple terms the loneliness of Godild. The situation is that of 'tragedie'; rather what we today would call pathos. It is much enhanced by the simplicity of expression.

11.71-80 "He wenten vt of halle  
Fram hire Maiden es alle;  
Vnder a roche of stone,  
Per heo liued alone,  
Per heo serued gode  
A3enes 3e paynes forbode;  
Per he serued criste  
Pat no payn hit ne wiste:  
Eure heo bad for horn child  
Pat Jesu crist him beo myld."

Behind the picture of an exile beyond the shield of the law, living in hateful isolation and danger in a harsh natural world, is the Old English literature and its visions of the lonely man.<sup>1</sup> The pathos here arises from the devotion with which Godild continues to serve God in these circumstances, and to care for her son.

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1. A law of Aethelstan, between 925 and 935, states that if a man's lack of a lord is an impediment to the process of law, his relatives must find him one or he becomes an outlaw and may be killed on sight. The Laws of Aethelstan II2 in The Laws of the Earliest English Kings, F.L. Attenborough, (Cambridge 1922) Pp. 128-9.

Now the poet begins the story of Horn in earnest and we find that the queen has reason to fear for him. He is a prisoner of the pagans, yet his fair looks save him from slaughter. The pagan leader compliments him on his beauty and tells him that they will cast him adrift to drown, for they fear retribution from him in the future. The idea that the sea will be allowed to carry out the execution so that no blame will accrue to the Saracens themselves, is a very primitive one.<sup>1</sup>

The children are placed in a boat, and they show every sign of distress, wringing their hands as they are led down to the beach. The tide flows, Horn grasps the oars, and they row off to sea. After a day and a night they arrive with the dawn in a new land. Horn, for the first time, speaks, relieved and full of confidence. They have arrived safely on shore. They say farewell to the boat and strike boldly inland to seek habitations.

It is instructive to compare the French poem with this eventful narrative. Thomas sets about his task in a far more sophisticated way. Instead of a rough injunction to listen to the song he is about to sing, Thomas calmly remarks to his audience that they have no doubt heard his previous poem read from the parchment. He therefore begins with the capture of Horn, assuming that his audience know the background. With Horn are fifteen sons of

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1. Perhaps this is part of the reason why the young Havelok is almost drowned.

noblemen. These are not his boon companions, as the Englishman imagines them, but,

1.11. "Cume seignur serveint tuit Horn, le meschin."

The tone is at once set as feudal. Horn's companions owe him some kind of service, they have presumably done him homage; they are his men, and his friends only in the specialised sense of vassalage. The Horn of Thomas is notable for his beauty too, and this extends to his manner (*Gente facun*). He seems like an angel and:

11.16-18. "Cum esteile journals, quan lievet al matin,  
Sur les autres reluist, ki li sunt pres veisin,  
Sur tuz ses compaignu(n)s resplent Horn (li meschin)."

The content of the simile is as commonplace as those used by the author of King Horn, but the language is more literary and the imaginative effort is more sustained.<sup>1</sup> The magnificence of Horn's attendants is also emphasised. They are dressed in doublets of purple or crimson and Horn himself is dressed in Alexandrian silk. Thomas does not overload his description. He always shows moderation in this respect, choosing some particular richness for emphasis. Here he selects Alexandrian silk; elsewhere it may be Poitevin steel (3312) or a horse from Hungary (1590). He is never swept away by sensuous description; he remains a connoisseur rather than a glutton.

In line 22 Thomas makes first mention of a theme which

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1. Cf. the appearance of the 'graal'. Perceval 3226-29

distinguishes his work sharply from that of the English poet.

Malbroin, the Saracen who captures Horn and his friends, does them no harm 'Kar ne fud destinez;'. When Horn is handed over to the Saracen leader, Rodmund, he is not slain at once, partly because his beauty induces pity, as in the English poem, but also because God puts pity into Rodmund's heart (37-39). Because he feels unable to act on the matter, Rodmund debates it in council, in the manner of the chansons de geste. Before the plan for disposal is spoken, the reader is reassured by a sententia from the narrator on the subject of the ever-present help of God.

ll.56-7. "Kar si le volt Deus, ki pur els ert veillanz,  
Ki ne laist pas perir cels ki lui sunt reclamanz."

After Broivant has suggested the idea of casting the children adrift to avoid killing them, and ironically remarked that their god will not help them, the whole council agree, in the last line of the laisse, in the good epic style familiar in the Chanson de Roland.

l.70. "Dient tuit e(n)viron: 'Broivanz est bien parlanz.'"

As the children are towed out to sea in a derelict ship, laisse four is filled with the assurance of God's protection. His power is evoked as the saviour of the infant Moses from the river, and other past miracles are recalled. The passivity of the comrades is set against the foreshadowing of the mighty deeds of Horn's manhood. His revenge on the pagans will be complete and not even their traditional gods, Mahun and Tervagan, will save them. The children are cut adrift and the pagans return and congratulate them.

selves on the success of their plan. But God intends otherwise, and Horn is cast up in Brittany, the home of a good, powerful and pious king. "Icist norrira Horn, cum Deu fu purvéant." (109)

From these summaries of the opening scenes, some of the major differences between the two versions will be clear. The Anglo-Norman work is of far more literary and sophisticated character. Much of the treatment is that of the chanson de geste; the milieu is feudal, described by a man of sensibility and courtly taste. The English version is not entirely lacking in artifice, but it is the artifice of the narrator of a simple story. The characters are subsidiary to the organisation of events. The briskness of narration is everything and there is no interest in lingering over the niceties of dress or manners. Above all, the force of destiny is lacking. There is no assurance of final triumph and revenge.

The behaviour of Horn as pictured in the two versions helps to illuminate the difference. In the French version he is completely passive. He is taken and set adrift in a derelict ship. He shows no more concern for his safety than an Irish saint, drifting forth on pilgrimage. On arrival in Brittany, he and his companions praise God for their deliverance and sit beneath a rock drying out their clothes. Herland is directed to them by the will of God. Contrast the behaviour of the English Horn. Once in the boat, he seizes the oars and begins to row. On arrival in Westernesse he remarks on the sound of the birds' song, then sets out resolutely in search of people. The only, perhaps doubtful, hint that there ever was super-

natural aid on the voyage is the unusual speed of the ship's passage.

11.119-20. "Pe se pat schup so fasste drof  
Pe children dradde perof."

The contrast lies in the activity of the English hero and the passivity of the French. Thomas is concerned with establishing his hero as a man chosen by Providence, and also with introducing his courtly and heroic milieu.

Until this point in the story, both versions have been content with narration. Although active by comparison with the French version, Horn has taken little part in the story. He is still very much a stranger to us in any details beyond his introductory description. Our real introduction comes, in both versions, as he introduces himself to the man he meets in Westernesse. This technique is one we think of as especially heroic, remembering its use in Beowulf. The surprising thing is that The Romance of Horn preserves the situation and the protocol of this meeting very exactly, in addition to the heroic method of introducing the hero slowly and naturally.<sup>1</sup>

Thomas deliberately and minutely reproduces the conventions of heroic literature, but he does so in the language of feudalism - valletuns, avoeisun, baron, lor avuez, francs homes, seignorer, chevalier, seneschal. It is, however, an idealised feudalism, close to the spirit of vassalage. The legal technicalities of feudalism, as they became codified, never arise, and Thomas' view of vassalage,

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1. See Appendix I.

exemplified here, could well merge with the heroic comitatus society. The underlying ideas, as well as their literary expression, must spring from an old heroic tradition.

Appendix I illustrates how the heroic traditions were available to other poets. Thomas differs from them, and from the author of King Horn, in the extent and skill with which he employs them. He deliberately creates a heroic background, a backcloth of ideal vassalage, for his courtly and God-directed chief character. There could scarcely be a greater contrast between Thomas' expansive treatment of this theme and the shrunken version in the English. King Horn cares nothing for God's guidance, he is self-sufficient and active; neither vassalage nor courtly formalities mean anything to him. He is quite out of sympathy with the heroic world in the version that has come down to us, and the formal politeness and decorum of the arrival in Brittany is replaced by a brisk common-sense interview between Horn and King Aylmer. The narrative technique is much the same, but the tone is popular and almost jaunty.

The precise relation of the sources of King Horn and The Romance of Horn is unknown, but the story of the arrival in Westernesse must have been substantially the same in both. By Thomas, it is expanded to establish an aristocratic, heroic milieu for the poem, as is the hereditary right of such episodes, and in King Horn it has waned into an insignificant incident in a popular narrative.

### III Characterisation and Narrative Technique

#### A Love

After setting his feudal and aristocratic scene, Mestre Thomas turns abruptly to describing the growth of the love of his chief characters. The crucial *laisse*, which makes the shift in the narrative and its tone is *laisse* 20. We are forewarned in *laisse* 19 by the lengthy recitation of Horn's virtues and how they are extolled by all the court where, now sixteen years old, he has returned to be presented to the king. The change in the direction of the story is clearly marked by verbal echoes and the expression of the same sentiment in different words, called by Geoffroi de Vinsauf, interpretatio.<sup>1</sup>

11.405-10.

"Taunt ke Rigmel l'oi,      od le vis coluré-  
 N'out taunt bele pur veir      en la crestienté:  
 Fille esteit dan Hunlaf,      al bon rei coruné.

20 Rigmel fille iert le rei,      danzele de grant pris:  
 Gent aveit mut le cors      e culore le vis;  
 N'out nule taunt vaillant      en seisaunte païs."

The introduction of Rigmel into the story is followed by an appeal for silence from Thomas (414-15). If they do not make much noise they will hear the story of the love of Horn and Rigmel. It

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1. Documentum de Arte Versificandi 112 vi, edited with notes and introduction by E. Faral, Les Arts Poétiques du XII<sup>e</sup> et XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle, (Paris 1924).



criticism which King Horn can incur with regard to the beginning of the love story is the abruptness with which Rimenhild is introduced. The linguistic device mentioned above is used again.

11.247-49. "luuede men horn child,  
& mest him louede Rymenhild,  
Pe kynges oʒene doster,"

The effect is, however, simply one of abruptness and not a fracture of the continuity of the narrative, as in Thomas.

King Horn now passes immediately to the passion of Rimenhild.

Two lines delineate it for us.

11.251-52. "Heo louede so horn child  
Pat neʒ heo gan wexe wild:"

The reason is that she can not find any opportunity to speak to Horn in order to ease her pain. Woeful in heart, she sends a message to Apelbrus that he should come to her and bring Horn with him.

11.271-74. "& pe sonde seide  
Pat sik lai pat maide,  
& bad him come swipe,  
For heo nas noþing blipe,"

Apelbrus is suspicious of Rimenhild's motives for wanting him to bring Horn and resolves instead to take Apulf, to sound the ground. All these events, from the introduction of Rimenhild to the arrival of Apulf at the bower, are related in under fifty lines. Only eight of these are direct descriptions of Rimenhild's emotional reactions to the onslaught of love. The rest are inflated by the use of interpretatio.

11.253-62. "For heo ne miȝte at borde  
 Wiȝ him speke no worde,  
 Ne noȝt in þe halle  
 Among þe kniȝtes alle,  
 Ne nowhar in non opere stede:  
 Of folk heo hadde drede:  
 Bi daie ne bi niȝte  
 Wiȝ him speke ne miȝte;  
 Hire foreȝe ne hire pine  
 Ne miȝte neure fine!"

Only once does the poet succeed in transmitting Rimenhild's feelings in any dramatic sense, the rest is pure narrative. There is no appreciation of the psychology of the situation. Even Apelbrus' suspicion is unmotivated. We feel that the narrator-poet is unhappy with the complexities of the love situation. He is not equipped to deal with the psychological opportunities or the possible moral discussion and he feels only the diffuseness of the events of the story at this point. He gratefully passes on to the intrigue of the substitution of Apulf, contenting himself with only a passing reference to the conventional sufferings of love.

Besides the heroic genre and courtly manners, Mestre Thomas' interests included psychology. It is necessary only to compare the number of lines he uses to relate the above episode with the number used by King Horn, to see to what extent he grasped the opportunity offered by his sources. From the introduction of Rigmel to the arrival of Haderof at the bower, takes Thomas almost nine times as many lines as the author of King Horn - three hundred and ninety five against forty six.

Not all this expansion is concerned directly with the love of Rigmel. Thomas includes one episode which the English poet omits entirely. His concern with the seneschal, Herland, is much greater than that of the author of King Horn with the steward. Firstly Thomas describes in detail the conditions which bring Horn and his friends to court. Laisse twenty one consists of a detailed exposition of the feudal requirement of court service; he goes on to tell who was present and to explain the arrangements which Herland made for lodging these guests so that their tender sense of honour shall not be affronted.

ll.442-44. "Herland, li senescha(1),        ad la curt governée:  
           Bien les ad herbergie,        sanz corus, sanz meslée-  
           N'i out pleinte d'ostel        ne d'autre rien livréé."

The lines bespeak the experience of a feudal court gathering. The brilliant and fashionable appearance of Horn, and its effect on the ladies present, is duly noted. Horn is delegated to the post of cup-bearer to the king and performs his office well. He is talked of around the court and is generally praised.

l.484.        "La parole de Horn        en la chambre est alée";

Rigmel sends her maid and confidante, Herselot on a secret errand to Herland.

Thomas has clearly left his world of the ideal-heroic for a contemporary courtly one. He sets the scene of the feudal court brilliantly and depicts unerringly the stir which a notable newcomer causes. The king's daughter, a sophisticated, perhaps rather bored young lady, finds her interest sparked by news of this young squire.

The story turns now to court intrigue. Rigmel does not wish the other girls to know her interest and so sends Herselot in secret. The introduction of a confidante immediately doubles the sense of intrigue. There is now an element of conspiracy. *Laisse* twenty-five contains the words: 'celée', 'segrei', 'En sun segrei', 'bien covrir', 'enging', 'privée' and, significantly, 'guerredonée'.

Rigmel is not in so powerful a position in relation to the seneschal as her English cousin is with regard to the steward. The latter can be commanded to bring Horn. Herland, in order to keep the secret of her love, as the convention demands, must be bribed or blackmailed into delivering Horn to her. Rigmel sets about it with expert subtlety.<sup>1</sup>

As she awaits the visit of Herland there is a very lively little picture of her preening herself. It shows surprising insight into feminine custom for its period.

11.525-30.	"Ele garde entur sei	e ses dras ascasma,
	Demaunde esmireür	e sovent se mira.
	As puceles dit ad:	'Danzeles, cum esta?'
	Eles ont respondu	ke del (tres) tut bien va.
	El demaunde sovent:	'Dan Herland, quant vendra?'
	E eles li responent:	'Ja, quant servi avra.'"

It would be an altogether charming picture if she were awaiting the visit of her lover, but we must remember that it is all part of the

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1. Cf. the technique with that used by Floire on the gatekeeper. *Floire et Blancheflor*, ed. M. Pelan (Paris 1956) 11.1981ff.

flattery which is intended to ensnare the seneschal. When he does arrive she greets him with the words:

11.538-39. "Beau sire seneschal, mut ad grant tens passé  
Ke vus ai mult forment en mun quoeer enamé,

Thomas comments:

11.536-37. "Or purrez ja oïr cum el cummencera.  
Par blaundie, goe creit, de mieuz espleitera."

The words bear a tone of mild moral disapproval. This tone is maintained by Thomas throughout the interview, where Rigmel is attempting to corrupt Herland from his duty.

Firstly, she sets out to win his confidence by telling of her admiration for him, then she promises rich gifts. In gratitude Herland says that he will repay her by any means in his power. She is too clever to seize this early opportunity and merely assures him of her faith in him and of her continuing favour.

11.553-56 "Si vus iert, si joe vif, tresbien guerredoné  
En tuz sens que vuldrez qu'il me seit cummandé.  
'Bien le sai,' dist Rigmel; 'des or m'estrez privé  
Plus que nul ki onc fust encor(e) de mere né."

She now lavishes gifts on him to reinforce her words - a fine gold ring with a sapphire forged by a celebrated craftsman, Marcel; a marvellous cup with incised decoration and filled with the finest wine. Rigmel, as a special honour, drinks the first half to guarantee that it is not poisoned and to pledge her faith.<sup>1</sup> Such a display of

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1. The precise significance of the sharing of the cup is not clear, but it must imply something like the sharing of future interests, for Lenburc offers Horn half a cup later in the poem; which he refuses out of loyalty to Rigmel.

attention and largesse from the daughter of the king is too much for Herland. He is overcome with gratitude and promises again to do her will. Her answer is to order claret to be brought, and then Blanchard, a fine steed, with all his trappings. She brushes aside Herland's thanks by ordering spiced wine. She sends for the further gift of two fine white greyhounds with golden collars, worked at Besancon. She follows these with a valuable goshawk. Thomas' discrimination is evident throughout. He does not lavish description, but uses either real or imaginary provenances for the gifts to give them a special value.

Herland is now so overcome by the attention, the richness of his surroundings, the largesse of the gifts, and the increasing strength of the beverages they are drinking, that Rigmel judges him to be her man. She asks him to bring Horn to her. Herland has no alternative than to agree.

1.650. "'Dame,' (li) fet Herlaund,        bien fait a otrier,'"

But as soon as Herland has left the charmed bower, suspicion strikes him. He can not sleep.

11.665-669.

"'Deu!'",	fait il en sun quoer,	'si el l'ad enamé?
Ele est fille le rei,		mun seignur avué:
Si coe ne fust par lui,		mut sereit avilé
E si par mei est fait		mal avrai espleité;
De mun seignur, le rei		en serreie reté
Ke j'en avreië fait		vers lui desleauté,
Si n serrai en la curt		a tuz jorz mal noté."

To carry out his promise to Rigmel would convict him of felony and destroy his reputation but, having received so much from her hands he can not disregard his word without great dishonour. Indeed such disloyalty to his pledged word would make him little better than a thief. To accept largesse without giving service in return would demean him and bring the same shame as failing in his duty to his lord.

While the seneschal is tormented by fear, suspicion and remorse in his insoluble dilemma, Rigmel's sleep is disturbed by the malaise of love. She tells Herselot of her suffering:

ll.709-11. "Un mal m'est pris al quoe, mut crem ke ne m'ocie,  
 Mes ne sai dunt me vient ne quel partie.  
 Descolorée sui, çoe m'est vis, e palie:"

She is suffering from the Ovidian disease of love, and shows the classical symptoms of bewilderment at what ails her. The affliction is worsened by the discussion of it with her confidante. The French Rigmel suffers the full rigours of the courtly tradition of love in a way that is only hinted at in the story of the English Rimenhild.<sup>1</sup> Thomas has full mastery of his tradition while the Englishman merely touches on a tradition that he knows only at second or third hand. It is a tradition which he can not fully understand and with which he has no sympathy.

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1. Though love robs Rigmel of her colour and her sleep, the clinical exactitude of the Love Malady described by Lowes ('The Loveres Maladye of Hereos' M.P. XI (1913-14).) is never approached. Cf. the love which attacks Medea. : Meta. Bk. VII.

There is equally as wide a gulf between the English and French treatments in their attitudes to Rigmel. In the English she is simply importunate, imperious, and for some unspecified reason, untrustworthy; so that Apelbrus substitutes Apulf for Horn. Thomas makes his morally questionable. There is a direct moral judgement against the way she prevails on Herland. This is an extreme statement of the clerkly distrust of womankind. Rigmel is guilty of a deliberate attempt to corrupt an honest lord, and of using the exigencies of the feudal situation to gain power over him. Her actions are self-centred and irresponsible. They are the conventional wiles of womankind made more morally significant by the extent of their treatment and the way in which she subverts the wholly admirable ideals of vassalage to achieve her own ends. Her meeting with Haderof is used to emphasise the point made; in King Horn the meeting is faintly comic and serves only to outline the violence of Rimenhild's passion. Rigmel's first words to Haderof in Thomas' poem are an echo of the corruption of Herland.

ll.822-23. "Si li dit: 'Beaus amis, des or vuil estre mise,  
Si vostre plesir (en) est en vostre comaundise.'"

In their conversation, Haderof upbraids her for her importunity, saying that she hasn't even asked who he is. He goes on to lecture her as to her future hopes of a husband. Haderof is the voice of wisdom and responsibility endeavouring to remind Rigmel of her duty, just as Horn will when they meet. The dialogue between Horn and Rigmel will be a dialogue between moderation and duty and

rashness and amorality. Such concepts are as remote from the English poem as are the conventional sufferings of the malady of love or the proper conduct of a feudal court.

In the English King Horn a message is sent to Apelbrus that he must bring Horn to the bower. In Thomas a messenger is sent. She is entirely missing from the English version and is patently a literary type - the maid-confidante. It is interesting to examine how Thomas uses her to illustrate the growth of Rigmel's passion. Combined with the use of the confidante is a narrative technique based upon repetition.

As was noted above, Thomas dwells on the beauties and virtues of Horn in *laisse* 19 in order to introduce his love story. It has already been established that Horn is 'doctriné' and 'bené' and this is now demonstrated by the admirable way he serves at table (471-74), but more and more, his beauty and his consequent attractiveness to women, are emphasised. In lines 476-78 we have the first occurrence of a repeated phrase which shows Horn's effect on the opposite sex.

11.476-78. "Dame ne l'ad veü                    ki vers li n'ait amur  
                   E ne-l vousist tenir,                    suz hermin covertur<sup>1</sup>.  
                   Enbracie belement,                    sanz seü de seignur,"

It is in fact an intensification of the idea expressed in lines 446-7. There it is merely a literary convention emphasised to express the lightness of the affections of women in a clerkly fashion.

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1. Cf. the similar idiom in the Laud MS. of Kyng Alisaunder 11.7720-21.

ll.446-47. "Dame ne l'ad veü ki n'en seit trespenséé  
De l'angoisse d'amur, ki taunt fort l'ad tuchéé."

In lines 476-78 the matter is much graver. There is the beginning of deception and adultery, and therefore moral disapprobation.

Still there seems to be no more serious purpose than disapproval of the amorality of the thoughts of women when faced by a new and exceptionally handsome man. We soon see these qualities in relation to Rigmel in her temptation of Herland and her scene with Haderof. In lines 724-27 the phrase is in her mouth, though she is quoting the impression of others.

ll.724-27 "L'en dit qu'il est si beaus, le vis ad taunt rosin;  
A ceus qui veü l'unt bien semblë angelin.  
Lee serreit ki l'avreit suz covertur martrin.  
Deu le me dunt encore e li bier saint Martin!"

In *laisse* 48 Horn's beauty is praised again; again it is described as angelic, and his service at table is approved. The ladies present are struck again by the desire to hold him 'suz covertur hermin'. Herselot sees him and returns to describe him to Rigmel. She is extremely enthusiastic about Horn. God, she says has destined an angelic being for Rigmel. Herselot's speech takes on a personal, dramatic power. It is filled with individual enthusiasm, and it combines all the ideas of emotional irresponsibility with a precision and violence of expression that promises imminent action. Rigmel recognises the attitude as her own; it has ceased to be a general disapproving comment on the lack of moderation in the behaviour of women.

11.963-69. "Des or vuil ke seiez de(suz) sa discipline  
 A faire sun comand (suz cuvertur' hermine).<sup>1</sup>  
 Ja hunte n'en avreit desuz ciel palaine.  
 Plust a Dieu ke de mei oüst faite ravine  
 E mei oüst sul a sul en chambre u en gaudine!  
 Joe fereië sun boen par sainte Katherine.<sup>2</sup>  
 Ja ne-l savreit par mei parente ne cosine."<sup>3</sup>

Rigmel is shocked by this grosser recitation of her own thoughts and aspirations and, touched by jealousy at the intensely personal nature of Herselot's description of Horn's desirability, she hastily silences her.

11.970-71. "'Tais fole,' dist Rigmel, 'ja n'en avras seisine,<sup>3</sup>  
 S'a lui (plest) ki fist ciel e terrë e marine."

But silence is worse than Herselot's tirade of praise. She begs her to continue, but again can not bear it and silences her. To hear so much talk of her love is pain.

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1. The second hemi-stich of line 964 is restored from the Oxford MS.
  2. The invocation of a virgin martyr in such a speech is a nice ironic touch.
  3. Thomas speaks of the love bond as a feudal contract, using technical words like: seignur (478); and seisine (970). Bloch (op. cit. p. 233) notes a relationship between feudal homage and courtly love. R.Dragonetti (La Technique Poétique des Trouvères dans la Chanson Courtoise, (Brugge 1960) pp. 61-113) gives a full account of the use of feudal and chivalric imagery by the courtly lyric writers of the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries. Thomas' tone is rather different from these. He seems to regard the metaphor from the side of feudalism. He is more interested in the realities of the feudal situation. The legal possession is more important to Thomas than the sentimental idea of love seen in the terms of the lord/vassal relationship.

Throughout the growth of Rigmel's passion the descriptions of Horn's angelic beauty and his, and Herland's duty in the hall, have been interspersed with the anguish of the princess. There is a constant counterpoint between the irresponsible passion of, first women in general, and then Rigmel in particular and the exemplary execution of duty shown by the male characters. Herselot maintains the connection between them by acting as a messenger. She also aggravates her mistress's affliction by suffering from the same malady of irresponsibility, but to a greater extent. The passion is also inflamed by the necessity of waiting, imposed by the courtly duties of the male characters.

All these themes come together in the scenes when Horn and Rigmel meet. Horn's angelic beauty culminates in the way the chamber lights up at his entrance (1053 ff.). There is a strong contrast between the importunity and amorality of Rigmel, whose development we have traced, and the moderate and wise reaction of Horn, whose sens was established early in the poem, and has been maintained during his service at the royal table. Rigmel's morality is questioned immediately before Horn's arrival by a repetition of the mirror scene (1022 ff.) which we saw before the temptation of Herland. But her first words to Horn are honest, though hasty. Instead of riches, she offers him her love. He rejects her advances; for their importunity as well as for their disregard for his obligations to the king. Horn is loyal as well as sené. There follows a disputation between Horn and Rigmel which amounts to a

temptation to deeds against his principles as a moderate man and as a vassal of the king. With great tact and gentleness, he rebuffs Rigmel's approaches until a more suitable time.

There is scarcely need of a closing paragraph to point out the extent to which Thomas' treatment differs from that of King Horn. Thomas uses the classical literary convention of love as a malady in the way it was used by Ovid. Yet it is not a slavish imitation of classical predecessors. He has enough sympathy, enough psychological insight, to take it, develop it and use it for the purpose which pleases him. The English poet makes bare reference to it. The, admittedly large, assumption that Thomas has read Ovid is made possible by the use of a lively image in which Horn condemns sudden infatuation.

ll.2444-47. "Encor dirras, ami,            tut un autre sermun:  
           Ne pris pas feu d'estreim,        tost fet defectiun,  
           Mut tost est alumé                e tost fet orbeisun.  
           Si est de fol amur                quant ne vient par raisun."

The image is used by Ovid:<sup>1</sup>

Metamorphoses Bk. VI ll.455ff.

"A flame of desire was kindled in Tereus' heart when he saw her, flaring up as quickly as the fire that burns withered corn of dry leaves or stores of hay."<sup>2</sup>

1. The classical idea of Cupid's bolt is to be found in l.1148.  
 "...feru suid'un quarrel."

2. "Non secus exarsit conspecta virgine Tereus,  
 Quam siquis canis ignem subponat aristis  
 Aut frondem positasque cremet faenilibus herbas."

The possibility of a memory of Ovid is strengthened by the artificial nature of the image, framed as a sententia and introduced by a stock ironic metaphor in the heroic style.<sup>1</sup>

The provenance of the figure of the go-between, who is confidante to the heroine and incendiary to her passion, is not clear. There is no precise parallel in Ovid. If she is modelled on Anna and her relations with Didon in Eneas, she has been transformed. One feels, however that there may be some indirect relation.

The use to which Thomas puts his mastery of love casuistry is quite alien to the English poet. The different moral stands of men and women do not interest him, and he makes no reference to them. Thomas develops them fully and it seems that when Horn and Rigmel meet there will be a violent clash between the irresponsibility of the latter and the sense of duty of the former. This does not take place for Thomas is not interested in the presentation of the dramatic conflict of wills for its own sake. Horn easily and rationally triumphs over Rigmel's uncontrolled passion. He is undisturbed by it. The cause of feudal duty, the heroic code of behaviour, triumphs with never a moment of doubt over feverish, amorous, feminine passion. The whole episode of growing love is made to reflect on the moral probity of Horn as a member of the society of vassalage. Horn begins to emerge as an ideal of moral conduct.

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1. See G.V. Smithers' edition of King Alisaunder Vol. II Introduction. (E.E.T.S. O.S. 237. 1957) p.33.

## B The Characterisation of Horn

The outstanding attribute of Horn in both versions, is his beauty. Thomas consistently uses it to prepare his audience for the love of Rigmel, and afterwards to trace the growth of that passion. The English poet follows a similar plan, but in a less deliberate way. Moreover, both the poets agree on Horn's intelligence, his ready speech, and his mastery of the rules of correct behaviour. The imaginative representation of the hero almost always follows this general pattern. The hero must combine prowess with wisdom, natural nobility with beauty. Eloquence is merely an aspect of wisdom, and correct conduct in the court is yet another facet.<sup>1</sup> Wisdom, to the mediaeval hero, was a social virtue.

The author of King Horn combines the ideals of beauty and wisdom in two short, stock lines.

ll.173-74. "He was þe faireste  
& of wit þe beste."

Horn is generally liked, a further stock requisite for the hero in mediaeval romance.<sup>2</sup>

l.247. "Luuede men horn child,"

The English poet baldly states the fact, while Thomas expends many lines in explaining why, and asserting that everyone actively praised him. Public regard is more overtly fixed to merit.

1. E.R.Curtius, European Literature in the Latin Middle Ages, trans. W.Trask (London 1953) Pp.171-3.

2. Cf. Havelok 30ff., Ipomadon 172, and Hall's note to line 247.

Although the English poet's view of Horn's intelligence corresponds closely with Thomas' sens, he also develops an individual trait in Horn's character. The English hero is pictured as having a somewhat self-sufficient nature, and a contemplative faculty distinct from courtly, social wisdom. His self-sufficiency is shown at the beginning in his seizure of the oars of the boat, his leadership on arrival at Westernesse, and his decision to strike boldly inland. In contrast to Thomas' Horn, his behaviour from the beginning is that of a fully-fledged hero. His peculiar prudence, we encounter in his reaction to Apelbrus' instruction.

ll.243-44. "Horn in herte lazte  
Al pat he him tazte."

Later, when Apelbrus warns him to be cautious when he goes to see Rimenhild,

ll.379-80. "Horn in herte leide  
Al pat he him seide:"

There is more to Horn's character than at first meets the eye. Hitherto his wit has been confined to the formality of addressing a king, but now we are given evidence of a deeper understanding which breeds caution and curbs impetuosity when that is desirable. This representation of thoughtfulness, of an inner intellectual life which is not revealed to other characters, is not unique. Usually, however, it is associated with the cares of love. Those suffering from love's melancholy develop this introspection and private brooding.<sup>1</sup> The use of this technique merely to show the prudence

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1. Cf. Floris and Blancheflour 416-18; Ipomadon 190ff.

of a man's character is decidedly unusual. When Horn is taken to meet Rimenhild, the warning proves to be unnecessary.

11.387-88. "He spac fair speche,  
Ne dorte him noman teche:"

Like any hero, correct behaviour is innate in him, but the English poet chooses to develop the sense of mesure as a natural caution in his individual character, which tempers his impetuosity. He takes the initiative with Rimenhild, as we might expect, and begins with mild flattery. Rimenhild bursts out with the suggestion that he should marry her. Although this suggestion is entirely unexpected, Horn shows no surprise. Instead he considers what might be a politic answer.

11.411-12. "Horn þo him biþozte  
What he speke miȝte."

We must remember that, in the English poem, Rimenhild is represented as commanding much greater power than Rigmel. The gulf between the royal family and the steward is considerably wider. He is treated as little more than a slave.<sup>1</sup>

The answer which Horn gives to Rimenhild is, after all his thought, rather a lame one. He claims that he is of too low a birth to marry a king's daughter. The excuse is inconsistent with his statement that he is of royal blood (175-8), but Rimenhild

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1. If the royal court is based on the author's knowledge of a lesser baronial household, then the steward may well be of servile status. Bloch op. cit. Pp. 337-40.

believes the conventional excuse<sup>1</sup> and falls in a swoon. This proof of her emotional good faith persuades Horn of her honesty. Regretting the pain he has caused her, he throws caution to the winds and embraces her, calling her 'lenman'.

The meeting of Horn and Rimenhild in the English version has more dramatic strength than its French equivalent. The carefully uncommitted attitude of Horn emphasises the danger he is in. Rimenhild is a powerful personage. None of this is present in the French version. The interview scarcely descends to the emotional level. Instead, Horn speaks long moralistic discourses which are entirely lacking in dramatic verisimilitude. By contrast, the English poet, from the substitution scene onwards, changes the treatment of his story from simple narration to drama. The tale is told to a great extent by the confrontation of characters, and there is a greater emotional discharge. In the substitution scene, there is amusement and the loyalty of Apulf; there is the passion of Rimenhild and the abject terror of Apelbrus before Rimenhild's rage, when the ruse is discovered. Most important of all is the emotional effect of the knowledge that the affair is explicitly an illicit one.<sup>2</sup> Rimenhild raises the possibility of betrayal in lines 357-62.

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1. Cf. the reasons given by Amis for his refusal of Belisaunt. Amis and Amiloun 592ff. and 755.

2. That is to say, it is being carried on without the knowledge or consent of the king.

"'Go nu,' quap heo, 'sone  
 & send him after none,  
 Whane þe kyng arise,  
 On a squieres wise,  
 To wude for to pleie:  
 Nis non þat him biwreie."

The irony implicit in her assurance of safety helps to raise the emotional pitch. Such confidence must arouse the spectre of Fikenhild 'þe werste' and justify the fears of Apelbrus.

In the French version the love of Horn and Rigmel is several times referred to divine foreknowledge. Horn's behaviour leaves no possible room for reproach; nor is there, before their meeting; any direct reference to betrayal of the king's trust. Even Rigmel's irresponsible behaviour is defensible on the ground that it is natural to all women.<sup>1</sup> In consequence, the emotional temperature of the French version is much cooler.

The English version presents a dramatically more successful love affair, the representation of which consists in a series of effective scenes and situations. Love is reciprocated. Horn shows pity for Rimenhild when she swoons, he shows tenderness when he tries to explain away her ominous dream, and there is pathos in their parting; yet, at other times he treats her without feeling or deceives her. It is sometimes hard to see his character as consistent or compatible with realistic motivation. After he has been melted into trustful love by her swoon at his refusal of

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1. Cf. Ipomedon 879lff.

marriage, he still maintains the deception of being a 'pral' (439). Interpreted on the realistic level this lack of frankness, coupled with his plea for a knighthood, seems as much an opportunist's ruse for his own benefit, as to enable him to ride out in honour of his lady in the manner suitable to the convention. This lack of frankness becomes an air of conspiracy when he allows Rimenhild to bribe Apelbrus to intercede with the king on Horn's behalf. There is no necessity for a bribe, for Apelbrus is his friend and guardian and is only too ready to have Horn knighted. Horn fails to mention this to Rimenhild, but on returning to Apelbrus, he gives a report of the interview and how he had fared (455-58). If conspiracy is too strong a word, then there is still a lack of frankness between Horn and Rimenhild and a bond between Apelbrus and himself which works at the expense of Rimenhild. All this is in contrast to the trusting love which in the swooning scene existed between them.

When Horn returns from Ireland a new element enters his motivation. He will not marry Rimenhild until he has won back Suddene and avenged his father (1273-88). The courtly element infers that this is because Rimenhild is worthy of a king alone; but the treatment of Rimenhild elsewhere in the story hardly supports such courtly motivation. The real reasons are the more heroic ones of revenge and re-possession. Such confusions of motive and inconsistencies of character tend, for the modern reader habituated to subtle and coherently motivated psychological literature, to mar the virtuosity of individual scenes in which the drama of situation and emotion is

well sketched.<sup>1</sup>

As the English poet concentrates on individual dramatic situations and neglects, or perhaps even blurs consistent motive, so the French poet concentrates on moral discussion and, as a result of this, well-argued motivation. Horn is early established as superior to all others. The idea is constantly repeated in a variety of connections. In line 479 he is an exemplar of beauty.

"Kar sur tuz de la curt iert il esmireür."

His superiority extends to all fields: beauty (18; 36), nobility of appearance (181), music and knightly accomplishments (375-383), general instruction (392-93), humility (400). Indeed he is excellent in every virtue and art. He is called enperial and enluminez dē Deu (3630), and frequently compared to an angel. In brief, the character of Horn as it is presented to us by epithet and direct description is an ideal of every virtue. It is this paragon of moral virtue, in the shape of a vassal of the king, who is faced by the irresponsible passion of Rigmel. We might expect him to refuse Rigmel's approaches on moral grounds as well as upon common sense ones, for he is endoctriné. But we must not think of Horn as a prig. He rarely descends to excessive moral exhortation. He is rather an example than a preacher. At the same time he is a vassal of King Hunlaf and

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1. It must not be forgotten, however, that King Horn was meant for oral delivery and that the inconsistencies on the realistic level derive from the oppositions of a series of conventional scenes and attitudes. Each of these have immediate interest, and under the conditions of oral delivery, inconsistencies might not be noticed.

a lord of men, himself. We must remember him in the heroic situation outlined in the first section. His reasons, therefore, for refusing to enter into an illicit relationship with Rigmel are two-fold. Such a relationship would, firstly, transgress the general moral law and, secondly, disregard feudal loyalty. To the French hero, his course is clear, though this does not prevent him from using the conventional excuse that he is not good enough for Rigmel; but to this he adds the important reason of loyalty to her father.

When brought to the bower, he lacks the self assurance of his English counterpart. He wavers until Herland orders him to stay. Rigmel takes the initiative and offers him her love and a ring with it. At first Horn is taken aback and asks God to thank her for her offer; then he says that he is a poor orphan and owes a debt of gratitude to her father. Rigmel quickly disposes of this excuse by reciting his noble genealogy. It would not do in Thomas' aristocratic poem to allow his hero to be taken for anything less than a nobleman. Even when he claims in Westir that he is the son of a vavasour, nobody really believes him. Poverty, with the addition of the debt of gratitude, make a better argument here than the ludicrous claim to thralldom in King Horn.

When Rigmel has demolished this perfectly good reason, she offers him the ring again. Again he refuses; this time for heroic-chivalric reasons which are extended into the realm of plain common sense. He never will love a woman, he says, 'taunt cum sui jovencel'. The idea of love before he is a knight is repellent, for:

11.1154. "N'est pas us a la gent a ki lignage apel."

The prohibition has the force of taboo. The conferring of knighthood was essentially a ceremony of initiation for a chivalric hero, as lines 1302-3, shortly before his dubbing, show.

"Seignurs, or entendez, si faites escotaunce!  
Si orrez cum dan Horn est eissu de s'enfaunce,"

Horn goes on to put the very sound reasons that he is as yet unproven and she may be disappointed in him.<sup>1</sup> She does not really know him and he does not know himself. The excuse has a peculiar modern subtlety but it really has the narrow application, here, of proof at chivalry. The reaffirmation of loyalty to the king arises naturally out of it. When he has been knighted, has proved himself and regained his kingdom, then they can discuss love. He adds to this a note of commonplace political reality. Rigmel is beautiful enough to marry an emperor's son and, thus, the kingdom might be strengthened.

Thomas' Horn clearly states the reasons for his inability to marry at the first interview. They consist of moral reasons, but moral reasons that spring more from the chivalric and feudal code than a Christian one. He is nowhere boorish to Rigmel and he proves his courtliness by presenting his reasons in terms that are flattering to her. He will not marry her until he has proved himself, he says, but he is not really fighting to become worthy of her, as the

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1. Compare the rather more courtly bias of the same reasons for La Fiere refusing the advances of Ipomedon. 11.877ff.

English hero claims he will do. Instead there is something of the epic spirit in his resolve. In the English poem, despite the artless tone, the key-notes are those of amour courtois rather than simply common courtesy.

ll.555-57.       "Today, so crist me blesse,  
                   Ihc wulle do pruesse  
                   For pi luue in þe felde"

By making Horn state his determination to carry out his feudal duty, Thomas avoids the difficulties encountered by the English writer, who makes his first reason social inequality, on a second occasion the desire to fight for his lady, and finally, on his return from Ireland, the duty to regain his kingdom. This presentation of a different motive for the evasion of marriage on each occasion, each perhaps springing from a different ideological background, gives the impression that Horn is trying to escape marriage. His brutal treatment of Rimenhild in this respect is at variance with his tenderness in other scenes.

Horn's reasons for refusing to marry Rigmel are rooted firmly in the heroic code of vassalage. He quickly goes on to prove himself in the field and to be elevated to the position of constable. His battles are decorated with all the trappings of heroic style. However, he still refuses to marry Rigmel because he must win back his homeland. As a result, he is quite innocent when he is accused of illicit relations with the king's daughter. The king requires him to swear an oath of compurgation. The contrast is violent between the cold

but civilised behaviour of the Anglo-Norman king who, abiding by legal practice, demands formal proof of innocence, and the outraged father of the English poem who drives out the presumptuous Horn with insults and the threat of blows. The behaviour reflects the different social position of the characters in each poem, and probably also of the authors of the poems.

Horn refuses to swear his innocence, scornfully calling this a method for cripples and old men and demanding a judicial combat against his accuser. He refuses to compromise this position and goes into exile rather than do so.

Taking this as a starting point, Professor Reid claims in his Introduction that: "Thomas recognises in him one fundamental defect, excessive pride, and traces its development."<sup>1</sup> If this is so, it alters Thomas' intention in presenting the character, as it has so far appeared. It creates, perhaps, a more satisfying and interesting hero, but it robs him of the position we have seen him occupying as an exemplar of ideal vassalage. If this position is to be maintained the accusation of a disapproving chronicle of pride must be refuted.

The first mention of pride is in a negative way.

