THE THEME OF EDUCATION IN TWELFTH- AND THIRTEENTH-CENTURY FRENCH EPIC AND ROMANCE

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SUMMARY

This study examines the description of characters' education in twelfth- and thirteenth-century French epic and romance with two broad aims: to establish how education is described, and to suggest reasons why it is portrayed in the particular way that it is.

The discussion is divided into three parts. The first provides the contextual framework for the second two, and presents a brief overview of the history of education in the period, together with a survey of the theory and practice of education in school and at home. Critics and historians have noted the link between education and literature and we provide a model of contemporary educational background, theory and practice, against which literary descriptions may be compared and understood.

In Part II we analyse these literary descriptions, hitherto not comprehensively explored. Taking a large corpus of works, we examine the content of characters' education, drawing comparisons across genre and timespan, and with the model from Part I. This, together with further examination of where poets draw their inspiration, what they choose to include and how it is presented, provides a context within which particular features, descriptions or texts may be discussed.

Part III examines particularly interesting treatments of education. Five different studies of individual works or groups of texts illustrate the range of ways education may function, and help us to establish the status of the education description in Old French literature.

We conclude that poets deliberately describe and exploit education in various ways. These range from delineation of character, where we see authors shaping the raw material of narrative for their own ends, to major thematic use, essential for understanding a text. Study of the theme of education reveals its contribution to and reflection of the importance of medieval education and its influence on vernacular literature.

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With reference to my supervisor, Dr. Penelope Eley, I take the liberty of a little plagiarism from Aimon de Varennes:-

> .... un[e] tel[le] maistre[ss] avoit
> Que on nul millor ne savoit;
> Mout estoit bien fonde[e] des ars.
> (*Florimont*, vv. 1861-1863)

ABBREVIATIONS

The following abbreviation is used throughout:

PL = *Patrologiae Cursus Completus Series Latina*, ed. J.P. Migne, 221 vols (Paris 1844-1880)

Other occasional abbreviated forms are signalled in the text where used.

INTRODUCTION

"...in the history of human culture, one of the determining and most important features has ever been education."[1]

There are a number of reasons why we should be interested in the education of characters of medieval French narrative of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Firstly, these centuries are times of very important changes and developments in the educational field. We see from the eleventh century onwards an increasing secularisation of learning, with education becoming a prerequisite not only for life in the clerical sphere, but also for administrative duties in the secular world. Education in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries becomes available to a wider range of people and covers a wider range of material than before, as newly rediscovered portions of ancient learning find their way into western Europe. These changes culminate in the great development in the institutions of learning, the rise of the universities in the thirteenth century.[2] Many of the changes of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries were to have a lasting effect on education in Western Europe.

During the same period, French vernacular narrative also experienced remarkable development and flourishing, producing a wealth of fine literary works. The changes in educational and intellectual life contributed to and were inextricably bound up with the upsurge to be found generally in the cultural life of the period, and, in particular, in vernacular literature. In talking about the twelfth-century renaissance, it is impossible to separate education and culture.[3]

Events in the educational world are specifically referred to, for example, in the literary works of Henri d'Andeli, whose *Bataille des .vii. ars* describes in allegorical terms the taking over by dialectic of the arts courses in the schools and universities of the early thirteenth century. His *Lai d'Aristote*, whilst a version of a known burlesque tale about Aristotle, is nonetheless influenced by the controversies surrounding the

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1 Daniel D. McGarry, *The 'Metalogicon' of John of Salisbury*, p. xv.

Full bibliographic details of this and all subsequent works referred to are given in the Bibliography.

2 On these changes, see R.W. Southern, *The Making of the Middle Ages*, J. Bowen, *A History of Western Education, Vol 2, Civilisation of Europe 6th-16th Centuries*, and P. Riché, *Ecoles et enseignement dans le haut moyen âge.*

3 On the link between education and culture see C.H. Haskins, *The Renaissance of the Twelfth Century*, pp. 5-11 and G.Paré, A. Brunet & P. Tremblay, *La Renaissance au XIIe siècle: Les Ecoles et l'enseignement.*

doctrinal acceptability of some of Aristotle's newly available works which raged in Paris at the time the *Lai* was written.

Such educational events may also form a less obvious part of the background to vernacular literature. For example, J.L. Roland Bélanger points out in a recent article on the epic:-

> Though not quoting *verbatim* ideas being daily discussed and even hotly debated in the schools, [the poets] were certainly conditioned by these ideas and introduced them into their work in progress.[4]

He cites references to the names of God, to baptism, marriage and confession in epic texts as revelatory of theological discussions topical in the schools at the time.

Similarly, Tony Hunt has illustrated how the rise of dialectic in the schools has influenced the approach and form of medieval romance, particularly in the work of Chrétien de Troyes:-

> The very concept of "courtly love" and the experience which it embodied appear to be a of a dialectical nature and susceptible of a dialectical treatment. They involve a permanent tension between "mezura" and extravagance, between action and inaction, which clearly colours the courtly romances. Indeed, in the romances of Chrétien de Troyes, dialectic leads above all to the investigation of the processes of the hero's maturation, and to the question whether these processes are to be located in the chivalric or the amatory sphere. A certain tension between love and chivalry is fundamental to these romances.[5]

He demonstrates that an important development in education - the rise to pre-eminence of the dialectical approach - exerts an influence on the form and content of vernacular literature.

It is clear from these brief remarks that the relationship between medieval education and medieval literature is a profitable area for study. From this area, we may select the topic of the education of the characters of medieval French narrative, for the descriptions of education themselves command our attention. They are frequently to be found - in our corpus of some 120 texts, over half describe the education of the hero and/or the heroine, and occasionally of other characters. Some poets devote

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4 J.L. Roland Bélanger, '"Au Commencement était l'école (de théologie)": A New Paradigm for the Study of the Old French Epic', p. 58.

5 Tony Hunt, 'Aristotle, Dialectic and Courtly Literature', p. 109. See in a similar vein by the same author: 'The Dialectic of *Yvain*'. On the influence of rhetoric see Sarah Kay's article 'The Nature of Rhetoric in the *Chansons de Geste*', and Tony Hunt, 'The Rhetorical Background to the Arthurian Prologue: Tradition and the Old French Vernacular Prologues', and 'Rhetoric and Poetics in Twelfth-Century France'.

considerable interest to this part of the narrative, as is the case in the charming cameo of the lovers at school in *Floire et Blancheflor*, or in the lengthy description of life in the schoolroom found in the lesser-known *Dolopathos*. Since many poets do describe the education of their characters, and some at least give it particular care and attention, the question of the importance of this topic to medieval poets and audiences is necessarily raised. However, we find that neither the descriptions of the characters' education, nor the reasons for their inclusion in medieval narrative have so far been comprehensively examined. A number of studies have appeared, dealing with the education of particular characters, most notably Lancelot, on whom Jean Frappier, Elspeth Kennedy, Alfred Adler and Micheline de Combarieu have written most informatively.[6] The most general study on the area of education is M.P. Cosman's analysis of the education of the hero of Arthurian romance, concentrating specifically on Tristan, Lancelot and Perceval.[7] This study does offer a brief survey of the possible sources from contemporary didactic works that may have influenced narrative poets, and refers to the presence of education in other, non-Arthurian material, but these are not explored in any great depth.

We need to ask ourselves, therefore, both *how* and *why* education is described across a wide range of medieval French literature, within the context of the importance of educational matters generally in the High Middle Ages. The first part of the question - how - is the necessary precursor to the second - why. It is this second question that is the primary focus of our study, because it offers a number of potentially interesting insights. Firstly, on the general level, we can observe how our poets manipulate the different elements of their narrative and how they may bring their own originality to a common idea. Secondly, we can observe how education interacts with the other elements of medieval narrative, how it affects our view of the characters of that narrative, and to what extent it contributes to structure and form. These aspects, when explored in relation to particular texts, moreover, may help in our overall interpretation of them. Such an examination will also enable us to form an opinion as to the importance of the education element in our narratives. Is education simply a motif, occuring at a certain point in the narrative with what we might call a decorative function, but of no further significance to the narrative as a whole? Or may it be said to be a true theme, providing a central focus of interest to a whole text? In attempting to

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6 Jean Frappier, 'L'Institution de Lancelot', Elspeth Kennedy, 'Social and Political Ideas in the *Lancelot en Prose*', Alfred Adler, 'The Education of Lancelot: "Grammar" - "gramarye"', Micheline de Combarieu, 'Le *Lancelot* comme roman d'apprentissage: enfance, démesure et chevalerie'.

7 Madeleine Pelner Cosman, *The Education of the Hero in Arthurian Romance*.

answer these questions, we hope not only to clarify our understanding of one facet of medieval narrative, but also to offer further confirmation of our original premise, that the high profile of education in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries significantly influences vernacular literature.

We have chosen to restrict our study to the period 1100-1250, in order to have a well-defined area within which to work, which nonetheless encompasses the important developments in both education and literature. Our timespan thus not only covers the whole of the twelfth century, but also enables us to consider the intellectual changes occurring with the rise of the universities in the thirteenth. The twelfth and early thirteenth centuries are also a particularly rich period for medieval French narrative, justly considered as one of its finest hours. By the later thirteenth century, literary changes such as the rise of the prose romance, coupled with external factors such as a developing bourgeoisie, had brought new currents into Old French narrative. Hence our discussions cover only the earlier half of that century.

The starting point for our study is the historical background of education, which is a prerequisite for an understanding of exactly how narrative poets represent education in their works. We need to build up a picture of the broad historical events and major developments in the history of education at this time, as well as precise details of the theory and practice of education, all of which may be represented in literature. The practice of education as described in literary texts is our main focus of attention, but educational practice must be seen in the context of educational theory and the general historical perspective. Whilst our exploration of this background can only be brief, and must necessarily be limited to an overview, we endeavour to take as broad a survey as possible of the documents that refer to educational theory and practice in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. It rapidly becomes apparent when one examines educational writing that a variety of types of authors are interested in this topic - churchmen, moralists, political theorists and encylopaedists, to name the principal examples. This diversity of source types can render the task of creating a coherent picture more difficult, but serves also to show the enormous growth of interest in educational principles in this period, a growth which doubtless results in a less than perfectly coherent theory and practice in reality.

Having thus reviewed in Part I what is known of educational history, theory and practice in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, we are provided with a framework and a constant point of reference with which to proceed to the two further parts of our study, which examine how narrative literature treats the education we have sought to describe in the first part. Part II consists of a survey of the representation of education in

medieval narrative of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The particular area of that narrative to be considered is defined by the following parameters. Firstly, as we have said, the timespan considered is 1100-1250 (*pace* problems of precise textual dating). The portrayal of education is examined in the two principal narrative genres, romance and epic, with the balance between the two weighted in favour of romance, which is more likely to include an account of a character's education. In order to present as representative a survey as possible, the number of texts examined is large, and the range eclectic. The exact choice of texts has been governed, however, by certain important considerations: important and well-known texts are included, but these are balanced by lesser-known texts; both prose and verse romances are included; the major romance sub-genres are represented - *romans d'antiquité, romans d'aventures, romans idylliques, romans arthuriens*; and epic texts are taken from a variety of cycles.

The survey of these texts sets out to show the ways in the which heroes and heroines of literature are educated, to see what they learn, when, and how, and who teaches them. Differences in portrayal across the timespan of our study, and between the different genres are also important aspects to explore. We will thus be able to build up a general picture of how the education of a character is treated.

Having answered the question of *how* education is portrayed, we can approach the more interesting question of *why* the poets describe education. Our general survey of our corpus of texts enables us to draw out some general answers to this question as we explore the poets' motivation in including a description of a character's education at all in the their narrative, its status generally within that narrative, and the types of literary effects that can be achieved from it.

However, it is the use and shaping of education in specific texts that provides the more illuminating answers to this question, and it is this that forms the substance of Part III: the literary exploitation of education. This comprises five studies of particular texts or groups of texts, chosen either because they give particular prominence to education, or because their treatment of the subject is unusual in some way. First, we examine the different versions of the *Roman d'Alexandre* in order to show how variations can be played upon the basic theme of education. Next, we study the literary exploitations of the common medieval *topos* of nature and nurture, which is an essential factor in medieval views of education. We explore ways in which the accepted dominance of nature influences the portrayal of a character, and the ways in which deliberate subversion of this accepted order contribute to plot and character. Thirdly, we explore the relationship between love and education, examining the interaction between education and another component of medieval narrative, in order to assess the

range of influence of education, its effect on other areas of the narrative, and hence is relative importance. Fourthly, we look at the education of women from the perspective of two texts dealing with highly educated and magical heroines; and finally we look in detail at the use of education as a fully-fledged literary theme in Chrétien's *Le Conte du Graal*.

These studies are not intended to be exhaustive, but serve rather as examples of approaches to certain texts or topics made possible by an appreciation of the context of medieval education and its literary representation. We can thus offer an informed opinion as to the status of the theme of education in medieval French literature and provide a framework within which other medieval texts may similarly be approached.

PART I

Education in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries - An Overview of the Historical Context

> "La civilisation médiévale avait oublié la *paideia* des anciens et elle ignorait encore l'éducation des modernes. Tel est le fait essentiel, elle n'avait pas l'idée de l'éducation." (Philippe Ariès)[1]

In order to understand the background of educational history, theory and practice in the Middle Ages, against which a discussion of its literary reflection can be set, it is first necessary to be clear what we understand by the term "education". Medieval education needs to be understood in the context of medieval society, which was structured around an idea of function. Etienne de Fougères, for example, divides society into its familiar three estates,[2] adding the function of each, in his social commentary, *Le Livre des Manières*:-

> Li clerc deivent por toz orer
> li chevalier sanz demorer
> deivent defendre et ennorer,
> et li païsant laborer. (vv. 673-676)[3]

Similarly, John of Salisbury's *Policraticus* uses an extended metaphor of human anatomy and bodily functions to describe the commonwealth and, in the words of John Dickinson, its translator, is based on the idea that "the perfect society is that wherein the members exactly fit themselves into the respective niches which it makes out for them."[4] The individual is viewed less in terms of his rights (a modern concept) than in terms of his function and responsibilities within society.

The significance of this in educational terms is that education becomes the means of equipping a person to fulfil the function accorded to him by the social order. Our modern view of education as a process designed to help an individual achieve his

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1 Philippe Ariès, *L'Enfant et la vie familiale sous l'ancien régime*, p. 463.

2 These are discussed in Georges Duby, *The Three Orders, Feudal Society Imagined.*

3 Etienne de Fougères *Livre des Manières*, ed. R. Anthony Lodge.

4 John Dickinson, *The Statesman's Book of John of Salisbury*, Introduction p. xxii.

own potential is quite alien to the Middle Ages.[5] Hence we find that notions of childhood and adulthood are based less on considerations of age than on those of preparedness to assume the responsibilities of life. A man reaches adulthood when he can govern his fief and undertake to provide for a family. If he has not attained such responsibilities, he may still be thought of as a child, despite his years.[6]

The medieval concept of education also differs from our own in that it does not distinguish so strongly between social and academic instruction (between "upbringing" and "education"), but rather views education in a general sense as a "training for life". The Old French verb "norrir", for example, covers a wide range of meanings from "to nurse a young child" to "to bring up a child" and "to educate a child", whether socially or academically. Similarly, "bien enseigné" means both "well brought up" and "well educated".[7] Any discussion of education in the Middle Ages must therefore encompass both academic and secular training, because to limit our study to purely academic learning would be to ignore a large part of the educational process. However, for ease in dealing with the very different source materials for each aspect, clerical and secular training will be dealt with separately in our discussion. Pierre Riché has usefully outlined the kinds of documents which can be used as source material in the study of medieval education, and divides them into three groups.[8] The first covers writings on study and school life; the second, works designed for a particular instructional end, such as advice on courtesy, manners or religion; and the third comprises what might be called educational treatises proper on the training of monks and schoolboys, or the noble and royal laity. The first and third groups provide a wealth of information for tracing the development of clerical education, the second group and third groups, where they relate to lay education, suggest that a range of materials need to be explored to form a picture of secular education. We shall look at as wide a range as possible, including, in addition to those works suggested by Riché, works by moralists and encyclopaedists.

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5 See, for example, the opinion of Doris Desclais Berkvam in *Enfance et Maternité*, p. 143: "Les notions de croissance ou d'évolution de la personnalité sont complètement étouffées au profit des notions d'apprentissage et d'adaptaion de l'individu à la norme sociale".

6 See comments on childhood and its terminology made by Jean-Charles Payen, 'L'Enfance occultée, note sur un problème de typologie littéraire au Moyen Age'.

7 See respective entries in Tobler-Lommatzsch *Altfranzözisches Wörterbuch*. The *Franzözisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch* notes that the Latin verb "nutrire" covers the same range of meanings as its Old French descendent "norrir".

8 Pierre Riché, 'Sources pédagogiques et traités d'éducation'.

Let us begin by sketching some of the broad concerns and major developments in education in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries before looking in detail at educational practice and theory. In the early Middle Ages, education had tended to be primarily within the province of the monastic orders, but a characteristic of the eleventh and twelfth centuries is the rise of the cathedral school, superseding its monastic counterpart. This is attributable partly to monastic reforms and partly to changes in society. The reforming spirit seen in the Cluniac and Cistercian revivals of the tenth and twelfth centuries emphasised a return to a more austere way of life, severing links with the outside world, including the potentially disruptive influence of lively young people in monastic schools. In the outside world changes were taking place that meant that the educational role could be taken up elsewhere. The cathedrals in the rising towns also supported schools, designed to train those connected with cathedral life and, in theory, poor scholars of the towns. It was to these schools that education increasingly passed from the late eleventh century onwards, as monastic schools declined. The presence of these schools in an urban surrounding brought them one step nearer to the secular world, which in turn began to exert pressure on educational needs.

As the twelfth-century economy prospered and society began to enjoy greater wealth, it also began to enjoy greater sophistication and leisure. With the ever-increasing complexity of court business and administration, opportunities began to open up for educated men outside the purely ecclesiastical world as part of the bureaucracy of royal or large noble households. A period of rapid economic growth gave rise to the need to adopt new and appropriate institutions, and to the questioning of traditional concepts. The cathedral schools were more able to meet these changing needs and education became more secularised. The calm of monastic learning gave way to the more vigorous mode of the cathedral schools where new ideas and ways of thinking were more easily accepted. An enormous change in atmosphere and orientation in academic life took place, which is aptly described by Lester K. Little:-

> The purpose of monastic education, seen in one light, was to pass on to younger monks a traditional corpus of sacred, and of virtually sacred literature .... The corresponding purpose of urban education was to prepare students for criticism, confrontation and contention.[9]

Coupled with this lively, combative mode was an optimistic and enthusiastic regard for the value of scholarship which was a hallmark of the twelfth-century renaissance. Consider, for example, the following quotation from Alain de Lille's *Summa de Arte Praedicatoria* on the benefits of learning:-

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9 Lester K. Little, 'Intellectual Training and Attitudes Toward Reform 1075-1150'.

> Lectio, sensum acuit, intellectum multiplicat, animositatem discendi parat, facundiam ministrat, teporem mentis calefacit, torporem expellit, tela libidinis exstinguit, gemitum cordis excitat, lacrymas elicit, Deo nos propinquos facit.[10]
>
> (Reading sharpens the perceptions, multiplies the reasoning powers, creates a hunger for learning, aids eloquence, raises the working temperature of the mind, casts out sloth, extinguishes the fiery darts of lust, raises a groaning in the heart, calls forth tears, brings us close to God.)[11]

However, there were still those in the monastic tradition in the twelfth century, who were opposed to the intellectual trends of the cathedral schools and their views counterbalance the intellectual enthusiasm of the time. Perhaps the greatest of these was Bernard, abbot of Clairvaux. His abbey was to become the focal point of the new Cistercian movement which aimed to renew the spirit of Benedictine monasticism in a return to an ascetic and contemplative life. Secular learning and education had no place in such a life and Cistercian monasteries ran no schools. Paradoxically enough, Bernard himself is reckoned one of the great intellectual figures of his time and he was well able to enter the lists against such figures as Abelard. He remained an intransigent opponent of any who indulged in the dialectical scrutiny of theological topics, or placed an emphasis on the importance of human reasoning in matters of faith. St. Bernard was ever an opponent of the secular, rationalising spirit of the twelfth century and, although a great thinker himself, he repeatedly warned against learning for its own sake:-

> Non tamen dico contemnendam aut negligendam scientiam litterarum, quae ornat animam, et erudit eam, et facit ut possit etiam alios erudire. Sed duo illa oportet et expedit ut praecedant, in quibus summam salutatis constitui superior ratio declaravit.[12]
>
> (I do not, however, maintain that book learning is to be looked down upon or neglected. It adds lustre to the soul, civilises it and gives it the capacity to civilise other men. But whereas it is right and proper for both those two things to be given precedence, higher logic has decreed that the greater of them be that which relates to salvation.)

Similarly, we find in Sermon 36, that he emphasised that all learning must lead to a greater love for God and the moral upbuilding of the student. In and of itself it was futile.

The conservatives like Bernard raised the doubts that had plagued the early Christian centuries as to the acceptability of secular learning for the Christian. Opinion

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10 *PL,* CCX, col. 180a.

11 Unless otherwise stated, translations are my own.

12 Sermon 37 *PL,* CLXXXIII col. 971c.

remained divided between those who viewed secular learning as deleterious and those who pursued it wholeheartedly. The position taken by Augustine, that secular learning should be plundered for what it could usefully afford the Christian, ultimately prevailed, although sporadic outbursts against secular learning continued to erupt. A notable example from the eleventh century is Peter Damian, who went almost as far as to urge all Christians absolutely to eschew secular learning.

The twelfth century brought a renewal of the positive attitude to secular learning, expressed, as we have seen, in such works as Alanus de Lille's *Summa de Arte Praedicatoria*:-

> Et si contigerit aliquando te transferri a libris theologiae ad libros terrestris philosophiae, transeundo aspicias, utrum ibi forte invenias quid, quod mores instruat, quod fidei catholicae competat, ut his quibus spoliantur Ægyptii ditentur Hebraei. (col. 180b)
>
> (And if it happens one day that you are diverted from books of theology to books of earthly philosophy, the diversion will enable you to see whether perhaps you can find there something which may order our ethical conduct and agree with our catholic faith. Were not the Hebrews enriched at the expense of the Egyptians?)

The most sensible compromise between secular and sacred learning can be found in John of Salisbury. Ever an advocate of the study of classical literature, he was nonetheless aware of the potential dangers. Readers needed to learn discrimination in order to select from their reading only such things as were "edifying to faith and morals".

> There is scarcely a piece of writing in which something is not found either in meaning or expression that the discriminating reader will not reject. The safe and cautious thing to do is to read only Catholic books. It is somewhat dangerous to expose the unsophisticated to pagan literature; but a training in both is very useful to those safe in the faith, for accurate reading on a wide range of subjects makes the scholar; careful selection of the better makes the saint.[13]

Coupled with the belief in the value of scholarship and the usefulness of secular learning in the twelfth century was a strong belief in the validity of human reasoning. This was a period of remarkable change on many fronts, and the growing complexity of European society in the wake of sustained economic growth encouraged a new self-consciousness as the individual began to have to find his own way in a changing society. Colin Morris sees in the period 1050-1200 the beginning of the modern,

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13 Joseph B. Pike, *Frivolities of Courtiers and Footprints of Philosophers*, Book VII, chapter 10, p. 253.

Western preoccupation with the individual.[14] The late twelfth century was the high point in a growing affirmation of the importance of matters human, bringing with it a renewed interest in the literature of the classical past as a source of ideas for shaping the present and the future.

This spirit of humanism was vitally important to the development of education in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. A new value was placed on the great classical authors for whom John of Salisbury made a plea in his *Metalogicon*; the writing of Latin improved, and it became a language able to express great subtleties of thought as well as supporting imaginative and lyric productions. Most significantly, an increasing value was placed on the human mind. Had it not been for this, a man like Abelard would never have been able to champion human rationality in the face of doctrinal authority, and show that a man might think for himself. Abelard's rational method was to become the accepted tool for intellectual enquiry for the rest of the Middle Ages. However, the spirit of individualism that had fostered it had waned by the end of the thirteenth century, and by the end of the Middle Ages, dialectic had become fossilised in scholastic practices.

In this climate of Christian humanism, education took on a new impetus also from the emphasis on the necessity for the individual to "know himself". This was a primarily intellectual search, focusing on the nature of God and the relationship of the individual to Him. The men of the twelfth century sought to understand the spiritual reality which would reveal to them the true nature of God, and man's relationship to Him. They tried to fit all human knowledge into a universal cosmology, based on an understanding of ultimate truth, which they never doubted that the human mind was capable of comprehending. Cosmological speculation was the hallmark of medieval intellectual life in which the influence of Neoplatonic thought is clearly discernible (although it was later overshadowed by Aristotelianism and the rise of dialectic). Marc Bloch sums up this important tendency of medieval thought thus:-

> In the eyes of all who were capable of reflection, the material world was scarcely more than a sort of mask, behind which took place all the really important things; it seemed to them also a language, intended to express by signs a more profound reality. Since a tissue of appearances can offer but little interest in itself, the result of this view was that observation was generally neglected in favour of interpretation.[15]

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14 Colin Morris *The Discovery of the Individual 1050-1200.*

15 Marc Bloch, *Feudal Society*, p. 83.

M-D Chenu also comments on the awareness, in all spheres of thought, that perceived reality is only a pale reflection of true reality.