11.397-401a	"Mes pur çoe n'iert de plus	en nul sen orguillé.
	Mut en fu de plusurs,	cum dut estre, loé
	Kar len trova mut poi	de si beaus sanz fierté,
	Mes cist passout trestuz	homes d'(e) humilité;
	E od çoe si avoit	valur de largeté,
	Ke plus vaillant de lui	ne pout estre trové.

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1. p. 15 and Cf. M.D.Legge, op. cit. p. 102. Miss Legge follows Reid, but rather doubtfully.

In lines 926-27 and line 2802 (co:ртеis sanz ponnée), his humility is reasserted. Professor Reid sees these as pride 'masked by his modest bearing', but such a view can only be applied by working back from some graver accusation. This is to be found in his masterful treatment of Rigmel and his refusal to take the oath. In lines 1262-65 Rigmel prays God to protect him from pride.

"Quant vus tiel l'avez fait,            ne'l lessez orgoiller:  
Trop en purra sun pris                    e sun los abaisser.

64    'Beau pere! Jesus Crist,            bons reis de paraïs!  
Ne lessez par orgoil                    ke il perde sun pris."

Professor Reid cites this prayer as evidence that Rigmel recognises Horn's pride beneath his humility. Taken out of context, it may appear so. Yet this is the culmination of Rigmel's cogitations on pride which began thirty lines before.

11.1236-40    "M'amur e mes aveirs                    li ai ja presenté,  
Mes il cure n'en ad;                    ne sai s'est par fierté.'  
'Dame,' dist Herselot,                    'nun est, par verité,  
Il n'ad hom'en cest mund                plus ait d' (e) humilité,  
E si est trop huntus                    par sa debonairté."

After this refutation of the idea by Herselote, Rigmel broods over Horn's behaviour and nothing her ladies can do can take her mind from it. Suddenly, she bursts out:

11.1253-54    "...                    'Deu! vrai justisier!  
Pur quei vousistes tiel    cel orgoillus furmer?"

She dwells painfully on his beauty and then passes on to the prayer in lines 1262-65 (quoted above), lists his other qualities and finishes by begging God for war to be made upon her father so that Horn will

be knighted as a protector of the land.

In assessing this as evidence against Horn we must remember that his reasons for refusing Rigmel's love were strictly in accordance with the conception of chivalric and feudal duty, of which he is an exemplar. Rigmel's first wonderings about pride follow immediately upon this refusal. Herselote does not understand Horn's heroic motivation any more than Rigmel, but her explanation of Horn's behaviour, coloured as it is by romance ideas, is closer to the truth. Having followed the establishment of Horn in Chapter III as moderate and motivated by feudal duty, and Rigmel as irresponsible and emotionally unstable, we must expect there to be no understanding of Horn's real motives and that Rigmel should mistake them for pride.

This accusation of pride by Rigmel is not meant to be taken seriously. It is the result of the sufferings of love. Rigmel is pictured as brooding over Horn. Her outburst is in the form of exclamatio addressed to God. Geoffroi de Vinsauf points out that this device arises from strong emotion, sometimes 'ex dolore', as in this case.<sup>1</sup> The description also follows the order shown to be usual by M.Faral.<sup>2</sup> The technique, then, is artificial and the aim emotional. The outburst is part of the suffering of love. Rigmel torments herself with Horn's beauty and his unattainability. She can not understand his motives and saves her own pride by ascribing it to Horn.

1. op. cit. II 2 25

2. E.Faral, Les Arts Poétiques...Pp.79-80. A description is made up of the moral and the physical. The latter was arranged in a fixed order: hair, forehead, eyebrows, eyes, cheeks and their colour, nose, mouth, teeth, chin, throat and neck, shoulders, arms, hands, chest, waist, stomach, legs, feet.

This is no cool, penetrating assessment of the hero's character, as Professor Reid would have us believe. It is an emotional outburst, stemming from the suffering of love, and with Thomas' customary psychological subtlety, it adds more to our existing knowledge of Rigmel's personality than it tells about Horn.

The refusal to swear an oath of innocence is more difficult to explain from the context. From a modern point of view it looks like pride. Again we must remember that Horn cleaves to an ancient aristocratic-heroic code which has been modified into the code of vassalage. Custom had hardened into strict laws of social conduct. Horn has the right to acquit himself by trial-by-combat.<sup>1</sup> In difficult cases the decision was usually left to God. If a vassal felt that a court deliberately handed down an unfair verdict, as Horn feels when the king requires judgement without naming the accuser, he was free to take his case up the feudal hierarchy until it reached the king. Bloch describes the process:

"The system of vassalage opened up new possibilities; every vassal's feudal lord was henceforth his normal judge; and the denial of justice was a crime, like other crimes. Quite naturally the common rule was applied to it and appeals ascended, step by step, through the gradations of homage. The procedure continued to require delicate handling; above all it was dangerous, for the customary mode of proof was trial by battle."<sup>2</sup>

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1. C. Stephenson, Mediaeval Feudalism, (New York 1963) p. 34.

2. Bloch op. cit. p. 373.

This form of appeal is impossible for Horn for the highest authority in the land is denying him justice. The king has the good reason that he knows of Horn's prowess in battle, and therefore demands an oath. Horn offers to fight more than one opponent but the king is adamant. He is unmoved by Horn's assertion of his right in *laisse* 95.

ll.1943-45a "Unc ne vi fiz de rei a qui(l) fust demaunde,  
 Qu'il feïst serement, kar coe sereit vilte.  
 Taunt cum est sein del cors, s'est de rien apele,  
 Par bataille le nit: si est dreit esgarde."

One feels that there is something punitive about the king's insistence upon Horn swearing an oath which is beneath his dignity. He is deliberately jeopardising Horn's honour; but he can not produce the accuser for judicial combat without breaking his word to Wikele. The position is dead-lock. As the son of a king, Horn's honour, not his pride, prevents him from swearing an oath.

ll.1974-77. "Bien jurer le pousse, si faire le deveie,  
 Mes m'est vis en mun quoer, ke fairene l(e) deie,  
 Ainz me larraie traire (e) le quoer e le feie  
 Ke serement face: franc qui l fait, se desleie:"

Not only is the individual honour forfeit, but that of his lineage.<sup>1</sup> If Horn swore the oath and exculpated himself of the modern charge of pride he would repudiate the right to be regarded as an exemplar of an ideal feudal code. His refusal to take an unjust oath, far

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1. Illustrated by Horn's demand that the guilty man's family be hanged or burnt. (1952-53) Cf. Ganelon's supporters in Ch. de R. and the fate of Godrich's family in Havelok.

from tainting him with the sin of pride, burnishes his honour brighter. He follows the principles in adversity which, in palmier days, made him refuse the love of Rigmel. The situation has a nice touch of irony in it.

When he says farewell to Rigmel she begs him to take the oath - he would be able to remain behind then, and also, he would assure their innocence (2021-25). But Horn's code is not that of the romance, and self-dishonour for the sake of a woman is beyond its dictates. He resists the temptation and leaves. His honour is intact, and in leaving he heaps more praise on himself by his magnanimous attitude to the lord who has wronged him.

11.2101-3. "Mes ne perdrez en mei, ke-m norristes enfaunt,  
Si j'oi vostre bosoig, sai tost vendrai erraunt  
Pur vus soffrir ahan, kar çoe iert avenaunt."

The tie of vassalage demanded mutual obligations and if one party repudiated his, the other was free to follow suit. An edict of Charlemagne lists the wrongs as a result of which the tie may be broken. Among them is the failure of the lord to protect his man when able to do so.<sup>1</sup> The rupture of the bond was usually accompanied by a formal ceremony (diffidatio). Although Hunlaf wrongs Horn by refusing him justice<sup>2</sup>, the latter does not repudiate his ties of allegiance. He remembers with gratitude that he is the

1. Stephenson op. cit. p. 20

2. The refusal of honourable justice is unnecessarily vindictive, but by another provision of the same Carolingian edict, which gives the seduction of the daughter of one party as cause for the rupture of the bond, Hunlaf's behaviour is in part justified. Cf. F. D. Ganshof, Feudalism (London 1964) p. 31.

nurri of Hunlaf and goes into exile promising him aid if he should need it. His loyalty is as great as his honour.

Professor Reid, in his Introduction, quotes line 1765 as evidence of Horn's pride.

1.1765. "Kar taunt redutent Horn e sa roiste fierté;"

He glosses roiste fierté as 'stubborn pride'. Again, an examination of the context reveals this remark to be embedded in praise; roiste fierté is only shown to enemies.

11.1762-67. "E reis Hunlaf l'eime cum l'ouïst engendré,  
 Kar par li tient s'onur (en si grant quieté.)  
 Kë il n'ad nul veisin par ki seit travaillé,  
 Kar taunt redutent Horn e sa roiste fierté;  
 E la u veut le mal mut tost s'en est vengé,  
 E la u veut le bien mut est d'(e) humilité;"<sup>1</sup>

It is perfectly clear from the context that Thomas is not arraigning Horn for personal arrogance; rather praising him for deeds of prowess. Laisse 86 tells how Horn harried Hunlaf's enemies and slew them. "Et," says line 1760, "pur çoe si est Horn mut cremu e duté,".

1. The particular sense of humilité here deserves a footnote. Clearly the formal structure of the lines imply an opposition between humilité and the quality which makes vengeance possible, roiste fierté. Just as the latter proves to mean more than 'pride' (see below), so modern English 'humility' is an inadequate translation for Old French humilité in this context. The word means the opposite of roiste fierté; the opposite to fierce, martial spirit, the emotional expression of prowess. It means something approaching 'gentleness' or 'affectionate graciousness'. Cf. Ch. de R. 11.1162-63. "Vers Sarazins regardet fierement,  
 E vers Franceis humeles e dolcement."

Perhaps something of this meaning is implicit in line 400 (quoted above). For the meaning of humilite when adopted into the courtly love situation, see: D.R.Sutherland, 'The Language of the Troubadours and the Problems of Origins' French Studies X(1956)Pp.199-215.

If we glance again at line 1765, we see that it is his roiste fierté that makes Horn feared. This is what makes him so terrifying to the enemies of the king. The quality can hardly be 'stubborn pride'; the glossing must be inaccurate.

The ordinary meaning of ruiste (L.Latin, rusticum) is 'violent'. Godefroy gives it as 'fort, vigoureux'. In other examples, as here, it often appears in a somewhat pleonastic usage that characterises formulaic expressions.<sup>1</sup> Fierté is capable of a great range of interpretations. It is derived from L.Latin ferus (savage, wild) but in Old French, according to Tobler-Lommatzsch (III 1829-30) and Godefroy (III 789, IX 617), can mean anything from unapproachability and arrogance to boisterousness and impetuosity. Both agree, however, that the dominant sense is one of violence and energy. The word is essentially linked to ideas of action and action of a sudden and violent kind. Its use in line 399 shows that fierté could mean 'arrogance' to Thomas, but in this context, used with roiste, such a rendering is impossible.<sup>2</sup>

What then does the phrase mean? It refers to a quality of violent action which makes a man feared; a kind of fighting spirit.

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1. For example: ruistes et combatants; ruistes vertus; ruistes fieror; ruiste bataille; rust vengeance. (all quoted by Godefroy).
  2. Tobler-Lommatzsch's examples; 'Bien maintendra mon regne par ses ruistes fiertés' (Main. III 93); 'Tant redouterent Charlon et sa fierté' (Aym. Narb. 860); 'Es portes fiert par molt ruiste fierté' (ibid. 931)

It is a quality much admired among a military aristocracy, but is it an enduring trait of character? In line 3358 Herebrand and Egfer meet in battle "par mut ruistes fiertez". Here the meaning is of something specific and temporary. It is a pride in transient violent action, perhaps a transient feeling in itself; only felt while the battle is hot. But in lines 278-79, Horn tells the story of his father's capture.

ll.278-79. "Mis peres i fud pris par sa ruiste fierté,  
Ki atendre ne vout ke venist sun barné."

Here the quality has become closer to a permanent trait of character. The original meaning of violent action and a pride in feats of arms, felt in the heat of battle, has become more of an abstract, enduring quality. *Ælolf* follows the spirit of warrior behaviour with too great heroic pride and, like *Byrhtnoth* at Maldon, pays for it with his life. We may quote Bloch again:<sup>1</sup>

"Pride is one of the essential ingredients of all class-consciousness. That of the 'nobles' of the feudal era was, above all, the pride of the warrior."

This is the roiste fierté which makes Horn feared. Specifically it is the apotheosis of the martial spirit revealed in combat, and the delight in martial skills; more generally it is the pride felt in following the code of behaviour of a small class whose cohesive tie was a professional ideal of violence. Far from condemning Horn

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1. op. cit. p. 292

for his roiste fierté, Thomas is demonstrating how well he measures up to the ideal of a feudal knight.<sup>1</sup>

Reid uses this first mention of roiste fierté to claim that it is the fore-runner of a savage pride that makes his friends fear him. He quotes lines 4574-76.

"Il se tindrent (tut) koi,        n'i osent mot suner,  
Kar il le dotent tuit,        taunt le sievent a fier:"

The lines occur in a *laisse* praising Horn. He stands up to speak and makes a sign to those in the hall for silence. They fall silent because they know him to be fier and they fear him. When he is angry no-one dare approach him, but when he is gay everyone is happy.

There is no note of censure in Thomas' tone. A strong, and what may seem to us, harsh leader was much admired in the Middle Ages.<sup>2</sup> A king should be feared and respected as much as loved. Strength and harshness often went side by side. The repeated epithet, 'le cremu', for Horn is never derogatory. Indeed he is now portrayed; not as a knight, but as a worthy king. Here fier simply means 'severe'.

1. The word fier is used of knights in an antithetical line from Ipomedon which gives some idea of its meaning. 11.439-40. "En la sale n'ot chivaler,  
Francs ne covert, couart ne fier,"
2. Cf. the case of King Henry I who, seeing his coinage being debased, summoned his moneyers to Winchester at Christmas 1125 and had them emasculated and deprived of their right hands. (D.M. Stenton, English Society in the Early Middle Ages, Harmondsworth 1965 p. 165). Cf. also the praise of Athelwold at the beginning of Havelok (27-61). Matthieu de Vendome's recommended epithet for a prince or emperor is one which emphasises the uncompromising nature of his justice (rigor justitiae). Ars Versificatoria I 3 64. ed. Faral op.cit. p. 133.

One more example may serve to acquit Horn of culpable pride and demolish the theory that Thomas traces a growth of it in his hero. While in Ireland, Horn takes part in a competition for putting the stone. This is preceded by *laisse* 123 which recounts his superiority at hunting, and the amazement of the court at his lack of boastfulness. At the stone-putting this is given practical illustration. One of the knights engaged by the elder of the king's sons casts a stone five feet farther than that cast by the younger son. He brags about it and Egfer begs Horn to avenge this defeat. The latter says modestly that he is not accustomed to this kind of game, but equals the boastful knight's throw. The knight throws another foot, and Horn equals this again. With an effort that brings him to his knees the knight improves his throw by half a foot.

Until now Horn has only thrown at the behest of the onlookers. He has preserved his lord's honour, but has been a paragon of modesty by not exceeding his opponent's efforts. Now Egfer sees that something is troubling him and he conjures him by his love and loyalty to the one whose ring he wears. Horn hurls the boulder more than seven feet beyond his opponent's mark. This last effort is a courtly touch, but the whole episode is based on the contrast between the modest Horn and his boastful opponent. Only his loyalty to Rigmel provokes him to hurl the rock farther than necessary. This modesty need not surprise us if we remember lines 1307-8.

"Pus cel tens des en ça            el reiaume de Fraunce  
N'out pruesce maõr                nẽ od menor vauntaunce,"

From the preceding examination it is apparent that the accusation

of pride levelled against Horn results from a mis-reading of the text and a misunderstanding of the principles of the heroic code of vassalage. It results also from a modern critic's desire to see Horn as a tragic hero rather than an epic exemplar. To modern taste, conditioned by the psychological criticism of tragedy, Horn's character would be artistically more satisfying if he were flawed by pride. Thomas' achievement would be greater if he had traced the widening of this crack and the final disintegration of an otherwise great man. Unfortunately he does nothing of the sort.

Can we then call Horn an epic hero? The outline of his life accords well with some of the traits of the heroic life collected by Jan de Vries.<sup>1</sup> Yet he falls short of the ultimate grandeur of the epic hero. It is partly because he is popularised to the extent that he is unhesitatingly invincible. The Germanic heroic spirit always

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1. Heroic Song and Heroic Legend, (Oxford 1963) pp. 210ff. The incidents in De Vries' collection which agree with Horn are:
- III His early youth is threatened.
  - IVa Shows particular features at early age. (Here beauty and aptitude for learning)
  - V Acquires invulnerability. (here: by means of a ring.)
  - VI Fight with a monster. (Horn's initiation is a fight with a Saracen).
  - VII Wins maiden.
  - IX Banished in youth but returns to victory.

shows to its best in adversity. The reason for Horn's failure perfectly to measure up to stature of an epic hero is that fate is not against him and, again and again, it is stated that Christian Providence is guarding him and shaping his destiny. The true epic hero rarely escapes with his life. The "moniages of Guillaume d'Orange, Walter of Aquitaine, Renart de Montalban are Christian distortions of an heroic life:"<sup>1</sup>

Horn is the paragon of the values of vassalage where it meets Christianity. The old values of sapientia et fortitudo are combined in him, but their austerity is tempered by the standards of behaviour of a courtly society. Horn's repeated desire to prove himself in battle, though basically motivated by heroic considerations, can not avoid being influenced by the contemporary romance idioms of Rigmel's declarations of love. His battles are no longer entirely for personal earthly glory, nor does he fight in full consciousness of a heavenly reward. His over-riding concern is the more secular one of preserving the honour of his line and of his class, and recovering that which belongs to him by right; and in these aims his success is assured by divine prescience. In this endeavour he becomes a model to that class. He is not a 'Miles Christi' nor is he an epic hero. In all his invincibility and his over-all superiority he is an ideal hero of vassalage. This was how feudalism should work.

The Irish episode sees Horn supreme in the arts of peace and war. The idea is put with great formal simplicity in lines 2697-2701.

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1. *ibid.* p. 183

"Li dui frere s'en vunt es chambres lur sorur.  
 Li einz nez meine od sei des esches sun joür;  
 Ki taunt bien en jüot- coe iert tut sun labur-  
 E sun fort chevalier, kar il n'aveit meillur,  
 (E) li pusnez (meine) Gudmod ki n'iert pas vaunteür."

Gudmod combines the skills of both the elder brother's men and in fact beats them at their own specialities. Despite this he is modest. He goes on to surpass everyone at music, singing a lai unknown to anyone else.

In battle he is invincible, as always, and the scene where he loyally avenges his dying lord and then is forced to say farewell to him is filled with pathos. In it we see the loving personal attachment to the lord which was an ideal of the original conception of vassalage and a sentimental ideal throughout the Middle Ages, however far it might have been from the truth.

Horn, then, in Thomas' poem is a representative of all the finest ideals of feudal society. He combines developed heroic-epic elements drawn from the chansons de geste with the accomplishments of contemporary courtly society. Loyalty to his lord, the honour of himself and his lineage combined with lack of personal presumption, devotion to feudal customs and all the traditional attributes of chivalry, are the constituents of Horn's character. He is more than a successful warrior. He is a complete man of the feudal age.

"There is a great difference between the homme preux and the prudhomme,' Philip Augustus is said to have remarked one day; he regarded the second as much the superior of the two."<sup>1</sup> Of the two,

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1. Joinville, c, CIX. Quoted by Bloch, op. cit. p. 306

Horn is indubitably the prudhomme. It is typical of his modesty and magnanimity that the only time we find the word in his mouth is in praise of the man who exiled him, his old lord, Hunlaf (3664).

The English Horn is certainly no prudhomme. In some measure he is familiar with courtly culture, like his Anglo-Norman cousin, but the emphasis is entirely different. While Thomas develops his hero into a consistent moral exemplar, the English Horn uses his courtly skill politically to ensure his personal safety. The Englishman's aim is not a moral one. He succeeds in telling a swiftly moving tale, interspersed with lively and dramatic scenes. The feudal duties so stressed by Thomas mean nothing to him. To him, the story's the thing.

C      The Narrative Technique.

In other sections illustrating the different aims of the poets, differences of narrative technique have inevitably arisen. The much fuller treatment of the arrival in Brittany by Thomas than that in the English work, was used to illustrate the beginnings of the heroic milieu in Thomas' poem. It also serves as a starting point for an illustration of Thomas' favourite narrative technique; that of repetition. The technique used in the arrival scene of following the hero from his landing to his meeting with the king of the country is duplicated in the arrival in Ireland of Gudmod and again in the arrival at Dublin of the Saracen, Rollac (2905ff.). In addition, Rollac arrives in answer to a prayer of Horn's, just as the pagan Marmorin had come in answer to Rigmel's prayer in Brittany. The repetition is carried on into the single combat scene which follows, the difference being that Rollac is a more important and a more human enemy than Marmorin. He was the murderer of Horn's father. Yet the course of the combat is almost blow for blow the same.

Thomas, however, deploys more poetic skill in this second encounter and introduces an imaginative visual effect, missing from the first,<sup>1</sup> The pagan strikes Gudmod on the helmet so:

1.3131.      "Ke li feus en sailli,    ki esprent tut l'erbu,"

The importance of this fight as a climactic single combat does not prevent Thomas from using its framework again in the fight between

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1. Cf. Ipomedon 9586ff.

Egfer and a pagan king. The pagan seizes Egfer's nasal and wounds him in the face. Both Herland and Horn almost suffer the same fate.<sup>1</sup>

The same motifs appear again and again in Thomas' stylised single combat scenes. The strategy of his longer battles is very much the same, each time involving unheroic surprise attack from the cover of woodland. In his courtly scenes, repetition is freely used, too. The mirror scene where Rigmel prepares for a visitor has been mentioned already, as has the repetition of the phrase 'suz hermin covertur'. The ideas of Horn's service in the hall, of Herland making arrangements satisfactory to all, of Horn's angelic beauty, are all repeated more than once, either close together or at great distances apart. The characters are firmly established by the endless repetition of a few epithets.

The parallelism of individual scenes is echoed on a larger scale by the plot of both poems. The episode in Ireland is closely parallel to that in Brittany. The rescue at the end is duplicated. Horn's meeting with Rigmel is preceded by that of Haderof. This parallelism is emphasised throughout by verbal echoes, yet interest in the story

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1. This use of the nasal is not isolated in literature, nor probably in life. Geoffrey of Monmouth VIII.6. relates how Hengest was seized by it. In Guy of Amiens' description of the Battle of Hastings William seizes an enemy by the nasal and it is possible that Stephen was captured in this way at the Battle of Lincoln in 1141. J.S.P. Tatlock, The Legendary History of Britain, University of California Press (Berkeley 1950) Pp. 326-7.

never flags for Thomas succeeds in making each repetition subtly different. Sometimes he introduces whole new sections or ideas, as in the peace-time amusements of Ireland. Sometimes there are echoes of some other part of the poem from that paralleled in structure.

Thomas' battle scenes follow heroic tradition by consisting of a series of brief, individual encounters described in a stylised manner. These are generalised into a battle in the time-honoured way of interspersing them with terse general comment.

1.3425a "Meint espie aceré par mi meint cors i frie;"  
compare Maldon 296-97 "...gār oft þurhwōd  
fæges feorhūs."

The same kind of specific technique is used for general effect again in line 1675.

"Bien i mustrent lur cors al felun sarazin,"

This technique of speaking of one part rather than the whole (intellectio)<sup>1</sup> is used in the Chanson de Roland, though not to generalise individual combats.

Ch. de R. 982. "'Jo cunduirai mun cors en Rencesvals,"

The reverse, where the whole represents the individual, is also used.

1.1691. "La bataillē est fort paien sunt miserin."

Various other commonplaces of the heroic style are to be found in the battle scenes.<sup>2</sup> Following the poets of the chansons de geste,

1. Geoffroi de Vinsauf, Poetria Nova ll.1022ff.

2. Some of these features of epic style are listed by Professor Smithers. op. cit. p. 31.

Thomas calls the Breton army 'li nostre' (1651) in order to increase the sense of urgency and to facilitate the identification of his audience with the hero's army. Verbal formulae of epic poetry are constantly repeated.

1.3395. "Il se fierent granz cops sanz nul retenement."

1.1515. "E le fels le feri; n'en fit esparneisun."

These lines can be paralleled by lines from the Chanson de Roland:

1.1504. "Turpins i fiert ki nient ne l'esparignet,"

Maldon:

1.118. "...swenges ne wyrned."

Beowulf:

1.1520. "...hond sweng ne oftēah,"<sup>1</sup>

The expression is a fossilised form of a general heroic admiration for the man who was truly fiers, who did not withhold his blow through fear of the effects, both on his enemy and his own hand.

Thomas does not make a very wide use of metaphor. Those he uses are usually rather uninspired. He credits Horn with 'vertu leonine' (1653) and speaks of Rigmel as "la fille le rei, ki sur tuz iert la flur." His use in the battle sections of the ironic metaphor is more interesting.<sup>2</sup> He makes use of the lancea pro censu type mentioned

1. Compare, too, 1.2826 'le dedut del harper' with the O.E. formulaic phrase in Beowulf (2109) 'hearpan wyne'.

2. The ironic metaphor is a device closely associated with the heroic spirit in poetry. It often forms part of a hero's scathing answer to the threat, demands, or offer, of an enemy. The lancea pro censu type is a subdivision which forms an answer to the demand for tribute and promises that tribute will be paid in terms of resistance. This is expressed metaphorically by the promise of tribute in spears or swords as in Maldon 11.45-48.

by Professor Smithers, and also the type using the promise to tell quite another sermon.<sup>1</sup>

11.1635-37. "Va, glotun, envers tei la nostre lei defend.  
Tiel treü t'en rendrai e (i) tiel tensement;  
Pur Hunlaf nostre rei itiel rente t'en rend."

This example also enshrines the venerable heroic custom of shouting jibes at the enemy.

Horn also uses the 'sermon' type after being offered a truce and rewards by his enemy.

11.3163-64. "'Par ma fei,' dist Gudmod, 'n'est pruz itiel sermon.  
Trestut el vus dirai ainz ke nus departon.'"

In line 2444 he uses a similar ironic metaphor to rebuff the amorous approaches of Lenburc. Later in the poem, when told that the wicked Wikele is feasting in his hall, Horn decides to gain entry by disguising as a minstrel.

11.5161-1a. "('Certes j'i serrai ja, si je pus, sun jugler:  
Un lai bretun li frai od m'espee de asier.')"<sup>2</sup>

The result is an unusual, if rather awkward, ironic metaphor.

In describing the pagan defeat, Thomas uses a commonplace but effective innuendo to emphasise the slaughter and the tragedy of it

1. op. cit. p. 33

2. The text is from the second of the fragments (F2) published by Braunholtz.

to the enemy.

1.1722. "Meinte paene en fu iloc s'amur tolué."

Understatement, too, is a common device, especially in the form of a negative statement followed by an affirmation; the device called by Geoffrey de Vinsauf, oppositio.<sup>1</sup>

11.3127-28.

"Cil vient mut fierement e cist n'est esperdu,  
Ainz l'ad bien encuntré e par mal receü."

This example is complicated by the antithetical balance of line 3128.

Thomas uses the technique of fore-shadowing events throughout the poem in order to emphasise Horn's election by God, but true heroic fore-shadowing is represented by Rodmund's dream, which he interprets correctly, and so goes into battle knowing that it will be his last. At the end of *laisse* 77 the style of the Chanson de Roland is adopted as Horn tells his men that God has fore-ordained their victory.

11.1570-71.

"(Sire, ' coe dient tuit, 'Deus en seit graciez!  
Ne pot meuz avenir: issi fu destinez.'" )

The objective comment of the author in the heroic style must be distinguished from the address of the romance writer to his audience.<sup>2</sup> The heroic technique is entirely objective; an elevated

1. Faral op. cit. Pp. 84-85

2. Either in the form of exclamatio or occupatio. See below.

comment upon the story as distinct from a subjective appeal to the audience.<sup>1</sup> Thomas uses this heroic technique in lines 159-60, when by this indirect means, he transmits the apprehensiveness of Horn and his companions when first faced by Herland.

ll.159-60. "Se il orent poür pur neent iert demaundé,  
Kar ne sievent k'(i) il sunt ne s'il querent maulté,"

It will be seen that, as well as extolling its values and borrowing its motifs, Thomas uses much of the narrative technique of heroic poetry. In his battle scenes, in particular, the style is much higher than in the courtly parts of the poem. It is formalised by the language of the chanson de geste and heightened by the use of epic formulae. Some primitive elements remain, such as the conviction expressed in *laisse* 74 that the combatants are the earthly representatives of their gods. Thomas treats Mahun and Tervagan quite seriously. They are given the status of powerful devils in order to raise the battles to epic grandeur. The Saracens themselves are acknowledged to be 'hommes preux', in violent contrast to their treatment in King Horn where they are regarded as pagan hounds. Rodmund's last fight is told at first from his side, at least until the battle begins. Outside Dublin the pagans prefer to die rather than to return leaderless (*laisse* 165).

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1. The intrusion of the author in heroic poetry is impersonal and indirect. In the romance it is either very subjective and indirect - an appeal to God - or impersonal and direct - an occupatio.

ll.3448-49. "....ensemble se sunt trait  
 E d'aus meïsmes ont grant fortelesce fait."<sup>1</sup>

They prepare to fight to the last man. There is no doubt that Thomas' mastery of the heroic style makes his battle scenes worthy of comparison with any in the Western European tradition of heroic-epic.

Outside the battle scenes Thomas makes free and elegant use of the figures listed by the theoreticians on the art of versifying. Unlike some mediaeval poets, Thomas is not used by rhetoric, but rather uses what rhetoric has to offer when he feels the need. Its use is rarely obtrusive except when such is the intention. This is the case in his attempt to link laisses 19 and 20 by the use of interpretatio (quoted above). The device is intended to link two discrete parts of the poem; the heroic opening and the romance love story. Laisse 10 is linked to 11 by a less obvious example (2151-220) and the device appears again in lines 402-3.

"E sis los creist par tut; par tut en est parlé  
 Kome Horn est vaillant, de grant nobilité."

Laisse 18 exhibits the similar device of repetitio. Thomas' use of this device is surprisingly rare, considering his constant use of

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1. It is an interesting query as to where Thomas got the idea of a shield-wall and the shame of a leaderless return. Did he find it in his source? Did such tales live on in Normandy? Perhaps it came from Latin sources. Isidorus Pacensis describes the shield-wall of the Franks at the battle of Poitiers in 733. Lynn White Jr., Mediaeval Technology and Social Change (Oxford 1962) p. 3.

repetition of form, idea and word orders.

11.377-81. "De bois e de rivere       refait il autretal;  
           D'eskermir en tuz sens        n'est a li cummunal  
           Nul ki vest' el païs        u burel u cendal;  
           Nul ne siet (en) vers lui    bien mener un cheval,  
           Nul si porter escu         od bucle de cristal."

His use of exempla is also fairly infrequent in a writer with such obvious literary borrowings. Possibly he feels the device too pedantic for his story, for he uses it most conspicuously when Horn is delivering a sermon to Rigmel in *laisse* 198. Here, he takes as his exemplum the biblical text of the camel's passage through the eye of a needle. He also employs a limited form of exemplum in such phrases as:

1.251.       "...si ma geste ne ment"

though he never names his source.<sup>1</sup> Rigmel's reply to the sermon offered her is a simple form of annominatio, but a better example is offered by line 3351.<sup>2</sup>

"La ot taunt decoupé       e poinz e piz e piez."

In the courtly section of the poem, Thomas employs techniques which are not found in epic poetry. The representation of his characters' thoughts is particularly sophisticated. The use of a

1. Geoffroi de Vinsauf, Poetria Nova 1255-57. Faral op. cit. p.236

2. "Annominatio est quando plures dictiones sibi assimilantur in litteris, vel in syllabis." Geoffroi de Vinsauf, De Coloribus Rhetorici. ed. Faral op. cit. p.323.

confidante has already been mentioned, but the use of internal monologue is also worthy of note. There is an interesting comparison between the new technique of:

ll.665ff. "'Deu!', fait il en sun quoeer,. 'si el l'ad enamé?'"

ll.2459ff. "En sun pense ad dit: 'Deus! fiz sainte Marie,...'"

and the old technique of the Chanson de Roland: 'dient les francs'.

In the heroic style it is left to be understood that the Franks did not always speak these words aloud. They act as a chorus.

Throughout his poem Thomas makes interpolations in the narrative to foreshadow the future. Sometimes they are in the form of exclamations addressed to God, but more often addressed to his audience (3589). Occasionally he uses transitio in the manner of later romance writers.

l. 699. "Or dirrai de Rigmel..."

On two occasions, in referring back, he uses the word desus to denote what has gone before; thus implying that the original version was written to be read alone as much as to be recited to an audience (460, 3071).

There is a constant knowledge of, as well as confidence in, what is going to happen next. The interest of Thomas' poem derives from the reactions of the ideal character to events. His purpose is to draw a moral ideal rather than to tell an exciting story. In keeping with this ideal, he makes frequent use of sententious utterance, if not of actual sententiae. The use of the device is usually bound up with ideas of God's pre-ordination of Horn's success. It helps to shore up the main character as a moral

example (1302-10). One passage will give the flavour of many of these sententious utterances.

11.3105-3106b "E Gudmod s'en depart, ki pas ne flechira  
 Mes la lei damme deu cum vassal defendra,  
 E joe sai bien de fi ke il li socorra  
 Kar a nul ki bien l'aint al bosoig ne faudra."

Lines 5173-75 are interesting as an example of Thomas' fidelity to feudal morals, framed as gnomic utterance. The death of Wikele is the death of a man opposite in every way to Horn. He is technically a felun; a man who has broken his feudal obligations. Thomas observes:

11.5173-75. "Issi deit avenir tuz jors a boiseor,  
 Car unc ben ne finat ki trichat sun seignur:  
 En cestui purrez bien estre espermentor."

If Thomas is interested in showing the security of the future of his moral hero, much of the interest of the English narrative springs from the uncertainty of the future of Horn and Rimenhild. A comparison of the individual treatment of the return from Ireland and the rescue of Rigmel from Modin will emphasise the difference.

In Thomas' story, Horn has just refused the hand of Lenburc, and with it the kingdom of Ireland, when a palmer, who turns out to be Herland's son in disguise, bursts in and calls Horn by name. The entry is dramatic but rather contrived.<sup>1</sup> Horn wastes a good deal of time trying to maintain the pretence of being the vavasour's

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Cf. the entry of the messengers at the end of Floire et Blancheflor.

son, Gudmod, but eventually admits his identity. It is noteworthy how the palmer's first speech is a plea for Horn to come home and avenge the wrongs done to his lord, Herland, and how he only mentions Rigmel's forced marriage as an after-thought. Thomas' interest now is to explain how king Godreche and his daughter react to the revelation that this is Horn. There is no haste for departure. King Godreche remembers his allegiance to Horn's father and renews his loyalty to his son in a wholly praise-worthy way. Lenburc retracts her suit and decides to enter a nunnery. At last, Horn leaves with a great Irish army.

On reaching Brittany he proceeds alone and, after changing clothes with a palmer, he becomes involved in a conversation with Modin and Wikele. He insults them and Modin bears this well, but Wikele, who lacks magnanimity, threatens to strike him. Modin restrains him for, he says, he would get no honour from it. The scene is merely to establish Modin as a courteous knight, whilst Wikele is shown to lack all chivalric virtue.

Horn now enters the castle and succeeds in making contact with Rigmel. They lay plans to persuade Modin to hold a tournament next day, outside the town; which he gladly does. Horn and some picked knights then ride to the tournament, defeat all opposition, and take Modin captive. The tie between Modin and Rigmel is dissolved on grounds of consanguinity and Modin returns to Fenice. Wikele is forgiven through Horn's magnanimity.

Thomas' telling of the story contains no urgency. He delays constantly to outline the behaviour of his characters with regard to the feudal code. The expedition is primarily mounted through and by

means of feudal loyalty, not love. The pledged word to Rigmel is a secondary concern to the oath sworn to his lord. The rescue is arguably more realistic than the English in its tactics, but it is also more courtly. The threat offered by Modin is only to Rigmel, and Rigmel is a secondary consideration. Here is the greatest difference between the English and the Anglo-Norman versions. In *King Horn*, Rimenhild is the sole cause for the return. The threat of Modi is much graver.

The difference between the two versions begins before the coming of the messenger. In *King Horn*, Horn refuses the throne and goes on living in Ireland for five years during which time there is no news of Rimenhild. The eventual mention of Rimenhild introduces a brief narration of events in Westernesse. Rimenhild is to be married: 'Þe daies were schorte' (927). Apulf writes to warn his friend and lord. The messenger seeks for Horn until one day he meets him on the shores of Ireland. He fails to recognise him and bewails the fruitlessness of his quest. Horn reveals himself and sends him swiftly to tell Rimenhild that he will:

ll.965-68.            "...beo þer bitime,  
                       A soneday bi pryme.  
                       Þe knaue was wel bliþe  
                       & hizede aȝen bliue."

But the sea grows rough and the messenger is drowned. The scene changes quickly back to Rimenhild. She is looking out to sea, hoping to catch a glimpse of Horn, her rescuer.

11.977-78.       "Po fond heo þe knaue adrent  
                   þat he hadde for horn isent,"

There is a strong and bitter irony in these simple lines. The dead messenger has almost a symbolic force; that of dead hope. He is a mute messenger of despair. Rimenhild is left wringing her hands.

The scene changes again swiftly, now beginning to generate a feeling of anxiety and suspense entirely incompatible with Thomas' leisurely telling of the episode. In contrast to Rimenhild's helplessness, Horn is active. He goes straight to Purston and tells him the situation. The action is hastened by the condensation of Horn's conversation with Purston into a paraphrase and reported speech (981ff). The king's reply is terse in the extreme: "'Horn, haue nu þi wille.'" (1000). He wastes no time in declaring his intention to be loyal to his promise of help. He recognises the immediate need for action and within twenty lines of approaching the king, Horn's army is embarked for Westernesse.

They arrive under cover of darkness. The narrative gains even greater speed, building up a sense of urgency. The smooth flow now breaks up into a series of short sentences relating individual events in the landing.

11.1019-23.       "Horn was in þe watere,  
                   Ne miȝte he come no latere.  
                   He let his schup stonde,  
                   & ȝede to londe..."

There is now a lapse in the pace as Horn meets a palmer, but this

is used only to heighten the anxiety by painting a pathetic picture of the unwilling bride.

11.1047-50.        "Awai igan glide,  
                   Pat deol inolde abide.  
                   Pe bride wepep sore,  
                   & pat is muche deole."

Horn now gains entry to the castle disguised as a palmer, though not unhampered by the porter. Meanwhile Apulf is above in the tower anxiously looking for his coming. Ironically, he speaks aloud to Horn, whom he thinks will never come.

11.1101-3.        "Ihc habbe ikept hure eure:  
                   Com nu oper neure.  
                   Ine may no leng hure kepe."

Horn is below proving the fidelity of Rimenhild. They are reunited but she is not rescued. He leaves the hall to gather his men. Rimenhild goes to the loyal follower, Apulf, and sends him in pursuit. He swiftly overtakes Horn and there is a joyful reunion. He returns with his men and the castle is taken without a fight.

The anxiety, the necessity for speed, the suspense of the English narrative, have no counterpart in Thomas' treatment. Modin, there, is more of a dupe of Wikele than a real enemy. Here, he is slain and Fikenhild escapes retribution only through the complicity of the other comrades. The irony of Apulf's injunction to Horn to come now or never has an entirely different tone in the French poem. Instead of anguish, it has gaiety, resulting from double entendre

rather than irony (laisses 206-7). It is the same kind of misunderstanding as is used in Floire et Blancheflor, depending on a mistaken identity.<sup>1</sup> Rigmel deliberately says that she will show Haderof a finer sight than he has seen since Horn left. He assumes that she means Modin and begins to reproach her for lack of faith. In fact she knows that Horn has arrived.

The excitement conjured up by the English writer derives largely from his bare style and short line. He writes simple, terse sentences and changes scene often, describing the actions of both parties, one after the other. It is a technique requiring considerable narrative skill, and it is a technique which commends itself particularly to the English writer, who never delays his narrative by needless description. Thomas is sparing in his description in the sense that he has no great set-pieces, but his poem abounds in selective description and circumstantial detail. Thomas repeats his ideas regularly, partly through a lack of invention, partly through a desire for clarity. Although the Englishman has repetitions in his plot, echoes of lines are limited to two or three examples. The parallelisms of the plot are less noticeable, too, for they lack the word echoes and they are often drastically edited. The battle scenes

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1. Clarice tells the Emir that Blancheflor is praying for her lover and he naturally assumes that it is himself. In fact it is Floire. Compare, too, the awkward irony in Amis and Amiloun when Amiraunt speaks in similar riddles to the duke who is unwittingly beating his sworn brother (2107ff).

are minimal; there is only one single combat and one lone fight against a band of invaders. The final battle is almost completely erased. The enemy is simply an impersonal threat. The result is that the parallel between Horn's initiation battle and the battles in Ireland is quite well masked. The Irish episode is very much subsidiary to the main plot. The Lenburc episode is obviously parallel to the story of Rigmel in Thomas, but in King Horn the Irish king's daughter appears only in his offer of her hand to the hero. She never makes a personal appearance. The only real duplication of events is in the double rescue at the end. This is obviously a reprise of the narrative tension at which the English poet excels.

The heroic aura is entirely missing in King Horn, except for the scholar, who may be able to recognise the fossilised remains of heroic attitudes. There is no generalised fighting, no extended defence of a Christian nation or its culture against a worthy enemy. Horn is a popularised hero to a much greater extent than his French counterpart. The enemy exist merely to be destroyed by him. There is little sense of the honour due to a noble foe. Horn brings in the head of his adversary and proudly gives it to the king. The scene is of realistic barbarism not literary heroism. The difference is implicit in the style. The following example from King Horn is rustic, brutal, clumsy and realistic. By contrast, that from the French poem is clinical, precise and slightly precious. Beside the example from King Horn its high style seems periphrastic.