> Ecolâtres et mystiques, exégètes et naturalistes, profanes et religieux, écrivains et artistes, les hommes du XIIe siècle, entre tous les médiévaux, ont en commun, imposée par leur milieu et réglant leur jugement dans une table innée des catégories et des valeurs, la conviction que toute réalité naturelle ou historique a une *signification* qui déborde son contenu brut et que révèle à notre esprit une certaine densité symbolique.[16]

This larger reality was identified with spiritual reality and thus the whole of intellectual activity was charged with religious significance in a way quite foreign to modern minds. Philosophical enquiry was aimed at finding out the truth concerning that larger reality, and it was an unquestioned assumption that the understanding of this truth increased man's understanding of the nature of God. Logic appeared to twelfth-century philosophers to provide the key to such an undertaking since it afforded a rigorous methodology whereby the truth or falsity of any given proposition could be ascertained, and therefore offered an objective framework for the search after truth. Dialectic was to become the most prized intellectual tool of this century and those that followed.

Perhaps the chief representative of this adherence to the value of human reasoning was Peter Abelard who, whilst his uncompromisingly expressed views brought him into conflict with his more conservative contemporaries, nevertheless enjoyed a great following. Perhaps more than any other he gave to dialectic the supremacy it enjoyed in the thirteenth century and beyond as the cornerstone of the scholastic method. Abelard's dialectical method was shown most clearly in his work *Sic et Non* in which he set out a number of theological propositions on which various accepted authorities disagree. He attempted to resolve the apparent contradictions by a rational approach. Although this undertaking was greeted in some quarters with horror, a similar approach was taken in the next generation by Peter Lombard who drew up a definitive statement of orthodoxy on all areas of belief, balancing the different authorities. His *Sententiae* became the standard work on theology in the schools and universities. The logical approach also fostered the growth of the study of law in this period. An Italian monk, Gratian, performed for canon law the same service Peter Lombard had performed for theology, commenting and glossing all canonical writings to form a consistent body. His *Decretum* became the standard canon law text, supplemented by collections of subsequent decretals made by various later popes.

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16 M. D. Chenu, *La Théologie au douzième siècle*, p. 161.

This method of marshalling authorities for and against certain propositions was to become, in the so-called scholastic method, the foundation of later medieval teaching, but this was not achieved without a battle and Abelard was persecuted by the conservative faction of his time. However, his method received a new impetus in the latter half of the twelfth century as new translations made available to western Europe much of the Greek learning they had lost, amongst which were many works of Aristotle. The logical works available to Abelard, known as the "old logic", were the *Categories* and *On Interpretation* which had been translated and commented upon by Boethius. By the time John of Salisbury wrote his *Metalogicon* (1159), the "new logic", in the shape of *Prior Analytics, Posterior Analytics, Topics* and *Sophistical Refutations*, had arrived. By the start of the thirteenth century the complete corpus of Aristotle's works was available, and the heretical concepts in some of his works, especially *Metaphysics* and *Natural Science*, added to the opposition of the reactionaries to the scholastic approach.

Although it is still not agreed exactly how the new translations were made and came into western Europe, the work of translation certainly occurred at those geographical points where the Christian, Greek and Moslem worlds met, principally Spain, Sicily and the Levant.[17] The Greek learning lost to Latin Christendom was preserved in Moslem centres of scholarship where it was commented upon and added to. Indeed many Moslem commentaries on Aristotle accompanied his works into the west, adding to conservative disapproval of them. The translation work usually involved turning Arabic versions of the Greek works into Latin, a difficult task since there were few Latin scholars competent to understand Arabic. Contact with Arabs in Spain or on Crusade were the usual methods by which the language was learnt. One of the major centres of translation from Arabic to Latin was Toledo, where it was fostered by a sympathetic archbishop, Raymond. Sicily too produced Arabic-Latin translations and versions of the original Greek, since Sicily had maintained contact with eastern Christendom.

Despite the difficulties involved and the often less than perfect quality of translations produced, the arrival of the Aristotelian corpus, together with other Greek scientific writers such as Euclid, Ptolemy, Galen and Hippocrates, had a radical influence on western European education. The subject matter available for study had greatly increased, and Aristotle's works provided further material for the study and practice of logic.

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17 Charles Homer Haskins, *Studies in the History of Medieval Science* remains one of the best studies on the translations.

The subsequent history of education and the rise of scholasticism is bound up with the history of the universities which were coming into being at the end of the twelfth century.[18] The growth of the cathedral schools and the intellectual excitement of the period provided the impetus for the development of a corporate institution concerned with higher education. The chief characteristic of the medieval university, and its bequest to the present day, lies not so much in the nature of the higher studies pursued, as in the idea of a self-regulatory, corporate institution controlling masters, students, curriculum and the recognition accorded to set standards of achievement. The idea of a corporate body was, of course, quite natural in the Middle Ages and a number of different professional guilds existed to protect the interests of groups of craftsmen and maintain quality of work.

In France, the schools of Paris were to develop into one of the finest of these new universities. Although the underlying factors favouring this development are, of course, multiple and complex,[19] part at least of the initiative came from the masters who were keen to protect their rights to teach in the Parisian schools. The general licence to teach, the *ius ubique docendi* was granted by the Pope through his representatives, for the church recognised the power of education and sought to maintain orthodoxy within it. The masters' guild at Paris required that only those licence holders who were further admitted to their guild should teach in the schools, and thus the beginnings of a corporate body were set up. One of their initial struggles was to secure the right for the university to confer the licence to teach, initially in the hands of the papal representative, the chancellor of Notre Dame, who was not part of the university. This was achieved in the course of the thirteenth century, as were a succession of privileges for masters and students in Paris, the most important of which were conferred in the Bull *Parens Scientiarum* of 1231.[20] This gave masters a role in determining the candidates to whom the chancellor would give the licence, and the right to cancel lectures in order to secure redress for grievances against the University. It also fixed hours for lectures and stipulated what texts were to be lectured on, when, and for how long.

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18 On the rise of the medieval universities, see Hastings Rashdall, *The Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages*, ed. F.M. Powicke and A.B. Emden, and Charles Homer Haskins, *The Rise of the Universities*.

19 See, for example, Stephen C. Ferruolo, *The Origins of the University*.

20 Quoted and translated by Lynn Thorndike in *University Records and Life in the Middle Ages*, pp. 36-38.

Administration was not the only battleground in the thirteenth-century university of Paris. Intellectual debate raged hot as the prejudice against secular literature was reignited when newly translated works of Aristotle, together with Moslem commentaries, became available to Western Europe and were enthusiastically read and used in the prevalent rationalising of religious matters. Both the Dominican and Franciscan orders, who had quickly become involved in the new universities, opposed the rationalising spirit invading theological studies in Paris in the early thirteenth century.

The Dominicans and their brother mendicant orders, particularly the Franciscans, formed at the turn of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries with the aim of renewing the monastic ideal, played an important role in intellectual life from the thirteenth century onwards.[21] The Dominicans sought specifically to influence the intellectual world. Their founder, Dominic, was convinced that the church must act to stamp out the Albigensian heresy that was rife in southern France, and that the most effective way to do this was on the intellectual front. Hence, from the start the Dominican order was concerned with the teaching of theology and the preservation of orthodoxy. They quickly established themselves in important university centres such as Paris, Oxford and Montpellier, which they saw as primary recruitment grounds for new members. They also used the facilities offered by the university to train their own members and set up their own convents in university towns where their students were taught. The regulation of 1228, detailing the organisation of their studies, illustrates the importance they attributed to education as a weapon for the church's military arm and their suspicion of secular learning:-

> The prior of the province or kingdoms, if he shall have brothers fitted for teaching who can be trained for it in short order shall send them to study in a place where there is a university, and let not those to whom they are sent dare to employ them otherwise or send them back to their province unless they shall have been recalled. ......
>
> They shall not study in the books of the Gentiles and philosophers, although they may inspect them briefly. They shall not learn secular sciences, not even the arts which are called liberal, unless sometimes in certain cases the master of the Order shall wish to make a dispensation, but shall read only theological works whether they be youths or others.[22]

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21 On the role of the mendicant orders in the history of the universities, see James Bowen, *The Civilisation of Europe, 6th-16th Century*, pp. 139-142 and Rashdall, *The Universities of Europe*, vol. i, pp. 345-366.

22 "Regulation concerning studies in the order published in the general chapter of the Friar preachers under Master Jordans at Paris, 1228" (*Chartularium Universitatis Parisiensis* I 112-13). Translated by Lynn Thorndike: *University Records and Life*, section 16, p. 30.

St. Francis, whose name to later generations has become almost synonymous with simplicity of life, was predominantly a mystic, urging his followers to adopt a humble, ascetic life, with less emphasis on intellectual matters. Later in the thirteenth century, sections of the Franciscan order did begin to realise the necessity of training their members in theology to aid in their preaching work amongst the poor and conventual schools were set up which offered a grounding in arts equal to that of the secular universities. Although never wielding comparable influence to the Dominicans, the Franciscans offered support to the conservative view and numbered among their brothers some of the most distinguished scholars of the day, notably Bonaventura and Roger Bacon.

Aristotle's works on metaphysics and the natural sciences contained explicitly heretical ideas, such as the eternal nature of matter and the denial of individual immortality. These new works appear to have given rise to an outbreak of new heresies, basically pantheistic in flavour, in the early thirteenth century, as new ideas stimulated new and free thought, fuelled also by Muslim commentaries on Aristotle that favoured a rational approach. Such works and heresies were anathema to the Dominicans who rigorously opposed them. This dispute caused a rift between the faculty of arts where Aristotle was enthusiastically welcomed, and the faculty of theology which opposed him. For a time the latter seemed to wield the stronger influence and Aristotle's works on metaphysics and natural philosophy were repeatedly banned from the University of Paris, although they continued to be illicitly read.[23]

Paradoxically, the greatest legacy of the Dominicans was the assimilation of Aristotelian thought into orthodox Christianity, chiefly brought about by their most famous member, Thomas Aquinas. His *Summa Theologica* forms the final vindication for the scholastic treatment of theology in the thirteenth century. Aquinas' works use Aristotle's logical methods coupled with the authority of the Fathers. The former is purged of heresy by appeal to the superior authority of the latter. Objections to items of the true faith are put forward in order to show that they can be successfully refuted. Thus the approach taken by Abelard which was greeted with such horror in the early twelfth century becomes, nearly a century and a half later, the accepted method of theological enquiry and debate.

Having surveyed the major developments in education, and the growth and characteristics of intellectual life in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, we now have a

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23 On the influence of Aristotle on Western thought, see F. van Steenberghen *Aristotle in the West, The Origins of Latin Aristotelianism.*

context within which to examine the practice and theory of education, both clerical and secular, within this period.

Boys destined for the religious life probably started school at around the age of seven, when their education proper was thought to begin. They started by learning the Latin alphabet, which was written on a board or small pamphlet, and then started to recognise whole Latin words, learning pronunciation and the rules of plainsong. The texts used were religious - the psalter and antiphonal, with large letters to aid recognition.[24] The curriculum in the cathedral schools remained largely what it had been in the monastic schools, although there are significant changes to be seen in the twelfth century.[25] It was based on the so-called seven liberal arts and its subject matter derived from the Greek and Latin heritage. The seven liberal arts originate from the fifth and sixth centuries when various scholars, fearing that the whole of classical knowledge, which was rapidly disappearing after the collapse of the Roman Empire, would be lost forever, set themselves to compiling encyclopaedias of extracts from various authors on different subjects. These excerpts became the basis of the knowledge available to the Middle Ages of their classical heritage. The division into the seven liberal arts is generally attributed to Martianus Capella whose allegory, *The Marriage of Mercury and Philology* introduces the seven handmaids of wisdom, namely grammar, rhetoric, dialectic, arithmetic, music, geometry and astronomy. These were generally divided into two groups, grammar, rhetoric and dialectic forming the *trivium* and the remaining four the more advanced *quadrivium.*

Grammar was concerned with the study of Latin, the basic requirement for any student, and comprised the rules of the language based on the handbooks of Donatus or Priscian, plus some study of classical literature, notably Virgil and Ovid. Grammar also included some study of ethics as works of Cicero and Cato were popular school texts too. Jonathan Nicholls argues convincingly that the presence of such ethical content, coupled with the necessity for rules for acceptable behaviour in a monastic community, is the source of the Latin courtesy text tradition, which in the thirteenth century and later was to become so popular in the vernacular and court environments.[26]

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24 Nicholas Orme, *From Childhood to Chivalry: The Education of the English Kings and Aristocracy 1066-1530*, p. 145.

25 On the medieval curriculum and its development, see Paul Abelson, *The Seven Liberal Arts: A Study in Medieval Culture*, and David Wagner (ed.), *The Seven Liberal Arts in the Middle Ages.*

26 Jonathan Nicholls, *The Matter of Courtesy*, pp. 22-44.

Rhetoric covered the use of literary devices and embellishments as an extension from the Roman arts of declamation and oratory. As secular demands increased in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, rhetoric began to concern itself with the art of letter writing (the so-called *ars dictaminis*) and legal and administrative formulae that the future court secretary might have need of - and even provided models for the student to write begging letters home for money! Dialectic covered the art of reasoning and it was this subject that was to rise into such prominence in the twelfth century, again fostered by secular pressures since dialectic was the principal weapon of the lawyer. Bologna was becoming an important centre for the study of law and both civil and canon law were rising into prominence elsewhere in Europe. The rediscovery of the previously unknown logical works of Aristotle during the twelfth century also helped to secure the position of dialectic as the chief of the arts.

By contrast, the mathematical arts of the *quadrivium* are a poor reflection of the brilliance of the Greeks in this field. The competence of most students in astronomy, for example, was limited to the ability to calculate the date of Easter, and was blurred by a great deal of superstitious interest in astrology. New translations of Greek scientific works in the latter part of the twelfth century did remedy the situation somewhat, but the Middle Ages remained predominantly an age of cosmological speculation, rather than one of interest in observation (though there are some notable exceptions such as Adelard of Bath).[27] The *trivium* therefore overshadows the *quadrivium* and even in the thirteenth century, lectures on mathematics in the University of Paris were given on feast days as a kind of treat or light relief from more serious studies.

Boys could pass on to these higher studies in the universities as young as fourteen, although many waited until they were older. The medieval universities were divided into four faculties - arts, law (this meant canon law in Paris where civil law was initially banned, Bologna remaining the centre for the study of civil law), medicine and theology. The latter three were regarded as the higher faculties to which admission was granted only after a scholar had passed through the faculty of arts, where the curriculum was still based around the seven liberal arts. However, the arts course was principally concerned with the study of logic, which was the tool to be used in the higher faculties. By the beginning of the thirteenth century, the study of Latin literature, which enjoyed a brief return in the mid twelfth century, had virtually disappeared from the grammatical curriculum as students pressed on towards the attractions of dialectic. Paris had never been an important centre for the study of Latin literature as Orléans, for example, had

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27 Haskins, *Studies in Medieval Science*, pp. 20-42.

been in the twelfth century. The standard of Latin, which had been so good in the twelfth century and left significant works of literature in its own right (such as Gautier de Châtillon's *Alexandreis*), had declined again during the thirteenth, and classical studies undoubtedly suffered at the hands of other, more popular subjects.[28] Students were more attracted to the higher faculties and here were generally older, the periods of prescribed study often being long (six years for medicine, twelve for theology). Often too, they were studying in the higher faculties whilst teaching in the arts, so that there was quite a range of age and experience amongst the student population.

Given the changing atmosphere of the educational world, it is not surprising that many clerical writers of this period take up the themes of the theory and practice of education. Despite the volume of material, a number of common themes recur, partly revealing common preoccupations, but due also to the writers' practice of quoting from common authorities and frequently from each other.

Firstly, most writers agree that those destined for the religious life must be properly educated to carry out their job. Hildebert, Archbishop of Tours in the early twelfth century comments, for example : "Tunc nobis subjectos docere debemus; sed qui docere debet scientiam quam docet, habere oportet" (Then again we ought to teach those who have been placed under our authority,; but someone who is to teach should know what he is talking about).[29] This may seem to be an extremely obvious remark, but it is made at a time when the minor clergy and local parish priests may have had only the most rudimentary knowledge of Latin, sufficient to cope with the Psalter and set prayers. Guibert de Nogent had earlier remarked upon the lack of teachers available in his youth and upon the poor knowledge of his first teacher, whom he blames for beating his pupil who was unable to grasp that which the teacher himself was barely competent to teach.[30] The requirement for priests to be properly educated was repeatedly emphasised by the Pope and was finally embodied in canon law in Gratian's *Decretum*.

Not only do the clergy need to be educated for the pastoral care of others, but education is seen to have more positive benefits as well. For many writers the pursuit of wisdom is synonymous with the pursuit of virtue, and learning is seen as a means of

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28 On the rise and fall of literary studies see Introduction to Henri d'Andeli, *La Bataille des .vii. Ars*, ed. Louis John Paetow.

29 Sermon LII in *PL*, CLXXI, col. 594b.

30 See John F. Benton, *Self and Society in Medieval France. The Memoirs of Guibert de Nogent*, Book I, Chapter 4, p. 45 and Chapter 5, p. 47.

salvation. For example, Honorius of Autun's *De Animae Exsilio et Patria Alias de Artibus* describes the soul of man, exiled in ignorance and trying to return to a state of wisdom.[31] On its journey the seven liberal arts are seen as the staging posts marking the way. Similarly, in Alain de Lille's allegory *Anticlaudianus*, Nature, grieved at the fallen state of her great creation, man, sets out to create a new and perfect example. *Prudentia* (human wisdom) is appointed to carry man to heaven in order that he might receive his new soul from God, and the seven liberal arts are called upon to fashion the chariot for the journey. A specific link is made between spiritual progress and secular learning. This equation of intellectual advancement with spiritual progress, found in so many writers of the period, is perhaps attributable to the profound respect then accorded to classical learning, which was regarded as almost as authoritative as Scripture. It is also a result of the necessary link between learning and the religious life and of the fact that education was still almost exclusively within the province of the church at this time.

However, as we have seen, some writers are more suspicious of secular learning. Richard of St. Victor says that true wisdom is attained by three means, "studium operis", "studium meditationis" and "studium orationis" and bemoans the lack of interest in the last two which are overshadowed by the first.[32] Most writers, however, concentrate on the positive benefits of education, such as the breeding of discipline to counteract the natural lasciviousness of youth. This is a recurring theme in St. Bernard (for example, in the *Tractatus de ordine vitae et morum institutione*), and Peter Lombard, commenting on Psalm 118, reminds his readers that youth is the time when discipline and correction are needed to inculcate good behaviour. Monastic discipline certainly could be quite harsh, especially if the famous recommendations of Lanfranc were strictly followed. He stipulated very close supervision of boys in his monastery: one master should sit between every two boys, there should be no physical contact, even of clothes, and they should not even be allowed to go unsupervised to relieve themselves at night![33] This is typical of the strongly moralistic view that is often found in didactic writings that human nature (especially in the young and in women) is essentially perverse and requires rigorous control. There are those who take a more moderate view, however. St. Anselm was known for his gentleness in training

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31 *PL*, CLXXII, col. 1241 ff.

32 *De preparatione animi ad contemplationem*, chapter 79, *PL*, CXCVI, col. 56.

33 *Decreta pro ordine S. Benedicti*, chapter 21, *De disciplina puerorum*, *PL*, CL, col. 506.

novices,[34] and Alain de Lille questions the use of corporal punishment as an aid to learning:-

> Quadrupedes adaquare nequis dum percutis illos
> Nec cogit pueros virga studere rudes.[35]
>
> (You cannot bring animals to water while you are beating them, and the cane does not make boys love their work.)

That learning is a process requiring hard work from the student is, however, often emphasised. Richard of St. Victor stresses it:

> ... dubio sine ingenti exercitio, sine frequenti studio, sine ardenti desiderio, ad perfectam scientiae altitudinem, mens non sublevatur ...[36]
>
> (It is doubtful whether a mind could ever be raised to the full height of knowledge withoug a great deal of practice, a consistent level of effort, and a burning desire..)

as does Philippe de Harvengt, who borrows a Pauline image:-

> Sicut enim miles palmam non accipit, qui molli desidia consopitur, qui laboris impatiens, umbra, plumis, uxoris complexu assidue delinitur, sic non nisi labore et studio ad excelsa scientiae pervenitur.[37]
>
> (For a soldier made soft by an easy life, having an aversion to work, and being always cossetted by shade, cushions and a wife's embrace, does not win the prize; and in just the same way there is no getting to the heights of knowledge without hard work and enthusiasm.)

He also comments in the *Epistola ad Hervardum* on the necessity of exercising natural ability so that it may reach its potential, a plea which had been made by both Hugh of St. Victor and John of Salisbury.

These latter are the authors of the two most important educational works of the twelfth century, which deserve to be studied in some detail. Hugh of St. Victor's *Didascalicon*, dating from the late 1120's, is the first work of educational theory known to have been written and used in the Middle Ages. Up until the twelfth century the schools had relied on Quintillian's *Instituto oratoria* (first century AD), but judging by the number and distribution of manuscripts of the *Didascalicon*, this became widely

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34 See *Vita Sancti Anselmi Auctore Eadmero* in *PL*, CLVIII, cols. 49-118, quoted in Pierre Riché, *De l'éducation antique à l'éducation chevaleresque*, p. 104.

35 *Liber de Parabolarum*, *PL*, CCX,col. 587.

36 *De preparatione* ... col. 56c.

37 *Epistola ad Engelbertum*, *PL*, CCIII, col. 32b.

used in the twelfth century, replacing the older work and exerting a significant influence on subsequent thought and practice.[38] The *Didascalicon* is both comprehensive and systematic, providing a classification of all subjects, together with a programme of reading for the student. It is also a positive affirmation of the value of learning and of human intelligence and it accords to dialectic the prominent place it was to have in the intellectual life of decades to come.

Having outlined the origins of philosophy in the first Book of the *Didascalicon*,[39] Hugh provides in the second a systematic classification of philosophy into its constituent parts. He uses a basically fourfold division of the arts - into theoretical, practical, mechanical and logical - with 21 distinct "sciences" subdivided between them (see diagram overleaf). Although he admits the mechanical arts into his scheme, he regards them as being of lesser importance than the rest. For the theoretical and practical arts are assigned to that aspect of wisdom called "understanding" which "works both for the investigation of truth and the delineation of morals" (I:5), and is superior to mere "knowledge" or human skills to which the mechanical arts belong. To this threefold division (knowledge = mechanical arts, understanding = theoretical arts and practical arts) Hugh adds the logical arts. These are given pride of place, for logic is

> ... that discipline which provides ways of distinguishing between modes of argument and the trains of reasoning themselves....so logic came last in time, but is first in order. It is logic which ought to be read first by those beginning the study of philosophy, for it teaches the nature of words and concepts, without both of which no treatise of philosophy can be explained rationally. (I:11)

Having thus classified all the branches of learning, Hugh goes on to describe briefly what is covered by each subject area. Book III opens with a survey of the most important authors who have written on each subject, drawn entirely from Greek and Roman classics. Hugh then proceeds to explain how a student should set about learning, laying great emphasis on order and method (III:7). He shows how a text should be expounded, encourages discernment and eagerness to enquire and emphasises the importance of a life of virtue for the student. He also offers advice on the training of the memory, an indispensible faculty to the medieval student whose access to books was restricted, and who relied principally on his memory for a record of what he had read. Hugh goes into greater detail on this same subject in his *De tribus maximis*

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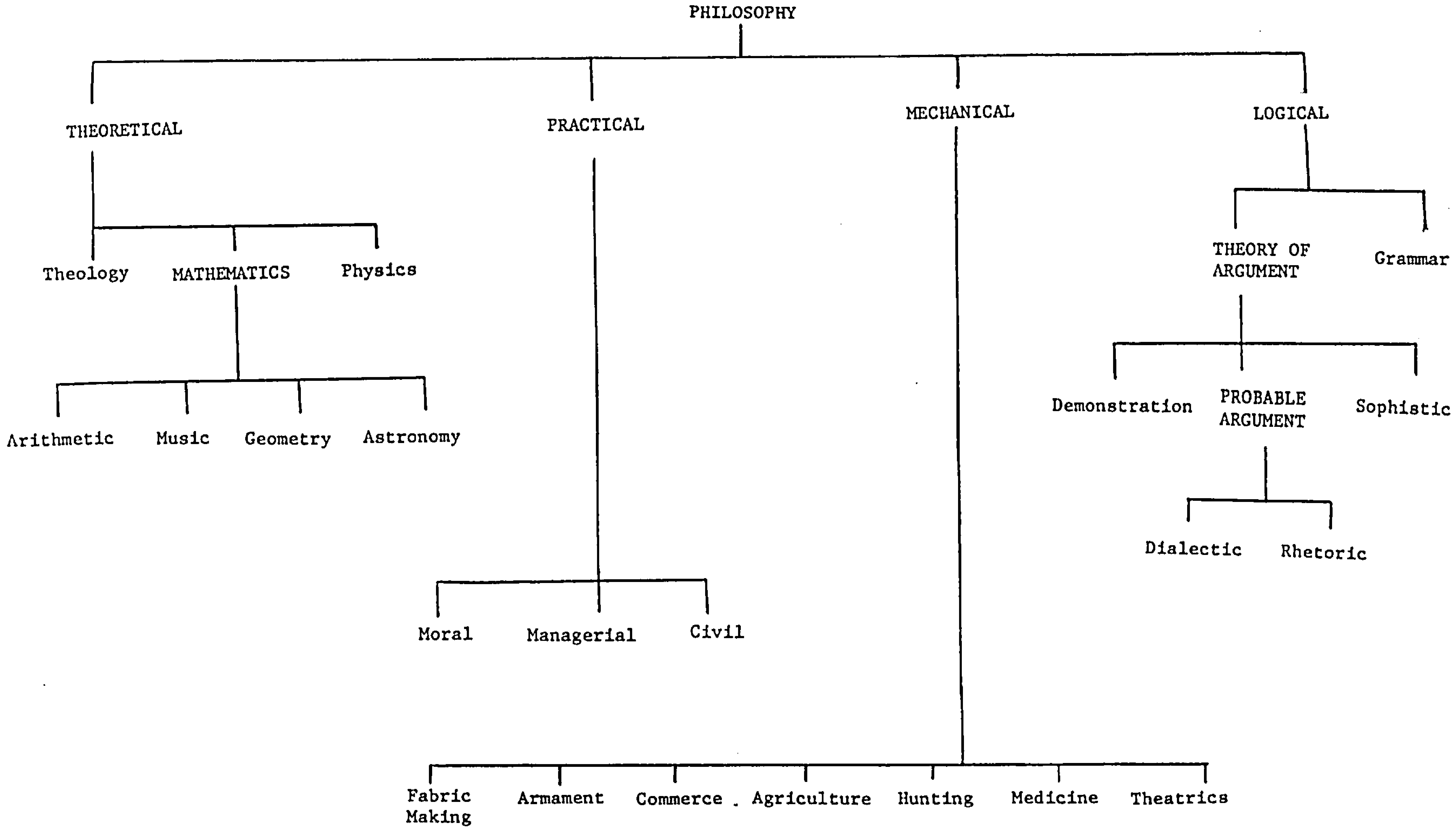
38 James Bowen, *Civilisation of Europe 6th-16th Century*, p. 61.

39 All references are to *The "Didascalicon" of Hugh of St. Victor, A Medieval Guide to the Arts*, translated by Jerome Taylor.


PHILOSOPHY
THEORETICAL
PRACTICAL
MECHANICAL
LOGICAL
Theology
MATHEMATICS
Physics
THEORY OF ARGUMENT
Grammar
Arithmetic
Music
Geometry
Astronomy
Demonstration
PROBABLE ARGUMENT
Sophistic
Dialectic
Rhetoric
Moral
Managerial
Civil
Fabric Making
Armament
Commerce
Agriculture
Hunting
Medicine
Theatrics

circumstantiis gestorum, which deals with the study of history. His approach is essentially mnemonic: the reader is advised to categorise his memory into time, number and place so that items can be recalled at will by means of the "tags" associated with them - when they were learned, where they were located on the page, etc.

The second half of the *Didascalicon* (Books IV-VI) offers a detailed programme for the study of theology which Hugh regards as the greatest of the sciences and superior to secular philosophy (cf IV:1). A similar pattern to the first half is followed. A classification of what constitutes the subject matter of theology - the Scriptures and Church Fathers - is followed by hints on how the study of theology should be approached.

Hugh's approach to learning is characterised by his practicality. He wishes to facilitate the learning process, which he regards as of supreme importance, and offers a framework in which the student can work. His scheme is almost entirely learner-orientated. He makes no attempt to describe a systematic method of teaching, although the work clearly was used as a schoolmaster's manual by his successors. Hugh is greatly concerned with the personality of the student and his aptitudes, and above all with the visible outworking of wisdom in the shape of virtue. Hugh is typical of medieval educational theorists in that learning is inseparable from virtue in his scheme, although this is partly attributable to the fact that he is writing for those destined for a life dedicated to God in a monastery. He sums up his view of learning as follows:-

> Three things are necessary for those who study: natural endowment, practice and discipline. By natural endowment is meant that they must be able to grasp easily what they hear and to retain firmly what they grasp; by practice is meant that they must cultivate by assiduous effort the natural endowment they have; and by discipline is meant that, by leading a praiseworthy life, they must combine moral behaviour with their knowledge. (III:6)

This emphasis on the individual student sets the scene for the growing awareness of the individual discernible in the twelfth century, which is part of a more positive view of matters human. The *Didascalicon* is pervaded by an optimistic view of the efficacy of human learning. In Book I Hugh describes the search for wisdom as a means of regaining our prelapsarian state:-

> But we are restored through instruction, so that we may recognise our nature and learn not to seek outside ourselves what we can find within. "The highest curative in life", therefore, is the pursuit of wisdom: he who finds it is happy, and he who possesses it, blessed. (I:1)

This affirmation of human effort is balanced in Hugh by a mystic and contemplative tendency that prevents him ever going so far in praise of human

reasoning in matters divine as Peter Abelard. He is, and remains, a product of the monastic tradition. Education is only the first part of the route to perfection:-

> There are four things in which the life of just men is now practiced and raised, as it were by certain steps, to its future perfection - namely study or instruction, meditation, prayer and performance. (V:9)

The spirit of Christian humanism of the twelfth century is perhaps best represented by John of Salisbury in his *Metalogicon.* This defence of the verbal and logical arts addresses some of the important educational preoccupations of its time. It is a positive affirmation of the dialectical reasoning that had been shaping intellectual thought since the time of Anselm of Bec in the eleventh century and was to remain the dominant intellectual mode until the Renaissance. John also presents a reasoned assessment of the relationship between nature and nurture, ever an educational chestnut, and he offers a perceptive critique of the pedagogical practices (and abuses) of the day.

In the second Book of the *Metalogicon,* John asserts the primacy of logic for all philosophic enquiry: "It provides methods whereby we may distinguish what is true from what is false and what is necessary from what is impossible" (II:3).[40] Expressed in these terms it is easy to understand the great promise that a rigorous dialectical methodology held for those whose aim in philosophising was to arrive at an ultimate truth. To John of Salisbury, however, belongs not so much credit for the affirmation of logic, but rather a plea for its correct use, for he was quick to realise the abuses to which dialectical disputations were subject. He accuses his claimed "enemy", Cornificius, in answer to whom the *Metalogicon* was written, of neglecting all studies except dialectic, and of spending time in futile reasoning over trivial points, merely for the sake of scoring off an opponent. Such superficiality is poor scholarship and contributes little to the search for truth.[41] John suggests that it may arise from purely financial motives for dialectic had the added attraction of usefulness in the professional sphere, notably in the legal field which was rapidly growing.

The second great argument of the *Metalogicon* centres on the relationship between nature and nurture. Cornificius and his like ignore a thorough grounding in the liberal arts, claiming that such effort is waste of time:-

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40 All references are to Daniel D. McGarry, *The Metalogicon of John of Salisbury: A Twelfth-Century Defense of the Verbal and Logical Arts of the Trivium.*

41 Daniel D. McGarry, 'Educational Theory in the *Metalogicon* of John of Salisbury', p.674, suggests that John astutely forsees here the subsequent degeneration of the scholastic method in the later Middle Ages.

> In the judgement of Cornificius (if a false opinion may be called a judgement) there is no point in studying the rules of eloquence, which is a gift that is either conceded or denied to each individual by nature. Work and diligence are superfluous where nature has spontaneously and gratuitously bestowed eloquence, whereas they are futile and silly where she has refused to grant it. (I:6)

John, by contrast, advocates the practice and study of the arts. He demolishes the Cornifician position by showing that the arts derive from nature in the first place; hence if nature is to be accorded primacy, the arts, her offspring, cannot be ignored:-

> The mother of the arts is nature, to despise whose progeny amounts to insulting their parent. Natural ability should accordingly be diligently cultivated. (I:11)

John's position is to favour cooperation between nature and nurture, although he also strongly urges the case for the latter:-

> Although the gifts of nature are definitely helpful, they are never or rarely so effective that they are fully realized without study. Nothing is so strong and robust that it cannot be enfeebled by neglect, nothing so well constructed that it cannot be razed. On the other hand, diligent application can build up and preserve the lowest degree of natural talent. If nature is propitious, it should be industriously cultivated, rather than neglected, so that its fruits may be readily harvested. On the other hand, if nature is unbenign, it should be nursed even more carefully, so that, with the aid of virtue, it may more happily and gloriously grow strong. (I:8)

However, he does sound a note of moderation:-

> At the same time, study should be moderated by recreation, so that while one's natural ability waxes strong with the former, it may be refreshed by the latter. A certain very wise man (whom I thank for his statement) has said: "While innate ability proceeds from nature, it is fostered by use and sharpened by moderate exercise, but it is dulled by excessive work". (I:11)

This last statement illustrates John's interest in a proper pedagogical method. He gives us a famous picture of the great teacher, Bernard of Chartres, carefully explaining a text to his students and taking steps to ensure that they absorbed and retained all he told them (I:24, pp 67-68). Bernard's insistence on repetitions of previous days' lessons and his ability to adapt what he was saying to match his hearers' level clearly impresses John who implies it was all too rare a phenomenon. John likewise praises the ability of Abelard, whom he would have heard in Paris, to communicate clearly and simply:-

> ... he preferred to instruct his disciples and expedite their progress by more elementary explanations, rather than to lose them by diving too deep into this question [of universals]. He very carefully tried to

> observe what Augustine laid down as a universal rule: he concentrated on explaining things so that they could be easily understood. (III:1)

Elsewhere John scorns those teachers whose aim seems merely to obfuscate and baffle their students with a show of their own great learning. He also scorns those, like Cornificius, who make their lectures as complicated and learned-sounding as possible, and indulge in trivial disputations in order that their own reputation may be enhanced, but with little thought for those who are trying to learn from them.

Educational practice in the mid-twelfth century was such that this kind of abuse was rife. There was no agreed pedagogical method laid down for all to follow, although Hugh of St. Victor's *Didascalicon* was widely copied and circulated. Neither was there any training for the teacher. Again, before the founding of the universities, the lack of rigid educational structures meant that learning tended to follow particular trends, with students flocking to hear one or other of the great intellects of the time as they rose into prominence. Hence the students deserted William of Champeaux and rushed to hear Abelard in the early 1100's in Paris. Masters were in a somewhat precarious position, and in order to build up a following amongst students they had to make their presence felt in academic circles. John complains that:-

> Each, to make a name for himself, coins his own special error. Wherewith, while promising to correct his master, he sets himself up as a target for correction and condemnation by his own disciples as well as by posterity. (II:18)

Given their precarious existence, it is hardly surprising that masters should, like any other group of professional people, form themselves into a guild to protect their own interests. From the latter half of the twelfth century onwards there are references to a *universitas* of masters in Paris, forming the nucleus of what, a few decades later, was to become the first university in Europe.

The quality of thought illustrated by Hugh and John, and the high profile of education are not restricted to the purely academic world. The writers of the thirteenth century particularly, began to turn their attention to the theory of education for royal and aristocratic children, although here practice was less uniform than in the academic sphere and the gap between theory and practice was probably greater. Families would use whatever resources they had available to equip their children to fulfil their later roles in life, and much would have depended on the wealth, status and individual inclinations of parents and children. However, certain general principles of education do emerge.

Breadth of education was a feature much valued, especially in the early years when the differentiation between secular and clerical training was not as rigorous as we might suppose.[42] The educational theorists who wrote the "miroirs de prince" suggest that breadth of education was the ideal to aim for, but there was also a practical aspect to the question. A younger son destined for the church might well find himself heir to an estate if his older brother(s) died early, or an elder son, like Abelard, might find he preferred a life of letters to that of arms and opt for a church career, leaving the running of the estate to a younger brother. Hence the early education of children was generally as wide as resources would permit. At the age of seven or thereabouts, the education of a boy would begin. He might well have a master to supervise him and would receive basic literacy training as well as the beginnings of military training, although this latter would not start in earnest until he was about fourteen and nearer physical maturity. Skills in horse- and weaponmanship were fostered also in the medieval practice of hunting, viewed partly as a preparation for war. Hunting was also a recognised social skill, forming, along with dice and chess, an important part of the entertainment of court and castle life. Much non-academic education was geared towards acquiring the social skills that fitted a child for that life.

The standard of literacy achieved by the laity in France at this time is not easy to assess.[43] Two facts must be remembered: firstly literacy was understood to mean Latin literacy, and secondly the ability to read did not necessarily imply the ability to write. Charlemagne, for example, remembered as a learned king, could read Latin fluently, but never had the time to learn to write. The twelfth and thirteenth centuries do appear to mark an upturn in lay literacy, although this concerns only the small percentage of the population at the top end of the social scale - the peasantry were uniformly illiterate. The sons of noblemen in the eleventh century were beginning to receive some training in letters, which had been rare in the tenth century, and the trend gathered momentum during the twelfth century. Just how much of the academic curriculum was available to those who were literate is also extremely difficult to assess. The laity benefitted indirectly from the growth of interest in scholarship amongst clerics and the move of schools from the monasteries to the towns. For example, as students flocked to hear the latest teacher, they needed to raise money to pay for lodgings and lectures and were thus a ready source of masters for noble children. John of Salisbury supported himself in Paris in this way, and his comment on his pupils' keen questioning suggests he was teaching them at more than simply a basic level:-

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42 See, for example, Nicholas Orme, *From Childhood to Chivalry*, chapter 1, pp. 36 ff.

43 On the question of literacy in medieval Europe, see James Westfall Thompson, *The Literacy of the Laity in the Middle Ages*, and Brian Stock, *The Implications of Literacy*.

> Meanwhile I took as pupils the children of nobles who in return provided for my material necessities... In this capacity, because of my duties, and the insistent questions raised by the youths, I was forced frequently to recall what I had previously heard. (II:10)

The French monarchy appears to have taken a lead in raising cultural standards, and from the twelfth century onwards there are frequent references to the standard of learning of some kings, notably Philip I, Louis VIII and IX, the last of whom is certainly the most famous. These kings patronised men of letters, fostering the writing, copying and collecting of books.

It was common practice for boys (and girls) to be sent away from home for some part of their education, preferably to an influential household. Thus noble children had companionship and the opportunity to forge contacts that would stand them in good stead in later life. In this way too, they learned social know-how at first hand, and even performed quite menial tasks, such as waiting at table.

As was the case in the academic sphere, there is a genuine interest shown by writers of this period in the proper education of children, as we shall see. There is a wide diversity of style and flavour, depending on the genre within which the work is conceived, but there is also, as we would expect, a degree of cross-fertilization, and a reliance upon sources from the classics, similar to that found in clerical education. It is therefore worth looking at examples from a wide range of different types to form an overall picture of the view of children's upbringing in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

The Dominicans, whose interest in university education in the thirteenth century was noted earlier, had a parallel interest in education in the aristocratic sphere, seeking to secure influence in the highest levels of society. One of their most important members in the thirteenth century was Vincent de Beauvais, known best as the compiler of the first of the great medieval encyclopaedias.[44] He enjoyed the patronage of the French king St. Louis who summoned him to live in the abbey near his own royal residence and allowed him to preach at the royal court. Louis subsidised the production of Vincent's encyclopaedia, the *Speculum Maius*, and it was also for his royal patron that Vincent composed his educational work *De eruditione filiorum nobilium*, although he does not appear actually to have been in charge himself of the education of the royal children. Louis himself was interested in providing good educational precepts for his children, as shown by two works of his, the *Enseignement*

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44 On Vincent de Beauvais, see Astrik L. Gabriel, *The Educational Ideas of Vincent de Beauvais*.

de Saint Loys à sa fille Isabelle and the *Enseignement de Saint Loys à son fils*.[45] The advice he gives his children is predominantly religious, emphasising the importance of faith and religious observance. He enjoins good moral principles on Isabelle - obedience to her husband and parents, the practice of virtue as an example to others. The advice to the son is broader, covering advice on choosing counsellors, avoiding war and adopting a moderate lifestyle, as well as honouring his parents and protecting the poor and the church. Clearly Louis shared the growing interest of the times in proper educational principles, and was an important patron in the educational sphere.

Vincent de Beauvais is an interesting author to consider, for he writes both on clerical education, and on non-clerical education, and on the latter both as an encyclopaedist (in the *Speculum Doctrinale*) and as a moralist (in his *De eruditione filiorum nobilium*). Michael Goodich comments on the usefulness of the encyclopaedias as a source of information about childrearing.[46] Although they are not original, being rather collections of citations from standard authorities on different matters, he believes they do represent a summary of current views in the choice of authorities selected. Moreover, he emphasises that the encyclopaedic tradition provides a good balance to the moral tradition (often rather austere in outlook) by its more liberal approach and broader base that considers the physical as well as the moral aspects of childrearing.

Vincent's *Speculum Maius* is divided into three parts: the *naturale* (dealing with matters concerning the world and the heavens), the *historiale* (dealing with the whole of history from Adam and Eve to the present), and the *doctrinale* which, from an educational point of view, is the most important. Like Hugh of St. Victor, whose *Didascalicon* he follows closely and quotes liberally, Vincent declares his belief that the pursuit of wisdom, via the acquisition of knowledge, redeems man from his fallen state. This is the framework within which he assembles his sum of knowledge in the sixteen books which follow. These cover a wide range of subjects from grammar and logic, through family life and order, political and social order to practical skills, medicine, mathematics and finally theology. There are some 2,000 chapters to this huge piece of work, making it a vast repository of the state of learning available to the thirteenth-century student. Educational theorising is found in the introductory chapter where Vincent gives a discussion of pedagogical method. There is little that is innovative and the argument closely follows the *Didascalicon* in the discussion of the need for

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45 The Old French text for these can be found in *Recueil des historiens des Gaules et de la France*, ed. Daunou & Naudet, Paris, 1840, Vol XX, p. 302, note 2 and pp. 26-7 respectively.

46 Michael Goodich, 'Encyclopaedic Literature: Child-rearing in the Middle Ages'.

diligence and discipline in the student, whose pursuit of wisdom should be a pursuit of virtue.

The most interesting section of the *Speculum Doctrinale* for information on non-clerical education is that on medicine (Book XII). Vincent gives a detailed guide on paediatric care, from the feeding of young infants to the start of schooling at the age of six. He shows a clear understanding of the child's physical and, interestingly, psychological needs, commenting on the need for harmony of body and soul to his wellbeing (XII:31). When it comes to learning, the teacher must be sufficiently slow and methodical. Physical education is also important, and should start at the age of twelve. The whole educational process should take account of the child's own needs - for example he will need time for sleep and relaxation - and of his future role in life - those whose profession will require physical strength will need appropriate feeding and training when young. Vincent reveals himself in these recommendations to be a practical and perceptive observer of children and their upbringing.

Much of the thought of the *Speculum Doctrinale* recurs in *De eruditione filiorum nobilium*, but the latter is considerably more moral in tone. This too is not an original work, but a collation of past authorities sacred and profane, notably Quintillian, Jerome and Hugh of St. Victor. It appears to have been well considered in its time and was known and used by later writers such as William of Perrault and Christine de Pizan. Nicholas Orme sees it as a significant turning point in educational writing because "it brought to the education of kings and noblemen the high standards and sophisticated concepts which had previously been confined to the educations of clerics and scholars".[47] Many of the ideas applied to clerical education in the *Speculum Maius* and in Vincent's sources are now applied more generally. Indeed, in the view of Josef Röder, Vincent uses the *De eruditione* as an opportunity to discourse on education in general, such was the prevailing interest in the question.[48]

However, there is a distinctly moral tone to the work, which derives from Vincent's initial premiss that education is necessary to curb the natural concupiscence of the young. They need enlightenment of the intellect to overcome the ignorance that breeds moral turpitude, and must be subjected to discipline and correction. The moral tone comes out most strongly in his treatment of the education of girls in the final chapters. Much of the material is taken from Jerome, lending it a distinctly misogynist

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47 Nicholas Orme *From Childhood to Chivalry*, p. 92.

48 Josef Röder, *Das Fürstenbild in den mittelalterlichen Fürstenspiegeln auf Franzözischem Boden*, p. 38.

flavour. Girls are seen as naturally tending to silliness and vice (especially sexual). The advice given, therefore, concentrates on the preservation of chastity through close supervision.

The *De eruditione* offers practical guidance on finding a good tutor, which is indeed the starting point for ensuring a good education for one's children. A tutor must exhibit excellent moral qualities as well as excellent pedagogical skills. This is not only a moral suggestion, it is also sensible, since a tutor in the Middle Ages was often virtually *in loco parentis* to his charges. The necessity of finding a good tutor is a recurrent theme in works on secular education. William of Perrault (*De eruditione principum*) sets great store by a good upbringing which requires the careful attention of the parents, especially in the selection of a tutor who must be of irreproachable character (V:2,9,11). Aegidius Romanus whose *De Regimine Principum,* written at the end of the thirteenth century became enormously popular and was translated into several vernaculars, also emphasises the importance of the tutor and his guiding influence on his pupil.

De Regimine Principum is an example of the so-called "miroirs de prince", works which describe the qualities believed to be necessary to the perfect prince. They are important political treatises, as in a period which saw the development of stronger monarchic rule, much of the smooth running of government depended upon the personal qualities of the ruler. They are also a useful source for non-clerical education since some deal specifically with the training required for the future ruler (such as Vincent de Beauvais' *De eruditione*).

Treatises on statecraft and discussions of the person of the prince have a long history before the Middle Ages, extending right back to the middle of the fourth century BC.[49] Medieval writers refer frequently to past authorities, both classical and early Christian, such works indeed providing the wellspring from which the thirteenth century "miroirs" draw their material. The basic themes which they inherit are that the prince should love his people as a father, should be of sound moral character, should take care to avoid false friends and flatterers and must remember at all times that the responsibilities of ruling are at least equal to the prestige. The king must be trained for his task; Plato lays great stress on the need for wisdom in a ruler and recommends a training in philosophy. Aristotle likewise sees education as a source of good order in the state. The importance of the prince being a learned man is especially emphasised in Roman works on statecraft. Plutarch likens a prince without education to a golden

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49 See Introduction to Erasmus, *The Education of a Christian Prince,* ed. Lester K. Born.

statue filled with sand, and recommends education in the state as a better method of securing good order than a multiplicity of laws. Pliny too recommends that the prince should foster good education. Moral qualities are also stressed, but these emerge more strongly from the fifth and sixth centuries onwards as Christianity exerts a greater influence, especially in the work of Augustine, whose influence is visible in the thirteenth century writers.[50]

Before moving on to the thirteenth century, however, one important and rather more original political work from the twelfth century must be considered. John of Salisbury's *Policraticus* provides both an account of his experiences of court life, viewed with a critical eye, and his own thoughts on political life. There is less of interest on the educational front to be drawn from his scathing descriptions of the vices and follies of courtiers, although a scornful aside on the degeneracy of the upper classes gives a revealing glimpse of changes in educational preoccupations:-

> In our days it is a proof of the intelligence of our nobles to be acquainted with the art of hunting; to be well grounded - and this is still more ruinous - in the principles of gaming; to tone down the manly voice into dulcet, effeminate strains; to forget their manhood and with vocal and instrumental music to disgrace their birth. (I:5 - Pike)[51]

This supports the view that society in the twelfth century was becoming more refined and leisured, a development John disapproves of, regarding it as "going soft" (cf VI:1-5).

The second half of the *Policraticus* contains John's discussion of the ideal state and his famous comparison of the commonwealth to a human body, where the head represents the prince, the heart the prince's counsellors; eyes, ears and tongue correspond to judges and governors, officials and soldiers to the hands. The prince's attendants are like the sides of the body, financial officers like its stomach and the peasant classes are the feet (V:11). John outlines the responsibilities and ideal standard for each, devoting a long discussion to the duties of the prince, especially as the upholder of the law.

The concept of the law is the foundation for John's interpretation of statecraft.[52] It is based on the idea that, independent of any legislation in force, there exists a body of

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50 Josef Röder, *Das Fürstenbild...* pp. 33, 36.

51 All references are to Joseph B. Pike, *Frivolities of Courtiers and Footprints of Philosophers,* or to John Dickinson, *The Statesman's Book of John of Salisbury,* signalled respectively Pike and Dickinson in the text.

52 See *Policraticus* (Dickinson), Introduction p. xxvii-xxxix.

"higher law" to which a prince is subject and to which actual, enacted laws should conform. This abstract "higher law" comes to be identified with the laws of Scripture, and for the interpretation of these, the prince needs to possess wisdom.[53] This comprises both knowledge of God's word and personal fear and love of God, seen in a high standard of personal morality. Hence John follows in the Roman tradition of stipulating that a prince should be educated, and the Platonic concept of wisdom is reinterpreted in a Christian context:-

> Therefore [the law] ... is to be read all the days of his life. From which it is crystal clear how necessary is a knowledge of letters to princes who are thus commanded to turn over the law of God in daily reading ... But plainly he will hardly be able to do this if he is illiterate ... If, nevertheless, out of consideration for other distinguished virtues it should chance that the prince is illiterate, it is needful that he take counsel of men of letters if his affairs are to prosper rightly. (IV:6 - Dickinson)

He quotes historical examples of noted literary monarchs: Philip of Macedon was known for a love of letters, such that he entrusted the education of his son Alexander to the philosopher Aristotle. The great Roman emperors too were men of letters and therein, says John, lay the prosperity of their commonwealth. By contrast present times have sadly lapsed and the enfeeblement of princely power is directly attributable to a lack of learning (IV:6).