11.609-10 "At eureche dunte  
Pe heued of wente."

11.1625 "N' i ateint nul al cop ke la teste n'en prent;"

The simple directness of the English style, with its concrete mode of expression, lends itself, as we have seen, to swift narration and tension. It is also ideally suited to the transmission of simple emotion and sincerity. The poet uses it effectively for scenes of pathos.

11.887-90 "Bute his sones tweie  
Bifore him he saʒ deie.  
Pe king bigan to grete  
& teres for to lete:",

friendship with Apulf:

11.1229-34 "Apulf bigan to springe  
For þe tipinge  
After horn he arnde anon  
Also þat hors miʒte gon:  
He him ouertok ywis,  
Hi makede suiþe Muchel blis."

the good humour of the king:

11.790-98 "'Welcome beo þu here.  
Go nu, Berild, swiþe,  
& make him ful bliþe;  
And whan þu farst to woʒe,

Tak him þine gloue;<sup>1</sup>  
 Iment þe hauest to wyue,  
 Awai he schal þe dryue;  
 For Cutberdes fairhede,  
 Ne schal þe neuere wel spede."

In lines 865ff. the simple, terse style is used to follow a rapid growth of emotion in one of the characters. Horn has learnt that the Saracen before him is his father's slayer. The short sentences follow the growing realisation, the rising, and turning of emotion to action, and they culminate in the violent:

1.875 "He smot him þure3 þe herte,"

There is no doubt that the poet makes the best possible use of his verse form and his simplicity of style in examples like these. The efficacy of his narrative technique is undeniable. Yet beyond a simplicity of expression, of idea, and an effective use of it, one is liable to assume complete artlessness. This would be a mistake. The poet of King Horn uses the simpler devices of rhetoric, less gracefully perhaps, but almost as much as Thomas.

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1. For the variety of interpretations of this line, see Hall's note to lines 793-97.

Like Thomas, his use of simile is not original. He borrows from the common stock of courtly romance.

1.15 "He was whit so þe flur,"

His horse, too, is of a breed common in romance, and is:

1.590. "Also blak so eny cole;"

He sings as he rides off to battle, in true romantic style. Metaphorical expression is rare, as it is with Thomas, but the single example is an extraordinary one. Horn is:

11.315-16. Fairer bi one ribbe  
 Þane eni Man þæt libbe!"

This peculiar expression presumably means that Horn is as fair as a woman.

In keeping with the lack of clear heroic motivation and behaviour, the commonplaces of heroic epic are much sparser in King Horn. The device of foreshadowing is used but is twisted to serve romance interests. Quite naturally, Rimenhild takes the dream of a fish bursting from her net as signifying that Horn will soon leave her. He denies this and gives a substantially true interpretation (557-84). The scene is an interesting interaction between the two characters, revealing Rimenhild's girlish fears and Horn's tenderness and fidelity. In short the dream has become a romance property. In heroic poetry the dream is immediately and correctly understood as the harbinger of dire events.

There is some foreshadowing, in keeping with heroic practice,

in the repetition of the epithet 'werste', attached to Fikenhild. The antithesis in lines 27-8 makes this more telling.

"Apulf was þe beste  
& fikenylde þe werste."

The only use of true heroic foreshadowing, employed for ironic effect, is in lines 853-54 where the Saracens are waiting to meet Horn.

ll.853-54. "His feren him biside  
Hore dep to abide."

The heroic gravity of the only other example is spoilt by its inclusion of a pun (206-12). The poet is interested in word tricks but the presence of a second pun in Thomas' narrative, in addition, leads one to think that this example belonged to the common tradition of the story. Thomas rather labours this second pun, for it involves translation. The English poet combines it with repetitio<sup>1</sup> and simple annominatio to make a riddling speech.

ll.1144-45 "Drink to me of disse,  
Drink to horn of horne:  
Feor ihc am i orne."

He has previously used simple annominatio in lines 587-88.

"Þe kni3tes 3eden to table,  
& horne 3ede to stable."

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1. The term repetitio indicates that successive phrases begin similarly. Cf. Geoffroi de Vinsauf, Poetria Nova l.1096.

The ironic metaphor of lines 1367-68 is the sole example of a device typical of heroic poetry and used fairly freely in Thomas' poem. It seems to be the type based on the word 'sermon', but there is no mention of it being an alternative 'speche'. They will simply be acquainted with our speech. The metaphor seems to be used rather awkwardly by the poet.

ll.1367-70.        "We schulle þe hundes teche  
                     To speken ure speche.  
                     Alle we hem schulle sle  
                     & al quic hem fle."

Presumably the language of Horn's men is battle. The more usual occurrence of ironic metaphor is to refute some speech of the enemy. Here it is unprovoked.

The use of understatement, too, is rare and outside the idiom of the heroic epic. There is no *oppositio*,<sup>1</sup> but negative understatement is used. In line 196 it is in the form of an observation by the author.

"Iwis he nas no Niping:"

The interest in words attested by the use of pun and annominatio, is pursued by a frequent use of repetitio and interpretatio; the latter in lines ten to thirteen:

1. Faral op. cit. pp. 84-85. The technique involves denying the opposite of an idea and then asserting the idea itself. Often the negative part is understatement and the positive assertion has hyperbolic effect.

"Fairer ne miste non beo born.  
 Ne no rein vpon birine,  
 Ne sunne vpon bischine:  
 Fairer nis non þane he was,"

and the former in lines 74-77:

"Per heo liued alone,  
 Per heo serued gode  
 Azenes þe paynes forbode;  
 Per he seruede criste".

In the ironic speech of lines 956-57 the two are combined, as they often tend to be in this poem.

"Walawai þe stunde!  
 Wailaway þe while!"

As might be expected, there is practically no use of either sententia or exemplum in this poem. It is neither moral in purpose nor literary in execution.

Apart from the use of simile and metaphor and certain verbal devices, the use of rhetoric in King Horn seems to be perfectly natural and largely unsuspecting. There is one striking exception. The use of exclamatio is deliberate and extremely skilful. It is employed only on two occasions, but on both it arises naturally from moments of great emotion, and has precisely the dramatic effect which the poet assigned for it.<sup>1</sup>

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1. To these may be added the short and typically romance address which Rimenhild makes to her heart on hearing of Horn's supposed death (1192-94).

The first use is an extremely complex one. Horn, having landed in Westernesse, turns and says farewell to his ship. As he does so, we realise that he is, in fact, severing ties with his country. He is saying goodbye to his home-land and to his kin; but at the same time he is providing for a future return and revenge. There is a peculiar mixture of pathos at leaving old things and joy at escaping death combined with optimism at the possibility of a future triumph. The short speech distils the essence of the exile-return theme. When it is over we are prepared for the next part of the poem. It completes the background of previous events. The whole scene is handled with uncanny skill. It is worth quoting in full.

11.139-52.        "'Schup, bi þe se flode  
                   Daies haue þu gode:  
                   Bi þe se brinke  
                   No water þe nadrinke.  
                   3ef þu cume to Suddene,  
                   Gret þu wel of myne kenne,  
                   Gret þu wel my moder,  
                   Godhild quen þe gode;  
                   & seie þe paene kyng,  
                   Jesucristes wipering,  
                   Pat ihc am hol & fer  
                   On þis lond ariued her;  
                   And seie pat hei schal fonde  
                   þe dent of myne honde.'"

The poignancy of this is enhanced for modern readers by the memory of Beowulf's landing and the way in which his ship, his link

with home, is carefully guarded. There is more than the sailor's affection for his ship in Horn's farewell. The sense of loss and isolation is heightened by the line:

"ʒef þu cume to Suddene".

The rupture is complete. The ship, which is properly a part of Suddene, is left to drift aimlessly, and perhaps never to return. The device here is more complicated than the simple exclamatio given to Apulf in lines 1098ff. Here the exclamatio, through a conceit of the author, presupposes a kind of prosopopoeia, for if the ship reaches Suddene it will be a messenger; but its message will be dumb testimony like that of the drowned knight, rather than a true use of prosopopoeia. Apulf's exclamatio (1098-1104) is simpler but equally effective in its aim of depicting the anguish suffered through his loyalty to Horn, and at the same time providing strong dramatic irony.

Except for his closer acquaintance and more correct use of all the trappings of heroic style, Thomas makes little more use of the devices of rhetoric than the author of King Horn. Neither make great use of them. Neither of the poets give the impression of working from a manual of poetry; both have a flexibility combined with their use of formulae and conventional situations that suggests that they both composed from their experience of poetic precedents. Thomas certainly knew a literary heroic tradition and borrowed heavily from it. The author of King Horn

perhaps knew of a heroic tradition but he was not close to it. It may have been an oral tradition whose devices he handled without feeling for their original heroic spirit. The use of devices based on word tricks needs little instruction. Thomas uses them to about the same extent as his English counterpart, but with a more accomplished air. The devices unique to Thomas - gnomic utterances and exempla - are an indication of the diverse aims of the writers. One need look no further for their origin than the sermons and moralistic writings of the period. The success of the English poet in the use of exclamatio is difficult to explain. No doubt the plain style helps to hide any artificiality and gives an impression of realism and sincerity; the development of this device to such a peak of perfection must surely be sought, not in rhetorical manuals, but in the school of poetic experience.

There is, then, little to choose between the poems in their use of rhetorical techniques. The real difference in narrative technique lies in the simplification of the English story pattern - the lack of repetition - and in the contrast of styles. The English story takes place against a blank background. The bareness of the setting is an integral part of the tale. It imparts a sense of primitiveness greater than ordinarily corresponds with the thirteenth century date of the poem and the courtly love traces in it. Thomas' poem is filled with detail and social background. There is the atmosphere of the court or the heroic battle-field constantly present. The whole story of King Horn

takes place in a vacuum. There are scenes of realistic emotion, tension and danger. The narrative scene changes swiftly for dramatic effect and hurries on to the next event. It is narrative without a background. After reading the poem, if we look back, all we can see in our mind's eye, is a desolate coast lapped by a cold sea. This is the only background to the narrative. The sea is almost as much characterised as the other actors in the drama. All meetings of import happen along the sea shore. The sea forms the backdrop to the death of Horn's father and it casts up the dead messenger. It is present at all moments of emotion. Apulf peers across its surface for the coming of Horn and Rimenhild dreams that a fish has burst from the net she has cast into its waters. The Saracens come from the sea to destroy and pillage. Against this background and against this threat, Horn stands out; a primitive hero touched by the tenderness of love, and perhaps incongruously, faintly coloured by the tones of chivalry.

Thomas' background is the feudal hall, the courtly custom, the service at table and the singing of lais. His enemies are worthy enemies and his hero is a prudhomme.

## VI    Conclusions.

As the similarity of the story patterns proclaim, the two versions of the Horn story which we have been studying, were originally the same. How long their development as separate stories continued we have no means of knowing, but the extant poems are now widely dissimilar. Each poet pursues different aims. The individuality of Thomas' treatment is the best argument for the primitive appearance of the English poem.

Thomas has taken the story and adapted it to his own precise purpose. He consistently represents a hero of superhuman virtue and accomplishment being guided through a fixed terrain of events by the hand of God. Horn is the hero of an ideal. Thomas uses both the framework of the plot and also the characterisation to state this ideal. This is not to say that he does not enjoy the heroic events for their own sake. He transforms them into events illustrating his ideal and adds to them by means of repetition.

The hero of the poem is an idealised view of the noble vassal, in whom the Carolingian concept of vassalage is blurred by contemporary feudal customs such as primogeniture and inheritance. The more discreditable aspects of feudal politics are ignored. Horn is in every sense heroic, but his behaviour is tempered by the gentler arts of peace. As a cultivated twelfth century gentleman, he is pre-eminent in chess and music; but on the field of battle his single, destructive sword stroke is as fatal as any of those of the primitive hero, and his devotion to his lord is of classical purity.

Thomas passionately admires those ancient ideals of heroism and loyalty which were at the root of feudalism. He endeavours to reconcile them with what is best of the new courtly civilisation. The character of the hero of the poem is the context in which the two scales of values are united. The duality of Horn's character helps to cement the precarious unity of tone in the poem. Without the combination in him, the heroic milieu would fall away from the courtly subtleties of the love story and form a poor background or, worse, a direct clash of genres.<sup>1</sup> As it is, the universal excellence of Horn helps to ease the transition from heroic to romance. Even so, the naive attempt to blend the heroic element with courtly civilisation simply by placing them side by side, still leads to a rather uneven structure.

The romance elements are not used for any parade of courtly love. This, Thomas feels, is incompatible with his moral ideal. He reduces the importance of womankind. He makes Rigmel the petitioner and uses the courtly sections to contrast the irresponsible emotional weakness of women with the dutiful loyalty of his hero. Sometimes Horn's wisdom and moderation take on a clerkly and moralising tone as he is made to argue Thomas' view of chivalric ideals.

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1. G.H. McKnight (P.M.L.A. XV 1900) thinks that this is what happens in King Horn. He considers the two facets of Horn's character, observable there, to be irreconcilable.

There is no doubt that Thomas' poem is aimed at an aristocratic audience. The values of aristocracy are extolled throughout. Along with the yearning for an idealised heroic past, Thomas preserves a strong contemporary regard for hierarchy, and the privileges and courtesies due to nobility. The lords visiting the court of the king are jealous of their prestige. They have to be lodged correctly according to hierarchy. The reason for Wikele's slanderous accusation is that he did not receive that which he regarded as his due - the horse, Blanchard. In Wikele the attitude is criticised, but Horn must recover Suddene because it is his due and, therefore, he must take it in seisin for the honour of his family. He returns to Rigmel as much for this reason as for true love. He returns and tests her fidelity but will not marry her until he has recovered the other thing due to him, his inheritance.

Thomas, then, sets out to create an ideal for his age. The story is set in the past and adopts a purity of heroic milieu from the past, yet it combines more or less successfully with what Thomas regards as worthwhile from courtly custom. This does not include courtly love in any form, but he extols courtly behaviour in the dealings of love; most especially in courtesy and moderation. From his own feudal society he takes an aristocratic outlook that was only beginning to gain wide currency. This includes the sanctity of property and a passionate belief in hereditary succession and the prestige of families as well as individuals. In a word, it is the growth of the idea of nobility. In Thomas' poem it puts

a special contemporary colouring on the heroic code as he depicts it.

The English poet is untroubled by such considerations. The theory of nobility, heroic ethics, feudal society; none of these are embodied in his poem. If heroic elements can be found they are mere fossils preserved in the story pattern. The Englishman concentrates on the love story and fills in no background. He avoids repetition of incident, except at the end, and tells his story with dazzling swiftness and abruptness of scene. There is no evidence of immediate literary debt to sophisticated romance except, perhaps in the awkwardly handled references to the courtly love tradition, as where Horn claims that it is the custom for a knight to fight for his lady.

The individual scenes are often brilliantly portrayed. The emotions of the characters are simple and straight-forward, as a rule, but the poet is capable of more subtlety, as in the scene where Horn is first brought to Rimenhild. The characters are not very well developed and are often inconsistent. Their consistency is of second rate importance compared to the narrative, and it is subordinated to the needs of emotional effect in individual scenes. For the same reason there is no consistent theme. Apulf and Fikenhild are overtly opposed to one another from the beginning as the loyal and treacherous retainers, but no moral theme is built on the opposition. The only reason for it is to foreshadow subsequent events. Dramatic effect, pathos, irony and tension are the aims of any good story-teller. These priorities are right, and

King Horn is a good short story. Individual scenes of emotion, the bareness of the setting, together with an uncomplicated linear plot, help to give the poem an imaginative force out of proportion to its meagre length. The poet gains from leaving much unsaid and allowing the narrative, together with an unobtrusive technical skill, to say it for him. Horn's farewell to his boat, the arrival of the dead messenger beneath the tower wall, and Apulf running to catch up with the returned Horn, are cases in point. The poet's technique, here, has been one of understatement, of leaving out instead of putting in.

The poet of King Horn aims lower than Thomas and, within his aims, he has achieved success. Thomas, in endeavouring to combine heroic tradition and courtly custom, and hardly modifying either, jeopardises the unity of his poem and threatens to stifle it with the moral perfection of his hero. As a moral exemplar it is successful; as a work of art its ultimate success is more open to question. However, considering the magnitude of the task which he attempts, the result of his labours is worthy of nothing but admiration.

FLORIS AND BLAUNCHEFLOUR

FLORIS AND BLAUNCHEFLOUR.

I Introduction.

The story of Floris and Blancheflour must have become one of the most popular in Western European romance, for it is extant in eleven languages and, in addition, the chante-fable of Aucassin and Nicolette bears close resemblance to it. In French two distinct versions exist, known since Du Meril's edition of them, as the 'aristocratic' and the 'popular' versions.<sup>1</sup> The former is the older, and the source of the English poem, and its date of composition is given by Taylor as about 1160.<sup>2</sup> He goes on to list the most important poems based on the two versions. Those based on the aristocratic version are as follows:

- 1) The Low Rhenish poem Floyris and Blanchiflur, of c.1170; ed. Steinmeyer, *Zeitschrift fur Deutsches Altertum*, xxi, 307.
- 2) The Middle High German Flore und Blanscheflur, composed by Konrad Fleck in the mid thirteenth century and edited by E. Sommer, Leipzig, 1846.
- 3) The English poem, composed about the middle of the thirteenth century.
- 4) The Scandinavian versions, which are based on a now fragmentary Norwegian prose translation. These consist of a

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1. E. Du Ménil, Floire et Blanceflor, (Paris, 1856)

2. A.B.Taylor, Floris and Blancheflour, (Oxford 1927)

fourteenth century Icelandic saga, Flores Saga ok Blankiflur, ed. Kolbing, 1896, and a Swedish poem of c. 1311, ed. Klemming, Stockholm, 1844.

- 5) The Middle Dutch romance of Floris ende Blancefloer, composed by Diederik van Assenede in the second half of the thirteenth century; ed. Moltzer, Groningen, 1879.

Based on the popular version are:

- 1) Boccaccio's Filocolo.
- 2) An Italian version of the first quarter of the fourteenth century, Cantare di Fiorio et Biancfore, on which a fourteenth century Greek version is based.
- 3) A Spanish prose romance, Flores y Blancaflor, printed at Alcala in 1512.

In the following study a comparison is made between the English version, which Hibbard calls 'one of the best of Middle English romances'<sup>1</sup> and the closest corresponding version, the 'aristocratic' French poem. The former exists in four MSS.

- 1) Cambridge Gg. 4. 27. 2. which was written in the latter half of the thirteenth century and also contains King Horn. The first line here corresponds to line 389 of Taylor's edition.
- 2) British Museum MS. Cotton Vitellius D. iii, of approximately the same date as the Cambridge MS. Only 200 lines survived a fire in 1731.

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1. L.Hibbard, Mediaeval Romance in England. O.U.P. (New York 1924) p.187.

- 3) Auchinleck MS. of the Advocates Library, Edinburgh;  
written in the second quarter of the fourteenth century.
- 4) Trentham MS. (Egerton MS. 2862 of the British Museum),  
written in the first half of the fifteenth century. It  
preserves 366 lines at the beginning of the poem which are  
lacking in the other MSS.

The MSS. are all probably the result of oral transmission from the original, which is lost.<sup>1</sup> Taylor's edition takes the Auchinleck MS. as a basis for the text, but almost the whole of the first 382 lines are from the Trentham MS. Elsewhere, passages verified by the French text have been included from the other MSS. All the quotations in the following work are from Taylor's edition unless otherwise stated in footnotes.

The 'aristocratic' French version exists in three MSS. and a fragment.

- 1) n<sup>o</sup> 375 du fonds francais, which also contains Cliges and Erec and whose date is given at the end of the Roman de Troie as 1288.
- 2) n<sup>o</sup> 1447 du fonds francais. Together with Berte aus grans pies and Clariss et Laris it fills the whole volume, whose date is in the first half of the fourteenth century.
- 3) n<sup>o</sup> 12562 du fonds francais, dated in the catalogue of MSS. of the Bibliotheque Nationale as fourteenth to fifteenth century.

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1. Taylor's Intro. p. 15.

- 4) The fragment of 1156 lines is in the Palatine Library of the Vatican: Pal. Lat. 1971. It is written in Anglo-Norman and dates from the beginning of the thirteenth century.

Miss Pelan's edition is based on MS. 1447, which is written in francien.<sup>1</sup> From the evidence of a resemblance between the atmosphere and taste exhibited in Floire and that in the romance of Thebes, Eneas and Alexandre, she considers the date of composition to be near the close of the twelfth century.<sup>2</sup>

Despite the popularity of the story, or perhaps because of it, the sources are still undetermined with any accuracy. Allusions to the story are frequent throughout the Middle Ages but they are of no help in establishing its provenance.<sup>3</sup> The suggestions made by scholars almost equal the number of versions. Huet suggested that the source lay in Arabic love tales and evinced a parallel which resembles the extant romance in many ways.<sup>4</sup> Reinhold attacked this by showing that many of the resemblances are due to chance or to the careful selection of material.<sup>5</sup> He stresses that much Arab literature is an adaptation of Greek sources and compares the story

1. M.M.Pelan, Floire et Blancheflor (Paris 1956).

2. *ibid.* pp. XVIII-XX.

3. Taylor p. 8.

4. G.Huet, Romania (1899 pp. 348-359, 1906 pp. 95-100).

5. J. Reinhold, Floire et Blancheflor, (Etude de litt. Comparee, Paris 1906 Chap. IV.

to that of Eros and Psyche, as told by Apuleius. He finds echoes of the Emir's custom of marriage for one night in the Book of Esther. It is unnecessary to list further theories, for Miss Pelan gives a very adequate account in her introduction (XXIV-XXVI) whilst wisely refusing to be drawn to offer a personal opinion. Whether the origin was Persian, Greek, Byzantine or Arab, it is safe to say that it was to the east of France. No more can be proved.

The closeness of Miss Pelan's text to the English poem is at once obvious. Reinhold considers them somewhat nearer allied than does Taylor and postulates a common antecedent of which the French poem is a direct redaction and from which the English is removed only by one intervening version.<sup>1</sup> He cites twenty instances where the French poem and the English version share a similar word order or rhyme:

ll.909-10. "Ho pat luuep par amures

And hap perof ioye mai luue flures."

ll.2180-81. "Damoisele qui a amours

Et joie en soi doit avoir flours."

and he attacks the English poet for showing poverty of imagination and under-developed art, claiming that he adds nothing and abridges drastically. In Miss Pelan's edition the poem is 3039 lines in length, while the English version printed by Taylor disposes of the

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1. *ibid.* Chap. II.

same story in 1311 lines. Although the English poet reduced the length of his story by more than half, he follows his original closely and does not omit any important detail of the narrative.

In a comparison of the poems we must bear in mind the closeness of their relationship and their similarity of aim. Both tell an idyllic love story framed in a romantic adventure; a journey to the fabulous east. Neither have a deeper intention than to entertain.

The most fruitful method of comparison, then, would seem to be a close analysis of the content and treatment of individual episodes in each poem under a broad heading. From this it may be possible to judge what the English redactor found of interest in his original and how far, using his selected material, he was able to blend it into a distinctive creation.

## II     Tone and Background.

The English poem has lost its opening lines in every manuscript and in Taylor's edition begins at a point corresponding to line 181 of the French version. In that version the story opens with a short summary of the lives of the characters, fitting them into the heroic age of early Frankish society. It begins with the avowed intention of offering an exemplar of love; it will teach all listeners 'a great deal about love'. The opening is a fairly sophisticated device to engage the attention of an audience. Maintaining the tone of sophistication the poet goes on to reveal how he learnt the story. He sketches a pleasing picture of a ladies' bower in which the girls are talking about love. One tells the story of Floris and Blancheflour, which she has heard from a clerk who 'found it written'. The poet then tells the story which he heard.

He tells how a pagan king crossed the sea and ravaged the pilgrim routes in Galicia. He caused much destruction, pillaging cities and castles and devastating the country so that,

1.74.     "Vileins n'i vet son buef querant."

The line evokes the end of an idyll.

Whilst attacking the pilgrim routes, the warriors take a young woman. King Phenis decides to take her home as a servant for his wife. She becomes a lady of the court and is pictured with the queen at the courtly task of sewing. The queen and her handmaid give birth to children on the same day. The son of the queen is called Floire and the young woman's daughter, Blancheflor. The

children are put out to the same wet-nurse and grow up in each others company.

The English poem begins when they are seven years old and are ready to learn their letters.<sup>1</sup> The king allows Floris to take Blaunche flour with him. They show great aptitude, and the English poet comments tersely:

11.27-30        "Wonder it was of hur lore,  
                  And of her loue wel þe more.  
                  Pe children louyd togeder soo,  
                  Pey myȝt neuer parte atwoo."

The poet combines the magnitude of their love and their academic ability into one terse verbal formula of a kind regularly used by M.E. Writers. He then makes the point of their inseparability before moving on to their specific achievement in reading Latin and in writing, and finally (1.35) to the king's disquiet at their continued affection. This disquiet is the trigger of events.

The French poet delays in advancing his plot. He feels it worthwhile to explain and describe the love of the two children, and

1. The choice of the seventh year is not fortuitous, it is the age of issue from childhood. In the Middle Ages, every seventh year was reckoned to have especial importance. Cf. M.P. Hamilton, 'Echoes of Childermas in the tale of the Prioress'. (M.L.R. XXIV 1939 pp.148). The article is reprinted in, Chaucer - modern essays in criticism, ed. Wagenknecht (New York 1959).

expends fifty lines to this end. He begins by touching on the courtly idea of service to one's lady. The language has a preciousness that is lacking in the spontaneous English description of their inseparability.

ll.214-16. "Et la joie d'amours maintient.

Chaucuns d'els deus tant aprenoit

Pour l'autre que merveille estoit;"

A certain sensuality creeps into their childish love with the description of the joy they take in reading books of love, especially Ovid. The description is punctuated by the stylised phrase, 'la joie d'amours'. Their relationship is far more formalised and adult than the simple and childish love of the English poem. There follows a sentimental idyll in which they eat their lunch together in an orchard filled with spring flowers and where the birds sing songs of love. But even the birds prefer to listen to the songs of the children as they sit writing endearing verses to each other.

The scene has a sensuousness and sentimentality which is entirely missing from the English poem. The recurring orchards and the songs of birds placed side by side with growing love are topoi of the lyrics of the trouvères. Dragonetti mentions flowers, orchards, fountains and the songs of birds, which inspires the poet himself to song, as typical of the raverdie theme.<sup>1</sup> They all occur in connection with the love of Floire and Blancheflor in the French poem. Firstly here, in connection

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1. La Technique Poétique des Trouvères dans la Chanson Courtoise  
(Bruges 1960) Pp. 169ff.

with the growth of their love, then in the description of the tomb, the Emir's garden, and in the basket of flowers delivered to Blanche-flor. Indeed the whole of the poem has something of the delicate spring-time sensuousness of the raverdie. If it has links with the sophisticated and aristocratic group of trouvères who wrote courtly lyrics during the early twelfth century these are further extended by an insistence on the power of love which is not emphasised in the English work. It enables them to advance in their studies at a very creditable speed, because they are working for each other. This same stylised view of the power of love will provide the motivating force for Floire to set out on an extremely hazardous journey to seek his lost love. In lines 892ff. the poet addresses his audience, enjoining them that they should not be surprised at Floire's temerity, for he who is spurred by love can achieve feats which are beyond belief.<sup>1</sup> He quotes his authority:

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1. Miss Pelan (notes 11.331-32) quotes similar views expressed in Eneas, Lai d'Aristote and the Lai de Narcisse.

ll.896-99. "C'est en Calcide et en Platon<sup>1</sup>  
 Qu'a paines cuideroit nus hon  
 Qu'estre poist fet que fera  
 Cil qui d'amours contrainz sera."

All this theorising on the power of love is omitted from the English poem. There the state of joie is not mentioned and there is no concern with its effects. By contrast, the French poem enshrines some of the beliefs of amour courtois. This empowering, transfiguring love, and its outward aspect of joie is that subverted religious emotion expounded by Andreas Capellanus.<sup>2</sup> The

1. Chalcidius, who probably lived in the fourth century, translated and commented on Plato's Timaeus. In this version it was known throughout the Middle Ages. The only other works of Plato known to have been available to the mediaeval reader are the Phaedo and the Meno which became available at a later date than the probable date of composition of Floire et Blancheflor. Although Chalcidius also quotes from the Republic, Crito, Laws, Epinamis, Parmenides, Phaedrus, Sophist and Theaetetus (C.S. Lewis, The Discarded Image. Cambridge 1964 Pp. 49ff.) the reference appears to be to none of these works. The indications are that it is simply an example of half-informed name-dropping in order to give some classical authority to the courtly love philosophy.

Perhaps by coincidence Phaedrus' speech in The Symposium echoes the sentiment of Floire et Blancheflor. Love enables men to do mighty deeds: "Love will make men dare to die for their beloved - love alone; and women as well as men." (Jowett's trans. 4th ed. I Pp. 510-11). However, the tone of Phaedrus' speech is essentially different from the sentiment of Floire, for the bravery of Plato's lovers is the result of a negative process. They are ashamed to be detected in any base act by their lovers. In the courtly philosophy of Floire, love is intrinsically ennobling. There is no need to posit a lost version of The Symposium.

2. Cf. C.B. West. Courtoisie in Anglo-Norman Literature. (Oxford 1938) pp. 2-5.

English audience must have lacked the powers to appreciate it, just as the poet lacked the literary background to exploit the echoes of the raverdie. Both are missing from the English poem.

The king becomes concerned at the love of his son for Blancheflor. When the time comes to be married, he fears, his son will not wish to marry the girl whom he, the king, destines for him; he will still prefer Blancheflor. He is inclined to have her killed, but the queen dissuades him and offers instead a plan to send Floire away to forget his sweetheart. The plan is executed. The French version pictures Floire being placed among the girls in his aunt's care, to see if he will forget Blancheflor.

11.369.72.      "Aprendre le maine Sebile  
                   O les puceles de sa vile,  
                   Savoir se il oublieroit  
                   Blancheflor et autre ameroit,"

The English reproduces the same incident but abandons the emphasis on sexual attraction. In neither version is the ploy successful in turning Floire's thoughts from his sweetheart, but in the English there is no obvious test of the fidelity of a courtly lover.

Floris's aunt treats him as a child and does not try to tempt a voluptuary's appetite with different fare. She merely puts him among the other children in the hope that his studies, together with their company, will divert his mind from grief. The common sense of the English poet is refreshing here.

11.109-12.     "His aunt set him to lore  
                   Pere as other children wore,  
                   Bop maydons and grom;  
                   To lerne mony peder coom."

Floris can not forget his Blancheflour and he writes home to ask his father to send her to him. With difficulty, the queen prevents the king from slaying her and persuades him instead to sell Blancheflour to some merchants and to construct a tomb and pretend that she is dead.

The scenes of the sale of Blancheflour and the description of the false tomb serve admirably to illustrate the divergence of style and background between the two versions. The English poet tells in twenty lines how the merchants paid twenty marks and a gold cup for Blancheflour. On the cup is portrayed the abduction of Helen from Troy, and on the top is a brilliantly shining carbuncle which gives enough light to enable a butler to distinguish between ale and wine in the darkest cellar. He goes on to tell how Aeneas brought it from Troy to Italy and gave it to Lavinia. The cup was stolen from Caesar and brought by the thief to be given in payment for Blancheflour.

The description, which takes the Englishman twenty lines, fills sixty-five in the French poem. It begins with greater lavishness than the English merchants show. Thirty pieces of silver are offered, and these are followed by bales of cloth and garments of rich materials. The cup is described more minutely. The poet has a clear perception of what he is about to describe. His figures

are wrought in a particular technique: 'De menue neelette;'.(440).

The niello-worker was no ordinary craftsman. He was a nobleman (1.441), an idea which becomes thoroughly vague in the English poem. His knowledge of Graeco-Roman classics was extensive, too, for he has portrayed the seige of Troy, with the battles outside its walls, the abduction of Helen, in white enamel, the judgement of Paris and the sailing of the Greek host. The poet tells rather more of the story of Troy than could reasonably be explained in the pictures he describes. He dwells on the judgement of Paris, telling the full story of it. Then, returning to the specific, goes on to tell how the carbuncle on the lid is held in the talons of a bird.

The English poet obviously knew the story of Troy, for he introduces the information that Helen was a queen, but for reasons of his own he avoids the full description and the classical allusions of the French. Although it may be mistaken to assume that the French poet had an over-all mental picture of a real cup, for he does not hesitate to digress on the story of Paris, yet he produces a vivid mental image of richness from the deployment of a number of visual details. The English poet makes no comparable use of descriptio, he merely establishes the association of richness with the cup and returns to his story. Lines 168-70 leave no doubt as to his impatience with description. He has no interest in rich cups or their decoration, for his audience must be neither literary minded nor wealthy. His cup simply tells:

11.168-70. "How Paryse ledde away þe queene,  
 And on the couercle aboute  
 Purtrayde was þer her bother loue;"

The precise description of the French is dispersed and blurred. Once again the English poet has avoided sensuous description.

When the false tomb is built the English poet feels that he must give some minimum indication of what it looks like. He describes it as:

11.210-16. "...A swithe feire graue wyrche  
 And lete ley þer-vppon  
 A new feire peynted stone,  
 Wip letters al aboute wryte  
 Wip ful mucche worshipp.  
 Whoso couth þe letters rede,  
 Rus þey spoken and þus þey seide:  
 'Here lyth swete Blanchefloure  
 Pat Florys louyd par amoure.'"

This is scarcely a clear picture of the tomb. The French poet goes to the far extreme. He indulges all his taste for sensuous description and lavish presentation. The description of the tomb occupies 111 lines (542-653), and serves as an excellent example of the Frenchman's love for luxurious detail and the sentimental presentation of the love of the main characters. The English poet may be criticised for a lack of vividness in the description, but the French poet, in his eagerness to embellish his poem, tends towards another danger. His florid description and sentimentality overstep the bounds of tasteful decoration. He may well have laughed at the rusticity of the English poem, had he seen it, but

the description there does not form a stumbling+block to narrative.<sup>1</sup>  
 Here the story is held up and the fascination with luxury and sentiment results in vulgarity. The final touch is added when the poet describes how the mechanical figures of the two lovers, one of whom is presumed dead, are made to speak and kiss as the wind blows.

ll.588-93. 'Ce dit Floires a Blanche flor:  
 "Beisiez moi, bele, par amor."  
 Blanche flor respont en besant:  
 "Ce vous aim plus que rien vivant"  
 Tant con li vent les atouchoient,  
 Et li enfant s'entrebeisoient.'

Here the sophisticated description of artistic achievement overtaxes itself. Technical efficiency is confused with human emotion in an insensitive way, and the result is vulgarity. To the modern taste it becomes barbaric splendour rather than the triumph of art. There is, however, no reason to assume that it would be judged in this way in its own day; few poets heeded Matthieu de Vendome's recommendation to make description apposite, and sentimentality combined easily in that age with an under-developed human sympathy.

The culmination of the thread of sensuous description and the adulation of the arts of man, is to be found in the detailed picture of the Emir's garden. The English poet can not afford to omit this, for it is an integral part of the plot. It is interesting

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1. Cf. Faral op.cit. p.77 "Matthieu (138) prend soin d'indiquer que la description doit venir avec a propos et se justifier par son utilité dans le recit:"

to see how he adapts his French original. On the way to Babylon he has omitted a visual representation of the city of Bauduc, perched high on a grey rock above the port (1202ff.). The picture is one of the few natural descriptions which interest the French poet; and even then its chief interest is centered around the fact that it is built on such an eminence. The description has the function of inspiring wonder.

The Emir's garden and palace are described to Floire by his host, Daires (1624ff.). After a brief description of the strength of the city in general, Daires passes on to the tower of the Emir. It is magnificently built of marble with a golden steeple and carillon. At the topmost point gleams a carbuncle, so that there is no need to carry a light anywhere in the vicinity. This light also serves as a guide to merchants and other travellers arriving by night. The poet makes great play of this last point, extending it to seven lines (1639-46). The tower is supported by a central pillar which stretches from top to bottom.

ll.1651-52. "Més que li uns par si grant sen  
Soustient la tor sanz nul ahan."

The poet admires the architectural concept. The pillar is made of white marble and carries a stream of fresh water to wherever it is needed in the tower.

ll.1660-64. "Moult tien l'engineor a sage  
Qui fist amont l'eve torner  
Par une coste d'un piler  
Si qu'es estages sus rement  
En un metal gentement pent,"

Earlier, the poet admires the man who designed the three stories of the tower in much the same words.

1.1648. "Cil qui les fist moult par fu sages;"

The Englishman's approach to the tower is very different. He points out the strength of the tower and mentions that it is built of marble, but he provides no detailed or complete picture of the tower in the manner of the French poet. He speaks confusedly about the conduit which carries water (545-54) and refers to the luminous 'pomel', mentioning that there is no need of a torch in its vicinity. He does not explain it in terms of a carbuncle,<sup>1</sup> which was expected by mediaeval lapidaries to shine in the dark, nor does he mention its main role of guiding benighted travellers. The only costly materials he mentions are marble and brass<sup>2</sup>, while the French author speaks of marble, gold, carbuncle, silver, crystal, planewood, bronze, ebony and glass. In addition the Englishman's poor contribution is presented as a mysterious 'marvel'. The French approach is more rational. The admiration of the achievements of man, of art, of technology, which was emerging in the descriptions of the cup and of the tomb, is here overt. The way in which the carbuncle is used in the service of commerce, as a light to guide travellers, is emphasised and the

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1. Except in the Cambridge MS. where the word 'charbugleston' is mentioned (1.234). A clearer description of the 'plumbing' is given too. E.E.T.S. no. 14 ed. W.H.McKnight.

2. Once again the Cambridge MS. is fuller, mentioning 'selver' and 'crestel' (232) as well as marble, brass and carbuncle.

poet repeatedly admires the technical achievement of the tower. It is not an inexplicable wonder, but the result of very advanced skills; a monument of the technical and artistic ability of a man.

These ideas are repeated in the description of the Emir's orchard. Like the orchard of Floire and Blanche-flor's early love it is an idyllic ordering of nature by man. Again there is emphasised the ingenuity behind its planting and arrangement. It is surrounded by a wall of azure and gold:

ll.1750-57. "Et desus seur chacun quernel  
 Divers de l'autre a un oisel  
 D'arein ouvrez trezgeteiz;  
 Quant il vente, si font hauz criz  
 Chaucuns oisiaus a sa maniere;  
 Il ne fu onc beste tant fiere,  
 Liepart ne tigre ne lions,  
 Ne s'asoait, quan ot les sons."

The birds are man-made but their effect is almost magical. They have much the same result as the live birds in the orchard where Floire and Blanche-flor used to share their mid-day meal.

The spring, which is purely magical and inexplicable, is used in a test of chastity. Above it grows an ever-blooming crimson tree. Ever-blooming trees are common in descriptions of the otherworld.<sup>1</sup> They are usually accepted as marvels and, almost by definition, inexplicable. Such a situation is not satisfactory to the French poet.

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1. Cf. H.R.Patch, 'Mediaeval Descriptions of the Otherworld'. (P.M.L.A. xxxiii 1918) Chap. II.

He wonders, not merely at the tree, but at the learning of the man who planted it.

11.1811-13. "De fisque ot cil grant conseil  
 Quil planta, car en l'aseoir  
 Fu fez l'engin, si con g'espoir."

He imagines a man learned in natural science who planted this crimson tree. We must not imagine that the poet was thinking in terms of a modern botanist or horticulturalist; possibly the art of the man who planted the tree was close to magic, but nevertheless the fact remains that, like the automata on the tomb and the bronze birds, like the gorgeous cup and the Emir's marvellous tower, the crimson tree is the result of human ingenuity. Man has intervened in the creation of all these marvels. By 'fisque' too, the weather is kept perpetually spring-like. At sunrise two winds spring forth to maintain the temperate climate.

11.1818-19. "Par fisque est si engigniez  
 Que touz tens est de fleurs chargiez."

The English poet's only concession to all this artifice is the single remark that the spring is 'wrowt wip mochel ginne' (698).

A little later Floire is told the manner in which the Emir selects his bride. The virgins are assembled, following a chastity test, beneath the incense-laden trees. She on whom a petal falls becomes the Emir's wife, and is doomed, for the Emir has a new wife every year and slaughters the old. This selection process has the true air of mythology about it. The piquancy of the situation springs from the random nature of the selection. The French poet,

eager to emphasise the threat to Blancheflor and to heighten the power of the Emir, tries to dispose of the arbitrariness of the choice. The Emir can, by enchantment, cause the petal to fall on any girl he pleases.

11.1848-51. "Et se il i a damoisele  
 Que il mielz aint ne soit plus bele,  
 Seur li fet par enchantement  
 La fleur cheoir premierement."

This makes nonsense of the selection procedure and destroys much of its appeal, but it has dramatic effect for it is followed by the revelation that the Emir shows a distinct preference for Blancheflor. In this instance the Englishman follows his French original.

11.729-36. "And 3if þer ani maiden is  
 Pat þamerail halt of mest pris,  
 Þe flour schal on here be went  
 Pourh art and þourh enchantement.  
 Þous he chese þour3 þe flour  
 And euere we harkneþ when hit be Blauncheflour."

Yet his interest is not in the art which makes the Emir able to deflect the fall of the flower to the one he chooses. This description in the French is distinct from the other examples, which reveal interest in art for its own sake, since it leads to a dramatic scene in the narrative. The Englishman therefore includes it and goes on to tell of its effect on Floris. Though avoiding sensuous description and sentimentality and preferring magical causality to human achievements and skills, the Englishman follows the French in the distortion of an original motif because

it lends a sense of urgency to the situation in which his hero and heroine are involved. The adoption of this incident is also, perhaps, facilitated by the fact that, although a man is involved in this art, it is patently a supernatural art. The Emir is an enchanter.

In the actual description of the garden, which is one of the Englishman's few set-pieces of description, he is much less original and less lavish than his French model.<sup>1</sup> The Frenchman gives lists of incense-bearing trees, talks of the 'Euphrates' as a river of Paradise, and generally exhibits a more exotic, if more rationalising approach.<sup>2</sup> The lists of exotic trees, the mechanical wonders, the river of paradise are all cut from the English poem. Instead of the golden and azure walls of the French poem, the walls are of crystal. The wonderful orchard is simply 'pe fairest of all middelhard;' and it is filled with the song of birds. The precious stones of the paradisaal river of the French version are now in the bed of a stream which flows from Paradise and forms the chastity test well. The only two additions are that the crystal of the walls contains knowledge of the wisdom of the world and that, in the chastity test, the water which wells up when an unchaste maiden

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1. Once again the Cambridge MS. is closer to the French, giving a short list of specific precious stones (258-59).
  2. H.R.Patch, The Other World, according to descriptions in Mediaeval Literature. (Cambridge Mass. 1950) Chap. I. The river Euphrates was one of the four rivers of the earthly paradise. Patch considers that the Emir's garden is based on Latin descriptions of the Christian earthly paradise, as is the garden of Aloadin, the 'Old Man of the Mountain' in the Travels of Marco Polo Chap. I.

enters it, turns red.

The Englishman has reduced the marvellous paradise of the French poem to a few romance commonplaces. Patch argues convincingly, first in the P.M.L.A. article quoted, and then in his book (Chaps. IV, V, VII) that the Emir's garden of the French version is based on Latin vision literature and accounts of journeys to the earthly paradise. When we look at the English version the commonplaces are those of the Celtic otherworld; the walls of crystal remind us of Sir Orfeo and are common in Irish accounts of the otherworld. T.P. Cross vouches for the beds of otherworld streams being filled with jewels in Irish literature.<sup>1</sup> Maculloch speaks of the belief in Celtic mythology of a chastity test where the water welled up if the girl was not a virgin.<sup>2</sup> This reduction by the English poet to a Celtic common denominator reveals how he tended to reduce the original description as much as possible to a commonplace romance view and to the world of magic with which he was most familiar. He has a regard for the wonderful, but only for the familiarly wonderful; he cares nothing for the exotic, the lavish, nor the original in matters of description.

Hand in hand with the Frenchman's interest in technical skill goes an interest in organisation. He makes frequent reference to the social background and, bearing in mind that Floire is disguised as a merchant, mercantile interests. It was noted above how the French

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1. Tom Peete Cross, Motif Index of Early Irish Literature.

(Bloomington, Indiana 1952) F162- 2410.

2. J. Maculloch, Mythology of all Races III p. 121.

poet insisted on the functional nature of the carbuncle on the minaret of the Emir's palace, as a guide to benighted travellers. His concern for merchants was also evident in his assertion that the merchants bought the cup with which they paid for Blancheflor. The English poet is not so well disposed to merchants and tells that they themselves were the thieves of the cup. In the English poem the merchants are not developed against any realistic background. They play the stock romantic part of a device for taking people away.<sup>1</sup> Floris is no more a merchant than is necessary for his disguise. The excuse is repeatedly made that he is worrying about business when his hosts notice that he is melancholy, but this is as far as mercantile interests go. The French poem, by contrast, gives the impression of an extensive mercantile network.

The picture of sailing is particularly realistic. It reveals the mode of embarkation of the period.

11.1164-69. "Et quant les venez fu trepassez  
 Et rapesiez fu li orez,  
 Dont font crier li notonnier  
 Par la vile qu'aillent chargier  
 Cil qui en Babiloine iront  
 Et es terres qui dela sont."

Apparently the service is a regular one for Floire makes an arrangement to be brought to the port nearest to Babylon, and lines 1208-11 tell that the skipper knows the route well.

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1. Cf. H. L. Creek, "Character in the 'Matter of England' Romances."  
J.E.G.P. X(1911).

"Bien sot tenir li notonniers  
 A la cité les droiz sentiers.  
 C'est li porz dont il le requist  
 Et il l'enfant tot droit i mist."

The English poet reduces all this to a few vague lines, which reveal his ignorance of shipping. The contract with the shipman becomes a mere illustration of courtly largesse.

ll.454-460. "Amorewe whanne hit was dailizt  
 He dide dide him in þe salte flod;  
 Wind and weder he had ful god.  
 To þe mariners he 3af largeliche  
 Pat brouzten him ouer blepeliche  
 To þe lond þar he wold lende,  
 For þai founden him so hende."

In these lines, too, is a fear of the sea. That the voyage was so easy and happy indicates a suspicion that it may well have been otherwise. The Frenchman treats the voyage as an everyday occurrence.

When Floire reaches Bauduc, he is well lodged. We are given a great deal of detail of the manner of lodging that is missing in the English poem. More interesting, however, is the observation that his host:

ll.1229-31. "Notonniers iert et marcheanz;  
 Au port a'voit deus nés bien granz  
 En quoi son marché demenoit."

We gather that one of his ships had brought the merchants who had bought Blancheflor, and they had lodged at his house. A few lines later there is mention of a further issue of interest to merchants. The poet, in talking of a Customs declaration, seems to expect some

controversy among his audience.

11.1252-56. "Maint home i ot paine et travail:  
 Ou soit a droit ou soit a tort,  
 Tout li estuet donner au port  
 Et rendre au prevost lor avoir  
 Et puis jurer qu'il dient voir."

Floire passes on to stay at the castle of Monfelix and, before taking his leave from there, he asks his host if he knows anyone in Babylon who can help him. His host commends him to Daires, remarking:

11.1376-80. "Mes compainz est si m'a moult chier,  
 De Babyloine est riches hon,  
 Grant tour i a et grant meson;  
 De ces deus ponz est mes compainz,  
 Par mi partons toz nos gaains."

Here the word 'compainz' has clearly lost any heroic sense. It may simply be translated as 'partner'. The two burgesses share equally the profits they make from the crossings; the lord of Monfelix over the arm of the sea, Frelle (1319), and Daires over the toll bridge at the entry into Babylon (1372ff.)<sup>1</sup>. In the English poem *Floris* simply begs his host for help. The latter replies that he has a friend in Babylon whom he will find at the end of the bridge. There is no mention of him being the keeper of the bridge<sup>2</sup>.

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1. 11.1393-95 give some details of the tolls charged.

2. In the Cambridge MS., however, he is called 'porter' and in Trentham, 'senpere'.

11.552-554. "Curteis man he is and hende.  
 We bep wed-brepren and trewpe-iplizt:  
 He þe can wissen and reden arizt."

There is no question of a business contact. The only link between the two is the primitive one of sworn brotherhood, which is commonplace in romance<sup>1</sup>. None of the details of the commercial enterprise are reproduced. So it is throughout; the Frenchman reproduces accurately the milieu of a merchant aristocracy whilst Floire is on his pilgrimage, the Englishman almost totally ignores it. After reading the French poem one carries away the impression of an organised and regular network of commercial links. The English poem preserves none of this and, apart from the social scenes of feasting in the lodgings, the social background is entirely lacking.

In the closing scenes of the poem, the English poet makes numerous cuts. The Frenchman describes the scene in the Emir's hall preparatory to the judgment of Floire and Blancheflor. The Englishman has no taste for the splendour of the scene and reduces it to a curt:

11.1095-96. "His halle, þat was heiȝe ibult,  
 Of kynges and dukes was ifult."

The French poet rhapsodises over the appearance of the two

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1. Cf. Horn and Apulf; Amis and Amiloun.

children, prepared for judgement. The style, indeed seems a little too florid. The Englishman is well advised to cut most of the scene, removing detailed references to a series of classical unfortunates (2614ff.) and a long description of the beauty of the children. We are told that Floire's face:

11.2630-31.        "...resemble soleil  
                  Que veons par matin vermeil,"

A little later, we are told that:

11.2645-47.        "Qui certainement la regardoit  
                  A ses ieulz ne l'aperceüst,  
                  Fors aus lermes, que triste fust."

Blancheflor's eyes are bright.

The idea underlying this passage is that the two children are martyrs. They are transfigured by the joie d'amours. This shines from their faces despite their tears. The Englishman retains this idea in an imprecise way;

11.1179-82.        "No man ne knewe hem pat hem was wo  
                  Bi semblaunt pat pai made po,  
                  But by þe teres pat pai schedde,  
                  And fillen adoun be here nebbe."

but he avoids the lengthy description appended to it in the

French.<sup>1</sup>

Once the important part of the story is over the English poet cuts even more drastically. Lines 2857-2959 of the French version are reduced to a mere twenty in the English (1263-1282). The whole court panoply, the feasting and the details of the dubbing of Floire are cut. Clarice is not subjected to the testing usual for the Emir's wife. The English poet's interest in the story is finished when Floris is reunited with his love. His only aim now is to round off the story by telling as quickly as possible what became of each character. For the Frenchman, the pomp and ceremony is a description worth lingering over.

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1. The description uses the vocabulary and imagery of the chansons courtoises:

- 11.2642-43     "Elz avoit clers, vairs et rianz,  
                   Plus que jame resplendissanz."
- 11.2648-49     "Sa face iert de coulor de rose  
                   Et plus clere que nule chose."
- 11.2658-9      "Les denz avoit petiz, serrez,  
                   Blans conme yvoires reparez."
- 11.2670-71     "Blanches mains ot et grelles doiz,  
                   Lons par mesure, formez droiz."

All the expressions underscored are cited by Dragonetti as typical of the *trouvères* (op. cit. pp.251-5 and 266-67).

On the relation between the courtly conception of *joie* and the Christian teaching of grace, see A.J.Denomy, "Courtly love and Courtliness". *Speculum* xxviii p. 46.

Also worthy of quotation is Professor Dronke's remark (*Mediaeval Latin and the Rise of the European Love Lyric* (Oxford 1965) p. 62) "The virtues acquired by the soul illuminated by divine grace are exactly those which the lover acquires when his soul is irradiated by his lady's grace: they are truly a courtly lover's virtues."

The ending is typical of the treatment throughout. The Englishman is concerned solely with the narrative and with dramatic effects connected with it. He dispenses with the long descriptions of his original and regards the East as marvellous without any human intervention. The milieu of the French poem, rather more courtly in its conceptions than the English, is made elegant by its unhurried phrasing. The tone is sensuous and sentimental and the background is of early Gothic splendour. The poet is interested in art, not merely for its sensuous appeal, but because of its testimony to human skills. He values it above nature, almost in a renaissance fashion.<sup>1</sup> His highest praise of Blancheflor is, although conventional, a significant choice of expression.<sup>2</sup>

ll.2650-51. "Les narilles avoit mielz fetes  
Que s'il fussent as mains portretes."

Combined with this interest in art and technology is an easy knowledge of a complex commercial world, with trade contacts scattered far and wide. Throughout the poem is a peculiar renaissance-like satisfaction in the contemplation of the works of man. We feel that this is a sophisticated artist living in an

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1. Sir Philip Sidney (Apologie for Poesie) expresses the view that nature's world is brazen, while the poet's is golden.

2. Cf. Ipomedon ll.2253-54 and Amis e Amilun ll.165-66.

expanding civilisation. Sometimes his taste for luxury and his over-confidence confound him and result in sticky sentimentality or vulgarity, yet beside him the English poet appears insular and rustic. In the next chapter we shall see how much the conservatism and simplicity of the English poet come to his aid in narrating the story and in creating sincerity of feeling, at the same time noting how much the artifices of the French poet deepen his characterisation.

### III Characterisation and Narrative Technique.

Creek, in his study of character in the 'Matter of England' romances uttered the useful generalisation that character is never emphasised in metrical romance.<sup>1</sup> He also went on to list some of the stock characters of romance. Much of this is applicable to the English Floris and Blancheflour. The characters are not developed and are products and pawns of the narrative situation, as in King Horn. Unlike King Horn, however, they are fairly consistent in their motivation. The only exception to this general rule being the portrayal of Floris and Blancheflour as children for the sake of pathos, and as adults for the sake of the love story and the journey. This is less of a fault in the English poem than in the French where the sensuousness of some passages and the sentimentality over childish suffering make for incongruity.

Floris, apart from his extreme youth, is a stock romance hero. He shares almost identical beauty with Blancheflour, he is resolute, generous, loyal and dutiful. His emotions are extreme but he is moderate enough to accept advice. Everything is subordinate to his love for Blancheflour, who returns his love in the same manner. She, too, is loyal, brave and self-sacrificing. There is nothing very surprising in the characterisation in the English poem.

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1. J.E.G.P. X 3 (1911) p. 429

In the construction of his narrative, the English poet is more of an innovator. His passion for structural symmetry is worth examination. The French journey to Babylon is a realistic voyage by land and sea, with stops in a series of detailed inns and castles on the way. If we assume a close fraternity of merchants, the whole voyage is quite realistic. We are given details of two inns where news is heard of Blancheflor, then we are told, in passing, of two more inns, at one of which there is talk of their quarry. They then stay at the castle of Monfelix before passing on to Babylon.

The English poet simplifies this complexity into three similar inns. Events at each are standardised more rigorously than in the French poem. Repetition is clearer because of the lack of circumstantial detail. The pattern of events is always the same: Floris is well entertained, the host or hostess notices his melancholy, comments on it with reference to his goods, and then goes on to mention that Blancheflor looked just the same when she was there. Floris, in delight and knightly largesse, rewards each richly. On the structural level, this undetailed repetition reduces the journey to a mere link between the two developed parts of the poem - the separation and the re-union. In the French poem the interest is maintained by the continuous addition of fresh detail, and the journey is an essential part of the narrative.

There is a certain formal resemblance in the English between

the portrayal of Floris's misery at each lodging and his unhappy sojourn at Montargis. This formal similarity emphasises the symmetry of the plot. From line 101 we find a kind of elegy. There is a constant contrast between the joyous reception and his misery.

11.101-104        "Wel feire him receyuyd þe duke Orgas,  
                   þat king of þat castel was,  
                   And his aunt wip mucche honour;  
                   But euer he þouzt on Blanchefloure,"

He is put to learn with other children, but the mournful refrain is repeated;

11.113-14        "Inou3 he sykes, but nozt he lernes,  
                   For Blauncheflour euer he mornes."

and repeated once more in 1.122.

This form is adopted at the first inn:

11.414-18.        "Al þai made glade chere,  
                   And ete and dronke echon wip oþer,  
                   Ac Florice þouzte al anoþer:  
                   Ete ne drinke mi3te he nouzt,  
                   On Blauncheflour was al his þouzt."

at the second inn in curtailed form;

11.492-94.        "Gladliche þai dronke and ete,  
                   Ac Florice et an drank ri3t nowt,  
                   On Blauncheflour was al his þouzt."

but at the third inn the story is beginning to gather itself and Floris only has to sigh before the host engages him in conversation.

This device of using a similar elegaic-lyric form to pass the time of an uninteresting journey is a very effective one. The melancholy of Floris is intensified by each repetition of the

'Blancheflour refrain'. This incremental repetition is a very economical means by which the poet gives the impression of a long journey without the actual time between his two main scenes growing longer than his limited knowledge and art can support without loss of interest. At the same time it enables him to present his main character at the beginning of the second major episode in precisely the state of half-hopeful melancholy that is needed for the adventure. Floris is desperate enough to attempt the plan put to him by Daris. Here is a fine example of how the sense of structure and narrative technique can overcome the handicap of lack of artifice and descriptive skill.<sup>1</sup>

Having speedily delivered his hero to Daris, the poet is now eager to involve him in the adventure of the entry into the castle and the reunion with Blancheflour. He neglects any characterisation of Daris and uses him as a tool of narrative. He makes Daris hurry over the description of the Emir's garden, as we saw in the last chapter, and then gives the plan for outwitting the gate-keeper in considerable detail. The poet wastes no more time in telling how the plan was executed, as does his French model. He merely notes:

11.819-22.        "Nou also Florice hap iwrowt  
                   Also Darie him hap itawt,  
                   Pat pourgh his gold and his garsome  
                   Pe porter is his man bicomme."

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1. Cf. too the lyric form of the passage prefacing the exclamatio to Blancheflour. It is framed between the repeated lines 255-56 and 11.269-70.

Having used Daris as a means of speeding his narrative, the poet moves swiftly on to the culmination of the hurried quest; the dramatic scene of Floris' penetration of the tower of virgins and its consequences. The English poet's aim has been sharply different from that of his French original. He hangs the story around the cluster of dramatic scenes at each end of the poem. His chief concern has been to carry his hero as swiftly as possible from one to the other without sacrificing all the narrative and dramatic interest on the way. In this he is successful. The French poet endeavours to tell the story as a realistic progression of events, supported by an interesting social, commercial and set-descriptive background. He has a variety of inns, each based upon the other, but nevertheless carefully differentiated. His *Daires* gives all the advice of the Englishman's but we also witness it put into effect, and we are present at the homage offered by the porter - again in an orchard where they are walking and talking in a very civilised manner. (2039ff.).

This orchard scene is preceded by one which demands quite subtle psychological delineation. Floris has had to persuade the Emir's gate-keeper to help him in his attempt to enter the palace. In the English poem the story is told only as Daris' advice, but in the French poem it is related how the plan is acted upon. If we compare it with Rigmel's seduction of Herland

in The Romance of Horn we see how highly developed are the techniques of subversion in the scenes of mediaeval courtly romance. The problem is the same. A man must be won from fidelity to his liege lord and made to serve another. Rigmel accomplishes this by a compound of flattery and largesse. Floris uses much the same weapons. Like Rigmel, he attempts at first to impress his victim with his wealth and consequence. He must go in the disguise of a master mason (ll.1885) so as not to arouse suspicion. He is advised to impress the gateward by airy intentions to build a tower like the Emir's in his own country. The gate-keeper has a well-known failing, which is the only outstanding part of his characterisation. He has a greedy passion for gambling at chess. Floire is advised to return on three successive days to play chess with him, each time handing over both his own and the gate-ward's stake, whether he wins or loses. His explanation of this behaviour is to be that used by Rigmel to explain her generosity.

ll.1921-23.        "...Car je vous ai moult aamé;  
                   Or et argent a plenté ai;  
                   Sachiez qu'assez vos en donrai,"

Each day Floire doubles the gift of the preceding day so that on the third day he takes four hundred ounces of gold. He also takes the magnificent gold cup described in such detail earlier in the poem. He is to refuse to play for it, which will make the gate-keeper extremely covetous of it. He will offer to buy

it for a thousand marks. He will entertain Floris to dinner. In this convivial atmosphere Daires advises the use of the trump card.

11.1944-49. "Dont li dites, riens n'en prendrez.  
 Més par amours la li donrez.  
 Dont par ert-il si deceüz  
 Et pour vostre or si embeüz  
 Que a voz piez vous en charra,  
 Son homage vous offrera,"

The psychology of this corruption, though perhaps stylized in motivation, is nevertheless subtle. The gatekeeper is impressed so that he forgets his suspicion, he is flattered and obligated by continuous gifts and fair words. The value of the cup is cleverly heightened by Floire's refusal to part with it, but then it is withdrawn only to be given as a free gift. The method is similar to that used on Herland. It puts its victim in the position where he is beholden to a benefactor whom he can repay only by his services. The bribery is not especially subtle but it is difficult to refuse, for its object is unknown until too late. Its aim is hidden beneath the guise of knightly largesse. It is a technique which could flourish in a society where the lord/vassal relationship existed alongside ideas of self-glorifying generosity. Thomas opposes this corruption of feudal society by making it obvious that Rigmel's approach to Herland is reprehensible. Here there is no moral judgement against Floire. He is using a well accepted means to an end,

and he has demonstrated true, disinterested largesse at every inn on the journey. The French poet, by stressing the importance of the cup in this bribery scene, does much to redeem the excessive length of his description of it earlier. It is now clear that that description had a purpose; both to make us aware in advance of the cup's value, and to help to create unity in the poem.

The plot in the English poem is precisely similar, with the exception of two important differences. These differences, small though they may be, show that the English poet did not appreciate the psychology of the situation, nor the stylised ideas of largesse and homage behind them.

The Englishman makes the betting more common sense. Apparently he feels that the gate-ward might be suspicious if he was given both stakes each time.

ll.771-74.      "And 3if he winne ou3t of þyn,  
                   Al leue þou hit wip him,  
                   And 3if þou winne ou3t of his,  
                   Þou lete þerof ful litel pris,"

This is indeed common sense and not knightly largesse. The gate-ward is likely to be gratified, but not bemused by generosity, as he is in the French poem.

The strategy of retaining the cup is practiced, but after its presentation, the English poet makes a change. His host advises Floris that he should present the cup and then resort to explicit bribery.

11.807-10.            "Sai also þe ne faille non  
                          Gold ne seluer ne riche won.  
                          Seie þu wilt parte wip him of þan,  
                          Þat he schal eure be riche man,"

The lines are a paraphrase of 11.1921-3 of the French poem (quoted above) but their placing after the presentation of the cup puts a completely different complexion on them. Instead of being an explanation of present generosity and a fruit of present love, connected with winnings at chess to come on the next day, the gold and silver mentioned in them is a promise for the indeterminate future, whose reality is guaranteed by the gift of the cup. The strategy of the cup fails to develop as in the French version and the English poet resorts to simple bribery with its promise of certain future wealth achieved gratuitously. Perhaps the English poet found the French psychology hard to believe. If so he must have been out of sympathy with the stylised situation involving patronage, largesse and homage. He follows the plan of the Frenchman but turns his covert manipulation of loyalties to open corruption. Floire steadily establishes an overlordship by largesse. Apparently motiveless generosity raises him above the gate-ward so that, at the final stroke, his victim eagerly accepts his patronage. English Floris remains too much of an equal with the gateman. His generosity is limited by common sense. The cup does not come as a climactic act of lordly generosity. He never establishes ascendancy and has to resort to

bribery. He never becomes a lord worth following, for his generosity is too functional - it is obvious bribery. The English poet entirely fails to reproduce the technique of establishing seigniority by unmotivated generosity.

The lack of courtly motivation is to be found, too, in the scenes, early in the poem, between the king and queen. In the French poem we have an echo of the sentiments of the Romance of Horn

ll. 295-6        "Ge craim que ne soit aviliee  
                  Par lui toute nostre ligniee."

The French king does not want Floire to marry Blancheflor because his lineage will suffer. The honour of the family will be abased. Floire could easily marry the daughter of a king. All this is explained clearly in well-reasoned terms. The English poet omits all this explanation and the king expresses his wish in a very forthright way. Floris will marry as he is advised to; the aristocratic reason is left to be understood or ignored as the reader prefers.

lines 47-51     "When þat maide is yslawe  
                  And brouȝt of her lyfdawe,  
                  As sone as Florys may it vnderȝete  
                  Rathe he wylle hur forȝete;  
                  Þan may he wyfe after reed."

The English king is unsubtle both in feeling and in expression. His wife produces the merciful plan to save Blanche flour, but when it fails the king bursts out again with very uncourtly,

vigorous speech.

11.140-1. "Let do bryng forþ þat mayde!  
Fro þe body þe heued shal goo."

The expression is unregal but it is vivid and violent. This is a man in anger rather than a king. By contrast see lines 404-9 of the French poem.

"Certes," fet il, "ceste nouvele  
Mar acointa la damoisele;  
Puet cele estre, par sorcerie  
Ra de mon fill la drüerie,  
Feites la moi tost demander  
Si li ferai le chief couper."

The rage is controlled and the expression self-conscious. The last line lacks the concrete violence of the English. The contrast is noticeable again after Floris' suicide attempt. The English queen's plea to her husband has an idiomatic edge that makes it the cry of an agonised mother. The French represents a queen making a more formal petition.

11.315-20 "For Goddes loue, sir, mercy!  
Of twelue children haue we noon  
On lyue now but þis oon,  
And better it were she were his make  
Pan he were deed for hur sake!"

11.841-3 "Sire" fet ele, "entent a moy!  
Je te requier por Dieu le grant  
Qu'aies merci de ton enfant."

The first request is undeniable, but the king refuses the second. We find in Floris's interview with Blancheflour's mother, that

the simple style triumphs again. The English is simplified and based on the French, where lines 674ff. are filled with a particularly staccato exchange in direct speech. The effect is rather too staccato; there is little variation in the length of each utterance and the dialogue bounces back and forth like a rubber ball. The English poet is more successful. Floris asks where Blancheflour is and her mother answers that she doesn't know. Floris's accusation is sharp and unexpected then, with repetition, it turns to despair.

11.235-7        "'Pou gabbest me,' he seyde þoo,  
                   Py gabbyng doþ me muche woo.  
                   Tel me where my leman be."

The conversation suddenly becomes violent in rhythm with the dramatic climax, the rapid dialogue made complex by assonance and repetition.

11.239-44        "'Sir,' she seide, 'deed.' 'Deed!' seide he.  
                   'Sir,' she seide, 'forsothe, 3ee,'  
                   'Allas, when died þat swete wy3t?'  
                   'Sir, wipynne þis fourteny3t  
                   Pe erth was leide hur aboue,  
                   And deed she was for thy loue.'

Again, we encounter the vividness of expression noted above.

(1.141). Lines 242-3 have a brutal impact resulting from concreteness of expression. Their finality gives great poignancy to line 244. This pathos and concreteness is entirely original. The French poem misses it completely by making Floire question

the truth of the statement, and by naively explaining his reaction.

11.682-87      "...Morte est."  
                   - "Est ce donc voir?" - "Oil, voirs est,"  
                   Floires respont, (qui s'en merueille  
                   Et de duel fere s'apareille,  
                   Qu'ainsi est morte Blancheflors)  
                   "Voire, sire, por voz amors."

The French poet turns to subjective writing at a critical point and sacrifices the dramatic technique which so effectively contrives in the English poem to create pathos.

Effective as this simple, direct expression is in the portrayal of violent emotion, it must not be supposed that this is the limit of its range. It transmits equally well the poignancy of Blancheflour's heroic resolution of loyalty:

11.913-16      "Ac pilke dai schal neuer be  
                   Pat men schal atwite me  
                   Pat I schal ben of loue vntrewe,  
                   Ne chaungi loue for non newe"

or the good-hearted jests of Clarice when Floris and Blancheflour are re-united in each others' arms:

11.938-40      "'Felawe, knouestou ouzt pis flour?  
                   Litel er noldest pou hit se,  
                   And nou pou ne mi3t hit lete fro pe."

Not is this effectively simple line limited to dialogue. Its vigour lends interest to the narrative.

11.155-58      "Pe king let sende after pe burgeise,  
                   Pat was hende and curtayse,  
                   And welle selle and bygge couth,  
                   And moony langages had in his mouth."

This passage is far more interesting than the prosaic French original.

11.421-23      "Par un bourgeois au port l'envoie,  
                   Qui estoit de parler moult sages

Si sot parler plusors languages."

The same concrete, figurative tendency is apparent a few lines earlier in the lyrical-elegaic section describing Floris's sojourn at Montargis. The metaphorical element in the concrete language is all that remains here of a very complicated conceit in the French poem.<sup>1</sup>

11.115-20 "If enyman to him speke,  
Loue is on his hert steke;  
Loue is at his hert-roote,  
Pat no ping is so soote;  
Galyngale ne lycorys  
Is not so soote as hur loue is,"

The French version of this is the tree which Love has planted in his heart.

11.377-87 "Amours li a livré entente;  
El cuer li a planté une ente  
Qui en touz tans florie estoit  
.....  
Quant Blancheflor verra gesir  
Jouste soi et la beissera,  
Le fruit de l'ente lors queudra."

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1. The concept of a tree of love planted at the heart, which will later bear fruit, is not uncommon in French romance (Cf. Miss Pelan's note to lines 378-88). The English poet's reference to the 'hert-roote' may itself be a direct translation of a French concept from some other source than the version of Floire et Blancheflor edited by Miss Pelan. Dragonetti (op.cit. p.125) refers to the use by the trouvères of the idea of the racine of the heart.

Cf., however, Romaunt of the Rose 1026, where the use of 'herte rote' is not suggested by the French (1010) 'au cuer me touche'.

Such artifices are not rare in the French poem, though, almost without exception, they are cut from the English work.

Between lines 2290 and 2321 is a sententious digression on Fortune. It is ostensibly to foreshadow a change in the fortunes of the hero and heroine, but it rapidly develops into a series of conventional complaints on the theme of the injustice of fortune. The passage is handled with skill and one can hardly avoid wondering whether there might not be some trace of personal discontent in the lines:

11.2312-23. "Et eveschiez donne as truanz

Et les bons clers fet pain queranz."

This entire digression is omitted from the English poem and, in its place, a description of the Emir's custom of being attended daily by different girls is given.

On arrival at Daires' inn, the French poet perceives the psychological interest in the situation. Floire has resolutely pursued Blanche-flor to Babylon. Now he is in Babylon, a stranger. Dare he trust his host with the secret of the reason for his journey? He can not accomplish his quest without informed help - but whom can he trust? This situation offers an opportunity to the French poet of demonstrating his virtuosity in the psychology of motivation. The English poet merely passes over the difficulty, making the final inn only a slight variation of the others on the route. His Floris tells the host of the reason for his visit within twenty lines - which correspond to

lines 1413-1561 of the French poem.

The French poet sees two possible motivating forces in this situation, love and wisdom. The trepidation of Floire is stated in terms of the latter, whilst love argues forcibly for risking everything. The scene is the epitome of a consistent difference of emphasis between the two poems. The French poet has continually emphasised the idea of the love of the two children, from their schooldays onward. The English poet never theorises on love; never, for example, talks of the power of love to overcome obstacles (see above p.99 ), nor does he mention the idea of joie. But here the idea of love as an impelling force with a separate existence from those who feel it, is explicit. Savoir and Amours dispute on a course of action.<sup>1</sup> As may be expected, Amours makes the more pressing speech, basing his argument on the idea that love bestows extraordinary powers on men, and asserting its authority by the use of a sententia.<sup>2</sup>

ll.1457-60. "Car qui ainme, ce sai ge bien,  
Engingneus est sor tote rien.  
Le vileins dit: "En moult pou d'eure  
A cui Dieu plest moult bien labeure."

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1. Disputes between Amours and Raison are frequent in the lyrics of the trouvères. (Cf. Dragonetti op. cit. pp. 237-8). For a study of the development of the device in romance, see: C.Muscatine, 'The Emergence of Psychological Allegory in O.F. Romance' P.M.L.A. LXVIII. (1953) p. 1160.
  2. Cf. Morawski, Proverbes Francaises, C.F.M.A. Vol.47. no. 679. 'En pou d'eur Deus labeure.'

Now, Daires, seeing that his guest is troubled, interrupts, asking if everything is to his satisfaction. Floire answers in words faithfully adopted by the English poet. He says that he fears that he will not find his merchandise and that, if he does, he will not be permitted to keep it (1477-80). The double entendre is used fairly frequently by the French poet and, in this example is copied by the Englishman (cf. 2168ff. and 2332 ff.).

There follows a lavish feast, cut from the English, in the midst of which Floire is again assailed by Amours and asked whether he does not envy Paris, whose likeness is carved on his cup. This spurs Floire to action.

The psychological allegory, well handled by the Frenchman, is very successful at illuminating the dilemma in which Floire finds himself. It serves too as an overt example of the motivating power of love. This allegorical approach is alien to the English poet. He can portray feelings well in simple terms, he can produce dramatic scenes, but he feels the artificiality of this as too great. He is not interested in the personified motivating power of love, revealed by allegorical analysis. Love, to him, is not separable from the persons who experience it. His characters behave according to their feelings of love and are not impelled by external ideas or by any very formalised rules of love. The desire to explain emotion sometimes leads to artistic miscalculations in the French poem. In line 2131 the poet explains that Floire is afraid

of being betrayed - an obvious and subjective intrusion which slows the narration at an exciting point in the story. The Englishman is never guilty of delaying his narrative by excess explication, description or subjective writing.

When Floris returns home and finds that Blancheflour is dead, the situation calls for intense emotion. It is a situation which has its precedents in romance and it attracts a formalised treatment.<sup>1</sup> The French model treats the occasion in a highly artificial way. Floire's reaction on learning of Blancheflor's death is a series of three exclamationes, firstly to Blancheflor, then to Death, and lastly to his 'greffe'. The whole is a carefully planned regrets, consisting of an appreciation of the beauties of Blancheflor's physical and moral constitution, an address to spiteful death, who will not carry him off though he has robbed him of his amie, and a final address to the penknife as a means of importuning death.

The English poet preserves most of the content of the exclamatio to Blancheflor but he dispenses with its stylistic elaboration and reduces it by paraphrase and the omission of detail. He opens with an original couplet which carries well the sudden outburst of pain which stimulates the exclamatio.

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1. Miss Pelan comments upon it in her notes on lines 724ff. See also: E.Faral, Les Sources Latines des Contes et Romans Courtois du Moyen Age. (Paris 1913) p. 32 n. 2.

11.271-72.        "'Blancheflour!' he seide, 'Blancheflour!  
So swete a þing was neuer in boure!"

The simplicity of this expression is maintained throughout. Her worth is expressed by the claim that her match was not to be found among women, and he refers to her accomplishment in a general way:

11.277-78.        "Inouȝ þou cupest of clergie  
And of alle curteysie;"

and claims that she was loved for her 'fayrehede' and 'bontè' by great and small alike. This last commonplace is borrowed directly from the French poem. Floris closes his address to Blancheflour with the observation that, having been born on the same day, they should have died together.

An examination of the French poem reveals how much the English poet has simplified his original. Floire opens his regrets with an appeal to Blancheflor and a reference to their simultaneous birth and shared childhood. He too says that they should die together if death were fair. He then passes on to a descriptio of her beauty and her moral virtues.<sup>1</sup> Pathos is enhanced by a series of questions which she can no longer answer. The descriptio is interspersed with the assertion that her beauty is indescribable. Intellectio stands beside punning repetitio in the expression of this.

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1. The order of description is that laid down by Matthieu de Vendome, but the more extensive physical descriptions in lines 2620ff. illustrate the poetic theory more clearly. See Faral op.cit. pp. 79-81.

11.730-35. "Bele? nus ne porroit descrire  
 Vostre biauté ne bouche dire;  
 Car la matire tel seroit  
 Que ja a chief nus n'en vendroit.  
 Ta crine, ton chief, ton visage,  
 Quil descrivroit tendroie a sage."

Floire closes his set-speech with a touching reminiscence of their schooldays together. It is clear, even from this single quotation, how the Englishman has simplified the style and generalised the content of his regrets. He speaks vaguely of all-embracing terms; 'clergie' and 'curteysie' and 'bonte'. The only clear mention of beauty is a reference to her 'fayrhede'.

This compression and simplicity is evident too in the treatment of the exclamatio to Death. The French poet accuses Death of being malicious and contrary, and then passes on to a moral reflection, based on a sententia.<sup>1</sup> Neither wealth, knowledge nor prowess avail against Death. Interpretatio is employed to emphasise its spiteful nature.

11.756-59. "Quant hom plus vault et vivre doit,  
 Lors le mez tu en mal destroit;  
 Quant on doit joie en son jovent  
 Avoir, tu li tols soudement;"

This principle is then illustrated by the vivid exemplum of an aged beggar crying vainly for death. Then, employing simple imagery, Floire says that he will find Death wherever he may be hidden and,

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1. Morawski op. cit. no. 417

so, will rejoin his amie in the flowery fields of paradise.

In the English poem all this is compressed into the mere extension of a single idea by means of interpretatio. The speech opens by stating the obvious fact that Death is to blame for the bereavement, and there follows what is virtually a long interpretatio on the contrariness of death. (ll.289-300). The vivid exemplum of the beggar is gone, as is the moral reflection, but interest is sustained by the vigour of the language and its immediate dramatic relevance.

11.295-96. "Pilke þat buþ best to libbe,  
Hem þou stikest vnder þe ribbe;"<sup>1</sup>

The long deliberations on suicide and the possibility of future reunion in the Elysian fields are reduced to four, more direct, lines.

11.301-4. "No lengore ich nelle mi lef bileue,  
Ichulle be mid hyre ere eue.  
After deep clepe no more y nylle,  
But slee myself now y wille."

The expression of extravagant emotion and philosophical debate are both avoided by the English poet. He apparently feels the apostrophe to the knife to be too unreal, for he omits it entirely, as he does the Queen's moral exhortation on the fate of those who take their own life. The whole becomes a piece of simple narrative, drawing pathos both from its simplicity of language and from its

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1. The idiomatic expression 'under...ribbe' as a euphemism for 'heart' is also attested in The Fox and the Wolf l. 41.

use of diminutives in the description of the saving of the boy by his mother.

11.311-12. "She reft him of his lytel knyf  
And sauyd þere þe childes lyf."

It is clear that the English poet feels that the subjective moral and philosophical investigation of the situation by means of complex rhetorical devices is unacceptable to his audience. He deals with the situation in the way we would expect. The remaining exclamations are given a very realistic and immediate dramatic value, sacrificing almost entirely the carefully developed philosophical analysis of the French. The rest becomes simple narrative with the spoken words immediately prefixed to the actions. The English poet levels the sometimes artificial devices of exclamatio to his own vigorous and dramatic style; the Frenchman skilfully exemplifies its derivatives of subjectio and conduplicatio<sup>1</sup> in developing a long, formal regrets, filled with subjective philosophy and moral reasoning.

In the use of other devices recommended by the masters of poetic rhetoric, there is little to choose between the two poets. Both use them quite sparingly and independently. In the French poem they are never obtrusive outside the passages of set description or moral or emotional study. Here the French poet adopts a graceful and fluent style, revealing his complete mastery of the verse form. His narrative progresses with no sense of strain. Descriptive details

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1. 11.728ff. cf. Geoffroi de Vinsauf, Documentum de Arte Versificandi, ed. Faral p. 276.

are an integral part of it. Variety of phrasing and of expression add to the overall sense of ease. He uses litotes:

1.1601. "Li murs qui la clot n'est pas bas,"

occupatio:

11.33-34. "Or sivrαι mon proposement  
Si parlerai avenaument."

and interpretatio:

11.568-71. "Et l'ymage de Blancheflor  
Devant Floire tient une flor;  
Devant son ami tient la bele  
Une rose d'or fin nouvele;"

but their use is firmly subordinate to artistic purpose. Verbal artifice is never unpleasantly obtrusive, never used for its own sake nor for shelter from the difficulties of clear expression. Repetitio is used in order to hurry over the retelling of the story, thus contrasting past trials with present happiness, but it is varied and deflected from its classical form by slight variations in the words used and in the word order.

11.2842-50. "Le duel qu'il fist tot a conté,  
... ..  
Et con ses hostes chier le tint,  
Et conme en Babyloine vint,  
Et comment il le conseilla,  
Et con le portier engigna,  
Con fu portez en la corbeille,"

The French poet tells his story with the ease and breadth of approach of a modern narrator. Only his taste for lavish

description and stylised emotion coupled with moral exempla betray his mediaevalism.

The Englishman is less in command of his verse form. Occasionally it forces awkward syntax upon him.

ll.455-56. "He dide dide him in þe salte flod;  
Wind and weder he had ful god."

and:

ll.467-68. "And kinges an dukes to him come scholde,  
Al þat of him holde wolde,"

Sometimes there is a repetition or confusion in sense in order to make the line scan properly, denoting a lack of imagination.

ll.263-64. "And þe letters began to rede,  
Þat þus spake and þus seide:"

ll.553-54. "We beþ wed-breþren and trewþe-ipliþt:  
He þe can wissen and reden ariþt."

But these examples of awkwardness must be set against the mastery of the lyric-elegaic form revealed in the series of inn scenes and the lyric beauty of Floris's reply to the inn-keeper's wife in lines 445-52.

"'Dame,' he saide, 'þis hail is þin,  
Boþe þe gold and þe win,  
Boþe þe gold and þe win eke,  
For þou of mi lemman speke;  
On hir I þout, for hire I siþt,  
And wist ich wher hire finde miþt,  
Ne scholde no weder me assoine  
Þat I ne schal here seche at Babiloine.'"

The variations in pace and rhythm and the elegant balance of the lines is equal in mastery here to the best of the French, and is better than

the passage from which it is drawn (1125-1139).

Most of the simple rhetorical devices of the French poem are used; sometimes more obviously. Repetitio is frequently used. In lines 1300-1304 it is used in the same manner as at the end of the French poem (2842-50); to hasten through extraneous details of the story.

"And þai com hom whan þai miȝt,  
And let croune him to king  
And hire to quene, þat swete þing,  
And vnderfeng Cristendom of prestes honde,  
And þonkede God of all his sonde."

Transitio is used to change the scene, as in the Romance of Horn:  
11.203-4.

"Now let we of Blancheflour be  
And speke of Florys in his contree."

and occupatio is used to speed the tale along. The device evokes pathos, for it appears that the poet can no longer bear to dwell on the painful scene of the judgement of Floris and his 'lemman':

11.1091-2. "What helpeþ hit longe tale to sschewe?  
Ich wille ȝou telle at wordes fewe."

Interpretatio is the commonest verbal device. Too frequently it marks uneasiness in dealing with a specific passage. It may be a passage where the poet's concrete and dramatic style will not accord with the more varied and abstract expression of the original. In lines 64-88 he dramatises Floris's distress and intensifies it by means of interpretatio. The French version is little more than plain narrative (343-51).

11.84-88 "....Sir, wiþout lesyng,  
For my harme out ȝe me sende,

Now she ne myzt wip me wende;  
 Now we ne mot togeder goo,  
 Al my wele is turned to woo'."

A vagueness appears whenever the poet is forced subjectively to describe emotion. He repeats ideas in the hope of intensifying his meaning and making it clear.

ll.137-39. "And wip wreth he cleped þe queene  
 And tolde hur all his teene,  
 And wip wrap spake and sayde:"

When called upon by his original to describe the lavishness of Floris's entertainment, he resorts to the use of interpretatio.

ll.412-15. "Gladliche þai dronke and ete.  
 Al þat þerinne were,  
 Al þai made glade chere,  
 And ete and dronke echon wip oþer,"

This kind of intensification by repetition of ideas, into which a slightly new element is added with each repetition (here, that of conviviality: 'echon wip oþer'), is in the province of popular poetry. It lacks the mental precision of its French original yet, due to its careful structure, with the introduction of the element of general merriment, it makes a violent contrast with Floris's melancholy and, so, is extremely successful.