Practical training is also necessary for the prince to rule effectively:-

> There is no-one who should have more knowledge or better knowledge than a prince whose learning ought to be of advantage to all his subjects. For since works of both peace and war require to be regulated, he ought to be learned both in the law and in military science. (VI:2 - Dickinson)

John emphasises the need for training for the rigours of military life, especially lamenting the fact that society seems to have "gone soft". It is important too for a prince and his children to be trained to look after and provide for themselves, rather than relying on the benefits of their inherited position. This may, after all, be taken away from them. Certainly there is no excuse for royal children to be idle. This includes royal daughters and John quotes the example of Augustus who reputedly

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53 John would appear to follow in the tradition of some of the early Fathers and of Augustine who, according to David Knowles, believed "that there was only one true God, and one true revelation of the divine economy, and that the God of revelation was also the source and guarantee of all being and truth, [and] they accepted as a consequence of this that "natural" truth, including metaphysical and ethical truth, was something ascertainable and permanent. In other words, there was a body of natural truth or philosophy, containing, among its other data, a natural theodicy and psychology and ethic, which could be ascertained with certainty and which could be used as a foundation for, and aid to the understanding of Christian theology." *The Evolution of Medieval Thought* p. 90.

taught his daughters needlework skills in case they should ever need to earn a living. The idea of providing for girls' futures in this way is certainly unusual and only receives a full expression some two centuries later in the writings of Christine de Pizan.

It is the thirteenth century which sees the full flowering of the "miroirs de prince".[54] They are in the main very similar to each other, urging similar virtues, although they vary in emphasis. France is particularly rich in writers of these works and the courts of Louis VIII and IX and Philip the Fair produced some of the most notable examples. Aegidius Romanus' *De Regimine Principum*, one of the most popular and widely read "miroirs", translated also into vernacular French by Henri de Gauchi, may usefully serve as a representative example of the genre.[55]

Aegidius sets the ideal prince a very high standard, since he must embody all the moral virtues, comprising both public and private. The three sections of the work deal in turn with the government of the self, the family and the state. In the middle section we find a lengthy survey of the upbringing of children, including three chapters devoted to daughters. Aegidius starts from the belief that kings and princes, like all fathers, must take good care of their children in a manner dictated by love (chapters 1-4). The children must be taught the Christian faith, good manners and academic knowledge (chapters 5-7). Specific advice on the curriculum and masters follows (8-9), and then Aegidius gives advice on morals and teaching the young child the basic skills of speech and dress (10-14). Chapter 15 deals with the care of children from birth to seven, the next with those from seven to fourteen and chapter 17 with those over fourteen. Chapter 18 deals with physical exercise. The final three chapters are those relating to girls, concentrating on their behaviour - they must not be seen in the streets, must not run, must not be idle and should learn when to speak and when to refrain.

In the third section of the work, Aegidius includes several chapters on the social responsibility of the knight as protector of the weak, and detailed descriptions of military training. He alo reiterates the common ideas that the prince should choose learned counsellors and encourage wise men to settle in the state so that all might benefit from their wisdom.

The overall tenor of the work is moderate, although the section on girls' education is noticeably harsher and more negative than the rest. Molenauer sums up

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54 Lester K. Born, 'The Perfect Prince: A Study in Thirteenth- and Fourteenth-Century Ideals' describes many of these in more detail.

55 References are to *"Li Livres du Gouvernement des Rois": A Thirteenth-Century French Version of Egidio Colonna's Treatise "De Regimine Principum"*, ed. S. Molenauer.

Aegidius' educational object as "the attainment by man of that happiness which is possible only by the harmonious development of all his forces, physical, moral and intellectual" (p. xxi). As such, Aegidius has a clear notion both of the goal of education and the individual needs of the child. His work marks a development in the genre, combining the child-consciousness of Vincent de Beauvais with the precepts of the older tradition.[56]

Thirteenth-century France also affords a vernacular example of the "miroir de prince", Robert de Blois' *Enseignement des Princes.* This 1873-line, rhymed "chastoiement" urges rulers to turn away from the moral degeneracy prevalent in society and to practise the virtues necessary for their station. In ten sections he sets out these qualities. The prince should honour women and the church (I-II), watch his speech (III), avoid pride and envy (IV-VI), he should not trust *serfs* as his advisors, should watch out for slanderers and traitors (VII-VIII) and finally should shun avarice and hasty anger (IX-X).[57]

There is an interesting innovation in the first piece of advice, the honouring of women, which does not appear in any of the Latin "miroirs". Robert appears to draw from the secular literary tradition of the troubadours, emphasising the positive effects wrought in the lover of a good woman. Robert's other didactic work, the *Chastoiement des Dames* (see below pp. 44-45) also owes something to the arts of love. The other virtues Robert selects are drawn from the traditions of moral and political writing. The section on counsellors uses the classic examples of Darius and Alexander who met their deaths because they trusted dishonest *serfs.* This leads to an interesting discussion on the roles of nature and nurture. Like John of Salisbury, Robert believes the social order is naturally ordained and its members should keep to the place nature assigns to them. Nor is it the place of nurture to alter nature's design:-

> On dist et voirs est: De nature
> Suelt adés passer norreture.
> Bien sot nature qu'ale fist,
> Quant ele si fait non li mist.
> Serf sont por ce que servir doient;
> ....
> Ne sevent franc home aidier,
> De nature pas ne lor vient. (vv. 1145-1153)

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56 Orme, *From Childhood to Chivalry* p. 93

57 References are to Robert de Blois *L'Enseignement des Princes* in *Sämmtliche Werke,* vol. iii, ed. Jacob Ulrich.

Robert's *Enseignement des Princes* owes something to both the political and moralist traditions as we have seen. Whilst the political writing of this period is optimistic in the virtues it expects and hopes to foster in a ruler, the moralist tradition is, predictably, less enthusiastic about the basic quality of human nature. It is, however, a useful source of views on childrearing, provided we remember its rather more negative bias.

Philippe de Navarre (d. 1261/64) wrote his moral treatise *Des .iiii. Tenz D'Aage D'Ome* at the end of a long life - "Cil qui fist cest conte avoit .LXX. ans passez quant il l'ampraint a faire" (I:1) - which he had spent in legal and diplomatic service for the king of Cyprus.[58] In his introductory paragraph he explains that, having acquired all the experience of a long life, he feels himself in a position to offer useful advice to others on all the four different ages of man. The division of life into various ages is a common motif from antiquity onwards,[59] and Philippe adopts the fourfold division of *anfance, jovant, moien aage,* and *viellece* (I:1), each of which occupies twenty years (V:188). The responsibilities and proclivities of each age are covered in turn.

Children he regards as naturally perverse from the start ("il sont si ort et si annieus en petitesce, et si mal et si divers, quant il sont .i. po grandet, que a painnes en norriroit on nul" - I:3) and the emphasis throughout is on the need for firm discipline. Although children are so troublesome, God has nonetheless provided that their parents and those who bring them up have a great affection for them. This Philippe approves, and he stresses the parents' responsibility to be involved with their children's upbringing. However, love should not be interpreted as simply allowing a child to do as he likes - indeed one should resort to corporal punishment in order to eradicate any pernicious tendencies (I:8). Throughout, Philippe suggests that the wise dictates of "raison" should be used to curb the wilfulness of "volantez". Initially this "raison" comes from the parent, although this is not because a child is a mere animal, lacking reason, but rather because his faculty is undeveloped. Indeed "raison" is God's unique gift which matures in a child so that by the time he is about ten years old, he should be able to distinguish right from wrong for himself (I:6).

Education of a child should begin as early as possible - the earlier one starts to learn something, the better one's final proficiency (I:14). The first thing to be taught should be the basics of the Christian faith - the Credo, Pater Noster, Ave and the first

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58 References are to Philippe de Navarre, *Les Quatre Ages de L'Homme,* ed. Marcel de Fréville.

59 See, for example, the study by Elizabeth Sears, *The Ages of Man: Medieval Interpretations of the Life Cycle.*

two commandments. These were regarded as the essential minimum religious education for a child. At baptism, the godparents of a child were charged with ensuring that he learned his Apostles' Creed, Pater Noster and Ave Maria.[60] Then the child should be instructed in whatever profession he is to follow. Children of noble parents should be taught "cortoisie" and also given edifying books to read (I:20). A profession offers a child a chance of advancement in life and for this both *clergie* and *chevalerie* are recommended, although no preference is given to one over the other (I:15-16).

Advice is given on tutors, who might be needed if parents are really so busy that they do not have time to undertake their children's education themselves. The tutor should be experienced and well-instructed himself and he should be adequately supervised by the parents (I:20). Although moderation is a quality recommended in the training of children - they should be allowed time for play for example (I:20) - the keynote is discipline.

Nature is ever liable to cause a child's downfall and the problem becomes more acute when *jovant* is reached and the flame of desire burns most strongly (II:33). It is against the temptations of nature that Philippe de Navarre's moral zeal is most fervently directed. He fears most for sexual misbehaviour, especially in girls (see below pp. 45-46), and the main purpose of strict early training is to defend a child against this. Whilst exhibiting a profound mistrust of everything connected with nature, he is optimistic about the remedy which lies in man's reason, the source of his enlightenment from God. In the discussion on *moien aage* he says:-

> Premierement doit on quenoistre soi meismes, et se doit on amesurer et retraire des folies que l'an a fait en jovant, et doit on rainablement et volontiers amander ses mesfaiz a Dieu et au siecle (III:96)

in which echoes of Abelard's "know thyself" are to be heard.

The religious dimension of life is also very important and the reader is continually reminded that he will one day be accountable to God, and that he should live his life accordingly. Whilst religious faith is vital, however, Philippe does not urge a flight from worldly concerns. Worldly advancement is recommended in the first section, and the second encourages a young man to make his way in the world as well as he can in order to be able to provide for his heirs. The moralist's warnings are directed more against the flesh than the world, as indeed one might expect from a secular writer who had spent his career in royal courts.

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60 Orme, *From Childhood to Chivalry*, p. 128.

In a much more satirical vein is Etienne de Fougères *Livre des Manières*, dating from the last quarter of the twelfth century, which looks at six different areas of society (king, church, knights, peasants, bourgeois and women), taking a critical look at the faults of each. The most interesting section for a discussion of lay education is that on *chevalerie*, which expresses similar ideas to those found in the "miroirs de prince". The knightly class is viewed in terms of its social function:

> Chevalier deit espee prendre
> por justisier et por defendre
> cels qui d'els funt les autres pleindre
> force et ravine deit esteindre. (vv. 537-540)

The feudal virtue of loyalty is stressed, but it is above all to those below them in the social order, rather than to those above, that the knight owes the greatest loyalty (strophe 139). Etienne is scathing about those nobles who exploit their dependents, extorting every last piece of produce from their farms. The new practice of knights simply showing off their prowess and enjoying life is scorned in words that echo John of Salisbury's *Policraticus* (see I:5, quoted above p. 34):-

> Haut ordre fu chevalerie
> mes or est ce trigalerie.
> Trop aiment dance et balerie
> et demener bachelerie. (vv. 585-588)

By contrast, purity of life, integrity and a love for the church are enjoined upon the knight (strophes 149-152). A knight was primarily trained to perform a social function - protection of the church and the weak, rather than for the enjoyment of his own skills.

Thus far, our discussion has dealt principally with the education of boys, but we also need to examine the education of women in this period. When it comes to the question of the academic education of girls, the picture is far less clear than it is for boys. There is a certain spectrum of opinions on the extent and range of women's education in the Middle Ages, largely because it is necessary to piece together a picture drawn from allusions and references scattered in various texts. Some are pessimistic, seeing women's intellectual lives as generally circumscribed;[61] it has also been shown that the opportunities offered by the nunneries would probably not have been equal to those available to men.[62] By contrast, there are those who take a more optimistic view

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61 See, for example, Sara Lehrmann, 'The Education of Women in the Middle Ages, and Diane Bornstein, *"The Lady in the Tower": Medieval Courtesy Literature for Women.*

62 Eileen Power, *Medieval English Nunneries, c. 1275-1535.*

and quote examples of women who undeniably did enjoy educational privileges.[63] However, some general comments can be made with a degree of certainty.

Firstly, conservative churchmen and monastic writers were generally scathing of woman's moral capabilities and therefore also of her intellectual ones.[64] They advocated restriction of her activities rather than expression of any aptitudes. Secondly, society in general was suspicious of learning in women and had little need of educated women. The centres of higher learning, whatever a girl's opportunity at a monastic or public school, were certainly closed to women who were thus debarred from the professional careers for which higher studies - in law, medicine, or theology - were designed. The only possible exception to the exclusion of women from university life is the group of women from Salerno, amongst whom was the famous Trotula. History has built up some glamorous details surrounding these characters, suggesting even that Trotula was a professor of medicine in the famous medical school, and that other women taught and practised there.[65] Trotula may have been the author of two treatises *De Ornatu Mulierum* and *De Passionibus Mulierum Ante, In et Post Partum.*[66] It can, however, be said that there was a group of women in Salerno who were famous as midwives as experts on cosmetics, subsequent tradition having afforded them an over-idealised status.

The suspicion of clever women seems to have led, at times, to talented girls being regarded as something of a freak - a kind of exhibit to be paraded for its novelty value. One certainly discerns something of this in Heloise's uncle Fulbert, who was inordinately proud of his niece's learning.[67] However, familial pride in a girl's abilities was usually precisely the factor that provided educational opportunities for those who did enjoy them. If family circumstances were propitious, then a girl might be allowed to develop her academic potential.

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63 See, for example, Joan Ferrante, 'The Education of Women in the Middle Ages in Theory, Fact and Fantasy'.

64 Marie-Thérèse D'Alverny, 'Comment les théologiens et les philosophes voient la femme'.

65 H.P. Bayon, 'Trotula and the Ladies of Salerno', and Muriel J. Hughes, *Women Healers in Medieval Life and Literature,* pp. 100-106, both explore the evidence for, and refute, such claims.

66 Hughes, *Women Healers,* p. 101 regards the attribution as uncertain.

67 See Abelard's comments in J. T. Muckle, *The Story of Abelard's Adversities, a Translation with Notes of the 'Historia Calamitatum'*, pp. 26-7.

Girls at home usually had the opportunity to learn to read, at least the Psalter, if there was a master to teach the boys, but it is unlikely they ever had a master of their own specifically for this end.[68] Moral writers are suspicious of girls acquiring too much academic training, Philippe de Navarre actually forbidding the teaching of reading to girls unless they were destined for the religious life. Even if she was to go into a nunnery, it appears that the education she received there was little different from that of the average lay noblewoman.[69] This education would comprise domestic management skills, and needlework. Outside the nunneries, the leisure occupations of hunting, of games of chess and dice, and of music and poetry reading were becoming increasingly important for the well-educated woman.

The nunneries had never laid particularly strong emphasis on the learning element of the Benedictine rule, unlike the monasteries, and it seems that the standard required for the average nun was that she should know enough Latin to participate in the singing of the office. From the thirteenth century onwards, it appears that many nunneries had an increasingly poor standard of Latin, judging by references in bishops' letters for the need for their instructions (in Latin) to be translated for the nuns to understand them.[70] Abelard's Rule for the nuns of the Paraclete insisted that the nuns should understand what they were singing, a hint that this frequently was not the case.[71] He did not, however, demand learning of any of the nuns except the Chantress, who was responsible for the singing, and even the Abbess herself was not required to be lettered - indeed he rather implied she was better not being so, otherwise philosophical speculations might have distracted her from her responsibilities. However he did make the provision that if there were nuns who were able to study, their allocation of tasks should allow them to develop this. The acquisition of learning would seem, therefore, to be an added bonus, a resource to be developed if it existed, but by no means essential.

This also seems to be the underlying thought behind Abelard's general letter to the nuns of the Paraclete.[72] In it he seems to imply that their Abbess, Heloise, had a good knowledge not only of Latin but also of the other two biblical languages, Greek and Hebrew. Heloise was reckoned the most learned woman of her day and good

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68 Orme *From Childhood to Chivalry*, pp. 157-8.

69 Orme *From Childhood to Chivalry*, p. 39. See also Eileen Power, *Medieval English Nunneries*.

70 Eileen Power, *Medieval English Nunneries*.

71 Abelard, *Institutio seu regula sanctimonialium*, *PL*, CLXXVIII, cols. 255-326. See also Enid McLeod, *Heloise: a Biography*, pp. 174-181.

72 Abelard, *Epistola ad virgines Paracletenses*, *PL*, CLXXVIII, cols. 325-335.

enough to rival many men, a startling exception to the rule of non-academic women. The combination of her remarkable intelligence and learning capacity, together with her uncle's pride in her talents allowed her to develop her intellectual capabilities to the full, even bringing the renowned Abelard to her as her private tutor. Her letters to Abelard show her to have been an excellent Latin scholar, well acquainted with Latin classics and a clear thinker, although her knowledge of Greek and Hebrew is less probable, given the prevailing level of ignorance at the time.

In this letter to the nuns of the Paraclete, Abelard draws extensively on Jerome and the Scriptures, arguing for the validity of the study of these three biblical languages and specifically for their study by women. He urges the Paraclete sisters to take advantage of their unique opportunity in having so talented a Mother and to learn from her. Abelard believes that whatever knowledge is available should be used to the best advantage. His letter can by no means be taken as a plea for the education of women. He is writing for a specific situation, not making a universally applicable statement. Neither is he free from the normal view of his time that woman is a morally weaker object than man. In fact this premise forms part of his argument for the advisability of women learning the biblical languages in order that their inherent weakness might be remedied.

Given this lack of book-learning in nunneries, it is hardly likely that they were able to offer a high standard of education in their schools. That nunneries did take in pupils, usually in the face of dire financial necessity, is undeniable, although the practice was frowned upon and restricted wherever possible by religious authorities. However they were hardly a great academic resource and a girl placed in a convent school was more likely to learn good manners and needle skills than advanced Latin studies.[73]

Thus, whatever precise detail we accept on the practice of academic opportunities for girls, we can be certain that they were less than those available to men, and that women's education was not marked by the same enthusiasm that pervades male learning at this time. The attitude of most theoretical writers on women's education is neatly summed up by Shulamith Shahar:-

> Most churchmen who wrote on the subject were in favour of according women in general, and noblewomen in particular, a certain degree of education. The aim was to foster their modesty and religious piety. ...

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73 Eileen Power, *Medieval English Nunneries.*

> Only in exceptional cases do these writers cite the need to educate women so as to prepare them to fulfil specific roles.[74]

The majority of didactic literature aimed specifically at women, and there is an increasing volume of it from the thirteenth century onwards, despite the rather negative picture we have painted, deals primarily with instructing girls in their roles as wife and nother, and in proper behaviour.[75] From the thirteenth century onwards a significant number of courtesy books were produced for the guidance of ladies, usually in the vernacular. Many were written in French and they give an insight into the aims of a girl's upbringing, although, as Diane Bornstein comments, they probably do not reflect much of the reality of women's everyday life:

> The voice of one feminist [i.e. Christine de Pizan] could do little to combat the ideal for women that was developed in most of the courtesy books. It was an ideal of passivity and claustration. Although medieval women needed to exercise the active virtues in leading their lives, the passive ones were emphasised in the courtesy books. Femininity was equated with modesty, humility, chastity and obedience. Women were exhorted to see themselves in the mirror on men's eyes and to act as servant, nurse, lover, wife and mother to meet the needs of men. Although women played important roles in the political and economic spheres, their duties within the home were emphasised and the household was considered their proper domain.[76]

This view is borne out by Robert de Blois' *Chastoiement des Dames*, dating from the first half of the thirteenth century. This 757-line poem is divided up into 21 sections, offering advice to ladies on good social behaviour. It is somewhat patronising in tone, as the advice given is rather simplistic and the impression created is that of a man encouraging women to behave in a way that makes them appealing to men. In the introduction Robert says that the aim of his poem is to show a lady how to offer

> .... par sa cortoisie
> Solaz et bele compaignie
> Et es alanz et es venanz. (vv. 29-31)[77]

It is a lady's function to make herself as agreeable as possible socially for the benefit of her reputation:

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74 Shulamith Shahar, *The Fourth Estate: A History of Women in the Middle Ages*, p. 154.

75 These are most fully documented in Alice A. Hentsch, *De la littérature didactique du moyen âge s'adressant spécialement aux femmes*, which remains the standard work on this area.

76 Diane Bornstein, *"The Lady in the Tower": Medieval Courtesy Literature for Women*, pp. 120-121.

77 References are to Robert de Blois, *Le Chastoiement des Dames* in *Sämmtliche Werke*, vol. iii, ed. Jacob Ulrich.

Trop tost puet son pris abaissier
Qui molt bien garde ne se prant
De solacier raignaublement. (vv. 52-54)

A woman is expected to behave demurely at all times, when she goes out anywhere (I), at table (XVII) and especially at church, for which a complete guide is given, including instructions on when to sit, kneel or stand (XII-XIV). However, she must not be so reserved that she remains veiled when greeted - unless she is very ugly! (X) - and must consent to play and sing in public if she is talented (XV). Forwardness of any kind is forbidden. She must not make eyes at men (IV), must not permit kisses or touches on the breast from anyone other than her husband (II, III) and should not show off excessive leg or cleavage. Her honour must be protected, hence expensive gifts should not be accepted (VII) and if a man offers her his love she should not boast about it (V). The final three sections offer advice on the tactful turning down of a lover (XIX-XXI) - or if a lady wishes, for keeping him hanging on to renew his addresses (XXI: 747-757). There are hints on personal hygiene (XI, XVI), table manners (XVII) and an exhortation to avoid gluttony and drunkenness (IX and XVII). Finally, since it is a common precept that

.... doit estre amesuree
Chascune dame de parler,
Qu'ale ne s'an face blasmer. (vv. 20-22)

She must watch her tongue and avoid shrewishness (VIII) and lying (XVIII). The instructions on table manners in the *Chastoiement* are in similar vein to other French *contenances de table.* Stefan Glixelli notes three in French and comments on the spread and popularity of this kind of literature which was still being read in the fifteenth century.[78]

Philippe de Navarre's *Des .iiii. tens d'aage d'ome* referred to above (pp. 38-39) comes from the moral rather than the courtesy tradition, but the comments made are of a similar nature. His main focus of attention is on the "nature" of girls and the need for its governance as a protection against sexual impurity. He is severely misogynistic - indeed more so than might be expected from a lay rather than a clerical writer. He subscribes to the belief that woman's nature necessarily tends towards wickedness, hence she must be kept in subjection, either to a father, husband or brother (I:21). Education is not a process for developing a woman's's own aptitudes, but of teaching her to know and keep to her place. Above all she must preserve her reputation which is fragile and easily tarnished (I:22), she must be kept in good company so that she is not led astray (I:26), she must learn a simple and meek demeanour (I:27). The emphasis

78 Stefan Glixelli, 'Les Contenances de table'.

throughout the work is on a woman's role in the home (the later sections deal with her role as wife and mother for example), hence the skills recommended are practical - spinning and sewing (I:24) - and certainly not intellectual: "L'an lot doit en anfance aucun mestier apanre par entendre et non mie penser" (I:24). Reading is certainly not to be taught unless a girl is destined for a convent, since this would open up the possibility for illicit liaisons carried on by correspondence (I:25).

The education of girls, in Philippe de Navarre's view, should be aimed at fitting them for their role in life. Exactly what this role is thought to be is crucial. In his concluding remarks on "anfance", Philippe sums up the education of women, saying they have a simple task, they need only learn to be chaste, whereas man's role is greater. He must be "cortois et larges et hardiz et sages". Such an attitude is clearly harsh and restrictive, but if it represents anything like the prevailing view of women in the Middle Ages, it is not surprising that their educational prospects were limited.

We may conclude that the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries are a time of important developments in the history of education. Although the vigour and enthusiasm that marked the twelfth century renaissance was shortlived, this period nonetheless left a lasting mark on educational history. The shift from the monastic to the urban sphere and the growing secularisation of education made the intellectual life a lively and combative one, occupying an important place in medieval life, and becoming available to a wider range of people. The growing spirit of rationalism gave birth to the scholastic method which remained the dominant mode of enquiry until the Renaissance, and fixed medieval thought in the realms of theological and philosophical speculation rather than discovery or experimentation. The great universities of the period, too, have survived until the present, much of our concept of higher education still bearing the marks of its medieval forebear.

The important develoments in education are matched by an interest in the theory of education, exemplified by the large number of writers on the subject. What is especially interesting in this respect is the growing number of authors, especially from the thirteenth century onwards, who tackle education in its widest sense. Writers from many different traditions comment on the upbringing of children; we find moralists, encyclopaedists, churchmen and political theorists raising the important question of how children should be brought up and what they should learn. Such evidence surely refutes Ariès' contention that the Middle Ages had no concept of education.[79] Certainly it may not have resembled either the ancient or modern view of education, but

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[79] See also remarks by Shulamith Shahar, *Childhood in the Middle Ages*, pp. 1-7.

writers in the Middle Ages clearly did recognise the need to train their youngsters for their future roles in life and had clear ideas of what they wished education to achieve. Although there is a growing interest in the individual in the twelfth century, and although in the clerical sphere learning is beginning to be pursued for its own sake, the predominant view of all education in this period is that of a training for life. Education was geared towards whatever future role a child was to play. The extent to which that coincided with a child's own wishes and aptitudes depended on circumstances, and whether he was able to influence his choice of career. Educational writers such as Vincent de Beauvais and Hugh of St. Victor are increasingly aware, however, of the psychological dimension of education, of the need for appropriate development and of the variations in the natural gifts of different individuals. Natural gifts and education should ideally work in concert, as both Hugh and John of Salisbury were aware, but the notion of the realisation of individual potential is still in the future.

What is also noticeably lacking in many writers is any attempt to work out how the clear goals they set for education were to be achieved. The writers of the "miroirs de prince" simply set out their ideas of how an ideal prince should be: they are not usually concerned with how he can be made to be what he should be. The practical applications of educational goals are best addressed by Hugh of St. Victor's *Didascalicon* and John of Salisbury's *Metalogicon.* These are undoubtedly the most important educational texts of the period and they illustrate that, although interest in secular education was flourishing in the period, it was still less advanced in its theory than clerical education. One has to wait until Montaigne in the sixteenth century for a clear expression of how educational goals can be achieved in the upbringing of a young nobleman.

Most political writers reiterate the idea present in their Latin sources, that the ideal ruler should have some kind of literary education, as this makes him a wiser and better man. Exactly how this equation is reached is not normally explained; it is rather an accepted assumption. John of Salisbury does, however, offer a clear answer in his *Policraticus.* The prince needs to be educated in order to be able to study God's word which is the higher law that is to guide his actions in good and just ways. This is matched by the common view of learning as being synonymous with the pursuit of wisdom. The educational writing of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, clerical and secular, is marked by a striking optimism in the value and efficacy of education, and yet there is always a tension between nature and nurture. Education may be able to curb the deleterious effects of human nature, but ultimately it is never seen as being able to alter what nature intended for a man. At its best, education is seen as a cooperation with and enrichment of the endowments of nature.

PART II

Literary Views of Education - Representation

The historical overview in Part I enabled us to form an idea of the major events and preoccupations in the educational sphere in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and to examine the theory and practice of clerical and secular education. The aim of this second part is to examine how these are translated into the medieval narrative. Taking a large corpus of texts, we address the question of how the narrative poets treat the education of their characters, examining what they learn, when and how, evaluating differences that arise between our two genres, and differences over our 150-year timescale.[1] We also examine how close a resemblance this education bears to the picture we formed in our examination of the historical context in Part I. These analyses enable us to evaluate how important to narrative poets is the education of their characters, and why they wish to include it in their work. The ground is then prepared for the final part of our study which examines the ways in which literature shapes education for its own ends.

Despite comments in recent years commenting on the low profile of children in Old French literature,[2] the education of the main protagonists is frequently described and treated as an matter of some importance, at least by the characters within the narrative.[3] Questions of the proper education of their child occupy parents' attention from the moment it is born - and even before the birth in the case of *Gui de Warewic*: Gui gives explicit instructions to his wife Fenice about the way their unborn son, Rainbrun, is to be brought up, knowing he himself will be absent from home at the time of the birth. The child is to be carefully looked after by his mother until he can walk and then be committed to the care of Gui's own former tutor, Heralt, who will know how to teach him everything he needs to learn (vv. 7699-7704).

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1 A complete list of these texts and their approximate dates can be found in the Appendix.

2 See, for example:- Jacques le Goff, *La Civilisation de l'occident médiévale*, p. 325 and 'Petits enfants dans la littérature des XIIe-XIIIe siècles', Béatrix Vadin, 'L'absence de représentation de l'enfant et/ou du sentiment de l'enfance dans la littérature médiévale'. Some of these views are countered by Kimberlee Anne Campbell, 'Beware of Biting Child: Childhood Recaptured in the the Medieval Legend of Doon and Olive'.

3 Doris Desclais Berkvam in *Enfance et Maternité* comments on the importance of the descriptions of education: "Ils [les auteurs] s'intéressent à l'éducation que reçoivent leurs personnages ainsi qu'aux parents, aux maîtres, à la famille et aux amis qui participent à la formation de ces jeunes êtres." (p. 10)

We can trace the typical pattern of the hero's, and then the heroine's upbringing and education through the descriptions we find in our narratives. The early part of a literary hero's life, like that of his factual counterpart, is generally spent among women. The poet of the *Roman des Sept Sages* reminds parents of their first duty to their new child:-

> Quant uns haus hom a .i. enfant
> son fils cortois et avenant
> lors devroit une gentis femme
> querre entour lui par tout le regne,
> Se li fesist l'enfant baillier
> pour bien norrir et ensaignier. (vv. 217-222)[4]

As it is normal practice for a child to be given to a wet-nurse, the choice of nurse is very important. She must be of good birth and breeding, for the base nature of a lowly woman may be transmitted to her charge, corrupting his noble nature. The author of the *Roman des Sept Sages* attributes the decline of the noble classes in his time to neglect of this principle:-

> Mais or est forment abaissie,
> c'une femme toute coursal
> nourri le fil d'un amiral.
> Quant il de li prent noureture,
> sentir se doit de sa nature. (vv. 205-210)

This problem does not arise in the case of the infant Alexander in Alexandre de Paris' *Roman d'Alexandre,* however, for this child firmly refuses to accept anything from a "vilaine":-

> Onques nel pot servir vilaine ne ancelle,
> Ainz le couvint touz jorz nourir une pucele,
> Et d'une franche dame aletoit la mamele.
> (vv. 232-234)

The quality of the nurse seems here to become something of a status symbol, a means of emphasising the hero's superlative qualities. A similar kind of picture is found in Jean Renart's *L'Escoufle* where the hero, Guillaume, has three nurses to himself, one to feed him, one to rock him and a third to carry him around the house and to bath him. These nurses each guard their own responsibility jealously, since they are all devoted to their infant charge (vv. 1788-1797).

The child remains with his mother or other women until the age when he is considered fit to pass into adult male society, generally at the age of seven or

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4 References are to version K of the verse redaction of the *Roman des Sept Sages*. For details of the interrelationships of the different versions, see the Introduction to Speer's edition of the text.

thereabouts, as we find in Thomas of Kent's *Roman de Toute Chevalerie*: "La mere fist l'enfant mult nettement norir/Itant crust en oyt aunz que bien pot roy servir" (vv. 427-428). Similarly, in *Raoul de Cambrai*, Bernier's son Henri remains with his mother until the age of seven, when he starts to learn skills belonging to the male world (vv. 7616-7620). The passage into the male world from the female is a significant step - the poet in *Dolopathos* tells us it was marked by an important festival in times past - and it is abnormal for a hero to stay among women beyond this point. Chrétien's Perceval, for example, is raised only by his mother because he has no father, a situation which leads to a defective upbringing.[5]

The next important figure in the young hero's life is his tutor. He is obviously a person who must be suitably qualified, like the nurse, a point emphasised in theoretical writings by Philippe de Navarre and the authors of the *miroirs de prince*.[6] Good education is certainly part of their necessary qualifications. Florimont, for example, has a tutor called Foucar who is extremely well educated:-

> Mout avoit apris en s'emfance
> Astronomie et nigromance
> Et savoit de dialetique
> De gramaire et de musique
> Et de retorique savoit
> De fisique asi s'entendoit;
> Tot savoit quanqu'il a mestier
> Ou a clerc ou a chevalier
> (*Florimont* vv. 1865-72)[7]

Durmart le Galois's father expresses concerns of a more moral nature when entrusting his son to his seneschal (*Durmart le Galois* vv. 177-194). He does not want to expose the child to a "vilain", for "lor enseignement est trop vilz" (v. 185), but wishes to be sure the master will encourage noble traits in the child.

The tutor may be appointed very early in the boy's life, as appears to be the case in *Gui de Warewic*. He then has overall responsibility for the upbringing of the child, relieving the parents of this duty and becoming something of a substitute for them. In *Doon de Mayence*, the tutor is responsible for very young children. The hero Doon,

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5 Perceval is further discussed in Part III Section 5. Other examples include Constentin in the *Roman de Brut*, who is only mentioned as being brought up by his mother (vv. 5663-5672). Certain heroes are brought up by fairies (in *Floriant et Florete, Maugis d'Aigremont, Lancelot del Lac* for example), but in each of these cases the fairy seeks male masters to help in the education process.

6 See, for example, Part I, pp. 33, 39.

7 See also Tholomeu (*Ipomedon* vv. 199-202, 325-6). Alexander in the *Roman d'Alexandre* is tutored by the famous philosopher Aristotle (see further discussion in Part III Section 1).

we are told, is seven when he is abducted by this wicked tutor (v. 432), and his two brothers are younger than he is. In *Floovant*, we also find the eponymous young hero entrusted to a tutor, the Duke of Bourgogne, a vassal of his father's, for his education:-

> .... "Senechaul, ca venez
> Jo vos commant ici Floovant a garder;
> Il est ancore junes, meschins et baichilés,
> Et si ne set pas bien ses garnemanz porter.
> "Sire, dit Senechaul, a vostre velenté
> Bien iert apris li anfes de quant que mestier eirt"
> (vv. 48-53)

Here notions of age are less clear, since "junes meschins et baichilés" need not imply a very early age. The emotional dimension of the relationship is seen, for example, in *Aliscans* where Guillaume d'Orange laments the death of his young nephew Vivien whom he has brought up - "Je vos norri par mout grant chiereté" (v. 886). He had cared for Vivien, instructed and knighted him, forging a close relationship between them, equal, indeed, to that of natural parenthood. "Nourir" here carries the wide range of meanings noted in Part I, describing the whole caring and educating process bestowed on a child. Clearly this kind of tutorship to a young nobleman is an influential position. In *Anseis de Cartage* we find Anseis' future father-in-law agreeing to Anseis' marriage to Letise only on condition that he is allowed the first son of the marriage to bring up, thereby securing his interests in the match and his future political influence in Anseis' affairs.[8]

The tutor may also enter the story a little later in the young hero's life when the time for some formal teaching is thought to have arrived. Thus, Oriande, in *Maugis d'Aigremont*, finds a suitable master for her young charge:-

> Oriände ot .i. frere, qui ot à non Baudris
> Esté ot à Tolete .vii. anz et .xv. diz,
> Mout fu bien des .vii. arz entroduiz et apris;
> Il ot plus de .c. ans, si fu vielz et floriz.
> Quant Maugis ot aage qu'il ot auques d'avis,
> A lui apenre fu nuit et jor ententiz.
> (vv. 613-618)[9]

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8 See also *La Chanson d'Aspremont* vv. 2735-38 where Balans feels loyalty to Agolant who had brought him up and therefore will not defect to Charlemagne.

9 We find tutors being appointed for formal schooling in the following also:-

Dolopathos (vv. 1237-1250)
Sone de Nansai (v. 87)
Blancandin et l'Orgueilleuse d'Amour (vv. 35-38)
Floriant et Florete (vv. 753-755)
Lancelot del Lac (Sommer p. 33)

He (or they, since several tutors may be appointed as in the case of Alexander in the different versions of the *Roman d'Alexandre*) has less overall responsibility for his pupil, and is involved rather with his schooling. The age for this is not necessarily specified; for Maugis d'Aigremont it is when "Maugis ot aage qu'il ot auques d'avis" (v. 617). This would probably be at around the age of five to seven, when we see the education of other heroes beginning, and this is roughly the age at which theoretical writers suggest that formal education should begin. The two half brothers of the hero in *Gui de Nanteuil* are already learning riding skills and the social accomplishments of chess and backgammon at five and six:-

> Quant il orent .v. ans, si lez font chevauchier
> Et quant il en ont .vi. bien galopent destrier
> Et d'eschéz et des tablez lez font bien enseignier
>
> (Version M, vv. 117-119. In version V the ages are three and four respectively)[10]

The tutor then teaches the child until he reaches the age of fourteen or fifteen, again another frequent watershed in theorists' views of age and development, or until he is knighted. The literary hero is generally fully educated and, predictably, the most accomplished in the land, by the age of twelve to fifteen.[11] Sone, hero of *Sone de Nansai*, for example, at the age of twelve excels in the art of singing:-

> Sones avoit .xii. ans passés
> Plus biaus enfes n'estoit trouvés
> Ne nus enfes mieus ne cantoit. (vv. 99-101)

Floriant, hero of *Floriant et Florete*, at the age of fifteen, has reached the end of eight years of education and is reckoned to be a fully finished young man:-

> Dedens .viii. anz fu bien apris
> Or en ot .xv. ce m'est vis,
> Et il l'a mout bien retenu. (vv. 765-767)

Many tutors retain a position of influence and privilege with their young charges even beyond the point where they are required in what we might consider a strictly

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In the *Vie de Saint Alexis*, the hero's upbringing is divided into three phases, "noureture", "escole", and service to the emperor (vv. 31-35).

10 Eracle in Gautier d'Arras' romance of the same name is put to his letters at the age of five (vv. 252-253).

11 There may be some vestiges here of the *puer senex* theme, described by Ernst Robert Curtius: *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, p. 100. See also Teresa C. Carp: *'Puer senex* in Roman and Medieval Thought'. There is an explicit use of the *topos* in Wace's *Roman de Brut* in describing Constentin: "Altretels fu en sa juenvlesce/Come altres sunt en lur viellesce" (vv. 5685-6).

educational capacity. Florimont's tutor Foucar remains the hero's mentor and shares in his adventures, as does Ipomedon's master Tholomeu in Hue de Rotelande's *Ipomedon*.[12] The guidance of a tutor is valuable to a young man until he attains the kind of majority marked by his preparedness for the assumption of the responsible roles of government or family leadership.

The tutor's influential position in the early life of a hero obviously makes him an important figure in the narrative and he often plays a catalytic role, precipitating events that lead to the adventures characteristic of the hero's life. In *Florence de Rome*, for example, Milon and Esmere are taken away from home and the influence of their wicked stepfather by their tutor. A wicked tutor is seen in *Doon de Mayence*, abducting the young hero from his natural home and mother, initiating the young boy's quest to regain them. In the A version of the *Enfances Vivien*, an argument between the young Saracen Rainouart and his tutor provokes the latter's action in selling his pupil to Christian merchants. In *Floovant*, it is the young hero's disrespectful treatment of his tutor (he cuts his beard while he is asleep (vv. 57-94)) which results in banishment from his father's kingdom. This disrespect for a tutor goes against the expected behaviour of a pupil towards his master, and is an unusual feature. Another well-known example is found in the prose *Lancelot*, where Lancelot's generous behaviour in giving away both his horse and his quarry on a hunting trip (pp. 36-37) is rebuked by his tutor. Lancelot challenges the tutor's verdict and authority, dealing him a hefty blow. His behaviour is rebuked by the Lady of the Lake, although she applauds the noble and elevated spirit that lies behind it.

Despite the influential role of the tutor, however, the most important part of the hero's education, and that which the poets take most care to describe, is the curriculum taught him. The precise content of this curriculum varies between texts, but tends in general towards social rather than academic skills. The distinction between social and academic training is a reflection of the distinction between the concepts of *clergie* and *chevalerie*. These are clearly perceived as contrasts in the Middle Ages, representing two different areas of life and orders of society.[13] We can therefore expect that our knightly heroes should receive training in those areas that pertain to *chevalerie*, and should concentrate less on the knowledge that belongs to *clergie*. However, in keeping with the growing secularisation of education in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and with the rising literacy of the laity, both of which we noted in Part I, and influenced no

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12 See also the relationship between Alexander and Aristotle, discussed in detail in the chapter on the *Roman d'Alexandre* in Part III Section 1.

13 See Part I, pp. 1, 40.

doubt by the enthusiasm felt for academic education, elements of *clergie* do appear in the education of our heroes. We find, therefore, that some receive training in both social and intellectual skills. The balance between *clergie* and *chevalerie* is nicely illustrated in the romance *Athis et Prophilias.*[14] The eponymous heroes are natives of Athens and Rome respectively. The poet contrasts the two cities: "Athene est pleine de clergie/Et Rome de chevalerie" (vv. 191-2). The heroes each broaden their education in the other's city so that they are accomplished in both areas. The theme of education is not developed further in the romance, which deals primarily with the very close friendship that springs up between the heroes and with their resultant adventures. However, it does provide an attractive scenario in which to develop this friendship *topos*, which is similar to that found in *Ami et Amile.* It is significant that the friendship is formed in early life, a time which is psychologically plausible for the forming of lasting attachments, and it invests the theme of education in this work with some importance since this is part of the initial cementing of the friendship.

We find, as we have already suggested, that social skills predominate in the hero's curriculum,[15] and of these hunting and social games are the most frequently learned.[16] We noted above that Gui de Nanteuil's brothers were learning precisely

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14 See also the reference to Archbishop Turpin in *Gui de Borgogne* where he describes himself as possessing both *clergie* and *chevalerie,* an enhancement of his personal status (vv. 1668-1670).

15 The frequency with which "noble" activities appear in educations is noted by Doris Desclais Berkvam in *Enfance et Maternité* ... p. 63.

16 For further examples of this core, see the following:-

Roman d'Alexandre (Version A) vv. 48-57, (Version B) vv. 63-73, (Version L) vv. 185-223
Amadas et Ydoine Version V. vv. 71-78
Blancandin et l'Orgueilleuse d'Amour vv. 35-44
Sone de Nansai vv. 87-96
Lancelot del Lac (Sommer Vol. III pp. 33-40)
Huon de Bordeaux vv. 7437-7467
Richars li Biaus vv 685-691

Both skills may not always be found. The following mention only hunting:-

Horn vv. 369-394
Gui de Warewic vv.141-156
Protheslaus vv. 1775-1779
La Chanson d'Aspremont vv. 2212-2223

In the following texts, hunting is omitted:-

L'Escoufle vv. 2018-2039
Florence de Rome vv. 679-682 (Milon and Esmere, brother-in-law and husband to the heroine)
Aye d'Avignon vv. 2560-2566 (Aye's son Gui)
Hervis de Metz vv. 256-269

these social skills at a very early age. One or other of these accomplishments, if not both, appears in the majority of descriptions of the hero's curriculum. Hunting and gaming are the most important elements of Floriant's education in *Floriant et Florete*, certainly overshadowing the seven arts which he also learns:-

A .i. mestre le commanda
Qui les .vii. ars li a apris,
Molt i a grant entente mis,
Aprés des tables li aprent
Et des eschés tot ensement
Comment on doit son jeu garder
Et son aversaire mater.
De chiens, d'oisiaus et de riviere
Li aprist toute la maniere.
Toute riens qu'apent a franc home
Li a apris, ce est la sonme. (vv. 754-764)

The hunting skills in particular are stressed in the initial education of Galeran in *Galeran de Bretagne*, although gaming does feature briefly:-

Galerens aprint d'autre part
Par le conseil Lohier son mestre
Comment l'en doit ung oyseau pestre
Gerfaut, oustour ou esprevier,
Faucon ou gentil ou lannier
Et il aprint a laisser aller
Et poursuïr et rappeller
Et comment l'en le garde en mue
Et quant l'on l'oste et remue;
Des chiens sot, s'en ama la feste;
S'aprint a deffaire la beste,
Si sot de l'arbeleste traire
Et sot moult bien ung boujon faire
Si sot de tables et d'eschecs. (vv. 1174-1187)

In many cases, of course, hunting and gaming form only part of a wider curriculum. Florimont, hero of Aimon de Varennes' romance of the same name, learns a wide range of subjects, of which these are but two:-

Florymons mout bien aprenoit
Tot seu que il savoir devoit.
Li dus le fist bien doctriner
De chevaucher, d'armes porter,
De lance roidement ferir
Et a cheval d'escut covrir.
Jeus des taubles, d'eschas mater,
As dames belement parler.
Et puels d'espreviers et d'ostors,
De counoistre faux jugeors,
Parler em plait cortoissement

Maugis d'Aigremont vv. 630-642
Gui de Nanteuil Version M vv. 111-119, Version V, vv.113-116

Et conoistre faux jugement,
D'escremie, de champions,
De menu ferir de bastons,
De harpe et de vïele aprist.
Li dus mout grant entente i mist
Et mout volentiers l'aprenoit.
Plusors fois quant il le veoit,
Si li dissoit de largeté .... (vv. 1901-1919)[17]

One text conspicuously omits both hunting and gaming skills: *Aiol* deals with a hero who is brought up in exile from society, and so lacks any training in social skills, a fact that worries both his father and mother. Although they do try to educate him to the best of their ability, these two subjects do not form part of the curriculum, and indeed, Aiol's father warns him later about the dangers of the dice tables when he leaves home for Louis' court (see below pp. 63-4).

Fighting skills are learned nearly as frequently as games and hunting, and these three skills together form the core of the courtly hero's curriculum. Sometimes the poet refers both to hand-to-hand combat and fencing skills - *escremie* - and to fighting on horseback, sometimes just to the latter. Gui, hero of *Gui de Warewic*, learns both: "De behorder e de escermir/de cheval poindre e retenir" (vv. 145-146). Guillaume, hero of Jean Renart's *L'Escoufle*, receives separate training in each aspect of fighting:-

Li damoisiaux avoit .i. mestre
Ki li aprent de l'escremie;
Por combatre nel fait il mie
Mais por avoir grignor alaine.
....
Li maistres li fait les destriers
Poindre et guencir et eslaissier
(vv.2018-21, 2034-35)[18]

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17 On the eclectic range of subjects Florimont learns, and the possible relationship between this text and similar passages in the *Roman d'Alexandre*, see Marjorie Rigby, 'The Education of Alexander the Great and *Florimont*'.

18 Other educations that comprise fighting include the following:-

Roman d'Alexandre (Alberic) vv. 82-105
(Version L) vv. 185-223
Florimont vv. 1901-1919
Horn vv 369-394
Galeran de Bretagne vv. 4852-4867
Chevalier au Cygne vv 1311-1349
Gui de Warewic vv 141-156
Sone de Nansai vv. 283-294
Florence de Rome vv. 679-682
Raoul de Cambrai vv. 1113-1125 (in this epic, the only skills ever mentioned as being learned are military, in keeping with the bleak atmosphere of family feuds and revenge)
Hervis de Metz vv. 256-269
Maugis d'Aigremont vv. 630-642

The amount of space devoted to fighting skills in the description of a hero's education is often quite long, more than half the description in *L'Escoufle*.[19] Galeran de Bretagne also receives a comprehensive military training, which is carefully described; indeed, it is given additional status by being described separately from the rest of the hero's education.[20] Brundoré, having knighted the young Galeran, proceeds to give him a lesson in fighting:-

Si li devise sa leçon
Comment il doit lance tenir,
Et son escu faire venir
Davant son piz a l'assemblee
Comment il doit traire l'espee
Chacier, guenchir et encontrer,
Cheval poindre et en presse entrer,
Et a meschief yssir d'estour.
Mainte guenche et meint bon tour
Li a moustré, et cil l'aprent
Qui depuis de rien n'en mésprent
Tant y a mise peine et cure. (vv. 4852-4863)

The care with which this poet, and others, describe the fighting training, and the attention lavished on the falconer's expertise in the reference to *Galeran de Bretagne* above, suggest that these skills were of particular interest to poets and audiences in the court milieu. Jean Renart seems to take the opportunity of hunting and fighting appearing in his hero's education to discourse on the hunter or fighter's skills. Poet and audience would, of course, recognise the acquiring of proficiency in these areas, which they themselves had very likely practised, doubtless creating a taste for such extensive descriptions.

Gui de Nanteuil (Version M) vv. 111-119
(Version V) vv. 113-116
Huon de Bordeaux vv. 7437-7467
Aiol vv. 259-276

19 Long fighting sections are also found in the following texts:-

Roman d'Alexandre - Alberic's version vv. 92-7 and L manuscript version vv. 207-212
Florimont vv. 1904-6, 1913-14
Huon de Bordeaux vv. 7460-7465

20 Separate sections devoted to the hero learning to fight can be found in the following texts:-

Aiol vv. 295-302
Galeran de Bretagne vv. 4852-4867
Le Conte du Graal vv. 1416-1530
Le Chevalier au Cygne vv. 1311-1349. In this text, the description is highly comical, since the hero has never learned to fight, is about to face a single combat, and is completely ignorant of what any of his armour or weapons are for.