While, as we have seen, the English poet's simple language and unanalytical mind are a handicap in analysing emotion, they are an ally in presenting simple emotion in dialogue. He handles dialogue with a sure hand, giving it a lively turn of phrase and

an idiomatic appeal not felt in the graceful French handling. Here the harsher, vigorous style is more at home. It is the style of everyday expression, and consequently his dialogue is more real, more purposeful, lacking in the hesitance of his descriptions of emotion. It presents emotion in a dramatic way. Similarly, character and feeling is well transmitted by the simple narrative. Emotion is evoked through action, as in the pathos of the farewell scene between Floris and his mother and father.<sup>1</sup>

11.397-402.        "Weping pai departed noupe,  
                   And kiste hem wip softe moupe.  
                   Pai made for him non oper chere  
                   Pan pai seze him ligge on bere,  
                   For him ne wende hi neuere mo  
                   Efte to sen, ne dude he no."

So long as emotion can be evoked by action, so long as description can be part of narration, or feelings be acted by dramatic dialogue, the English poet is past master of his craft. When he is forced subjectively to describe emotion or a scene in more than a few words, he becomes distressed. His only method is the repetition of ideas, and his narrative falters in recapitulations of the obvious. Fortunately the English poet is sufficiently adept at his craft to hold these unhappy moments to a minimum.

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1. Cf. the extravagance of emotion in the French handling of the same scene. 11.1022-34.

#### IV    Conclusions.

Since the English poem is so close to its French predecessor, it is most difficult to decide which differences truly reflect the differing social backgrounds of the poets. By virtue of the fact that the English poet was working so closely from a French model, what may be fundamental differences in the social background have become blurred until they are mere differences of emphasis. It is safe to say that in the French poem the reality of the aristocratic and courtly milieu is more pronounced. The French king is more concerned about having his line debased; Blanche-flor's mother has a more elevated status as a captive than in the English poem; the aristocratic game of chess is better understood and the technical terms and some of the moves are given (ll.2009-11). Most important, the means whereby the gate-ward is coerced are misunderstood by the English poet. They belong to an aristocratic code of chivalry with which he is not entirely in sympathy; though he does make much of his hero's virtue of largesse elsewhere in the poem.

Alongside a more chivalric attitude is a representation of love closer to that of amour courtois. Love is not simply a feeling demonstrated by the behaviour of characters. It is objectified in the manner of Ovid or of the courtly love convention. It acts throughout the poem as an undoubted motivating power and is theorised upon in a way foreign to the English poet. In his narrative, the transfiguration of love - joie - has no place. He shuns the exempla illustrating the supernatural enabling power of

love. Sophisticated ideas of galanterie, such as appear in the French poem, are lacking.

11.2660-63. "De sa bouche ist sa doce alainne,  
Vivre en puet en une semaine:  
Qui au lundi la beseroit  
En la semaine fain n'avroit."

The vision of love as an idealised force with intrinsic power, and the aristocratic ideas which lie behind the stylised seduction of the gate-ward, argue a greater literary sophistication than the English poet possessed. This is upheld by the tendency of the French poet to use literary devices such as sententiae and exempla with considerable accomplishment. The moral content and the classical learning imparted by these two devices is, if not ignored, yet greatly reduced by the English poet. His account of the decoration of the cup is curtailed, and he makes no moral judgement on suicides. He takes no pains to say that all the girls in the tower are virgins, as the Frenchman does (1699-1700); but circumstantial details of the narrative imply so. He does not speak of Death as a leveller, nor does he take care to point out that the Emir has one wife only at any given time. But he does not have the head chopped off the previous wife to achieve this monogamy, nor is the victim blinded prior to execution. Although Floris accepts Christianity in the end, as in the French poem, he does not convert his land with the cruel chanson de geste spirit of his French counterpart.

The representation of love in the French poem lies at the confluence of two distinct streams in the author's thought; an analytic,

rational one and a sensuous and sentimental one. Both are perhaps the result of the poet's education in other literary works, and the latter has a good deal in common with the literary commonplaces of courtly lyrics as well as of romance. The former, in the guise of courtly love casuistry, is no stranger there either.

This formalised conception of love is not to the taste of the less sophisticated audience of the English poet. The love of the children in his poem is presented in a more naturalistic form. There is no implicit test of fidelity when Floris is sent away; there is no dwelling on the joie d'amour or writing of verses; there is no regrets or panegyric descriptio of the lady to compare with those in the French, at lines 715ff. and 2638ff. Instead the lack of courtliness makes the relationship between Floris and the king and queen much closer to an ordinary parent-son relationship.

Floris and Blancheflour are inseparable and they weep bitter and childish tears whenever the threat of separation arises. They work happily together, but never indulge in the courtly dalliance of the French couple. Blancheflour touchingly swears to be true to Floris when she is in the Emir's power, and her words have a ring of dramatic truth distinct from the tone of conventional rhetoric. The presentation of their love by the English poet makes for more consistent characterisation. The English children behave rather more like children. Though the poem is heavily influenced by its courtly source, more naturalistic values are uppermost. There is a greater feeling for the children, as children, rather

than small practitioners of courtly love. Again, this probably argues a gulf between the relative sophistication of the intended audiences.

The subjectifying, analytical ability of the French poet leads him into psychological appreciations beyond those possible to the English adaptor. Again, he perhaps owes his mastery of these techniques to that body of love poetry which included the work of the trouvères for, like them, he uses emblematic figures to represent the growth of love, and personifies the faculties of the mind in presenting psychological allegorical debate. He is entirely at home in the subjective description of feelings and motives. The English poet usually tries to avoid these but is occasionally forced to copy them in a lame way.

The two aspects of the French poet converge again in his long set-descriptions. In the descriptions of the cup, the tomb, the Emir's garden and the feasts in the inns, lavish sensuous detail fills the lines. A great visual baroque tableau is presented, embellished by exotic appeals to all the senses. The food and the wines at the feasts are described, the song of the birds echoes through the scented orchards, and the petal falls and touches the girl who is to be the Emir's wife. The mechanical models of Floire and Blanche-flor speak to each other and sweetly kiss. Throughout, is evoked a sense of wonder, not merely at the exotica themselves, but at the wit of the man who created them. It is a rationalists approach to sensuous magnificence. The

English poet is content to ask for simple wonder at the more humble and familiar Celtic marvels of his paradise.

The fascination with the idea of the artist responsible for the wonders is noticeable in descriptive detail throughout the French poem. Sometimes the excessive detail, the richness and elaboration of the scene, tend towards barbaric splendour. To modern taste the enthusiasm for technical skill, combined with the sentimental strain, can lead to a failure in sensibility. The opulence of the statues of the dead Blanche-flor and her sweetheart, animated and made to kiss and speak to each other by the craft of man, seem to us close to vulgarity; but the poet obviously regarded them as a noble tribute.

Besides the technician, Man's achievements as an organiser and a commercial creature are admired. We catch a glimpse of great, widespread mercantile interests through details of tolls and partnerships and the way shipping ventures are mounted. Merchants own ships and entertain visitors in their houses, and princes erect lights to guide travellers.

The descriptive details and circumstantial details of the French narrative trace the background of a rich and confident society whose interests extend to mercantilism, but who are also conversant with the literature of aristocratic society. There is no comparable background in the English poem. Its audience had humbler interests. In its presentation of complex and detailed visual images the French poem is starting on the road which leads to Huizinga's comment on the waning Middle Ages:

"One of the fundamental traits of mind of the declining Middle Ages is the predominance of the sense of sight, a predominance which is closely connected with the atrophy of thought."<sup>1</sup>

If the lack of detailed description and background be a sign of intellectual health, then the English poem is yet very vigorous. Detailed set-pieces of description are kept to a minimum, psychological motivation is neither described nor discussed. The analytical and rationalistic strain of the French poem is absent. The poem lacks any realistic social background. Two things only are of importance; the narrative framework and the realistic portrayal of emotion. The latter is most successful in the dramatic dialogue, where the terse, direct, sometimes violent expression, framed in an extremely concrete vocabulary, is ideally suited to the representation of idiomatic speech and the transmission of sincerity of feeling.

The achievement of the English poet lies in his narrative and his representation of simple emotion. In these he attains a series of triumphs. He recasts the poem to suit his narrative ability in a masterly way, using a chain of formally repetitive elegaic scenes to transport his hero from one cluster of dramatically realised scenes to another. The repetition has the cumulative effect of folk-tale, hammering home the feelings

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1. J. Huizinga, The Waning of the Middle Ages, (Harmondsworth 1965) p.271

of the hero and preparing him, in the minds of the audience, for his climactic adventure. The poet achieves a fine overall symmetry in the structure of the story by skilfully removing unnecessary narrative from the original. Daris is made to serve as narrator of events as well as the instigator of those immediately following the stay at his inn - a quite sophisticated narrative technique.

Although the aim of the poets has been similar - to tell a story - their modes of approach have been strikingly different. The Englishman, by his creation of simple symmetrical structure, his lack of description and incidental detail, his terse narrative, his vivid and idiomatic language and his representation of feelings by action and by dramatic dialogue, has used the tools of the dramatist. The Frenchman, with his descriptive detail, his social milieu, his local colour, psychological subtlety, moral preoccupations and graceful style, uses the techniques of the novelist. Beside the subtlety, the sophistication and the literary artifice of the French artist, it is easy to think of the English poet as an unlettered rustic. Such a picture would be unfair, for we must remember the difference in the intended audience as it is revealed by the discrepancies in the content of the two poems. If this is taken into account there is no cause to consider the English poet an inferior artist. His concern is to produce a poem dependent upon immediate narrative interest, the interest of characters in

situations, and to spice it with marvels of an easily recognised kind. By his simplicity of language and dramatic technique coupled with structural skill, he patently achieves this. He has taken a poem intended for a more sophisticated, more literate and more mentally subtle audience, and by his particular talents, recast it in a different, simpler form without losing any of its intrinsic interest. In narrative vitality, it has gained. This is no mean achievement.

HAVELOK THE DANE

Havelok the Dane, Le Lai d'haveloc and Gaimar's Haveloc episode

I Introduction

The story of Havelok the Dane and his wife Goldeboru is extant in three main versions, and Robert Manning of Bourne makes an allusion to it in his adaptation of Peter Langtoft's chronicle (1338). In addition, the Lambeth MS. of Manning's work contains a summary of the French version of the tale, interpolated at a later date.<sup>1</sup> There are also about a dozen minor poems, all but two of which are debased versions of the French treatment.

The earliest extant version is that embodied in lines 39-816 of Geffrei Gaimar's Estoire des Engleis. According to the most recent editor it was included after the Estoire was compiled, partly in order to give substance to Canute's claim to kingship in England in his debate with Edmund Ironside<sup>2</sup> (4309-18). This version of the story of Havelok is to be found in three of the four extant MSS. of the Estoire des Engleis. The fourth omits it and instead attaches the Lai, following the Estoire. The three MSS. in which Gaimar's version is extant are as follows:-

- Durham Cathedral Library C.iv.27 (early 13th century)
- Lincoln Cathedral Library 104 (formerly A.4.12) (later 13th century)
- British Museum Royal 13.A.xxi. (late 13th century)

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1. They are printed in the Sisam, Skeat edition of Havelok pp. xvii-xviii
  2. cf. Bell's Introduction p. lvii.

The most recent editions of the Estoire des Engleis are the Rolls series edition by Sir T. Duffus Hardy and C.T. Martin (1888-9) and the Anglo-Norman Texts Society edition by Alexander Bell (1960). The later edition, which is based on the Durham MS., is used for the present study. On internal evidence, Bell dates the composition of the Estoire des Engleis as during the latter part of the five years 1135-40.

The second French version the Lai d'Haveloc is extant in two MSS.:-

Cheltenham Phillips (Thirlstane House) (late 13th - early 14th century)

London, College of Arms, Arundel xiv (later 14th century)

In the latter, the Lai is appended to Gaimar's Estoire. The Lai has been printed by Hardy and Martin in their edition for the Rolls Series and also in Madden's edition of Havelok. The edition used for this study is that of Alexander Bell, which also includes the Haveloc episode of the Estoire, and was published by Manchester University in 1925. According to Bell "...the 'Lai' is undoubtedly derived in the main from Gaimar's version of the Haveloc story".<sup>1</sup> He postulates as the genesis of the poem, the arrival of its poet in Lincolnshire in the early thirteenth century, his acquaintance with Gaimar's story, his combination of it with local tradition and the refashioning of the story into a Breton lai under the influence of Marie de

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1. Introduction p. 51.

France.<sup>1</sup> This influence is evident in verbal echoes of Les dous amanz, Guigemar and Eliduc, as well as in distinctive alterations to the story.

The most considerable treatment of the subject is the English Havelok the Dane which extends to more than twice the length of the Lai, its nearest rival. It exists in only one manuscript, MS. Laud Misc. 108 of the Bodleian Library, Oxford (early 14th century). In 1911, Skeat published some fragments which he had discovered in the Cambridge University Library which added a dozen lines of doubtful validity to the corpus.

The most important editions are as follows:-

- 1828 The Ancient English Romance of Havelok the Dane  
edited Sir Frederick Madden, Roxburghe Club.
- 1868 The Lay of Havelok the Dane ed. W.W.Skeat, E.E.T.S. (Extra Series IV)
- 1901 The Lay of Havelok the Dane ed. W.W.Skeat, and revised K. Sisam, 1915, Oxford.
- 1928 Havelok ed. F.Holthausen (3rd ed.) Heidelberg and New York.

The Cambridge fragments, together with the Lambeth Interpolation, are printed in both the Sisam and Skeat editions and in Holthausen's third edition. The former is used for references in this study unless otherwise stated. The date of composition of the poem is given by Holthausen, quoting Deutschbein, as "wohl in der 2 Hälfte

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1. Introduction pp.59-60

des 13 Jahrhunderts".<sup>1</sup> The poem was probably composed near the scene of the events described in it. The origins of the Havelok story are unknown. The name Havelok has been shown to be a form of the Celtic Abloc, which is often substituted for Norse Olafr. The name Cuaran, applied to Havelok in the French versions, has resulted in fruitless attempts to link him with the Norse king of Dublin, Anlaf Cuaran, who was defeated at Brunanburgh in 937. Other candidates proffered as the prototype of Havelok have been King Swein, Olaf Tryggvason, Reginwald, Anlaf Cuaran's uncle, and even the Higelac of Beowulf.<sup>2</sup> Attempts to link the single combat in the Lai with the battle of Brunanburgh have also been undermined.<sup>3</sup>

Thus, researches into the origins of the story have produced no unambiguous result. To say that the tale of Havelok is not ultimately based on history may be to go too far, but if it is, the historical events have become too garbled by the stock items of romance, to be identified. Material has probably been imported from folk tale as well as from other works of the oral tradition, so that at the extant stage of development comparisons with folk tale are of as much value as those with historical events. The desire to link Havelok with history perhaps arises in part from the chronicle treatment of Gaimar and in part from the social realism of the English Havelok. Such desires are likely to yield illusory results. More fruitful to the critic of Havelok is the comparison with other romance tales and legends.

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1. Intro. (3rd ed.) p.xii

2. Sisam, Skeat edition, Introduction pp.xxivff, and also Bell's Introduction to Estoire des Engleis p.lviii

3. M.Ashdown 'Single Combat in English and Scandinavian Romance' M.L.R. xvii pp.113, and Bell's reply 'Single Combat in the Lai d'Haveloc' M.L.R. XVll, pp.22ff.

## II. Tone and Background

### A The Marriage and the Voyage to Grimsby.

The main events of the stories recounted by the three versions of the Havelok tale are substantially similar, yet differences in treatment and style lead to difficulties not previously encountered in this essay. In addition to individual reorganisations of material, different traditions of the tale lend new episodes or suppress old ones. Each of the three poems is sufficiently distinct to make direct comparisons of any particular episode either impossible or inadequate as a means of revealing the total concepts peculiar to that poem. A complete picture of each poem has to be gleaned from a variety of incidents, some of which may not be represented in another poem, or may not seem to illustrate its distinctive qualities. Therefore, in the study of the versions of Havelok, the direct comparison of individual episodes has to be abandoned. Instead, the ideas of the English poem are evinced and compared, as ideas rather than incidents, with those of the French versions.

However, as though to fly in the face of this doctrine, I propose to begin with the comparison of an incident, the central incident of all three poems, the marriage of Havelok to Goldeboru/Argentille and the occurrences which lead to the decision to leave the King's court for Grimsby and Denmark.

In Havelok the marriage takes place almost half way through the

poem; it marks the convergence of the stories of Goldeboru and Havelok, followed separately and in some detail, until then. It takes place under the most direct compulsion from Godrich in the form of a bullying encounter of his with Havelok and, separately, with Goldeboru.

11.1159-62      "'But þu þis man (wel) under-stonde,  
I shal flemen þe of londe;  
Or þou shalt to þe galwes renne,  
And þer þou shalt in a fir brenne.'" "

Poor Goldeboru has little choice, for it is better to marry than literally to burn. She accepts her fate stoically:

11.1165-68      "(Sho) þouhte, it was Godes wille:  
God, þat makes growen þe korn,  
Formede hire winman to be born."

There follows some details of the wedding, and it is noted that they are married by the archbishop of York 'Als God him hauede þider sent.' (1.1180).

Thus far it is clear, firstly that the behaviour of King Godrich is far from courtly, and secondly that the destiny of Havelok and his wife is in the hands of God. Goldeboru accepts it as such and God has arranged that they should be married by the Archbishop of York; he who would marry kings and queens. This must not be without significance.

Turning to Gaimar, we find that the wedding, or rather the marriage, is of such importance as to form the basis of the story. It is mentioned with a personal sense of scandal, within the first hundred lines of the poem:

11.96-100      "Oëz que fist cist feluns reis!  
                  Pur l'erité qu'il cuveitad  
                  Sa niece mesmariee ad;  
                  Il la dunad a un garcon  
                  Ki Cuaran aveit a nun;"

Gaimar hastens then to add some details of Cuaran's character and the fact that he was no ordinary scullion, for he was come from a 'gentil lit' (1.160). However, great play is made of this marriage and the shame of it is revived in the verbal echo of lines 99-100 - found just before the dream which decides their departure.

11.168-174      "Ore est mestier que Daus aït  
                  Kar ci ot fait grant cruelté  
                  Pur cuveitise de cel regné  
                  Quant pur la regne sul aveir  
                  Hunist sa niece a sun espeir,  
                  Il la dunad a sun quistrun  
                  Ki Cuaran aveit a nun."

The reference to God in line 168 is purely formal,<sup>1</sup> distinct from the active part played by God in the English poem at this point. However, it does link in a vague way with the prophetic dream. Gaimar's approach is far more impersonal than that of the English poet. No details of the wedding are given; the whole concern is with the scandal of this marriage, the individuals involved are entirely discounted. The king, Edelsi, never stoops to personal compulsion. His scullion, his jester (Jugleür 1.164) is married to his niece. One feels that Cuaran's position is such that a personal interview with the king is out of the question, much less a marriage conducted by the Archbishop of York.

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1. Cf. Horn 11.75; 90 etc.

The treatment offered to this incident by the Lai is different from both Gaimar and Havelok. The background to the wedding is presented entirely in the plans and actions of Edelsi. The feelings of Cuaran and Argentille are not mentioned. The poet corresponds with the English to some extent in his concentration on the wicked decision of Edelsi and its dramatic presentation. Here, though, Edelsi is seen against the background of his counsellors and the broader background of a possible opposition party among his barons. The background of the court is well blocked in and great attention is paid to the fiendish wit of Edelsi. His action is motivated by the demand of his barons that Argentille should be married according to his oath. He puts them off whilst he consults his counsellors, but he has already decided to marry her to Cuaran. He tops his plan with the sardonic remark, "De chalderes serra reine." (1.332). He will imprison any dissenters, and he goes on to take precautions against disturbances when he announces his plan. (345ff.). The actual wedding is again of small importance. The barons are not willing to suffer the atrocity, but they are subdued by the armed men whom Edelsi has thoughtfully provided beforehand.<sup>1</sup> As with Gaimar the gulf between Cuaran, the scullion, and King Edelsi is unbridgeable. They never meet. Nor is there any suggestion of divine intervention. Cuaran is merely

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1. The interest of the poet in this marriage forced by the king is interesting comment on his awareness of contemporary political controversy. One of the promises made by John at Runnymede in 1215 was that he would refrain from marrying heiresses below their station. cf. D.M. Stenton op. cit. pp.76-7.

a puppet in a political manoeuvre. The emphasis is not on the scandal itself in a general way, as in Gaimar, but on the handling of this individual occurrence. The interest is in the political manipulator, Edelsi, who is clearly presented against a realistic background, not only of the court but of the machinery of government, his council and his barons.

In the description of the marriage the differences between the three versions are that in Havelok the emphasis is on the dramatic presentation of the actions and reactions of the three characters involved, a short description of the wedding, the unkingly behaviour of Godrich and the lack of courtly surroundings, and the presence of God as a possible redeeming force; in Gaimar the wedding is the beginning of the tale and all the emphasis is upon its injustice, with the merest hint of unexpected developments through a description of the scullion's character; in the Lai the gulf between Cuaran and Edelsi is as wide as in Gaimar and the author concentrates on the side occupied by Edelsi. His interest is in the presentation of the realities of the political situation and in the subtlety of Edelsi's character.

Bearing these discoveries in mind, we shall now follow the course of events in the three versions, which lead to the voyage to Denmark. In the English poem, Havelok, immediately after the wedding becomes aware of the perilousness of their situation at Godrich's court and decides to go to Grimsby. They arrive to find that Grim has died. His heirs, far from being downcast at finding

another to share their goods, greet Havelok and his bride enthusiastically, but not as a brother or an equal.

11.1211-13        "On knes ful fayre he hem setten,  
                  And Hauelok swiþe fayre gretten,  
                  And seyden, 'Welkome, louerd dere!'"

They show a reverence which scarcely accords with the cook's man, which Havelok is supposed to be. The poet says they were not 'fikel' (1210) and goes on to show them offering him all their possessions and joyfully accepting him as their feudal lord.

11.1229-36        "Pou shalt ben louerd, þou shalt ben syre,  
                  And we sholen seruen þe and hire;  
                  And ure sistres sholen do  
                  Al that euere biddes sho;  
                  He sholen hire cloþes washen and wringen,  
                  And to hondes water bringen;  
                  He sholen bedden hire and þe,  
                  For leuedi wile we þat she be."

Not only do they accept Havelok, but without any resentment, they offer to support and wait on his wife and to serve her in menial day to day tasks, accepting her as their rightful lady. This demonstration of idealised loyalty is an implicit contrast with the refusal of Godrich and Godard to render their rights to their respective lord and lady. Its simplicity, the wholeheartedness of simple hospitality, combined with the acceptance of Havelok's overlordship, make it most effective as a contrast. This behaviour is at variance with consistency on the natural level of appreciation. Havelok's behaviour at his marriage, and in

interpreting his dream, makes one assume that he is unaware of his kingly birth. Yet he shows no surprise at his treatment by Grim's children. As a child, he was well aware of his ancestry, and a little after his reception by Grim's children he reveals to them 'something that they know'; that is, that he is king of Denmark (1400). His own knowledge of this can be explained on the realistic level by the revelation of the dream, but his knowledge of their awareness of it can not be explained except by his previous concealment of the whole situation. This seems scarcely probable. It is apparent that the question of self-knowledge or otherwise is treated arbitrarily as is most suitable to a moral or dramatic point, as is the question of age, earlier in the poem (112,125 ag. 205 and 365 ag. 455 ff). Here the scene must be included as a deliberate contrast to Godard and Godrich, and a moral example of loyalty to one's lord transcending worldly misfortune.

After the feast prepared for them by their faithful retainers, Havelok and Goldeboru retire to bed. Goldeboru lies awake miserably contemplating her fall in status, for the behaviour of Grim's children has made no impression on the relationship between herself and Havelok, indeed:

1249-50        "...she wende she were bi-swike,  
                  Pat she were yeuen un-kyndelike."

Her concern is with the misfortune that has married her below her station; she seems to have no opinion on the personal attraction of the man she has married. Suddenly her attention is drawn by a

light, a bright, clear light, described in terms of lyrical beauty and mysticism reserved for miracles.

1251-54        "O niht saw she per-inne a liht,  
                   A swiþe fayr, a swiþe bryht,  
                   Al so briht, al so shir,  
                   So it were a blase of fir."

Her reaction to it, when she sees that it arises from Havelok's mouth, is immediate:

1.1260        "He beth heyman yet, als y wene,"

At the same time she notices a golden cross on his shoulder,<sup>1</sup> perhaps a more Christian sign of kingship, and she hears an angel voice tell her that Havelok is a King's son and will rule both England and Denmark, and she will be queen. Immediately she is filled with joy:

11.1278-9     "Pat she ne mihte hire ioie mythe;  
                   But Havelok sone anon she kiste,"

Her affection for Havelok is called forth only by the revelation of his noble birth. Although Havelok calls her 'lemman' on several occasions, this is the only manifestation of their love in the poem. Havelok now recounts an obviously symbolic dream which Goldeboru swiftly interprets for him from her newly revealed knowledge. She fills twenty lines with the news that he is to be king (1316ff). She follows this with advice that he should go to Denmark. When morning dawns, Havelok, realising that God is guiding his destiny, goes to the church and prays for vengeance on Godard and for a

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1. Holthausen notes that this device is drawn from French epic.

safe crossing to Denmark, calling Christ to witness that the land is his by right (1383). Then, having stated the twin aims of his life and assured God's blessing he turns away, overcome by religious emotion.

11.1387-90 "His leue at Iesu Crist he tok,  
 And at his suete moder ok,  
 And at þe croiz, þat he bi lay,  
 Siþen yede sore grotinde away."

Havelok is the most pious of romance heroes. Can there be any doubt as to the legitimacy of his claim to Denmark or the righteousness of his revenge on Godard? God is clearly on his side. His return to Denmark is almost a crusade.

Gaimar's narration of post-marital events follows a very different course. Having fully established the scandalousness of the deed of Edelsi in marrying his niece to a scullion, he now passes on to their life together. Cuaran is a very innocent young man.

11.175-178 "Çil ne saveit que femme (esteit)  
 Ne qu'il faire ne li deveit;  
 Des qu'il unkes el lit veneit,  
 Adenz giseit, si se dormeit."

Argentille's reaction to this surprising behaviour is explored.

Instead of simply lamenting her misfortune at being married beneath her station, she wonders at Cuaran's behaviour and curses her uncle for giving her to such a man. Gaimar takes the opportunity to make moral comment on conjugal obligations.

11.181-188 "E mult forment se merveillat  
 Que (unques) vers li ne se turnat  
 Ne ne la voleit aprismier  
 Cum hum deit faire sa muillier.  
 La niece (al) rei se cumplaineit,  
 Suvent sun uncle maldiseit  
 Ki si l'aveit deseritee  
 E a un tel hume dune,"

Soon, however, love triumphs over innocence and when they have happily fallen asleep together, Argentille dreams a long and fairly complex allegorical dream (11.194 ff) signifying that Cuaran will be king. She fails to understand it, having no guidance from angelic voices. She awakens to find herself in her husband's arms. She embraces him and tentatively opens her eyes, to find a flame issuing from his mouth. She awakens him and tells her dream. He fails to understand it, nor can he explain the flame from his mouth. Now that these confidences have been exchanged Argentille feels that she can ask about his lineage, and suggests that they leave the court, for;

11.300-303 "Nus sumes ci huntusement;  
 Mielz nus vendreit estre issilliez  
 Entre paiens e enperrez  
 Que ci gisir en tel huntage."

Now, the misery over the 'mismatch' is past, she is willing to go anywhere with her love.

Gaimar tells a highly sophisticated love story, treating the relations of his husband and wife with a sensitivity and tenderness hard to equal in early romance. The motivation for the departure

for Grimsby which leads to the revelation of Cuaran's birth and his voyage to Denmark to regain his rights, is a very subtle one. It grows naturally out of the development of the love of Cuaran and Argentille and out of Argentille's abandonment of her previous position to share her husband's future, whatever it may be. The first step is to leave the scene of their shame, the court of Edelsi. The decision to leave the court has its symbolic value. Gaimar sensitively traces how Argentille becomes the wife of Cuaran and rejects her past life to adopt Cuaran's life among his kinsmen. This is a reinforcement of the symbolic value of the dream in which Argentille sees their shared future on the night of their first union.

Gaimar's first interest is in the growth of married love. He does, however, describe the arrival of Cuaran and his bride at Grimsby. They are greeted by Kelloc, Grim's daughter, and her husband, a merchant, Dan Algiers. The greeting is less ecstatic than that extended to Havelok and Goldeboru, for the arrival of Cuaran with the King's daughter as his wife sets a problem for Kelloc and her husband. Should they tell him of his birth? They decide to do so (352). Cuaran is told the whole story and offered every assistance in regaining his country. They offer to serve him if he is successful.

11.454-66        "Si bien vus prent, mandez le nus;  
                   Nus vus siuvrum, si vus volez,  
                   Si Deu vus rent voz heretez."

This offer of service is a striking contrast to the happy, natural submission of the children of Grim in the English poem. Kelloc behaves in a sophisticated way. They offer help, rather through a sense of friendship and in a mood of near equality. They do not merely submit to Haveloc's overlordship.<sup>1</sup> Kelloc is in fact the spring of action. She is the immediate motivation for the excursion to Denmark. If it is successful she and her husband will follow Haveloc. The motives are friendship and loyalty, tempered by political caution. This strain of political awareness is emphasised by the mention, by Kelloc, that her husband feels that Denmark is ripe for revolution.

11.457-60      "En Danmarche fud le (autrer)  
                   E a plusurs oïd preier,  
                   Si hom vus trovat, que venissiez  
                   E le païs chalengissiez."

The outstanding elements of Gaimar's treatment of this part of the story are his sophisticated treatment of the relationship between Kelloc and Haveloc, his political realism, and the way Haveloc's actions are impelled by women rather than by divine revelation; first by his love for Argentille and then by Kelloc's decision to tell him his history.

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1. Cuaran becomes Haveloc when his identity is revealed by Kelloc.

The Lai presents yet another variation of these incidents. The difference is chiefly one of emphasis. The events of the wedding night are similar. The reactions of the two participants are not so precisely followed. The shyness of the couple is disposed of less sensitively.

ll.382-83. "Cele out grant honte de lui  
Et il assez greindre de li;"

The chief reason given for Cuaran's distantness is because he is ashamed of the flame from his mouth. Argentille dreams much the same dream and receives the same fallacious interpretation. The next morning the Argentille of the Lai decides on an entirely original plan. On the advice of a chamberlain she sets out to visit a hermit who dwells in Lindsay to try to discover more about her strange dream (505 ff).

Bell regards the hermit episode as introduced under the influence of the lais of Marie de France (see above: Introduction). It combines the mysticism and religiosity of the lais without the earnest religious feeling of the English Havelok. It is an episode rooted in the court as viewed through a woman's eyes. A chamberlain, one of those attendants whom women would frequently meet, acts as the guide. The poet does not fail to mention that Argentille puts on her 'chape' (505) for this cloak and dagger excursion. The hermit plays the part of the English angel, telling Argentille of her future, but he does not serve to assure the aid of God as does the English angel. He simply forms a delicious piece of intrigue and mysticism, and a useful deus ex machina to provide

clear motivation for the journey to Grimsby. The poet of the Lai has been unable to find this, as did Gaimar, in the love of Cuaran and Argentille.

On arrival at Grimsby, they are greeted by Kelloc, with the rather forced gaiety and jesting tone fashionable among the ladies of romance.<sup>1</sup>

568-572      'Si li demanda en riant,  
                   "Amis" fet ele, "par ta foi!  
                   Ceste femme qu'est od toi,  
                   Qui est ele? Mult par est bele,  
                   Est ele dame ou damoisele?"'

This courtly reference to Argentille's beauty is entirely original and replaces the discussion in Gaimar between Kelloc and her husband on whether to acquaint Cuaran with his true identity. In the Lai, Kelloc immediately tells Havelok the whole story and arranges for his crossing to Denmark, advising him to see Sigar Estal. Kelloc's husband is un-named and acts merely as the implement of this plan. Nowhere does Kelloc show that she is in any way inferior to Havelok, and nowhere promises him service.

The main traits of the three versions which emerge from this examination of an episode in the story, are: firstly that Havelok contains a religious feeling not present in the other treatments, that this feeling is linked to an almost religiously held view of

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1. Cf. Clarice's attitude towards Floris and Blancheflour

loyalty and submission to the rightful king, and that it is God's purpose to restore to Havelok his rights. Secondly, the treatment of the aristocratic characters is scarcely courtly. Their behaviour is not that of kings or noblemen, rather the petty plotting and reactions of ordinary people. Thirdly, the love of Havelok and Goldeboru is not described at any length. Their relationship in terms of the plot is an alliance of power rather than of love.<sup>1</sup> Goldeboru is only happy when she knows she has married a potentially powerful man. The initiative is always with Havelok and his God; Goldeboru merely serves as the link between them, just as their marriage is the link between two stories of dis-possession and revenge.

Both Gaimar and the Lai place more emphasis on love, and the Lai leaves the motivation entirely to women. Both present a more realistic view of courtly life and of the political situation, the Lai in particular. Neither treat the matter of the 'mismatch' at the human level. Gaimar deplores it in general terms, then turns to love which cancels it. The Lai glosses over it by interesting itself in the political implications and the character of the villain. Both these poems lack the awe of kingship evident

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1. Though Havelok does call Goldeboru 'lemman' in an affectionate way from time to time.

in Havelok, and both are essentially secular in their interests and motivations.

Having adduced, in principle, some differences between the various treatments of this single, central episode it must now be determined how general they are in the context of the whole poem. To facilitate this I intend to take the English Havelok as a base for comparisons with the other two treatments. The method will be to try to show first the attitude adopted by the poet of Havelok and then, by comparison, to elucidate the other versions, and show where differences occur.

## B The Christian Ethos

The first recurrent idea which became clear in Havelok was the place in the poem given to the Christian religion. Havelok's flame was a sign from God, an angel motivated the decision to go to Denmark, Havelok ensures God's blessing before his departure, Goldeboru accepted her fate as the will of Providence. When we read the rest of the poem we find that religious attitudes pervade it as they pervaded ordinary life in mediaeval times.

The deaths of Athelwold and Birkabeyn are largely parallel events; both are intimately connected with religious observance. The former is seen as the fitting end to the life of a noble king, coming at the end of a long enumeration of his virtues. It reminds one of the pious descriptions of the deaths of holy men in Bede's Historia, in the way that he is previously aware of his approaching end (115-6), in the distress of his followers (164), his own resolution (166ff) in a painful illness, his earnest prayers to God and his absolution and taking of the Eucharist (211-12), the generous division of his goods (218) and his final commending of his soul into the hands of God and calling on Christ (228-30). One needs only to read Bede's account of the death of Caedmon in conjunction with Cuthbert of Jarrow's account of Bede's own death to find all these commonplace themes except the scourging.<sup>1</sup> This

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1. Cuthbert does mention that Bede quoted 'Omnem filium quem Deus Recipit, corripit, flagellat et castigat'. Bede was referring to his illness.

latter is added to the usual topoi to emphasise the extraordinary ascetic holiness of Athelwold.

Athelwold, and to a less pronounced extent, Birkabeyn are great kings whose greatness is blended with religious fervour. Not only does Havelok give thanks to God when his identity is revealed to him, but it is made clear that God has been protecting him since his birth. The Divine prescience is not made so clear as in the Romance of Horn, nevertheless it is there. Havelok is saved from Godard by a miracle.

500-501        "Per was miracle fair and god,  
                  Pat he þe knaue nouht ne slou,"

The poet does not make a special point of it, as does Thomas when he says that God put mercy into the heart of Rodmund against his will.<sup>1</sup> Indeed it seems a mere figure of speech. Yet when taken with Havelok's other escapes, it turns out to be something more.<sup>2</sup> The miraculous light from his mouth, besides serving as a sign to Goldeboru and motivating the second part of the story, is the cause of Grim's sparing the child's life. Grim's wife notices the light and draws his attention to it. Grim rises to investigate. As he does so the poet interpolates a sententia into his action.

1.600        "For man shal god (ai) god wille haue - "<sup>3</sup>

1. The Romance of Horn 37-39

2. According to the N.E.D., the use of 'miracle' in a general and hyperbolic sense is recorded no earlier than Chaucer. Knight's Tale 1817.

3. Holthausen's emendation seems to make the better sense here.

The Biblical reference leaves no doubt as to who has sent the sign which now motivates Grim's actions. A moment later this is clinched when Grim, recognising the heir to the throne prophesies his future:

606-612        "'Goddot!' quath Grim, 'pis ure eir  
                  Pat shal (ben) louerd of Denemark,  
                  He shal ben king, strong and stark;  
                  He shal hauen in his hand  
                  Al Denemark and Engeland;  
                  He shal do Godard ful wo,  
                  He shal him hangen, or quik flo;"

The prophesy is a strange one at that moment, if it is not inspired by God. A few lines later the protection of God is clinched by a subjective observation from the poet, in the form of another sententia; placed on the lips of Grim's wife by both Skeat and Holthausen, but nothing in the manuscript prevents it from being a moral platitude of the poet's.<sup>1</sup>

647-8            "'Soth it is, pat men seyt(h) and suereth:  
                  'Per God wile helpen, nouht ne dereth.'"<sup>2</sup>

When Ubbe invites Havelok to his house, the poet remarks:

1712-13        "Loke nou, hu God helpen kan  
                  O mani wise wif and man."

and when Ubbe recognises him after his arrival in Denmark, Havelok

1. cf. the MS. facsimile facing page 24 in the Sisam, Skeat edition. The poet was not averse to making such subjective statements, though they are usually concerning the traitors in the poem.

2. Holthausen's is again the more accurate reading of the MS.

acknowledges God's part in guiding him to this powerful friend.

2188-9      "Po was Havelok swiþe bliþe,  
                  And þankede God ful fele siþe."

In lines 2022-3 Bernard states specifically that God protected Havelok in his fight with Ubbe's servants.

"But als(o) God self barw him wel,  
Pat he ne tinte no catel."

In addition to the various direct acknowledgements of or ascriptions to God's power, and in addition to the circumstances of the plot, the poem is framed by repeated reference to a particular event of the Christian story; the betrayal of Christ by Judas. Allusion is constantly made to Judas to characterise the villains in the story.<sup>1</sup> Sometimes their evil only is predominant, when they are called 'Sathanas'.<sup>2</sup> In either case the reference is to the great opposition of the Scriptures, between God and the devil and represents an imaginative re-use of an established convention. In Havelok, the Devil is a traitorous devil and Havelok is the child of God.

Throughout the poem appeals are made to God. Sometimes they have the air of real piety, sometimes they are mere oaths.

1. l. 319; 425; 482; 1133 cf. Kùlbing's note on Amis and Amiloun 1.1109.
2. l. 1100, 1134, 2512.

It is interesting to note on how many occasions God is not involved merely as a passive abstraction of goodness, but as a real and active power. Goldeboru lies in prison, weeping, and the poet fiercely invokes God to bring her vengeance.

331-335      "Iesu Crist, that Lazarun  
                   To liue brouhte fro dede bondes,  
                   He lese hire with hise hondes;  
                   And leue sho mo(te) him y-se  
                   Heye hangen on galwe-tre,"

The prayer is made poetically appropriate by the use of its commonplace metaphor 'dede-bondes'. Christ is not the object of a despairing wish, but obviously a potent force. He raised Lazarus from similar bondage. We know that He will not fail Goldeboru. In line 435 the allusion is to "...Crist, pat made mone and sunne." and in line 1167: "God, pat makes growen þe korn,"<sup>1</sup>.

There is nothing unusual in the use of the Christian frame of reference in this way, for the insistence on God as an active force is a commonplace in sermons and prayers,<sup>2</sup> but the manner in which the Christian ethos not only permeates this poem but provides an immediate cause, as well as background, for the action is noteworthy. God is seen as the single great motivating factor. He reveals Havelok's nobility to him, He saves him in childhood and

1. Cf. also lines 542-4

2. Cf. The Romance of Horn 1.75-6 'Or les guarisset cil ki salvat  
 Moïsan,  
 Quant fud jested petit al flum  
 del desruban,"

He ensures that Ubbe recognises him. The hand of God is guiding Havelok's destiny throughout in a way which, if not so obvious as in The Romance of Horn, is equally sure.

The comparison with the other two versions of the Havelok story, in this respect, is easily completed. Gaimar's poem is entirely secular. References to God are the purely formal ones of speech 1.719 "Deu seit loed!", or the romance convention mentioned above (1.168). The nearest approach of Gaimar to the idea of God as active in the plot is the repeated 'Si Deu vus rent vos heretez' of lines 466 and 470. This is more of a pious expression than a significant pointer to the mechanics of the poem.

The Lai, too, is largely secular in its content and expression. It is not quite so prosaic as Gaimar, for the hermit episode is introduced to add to the sense of mystery already implicit in the flame, and the horn that can only be blown by the true heir. The tone of religiosity of the hermit episode is echoed in the way in which Havelok blesses and makes the sign of the cross over the horn.<sup>1</sup> After he has blown it, instead of merely indulging in formal praise of God, as does Gaimar (1.719 above), Sigar in the Lai emulates the English Ubbe (1.2226) by claiming that God has returned the lost heir.

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1. He makes the sign of the cross, though does not bless the horn, in MSS. Harleian and Royal of Gaimar, but not in Durham and Lincoln.

911-13 "Seignurs purceo vus ai mandez  
 Que Dieu nus ad revisitez.  
 Veez ci nostre dreit heir;"

However, we must remember the political reality found in the Lai. This appeal to the crowd is in the nature of a presentation of the candidate. As in the English poem, thanks are given to God when Haveloc is recognised; but this time by Sigar (841-42). God is said to have recompensed Argentille for her past hardships, when Haveloc becomes king of Denmark.

11.977-79 "Mult fu eincois desesperee,  
 Mes ore l'ad Dieus reconfortee,  
 Quant Haveloc est rois pussanz."

These examples add up to little more than a manner of expression. God is momentarily seen after the event as an arbiter of justice and a comforter. The only allusions to His presence are as thanksgivings. There is a sense of religiosity in the revelation of the hermit and in the blowing of the horn, but they are mere episodes, elegant decorations affixed to the mechanics of the plot. The hermit, himself, is the immediate spring of action for the journey to Grimsby; the paraphernalia of Christian mysticism is superficial. In the Lai, the expression of the part of God is either as conventional acknowledgement or superficial decoration. It completely lacks the importance found in the English poem, where it suffuses the atmosphere and provides for the action.

C The Ideal of Kingship

Co-existent with the religious preoccupation of the English poem, and equally as important, is the reverence offered to nobility. We saw the idea of kingship as comparable with godhead in the willing submission of Grim's children to the newly returned Havelok. The idea of kingship and religion are inextricably entwined in the behaviour of King Athelwold. The scene of his death comes at the end of a long description of his life. He is incorruptible and just, integrity is his chief virtue.

11.71-74.       "Riht he louede alle þinge,  
                  To wronge nicht him no man bringe,  
                  Ne for siluer, ne for gold:-  
                  So was he his soule hold.

He is described as a great legislator (29) and his laws are the result of sincere religious belief and native honesty.

35-38            "He louede god with al his miht,  
                  And holi kirke, and soth, and riht,  
                  Riht-wise men he louede alle,  
                  And oueral made hem forto calle;"

His qualities of character, as described in these few lines, embrace all the essential virtues. Not only does he love the abstract principle, but he loves it incarnate in good men. It is not merely a passive love however, and this is most important. He hounds evil men. The poet repeats this idea with enthusiasm (39-43; 76-86). The harrowing of evil is regarded as perhaps a more positive virtue than mere goodness. The result of all this is peace in England.

44-50 "In þat time a man þat bore  
 (Wel fifty pund, y wot, or more,)  
 Of rede gold up-on his bac,  
 In a male hwit or blac,  
 Ne funde he non þat him misseyde,  
 N(e) hond on (him) with iuele leyde."<sup>1</sup>

The strength of his rule reduced his foreign enemies to servitude. His justice, as well as being energetically applied is impartial. His personal prowess equals his public strength and is matched only by his charity. The poet calls him large (1.97), but it is largesse without any courtly connotation, for his generosity is not self-glorifying but in earnest contemplation of an eternal reward (102-5).<sup>2</sup> The efficacy of his justice is a stock signification of approval of a king,<sup>3</sup> but the stress put on his holiness and Christian charity is unusual and suggests hagiography rather than poetic manuals as a source for this description.

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1. This passage is reminiscent of a proverb quoted by Bede about the peace in the reign of King Edwin (Historia II 16) 'In those parts of Britain under King Edwin's jurisdiction, the proverb still runs that a woman could carry her new-born babe across the island from sea to sea without any fear of harm.'
  2. The description of Athelwold's generosity to the poor resembles that of King Oswald (Bede III 6) as much as the awe in which he was held, resembles King Edwin (II 16).
  3. Cf. Faral, Ars Versificatoria I 66 and Romance of Horn (above).

Godrich begins his reign by making the laws even more severe and enforcing them harshly. Such is his success that soon 'Al Engeland of him stod awe;' (277). There is a suspicion of tyranny or at least self-seeking, but no real condemnation. Kings were expected to be harsh to be strong. Athelwold, however, tempered his strength by his charity and his poverty. He was truly the father of his people. He was loved by young and old,

31-33        "Erl and barun, dreng and thayn,  
               Kniht, (and) bondeman, and swain,  
               Wydues, maydnes, prestes and clerkes,"

He was accepted by them as naturally and as irrevocably as a father is accepted by his children. He loved God, and by implication God loved him, and he held the land 'to riht'. (1.109).

The view of the ideal king, then, is one who combines strength with pity and honesty with justice. He holds his land by right; right which we may expect to be upheld by God whom he serves above all, and who is the inspiration of his own integrity. This is the conception upon which Havelok is based.

Havelok, the child of a royal father, has a miraculous beam of light which stands from his mouth when he is asleep and a golden cross on his shoulder. They are clearly connected with God; signs that provide the motivation and save Havelok's life. When Grim sees the light in his cottage it leads him to the king-mark, and he knows that he is about to drown the heir. His attitude changes immediately. Because this is the royal child, loyalty is almost a religious duty demanding that it should be saved. Where before,

humanity meant nothing, he is now willing to lay down his life. The knowledge of his royalty when he returns to Grim's children with his wife, calls forth immediate submissive loyalty and devotion. As soon as Ubbe sees the king-mark he falls at his feet and kisses them (2158ff). He immediately offers him homage.

There is no aristocratic code of loyalty in Havelok. This kind of loyalty is not that between a war leader and his comitatus not that between a great feudal lord and his vassals. There is no sense whatever of equality. Havelok is undoubted master, and it is made clear that his mastery resides in the quality of royalty, for the discovery of this stimulates loyal servitude. To accept him as master is the natural, honest and good thing to do, just as it is to accept God, his protector and guarantor, as lord. To do otherwise makes one unnatural, wicked, in rebellion against God, a 'Sathanas' or a 'Judas'. The sanctity of royalty is established and to rebel against it is a sin akin to blasphemy. This is explicit with reference to Godard in line 2469, 'Euerilke del, God was him gram.' It is the greatest virtue of the righteous to endeavour to obliterate such evil. Havelok then is at once the righteous man engaged in a virtuous struggle against unnatural wickedness, and also a true king re-possessing himself of his hereditary right with the help of his loyal servants. These are some of the moral implications which we shall take as our next subject for comparison. Firstly, however, we must compare the vision of royalty and the aristocratic background of the French

works.

The idea of kingship is never clearly formed in either of them. It is merely accepted as a part of the story. Edelsi - the Godrich of the English - is a king in his own right, though a traitorous one. Both Gaimar and the Lai call him 'feluns reis'. The term is technically correct according to its use in the feudal vocabulary, but illustrates no over-riding interest in feudalism. It is merely a habitual means of expression. Odulf - the English Godard - is accepted by both poets as having been made king by Arthur. There is no question of the sanctity of kingship. The Lai puts the matter with the simple realism of the politically aware.

37-39        "Quant Arthur out finie sa guerre,  
               Hoðulf dona tote la terre  
               Et les homages des barons,"

Gaimar spends no time on Achebrit's moral qualities and mentions only his possessions in England and Denmark (69ff). The flame which, in the English is so important a link between God's purpose and the sanctity of kingship, is played down by both the French versions. Both make more of the dream than the flame. In Gaimar, Cuaran first ignores Argentille's question about it and then says he is ashamed of it. It has no further importance until it proves Cuaran's identity to Sigar. The Lai dispenses with its importance even further. Cuaran explains it away by making it allied to the dream. The dream is about the preparation of a feast and the flame means that the kitchen will catch fire. It is the dream alone which sends Argentille to the hermit and to Denmark, by way of Grimsby.

The flame plays a lesser part in the recognition of Haveloc too.

In Gaimar, recognition comes in three stages. Firstly Sigar is struck by the resemblance of Cuaran to his dead lord (551 ff) and when Cuaran tells his story he remembers that Gunter had a son called Havelok (619 ff), secondly the servants report the flame (633 ff) and thirdly, Havelok blows the horn which only the true heir can blow (713-14). The Lai follows the same steps but somewhat more specifically. Sigar's recognition of Haveloc is more precise.

749-750        "Cil le resembloit de visage  
                  Et de grandeur et de corsage."

His action is more deliberate. He remembers that Grim had the king's son in his care, but he is still in doubt (822) and he is shown as actually sending a confidant to ascertain whether the flame exists (829 ff).

Thus, the flame which, in the English, is a revelation of the sanctity of royalty, is much less important in the French versions. The extolling of royalty is not their aim. The baronial classes in each poem are allowed their full prestige, though only as a part of the story. In the Lai Grim is elevated to become the commander of a castle. He saves Haveloc through his loyalty to King Gunter. This kind of feudal loyalty is present in both poems, together with the usual conceptions of feudal society. Odulf is generally agreed to be felon, while Grim in the Lai is a prodoms.

143            'Li prodoms son seignur nurrit,'

Kelloc shows loyalty to Haveloc in Gaimar because his mother brought her up '...ele me nurrid' (403). In the Lai Cuaran leaves Grim's household, not because of a famine, but because Grim feels that a

king's son should have the proper 'nourriture'. He may get this at the court. According to Gaimar Argentille is 'mesmariee'. She is married outside her appropriate class and there is a useful word available to cover the event. The marriage, however, is legally valid, for Edelsi has taken her as his ward, 'veiant sa gent' (Lai 218) and thus has a right to dispose of her as he will. He does not break the literal oath which limits this freedom, merely interprets it against the spirit in which it was framed.

The work lineage is used several times in Gaimar recording some interest in genealogy (156ff and 401 ff). The protagonists in these poems are never from the lower social orders. The Lai makes Grim the commander of a castle. He is a considerable mariner in Gaimar. In both, his descendants are merchants. Gaimar makes Sigar not only a seneschal, but a justisier too. Those who aid Cuaran are his superiors in power, and the quality of royalty does not transcend this. In both poems, his promise of rewards to Kelloc and her husband is accepted as a right. No-one accords Haveloc undue reverence, and the initiative is always elsewhere - with Argentille, Kelloc or with Sigar.

The idea of kingship in these poems is unimportant; it is merely an extension of the background of accepted feudal conventions and loyalties. Kingship is very definitely a secular thing, at the mercy of fortune and of material power. It can be made and unmade with equal facility, and its only guarantor is human loyalty and not divine dispensation.

## D The Moral Atmosphere

When we turn to examine the moral or possibly didactic element of these poems, it is a little surprising, after the last two sections, that one is scarcely visible. Even the English Havelok has no sustained didactic purpose, no deliberately emphasised moral. The theme of the sanctity of kingship and its close links with the Christian God leads from an implicit moral attitude rather than didactic exposition. It is an idea obviously fiercely held by the author and it dictates the treatment of the story, but it is not the raison d'etre of the poem. The explicit moralising touches are not so unified. They consist of an observation here and a sententia there.

Havelok, in lines 798-810, decides to work for his living. The decision comes amidst a peculiarly detailed description of ordinary life and manual tasks.

798-801        "Swinken ich wolde for mi mete.  
                   It is no shame forto swinken;  
                   Pe man þat may wel eten and drinken  
                   (Pa) nouht ne haue but on swink long;"

This little passage is matched by that testifying to Havelok's chastity which is appended to a description of his strength (995ff).

In addition, lines 1421-24 admirably illustrate the moral standpoint of the author with regard to the sanctity of kingship.

"But Grim was wis, and swiþe hende,  
 Wolde he nouht his soule shende;  
 Leuere was him be for-sworen  
 Pan drenchen me, and ben for-loren;"

The attitude is quite contrary to the aristocratic conception of honour, where fidelity to one's immediate lord and to one's pledged word were of first importance.<sup>1</sup> The author obviously considered that the wise man should fear Hell before dishonour. That Hell was the reward for the murder of a king's son was one of the tenets of his belief.

This is the attitude which we find in the only explicit moral presentation of the theme; that is, in the cursing of those who rebel against kingship. This is carried out with surprising fervour. Its intention is clearly to influence the attitude of the audience to the traitors, but one feels that it is also a genuine reaction of the poet. As a device, it links in with the branding of traitors as Judases or Satans; enemies of God and man; but more than this they are men who have unnaturally revolted against their true masters. Therefore, they are accursed.

1. The Laws of Alfred open with an injunction to abide by one's oath: '...pæt t mæst ðearf is, pæt æghwelc man his āð. / his wed wæerlice healde.'

However, the first sub-section provides that if a man is wrongfully compelled to promise to betray his lord or to take part in some unlawful enterprise, it is better to prove false to the oath than to abide by it. The Laws of Alfred II, The Laws of the Earliest English Kings, F.L. Attenborough (Cambridge 1922) pp. 62-3.

Grim is willing to carry out his promise until he discovers that he is betraying his natural lord. The idea is that it is better to be forsworn than damned, is exemplified in Alfred's law.

The word Dapeit is used four times in a moralising sense, in attempts to stem the flow of sympathy for the suffering villain. The stricture is placed upon whoever feels sympathy for them, in a formal phrase which has something of the quality of a strong rhetorical negative.

Havelok wreaks great slaughter on the men who attack Bernard's house and the poet exclaims:

1914-15        "Dapeit hwo recke! for he it seruede;  
                  Hwat dide he pore? He weren werewed!"

The aim is clearly moral justification of this scourge of evil doers. The poet describes the arrest of Godard. He is bound painfully tightly and cries to God for mercy. He is sternly denied it by the author, who says that they would not stop for all his cries, and rightly so.

2447.        "Dapeit pat on pat per-fore let!"

The author is again defending the mercilessness of those who harry evil. Godard, too, deserved it. After the particularly harrowing and cruel scene of the flaying of Godard, the poet finishes:

2511:        "Dapeit hwo recke! he was fals."

One is compelled to wonder, because of the necessity for these interjections alongside scenes of cruelty, whether the poet himself did not fear some misdirected pity from his audience, or perhaps even feel it himself. This seems the most satisfactory explanation of the vehemence, and assertion of the condemnation which is close to defiance, in three out of four occasions. By the fourth use

(1.2757), the condemnation has become simply mechanised. The same alienation of the villain is attempted in line 2409 where, Godard having been stabbed in the arm, the poet comments:

"Per-of was ful litel harum."

The curse on the unnatural villain is developed at great length in 1.426 ff. Here it is in the nature of a formal curse<sup>1</sup> and appears well deserved, for it is pronounced whilst Godard is in the midst of his evil deeds. Elsewhere, to the modern reader, curses tend to recoil upon themselves for they smack of pitiless persecution, which in modern belief is never deserved, even by the guilty. Their moral implication, though, is clear. Godard and Godrich, rebels against their royal master and therefore in revolt against the natural duty of man, are malefactors who can expect and can deserve no mercy. Equally, those servants of Ubbe who attack their master's guests, royal Havelok and his wife, deserve no quarter and no sympathy. The poet is a severe judge.

The Lai is overtly a didactic poem. It begins with an assertion that men should hear and profit from the deeds of the ancients. The poet says explicitly that this poem will serve as a lesson to chasten those who are guilty of baseness and misdeeds.

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1. cf. Holthausen's note 1.426ff.

11.7-9 "Villainies et mesprisions,  
 Ceo devereit estre li sermons  
 Dont l'om se deust chastier;"

Then he seriously remarks:

1.10 "Car mult iad mauveis mester."

This is a striking contrast with the induction of Havelok. It threatens a serious, didactic poem intent on edifying its audience by example. Fortunately the threat of dry didacticism never materialises. The poet, recognising that the tale is by its nature a moral one, is content simply to tell the story without overtly pointing a moral. In the first few lines he puts the reader on the alert for the moral and then lets the story unfold its own inherent moral content; the story of how a traitor marries a princess to a poor man, who turns out to be a king and exacts vengeance. The emphasis of the French versions is on the Argentille/Haveloc story rather than on the Danish and Grimsby events. This clarifies the moral of the story without the necessity of emphasising it subjectively.

The only moral judgement outside that implicitly in the story is that implied in lines 951-2:

"Ne sai pur quei cil en moreient,  
 Ki nule culpe n'en aveient."

The words are those of Haveloc who, apparently through humanity, sees no reason why the contending armies of Odulf and himself should be slain, and offers single combat. This idea of the single combat, unique to the Lai, perhaps derives from French romance tradition.<sup>1</sup>

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1. cf. A.Bell 'The Single Combat in the 'Lai d'Haveloc'' MLR XVIII pp. 22-28.

It seems to have a high moral tone in this poem, where the challenge is accepted and the single combat takes place. In reality it was often merely a political weapon by which leaders asserted their belief in the justice of their cause.<sup>1</sup> As a romanticised version of heroic behaviour it continued, merely as a gesture, rarely acted upon, until halfway through the sixteenth century.<sup>2</sup> It is perhaps a little hasty to see in Haveloc's challenge a considered, humanitarian view of war. The concern for the armies was the conventional way of phrasing these challenges. This merely asserts Haveloc's heroism and the rightness of his cause, and does not assume an implied moral condemnation of battle.

Gaimar's poem, too, is devoid of overt moralising. He, too, concentrates on story-telling and leaves the moral unemphasised beyond an exclamation at the scandal of Edelsi's marrying Argentille to a scullion (1.96 ff). The overt moral observation on diverse subjects, as well as the strong central idea of the sanctity of kingship and the unforgiveable perversity of rebels, are the monopoly of the English poem.

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1. William the Conqueror challenged Harold for this reason. Such confidence in one's right that one signified a willingness to submit to a judicium dei was excellent propaganda for any cause.

2. cf. Huizinga op. cit. pp. 93 ff.

## E    The Realism in the Background

On first reading Havelok, one carries away a strong impression of the reality with which it treats ordinary life in mediaeval times. Yet, so far in this essay, when reference has been made to verisimilitude, it has usually been to the French poems. The reason is simple. Thus far, the backgrounds we have examined have been backgrounds of ideas, and the social setting in which they have been represented, has been that of aristocratic society. When dealing with such a background, the French poets possess the experience, the style and tradition to treat it easily and familiarly. They have never strayed far from the court in their setting. Grim does not appear personally in Gaimar and his social status, albeit in retrospect, has been advanced by both poets. His children are considerable merchants with codes of behaviour in no way inferior to the aristocracy. All the implied values are those of a feudal aristocracy, though these values do not form the raison d'etre of the story (see above).

Both the French poems present a fairly satisfying view of the higher levels of society, presumably because of their author's familiarity with it. The whole story is raised to the aristocratic level in both treatments. In the Lai, especially, courtly elements are in evidence. The form itself is a courtly one. Women play an unprecedented part in motivation, Grim becomes the commander of a castle and sets sail with a retinue of 'chamberlencs et serjanz'. Feminine beauty is highly prized, being the reason for the fight

with Sigar's men (595-99), and Argentille's beauty draws the conventional admiration in Sigar's hall (685-5).

The English Havelok lacks this emphasis.<sup>1</sup> Its court scenes are unconvincing. It lacks the realistic touches of court politics which are a feature of the Lai and Gaimar; with their accounts of conditions in Denmark given by the merchant-husband of Kelloc, their clever presentation of Haveloc to his people, and the tension between kings Edelsi and Odulf and the barons. However, in the kitchen, the English poem is supreme in its realism. The picture offered by the French poems really hardly enters the kitchens. Gaimar describes Cuaran as a particularly distinguished scullion and spends his energy rather on delineating Cuaran's courtly virtues than his kitchen duties. Despite these virtues the gulf between him and the lords in the hall is extremely wide. He is fed from the table like a dog, because he is popular:

1.125-6        "E li reis e li chevalier  
              Lui dunoent de lur mangier;"

Through his generosity with these proceeds he is universally praised. Rather than a real description of the kitchens, this is a translation into kitchen terms of the ideals of largesse and feudal dependence.

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1. Ubbe comments on Goldeboru's beauty (1717ff) and suggests that some trouble may come from it (1741-45) but it is not the clear motivation of the attack when it comes. Bernard gives the reason as being as much for robbery as anything (1955-9).

The Lai places greater emphasis on Cuaran's strength than does Gaimar and some details of the tasks he has to perform are given, but the mention of these tasks is not so much a description of life in the kitchens as an illustration of Cuaran's strength.

11.245-6      "Merveillous fes poeit lever,  
                 Busche tailler, ewe poeter."

He also washes the dishes and gives the scraps to those about him.

If, in the French poems, the court is carried into the kitchen; in the English poem the reverse applies. Havelok enters the court through the kitchen. He is hired by the cook with the words:

11.907-8      "Wel is set þe mete þu etes,  
                 And þe hire þat þu getes."

He is taken in an entirely realistic way, because the cook thinks he will earn his keep. For the sake of a little to eat he will fetch fire and water.

11.913-20      "Þe fir blowe, and ful wele maken;  
                 Sticles kan ich breken and kraken,  
                 And kindlen (ek) ful wel a fyr,  
                 And maken it to brennen shir;  
                 Ful wel kan ich cleuen shides,  
                 Eles to-turuen of here hides;  
                 Ful wel kan ich dishes swilen,  
                 And don al þat ye euere wilen."

In return for this work Havelok is fed by the cook and he sits down to eat feverishly, still as a stone, concentrating on nothing else. Then follows a further passage (932-944), describing the work Havelok did. This merges into the description of his character which we

find in the French poems at this point. Since he's a good worker, the cook buys new clothes for him and this increases his fine looks. There then follows a description of the game played by Horn in Thomas' romance. Here it is certainly not an aristocratic sport, though it is patronised by those noblemen present. Havelok puts the stone further than all others. This decides Godrich to marry him to Goldeboru and he goes to Havelok and addresses him familiarly,

1.1135 "...'Mayster, wiltu wif?'"

Such an approach to Cuaran by Edelsi in the French poems would be inconceivable. Here Godrich, not only meets Havelok face to face, but speaks to him in his scullion's language. In Havelok, the kitchen, its tasks and restrictions, are realistically and sympathetically described, but the behaviour of the court falls short of realism. The French poems avoid the kitchen or interpret it in terms of court behaviour. Their realism is in the court and political setting.

The reality of background, as distinct from the validity of characterisation, of Havelok is then restricted to the humbler scenes - Grim's life as a fisherman; the market at Lincoln; the rustic sports and perhaps Ubbe's house and the Bernard Brun episode.

The social realism of the ordinary life is often strikingly vivid. Certain actions or descriptions make the ordinary life of mediaeval England more alive than in any other romance. The hardship of a famine is transmitted forcibly to us in the decision of

Havelok to work, 'for those who don't work don't eat'. Havelok has to leave Grim to seek work, for Grim can no longer keep him, even though, in his loyalty, he places him before his own children. The whole force of the sacrifice and the steadfastness of Grim's loyalty in a time of desperate shortage, is contained in the two lines:

1.857-8        "He tok þe sheres of þe nayl,  
                  And made him a couel of þe sayl,"

Grim jeopardises the livelihood of his family for his loyalty to the heir of Denmark. At the same time we receive a vivid picture of the cottage of an ordinary fisherman, with its folded sail for the boat and the shears hanging on a nail in the ordinary, familiar way. Such passing references to the most common, simple things of life in the country, things which hardly suffer change, make for the reality of the humble background.

The scene in the market at Lincoln during the famine is familiar to us. Men wait disconsolately for work.

1.865-70        "Two dayes þer fastinde he yede,  
                  þat non for his werk wolde him fede;  
                  þe þridde day he herde calle:  
                  'BERMEN, bermen, hider forþ alle!  
                  (Poure þat on fote yede)  
                  Sprongen forþ so sparke (of) glede."

Havelok hurls down nine or ten at this chance of work. The next day the same happens and he carries the fish to the castle on his head, in much the same way as a modern Billingsgate porter. We

recognise in this scene the films of the depression of the 1930's. There is too little work to go round and men are desperate for it. The scene has hardly ceased to be one of our everyday life. The vivid impression of reality in the background of Havelok springs in scenes like this from the fact that the poet describes things that are least susceptible to change - humble manual tasks, tools, labourers in hard times. They are real to us because we have seen them at first hand. The same things exist in our world. The French poems, on the other hand, treat of the world of the court and its manners; but ideas, fashions and conventions change. We are willing to believe that this may be an accurate sketch of the aristocratic background because we have read about it elsewhere, but it lacks the poignant sense of reality of Havelok, because we cannot possibly have experienced it ourselves. It is possible, of course, to exaggerate the ordinariness of the setting of Havelok. One thinks of Grim's children as little better than peasants, but a second glance shows this is not so.

11.1221-4        "We hauen, louerd, all gode,  
                   Hors, and net, and ship on flode,  
                   Gold, and siluer, and michel auhte,  
                   Pat Grim ure fader us bitawhte."

They are fairly well off, yet their possessions are simple ones; the possessions of a rich peasant or perhaps a small local magnate, a vavasour or dreng. They are the riches of a farmer or perhaps a merchant rather than a great lord. The feast prepared for Havelok is an agricultural, rather than courtly one.

11.1238-1246 "Sithen stikes broken and kraked,  
 And þe fir brouht on brenne,  
 Ne was þer spared gos ne henne,  
 Ne þe ende, ne þe drake,  
 Mete he deden plenté make;  
 Ne wantede þere no god mete,  
 Wyn and ale deden he fete,  
 And maden hem (ful) glade and bliþe,  
 Wesseyl he ledden fele siþe."

This is a rustic feast. The meal Ubbe offers Havelok is, as befits a great lord, more luxurious:

1.1726-29 "Kranes, swannes, ueneysun,  
 Lax, lampreys, and god sturgiun,  
 Pymment to drinke, and god claré,  
 Win hwit and red, ful god plenté."

The most luxurious drinks are mentioned and the meat is appropriate to the king's table, but the poet does not labour the list. Evidently it would be little but a series of luxurious names to his audience, or perhaps he had exhausted the commonplace romance list of expensive foods, for he refrains from dwelling on the subject of food longer and simply suggests even greater things by declaring,

1.1734-5 "Pat is þe storie for to lenge,  
 It wolde anuye þis fayre genge."<sup>1</sup>

Ubbe's hall is a fairly simple building; although it has a tower (2073). Only a fir-wood partition separates Ubbe from his guests,

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1. It would be intriguing to know whether the poet was specifically referring to the technique of lengthy descriptions as a method of amplification.

and he sleeps in the company of three servants. The organisation of Ubbe's court and its manner of conduct seems more suitable to a provincial baron than a lord of the realm.

The realism in the setting of Havelok is a realism in the presentation of details of ordinary life. If they tend to be details of country life this is scarcely surprising, for in the early middle ages almost all ordinary life was country life. The descriptions of the life of the aristocracy and the wealthy, also betray a provincial, if not rustic, air. The great nobility are not presented with the realistic ease of the French works. Everything is transposed to a lower key. Havelok was composed by a man who had no close contact with the manners and ideas of the aristocracy. Its setting betrays this as much as the lack of sophistication in its conception of kingship. It was intended for an audience who dwelt in the country rather than the court and to whom the simple tasks described in it were meaningful. The thing that distinguishes it from other English romance is the wealth of circumstantial detail of this ordinary country life. King Horn may have been composed for the same kind of audience, but nothing in it except its lack of sophistication lends any proof to the hypothesis. In the setting and the background of Havelok we can see something of the surroundings in which it might have been performed and something of the daily life of its audience. The oft-quoted passage describing the celebrations following Havelok's coronation as king of Denmark, mentions the performance of 'gestes' and romances together with other entertainments.

1.2322-31 "Buttinge with (pe) sharpe speres,  
 Skirming with talevas pat men beres,  
 Wrastling with laddes, putting of ston,  
 Harping and piping, ful god won,  
 Leyk of mine, of hasard ok,  
 Romanz-reding on pe bok;  
 Per mouhte men here pe gestes singe,  
 Pe gleumen on pe tabour dinge;  
 Per mouhte men se pe boles beyte,  
 And pe bores, with hundes tēyte;"

In a more courtly or aristocratic poem the coronation would have been celebrated with a tournament. Here we have a large fair, a celebration for the ordinary people, petty merchants, burgesses and rural peasants. No doubt Havelok was recited on such occasions.

Before leaving the discussion of realism it is as well to note a certain tendency of the Lai to explanation, rationalising of events and details which remain uncommented upon in the other poems. Firstly, both the French versions dispose of the inconsistencies arising out of the English poem's exaggerated regard for royal birth. There is never any doubt that Cuaran, in the French poems, is ignorant of his birth. His discovery of it forms the first climax of both poems and his name is changed to Haveloc to emphasise the change in status. In the Lai, the ray of light from Haveloc's mouth is rationalised in an unprecedented manner. We are told of its existence, purely as a recognition token, in line 71. A rather bizarre explanation of it is offered:

1.74 "Si grant chalur avoit el cors."

and, in courtly style, it is credited with a pleasant perfume.<sup>1</sup>

1.75-76 "La flambe rendoit tiel odour,  
Onc ne sentit nul home meillour."

Since it is introduced earlier, the recognition of Havelok by the flame when he is in Sigar's castle is presented in a more restrained and sophisticated manner. In both the French poems Sigar has been told of the flame by Haveloc's nurse so he looks for it in this young man who reminds him of King Gunter. (Lai 1.830ff; Gaimar 1.623ff)

The author of the Lai endeavours to explain the process by which Grimsby came into existence. As a theory the explanation is not ridiculous. He says that when Grim arrived there the place was uninhabited (126-30); Grim built the first house and became well known in the district. A trickle of immigrants joined Grim in his business and founded Grimsby.

11.139-42 'Plusurs a li s'accompaignerent,  
Sus le havene se herbergerent,  
Pur son nom, qu'il eurent oi,  
Le liu appellerent Grimesbi"

The poet is not so convincing in his attempts at etymology. He feels a need to explain the name Cuaran and merely fastens on what seems to him a possible etymology, given the facts of the story.

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1. cf. the accent on perfume in the French descriptions of the marvels in Floire et Blancheflor.

Cuaran, he informs us, is what the Bretons call a scullion (258-60)

When Haveloc is presented to the lords by Sigar, he is suddenly overcome by fear and seizes an axe with which to defend himself. Gaimar mentions that he feared judgement for the deaths of the five men he killed the day before. The author of the Lai evidently feels that this is not sufficient explanation, for Haveloc has been well treated since then. He neatly surmounts this by saying that Haveloc thought it might be the custom to prepare a prisoner for judgement.

11.858-64      "Haveloc mult se cremoit,  
                   Pur les homes q'il out occis,  
                   Qe ceo fust us de cel pais  
                   Qe l'om le deust issi servir,  
                   Baigner, laver, et revestir,  
                   Et puis iuger pur le mesfet,  
                   Et auant amener au plet."

There is evidence in the French poems, and especially in the Lai, of a certain desire to understand something behind the mere events of the story or the emotions of the characters. It is not very well developed, perhaps, but there exists a taste for analytic inquiry. The poet is, to some extent, a conscious critic of his material and as such, he tries to forestall some of the possible questions of his audience. This is a further sign of the sophistication of the audience of the French poems. They were not content merely to wonder at, or to be surprised by the next

incident. They were beginning to look objectively at romances and to ask the awkward question "Why?".

It may now be useful to sum up the broad differences between the two poems. The background of the French, and especially the Lai, is partly rationalising. Motives and reactions are clarified. The moral of the Lai is implicit and is clarified by the re-organisation of the story, placing emphasis on the Haveloc/Argentille marriage and its results. The question of unsuitable marriage is begged by the Lai, and treated as an abstraction by Gaimar, while the English poem treats it at the human level of its victims. Loyalty to one's lord, which the moral content of the poems suggests, if not states, to be a virtue, is the feudal and aristocratic duty which is common in romance. The setting of both the poems is aristocratic, but none of the ideals of aristocratic behaviour are formulated. There is no ideal view of kingship. The background is courtly, but not courtois. Love and beauty are of importance in the Lai, and the position of women in the plot is a more elevated one than that of Haveloc himself. Gaimar treats rather of married love. Argentille is more important than is her English cousin.

The English poem has nothing to compare with the mysticism and religiosity of the hermit episode in the Lai. Instead, it is suffused with a simple religious feeling. Its characters continually refer to God and offer prayers to Him. The underlying vision of ideal kingship is linked with the Christian religion.

Loyalty is not of an aristocratic kind, but a form of religious submission and a sacred duty. Havelok is under divine guidance and the recovery of his kingdom is determined by God. The whole emphasis of the story is upon kingship; attitudes towards it and the recovery of its rights. The relationship of Havelok and Goldeboru is undeveloped; their marriage is an alliance of right, and later, of power. This interest in kingship and the matters surrounding it places the importance of women in the background, and in addition, it demands an impassioned onslaught on those who oppose their natural lord. The author feels no sympathy for them, and allows his audience none. He is the malleus maleficorum. As befits this unsophisticated view of kings, the setting of the poem is a humble one. Within this sphere, it achieves vivid reality.

The difference in background and tone between the French and English poems can be stated simply as the difference in the backgrounds of their authors. One has his eyes fixed upon the tasks of village life and the affairs of petty lords, the others look to the behaviour of the court and the habitual conduct of the great barons.

### III Characterisation and Narrative Technique

The structures of the three treatments of the Havelok story differ from each other. The poet of the Lai begins with a subjective account of the background of events. He brings the reader immediately up to date with the situation in both England and Denmark at the time of Cuaran's departure from Grimsby. All the properties of the story are revealed; the flame, Haveloc's true identity, Sigar's opposition to Odulf. The whole is framed in a kind of introductory narrative, the actual story not commencing until Cuaran leaves for the court. This requires further background information, and the story of Edelsi and Achebrit is given. This last merges into the story proper as Edelsi is forced to find a husband for Argentille, in fulfilment of his oath. This concentration on the central issue of the story; the wicked deed of Edelsi and its retribution through the love of Argentille and Cuaran; helps considerably to clarify the moral effect of the Lai, which otherwise is not emphasised.

Gaimar, although probably the main source of the Lai, uses a somewhat different technique. He begins by sketching only the English background and then tells how Edelsi married his niece to a scullion. Cuaran's extraordinarily fine character is then described, and the story truly commences on their wedding night. This enables Gaimar to concentrate interest on the growth of their love and in the way in which it transcends circumstances to provide

a motivation for leaving the court. Also, when Haveloc's nobility is revealed, it is a surprise not only to the other characters, but to the audience. Both the French poems begin with the fairly subtle device of the artificial debut;<sup>1</sup> the Lai, with a moral disquisition, and Gaimar, by commencing in the middle of the story. The English poet begins naturally.

After a short address to the audience, intended to hold their attention and interest them in the story to come, the Havelok poet begins with the background of Athelwold and Godrich. Once this is established, he transfers to Denmark and tells the largely parallel tale of Birkabeyn and Godard. The story now develops as a straightforward narration following the fortunes of Havelok. There is no further need to interrupt the narration with details of past events in England, for these have been disposed of at the beginning. There is no threat to the unity of the story because of the parallelism of events and the pervading theme of kingship and treachery in both. The effect is of the intensification of the same idea.

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1. Faral, op. cit. pp. 55-59

A The Villains, the Hero and the Heroine in the English poem.

The two most interesting characters in Havelok share the parallelism of the events in which they are involved. Godard and Godrich have similar motives for their treachery, though the former is the more unmitigated villain. Because of their apparent fidelity, both are chosen as the guardians of the heir to the kingdom.

11.178-79. "...þerl Godrigh of Cornwayle  
Was trewe man, with-uten faile;"

11.374-75. "Was þe trewest, (as) he wende,  
Godard, þe kinges oune frende;"

Both swear to govern the kingdom well, but swiftly decide to take it for themselves. Their methods are rather similar; though Godard's decision to become a traitor to his oath is not described, so that his actions seem more immediate and ruthless.

Godrich incarcerates Goldeboru at Dover:

11.322+27. "And þerinne dede hire fede  
Poureluke in feble wede.  
Pe castel dede he yemen so  
Pat non ne mihte comen hire to  
Of hire frend, with (hir) to speken,"

and Godard:

11.412-14. "...in þe castel dede hem do,  
Per non ne mihte hem comen to  
Of here kyn, þer þei sperd wore;"

He clothes them only 'Feblelike' and does not feed them properly.

Godard's action immediately follows the death of Birkabeyn. He

is guilty almost as soon as he has sworn the oath. Godrich, however, rules England for some time and his treason springs out of tidings of Goldeboru's approaching maturity. His motives are examined in an interesting soliloquy (292ff). Is it right that he should be deposed from his rule to serve a mere girl? His ambition has an aristocratic tinge. He wishes to regalise his lineage.

11.308-11.      "Ich haue a sone, a ful fayr knaue,  
                   He shal Engelond al haue,  
                   He shal (ben) king, he shal ben sire,  
                   So brouke i euere mi blake swire!"

There is an air of desperation in Godrich's speech. He is fully aware of the evil he is committing, but he exercises his doubts by vigorous curses:

1.296.            "Dapeit hwo it hire thaue!"

11.300-301.      "Dapeit hwo it hire yeue  
                   Euere-more hwil i liue!"

Then, warming to his decision, he finds fault in Goldeboru; she is too proud, he has treated her too well. Now he is fully committed and endeavours to see his decision with cool objectivity by finding grim humour in it.

11.306-7.        'Shal it nouht ben als sho penkes:  
                   "Hope maketh fol man ofte blenkes."

Godrich is an explicable villain; his motives are clear and the reader can, to some extent, sympathise with them. He therefore does not appear so black as Godard, whose motives we know, but whose

mental processes are unrevealed. Godard's treachery is quite uncharacterised. He is merely a villanous abstraction, whose actions are a severer echo of Godrich's.

As soon as Godard has locked up Birkabeyn's children, he goes to visit them. At this point he is entirely uncharacterised except that he has sworn an oath and immediately broken it. By these deeds, we class him as another Godrich. He is already a less sympathetic villain, for his behaviour has been more ruthless and he has been the object of a long formal curse (425ff) from the narrator. Godrich was not called Judas, nor was he cursed. He was merely a traitor, a man who had been corrupted by new-found ambition. When Godard appears in person and is made to speak, the impression of his greater evil is intensified. The situation, involving the imprisonment of young children is enough to accomplish this, but the poet skilfully heightens the effect.

Godard is tormented by no doubts as to his course of action. He goes to the children with the clear intent of killing them. First, however, he sadistically teases them. Pretending concern, he asks them in a kindly way

11.453-54.        "... 'Hwat is you?  
                  Hwi grete ye and goulen nou?'"

The children complain piteously that they haven't enough to eat. They innocently ask if there is a famine.

11.462-63.        "Weilawei! nis it no korn  
                  Pat men mihte maken of bred?"

But Godard 'yaf...nought a stra', for this irony. Maintaining his kindly pose, he takes the two little girls on his knees.

11.469-70. "Also he wolde with hem leyke,  
Pat weren for hunger grene and bleike."

The appearance of the children makes a nauseating contrast with Godard's pretence. There is a quality in his behaviour that the modern reader might relate to sadism, but the mediaeval would perceive as a convention of unnatural villainy.<sup>1</sup> A moment later Godard has cut the children's throats and, not ceasing there, dismembered them. Godard is now established by his actions as a devilish and unnatural villain, entirely lacking in conscience. Beside him, Godrich seems a paragon of virtue. He had qualms about his decision to seize the realm, Godard had none. The scene between him and the innocent children damns him completely. Not only does he not hesitate, but he appears to take pleasure in the brutal business. The heightened innocence of the children and Havelok's ingenuous promise to give him homage, create a contrast which is even more damning. The scene is handled with great skill, rising to a climax in the frightening carnage contained in lines 474-75.

"Hwan þe children bi þe wawe  
Leyen and sprawleden in þe blod:"

The line is part of the common stock of phrases for use in romance,<sup>2</sup>

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1. Dissimulation is an important aspect of villainy as it is conventionally conceived in Mediaeval romance. Cf. Hardre in Amis et Amiles.

2. See Holthausen's note to this line.

but the sudden violence here has a vigour of expression that reveals an imaginative mind at work on well-known themes.

Only a miracle (500) saves Havelok from Godard. The latter is paralysed by indecision. He stands,

1.508. "Starinde als he were wod:"

Finally, he decides to drown Havelok. He delegates the task to Grim. Now he becomes calm again, a reasoned villain. His approach to Grim is brilliantly portrayed coercion.<sup>1</sup> He begins by reminding Grim that he wields the power of life and death over him. He then says that, merely by doing his duty, he can gain his freedom.

11.527-30. "Grim, þou wost þu art mi þral;  
Wiltu don mi wille al  
Pat i wil (nou) bidden þe,  
To-morwen (i) shal maken þe fre,"

In addition, he will make him rich. All he must do is to drown a

1. Compare this technique with that used by Rigmel to gain control of Herland, or by Floire to corrupt the gate-keeper. Here the approach is a brutal and direct assertion of power; the bribe of freedom is only an afterthought. In the French poems, the method used is to establish ascendancy by largesse and steadily to make the victim hopelessly indebted and impressed; to play upon his social aspirations. The poet of Havelok has a more unsophisticated approach. However, when Godrich broaches the subject of marriage, he at first approaches Havelok in a friendly way. This transient friendliness is the counterpart, however faint, of the counterfeit emotion which is supposed to stimulate the largesse of the French poems. In Havelok it is subsidiary to the willingness to use force if the more subtle approach seems in danger of rejection. Bluntly expressed, brutal force is the dominant instrument of coercion in Havelok.

child. Godard says that he will accept all the responsibility (536). The argument is well framed. Godard claims that, since Grim is obeying his orders, he will be guiltless. There are also the dual encouragements of a veiled threat and the promise of a considerable reward. Grim can hardly refuse. Godard's cunning is equally as great as his cruelty; indeed his smiling murder may be as much a conventional way of presenting duplicity as an attempt to demonstrate unnatural cruelty. He is called Judas with good reason. He is a murderer who feigns friendship.

Grim has a conscience, but he will not betray his word to his lord (580). Only the sacred light from Havelok's mouth saves him. Then Grim decides to go to Godard and ask for his reward. Godard meets him with withering scorn,

11.681-84.        "...Wiltu (nou) ben erl?  
                   Go hom swiþe, fule drit-cherl;  
                   Go heþen, and be euere-more  
                   Þral and cherl, als þou er wore."

Godard lacks integrity in criminal enterprises just as in honest ones. His disloyalty extends to his fellow conspirator and he takes delight once more in the perpetration of evil. He mockingly lectures Grim on the wickedness of the deed he has committed. The only rewards Grim receives from the traitor are insults, mockery and threats. Godard's cunning makes him aware of the strength of his position, and his complete lack of honesty makes him exploit it. Being evil and disloyal, he is characterised symbolically as

the incarnation of these qualities, and he consistently propagates them. Grim knows that he must fly from this man or his life will never be secure.