There are a few texts, however, in which fighting is specifically not learned. Blancandin's father does not want him to learn anything of *chevalerie* (*Blancandin et l'Orgueilleuse d'Amour* vv. 43-44), and Perceval in *Le Conte du Graal* is brought up in ignorance of it. In Blancandin's case this does not, however, exclude the recreational exercise of equestrian skills; "porquant si sot bien behorder,/Un cheval poindre et galoper" (vv. 47-48).[21]

Musical skills are another area of courtly accomplishment sometimes learned by male characters, although music is found more frequently in women's education. Indeed Silence, in *Le Roman de Silence*, a young girl brought up as a boy for political reasons, decides to learn music as this will give her at least one feminine skill if she should ever be able to acknowledge her real sex (vv. 2823-2872). Music is one aspect in which the eponymous hero of the Anglo-Norman romance *Horn* excels:-

N'est estrument suz ciel, dunt sacet hom mortal,
Dunt ne past tute gent dan, Horn l'enperïal
(vv.375-6)[22]

Music is important to Horn later in the romance also. In his Gudmod disguise he plays to Lenburc, princess of Ireland. In a plot similar to that found in *Tristan*,[23] she is attracted to him and wishes him to remain and become her tutor in music, but he declines (vv. 2814-2845). Sone de Nansai's singing was mentioned above as one of his accomplishments when he reached the age of twelve, but his musical talent receives further elaboration later in the romance when he falls in love and neglects his former pursuits:-

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21 This is also the case for Perceval who knows how to ride, hunt and throw javelins, but has been kept from the knightly riding and fighting skills which are taught him later by Gornemanz.

22 Other heroes who learn musical skills are found in the following texts:-

Roman d'Alexandre (Alberic) vv. 82-105
(Version L) vv. 185-223
Florimont vv. 1901-1919
L'Escoufle vv. 2018-39
Maugis d'Aigremont vv. 630-642
Aye d'Avignon vv. 3-16

One of the best known musical heroes in medieval romance is Tristan. We have no reference to his education in either Béroul or Thomas, but Eilhart, Béroul's source, mentions this as part of the hero's accomplishments (Eilhart von Oberge, *Tristrant*, ed. Franz Lichtenstein, vv. 130-184, particularly v. 132), as does Thomas's epigone Gottfried von Strassburg (Gottfried von Strassburg: *Tristan und Isolt*, ed. August Closs, vv. 2054-2146, particularly vv. 2093-2097)

23 See edition by Mildred Pope, Vol 2. p.7.

De canter set quan qu'en puet iestre;
De ce se puet apieler mestre.
Ne nus mieus a mont cantoit,
De coi tous anuijer soloit;
Si soloit volontiers canter;
Or ne l'ot on .i. mot sonner. (vv. 289-294)

Instrumental skills are those in which the young Alexander excels in the L version of the *Roman d'Alexandre*:

D'estrumens li aprisent, tymbre et harpe a soner,
De rote et de vïele et de gige canter,
Et sons et lais et notes connoistre et atemprer,
Et par le sien engien en tous tons cans trover.
(vv. 217-220)

Conversation is another of the social skills that is mentioned regularly in descriptions of education. The decasyllabic Alexander romance in particular emphasises this, telling us that the hero learns to "parler ot dames corteisament d'amors" (Ms A, v. 55), an innovation by this particular redactor on his predecessor Alberic, where speaking skills are considered in terms of the owner's ability to express himself well in the legal sphere - "Le terz [magestre] ley leyre et playt cabir" (v. 98).[24] Similar oratorical skills appear in *Le Siege de Barbastre*, where Beuves and Louis are both praised for gifts of oratory after giving rousing rallying calls to their men (vv. 2711, 6421-9). This ability in a leader is seen as a great asset to his people.

Two heroes learn, besides the art of conversation and good manners to ladies, the more intimate arts of love. Training in love is, of course, the object of the "arts of love" that were gaining popularity in this period, and its expression in literary texts is examined further in Part III. Training in the sexual aspect is rare, and we find only these two examples, in *Maugis d'Aigremont* and *Partonopeus de Blois*. Maugis is in the unusual position of receiving some first-hand exerience from his fairy foster-mother Oriande:-

Si en fist son ami, que mout le pot amer.
Son cors li abandone besier et acoler,
Desoz son covretor ensemble od li jöer.
(vv. 640-642)[25]

Partonopeus, similarly, needs to be "taught" by his mistress Melior because of his youth and inexperience in an amusing scene which is discussed further in Part III. We should

24 Other skilled speakers are the heroes in *Maugis d'Aigremont* vv. 630-42 and *Florimont* vv. 1901-1919

25 See some similar treatments in *Huon de Bordeaux*, vv. 7466-7467 and the Tent Maiden Episode in *Li Contes del Graal*

note also, that both these ladies, either implicitly or explicitly, are of the fairy type, who entices and secures her mortal lover with such favours.

Good manners and social skills, therefore, are the goal at which the social education of literary characters is aimed. Horn, having been taken in by King Hunlaf with fifteen companions and entrusted to the King's seneschal to be educated, emerges from the process particularly well accomplished in all social graces and courtly perfection:-

> Od tute çoe si est mut e humbles e leal,
> Qu'il ne fereit de son cors huniement vergundal
> Pur tut l'or ki onc fust trové en un jornal.
> Li enfaunt sunt norri e mut sunt bien gardé,
> Mut par sunt tuit corteis e mut bien doctriné,
> Ne poënt en nul sen de rien estre blasmé:
> Mes sur tuz out le pris Horn li pruz, li sené.
> ....
> E si ert en tuz sens tut li meuz enseigné.
> (vv. 384-390, 392)

Aymeri, in *Aymeri de Narbonne*, who receives no formal training that we are told of, is nonetheless praised for being "bien enseigné" (v. 3285). Similar references are found at vv. 3260 and 3302, and all occur at the point in the narrative where Aymeri is introduced to his future wife Hermenjart for the first time. The references to his excellent education and manners are used to illustrate how perfect a husband Hermenjart is now acquiring; we have heard much of his military prowess, now, in his relationship with a woman, his social accomplishments are also being emphasised.[26] In the *Roman d'Alexandre* by Alberic de Pisançon, there is an explicit link between learning, good manners and moral integrity:-

> Magestres ab beyn affactaz,
> De totas arz beyn enseynaz,
> Qui.l. duystrunt beyn de dignitaz
> Et de conseyl et de bontaz
> De sapientia et d'onestaz
> De fayr estorn et prodeltaz. (vv. 82-87)[27]

A similar comment is found in *Hervis de Metz*, where, at the end of his education, the hero is said to be "de bones teces ... bien endoctrinés" (v. 267).

Part of the young man's education is often spent at an influential court, preferably a royal one, where this proper behaviour and accomplishment can be fostered

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26 Other heroes whose good manners are commented upon can be found in *Hervis de Metz* vv. 256-269, *Amadas et Ydoine* vv. 71-78, *Horn* vv. 369-94.

27 See also further discussion on this text in Part III Section 1

and practised. Parents are keen for their sons to be received in such places, and nobles and monarchs too are keen to receive the services of these boys, who are a useful source of domestic help. The new milieu will broaden the horizons of these young children, enabling them to increase their social awareness and make valuable friendships and contacts. We note, for example, the enlarged range of people the young hero of *Jourdain de Blaye* comes to meet at court:-

> Or fu Jordains a la cort escuiers.
> Moult enammerent serjant et chevalier
> Et clerc et lay et prestre de monstiers
> Riches pucelles et cortoises moilliers.
> (vv. 803-806)

This being sent away from home is a common *topos* in the epic, where young men are sent to the royal court in the hope that they will be able to make their mark by their prowess and hence win lands and fortune, which aim is often the generating force in the epic storyline. The young Guillaume d'Orange, however, is scathing about the possibilities offered by Charlemagne's court, where he knows social concerns weigh more heavily than military ones, and where he will be acting as a glorified slave:-

> "N'irai an France l'anpereour servir
> Nen anterai an chanbre, que ne sai faire lis
> Ne gardeir robes ne henais maserins
> Ne per forais chasier pors ne guerbis"
> (*Les Enfances Guilllaume* vv. 85-88)

In *Girart de Vienne* Renier offers a similar testimony about the occupations of himself and his brother Girart at court:-

> "Girart mon frere fet le mengier haster
> en la cuisine, ne l'en poons giter
> les escüeles fet torchier et laver;
> je faz les napes estuier et garder,
> et les hennas, que nus nes puist embler.
> Li rois nos fet tout autresin mener
> come roncin q'an meinne pasturer:
> nos fesons son servise." (vv. 927-934)

Despite these disparaging remarks, however, the ability to carry out such menial tasks forms part of a young man's general accomplishments, and Richars, the hero of *Richars li Biaus*, is specifically praised for his abilities in serving at table:-

> Et quant ce vint qu'il ot .xv. ans,
> de biel servir est connestables,
> quant on devoit siervir as tables;

et du siervir ot si grant grasce
qu'il ne trueve nul qui le hache. (vv.690-94)[28]

The situation can also often turn to a hero's advantage. Whilst serving at a foreign court, an epic hero may well meet a rich princess. In *Doon de La Roche* young Landri, during enforced exile, meets the princess Salmadrine, daughter of the King of Constantinople, in whose service he has engaged himself. They eventually marry and he thereby inherits her father's considerable kingdom. On a similar line, Milon, son of the hero in *Orson de Beauvais,* meets his future wife Oriente, princess of Basile, whilst serving her father during his enforced exile.

In the romances, the situation of a young man serving at another court sometimes gives rise to an intimacy between the hero and a young lady when he is appointed her personal squire. Thus Guillaume and Melior meet and fall in love in *Guillaume de Palerne,* and in *Amadas et Ydoine,* Amadas first sees Ydoine as he waits upon her at table. He is so overwhelmed by her presence that he becomes distracted from his task, blunders and falls into a prolonged love swoon (vv. 191-365). Two later romances, Philippe de Remi's *Jehan et Blonde* and the anonymous *Claris et Laris* make use of a similar motif. A link is forged in these stories between education and the love interest of the story. Indeed, what actually attracts Melior to Guillaume de Palerne is his rapid learning of social skills (he had been brought up outside the courtly environment), and his perfecting of them.

Another variation is played in the romance *Floire et Blancheflor.* The young lovers are brought up together and, when the time comes for Floire to start formal education, he refuses to cooperate unless Blancheflor can learn with him (vv. 209-218). Their incipient love is fuelled by their proximity and by the love stories they find in the books they read:

Livres lisoient paienors
u ooient parler d'amors.
En çou forment se delitoient
es engiens d'amor qu'il trovoient.
Cius lires les fist molt haster
en autre sens d'aus entramer
que de l'amor de noureture
qui lor avoit esté a cure. (vv. 231-238)

Concepts of love and education are subtly interwoven in this text and these are further discussed in Section 3 of Part III.

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28 See also *Huon de Bordeaux* vv. 7444-7467 and *Ipomedon* v. 195

The departure for a foreign court by a son is often the moment at which a different type of education appears in Old French narrative. This is contained in the parting lecture given by the parents on this occasion. Scenes of advice-giving are frequent, and often have a didactic thrust, echoing words found in books on courtesy or statecraft.[29]

Further evidence that narrative poets turned to contemporary didactic literature for material for these words of counsel is found in the works of Robert de Blois. His romance *Beaudous* tells of a young man who wishes to go to Arthur's court to earn fame and renown. His mother allows him to go, but cautions him first on how he should behave and what he should remember. He departs and embarks on a series of adventures which bring him the fame he desires and the hand of a beautiful princess. In the manuscript in which it has been transmitted to us, *Beaudous* appears to be used by the redactor as a kind of framework into which to fit all Robert's works. For he takes the opportunity of the mother giving advice to her son to insert Robert's didactic works, including the *Enseignement des Princes* and the *Chastoiement des Dames*, examined earlier, plus other lyric and narrative material into the text, with a rather clumsy result.[30] The didactic works fit reasonably appropriately into this point in the narrative, although the other works make little sense here as the editor points out (p.i). Nevertheless the manuscript does show that contemporary didactic works were considered useful material to draw upon for fictional productions.

In *Aiol* we find the young hero, raised in exile by his parents and a hermit, preparing to leave for Louis' court to restore the honour of the family name. His father is acutely aware of the inadequacies of his son's upbringing - he has not had experience of life in company and lacks basic social know-how - and he issues the following caution:-

> "As eskiés ne as tables, fieus, ne jués:
> Celui tient on a sot qui plus en set,
> Car se li uns les aime, l'autre les het,
> Lors commenche grant guerre sans nul catel.

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29 Jonathan Nicholls: *The Matter of Courtesy* comments: " ... the early training given to the hero in the form of advice from a tutor or parent is often meant to be of material benefit to the audience. Such passages of advice are often similar in nature to courtesy books, and it is reasonable to assume that in portraying the fictional education of the hero, the author, in some degree, reflects contemporary practice." (pp. 51-52)

30 The works are listed by Ulrich, vol i, pp. ix-xv.

Roberta Krueger,'Constructing Sexual Identities in the High Middle Ages', pp. 111-112, sees this inclusion rather as a deliberate device which influences our reading both of *Beaudous* and the rest of Robert's *oeuvre*.

> N'aiés cure d'autrui feme enamer,
> Car chou est un pechiés que Dex moult het,
> Et se ele vos aime, laissiele ester.
> Si vos gardés molt bien de l'enivrer,
> Et sachiés bien qu'ivreche est grant vieutés.
> Se vos veés preudome, si le servés,
> Se vos seés en bant, si vos levés;
> Les grans et les petis tous honorés;
> Gardés que nul povre home vos ne gabés;
> Ançois i poriés perdre que conquester."
>
> (vv. 165-178)

The first few warnings are designed to prevent his son dropping social "clangers" or running into trouble - he should not gamble at chess or other games, he should not have designs on another man's wife, drunkenness is something to be avoided. The second part of the father's advice is directed more positively, suggesting things Aiol should actively seek to do in order to advance his position at court. He should serve "preudomes", he should show correct deference in his manners, making himself amenable to all sorts and conditions of men, not forgetting the lowly, whom he should not snub. Clearly the social dimension of his son's upbringing is an important one, and skills in this field will be needed if he is to be accepted at the royal court and succeed in his aim of regaining Elie's lost fiefs. It is interesting to find this concern with social propriety in an epic text, and to find military skill balanced by social skills as a means of the hero securing his political ends.

Similar concerns trouble the adopted father of Guillaume de Palerne. Separated from his royal family, Guillaume is brought up in the forest by a farmer, where one day he is spotted by an imperial hunting party who are struck by his beauty and he is sent to the Emperor's court. His adopted father gives him a long lecture on how he should behave there (vv. 545-581). Since he is to serve the Emperor, he is warned to be "frans et debonaire et servicables" and to avoid being "desmesures", the great offence against good courtly behaviour. Like Aiol, he is charged to make himself agreeable to both rich and poor, indeed particularly to the latter. By being deferential to all, he will earn himself no blame and will secure the honour he desires.[31]

The giving and receiving of advice also forms a motif in Chrétien's *Cligès*. Cligès' dying father, Alexandre, gives him very specific instructions about going to the English court to prove his prowess. He should not make himself known until he has

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31 Apart from these two examples of a father's advice to his son, see also

Durmart le Galois vv. 1427-1456
La Chanson d'Aspremont vv. 47-81
Sone de Nansai vv. 20181-20194

proved his jousting skills and should not in any case take Gauvain, who is his uncle, as an opponent. Cligès remembers and acts upon this advice very carefully, and it leads to his taking part in a tournament at Oxford under the disguise of several sets of armour of different colours, and causing consternation to the Arthurian court by his valour and anonymity. In this instance, the advice generates further action later in the narrative. Moreover, Alexandre himself is lectured by his own father in his youth when he leaves home to visit Arthur's court (vv. 118-213). The advice he receives concerns the proper practice of liberality, an eminently courtly quality. He is taught that this is the queen of virtues, the one which will assure the advancement of its owner. Indeed, generosity is a frequent component of these speeches of instruction.[32]

In *Huon de Bordeaux* we find Charlemagne lecturing his son Louis on good government. The aged emperor abdicates in favour of his son with the pithy warning:

> Fiex, n'aies cure de traïtor lanier;
> As plus preudommes vous alés acointier,
> Car de preudomme puet venir tos li biens.
> Portés honnor et amor au clergie,
> A sainte Glise pensés du repairier.
> Donnés du vostre as povres volentiers.
>
> (vv. 212-7)

Generosity reappears here and we also find another important precept, that of not trusting the wrong kind of people. This is a very important principle in political writings of the period and it also forms part of the ethos of epic and romance.[33]

It is not, however, only men who deliver this kind of advice. Mothers are as concerned as fathers that their children should be advised on how to get on in life. In this same epic, Huon de Bordeaux and his brother Gerard are instructed by their mother:

> "Enfant .. vous irés cortoier
> N'i alés mie con vilain pautonier.
> Menés o vous desc'a trente somiers,
> Que vous ferés de mon avoir cargier.
> As plus preudommes vous alés acointier
> Car de preudomme puet venir tous li biens,
> Si n'aiés cure de malvais losengier;

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32 See, for example, the following references:-

Partonopeus de Blois vv. 1907-1942
Sone de Nansai vv. 20973 ff.
Huon de Bordeaux vv. 212-217, 564-572
La Chanson des Saisnes laisses CCXXIV-CCXVIII

33 See also *La Chanson des Saisnes* laisses CCXXIV-CCXVIII and *Roman d'Alexandre,* Version L, vv. 325-40, Version of Alexandre de Paris vv. 333-349. The references to the *Roman d'Alexandre* are discussed further in Part III Section 1.

A sainte Glise pensés du repairier,
Portés honnor et amor au clergié
Les povres gens deportés volentiers
....
Je vous requier, por Diu le droiturier,
Que n'aiés cure de malvais losengier,
As plus preudommes vous alés acointier.
A sainte Glise pensés du repairier,
Portés honnor et amor au clergié.
Donnés du vostre as povres volentiers;
Soiés courtois et larges vivendiers,
Si serés plus amés et tenus chiers."
(vv. 405-14, 565-72)

These words are remarkably similar to those spoken by Charles earlier in the same work.[34]

An interesting variation on the theme of advice from one character to another is found in *Partonopeus de Blois*. In this romance it is the heroine, Melior, who advises her young hero, Partonopeus, as he is about to leave her kingdom to return to France. The use of the heroine for the role of advisor in this case is part of the reversal of the roles of male and female which is discussed in more detail in Part III. Melior's instructions to Partonopeus are similar to those already seen in other texts. She urges him to be faithful and strong in battle for France and for his own fief of Blois, both under threat since the death of the king and Partonopeus' father the count. He should be generous and especially reward faithful knights. He should be considerate to the poor, humble in speech, honouring God and man and protecting the church. Lastly, she gives him instructions relating to his treatment of herself - that he should return quickly to her and should remember her taboo not to try and look at him.

The strictly noble, court-orientated skills are thus those that appear most frequently in the literary hero's curriculum. He is expected to be an accomplished courtier and, as the education of Amadas in *Amadas et Ydoine* illustrates, his excellence in these areas marks him as a character fit to adopt the exemplary role of hero:-

N'out el regné si bel dancel
Ne si enseinné damisel
De afaitement, de curtaisie,
D'eschés, des tables, de eschirmie,
De tuz deduiz, de chens, de oiseaus
Ert si apris li damiseus
Quo nul de lui plus ne saveit.
(Version V, vv.71-77)

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34 The other well-known example of a mother giving advice to her son is Perceval's mother, who admonishes her son to offer help to ladies, ask the name of his journeying companion, seek the company of *prodomes* and remember to go to church and pray (vv. 525-592). This, and the advice given by other characters, is discussed in detail in Part III, Section 5.

The reference to "deduiz" is significant, reflecting the growing importance attached to leisure pursuits in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, which makes the social dimension of the hero's education increasingly important. As we might expect, this form of education is particularly common in the romances, but examples can also be found in the epic. In *Aye d'Avignon* Charlemagne brings up the orphan Garnier at his court and the skills he is concerned to teach him are precisely these:-

> Quant li rois va en bois, ne le vot pas laissier:
> Ou il porte son arc ou il tient son estrier.
> E quant va en riviere, o lui maine Garnier:
> Ou il porte l'ostor ou le faucon gruier.
> Quant le roi veut dormir, Garniers est au couchier,
> Et dit chançons e sons por le roi solacier.
> Jamés n'orrez tel honme por gent esbanoier.
> (vv. 6-12)

The young man is being trained to be a useful member of a hunting party, and a person able to sing or recite and entertain others, thus being worth his keep in a large household. Charlemagne thus bestows on Garnier the particularly valuable gift of independence and acceptance in the court environment.

As we move from the social skills towards the more academic end of the curricular spectrum, we find different skills appearing. Firstly, there are a number of heroes who are gifted linguists. The languages learned can range from Latin, Hebrew and Greek to Arabic and other more even more recondite examples.[35] The presence of linguistic abilities is used in a variety of ways by the poets. Firstly, there are several references to the three Biblical languages, Latin, Hebrew and Greek, which lend an air of learning and scholarship to the educations which contain them. Alexandre de Paris' Alexander, for example, learns "grieu, ebrieu et caldieu et latin" (v. 336), in accordance with an education that is generally sober and moral in flavour.[36] Blancandin, in *Blancandin et l'Orgueuilleuse d'Amour*, having been instructed in "toz langaiges" (v. 40) is able, later, to use "et bien latin et bien grezois" (v. 2248), as well as "sarrazinois"

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35 The heroes of the following texts know the following languages:-

Roman d'Alexandre: (Alberic) vv. 89-91 (Greek, Latin, Hebrew and Armenian)
(Version L) v. 327 (Greek, Latin, Hebrew and Chaldean)
(Alexandre de Paris) v. 336 (Greek, Latin, Hebrew and Chaldean)
Aiol v. 276 ("latins et romàns")
Floovant vv. 1222, 2393 (Floovant's squire speaks arabic)
Blancandin v. 40 ("toz langaiges")
Girart de Vienne v. 676 (Renier wishes to learn "romant" from Charlemagne)
Gui de Borgogne vv. 1372-3 (Charlemagne knows "grejois et tous les latins")

36 On the languages learned in the different versions of the *Roman d'Alexandre*, see further discussion in Part III Section 1.

(v. 2247). However, the characters' abilities in Greek and Hebrew are undoubtedly exaggerated, since, as we saw in Part I, few in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries were versed in these languages, hence the loss of Greek learning to the period.

If the Biblical languages tend to give the characters an air of scholarship and learning, other languages are included to give an idea of exoticism. Armenian is referred to in *La Chanson de Guillaume* (see below) and in Alberic's *Roman d'Alexandre*. Armenia would have been known to the Middle Ages after the First Crusade, especially as a Christian enclave in a hostile surrounding Islamic world. The inclusion of Armenian amongst the linguistic skills of heroes and heroines is primarily to lend a flavour of the unusual and the exotic, although probably also because it rhymes conveniently with "latin". Another language which is often found, particularly in epic texts which deal with battles against the Saracens, is Arabic. Clearly here the character who knows the enemies' language is useful as a spy, and is thus an important participant in the plot. In *Floovant*, Floovant's squire is able to speak Arabic and is thus able to spy on the Saracen enemy, and Blancandin uses his skill in Arabic to pretend to be a Saracen. He thus avoids capture by his enemy, and later uses his ability to speak Greek to talk behind their backs and make plans for his eventual escape.

The poets are aware of the advantages of knowing foreign languages. In the *Roman d'Alexandre*, for example, we find that Alexander, having defeated Porrus during his Eastern campaign, is able to parley with him without the need for an interpreter:-

> Porrus rent Al'x. lo bon brant d'acier
> E dist en son lengage que il l'aveit mout chier.
> Al'x. l'entent sens autre latinier
> Car de trastoz lengages s'isteit faiz enseignier.
> (Version B, vv.5082-5085)

We find, therefore, that languages are viewed both as a practical and as an intellectual skill.

A very wide range of languages is found in *La Chanson de Guillaume* where Guillaume, killing his horse Balçan, so that it will not fall into Saracen hands, laments in a remarkable, polyglot outpouring:-

> Muat sa veie, e changat sun latin
> Salamoneis parlat, tieis, e barbarin
> Grezeis, alemandeis, aleis, hermin
> E les langages que li bers out ainz apris:
> "Culverz paiens, Mahun vus seit failli!"
> (vv. 2169-2173)

The reason for this wide range of languages would appear to be Guillaume's wish to curse the Saracen enemies as comprehensively as possible, in every language that he knows how to speak, and the fact that he knows so many increases his heroic stature. The skill in speaking foreign languages is made part of the idealisation process of the hero. It is recognised as a desirable quality and is bestowed on the hero in generous portion.