Despite his symbolic character, Godard is in no sense a flat, stock figure. He is strikingly individual in the subtlety of his attitudes. These attitudes are few; aristocratic mockery, cunning, absolute lack of integrity, and a Judas-like duplicity; but they are very effectively conveyed. Godard appears for a short time, but his actions, described by the narrative, and his speeches, presented dramatically, result in a very precise and well-drawn character. The character is fascinating in the sometimes dull ranks of romance villains.

Godrich's actions are similar to those of Godard, but his crimes seem less dastardly because they are better explained. He is at first more scrupulous, but by the time he has formed his plan to marry Goldeboru to Havelok, his character has the same apparent pleasure in cunning as Godard. In the soliloquy, beginning line 1073, he is depicted as deciding to marry Goldeboru to Havelok, because he is the 'hexte' man. He is obviously well pleased with the subtlety of his plan. Havelok, a kitchen porter, is the 'hexte', the fairest, strongest and best, and, so, is the only man who corresponds with his oath to Athelwold. He chooses to interpret the vow in its literal sense. Havelok is physically the strongest in the land. Obviously Athelwold meant something else when he spoke of the strongest man. But Godrich makes play on

the interpretation of the word 'hex.te', taking it to mean 'tallest'. He is sardonically amused at the situation. So delighted is he at the irony of the solution he has found, that he arranges for Goldeboru to be brought to Lincoln amid demonstrations of joy, and he announces that she will be married to the fairest man alive (1110). Goldeboru is suspicious and declares that she will not marry any but the son of a king, and Godrich flies into a rage when he sees that she is ready to oppose his plan. He deserts his rather superior relish of the irony of the situation and turns to crude, blunt expression; the bullying which soon proves to be typical of him. He phrases his insults with direct coarseness, deserting his elegant pretence completely.

11.1121-28.        "Pou shalt hauen a gadeling,  
                   Ne shalt þu hauen non oper king;  
                   Pe shal spusen mi cokes knaue,  
                   Shalt pou non oper louerd haue.  
                   Dapeit þat þe oper yeue  
                   Euere-more hwil i liue!  
                   To-morwe sholen ye ben weddet,  
                   And, maugre þin, to-gidere beddet."

He now approaches Havelok in a conspiratorial way. He addresses him in a familiar, colloquial way, calculated to gain his trust and co-operation; for Godrich is intelligent enough to prefer a volunteer to a pressed man.

"... 'Mayster, wiltu wif?'"

Havelok answers in the same tone with the commonsense reply that

he cannot support a wife. Again, Godrich suddenly changes his tone. His reaction is quite out of character for a nobleman, as is often the case with thwarted or angry nobles in English romance.<sup>1</sup> He springs on Havelok, strikes him, and shortly threatens him with hanging if he does not comply with his demand. The remark is put with peculiar unpleasantness.

11.1151-52. "I shal hangen þe ful heye,  
Or y shal pristen ut þin eie."

The gusto with which these shattering alternatives are delivered is typical of Godrich's threats. He turns to Goldeboru:

11.1159-62. "'But þu þis man wel under-stonde,  
I shal flemen þe of londe;  
Or þou shalt to þe galwes renne,  
And þer þou shalt in a fir brenne.'"

The shock of these threats comes from their simple explicitness, expressed in the active rather than the more usual passive voice, combined with the directness of the first person. This is not the mode of behaviour, nor is it the manner of expression of the true aristocracy, portrayed in courtly romance. Indeed, it bears some of the marks of style and expression of the fabliaux.<sup>2</sup> Both

1. Cf. King Aylmer's attack on Horn, and the Duke's similar attack on Amis. The Emir of Floriss and Blancheflour is more reserved.
2. J. Bédier, Les Fabliaux, 4th ed. (Paris 1925) pp.341ff. Also, C. Muscatine, Chaucer and the French Tradition (Berkeley 1964) pp.63ff. Muscatine comments expressly on the importance of action and dramatic dialogue in producing the vividness of the fabliaux.

Godard and Godrich, despite their pretensions, are occasionally depicted in a manner which is coarsely realistic, and in which they use the expression of everyday speech in a dramatic way. However, when Havelok comes to take revenge on them, Godrich grows to something approaching heroic stature.

When the news of Havelok's invasion first reaches him, Godrich is momentarily disconcerted, but he quickly regains his courage and persuades himself that he will crush the invader (254lff). He calls out the fyrd and addresses them in true heroic style (2576ff). It is a nicely calculated speech. He warns his audience that they are not here for foolish play, indeed he will tell them why they have been called - implying stern business. He blackens the enemy by describing their assault on the church and awakens fears in his army by listing the common reasons for resisting an invader.

11.2587-91. "He moun us alle ouer-gange,  
 He moun vs alle quic henge or slo,  
 Or þral maken and do ful wo,  
 Or elles reue us ure liues,  
 And ure children, and ure wiues."

Then he calls on them to join with him in attacking the enemy, and makes an oath never to be shriven until Havelok is driven from the land. All must follow him, for, he vaunts:

11.2602-5. "...ich am he, of al þe ferd,  
 Þat first shal slo with drawn sword,  
 Dapeyt hwo ne stonde faste  
 Bi me, hwil hise armes laste!"

Godrich is as good as his word, and can only be captured by Havelok.

Though the characters of Godard and Godrich are basically the same, they become quite well differentiated; this differentiation springs largely from the different circumstances of each. The twin keys to their characters are duplicity and treachery. Conventional duplicity is at the root both of Godard's friendly manner to his child victims and Godrich's pleasantries before forcing Havelok to marry Goldeboru. In this latter case, dissimulation is bound up with pleasure in the irony of the situation. The same pleasure is seen in Godard when he lectures Grim about his wickedness. Godard is haughty and superior, but when Havelok and Goldeboru oppose Godrich, his behaviour is different. He descends immediately to threats and blows. The sudden outburst of fury is a popular and unsophisticated representation of an outburst of rage of the kind seen today only on a Punch and Judy stall.

The differentiation, then, is based only on individual scenes and the opportunities given for soliloquy. Once the difference has been established, it is continued in the final scenes. Godard is swiftly arrested and put to death with cruelty rivalling that shown by him to Havelok's sisters. He is allowed only a mean gesture of self-defence before he is stabbed in the arm. Godrich, who is a lesser villain, actually grows in stature, through the use of heroic devices and attitudes, until the point where he makes his speech to the army. This speech contains no more duplicity than any other such heroic oration. After this, he is quickly captured and abased, but with less brutal detail than in the case of Godard.

The means of presenting these characters are quite wide, ranging through the explicit curses and comparisons with Judas of the narrator, narrative details of their emotions and actions, to the extremely subtle and well-wrought soliloquies of the characters themselves.

Although the English poet makes much of the presentation of the villains because they are close to the moral points he wishes to make concerning treachery, his presentation of the heroes is much less interesting. Havelok is little more than a sketch and Goldeboru is a mere cipher. The description of Havelok's deeds occupies a good part of the poem, but he is a reticent figure. Part of the difficulty arises from the poet's decision to span a great chronological space simply by the use of linear narration. The result is that Havelok appears in what are virtually three different characters. Firstly, he is portrayed as a child, then as a poor country lad and as a kitchen porter and, finally, as the heir-apparent and a military leader. To unify a character such as this within reasonable space limits is a difficult task.

As a child, Havelok is a sketch built up from two dramatic scenes. The emotions depicted are real enough and both scenes are impressive, but there is hardly a character to be gleaned from them for Havelok. The innocent simplicity of the child faced by Godard merely yields a scene filled with pathos. The scene where Grim recognises the royal heir and does homage to him is relieved by an air of common sense in the reply of the child. He wants to be freed

and to be given food before there is any talk of homage. When given it, he wastes no time but devours it hungrily. The scene has an attractive air of observed reality.

The two phases of the adult Havelok merge quite well, for the attributes of a hero are complementary to those of a king. His character is established by a wide variety of means. The induction of the poem tells of his prowess and this is echoed in the description of his strength in the games, and it becomes heroic in the description of the final battles and the fight at the inn. In the market scene, we see Havelok's intelligence allied with his strength. He keeps a careful watch for the cook so as to be ready to get work. The idea of strength and intelligence is paramount again when Godrich ascribes them to Havelok (1083-84), but the twin virtues of the epic hero, sapientia et fortitudo, are not elaborated much beyond this.<sup>1</sup> Havelok does not exhibit the considered scepticism of the hero who possesses sapientia in its developed form; a prudence which comes from an appreciation of the various forces which can influence human behaviour. He does, however, quite frequently acknowledge the part played by God in his motivation, and as a further proof of his piety, founds a monastery dedicated to the memory of Grim. Like Beowulf, he combines gentleness with strength.

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1. Cf. R.E.Kaske, 'Sapientia et Fortitudo' as the controlling theme of Beowulf. Studies in Philology 55 (1958) pp.423-56. Possibly Kaske's interpretation throws more light on the villains than on Havelok. Opposed to sapientia are avaritia and superbia. When intensified, they develop into malitia, the love of wrong-doing. Godrich's character might be explained in these terms.

1.1066. "Hu he was strong, and ek ful meke;"

Havelok's prowess is established by narrative events, by ascription by the narrator and the other characters (Bernard Brun 1970ff). When his star is in the ascendant he can show magnanimity to Godrich, but his justice is swift and cruel. Havelok allows the full rigours of what seems arbitrary legal ruling, to take their course. This is what would be expected of the best mediaeval kings. Besides the means of characterisation mentioned above, Havelok is allowed a soliloquy (790 ff). It does not trace any mental process, as does Godrich's, nor does it stimulate any action significant in the subsequent development of the story. It is notably undramatic and its sole purpose is a moral one dear to the narrator. Havelok feels that he must work for his food. The only possible implication of this on his character is that he is beginning to develop a mature sense of responsibility. This is not taken up again except where he decides to take Goldeboru away from the court to Grimsby; a decision taken for him in the French versions.

Havelok's character is described at length by the poet in the manner of the French poems, shortly before his marriage. It is the first time that he is fully realised.

11.945-51. "Of alle men was he mest meke,  
 Lauhwinde ay, and blipe of speke;  
 Euere he was glad and blipe,  
 His sorwe he coupe ful wel mipe,  
 It ne was non so litel knaue,

For to leyken, ne forto plawe,  
 Pat he ne wolde with him pleye!"

His happy nature is not unusual. Holthausen remarks that the phrase 'glad and blipe' is stock. Yet the willingness to play with little children is an expression of conventional gentleness peculiar to this poet. This gentleness is repeated in the testimony to his tolerance,

11.991-94. "Als he was strong, so was he softe;  
 Pey a man him misdede ofte,  
 Neuere more he him (missejde),  
 Ne hond on him with yuele leyde."

The net result of this is that:

11.955-56. "Him loueden alle, stille and bolde,  
 Knihtes, children, yunge and olde;"

This is a stock requisite for the character of any romance hero.<sup>1</sup> Prowess, strength and beauty combine in Havelok with a mild and happy disposition. Possessing these basic virtues, he lacks the decoration of courtly virtues. The conditions of the poem give the character its own distinctive marks. Havelok recites to the cook a list of his humble accomplishments (909), he loves children and has a very unpretentious relationship with them. He is good-natured and forgiving, but certainly not foolish. His wisdom begins

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1. Possibly it has roots in the sapientia et fortitudo ideal, linked with Germanic enthusiasm for a good reputation. Beowulf, too, is extolled for his gentleness at the end of the poem. See also, King Horn (247); Amis and Amiloun (198); Floris and Blancheflour (279).

with a respect for the pre-ordaining power of God. The awareness of this makes him more deliberate in his actions than his French brothers. His virtues are solid, homely ones, lacking the stylisation and formality of the true courtly or epic hero. If any link exists, it is not emphasised.

Havelok's eminence in the English poem as a stimulator of action considerably reduces Goldeboru with relation to her French counterparts. Goldeboru acts merely as a go-between, revealing divine dispensation to her husband. She is conventionally beautiful, though no details of her beauty are given. Ubbe refers to her as, ll.1718-21.

"...Goldeboru...

pat is so fayr as flour on tre;

In al Denemark is wimman (non)

So fayr so sche, bi seint Iohan!"

A passing reference is made to her beauty and accomplishment in lines 280ff, but her beauty is never the object of contemplation as an end in itself. Her appearances in the action are quite rare, and when she appears, she acts as a reinforcement of the poet's views on kingship. On seeing the flame, she rightly assumes that Havelok is a 'heyman' and when the angel confirms it,

l.1278.

"...she ne mihte hire ioie mythe;"

She assumes an air of authority when urging Havelok to go to Denmark according to the angel's information, and emphasises her authority by the use of several sententiae (1335ff). She then disappears from the story; except for Ubbe's brief reference to her;

until she returns to England to defeat Godrich. Here, to some extent, she serves as the moral voice of the narrator. She shows a very masculine satisfaction at achieving revenge and the repossession of her inheritance. She thanks God, as Havelok might, at seeing Godrich burned.

ll.2846-49.        "And seyde, 'Nu is time to take  
                       Manrede of brune and of blake,  
                       Pat ich ride se and go:  
                       Nu ich am wreken of mi fo.'"

The only reference to the love of Havelok being returned by Goldeboru, apart from the kiss she gives him on discovering his nobility, is the conventional passage at the end (2967ff) describing their subsequent life together. The character of Goldeboru is very thin indeed. Apart from a vague beauty, she shows no consistent characteristics. She exists simply as a link in the construction of the poem without playing any direct part in its motivation. She is, in fact, a personified spokesman for the moral pre-occupations of the poet. The English poet, apparently, has predominantly moralistic aims, and his characters are largely at the mercy of the narrative and the moral attitudes which spring from it. This, naturally, increases the importance of the villains, and this importance is emphasised by the only extensive treatment of character in the poem.

B The Villains, the Hero and the Heroine in Gaimar.

By contrast with the English work, Gaimar almost entirely ignores the characters of Edelsi and Odulf. The latter, especially, is little more than a name. He seems to have been killed in the Danish battle, but no clear account of his end is offered. The final battle with Edelsi, too, is contained in short compass. Edelsi never appears and we are told that he died, apparently of natural causes, a fortnight later (807-8). We learn no more about either of the kings than that they were 'feluns reis' (96). From the details of events in the story, they seem less villanous than Godard or Godrich. Odulf has slain Haveloc's father but Grim escapes before there is any threat to Haveloc himself. We are told that Edelsi has Argentille married to his scullion, but he never becomes personally involved in the crime. The villains of this poem are too aristocratic, too powerful, to carry out their own wicked plans.

The only dramatic appearance of either of them is when Edelsi is asked leave to go to Grimsby. His complacency and his belief in the absolute impregnability of his power, are evident in the mocking words he addresses to his companions.

ll.323-36. "E dist: 'S'il unt un poi de faim,  
U al tierz jor u al demein,  
Tut se mettrunt el repairer,  
Quant ne purrunt mielz espleiter.'"

The Anglo-Norman poet fully appreciates the realities of power. He

knows the detachment from his deeds of the man who wields it. Edelsi is a truly aristocratic villain and he need not approach his victims personally. His will is executed for him at a distance from its author. Since he, personally, never enters the society of the hero, he is hardly characterised, for Gaimar concentrates exclusively on Haveloc and Argentille and on those with whom they have direct dealings.

In some ways Gaimar's Haveloc is similar to his English counterpart. He is introduced, like Havelok, just before his wedding, at the dramatically appropriate place, by a set description (104ff). The items of his physical beauty are extolled in the usual order,<sup>1</sup> and his gay temperament is noted:

"Li suen semblanz ert tut tens liez,"

He is brave and eager to fight, so that he can overcome any vadlet in the house. In addition, he is 'francs' (119) and soon forgives those who assail him.

11.124-25.                   "Quant il (se erent) entrebaisiez,  
Dunc esteit Cuaran haitiez."

Thus far the character of Gaimar's hero does not differ radically from that of the English poem; but at this point, the different social outlook of the poets begins to take effect. Instead

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1. Faral, op. cit . pp.79-81

of saying merely that Cuaran was loved by all men, or immediately stating that he was 'loez', Gaimar says that the nobility gave Cuaran food from their meals, so that when he passed this on to the other servants, it was,

11.137-38. "Pur co qu'esteit si bien amez  
E si preisiez et si loez,"

Gaimar's Haveloc gains the approbation of his society, not through homely moral qualities, but through the chivalric virtue of largesse. This largesse of the kitchen has a faintly comic air. Gaimar enlarges on it. Largesse becomes one of Cuaran's chief virtues. He would always give whatever he had, and would even borrow to do it. He always repaid that he borrowed, and never asked for himself. At the end of this recitation of chivalric virtue Gaimar notes that Cuaran was from a 'gentil lit'. The whole episode of the kitchen is delivered with the faintest air of comic incongruity. The social framework is that of feudalism. Cuaran gives gifts of food in return for esteem, if not for service. His largesse is miniscule. Within this microcosm, there is something heroic about the mention, in line 132, that it took two servants to carry the food that he was given. The incongruity is not pressed, and the juxtaposition falls just short of being comic, but it is curious and interesting.

On the night of his marriage, Cuaran's naivete draws curses from his bride. Such reservation, without good moral or religious cause, is unusual in a hero. The English Havelok, although a

particularly pious hero, lacks this shyness and innocence. The retiring nature of Cuaran is perhaps only a trace of the poet's sentimentality, but it helps to establish a rather unassertive hero, as does the microcosmic world of kitchen feudalism.

One night, Argentille has a dream in which she sees a battle on the sea-shore between a bear and some foxes and a group of pigs. When the bear has been killed, the foxes run to beg mercy from Cuaran. He turns to the sea and the trees of the forest bow down to him and the waves rush towards the land. Now come two lions on their knees to Cuaran, who climbs a tree in terror. A great cry arises, and Argentille awakens. She tells the dream to her husband, who interprets it. The foxes, he says, represent the meat to be served in a feast which the king will hold next day; there will be so much left over that the servants will prosper. He will enrich his fellows.

11.273-76. "Tant en prendrum a espendant,  
 Les esquiers ferai manant  
 Des bons lardez e des braüins  
 Des escuieles as baruns."

The reference is again made to the feudal society of the kitchen. There will be an opportunity for Cuaran to show his largesse. The bear and the lions represent an actual bear and two bulls which will form part of the feast.

11.284-87. "E pur la mer pernum les pluns,  
 U l'ewe munted cume mer  
 Deci que freit la fait cesser;  
 La char des tors i serrad quite."

To appreciate this interpretation scene properly, we must remember that it takes up the thread of the incongruous social framework of kitchen feudalism. In addition, we must remember that a fairly sophisticated mediaeval audience would be well versed in the lore of literary dreams. They would know, for example, that lions kneel to kings alone, for the lion is the king of beasts. They would immediately recognise the wild boars as an army. In the Romance of Horn, Rodmund voices his fears about such a dream to Hardre:

ll.4644-52. "L'altrer, n'ad mie mult, un gref sunge sungai,  
 E cum jo me purpens e jo plus m'en esmai:  
 Me fus vis, k'od mes chens un matin m'en alai  
 En un bois sur la mer, e ileoches chacai;  
 En un sundre de pors esrai e si huai.  
 Un sengler grant dentud e fier od els trovai,  
 Ki nafrot mun cheval, mei abateit al tai,  
 Enz el cors me feri, k'unc pus ne levai.  
 "Pors" senefient "gent" en sunge - ben le sai.

We can assume that the audience of Gaimar's work would be as well educated in dream lore as that of Mestre Thomas. Thus, taking this knowledge with the hint that Cuaran was from a 'gentil lit', they would be aware that some great future awaited him. Yet, Cuaran persists in his kitchen feudalism. He has an intransigently lower class mind. The irony which results from his interpretation of the dream in contrast with the true one, is unquestionably comic.

Gaimar, from the introduction of his hero, has treated him

with a highly sophisticated comic irony which only becomes explicit to the alert audience in this scene.<sup>1</sup> When Argentille asks about the flame, the joke becomes even more obvious. Cuaran explains innocently that it comes in his sleep, but he feels nothing. He is ashamed of this sign of royalty.

11.295-98. "Des que jo dorm, ma buche esprent  
De la flamme nient ne me sent.  
Vers tei en ai hunte mult grant  
Que co m'avient en mun dormant."

The naive triviality of a mind that can explain away a miracle in these terms and, in addition, be ashamed of it, is the climax of the slightly mocking tone with which Gaimar has treated his hero from the start. He is a lord of the kitchen, an ordinary fellow with his mind incorrigibly set on trivialities, totally unaware of his destiny. Even after he has been told of his birth, he still suspects that Sigar is about to try him for his misdemeanours rather than present him to the nation. Despite this ineffectualness, this trivial turn of mind, which is reflected in the tiny part he plays in the motivation of the plot, Cuaran is treated sympathetically in his relations with Argentille. The growth of their love is sensitively recorded, and here, Cuaran never appears a fool. However, there is never any doubt that he is the junior partner in the

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1. Gaimar's treatment of kitchen feudalism is subtle and ironic, but a broader tradition of kitchen humour extends back to late Classical times. Cf. Curtius, *op.cit.* pp.431ff. Bedier finds in comic incidents in the French epic the 'germ of the fabliaux'. He cites the example of the comic kitchen boy, Rainoart, who develops into an epic hero. Les Fabliaux, p.372.

marriage as well as in the motivation. Even Kelloc discusses with her husband whether it is wise to tell Haveloc of his birth, for she fears his lack of discretion.

11.343-48.        "...S'il le saveit,  
                   Jo qui que il le descuvereit  
                   En itel lieu par sun folage,  
                   U tost li vendreit grant damage.  
                   Il nen est mie si savant  
                   Qu'il saced cuvrir sun talent."

However, if Argentille is there, it will be all right.

11.353-54.        "E si sa femme vient od lui,  
                   Bien li poüm dire, co qui,"

Kelloc's doubts of Haveloc's discretion prove unfounded. He promises her husband and herself a reward for their help and departs to Denmark. There, he is the model of circumspection. Even when Sigar asks him who he is, he tells his story in a guarded way, full of reservations, mentioning Grim and his own name of Haveloc, but otherwise speaking as though Kelloc had told him nothing. He allows Sigar to draw his own conclusions. It seems as though this caution is a part of Haveloc's character, deliberately portrayed by Gaimar, for the main events of the story could have been followed equally well if Haveloc had boldly claimed to be Birkabeyn's heir. The horn test would have been used as proof of the claim. Sigar slowly recognises his lord by blending his half recognition with details given to him by Haveloc. The realisation that Cuaran is in fact Haveloc, his lord, dawns slowly, and Sigar appoints a

sentinel to watch for the marvellous flame which he knows burns at the mouth of the true heir.

After his acceptance as king, Haveloc becomes merely a narrative sketch of the heroic leader, performing mighty deeds in battle and receiving the allegiance of his people. He shows the same magnanimity as the English in his willingness to pardon Edelsi.

Although Gaimar's Haveloc is merely a sketch, he is an interesting characterisation. In his early days he is viewed as practising the virtues of courtliness against the background of the kitchen. Full benefit is reaped from the situation that Haveloc is unaware of his nobility, while the audience vaguely realise it. As a result of this irony and of his part in the motivation of the plot, Haveloc is made to seem rather an ineffectual character. However, when the kitchen scene is over, his prestige increases with the rise in his fortunes. His love for Argentille has been well represented, and when she is threatened, he becomes a fighting man. To gain his inheritance, he becomes a diplomat. But, even late in the story, there still remains some of the indecision which makes him the tool of women rather than the initiator of action. Sigar still makes him king almost despite himself.

Gaimar's treatment of Argentille as a character is very thin indeed. Her most important appearance; in the scene of the dream; is a collection of interactions, certain fairly general attitudes and emotions. Outside this scene, we are told that her beauty is

the cause of the attack by Sigar's men, but the reference to beauty is nowhere heavily emphasised. The whole picture of Argentille which the reader bears away with him stems from the few scenes after the marriage. Here, for the length of her appearance, she makes a considerable impression. Her charm is due entirely to a combination of spirit and girlish timidity. She is pictured as cursing her uncle for marrying her to an unresponsive husband at one moment, and at the next, taking shelter in his arms from the terror of a dream. Her questions about the flame are filled with child-like incredulity. However, when she has decided to go to Grimsby, her poise returns and she speaks with firm determination.

11.299-303.

"...Ami, entend.

Nus sumes ci huntusement;

Mielz nus vendreit estre issilliez

Entre paiens e enperrez

Que ci gisir en tel huntage."

She has full knowledge of her worth, but does not exaggerate it. Gaimar's Argentille is only lightly penned, rather a series of emotional attitudes than a deeply realised character. Yet, this series of attitudes combine to present a glimpse of a character which is full of charm and verisimilitude.

C The Villains, the Hero and the Heroine in the Lai.

The presentation of character in the Lai is somewhat deeper than that of Gaimar, as its extra length might presuppose. Like Gaimar, however, the author of the Lai tends to concentrate on the story of Haveloc and Argentille at the expense of the space devoted to the characterisation of the villains. Odulf is presented merely by allusions made in the course of the narrative, very much as in Gaimar,

1.36. "Ki tuz jorz et le quer felun"

It is implied that Odulf is to be feared, for this is the reason for the departure from Denmark, and at his only other appearance, in the single combat, we learn little of his character. We are told that he does not deign to refuse Haveloc's challenge. The combat is quickly over without adding anything to our picture of Odulf.

Edelsi is a little more fully represented. Some use is made of dramatic technique in sketching his character. When he is forced by his barons to marry off Argentille, he calls his counsellors together, ostensibly for their advice. In fact, he has called them to give a demonstration of his own subtlety. His approach is perfectly didactic. First he states the problem (307ff). This is that Argentille must be given to some worthy lord in order to satisfy the oath and the barons, but Edelsi would prefer civil war

to relinquishing his powers. He invites his counsellors to offer their solution. They suggest that he makes Argentille a nun in Brittany. Now Edelsi presents the correct solution, upon which he had previously decided.

11.321-22. "Seignurs," fet il, "enpensé ai,  
Tut autrement m'en delivrai.'

He explains the oath, and the subtlety of his reasoning inspires his witty expression.

11.329-32. "Lealment m'en puis acquiter,  
A Cuaran la voil doner,  
Celui ki est en ma quisine.  
De chalderes serra reine."

After all, he says, Cuaran is a man of great strength, as anyone who has seen him knows. He is not unwilling to support his plan by force and adds sardonically,

11.339-41. "Si nuls i ad kil le cuntredie  
Ne kil m'aturt a vilainie,  
Dedenz ma prisun le mettrai,"

The whole exercise is pervaded by relish for power and political manoeuvre. It is framed as a demonstration to his counsellors of the subtle brain of the king. He prefers to use wit first but to support it by force. It is a primary usage of politics that a suitable pretence must be established before the use of force.

Edelsi addresses his barons, commencing by a reference to their demand (351ff) and then reminding them of the oath to marry Argentille to the strongest man. He implies that he is now going to carry out their wish, and the will of Achebrit. He has made

enquiries and discovered that the strongest of men is Cuaran.

11.371-74.        'Veritez est desi k'a Rome  
                   De corsage n'ad si fort home.  
                   Si garder voil mon serement  
                   Ne la puis doner autrement."

The speech is well turned and its logic is irrefutable. Edelsi has promised to marry Argentille to the strongest man; the barons demand a marriage; in Edelsi's view Cuaran is the strongest; therefore, to keep his promise, Argentille must marry Cuaran. None of the barons dare openly question Edelsi's interpretation of the word 'fort'.

The character of Edelsi has some affinities with those of the English villains. Edelsi marries Argentille to Cuaran on the strength of a similar piece of casuistry based upon variant interpretations of an oath. The circumstances of Edelsi's manoeuvre are, however, somewhat different. His explanation of the oath is made with the constant background of the court. The point of the trick is to establish a political alibi before his barons and at the same time to demonstrate political acumen to his courtiers. The pleasure which Edelsi takes in his ruse is a rather pedantic one. He lays out his reasoning before his council like a lesson in political intrigue. He shares the belief of the English villains in the use of force as the ultimate sanction, but unlike them, he prefers to keep this merely as a threat. Edelsi has a more intellectual approach to his crimes. Like Gaimar's villains,

he is more detached from his villainy. He, personally, would hardly stoop to violence, especially on a scullion. His aristocratic scorn is evident in his reaction at the news of Haveloc's return to England. He sends a message to Haveloc,

ll.1018-24. "Merveilles," fet il, "ai oī  
De Cuaran cel men quistrun,  
Ke jo norri en ma meison,  
K'il me vent terre demander.  
Mes keus ferai a lui juster  
Od trepez e od chald (e) runs  
(E) od paeles e od ploms."

Eldelsi makes no further appearances save for passing narrative references in the final battle. He is defeated and lives for a fortnight afterwards. On his death, Haveloc seizes his lands.

The author of the Lai takes his characterisation of Haveloc largely from Gaimar's individual treatment. In addition, there is a greater emphasis on the physical strength of the hero which is more compatible with the English version. Illustrating its independence of Gaimar, the Lai also covers the time which Haveloc spent with Grim and mentions his extraordinary strength as a young man (151ff). He is retained by the king's cook:

ll.246-47. "Pur co ke fort le vit et grant,  
E mult le vit de bel semblant."

As in the English poem, a list of the humble accomplishments of the hero is given too (247ff). Other than his open-handedness, as in Gaimar, no other moral qualities are noted.

In the presentation of the quality of largesse, the nice

irony of Gaimar is entirely lost. There is no effective counterpoint of courtly virtue and kitchen background. Instead of inspiring loyalty in his fellow servants by his generosity, Cuaran is simply regarded as a fool. The Lai states baldly:

11.255-58      "Tant esteit francs et debonere,  
                   K'a tuz voleit plaisir fere.  
                   Pur la franchise k'en lui ot,  
                   Le teneient entr'els a sot,"

There is no irony in this passage; instead the baseness of the kitchen servants, who mock at franchise, is revealed. Cuaran is a nobleman among those who can not appreciate noble behaviour. Indeed, they make game of him and call him Cuaran (scullion) in a mocking tone. Gaimar never attempts to explain the appellation in this way.

Reviving the earlier theme of his strength, the author of the Lai tells how Cuaran used to be made to wrestle for the amusement of the court. The magnanimity of his character in the other treatments is retained by the observation that he would bind his opponents in a struggle until an amicable agreement had been reached. Gaimar, although he represents his hero as a lord of the kitchen, never goes so far as to show him turned into a kind of gladiatorial buffoon, and, therefore, never arouses the moral judgements that this treatment of the hero awakens in the Lai. The only reference in Gaimar to anything of this kind is the remark that Edelsi made Cuaran into his Jugleür.

In the scene where Cuaran interprets the dream, the Lai again

follows Gaimar closely. The dream itself is clarified a little, but in his interpretation of it, Cuaran makes the even more preposterous claim that the flame is a part of the dream, signifying that the kitchen will be burned down. He immediately retracts this and admits that the flame always issues from his mouth in his sleep (485ff). He admits to being worried by it, and indeed, the author of the Lai posits the flame as one reason why Cuaran is so shy of Argentille. He is pictured as lying prone, just as in Gaimar, but here the reason is given.

11.389-90        "Ne voleit pas k'ele veïst  
                   La flambe ki de lui issist;"

Gaimar merely alludes to Cuaran's innocence.

The author of the Lai, then, tends to treat his hero in a more straightforward way than Gaimar. There is none of the latter's subtle irony and, instead, the moral judgement is made that the other denizens of the kitchen maltreat Cuaran merely through their own baseness.<sup>1</sup> The shame which Cuaran feels about the flame may be comic here, too, but it is not the culmination of an ironic vision of the hero and may be taken as a straightforward attitude of character.

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1. Bell suggests in his note to 11.265ff. that this is derived from the author's reading of Gerbert de Montreuil's Perceval continuation. He adduces as evidence several similarities in phraseology in the two works.

The hero of the Lai, like the others, is a sketch. He is the most ineffectual of them all, lacking the sophisticated literary conception of Gaimar's poem, and the realistic touches and the importance in plot motivation of the English hero.

As if to make amends for the meanness of its presentation of the villains and the hero, the Lai presents the fullest development of the character of Argentille. Parallel to this, it exhibits the fullest example of the motivation of plot by the female characters. Great stress is placed upon Argentille's beauty both in narrative epithet and in the opinions of Kelloc (575), her husband (657) and the men of Sigar's court (682). The fact that she is 'bele et enseigneur' (692) causes the squires of the court to covet her and, so, is the explicit reason for the attack. The author tries to represent his hero as girlish in the same way as Gaimar's Argentille, but lacks some of the latter's sensitivity and imagination. Instead of showing the spirit to curse her uncle, the Argentille of the Lai is filled with shame on her wedding night, and Gaimar's pleasant contrast between spirit and timidity is lost. Here, fear at the dream is baldly stated, instead of being evident from her actions, and the fright of the dream is clumsily juxtaposed with the new fright of the flame by means of a commonplace syntactic device involving the simple and comparative forms of the adjective.<sup>1</sup>

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1. This is clearer in the London MS.

11.435-37 "Mult out del sunge grant paour;  
Puis out greindre de son seigneur  
Pur la flambe q'ele choisit"

11.438-42        "...Argentille s'en esperi.  
 Mult ot del sunge grant pour  
 E pus ot plus de sun seignur  
 Pur la flambe k'ele choisi  
 Ki de la buche li issi."

Gaimar's picture of the terrified girl opening her eyes after a nightmare to see a flame coming from her husband's mouth is replaced by this rather nerveless device.

If the Argentille of the Lai lacks some of the appealing feminine timidity of Gaimar's heroine, she possesses another well-known feminine attribute not found there; that of guile. This guile is the means of empowering a determination in Argentille's character which is perhaps borrowed from the earlier Anglo-Norman work.

On the morning after the dream, she determines to discover its significance by visiting a hermit. This she does in secret. Then, armed with the knowledge he has given her, she returns to Haveloc and,

11.540-42        "Priveement et par amur  
                   Li demande dunt il ert nez,  
                   Et ou esteit sis parentez."

She does not reveal her reasons for wishing him to go to Grimsby, claiming instead that their position at court is a shameful one. This resourceful and guileful trait returns with her at the end of the poem, where she devises a plan for the defeat of Edelsi. She is something of a dominating woman in character, as befits her

position as a prime motivating force. It is she alone who promises a reward to Kelloc and her husband on leaving them (635ff). It is she, too, who demands that Haveloc should recross the sea to recover her kingdom.

11.984-88.        "Argentille li conseilla<sup>1</sup>  
                   Qu'il passast mer en Engleterre  
                   Pur sun heritage conquerre  
                   Dunt sis uncles l'aveit jeteo,  
                   E a grant tort desheritee."

The Argentille of the Lai is a more forceful personality than either of her sisters, and a less pleasant one than Gaimar's heroine.

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1. In the London MS. line 984 reads: 'Argentille li comanda'.

D     General Characterisation.

The poems do not differ violently in their means of characterisation. In all the poems, Havelok is the only character of whom a set description is given. The other characters are established by epithets ('Bele Argentille'; 'feluns reis'), or by their actions described in the narrative. Realistic attitudes and emotions are portrayed in dramatic scenes, but these usually illuminate only a few facets of a character and do not contribute to a fully rounded character which can be consistently developed. The Lai shows us Edelsi in this way in his scene with his counsellors and the poet of Havelok uses it frequently and very vividly. The scenes between Grim, his wife and the infant Havelok show it at its best. Gaimar, partly as a result of his genre, the narrative estoire, uses it less; but, coupled with touches of inspired narrative, attains a very high standard in the dream scene. Havelok is the only poem to use the psychological monologue as a means of linking motives and actions. However, it is not analytical and, in the case of Godrich, it is dramatically conceived and extremely effective. The poet of Havelok is capable of a surprising range of methods of presenting character. He uses direct remarks from the narrator, successful description arising from narrative, as in the French versions, and also the vivid presentation of emotions such as have already been noted in King Horn and Floris and Blancheflour.

None of the poets spend much effort on the elaboration of emotion or its analysis in monologue. Only the author of the Lai

tends to explain the reasons for his characters' actions in his capacity as narrator, and then only when this helps to clarify a point which is found to be difficult by reference to the story in Gaimar. Haveloc's reason for seizing the axe in Sigar's hall is clarified, and earlier it is made clear that those who attack Haveloc do so because they covet his wife. In Gaimar this is not quite so clearly stated.

As we have seen, the characters, too, have a certain similarity. All are developed from conventional stock. In all the poems Argentille is beautiful, Havelok is handsome, strong and gentle, the villains are dissimulating and cunning. These basic characters are differentiated by three main processes; firstly the greater or lesser desire of the poet to create dramatic scenes displaying the emotions of the characters, secondly, by the events in which they are involved, and thirdly, by the exigencies of the theme or underlying values of a particular poem. Gaimar is interested in the character of Argentille and gives her, by means of a dramatic scene, a certain spirit combined with femininity and common sense. On the other hand, Goldeboru's character is extended beyond the commonplace almost solely for her utility as a means of presenting the ideas underlying the poem. Her submissiveness at the marriage to Havelok is because she thinks it is the result of divine dispensation. She has a persistent concern for royalty, and towards the end shows a masculine enthusiasm for revenge and repossession. The feminine wiles of Argentille in the Lai are, no doubt partly, a deliberate extension of her character for its own sake, but they are also

subsidiary to the author's decision to introduce the secretive hermit episode as a concession to contemporary literary fashion. Her dominance of character is the direct result of the increase in her importance as a factor in the initiation of action in the plot.

As we noted earlier, the difference between Godrich and Godard is almost entirely dependent upon their narrated actions in the story. The difference between them and Edelsi is largely dependent on the social differences of the poets. Duplicity is the basic vice of all three. Edelsi's speech to his barons reveals the same detached air of innocence on the surface as Godard's questions to the starving children. The difference between them is that Edelsi is speaking to his court and duping his entourage. Due to the English poet's lack of understanding of courtly politics, Godrich merely exhibits his duplicity in soliloquy or to his immediate victims. He never addresses himself to the shadowy court which, we assume, surrounds him. Unlike Edelsi, he carries out his plans with grotesque threats. The French poet understands the courtly situation and does not involve his villain in such unkingly behaviour. We can not imagine him 'Starinde als he were wod' (508) as a result of the deeds committed by his own hand. He is altogether a more intellectual villain, conceived in the aristocratic mould.

The development of character, then, is very often implicit in the development of the story or dependent on the ideas behind

it, which may be influenced by external factors. Character, in all three poems, is rather a by-product than a first concern. Yet, in none of the poems are all the characters allowed to remain flat and uninteresting and in none of the poems are they ludicrously inconsistent, if one excepts Haveloc's obvious caution in Gaimar, which follows immediately upon Kelloc's fears of his lack of discretion. Where inconsistency does arise, it is usually so well cloaked by the intrinsic interest of the matter and by the skilful treatment of it by all the poets, that it is of little importance to the modern reader and must have been of even less to the mediaeval audience.

E     Narrative Technique

A great deal of the sense of realism present in the English Havelok comes from the language of the poem. The vocabulary is simple and non-technical, the dialogue given to the characters is natural and direct. An easy colloquialism is evident from the beginning. A dramatic part is written for the narrator and it serves as an induction. Attitudes of conviviality and piety are transmitted even as the story is advertised. There is no hint of didacticism; merely a cheerful attempt to get on good terms with an ordinary audience at their own level.

11.13-16     "At þe biginning of vre tale,  
                   Fil me a cuppe of ful god ale;  
                   And (y) wile drinken, er y spelle,  
                   Pat Crist vs shild alle fro helle!"

The expression never soars above the potential audience. It seems probable that the expression to describe a child must have found its way from poetic usage into the ordinary language.

1.125            "Sho ne kan speke, ne sho kan go."

It is part of the everyday speech of ordinary people in such a situation. In lines 369-70 it is taken up again in speaking of Havelok.

                  "Til þat he koupen speken with tunge;  
                   Speken and gangen, on horse riden,"

The mention of the particular organ associated with an act is not

unusual.<sup>1</sup>

Homely duties are described in the idiom of the ordinary people.

11.584-85. "Ris up swiþe, and go þu binne,  
And blou þe fir, and liht a kandel:"

Havelok's complaint when he is released by Grim has the phrasing and rhythm of everyday speech.

11.634-36. "And seide, 'ich am wel ney ded,  
Hwat for hunger, hwat for bondes  
Pat þu leidest on min hondes;"

The expressions of carelessness or lack of value were probably not drawn originally from literary sources, though they have become a commonplace of mediaeval writing. There is no reason to doubt their use in everyday speech at the time that Havelok was composed.

11.2050-51. "For bynderes loue ich neuere mo,  
Of hem ne yeue ich nouht a slo."

The interest of the language is far from limited to the use of idiomatic expression. Simple language is used with vivid imaginative effect. There is a tendency, noted in the other English romances, for the poet to express himself in concrete, simple, often violent figurative language. In Havelok this tendency is at its height.

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1. See Hall's note to King Horn 11.755-56. The expression 'speken and gangen' is recorded in Beves (Holthausen's note 1.125) and see also Amis 1.370. Worthy of comparison, and an occurrence which attested the diffusion of the expression, is its use by Bede in describing Caedmon's sickness: "hwæðre tōþon gemetlice þæt hē ealle þā tīd meahste ge sprecaþ ge gongan." Hist. Eccl. IV 24.

Athelwold makes his enemies fear him.

1.68. "He made hem lurken, and crepen in wros:"

H is illness is described:

11.142-43. "To þat stede þer he lay  
In harde bondes, niht and day."

The description of an illness as being laid in bonds is scarcely original, but it is none the less effective for that.<sup>1</sup> The burial of Athelwold is just as graphically described.

1.248. "Pan he was to erpe brouht,"

Compare this with the burial of the queen described in the Lai.

11.235-36. "Hastivement refu finie,  
Lez son seignur fu enfuie."