The most common aspect of academic learning found in the heroes' education is literacy and writing.[37] Joufroi, hero of the romance *Joufroi de Poitiers*, is permitted by his father to go to King Henry's court in England to pursue his career, a step the father approves of "car la poiras toz biens aprendre" (v. 117). When Joufroi finds the king at York, he and his companions are welcomed into the royal household, and are sent to learn to write:-

> Si les retint mult volentiers
> Et a un chanberlenc les fit
> Maintenant metre en escrit. (vv. 166-168)

In *Jourdain de Blaye*, the eponymous young hero finds himself in the household of Fromont who has usurped the fief of Jourdain's father Girart. The barons, trying to persuade the wicked Fromont not to treat the child with undue severity, urge that he should receive some education, and letters are specified as being suitable for him:-

> "Sire Fromont, frans chevaliers gentiz,
> Dou fil Girart car en aiëz merci.
> Mait le as laittres por Deu qui ne menti"
> (vv. 696-698)

Gautier d'Arras's Eracle is "mis as letres" when he is five years old. This phrase can be used to mean that a child is actually sent to school, or, more simply, that he is given some formal academic training with a master at home. It is not always apparent just what is understood by "letres" in terms of the curriculum covered. It certainly comprises basic grammar, literacy and the learning of Latin, but it can also be

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37 Other heroes who learn letters can be found in the following works:-

Hervis de Metz vv. 256-269
Sone de Nansai vv. 283-294
Joufroi de Poitiers vv.166-168
Silence vv. 2359-2400
Cesar (*Roman de Brut* v. 3842)
Dunian and Fagan (*Roman de Brut* vv.5227-5230)
Coil (*Roman de Brut* v. 5201-5206)
Aiol (*Aiol* vv. 274-276)

used in a wider sense as a synonym for "clergie".[38] Eracle, who shows a remarkable aptitude, learns "plus en un ans c'autres en quatre", from which we might plausibly deduce a reasonably wide curriculum. Reading is his most important skill, however, for he needs to be able to read the scroll brought by the angel, which will describe Eracle's three special gifts. Indeed, careful instructions are left on the scroll to this effect:-

> Li letre par defors disoit
> c'on mesist cel enfant a letre
> quant eure et tans seoit del metre (vv. 234-6)[39]

Writing skills are also essential for court secretaries and chamberlains who make occasional appearances in our narratives. In Hue de Rotelande's *Protheslaus* we find a court secretary to Pentalis forging a letter to endanger the hero Protheslaus's life (vv. 570-586). We are specifically told that:- "Il saveit asez de clergie" (v. 570). Such chamberlains are available to prepare and read correspondence sent between courts. The fact that correspondence is dealt with by an amanuensis does not necessarily imply that a king or nobleman is illiterate. Again in *Protheslaus* we find that at one point (vv. 675 ff.) Protheslaus asks a "clerc privé" to read a letter to him (this is the forged letter referred to above), but later in the romance is able to read Medea's letter for himself for "il sot asez de lettreure" (v. 7556). This is not simply inconsistency on the poet's part, rather reflects the common practice of having a secretary to deal with the mundane business of reading correspondence.[40] However, it would appear from some references that the literate ruler was the exception, since our poets draw attention with pride to

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38 See range of meanings cited in Tobler Lommatzsch.

39 Eracle's education is similar to that found in two saints' lives and bears out the view that Gautier's romance owes a debt to the hagiographic tradition. We are told of Saint Alexis:-

> ... ad escole li bons pedre le mist:
> Tant apris letres que bien en fut guarnit.
> (vv.33-4)

and of Saint Gilles:-

> A letres l'ad ses pere mis
> A la divinites'est pris:
> A co mist li emfes s'entente
> Bien ad tenu la dreiste sente (vv. 45-48)

With the exception of Lucemien in *Dolopathos*, these are the only characters who are sent to school for their education. The stress for them is on academic and religious learning, fitting for their saintly vocation.

40 Similarly Sone de Nansai is carefully described by the poet as being literate (vv. 87-96, 283-294) but later in the work he has a clerk to read him a letter from his brother Henri (vv. 2211-2).

those who do read. For example, in *Les Quatre Fils Aymon* Charles receives a letter from Ys:-

Charles, nostre emperes, si a brisié la cire;
Quant il fu jovenciaus si ot apris a lire,
Et esgarda la letre .... (vv. 6115-6117)[41]

King Lohier in *Partonopeus de Blois* is also able to read, as the poet firmly underlines: "si list le brief car il ert clers/et del brief lire baus et fers" (vv. 2747-48). The poet draws a subtle contrast between Lohier and his opponent the Saracen Sornegur who are engaged in battle and exchanging correspondence. Whereas the French king is able to read and write, the pagan opponent is seen to resort each time to a secretary to assist him (vv. 2709-2752, 2809-2858).

Intellectual training is more commonly found in romance heroes, but one epic hero who does learn some academic skills is Aiol. He is brought up in exile by his father, mother and a hermit, who try between them to educate the boy as comprehensively as possible. He learns martial skills from his father, although he lacks other companions with whom to practise. His mother Avise teaches him about the courses of the stars and the waxing and waning of the moon. This is more likely to be the practical skill of observation and using the moon and stars for navigation and recording the passage of time than more advanced astronomy. Astrology is not implied, as it often is in other descriptions of astronomy, since there is no hint of magic or discerning the future in Avise. Finally, the hermit teaches Aiol his letters:-

De letres de gramaire l'ot escolé
Bien savoit Aiols lire et enbriever,
Et latins et romans savoit parler (vv. 274-6)

In this case, "letres" would appear to refer only to the learning of Latin and being able to read and write.

It is only occasionally that a hero learns the seven liberal arts, or a selection of them.[42] Floriant, whose learning of chess and hunting we examined earlier, also learns "les .vii. ars" (v. 755), and we can assume that these were also taught to Maugis d'Aigremont, since his tutor was skilled in them (see vv. 613-618, quoted above p. 51).

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41 See also *Anseis de Cartage* vv. 608-610

42 Heroes who learn some or all of the seven arts can be found in the following:-

Sone de Nansai ("ingremance" and "geometrie") vv. 283-294
Le Roman des Sept Sages de Rome vv.360-80 (emphasis on astronomy)
Floovant vv.739-43 (Saracens' expertise in astronomy is mentioned)
Aye d'Avignon vv. 2560-2566 (Guy learns astronomy from Saracens).

A particular item from the seven liberal arts curriculum may sometimes be focussed on. In *Partonopeus de Blois* we find a group of judges, called upon to adjudicate the tournament held for Melior's hand. These seven judges are all skilled in rhetoric and therefore in the art of making judgements, and practised in knightly skills (vv. 7365-7372). Rhetorical skills are also specifically mentioned in various versions of the *Roman d'Alexandre*, which, in all its verse versions, lays a particular stress on academic as well as social training.

The most usual art of the canon to receive attention is astronomy, as for example in the *Roman d'Alexandre*:-

> Li reis Felips quist a son fil doctors
> De tote Grece eslist les vii mellors.
> Cil li aprenent des esteles les cors,
> Del firmament les soveirains trestors,
> Les .vii. planetes e les signes auçors
> E les vii arz et toz les granz autors
> (Decasyllabic romance, version A, vv. 48-53)

The appeal of this subject lies in its evocation of the fantastic, magical and supernatural, lending the touch of exotism or mystery that poets and audiences seem to relish.

We do, however, find one romance, *Dolopathos*, which offers a particularly rich description of a clerical education, and it is therefore worth examining in some detail. This romance belongs to the Old French Seven Sages cycle, a large and complex group of stories.[43] *Dolopathos* is one of two romances in one sub-group of the cycle, the other being the Latin *Dolopathos sive de Regem et Septem Sapientibus* by Iohannis de Alta Silva, of which the French text is a loose reworking. The Seven Sages is a frame-story, into which a series of short tales, each with a moral, is intercalated. The frame involves a king, whose son is put in the hands of the Seven Sages (in *Dolopathos* only one sage, Virgil, is mentioned) to be educated.[44] On the boy's return to court, his stepmother plays Potiphar's wife to him, in an attempt to persuade him to break a self-imposed silence. Accused of the attempted rape of his stepmother, the prince is condemned to death by his father. The stories represent the efforts by the wicked queen and the Seven Sages respectively to bring about or prevent the boy's punishment until the moment comes for him to break his silence.

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43 For guidance on this see Introduction to Mary B. Speer: *Le Roman des Sept Sages de Rome*, pp. 1-36.

44 Domenico Comparetti: *Vergil in the Middle Ages*, p. 234 suggests that the appearance here of a single sage may indicate that the *Dolopathos* author was working from the so-called Eastern tradition of the *Sevan Sages*, a version relatively uncommon in Europe.

The upbringing and education of the prince thus form an important part of the narrative. In the verse version of the Seven Sages romance which forms part of the remaining group of versions other than *Dolopathos* (and from which we have quoted above, p. 49), the poet takes care to describe the baptism, nursing and education of the hero, taking the opportunity to discourse on the customs surrounding former and modern practice of the first two. In the case of *Dolopathos*, when reading the poet's description of his hero's education, it is clear that he has gone through the process of clerical education himself and also that he has an interest in educational matters. Indeed, Iohannis, author of the Latin model of the Old French version is thought to have been a schoolmaster.[45] The Old French poet, Herbert, follows his source fairly closely, deviating from Iohannis' description of the hero's education in no material detail.[46] His detailed description of the theory and practice of clerical education provides many interesting touches. Given that Iohannis had a practical experience of the process he describes, we should not be surprised to find that this description is based on the clerical, rather than the social model, as in most other texts.

Dolopathos, king of Rome, is greatly praised by the poet, for he is an excellent monarch in whom not the least virtue is his adherence to the advice of wise men. The king has a son, Lucemien, whose early days, until he reaches the age of seven, are spent with his nurse. The poet explains that, in times past, it was the custom for a noble or royal child to stay in the company of his nurse until this age, when he was deemed fit to enter adult, male society, the occasion being marked by an important festival (vv. 1174 ff.). At this moment, King Dolopathos has to begin to consider his son's future education, and it is through his cogitations on this subject that the poet presents his own view of the importance of education (vv. 1237-1256). The king calls to mind the opinion of Plato that it is of great benefit to the people if their king is a philosopher; indeed philosophers make the best kings. Clearly the poet knows something of the classical authors, although by the Middle Ages this saying of Plato's was anecdotal, being repeated in treatises on statecraft from antiquity onwards. Having recalled the classical view that a ruler should have a knowledge of philosophy, the king discusses his son's future with his counsellors, and all agree that a philosopher should be procured as the boy's tutor, so that the prince can be taught the seven liberal arts (i.e. the component parts of philosophy). The king and his counsellors have high expectations of the benefits this education will accord the young Lucemien, nurturing in him high moral qualities:-

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45 See J. Nicholls, *The Matter of Courtesy*, p.55.

46 The French text can be compared with Iohannis's version, found in *Dolopathos sive de Rege et Septem Sapientibus*, ed. Alfons Hilka, pp. 14-15.

> Et par les ars k'il entendroit
> Et par le senz k'il aprendroit
> Des autors et de l'escriture
> Entendroit reson et droiture
> Et connoustroit ces ennemis
> Et essauceroit ces amis. (vv. 1251-1256)

The philosopher is duly sought and the young prince finds himself at school under the famous Virgil, regarded by the Middle Ages as a great sage, if not a prophet of God. The portrayal of Virgil in *Dolopathos* falls mid-way between the literary view of him as a poet and great author from the schools, and the popular view of him as tantamount to a magician.[47] His position as an educated man, familiar with all knowledge, allows the poet to combine these two conceptions easily and unconsciously.[48]

A long section is devoted to Lucemien's experiences at school (vv. 1339-1494). This is more than 150 verses long, far longer that the dozen or two verses normally given to a hero's education, and it allows the poet to expatiate upon his views of the proper practice and psychology of education. We find young Lucemien, seated at the feet of his master Virgil, along with the other pupils, each holding his own book (vv. 1324-1328).[49] The young prince is first taught his letters and the basics of reading:-

> En sa main li met une monstre;
> La letre li enseigne et monstre
> Par reson coment on doit mettre
> En sillabe chascune lettre;
> Les sillabes font dictions;
> Les disions font orisons. (vv. 1342-1348)

The picture given is very detailed, describing the kind of large representations of letters used at the start of the reading process, which is mentioned in no other text and here the schoolmasterly origins of the source poet are particularly apparent. Virgil's teaching process is also shown to be systematic, building from letters to syllables, then to words and finally to whole utterances. It is significant that these utterances are prayers - training in literacy being basic training in Latin for clerical use, involving the standard forms of prayer.[50] The same concern for order is seen in the poet's insistence on

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47 Comparetti, *Vergil in the Middle Ages*, pp. 232-238

48 We should remember that magic was regarded in the Middle Ages as part of the canon of learning, if a bastard member of that canon. See further discussion in Part III, Section 4.

49 It is thus that a master and pupils are normally represented in medieval iconography. See, for example, D.J.A. Ross, 'Olympias and the Serpent: The Interpretation of a Baalbek Mosaic and the Date of the Illustrated Pseudo-Callisthenes', esp. pp. 13-15 and illustrations on plate 5.

50 See Part I, p. 18

Lucemien's learning the seven arts in order, first the trivium, then the quadrivium, each art following on from the last ".. par l'un art font l'autre naistre" (v. 1444).[51] Virgil emerges as an excellent teacher from this description; not only is his programme methodical, but he is quick to realise the aptitude of his pupil and his desire to learn:-

Requis et proié li avoit
Et prie encore k'il li apreigne
Plus haute chose, ce il daigne.
Quant li mestres apercéu
Son ligier sens et conéu
Plus l'en ainme et plus l'en tient chier.
(vv. 1388-1393)

He presents his pupil with a special book containing all the knowledge of the seven arts in one small volume, such that the contents could be entirely learned in three years. The master is able to foster and encourage the pupil's abilities, but these would be nothing without a measure of diligence. Fortunately this is not lacking:-

Lucemiens ne s'en feingnoit
D'aprendre ne de retenir (vv. 1350-51)

Et cil i met si à droiture
Eulx et pensée, et cuer, et cure
Qu'il n'entent s'à aprendre non. (vv. 1475-77)

We are reminded in the second quotation, of the words of Hugh of St. Victor's *Didascalicon*: "Tria sunt necessaria studentibus, Natura, exercitium, disciplina."[52] The poet stresses that it is the combination of Virgil's excellent teaching and the pupil's efforts and aptitude which lead to Lucemien's academic success.

Par nature bien se provoit
Lucemiens et bien trovoit
Bon mestre et bon enseignéor;
Moult avoit bon douctrinéor
Qui moult volentiers l'aprenoit,
Et li enfès tout retenoit. (vv. 1379-1384)

Dolopathos therefore shows a clear interest in the mechanics of learning, the relative roles of master and pupil, the poet emphasising the importance of the pupil's efforts as well as those of the master, an unusual touch. It is far more common for the learning process to be viewed as an automatic reaction to teaching. Alexandre de Paris suggests this in his *Roman d'Alexandre*: "Li mestres li enseigne et li varlés aprent" (v.

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51 This emphasis on the systematicity and interrelationship of the seven arts reminds us of the categorisation of knowledge by Hugh of St. Victor, for example (see above Part.I p. 24)

52 *PL*, CLXXVI, col. 770. Echoes of this same quotation can also be found in Chrétien's *Conte du Graal* (see further discussion in Part III Section 5)

347) and even the balance of the two halves of the verse underlines the effortless link between teaching and learning. By contrast, Thomas of Kent, author of the *Roman de Toute Chevalerie*, also unusually suggests that the learning process requires effort on the part of the child. Thomas portrays the education of the hero as a process by which he has to learn the skills necessary for coping with life in an adult world, a process that may well not be easy.

> Assez aprent l'enfes si a chef put venir
> D'estre yvre ou jolifs n'ot il point de leisir;
> A peine put il manger, beivere ou dormir.
> (vv. 440-442)

Chrétien de Troyes in his *Conte del Graal* also suggests the need for effort and application. Gornemanz, who teaches the young hero equestrian and military skills warns the young lad that:-

> Il covient a toz les mestiers
> Et painne et cuer et us avoir. (vv. 1466-1467)

This quotation is just one of several references to nature and nurture in the work, and indeed the two ideas form a complex pattern in the romance.

In the case of Lucemien in *Dolopathos*, noble nature has innate virtues and aptitudes, which will respond to education and nurture.[53] Despite this being, as we shall see, a literary commonplace, the poet gains from this fact the insight that a balance and cooperation are required between aptitude and training:-

> Et quant la bonne norreture
> S'aconpaigne à bone nature
> Dont est bone la conpaignie;
> Li uns bienfet à l'autre aïe. (vv. 1375-1367)

Education is working at its best when it is able to foster and develop what is innately present. It cannot, however, change the essential nature, nor can the raw material of nature thrive without some stimulus.

The supremacy of nature over nurture is frequently invoked in epic and romance texts, and it is an important factor to consider when examining the representation of education. It is enshrined in proverbs which we sometimes find quoted in narrative texts. The *Mort Alixandre* quotes Solomon as the originator of such proverbs:-

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53 See also *Maugis d'Aigremont*, vv. 618-620:-

> Et Maugis n'ert d'apenre pereceuz n'alentiz
> Car nés ert et estrez d'une geste gentiz.

Salemons fu mult sages, qui ce dit e otrie
Que costuma ensegne home e tres bien lo chastie,
Mas au lonc a nature tote la segnorie.
(*Mort Alixandre* 1:19-21 - see note Vol. 7 p. 31)

A similar proverb suggesting that nature is quite capable of providing all that is necessary without the intervention of nurture is quoted in *Aiol*:-

Li oiseus debonaires del bos ramés
Il meismes s'afaite, bien le savés:
Autressi fait el bos Aiols li bers;
(vv 255-7)[54]

The formula that nature prevails over nurture is firmly fixed in the mindset of medieval poets and their audiences, and it makes its appearance in various guises in our narratives.

The most extreme picture of nature's dominance is found in *Le Lai d'Aristote* by Henri d'Andeli, a burlesque tale in which Aristotle is ridden round an orchard by a woman he had sought to separate from King Alexander.[55] Reduced to this humiliation, Aristotle tries to turn the situation into a cautionary *exemplum* on the possible meretricious influences of human nature (especially in women) by declaring:-

"Quant que g'ai apris et lëu
M'a desfait Nature en une eure,
Qui tote science deveure
Puis qu'ele s'en velt entremetre.
Et se ge vueil dont paine metre
A vos [i.e. Alexander] oster de sa prison,
Nel tenez mie a mesprison,
Car bien savoie la doutance
Et l'anui et la mesestance
Qui de Nature vient et muet. (vv. 489-498)

The nature/nurture *topos*, although often banal, can allow the poets some insights into the questions of an individual's skills, aptitudes and predispositions, as we saw in *Dolopathos*. However, when dealing with medieval texts, the idea "individual" must not be understood in its modern sense, rather the individual is seen as a representative of his social class, which will predetermine his inherent desires and abilities. We find examples of this in a number of texts. Hervis, Fergus and Vivien (eponymous heroes respectively of *Hervis de Metz*, *Fergus*, and *Les Enfances Vivien*), all show a natural aptitude for *chevalerie* which makes them dissatisfied in any other

54 This proverb is also quoted in Guillaume de Palerne vv. 745-50 and in Richard de Fournival's *Consaus d'Amours* Section 35.

55 See further discussion of this text, and the history of this burlesque treatment of Aristotle in Part III, Section 1.

context. Hervis has one noble parent, like Fergus in Guillaume le Clerc's romance, and neither of these heroes can resist nature's call to the profession of *chevalerie*. Vivien is under the care of a Saracen merchant and his wife, having been separated from his family in their perpetual wars against the infidel enemy. Vivien and Hervis create havoc when sent out to learn the art of trade, for the practice of bartering and payment runs counter to their innate knightly concepts of largesse, and they are prepared to sink all their capital into a fine piece of knightly equipment.[56] Fergus is brought up in ignorance of knightly pursuits, until his innate desire for them is stimulated one day by the sight of Arthur and his retinue, and he insists on leaving home to join them. Although, like Perceval, he knows nothing of *chevalerie* in practice, which leads to some comic encounters, Fergus is nonetheless enabled to develop a high degree of skill in a remarkably short time, for such skills are inherent by nature.

Unlike Hervis and Vivien, the heroes Guillaume and Doon in *Guillaume de Palerne* and *Doon de Mayence* do learn non-knightly skills - Guillaume farming, Doon forest skills. They, however, show their heroic destiny by excelling even in these:-

> Bien set ja ses bestes garder,
> Chacier avant et retorner
> Et mener en millor paisson.
> De l'arc savoit plus que nus hom
> Berser et archoier et traire.
> La nuit quant a l'ostel repaire,
> Vient tos chargiés le damoisiax
> De lievres, de connins, d'oisiax
> Et de pertris et de faisans
> (*Guillaume de Palerne*, vv. 365-373)

> De l'escorche du til belez nates fesoit
> Et de la mousse seiche par dedens garnissoit,
> Dont li et son chier pere moult chaudement vestoit.
> Arc avoit fort e bon, dont toute jour trahoit
> Escouflez et oisiaus au seir tant aportoit
> Comme il poveit mengier, quant rosti les avoit;
> Mez ja n'i éust pain pour chen qu'il ne l'avoit.
> Sel fesoit de la mer, que au soleil metoit,
> Dont il fesoit son bon et sa char en saloit.
> ....
> As chers at as chevreus va par le bois traiant
> Tant en prent et ochist com li vient à talent
> Et apporte à ostel et escorche esraument
> Puis essuie la pel et frote en conroiant
> Tant que mole devient par son efforchement;
> Puis si s'en cauche et vest et son pere ensement.
> (*Doon de Mayence*, vv. 1947-55, 1969-74)

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56 A similar plot line is found in *Guillaume d'Angleterre* and *Octavian*, both of which are discussed in further detail in Part III.

In both these cases, whilst the non-knightly skills are carefully described and the hero's proficiency praised, the art that appears most important is hunting, which may well be a hint of future chivalric prowess when the hero regains his true position in society.

Upbringing and education cannot mask the true nobility of these heroes, for mere processes cannot change nature's intended destiny. They are therefore also unable to remedy defects arising from nature. The romance *Robert le Diable* describes the life of one Robert, whose mother, heartbroken at her inability to have children, finally prays to the devil to grant her wish. Granted it duly is, but the resultant son is as wicked as one would expect a child of the devil to be. Despite careful upbringing and teaching, he remains evil and unpleasant, a situation that can only be remedied by more effective expiation in the form of a special and humiliating penance imposed by a saintly hermit. In *Gaydon,* the ostensibly exemplary education received by the wicked Thibaut (a member of the Ganelon strain) is nonetheless unable to alter Thibaut's nature, and he prepares to use his knowledge for the nefarious end of sending a poisoned apple to the king as a means of discrediting the hero, Gaydon:-

"Quant fui petis, dès que je soi aler,
Mis fui as laittres, por iestre plus senez;
A Saint Denis fui bailliez à l'abé,
Le plus saige home de la crestienté.
Mes oncles fu, si m'ot en grant cherté;
Plus savoit de l'art et de l'autorité
De nyngremance, plus que hom qui soit nés.
Tant m'en aprinst que g'en soi à plenté;
Car aprez lui cuida que fuisse abez,
Ou à Paris à evesques posez.
Ganes mes freres ne le volt endurer:
En Espolisce me fist il a lui mander,
Là me fist il chevalier adouber,
....
Encor n'ai pas mon grant sen oublié;
Encor ai je tel herbe mecinnel
En .i. escring, en men demainne tref"
(vv. 73-85, 88-90)[57]

Nurture is really only effective where it acts to enhance and bring out the endowments of nature. Gille de Chyn initially shows no interest in knightly pursuits, which the poet, Gautier de Tournay, tells us is "contre nature" (*L'Histoire de Gille de Chyn* v. 44), but when he is taken into the care of Gossuins d'Oysi, he quickly learns to enjoy and excel in knightly pursuits, thus fulfilling what Nature destined for him (vv. 55-74):-

57 Wistasse in *Wistasse le Moine,* also has devilish skills, learned whilst studying in Toledo - a hint perhaps also of Arabic influence.

Mais descaus ert et desramés,
Saulez de dras et deslavés;
De lui acesmer n'avoit cure:
Adès faisoit contre nature.
Mout estoit de foible sanlance;
Nus n'eüst de lui esperance
Que ja deüst terre tenir
Ne a nul bien deüst venir.
....
Si tost com il fu adoubés
Et qu'il fu chevaliers només
Et ses pouvres dras remüa,
Quant son afaire remira
Adont müa toute s'enfance.
(vv. 41-48, 67-71)

Nature's efficacy is taken to its logical extreme in the person of King Arthur who, despite his role as the head of the court that, by universal acclaim, stands for all knightly virtue and perfection, is never mentioned as having an education. Why Arthur should not, amongst his other superlative qualities, be the flower of education may seem curious, although it is perhaps explained if we examine Arthur's earliest appearance in vernacular French literature in Wace's *Roman de Brut*. Wace specifically stresses the fact that Arthur had never been formally educated:-

Par sei senz altre enseinement
Emprist si grant afaitement
E se cuntint tant noblement,
Tant bel e tant curteisement
N'esteit parole de curt d'ume
Neis de l'empereür de Rome.
N'oeit parler de chevalier
Ki alques feïst a preisier (vv 9735-9742)

The explicit mention here of a lack of education on Wace's part is innovative, for Geoffrey of Monmouth makes no similar reference. The stress on Arthur's lack of formal education is a means of praising the innate qualities that mark him out as the flower of chivalry without the need for assistance from nurture.[58]

The supremacy of nature over nurture obviously conditions the poets' presentation of education. Whilst eduation is an important element, carefully described, it can only operate within certain limits. It remains subject to nature, interpreting her design, but denied the ability to alter or to innovate.

Turning from the education of the hero to that of the heroine, we find hers is described less frequently, although the general pattern is similar to that of the hero. The relationship between a boy and his tutor is mirrored in examples of girls who have

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58 Compare this with the second proverb quoted above, p. 77.

an intimate *maistresse*. The best-known of these is Fénice in Chrétien's *Cliges*. Her nurse Thessala has been responsible for her upbringing and education and has many skills of her own:-

> Sa mestre avoit non Thessala
> Qui l'avoit norrie en anfance,
> Si savoit molt de nigromance (vv. 2962-64)

She now remains Fénice's closest friend and advisor in a foreign court and uses her skills to assist Fénice in her designs to trick the emperor Alix and remain true to Cliges' love (see vv. 5340 ff.).[59] Exactly the reverse is true of the *maistresse* of Orians in Gerbert de Montreuil's *Roman de la Violette*, who betrays the heroine's secret sign, the violet, to her enemy.