Gaimar's description of the funeral of Achebrit is less periphrastic but the emphasis is rather on Colchester as the place of burial, than the physical act of interment:<sup>2</sup>

11.79-80. "A Colecestre fud ported,  
Iloc fud li reis enterred"

1. Cf. Amis and Amiloun 1.1929. The suffering of a lover is likened to being in 'balful bende' in the lyric Blow, Northern Wind. 1.65. (MS. Harley 2253). Beowulf refers to the bonds of the death agony which clasp Grendel. (Beowulf 11.975-77).
2. Cf. Floris and Blancheflour 1.243. This plain and graphic expression to describe a funeral is a means of intensifying the emotional effect well known to English poets.

In Havelok, the conditions of Goldeboru's imprisonment are summed up by the striking phrase:

1.323. "Poureluke in feble wede."

There is wonderful economy and clarity of expression here.

Sometimes the vigour of the language is emphasised by the strongly marked rhythm of an alliterated phrase.

1.164. "He greten, and gouleden, and gouen hem ille,"

The turbulence of the rhythm is admirably suited to the sense.

11.234-37. "Per was sobbing, siking, and sor,  
Handes wringing, and drawing bi hor.  
Alle greten swiþe sore,  
Riche and poure þat pere wore;"

However, the verse can become an ideal vehicle for unemotional narrative; enjambement and the subtle use of caesura and repetition make for an easy, smooth rhythm.

11.286-90. "Quanne þe Erl Godrich him herde  
Of þat mayden, hu wel she ferde;  
Hu wis sho was, hu chaste, hu fayr,  
And þat sho was þe rihte eyr  
Of Engelond, of al þe rike:--"

The manner of expression, though vivid, is not always original, as we have seen. Indeed, very frequently, it relies upon the formulaic phrases common to Middle English romance.<sup>1</sup> Occasionally, they are

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1. Cf. the rhyme nede/stede in a couplet praising the hero. It occurs six times in Havelok.

reminiscent of Old English composition; though the alliteration has vanished:

1.239. "Leuedyes in boure, knihtes in halle."

Here, the use of the phrase is a simple kind of interpretatio. The line is an expansion or exposition of the previous line.

1.238. "And mikel sorwe haueden alle,"

This technique of very simple interpretatio, coupled with the habit of subjoining a list or a formulaic expression to explain more fully, is a favourite means of amplification in Havelok.

Formulaic expressions often consist of tautologous epithets, tacked to the end of a line: 'faire and wel,' (224), but equally as often these are antithetical and all-embracing: 'lef and loth' (261); 'fre and þewe' (262). Rarely, the sense is jeopardised by the application of such a tag:

1.138: "And after hise baruns, riche and poure,"

The interpretatio-lists are usually made up from matched pairs in this manner. They are stimulated by, and grow out of a single idea and all the words belong to the same theme.

11.30-33. "Him louede yung, him loueden olde,  
Erl and barun, dreng and thayn,  
Kniht, (and) bondeman, and swain,  
Wydues, maydnes, prestes and clerkes,"

Another short list - not strictly interpretatio - is stimulated by the mention of the word 'messebok' in line 186. In line 388 the list is enlivened by associating actions with the objects mentioned.

11.388-91. "But pat ich wille, pat pou suere  
 On auter, and on messe-gere,  
 On þe belles pat men ringes,  
 On messe-bok þe prest on singes,

The seriousness of the oath is emphasised by the list of holy relics, and this is intensified by the itemising of the list by the use of simple repetitio.<sup>1</sup>

The repetitive nature of the story pattern, together with these lists, gives a sense of slow evolution to the early part of the poem. The story is only redeemed from lagging before it has really commenced by the vigour of some of the expression, which has been noted earlier. Apart from the obvious interpretationes and some of the lists, certain passages in the poem proceed at a very pedestrian rate. The description of Athelwold at the beginning reveals a very leisurely evolution of ideas. One proposition gives birth to another associated one, and each proposition is separated by a line that does no more than consolidate the idea.<sup>2</sup>

11.35-40. "He louede god with al his miht,  
 And holi kirke, and soth, and riht;  
 Riht-wise men he louede alle,  
 And oueral made hem forto calle;  
 Wreieres and wrobberes made he falle,  
 And hated hem so man doth galle;"

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1. For lists enlivened by descriptive phrases, see 11.699ff.; 751ff.; and the famous interpretatio 11.2320ff.
  2. See also the fragmented thought in 11.71-74.

The total effect is rather that of antiphon and response, where even the antiphones grow out of each other. This kind of composition bears the marks of a concern with versifying and expression rather than an agile interest in the ideas expressed. The story does not really gain momentum until the dramatic scene between Godard and Havelok, despite the incisiveness of some expressions. The redoubling of ideas and the slowness of progress in the narrative is not necessarily a bad thing. It may be assumed that Havelok was intended to be recited to an audience of an unsophisticated background. Hence, a slow evolution of thought may be an advantage. In any case an audience may not have settled completely before the story begins, having failed to mark the 'nede/stede' couplet at the end of the induction. In such circumstances it is desirable to delay the development of the story and to emphasise needful details of the background. Orally performed epics generally delay for some time before introducing their hero. The poet of Havelok, however, never entirely abandons a certain hesitancy in the development of ideas.

Characteristic of the Havelok poet is his use of sententiae. This predilection for crystallised wisdom points again to a lack of agility and originality in thought. On at least four occasions,<sup>1</sup> this criticism is disarmed by placing the proverb in the mouth of a character, and thereby giving it dramatic value. Godrich's

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1. Five, if we include Havelok's "It is no shame forto swinken;" (799).

"Hope fol man ofte blenkes." reflects entirely upon his own character. Goldeboru appears sage, and her argument gains authority, from her use of proverbs (1338; 1352). Ubbe neatly sums up Havelok's worth by his expression in line 2036. Elsewhere, the poet does not merely accept the authority of proverbs, but bends them to his purpose. In line 1635 the proverb acts as an exemplum for the passage which follows.

ll.1635-37.        "He was ful wis pat first yaf mede;  
                    And so was Havelok ful wis here,  
                    He solde his gold ring ful dere;"

In lines 600 and 648, the sententiae are directly related to the theme of divine guidance and aid. Only in line 2461 is a proverb used in a way which simply obscures more complex issues:

ll.2461.            "'Old sinne makes newe shame:'"

Even here the effect may be intentional, for we have seen how the poet persistently harries the offenders and purposely denies them the pity or understanding of the audience. Here, a sententia provides a conveniently unquestionable, preformed moral judgement.

Simile is widely used. Usually it is very short, simple, and has a distinctly homely flavour. Athelwold hates wrongdoers like gall (40), the English people fear Godrich as the ox fears the goad (279), Havelok's burden is as heavy as an ox (808) as is the boulder which he throws (1026). The light which shines from Havelok's mouth is:

ll.1253-54.        "Al so briht, al so shir  
                    So it were a blase of fir."

These similes are in key with the background. They refer to the ordinary objects of everyday life.

Other tropes of rhetoric are not so extensively used.

Exclamatio, in which the poet addresses God (328) or the devil (445) has been mentioned earlier in the discussion of the moral tone. Together with this personal use of the device by the narrator, we must include transitio<sup>1</sup> and occupatio<sup>2</sup> which are both essentially devices of subjective narration. The construction of the story precludes much use of the former device.

1.328. "Of Goldeboru shul we nou laten,"

In this example the usual statement of to whom we are to transfer is missing. Line 2363 provides an example of the use of occupatio.

Repetitio is used quite often; sometimes in the form of repetition of whole phrases, which are balanced against one another. Havelok's denial of the means to support a wife is one of the most striking.

11.1140-44 . "I ne haue none kinnes þinge.  
 I ne haue hus, y ne haue cote,  
 I ne haue stikke, y ne haue srote,  
 I ne haue neyþer bred ne sowel,  
 Ne cloth, but of an old whit couel."

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1. Geoffroi de Vinsauf, Poetria Nova 1155-6. Op. cit. p.233 and p.354.

2. Ibid. 1159.

The balance of the line creates a rhythm whose cumulative effect is an assertion of poverty. A few lines earlier (1059-72) the same technique is employed to emphasise Havelok's physical fairness.<sup>1</sup>

Godard's frantic self questioning in his soliloquy after sparing Havelok (509ff.) is a kind of dubitatio,<sup>2</sup> but it is so naturally handled that one wonders whether the strange-sounding technical name can be applied to it.

Goldeboru's beauty and charm are neatly implied by the innuendo in line 285:

"For hire was mani a ter igroten."

The fidelity of Grim's children is emphasised by the deliberate understatement of line 1210.

11.1207-10 "Pat ful fayre ayeyn hem neme,  
Hwan he wisten pat he keme,  
And maden ioie swiþe mikel,  
Ne weren he neuere ayeyn hem fikel."

The occurrence of understatement of this kind and the use of innuendo are symptomatic of heroic technique. Here, although the subject matter is not heroic, an examination of the technique of the sections which tell of battle may prove interesting.

The first fight in which Havelok is involved is the battle at the door of Bernard Brun's house. In it he defends himself and his friends

1. Alþo, to emphasise the slaughter wrought by Havelok and his friends in lines 1902-3.

2. Geoffroi de Vinsauf, De Coloribus Rhetoricis. Faral op.cit.p.324.  
"Dubitatio est quando de duobus utrum vel de pluribus dubitatamus quid eorum velimus dicere,"

against a gang of marauders. It is, in fact, not a great deal better than a brawl. It begins when the sixty 'laddes' arrive and threaten Bernard (1771-73). This is immediately followed by a vignette of Bernard arming himself and then his defiance and a vaunt of what he will do to them. The villains reply with another jibe. These opening passes are in the ordinary colloquial language of the day. There is none of the formality of chivalric expression. Yet, the manner of handling the fight is undoubtedly heroic. The narration is entirely objective. The heroes speak for themselves. The battle begins as one of the enemy hurls a stone and breaks down the door. The focus sharpens to Havelok, who takes up his stance by the door and utters an unmistakably heroic vaunt:<sup>1</sup>

ll.1797-99        "'Her shal y now abide:  
                  Comes swipe vn-to me!  
                  Dathey't hwo you henne fle!'"

This vaunt is answered in a way impossible in the most elevated heroic treatments. There, the splendour of the resolve might be accompanied by an action, but it would never be immediately and scornfully refuted by an enemy, as it is in Havelok. Havelok disposes of the presumptuous enemy, however, with a door beam. The blow and its effects are minutely described, as are all subsequent blows. The effects lack the stylisation of high epic style, perhaps because

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1. Cf. Maldon ll.246-48; and for line 1799, compare Macbeth's cry to Macduff: 'And damned be him that first cries, hold, enough.'  
V viii 34.

the blows themselves are so unconventional.

The battle continues and at line 1849 a detailed picture of Havelok is given, running in blood like water from a well.<sup>1</sup> This descent from the general melee to minute individual description is typical of heroic battle scenes. Now, the attention of the poet turns to Huwe Raven. He rushes to aid his lord,

11.1878-80      "'Alas!' quath Huwe, 'pat y was boren!  
                   Pat euere et ich bred of koren!  
                   Pat ich here pis sorwe se!"

There is some implication that he is ashamed of not repaying his lord's generosity. He swears to avenge him, as do the others (1883-84). The battle draws to a close.

The whole scene has been related in the objective manner of heroic poetry. The movement from the detailed to the general has been obvious; the jibes, the vaunts, the arming of the warriors and the attachment to the lord as a result of his generosity are all present. Yet, the tone is not truly heroic. The language is too colloquial, the hero is too invincible, even though he is wounded in a way that the true epic hero could be only at the moment of his death. The blows are lacking in the finesse required of the true epic hero. The poet does not appreciate the code of professional pride and the honour that is in the spirit of true epic poetry. The difference is revealed in the catalogue of wounds inflicted.

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1. Cf. Amis and Amiloun (1349). This welter of blood is typical of English romance, though not of French.

11.1902-3 "He broken armes, he broken knes,  
He broken shankes, he broken thes."

The true epic hero kills with one blow, which slices his opponent to the belt.

The imagery of the encounter is that of the chase, or at least, of bear-baiting. There is one long epic simile:

11.1838-40 "And shoten on him, so don on bere  
Dogges, pat wolden him to-tere,  
Panne men doth pe bere beyte!"

and two shorter ones:

1.1872 "And pider drof al-so an hert,"

11.1866-67 "But dursten he newhen him no more  
Panne he bor or leun wore."

Other, more homely similes are present alongside these.<sup>1</sup> Innuendo is used with good effect to show how swiftly one unfortunate died.

Havelok:

11.1828-29 "...smot him sone ageyn pe brest,  
Pat hauede he neuere schrifte of prest;"

There is ironic understatement in the plan made by the attackers to surround Havelok and:

11.1835-36 "...brisen so, pat with no salue  
Ne sholde him helen leche non:"

The ideas and the technique of the street fight are heroic, but the spirit that infuses them with life is missing. The aristocratic

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1. 11. 1851; 1876-77; 1911-12.

military code is vanished.

Its ghost is raised in the final battle scene with Godrich. The narrative turns to Godrich at line 2530. He is important enough to merit the story being told in part from his side. Soon, he gathers the English army and addresses them with heroic understatement, appealing to their manhood:

11.2576-78        "... 'Lypes nu alle samen,  
                   Haue ich you gadred for no gamen,  
                   But ich wile seyen you forhwi;"

They are to engage in no foolish pranks but in an enterprise of great importance. Then follows some propaganda denigrating the invaders. He plays on the fears of the invaded and offers himself as their ally. He then makes a distinctly heroic oath:

11.2597-99        "For shal i neuere more be blipe,  
                   Ne hoseled ben, ne of prest shriuen,  
                   Til pat he ben of londe driuen."

This is the kind of self-denying oath which Charlemagne makes as a spur to action in the Chanson de Roland. The bodies of those slain at Rencesval will remain unburied until they are avenged.<sup>1</sup>

Having uttered this oath, Godrich vaunts that he will be first among the enemy.

11.2602-5        "For ich am he, of al pe ferd,  
                   Pat first shal slo with drawen swerd,  
                   Dapeyt hwo ne stonde faste  
                   Bi me, hwil hise armes laste!"

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1. Chanson de Roland 2434-39. Huizinga, op. cit. Pp.87-90, makes reference to vows of this type made in the 14th century. They grow more and more exhibitionist in their conditions.

These four lines express the dedication to personal glory which is at the root of the Germanic heroic outlook. Moreover, it is expressed in commonplace heroic terms. To fight as long as one could hold a weapon was the utmost bravery, to flee, the deepest shame. Maldon testifies to the eagerness of warriors to gain the honour of being the first to shed enemy blood (123-26). The close of Godrich's speech contains the vintage heroic spirit.

The battle commences. It is a series of individual combats, relating the deeds and the actual blows of Havelok, Robert, William and Huwe (2620-50). Havelok strikes off the head of an opponent. The poet comments upon it with a strangely distorted version of the 'sanz nul retenement' theme.

1.2627 "Wolde he nouht for sinne lette."

There is rarely a Christian question of pity or sin in this fatal stroke.

The accent in this scene is entirely upon individual prowess. Robert is inspired by Havelok and becomes intent on winning glory (2629-30). There is a lengthy description of the truly epic blow delivered by Huwe (2642-49) and, before it, a hyperbolic effect is gained by the use of litotes.

11.2636-37 "Huwe Rauen ne forgat nought  
Pe swerd he hauede pider brouht;"

Ubbe then engages Godrich in a prolonged epic duel. The blows

delivered are described in hyperbolic terms.<sup>1</sup>

11.2666-67 "So þat with (þe) alþer-leste dint  
Were al to-shiuered a flint."

The fight continues all day until Ubbe is severely wounded. Now Godrich slays many Danes. He is likened to a lion on the hunt.

11.2690-92 "...also (leun) fares  
Þat neuere kines best ne spares,  
Þanne is he gon,"

This is the kind of wild beast simile regularly found in epic poetry. Six lines later, a rural simile likening him to a scythe restores the more normal, homely structure of imagery found in Havelok. When Havelok confronts his enemy on the field of battle, he advises him to yield and magnanimously offers to forgive him. The reason is that he is so good a knight (2720-21). Here, despite Godrich's wicked deeds, and the whole moral orientation of the poem against him, is a genuine appreciation of the skill of a fighting man. The moment does not last long. Godrich replies with a scornful refusal. The climactic fight ensues and Godrich is soon beaten, and his arm cut off. The heroic section draws to an end as Godrich's children are made to suffer with him (2835-37) just as Horn demands that the perjurer's family should die with him in the Romance of Horn (1952-53).<sup>2</sup>

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1. Though not so much as Bernard's report of Havelok's wounds to Ubbe after the fight at the inn, where he claims that the slightest of his wounds would bring down a horse (1977-79).
  2. Compare, too, the end of Ganelon's kin.

Most of the commonplaces of heroic technique are present in Havelok, though they are not at their full development.<sup>1</sup> In the street-fight the technique is that of the heroic battle scene, but the actions and emotions of the participants are not heroic, and a definitely popular element has crept into the invincible figure of Havelok. He is something of a rustic hero. In the final battle, the technique of the heroic poem is more limited, yet here and there, the values and concerns of true epic poetry appear. Most noticeable are the stubborn determination to endure to the last and the desire for personal glory. There, too, though only in a faint trace, is the inspiring effect of others' prowess, and its compulsion on the heroic mind to emulate the deeds of valour and, if possible, to surpass them. The glimpse of a truly heroic world is achieved by a series of individual combats in which each individual shows heroism. In the street-fight the whole emphasis is on the marvellous Havelok. There is no opportunity for a unifying code of behaviour to emerge from the interaction of individual deeds. The abstract quality of heroism, therefore, never materialises. Heroic values are present in the final battle but are never fully exploited, for the technique is relatively sparse.

Neither of the French versions has a heroic tone comparable even to this. Gaimar accounts for the final battle in a few lines of narrative, turning all his attention to the ruse executed by

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1. The dream might be added to the epic machinery in the poem.

Argentille. The Lai follows his precedent closely. The fight in the street is entirely recast in a way which does not allow of any heroic content. Haveloc alone is involved in a scuffle with six opponents. He is then forced to take shelter from the wrath of the townspeople in a church tower. As we have seen, the interaction between comrades is necessary to body forth the heroic ideal. It can only be effectively shown in hand to hand fighting. The only idea borrowed from the world of heroic poetry is the single combat in which Haveloc slays Odulf in the Lai. Even here, neither the technique nor the tone is properly heroic. Haveloc decides on single combat out of pity for his army, not from the desire for personal glory (943-45). The battle itself is accomplished in five vague lines, Haveloc slaying his adversary at the first blow. The only trace of heroic technique is the defiance framed in a simile.

1.960. "Requerent sei cume liun."

One must agree with Bell that this single combat can not have any direct descent from an original heroic version.<sup>1</sup>

Gaimar does preserve a certain technique in his description of the street-fight, which is reminiscent of the heroic manner of describing battles. From line 549 there is a thoroughly vague account of the defence of the church tower, undertaken by Haveloc and his wife. Then lines 553-54 give a sudden and vivid picture of the arrival of Sigar. The particular is suddenly selected from

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1. Bell (M.L.R.) xviii pp.22-28) thinks it is derived from French romance.

the general vagueness.

11.553-55        "Quant dan Sigar i vint puignant,  
                   Veit cum les pieres vait ruant  
                   Danz Avelocs qui mult ert fort;"

The liveliness of the picture is accentuated by the use of the present participle. As an example of the heroic technique of suddenly concentrating on some minor or individual incident, it has shrunk to insignificant proportions. As a technique for describing battles, it is rather the reverse of the heroic manner where most of the emphasis is on the individual incident with only an occasional broadening of scope. It is no less effective for this, and it is a technique used brilliantly by Gaimar throughout his poem. We have seen how this simple and graphic observation of the detail of Argentille tentatively opening her eyes after the dream, heightens the reality and charm of the character, which is drawn by narrative and simple description. Again, in lines 491ff, a vivid sketch of ships on the ocean lends interest to the rather terse narrative.

11.491-92        "Dous nef's i ot tuit veirement,  
                   Lur veilz drescent cuntre (le) vent."

Gaimar's narration is normally more direct, more subjective and more economical than that of Havelok or the Lai. He dwells on scenes only when he is particularly interested, and only here does he adopt a limited dramatic technique. His language is simple and the evolution of his narrative is at a considerably faster rate than in Havelok. He lacks the vividness in expression of that poem, but

enlivens his narrative by the little vignettes we have just noted. Occasionally, too, he allows his characters to speak for themselves. The dialogue is effective and not unrealistic, though he is guilty of using direct speech for heavy, undramatic narrative purposes in Kelloc's revelation of Haveloc's past. Gaimar's style, in some ways, that of the historian, yet the story is not told as a plain history. Various direct appeals are made to the audience, in the romance manner. Their intention is to direct the emotion and hold the attention of an audience. Two, at least, serve the subsidiary purpose of providing a critical analysis of the poem.

1.96 "OËz que fist cist feluns reis!"

1.154 "Or oiez pur quei le faseit:"

A third (168) is the conventional romance technique for stimulating the anxiety of an audience, by insisting on the necessity of God's help for the hero, and a fourth (248) serves to introduce Argentille's exclamation at seeing the flame. Together with these rather analytical remarks, we may place Gaimar's claim to be working from a book.

1.756 "Si cum nus dit la veire estoire."

The impression must not be given that Gaimar's narrative is a concise report in the modern sense, or a well executed synopsis. Like the poet of Havelok, he uses the technique of amplification by lists, though his lists are fewer and shorter.<sup>1</sup>

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1. See also, ll.127-30; 645-46.

11.442-44      "Peissuns eumes a mangier,  
                   Turbuz, salmuns e mulüels,  
                   Graspeis, porpeis e makerels;"

Gaimar emphasises a point made, by the use of interpretatio,<sup>1</sup> but never unduly extends it. It never hampers his progress.

11.155-58      "Il quidot qu'il fussent si frere  
                   Mes ne lur (a) partint sun pere  
                   Ne sa mere ne sun lignage  
                   Ne n'esteit de lur parentage."

Nor is Gaimar free of the stock expressions of romance. The ring which Sigar offers to the successful candidate at the horn-blowing test, is a magic one,

1.688            "Qui a bosuin valt un chastel."

This description of the value of a ring is commonplace.<sup>2</sup> The estimate of the value is particularly apposite in this context, where its power is a defence in need.

Apart from these examples, Gaimar's artifices of style are very sparse indeed. He decides on the general structure of his story and tells it very simply. It is swelled out by no significant repetition, and the devices of interpretatio and lists are used sparingly to emphasise points and rarely simply for amplification. The interest is drawn from the events of the story, from the relationship of

1. Cf. 11.137-38

2. Cf. that given by Rigmel to Herland: '...ki bien vaut un chastel' (562). Also Floire et Blancheflor (992) 'li estrief valent un chastel'.

Argentille and Haveloc and from the implicit irony. All these are heightened by simple graphic sketches, by the cunning arrangement of details, and by dramatic interludes. The irony of the plot is spoken by Cuaran to his wife, when he tells her that his relatives live in Grimsby.

11.307-8 "Si la ne truis mun parenté,  
Suz ciel ne sai dunt jo sui né."

The author of the Lai is not interested in irony. He is not sophisticated enough to let the plot work for him. Throughout the poem one can feel the poet at work on his material behind the story. The beginning of the poem, with its moral injunctions, is very subjective, and the story-teller is not effaced until three hundred lines have elapsed. He keeps intervening in the development of the story; to explain the extent of a kingdom:

1.196 "A icel tens dunt jo vus di..."

or to note Grim's ambitions for Haveloc and explain what spurs him to direct, but undramatic, speech.

11.165-66 "Kar il quidot en sun corage  
K'uncore avreit sun heritage."

Even when warming to the description of the character of Cuaran, he passes on to the derivation of the word. The total effect is that the first three hundred lines never attain a life of their own. They are a summary by an uncommitted writer, a background, 'the story so far'. As such, the three addresses to the audience, contained within them, have no emotional colouring whatever. They are simply concerned

with passing on information. Line 196 (quoted above) is simply a repetition of line 128, in which the poet distances his story by explicitly placing it in time long past, and by baldly explaining the state of the land. When he has completed the necessary background of Achebrit and Edelsi, the poet decides to return to his hero. This is accomplished by the use of transitio in a way which, if not subtle, is at least quite clear.

11.237-38 "D'els estoet ore ci laisser  
D'Aveloc voil avant traiter."

Even later in the story, the poet interrupts the flow of his narrative to make the motivation of his hero clear. There is no regard for the suspension of disbelief, which is usually the aim of story-tellers.

11.856-57 "Savez ke li vallez cremeit  
Pur les homes k'il ot oscis..."

The language used, in common with the other versions, is not complicated. But unlike the other poems, it rarely rises to vividness of expression, either in turns of phrase or in descriptive vignettes. There is an exception to this rule in the description of Cuaran's strength as a young man.

11.153-56 "Ainz k'il eust gueres d'ees,  
Ne trovast il home barbé,  
S'encuntre lui luter volsist,  
Ke li enfes nel abatist."

The Lai contains more direct speech than Gaimar but, setting aside the scenes in which Edelsi appears, the dialogue is uninspired. For two long tracts, direct speech is used purely as a narrative medium, with

no dramatic force whatever (595-634; 773-806). The latter is largely a repeat of the former with details added which we have already gained from the narrative, and other details omitted. Even Edelsi's exchange with his council is not entirely dramatic. The problem he sets his counsellors is in reported speech, even to the passionate desire to remain king.

11.312-13.      Mes il voleit melz suffrir guere  
                   K'estre dessaisi (z) de la terre."

The counsellors' reply is written more as a quotation inserted into narrative, than as the dramatic reaction of real characters.

1.315            "Co li dient si conseiller:"

Again, after Argentille has visited the hermit, her question to Cuaran is framed in indirect speech. The reply is in direct speech.

11.540-43      'Priveement et par amur  
                   Li demande dunt il ert nez  
                   E ou esteit sis parentez.  
                   "Dame," fet il, "a Grimesbi,"

Thus, the direct speech in the Lai only very rarely reaches the pitch of dramatic reality found in Havelok and, less frequently, in Gaimar. Instead of bodying forth attitudes and emotions in the manner of drama, it tends to be a mere illustration of those already described by the narrator; an apposite quotation in the midst of a more explanatory narrative. This is not always so, and if it were, the Lai would be a less worthy work than it is. The discrepancy between the described feelings and the suspicions of Sigar about Cuaran, and his attitude to

Cuaran in direct speech contributes a great deal to the richness of the poem and makes for subtler characterisation.

The language of the narration is no more inspired than much of the dramatic dialogue. It contains much of the conventional expression of romance. Not perhaps as much as Havelok, but it is a less vigorous selection. Edelsi is made to swear 'Veant sa gent' (220), and there is no stronger man than Cuaran 'desi k'a Rome' (371). The barons mutter darkly that 'granz colps' will be given over the mismatch of Argentille.<sup>1</sup>

Repetition of both narrative details and individual lines are not uncommon. Edelsi delivers much the same speech, first to his counsellors when he is outlining his plans:

11.323-28        "Quant Achebrit li reis fina  
                   E sa fille me comanda,  
                   Un serement me fist jurer  
                   Veant sa gent, e afier  
                   K'al plus fort home la doreie  
                   K'en la terre trover (poreie)."

and secondly when he is actually delivering the speech to the court:

11.358-62        "Quant Achebrit li reis fini,  
                   En ma garde sa fille mist,  
                   Un serement jurer me fist  
                   K'al plus fort home la doreie  
                   K'el realme trover poreie."

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1. The sweetness of the scent of the flame is expressed conventionally 1.76. "Unc ne sentit nuls hom meilur." Cf. F. & B. 1.541; 1690. Compare also the 'set vinz' armed men in Edelsi's chamber (346) with the number of gates in Babylon's walls. F. & B. 1.1607.

When Kelloc is telling the story of his early life to Haveloc, she refers to Odulf in exactly the same words as does the narrator in line 36.<sup>1</sup>

1.504 "qui tuz jors out le queor felon"

Line 124, describing Grim's escape in the introduction, is precisely echoed by line 1001, describing Haveloc's return to England for vengeance.

1.1001 "Tant unt nagé et tant siglé..."

This repetition of lines which occurred in the setting of the background helps to recall the relevant information given there. The line about Odulf triggers a memory of his crimes, though they have only been narrated and not acted out. The reference to the voyage results in a subtle contrast between the two occasions.

The graces of style are sparse in the Lai. The construction in line 41, a balanced line with the beginning of each hemistich marked by unsensational repetitio on the word 'tant' is used three times.<sup>2</sup>

1.41 "Tant par destreit, tant par pour,"

Line 69 provides a rather unusual example of litotes, unique in this poem.

11.69-70 "Li enfes n'esteit gueres granz  
N'aveit mie plus de dous anz."

1. Though only in the London MS.

2. Also in lines 1001 and 124 (quoted above).

The progress of the narrative is very direct. Interpretatio is scarcely used, though a simple form of it occurs rarely.

ll.297-98        "Li reis oï ke cil diseient  
                  E la requeste k'il feseient."

Often it is merely the formulaic redoubling of the sense of an adjective, verb or, occasionally, a noun. The adjectival form resembles the matched pairs commonly placed together, which are found in Havelok, and indeed in most romances.

Argentille is : 'creue et grant' (289)

Cuaran is: 'francs et debonere' (255)

and in line 245, where the couplet is broken up, he is hired 'Pur co ke fort le vit e grant'. Edelsi claims that he had enquired most particularly after the strongest man:

l.363            "Assez ai quis e demandé..."

Contrary to the redoubling of the verb, the poet also employs the common form of zeugma in which the simple adjective and the comparative are dependent upon the same verb. The adjective itself is not repeated.<sup>1</sup>

ll.387-88        "Celë ot grant hunte de lui  
                  E il assez greinur de li."

The redoubling of nouns easily extends itself into the list-technique found in the other poems, but the author of the Lai limits the use of this technique. If there is a kitchen fire, the scullions will have

1. Cf. Floris and Blancheflour 27-28. In King Horn, a similar device lacks zeugma and depends on the comparison of adverbs. (247-48). See also The Romance of Horn 1.3641.

to:

ll.483-84 "De porter fors nos chald (e) runs  
E nos paeles e nos plums."

If a particular trait of style is typical of the Lai, it is the redoubling of expression. Time and again, an adjective, noun or verb is placed alongside a synonym or another word associated with it. When distinct from a conventional doublet, as it sometimes seems to be, the technique is one used by an author who is not perfectly satisfied with his expression and is striving to make himself clear.<sup>1</sup> It is comparable to the alternative translations given in the vernacular glosses of Latin originals. It partially succeeds in its aim of intensifying a particular impression, but it takes the precision and the vigour from the expression.

Repetition is regularly used in the Lai but repetitio is rare. Only one considerable use is made of it. Here, it is entirely successful in conveying the sense of bustle and importance for which it was intended.

ll.843-45 "Por ses messages les chargea,  
Pur ses amis les enveia,  
Pur ses homes, pur ses parenz."

The technique of the author of the Lai may be simply characterised, then, as extremely subjective, largely undramatic, analytic in his approach and indecisive in his expression. He has a tendency to use conventional romance expressions but this is not carried to

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1. Cf. Floris and Blancheflour l.264; 554.

inordinate lengths. He repeats himself in his narrative, perhaps in order to tighten the unity of his poem, but there is little overt artifice. His language is simple but where artifice exists, it is well used. He lacks the vividness of expression and dramatic virtuosity of the poet of Havelok and can not match Gaimar's subtlety in telling an ironic story or observing the minute reactions of human beings, yet, once his poem is past its long introduction, it never flags. Its clarity of motive, its grasp of political behaviour and continuously progressive narrative, make it worthy of comparison with the other versions of the Havelok tale.

#### IV Conclusion.

The root of the major differences between the versions of the Havelok story is set firmly in their different social and literary backgrounds. Ubbe can offer Havelok a fine meal, but he lives in a wooden house and sleeps in the company of his servants. In contrast, the seneschal of the Lai provides facilities for his guests to wash before dining.

ll.671-73        "En la sale les enveia  
                   Tant ke fu ore de disner  
                   E ke tuit alerent laver."

Havelok provides a vision of aristocracy as it looked from outside; the French poems attempt no vision, merely accepting the aristocratic background as normal. The background of Havelok is the world of ordinary people, straying in its setting no higher than the dwellings of the lesser rural nobility. The evocation of the humble cottage of Grim, with its shears hanging on a hook, its dying fire and its sail-cloth, seems to spring from first hand observation. The handling of the battles, and the behaviour of the kings does not ring so true. The poet apparently realised his limitation in this field, for he avoids description of the splendours of the army or the court. His experience of the latter is limited to the kitchen, and his king, Godrich, is characterised on the level of kitchen behaviour. He is never pictured among his lords. The army, too, is presented at a low level, and action is limited to the deeds of Havelok and his immediate comrades. Only in Godrich's exhortation

before the battle does any truly heroic note creep in. Here the poet is sustained by the habits of the expression of a tradition not yet quite dead. Godrich expresses himself in the heroic manner. The battle is given heroic treatment. Yet, it is in a much diluted form. The techniques of heroic presentation have degenerated into an habitual way of approaching the description of an important battle. The same methods are used to describe Havelok's fight at the lodgings, where the feeling is far from heroic.

The vision of royalty which the poem evokes and develops into its theme, emphasises the fact that the author is writing outside a pure aristocratic tradition. Loyalty to the king, who is everyone's temporal lord, is of extreme importance. The whole orientation of the poem implies that it is tantamount to the fear of God.<sup>1</sup> Grim is unhesitatingly false to the oath passed to his lord when he discovers

1. Compare the opinion of the 'Anonymous of York', a 12th century writer quoted in a foot-note to p. 3 of A.L.Poole, From Domesday Book to Magna Carta (Oxford 1951) "'Potestas enim regis potestas Dei est, Dei quidem est per naturam, regis per gratiam. Unde et rex Deus et Christus est, sed per gratiam, et quicquid facit non homo simpliciter, sed Deus factus et Christus per gratiam facit.'"

Poole adds that even John of Salisbury, in his Policratus (1159) and the 13th century lawyers Glanvill and Bracton, shared this view to some extent. The great divergence from the doctrine of Havelok is that all the authorities agree that the divine role of the king dated only from his coronation.

the royalty of his victim. The loyalty of both Grim and his children and of Ubbe, is beyond that near equality and friendship which existed between lord and man in the heroic ideal, and later, in the aristocratic, feudal ideal. Loyalty is a religious emotion, and the natural order of things. Hence, those who transgress the bounds of loyalty are repudiating the natural order and the will of God. The poet shows no sympathy for his villains and treats them with extreme cruelty. It seems as though he believes that the only true measure of virtue is the vigour with which a man persecutes evil. The idea is latent, too, in the approbation of King Athelwold's way with the wicked. This zeal is the more surprising in view of the patent gentleness of the poet revealed in his characterisation of Havelok, and the pathos he evokes at the murder of the children. One feels that this can not all be the result of conventional composition. Perhaps this vengeful zeal was not an integral part of his character, but simply an austere conviction.

The French poems utterly lack the religious fervour of Havelok, just as they lack an idealised view of kingship. To them, a king is part of the aristocratic background and a 'feluns reis' is merely a distasteful subdivision of the species, however scandalous his actions may be. Though the actions of Edelsi and Odulf break laws of fidelity, they are never guilty of as great crimes as Godard and Godrich. They never make personal contact with their victims, for they are characters who would not be found in personal

contact with kitchen servants. In Gaimar, Edelsi only appears once, and this is to make an ironic jest to his court. In the Lai, Edelsi shows the same pleasure in his deeds as Godard and Godrich, but he is far more cerebral. There is no question of personal violence. He foresees difficulties and deploys men-at-arms to offset them. In the French versions, the king may be wicked, but he is a true king in his own right, and behaves like one. It is symptomatic of the English poet's outlook that neither of the villains are true kings; they are usurpers. The author of the Lai, in his political wisdom, follows Gaimar in admitting the kingship of his villains. A king, to the French authors, can be made by a man - King Arthur - and deposed by another - Haveloc.

The French poems merely tell the story of usurpation and the alliance of two unfortunates, one of whom, unknown to him, has qualities which enable him to avenge and re-instate them both. They totally lack the fervour of the English poem for royalty and legitimacy. Their emphasis is elsewhere.

Gaimar's is the more sophisticated approach. Instead of venturing into the kitchen, as does the English poet, he presents his hero, ignorant of his true birth, demonstrating the courtly virtue of largesse in a kitchen setting. The emphasis is on the largesse, but its currency is that of the kitchen. The situation is developed by Gaimar with a fine use of witty irony. Cuaran is presented as totally ignorant of his birth, completely unambitious, yet practising the way of life of a courtly gentleman in kitchen

society. This presentation of Havelok demands a very restrained and controlled narrative, in contrast to Havelok, where the narrator plays almost as great a dramatic part as his characters. Gaimar, like the author of the Lai, strictly limits his direct addresses to the audience and tells his story in a relatively indirect manner. His second concern is his presentation of the relationship between Cuaran and Argentille. He makes the latter a living character by a series of skilful pieces of observation, and he sensitively follows the growth of the love of the main characters. Argentille is very much more important than Goldeboru.

This is even more true in the Lai. Here, Argentille indulges in an adventure on her own and becomes the chief motivating force in the early part of the plot. She is characterised as far more dominating than Gaimar's girlish figure. The world surrounding her, with its 'serganz et chamberlencs', its hermit, and its many references to beauty, comes closest of all to the world of courtly romance. The author of the Lai makes it even clearer than Gaimar that the cause of the fight which draws Sigar's attention to Cuaran is the beauty of Argentille. This follows a trend in the Lai to make the motivation of events in Gaimar clearer. Cuaran's shame about the flame from his mouth is given as the reason for him lying prone. Sigar's realisation of the truth about Cuaran and the steps he takes to ascertain it, are more clearly plotted. All this is a symptom of the general desire in the Lai to look critically at the material and to explain it. This desire threatens the smooth progress of belief in the narrative.

The Lai, like Gaimar, has an 'artificial' construction. It begins ostensibly as a moral exemplar and continues for the first three hundred lines as a very subjectively narrated summary of events leading to the moral part of the story. This technique is never entirely abandoned. Whereas the English poem succeeds in presenting its characters by dramatic speeches, by soliloquies and also by dialogue, the Lai tends first to describe feelings or characters and then to illustrate them by an apposite quotation. Gaimar, too, can use the device, but, in his shorter space, he prefers to use simple narration with occasional direct speech. The technique of reproducing only the most important sayings in direct speech, is suited especially to work composed to be read. Moreover, the technique of answering reported speech by direct speech is more common in the genre of 'estoire' than in romance. It is extensively used by Geoffrey of Monmouth. The manner of the narration of both Gaimar and the Lai is closer to written 'estoire' than is Havelok.

The more 'literary' nature of the French poems is noticeable at once, both in the obvious courtly influence on the Lai and in the sophisticated irony of Gaimar. The dream, too, is a more literary one in the French versions than the obvious symbolism of the English. The Lai uses many of the conventions of expression common in other French romances, though Gaimar is less dependent on these.

The language of none of the poems is stilted, but the English author is most notable for his lively use of language. This

results from the concreteness of his vocabulary, coupled with a genius for figurative expression and an ear for direct and economical idiom. Like other English poets, his treatment of death and burial is startlingly concrete. Ubbe and his men are overcome with joy at the recovery of their lord,

1.2161 "So he him haueden of erpe drawn."

Beside expression like this, the modern equivalent - "as if he were raised from the dead" - seems vague and euphemistic. In this respect the language of the French has the same intangible quality in its imagery as the idiom of modern English. This is not to say that the language of the French poems is in any way vague or complex. Indeed, in Gaimar at least, it is transparently and smoothly progressive in thought. Yet it lacks the inherent vivid, concrete, image-making power of the English.

Some of its expressions are traditional, the common property of other romances, polished by use; others are, as far as one can tell, the coinage of the Havelok poet. Some may even be drawn almost directly from the phrases of everyday speech. The real difference between the language of the French and English versions is that the former is the product of men who are educated to read and to compose on paper with a sense of direction and self-criticism; the latter is the language, and therefore the thought-process, of one whose literary education was narrowly limited. The rhythms and alliterative expressions of Havelok, the simple language and the concrete imagery, are at their best when spoken.

The poem is in the kind of language one speaks rather than reads or writes. The conventional phrases used by the poet were probably familiar to him from oral sources rather than from reading books. His techniques to intensify or amplify his matter are those common to many English romances.

It may be to go too far to declare from all this that the poet of Havelok was illiterate and to claim that, therefore, the poem was orally composed. Yet, the processes of the author's thought, the slowness of the evolution of the narrative, the conventional expressions and the stock virtues of the characters, point to close acquaintance with oral tradition. The half-comprehending use of epic treatment and heroic ideas - almost entirely missing in the French works - also signify a certain familiarity with the traditional techniques of oral composition. If the author had learned the manner of treating battle scenes from a book, we should expect his style to be more elevated and his treatment to be more perfect and complete. Against this mass of evidence for oral composition can be opposed little trace of specifically literary influence. The exempla and Latin tags used are all of Biblical and religious provenance and require little reading. Possibly the hagiographical flavour of the death of Athelwold presents the most promising evidence of literary influence. Taken with the psychological monologues of the villains and the polish of some of the verse, it seems to suggest

that the author of Havelok was at least semi-literate. We have his word - perhaps a literary topos, too - that he laboured during many sleepless nights to produce this work (2999). Perhaps his labour included the writing down of a poem, composed amidst an oral tradition by the use of methods proper to oral composition. The writing of the poem may have been simply a means of preserving and refining an oral product.

Havelok, then, was written by a poet of individual genius in the use of dramatic presentation, the imaginative use of language and the better use of conventional themes. In scenes like those describing the market at Lincoln, the fisher's life or Grim's cottage, nothing seems more certain than that he borrowed his setting, like much of his idiom, from the day to day life around him. It is this direct observation of peasant life unified with the language used and the ideas expressed, that makes Havelok into the most individual and one of the most lively and brilliant, of the Middle English romances.