The curriculum of the heroine tends towards the social rather than the academic, perhaps even more so than for male characters. There is, nonetheless, a wide range of subjects learned. Firstly, it is common for a heroine to be spoken of as "well brought up", even if no education process is described for her. This is true of Aymeri de Narbonne's future wife Hermenjart (*Aymeri de Narbonne* vv. 2545-2547) and of his son Beuve's future wife (*Les Narbonnais* vv 1347-1375).[60] Terms which occur frequently are "bien enseignée", "cortoise" or "senee". Whilst these do reflect the importance attached to such qualities, it must be said that they are often added simply for the convenience of the rhyme scheme.

Specific social skills include the art of conversation, in which Romadanaple, Aimon de Varennes' heroine in his romance *Florimont*, for example, is skilled:

> De totes riens li aprenoit
> Que pucele savoir devoit
> De respondre et d'escouter
> Souef et doucement parler. (vv. 1029-1032)[61]

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59 Romadanaple in *Florimont* is educated by the wise Sipriaigne (vv. 1005-1040) who also assists in the love intrigue between hero and heroine.

60 Other heroines whose good upbringing is commented upon are:-

Aelis (*L'Escoufle* vv. 2054-2071)
Romadanaple (*Florimont* vv 1027-1046)
Florence de Rome vv. 47-59
Malatrie (*Le Siege de Barbastre* vv. 7181-7182)
La Chanson d'Aspremont vv. 10782-10787 (Saracen women prisoners)

61 See also:-

This art of speaking is taken to a rather interesting extreme in *Le Roman de Thebes* in which one of Oedipus's daughters, Ysmaine, is described as *loiduite*:-

La menor apelent Ysmaine
onc ne fu dame meins vilaine.
Mout fu gente et mout bien duite,
et bien courtoise et bien loiduite. (vv. 4085-88)

This means "instructed in law", and refers to the verbal skill of effectively pleading a case. Ysmaine is the only woman character in the romance to be thus described,[62] and is the only female character in the corpus to possess this skill. She is portrayed as pert and plucky, characteristics enhanced by this verbal skill. However, one must be wary of reading too much into this particular use of the word, for one reason for its use may well be the convenience of the rhyme.

Two other skills fitting for young ladies to learn are music and needlework. Jean Renart's heroines Aelis (*L'Escoufle*) and Fresne (*Galeran de Bretagne*)[63] are both taught these two skills.[64] Music is an important skill for a girl: it will be remembered that Robert de Blois mentioned it as part of the duty of a well-trained hostess in the *Chastoiement des Dames*[65] and that Silence saw it as a means of keeping in touch with her femininity. Needlework also formed part of the staple skills of a young lady, whether educated in castle or convent, as we saw in Part I. Of Fresne's training and skills we are told:-

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Ydoine (*Sone de Nansai* vv. 61-64)
Florence de Rome vv. 47-59
Ysmaine (*Roman de Thebes* vv. 4391-4394)

62 The editor's glossary gives only one other reference, to the male character Thideus, whose speaking skills as an ambassador are praised.

63 We follow the editor of *Galeran de Bretagne*, Lucien Foulet, in attributing this romance to Jean Renart.

64 Other heroines who learn music are:-

Lenburc (*Horn*)
Yseut (*Tristan*)
Marcie (*Roman de Brut* vv. 3336-3348)
Silence (*Roman de Silence* vv 3138-3162)

Needle skills are also practised by

Galeron (*Ille et Galeron*)
Biatrix (*Hervis de Metz*)

65 See Part I, pp. 44-45.

Fresne avoit a ouvrer apris
N'ot telle ouvriere jusqu'en Pouille
Com ele est de tistre et d'aguille;
Si sot faire oeuvres de manieres,
Laz et tissuz, et aulmosnieres,
Et draz ouvrés de soye et d'or
Qui bien valoient ung tresor:
Maint en fist puis pour sa marrine.
De la harpe sot la meschine,
Si lui aprint ses bons parreins
Laiz et sons et baler des mains,
Toutes notes sarrasinoises
Chançons gascoignes et françoises,
Loerraines, et laiz bretons,
Que ne failli n'a moz n'a tons,
Car elle en sot l'usage et l'art.
(vv. 1158-1173)

Of Aelis' sewing ability, which is also quite exceptional, the poet tells us:-

Bele Aelis, Hé! Diex en est ce
La plus prex et la plus cortoise?
Tuit cil a cui et s'envoise
En sont ml't lié, que c'est raisons;
....
Ml't lor sot en une chainture
Portraire l'ami et l'amie;
Et sachiés bien que ne vieut mie
Tant atendre c'aucuns li quiere:
Bel anel ou bele aumosniere,
Ou ataches, quant el les a
Faites, tos li premiers les a
Qui li demande, et volentiers.
Il n'estoit deduis ne mestiers
Dont pucele deüst savoir
Qu'el n'i atort si son savoir
K'ele en set plus c'une autre feme.
(vv. 2054-2071)

Aelis's needle skills stand her in good stead for, upon becoming separated from her lover Guillaume during their elopement, she is able to earn her living by sewing, and she teaches her companion Isabel to do likewise. They settle in Montpellier and the quality of Aelis's work brings in custom from many important people, including the Count of Saint-Gilles, who takes her into his household where she is eventually reunited with Guillaume. Gautier d'Arras's heroine Galeron is also able to earn her living by her needle until she is eventually reunited with Ille in the romance *Ille et Galeron*.[66] In all these cases, the heroine's learned skills are part of the mechanics of the story, enabling a final resolution of the love interest. These heroines are able to adapt to

66 A similar idea is found in *Girart de Roussillon* where the hero's wife Berthe is able to keep them both during her husband's despair and exile from Charlemagne's court.

changing fortunes and circumstances, and apply their skills to a new end, that of survival. On this idea of adaptability, Doris Desclais Berkvam points out that a girl may resort to any practical way of earning her living, whereas a male character cannot so easily go against his noble character - hence the failure of Hervis de Metz or Vivien as merchants, for example. In her view, a girl's nature is linked to her sex, whereas that of a boy is more determined by his station in life - hence his inability to adapt to an unforeseen change of circumstance.[67] Philippe de Navarre, commenting on how a woman or a man succeeds in life, makes the same, implicit distinction. A woman is regarded as good, simply if she remains chaste, whereas a man's virtue is determined by a larger range of social values - courtliness, generosity, valour and wisdom.[68]

Unlike their male counterparts, heroines do not spend so much time learning to hunt, nor to play chess and we find only isolated examples of them engaged in these pursuits. Dido in the *Roman d'Eneas* is one heroine who enjoys hunting. In the case of chess, even if we are not told of her learning how to play, Lenburc in *Horn* is clearly skilled in the game for she plays competitively with her male visitors (vv. 2726-2773), leading to her falling in love with Gudmod who is none other than the hero, Horn, in disguise. In the description of Aelis' education, quoted above, the necessity of learning "deduis" appears, suggesting courtly entertainment of all kinds. The word has the same significance here for a girl as it had for Amadas in our quotation from *Amadas et Ydoine* (p. 66).

The linguistic skills found amongst male characters are also practised by women. One of the most gifted is Aiol's wife Mirabel, of whom we are told:-

> Ele sut bien parler de .xiiii. latins:
> Ele savoit parler et grigois et hermin,
> Flamenc et borgengon et tout le sarrasin
> Poitevin et gascon, se li vient a plaisir
> (vv. 5420-23)

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67 Doris Desclais Berkvam, 'Nature and Norreture: a Notion of Medieval Childhood and Education', pp.171-2.

The linking of nature to gender or social status is explored further in our discussion of *Le Roman de Silence* in Part III, Section 2.

68 "Fames ont grant avantage d'une chose; legierement pueent garder lor honors, se eles vuelent estre tenues a bones, por une seule chose; mès a l'ome en covient plusors, se il vuet estre por bons tenus: besoigs est que il soit cortois et larges et hardiz et sages. Et la fame, se ele est prode fame de son cors, toutes ses autres taches sont covertes et puet aler partot teste levee: et por ce ne covient mie tant d'ansaignemanz as filles comme au filz" *Les Quatre Tenz d'Aage d'Ome*, I:31.

Berthe, wife of Girart de Roussillon knows "caudiu e gregeis e romencar/E latin e ebriu" (vv. 238-9). There is a similar combination of practical, intellectual and exotic overtones in these descriptions, to that observed in the case of the hero. We also find shrewd comments on the practicalities of language learning. Adenet le Roi claims, in *Berthe aux Grands Pieds*, that in the time of Pepin, the Germans "avoient entour aus gent francoise tous dis/pour aprendre francois lor filles et lor fis" (vv. 151-152)[69] Berthe herself speaks excellent French and is hence well able to cope with being married to a French monarch. Adenet's comment illustrates an awareness that languages are best learned young and by continual exposure, preferably in a native context.

Moving to the more intellectual end of the spectrum, the standard of academic education achieved by most female characters is a knowledge of grammar or the ability to read and, perhaps, to write. The most basic form of literacy available to women characters is being able to read their Psalter and the Hours. This is what Ydain, daughter of the Chevalier au Cygne learns:-

> Chil [maistre Salemon] aprist la pucele à la clere fachon
> Son sautier et ses eures par bone entension.
> (vv. 7079-7080)

It is unusual for a girl to be given any more extensive academic education, and where it is given, it is usually less comprehensive than that available to a young man. Romadanaple learns grammar and is given the Latin authors to read, but as the author amusingly points out "... a amors plus entendoit/Que as batailles ne faissoit." (vv. 1037-8). Maybe even as early as 1188, writers were aware of sex-determined preferences in an educational context.

The more general and wide-ranging "lettres" are learned by a number of heroines, such as Eleine, daughter of Choel in Wace's *Roman de Brut*:-

> Eleine, une fille, out nurrie
> Ki mult sout d'art e de clergie
> Eir lu rei sule estre deveit
> Kar filz ne fille altre n'aveit.
> La meschine fu bien lettree
> E de belté assez loee;
> Mult la fist Choël bien aprendre
> E mult i fist maistres entendre,

69 Adenet li Rois *Berthe aux Grands Pieds*, ed. Albert Henry.

Pur ço que quant li reis morust
Le regne aprés tenir seust. (vv 5605-5614)[70]

Eleine's education is accounted for by the fact that she is the King's only daughter and needs to be equipped to rule in his place. In this she is similar to two other highly educated heroines, Melior and La Pucele.[71]

We find an example of an academically well-educated heroine in Fenice, daughter of Count Roalt and beloved of Gui de Warewic in the romance of that name. She is an altogether accomplished lady:-

Curteise ert e enseigné
De tuz arz ert enletré;
Ses meistres esteient venuz
De Tulette, tuz blancs chanuz,
Ki l'aperneient d'astronomie,
D'arismatike, de jeometrie;
Mult par ert fere de corage.
Pur ço qu'ele ert tant sage,
Dux e cuntes la requierent. (vv. 63-71)[72]

She learns the seven liberal arts, but it is the subjects of the *quadrivium* that are specifically mentioned, as tended to be the case for male characters. There is an interesting balance in this romance. Whereas Fenice receives a strongly academic education, her lover Gui's is primarily social; he learns jousting and hunting skills (vv. 145-152). Unusally, her education is described before his. There is an element of role reversal in this, emphasising the social distance between the two which makes Fenice hesitant of accepting Gui's attentions until he has proved his worth. Fenice's accomplishments also make her a sought-after match for a nobleman. Rather the reverse is found in *Girart de Roussillon.* Girart and Charlemagne are promised the two daughters of the Emperor of Constantinople in marriage, Girart being destined to have the younger, Elissant, the king the elder, Berthe. Elissant is the more beautiful, but Berthe has brains and education. Unfortunately, both men are captivated by the

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70 See also:

Blancheflor (*Floire et Blancheflor* vv. 218-242)
Marcie (*Roman de Brut* vv. 3336-3348)
Romadanaple (*Florimont* vv. 1027-1046)
Florence de Rome vv. 47-59
Aye d'Avignon vv. 1560-1561
Seneschal's wife (*Durmart le Galois* v. 236)

71 See discussion in Part III Section 4.

72 Like Fenice, Eufemie in *Le Roman de Silence* also knows the seven liberal arts (v. 236), although the various subjects are not referred to individually.

younger girl, and Charlemagne eventually "steals" her from Girart and insists on marrying her. Berthe, for all her education, is spurned. However, her practical skills become important later in the work when she is able to keep herself and her husband during their exile from the Emperor's lands.

Florence, eponymous heroine of *Florence de Rome* is another heroine whose education includes a significant academic content. At the age of ten

> El fu cortoise et sage et de grant nobleté
> Et si fu bien letree, plene d'umilite
> Et dou cors des estoiles sot a sa volenté
> De toz les elemenz, quan qu'en furent trové,
> Bien harpe et bien vielle, docement et soé;
> Il n'avoit si bon mestre en crestienté
> Qu'a dous de ces parolles ne l'eüst tot maté.
> Nus hom n'en sot que dire, tant ot le cuer sené,
> Et quant elle parolle. tot le mont vient a gré,
> Et cil que bien l'esgardent sont si enluminé,
> Qu'el ot la char plus blanche que n'est flor en esté.
> (II: 49-59)

In this description, the social and academic aspects of education are not separated; rather there is an admixture of moral, social and academic features which are combined to give an idealised picture suitable for a heroine destined for a saintly end. This text is unusual in being one of the few that bears the name of the heroine for its title. It is likely that the high profile given to Florence's education is a result of her leading role in the work.

Beyond the academic sphere, two other skills which are found amongst women characters, and more extensively amongst them than amongst men, are healing and the practice of magic.[73] The classic example of the first is, of course, Yseut. She inherits her mother's skills in this area and it is she who is finally called to the dying Tristan at the end of Thomas's fragment. Her healing ability may well be a vestige of some fairy ancestry in earlier sources of the story.[74] Aside from Yseut, however, it is common practice for female characters to offer healing to a wounded knight. In the epic *Otinel*, for example, there are two complementary scenes in which a Saracen and a Christian

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73 Male doctors are called to the apparently dead Fénice in *Cligès* (v. 5754 ff.) and an anonymous doctor occasionally makes a brief appearance in epic texts to heal a wounded knight, usually in a remarkably short space of time.

On the subject of male magicians, see the article by William W. Kibler, 'Three Old French Magicians: Maugis, Basin and Auberon'.

74 See the comments made by Gerald J. Brault, 'Isolt and Guenevere: Two Twelfth-Century Views of Women'.

knight are healed by a woman on the opposite side. Ogier is wounded and taken prisoner by the Saracens, and a princess called Alfamie is sent to tend him (vv. 1002-1054), while the eponymous hero Otinel is healed by the Christian girl Belissent, daughter of Charlemagne (vv. 1309-1317).[75]

Trotula and her associates , whose claims to medical fame we surveyed briefly in Part I, also make appearances in vernacular literature.[76] In Marie de France's *Lai, Les Deus Amanz,* for example, the girl sends to her relative in Salerno for a magic potion:-

> "En Salerne ai une parent,
> Riche femme, mut ad grant rente;
> Plus de trent anz i ad esté.
> L'art de phisike ad tant usé
> Que mut est saives de mescines." (vv. 95-99)

There are a number of heroines who know and practise magical skills. Guiborc/Orable, the Saracen wife of Guillaume d'Orange is seen using her arts to successful and comic effect in *La Prise d'Orange* and *Les Enfances Guillaume* to rid herself of an unwanted bridegroom by giving him frightening hallucinations. Her abilities are sneered at by her sister-in-law in the *Chanson de Guillaume.* Trying to dissuade her husband the Emperor from going to battle with Guillaume, she warns him about the latter's wife:-

> "Dame Guiburc fu né en paisnisme,
> Si set maint art e mainte pute guiche.
> Ele conuist herbes, ben set temprer mescines.
> Tost vus ferreit enherber u oscire. (vv. 2591-94)

These comments are inspired by the traditional role of the empress not wanting Louis to go into battle, and the prejudices against both Saracens and practitioners of magic arts, similar to that noted above in *Wistasse le Moine.* They also lend a realistic note of old-fashioned in-law jealousy.

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75 Other healers include

Eufemie (*Le Roman de Silence* vv. 593-598)
The Red Tent Maiden (*Durmart le Galois* vv. 3156 ff)
Pentalis's sister (*Protheslaus* vv. 2300 ff)
Enide (*Erec et Enide* vv. 5092-5095 - Enide tends Erec's wounds)
La Demoiselle de Noroison heals the hero in *Yvain* vv. 2942-3137

76 See examples given by Muriel Hughes, *Women Healers in Medieval Life and Literature*, pp. 5-17 and p. 106.

In the romances we find two heroines who not only have a knowledge of magical arts, but whose education in them is also described. These are Melior in *Partonopeus de Blois* and La Pucele in *Le Bel Inconnu*. The latter, for example, describes her education to the hero Guinglain in the following terms:-

> "Mes pere fu molt rices rois
> Qui molt fu sages et cortois.
> Onques n'ot oire ne mes que moi;
> Si m'ama tant en bonne foi
> Que les set ars me fist aprendre
> Tant que totes les soc entendre:
> Arimetiche, dyometrie,
> Ingremance et astrenomie,
> Et des autres asés apris.
> Tant i fu mes cuers ententis
> Que bien soc prendre mon consel
> Et a la lune et au solelec
> Si sai tos encantemens fare
> Deviner, et conoistre en l'are
> Quanques dou mois puet avenir. (vv. 4933-4947)

Not only does La Pucele learn magic, she had learned the whole of the academic curriculum ("les set ars", v. 4937), with especial emphasis on the *quadrivium*. As in the case of male characters, we see astronomy being favoured over the other arts, and astronomical knowledge is here clearly linked to supernatural skills. Melior, too, has a very comprehensive education; apart from magic she learns the seven liberal arts, medicine and theology.[77] These highly educated women, whose standard of academic education is even greater than that found for male characters, and who are furthermore striking, given women characters' generally limited intellectual opportunities, also have in common a fairy ancestry. They form a particular group and will be discussed further in Part III Section 4.

We noted earlier that advice to a young boy often forms part of his education. There are few equivalent examples for women. This seems surprising, since proper behaviour was seen as being as important for women as for men, if not more so, in the eyes of medieval writers. The courtesy tradition which, in part, influenced these maxims, contains many examples directed at women. However, one example of advice to a young girl can be found in Gautier d'Arras's *Eracle*.[78] Athanais, a girl of lowly birth, has been selected by Eracle as the most fitting wife for the Emperor, for she lacks

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77 In the *Roman de Troie*, we find a further example of an educated woman practising magic. Medea, we are told, had known astronomy and necromance by heart since her childhood (vv. 1221-1222), although her formal education is not explicitly mentioned.

78 We might also mention Lavine, whose mother lectures her on love in *Le Roman d'Eneas*, v. 7857 ff. See further discussion in Part III Section 3.

the vices he has found in all women of higher standing. Her aunt instructs her to remember that all this good fortune has come to her by the grace of God and to show her gratitude in acts of generous giving (vv. 2768-2772). This concept of sacrificial giving has been a theme of the romance, Eracle having allowed himself to be sold by his mother in order that she might have more to give to the poor, thereby enabling her to secure God's pardon for her deceased husband. One might have expected to find more advice on how to behave correctly at court, but Gautier is clearly concerned to portray the piety in Athanais that has brought her good fortune. The scarcity of this advice-giving form of education for women is perhaps explained by the fact that women's lives are generally more circumscribed, with fewer opportunities for moving out into a new phase or area, the event that initiates this kind of education.

We have seen in this analysis of the descriptions of education found in particular texts within our corpus that there is a wide range of subject matter covered by these educations, though with a predominantly social rather than academic bent. This becomes easier to see and understand if we look at the education described in literary texts in the light of our survey of the historical context from Part I.

The literary representation of education is derived principally from the secular model in twelfth- and thirteenth-century practice. This is indeed what we should expect; *clergie* and *chevalerie* being seen as complementary, and the literary hero's life being located primarily in the chivalric sphere, it is the skills of the courtier and the knight that he requires. We have also seen how the acquisition of a particular courtly skill, such as hunting or horsemanship, receives more detailed attention as the poet taps in to the experiences of his audience in undergoing similar training. We should beware, however, of pushing comparisons between literary education and contemporary non-clerical education too far, because, as we noted in Part I, the latter varied considerably and is less reliably documented than its clerical counterpart. We can, however, clearly see that it is secular practice to which our poets turn for their inspiration.

We do, however, find an important exception to this general rule in the case of *Dolopathos*, the work originally, as we noted, of a schoolmaster. Whilst it is obviously the case that many noble sons in the Middle Ages were sent to school, either destined for an exclusively religious life, or for a semi-clerical role as court administrators and functionaries, such a preparation is highly unusual for a future ruler, especially as it

contains no courtly training.[79] We also found Eracle, like examples of heroes from the saints' lives, being educated at school. This is in accordance with his saintly mission in life.[80] These are, however, exceptions to the general rule, and in each case the more clerically-oriented description has a clear motivation.

One striking omission from the literary representations of education is that of explicitly religious education, especially amongst male characters, except in saints' lives, where it would clearly be expected. Basic training in Creed and prayers formed part of the practice of upbringing for probably every child.[81] We do see heroes learning the seven arts and Latin letters which may have religious overtones, given the theological orientation of academic training, but basic Christian observance is taught in only one instance, to the young Perceval. From his encounter with the knights in the Gaste Forest we learn that he knows his creed and prayers (the basic religious training advocated, for example, by Philippe de Navarre, see p. 39) and religious observance is enjoined upon him by his mother, Gornemanz and, most specifically by the the hermit.

Religious training is more likely to be found in girls' education than boys'. Ydain (*Le Chevalier au Cygne*), as we saw above, learns her Psalter and Hours, and the women folk of *Gui de Bourgogne* are able to turn to their Psalters for prayer to support the young men in their battle. In this differentiation between male and female education, one is reminded of the continual stress laid in the theoretical writings on education on the need for women to preserve their good name and chastity above all else, whereas a man has greater scope for development. The stress on religious observance for women forms part of this attitude.[82]

The descriptions of education in Old French literature are based more upon current practice than current theory, which tends to emphasise academic skills, but obviously the theoretical writing on noble education forms a background both to practice and its literary reflection. The gap between the theory and practice of noble education is probably quite large, as we saw in Part I. Vincent de Beauvais, for example, had set great store by the academic content of the education programme for

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79 In the related text *Le Roman des Sept Sages,* the wicked stepmother uses as part of her argument to have her stepson called away from the sages and back to court, the fact that this would broaden his education : "Et si veist chevaleries/et apreist des cortoisies" (vv. 445-6).

80 On the relationship between this text and the hagiographic tradition, see Introduction to Guy Raynaud de Lage's edition, pp. xi-xviii.

81 Shulamith Shahar, *Childhood in the Middle Ages,* p. 166, comments that the religious aspect of education was viewed as the most important in the Middle Ages.

82 Cf. quote from Philippe de Navarre above, n. 68.

noble children, as did the writers of the *miroirs de prince*. However, it is unlikely that these were closely adhered to in practice, as witness the generally low picture of lay literacy which emerges in studies of that area.

The theoretical viewpoint is, however, valuable as representing an ideal towards which writers felt one should aim, and we need to assess how far the ideals of theoretical writers are adopted by romance and epic writers. Madeleine Pelner Cosman suggests that the ideal that the ruler should be a learned man, propounded in the "miroirs de prince" in the Middle Ages and inherited from classical antiquity, forms the background to, and pervades the ethos of, the romance writers and their portrayal of education.[83] Whilst we do not entirely agree with her as to the extent of the influence of the "miroirs" on vernacular descriptions of education, she has convincingly shown the parallels between the advice given to the young Lancelot and the theories found in John of Salisbury's *Policraticus*, for example.[84] There are undoubtedly resonances of this important theme in the literary works we have examined.

The most specific echoes from the *speculum principis* genre and other theoretical works in our texts are to be found in the words of advice and instruction that were seen to be exchanged between characters. The advice contained here is usually the same at that found in the theoretical model:- practising liberality, choosing the right advisors, not neglecting one's duty to God or to the poor. The relationship between these kinds of didactic literature and fiction is a close one as we saw from the example of the works of Robert de Blois.

However, we should bear in mind that the literary hero is not only seen as a potential ruler, and should beware of overapplying the influence of the *miroirs*. The epic texts, which may be considered to deal more with the questions of ruling than the romances, show the least influence of the political ideal of the learned man, concentrating rather on the military aspect of the potential ruler. For example, Charlemagne, known to the Middle Ages as a learned man and patron of learning, is seen in epics primarily as a military hero rather than the perfect example of the learned prince. The ideals of the Old French epics can be divided into two main concerns: the restoration of social order, necessitated by either internal or external threat, and, increasingly in later epics, the establishment of a hero's *lignage*.[85] The epics are not primarily concerned with the *maintenance* of social order that political writing takes as

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83 M.P. Cosman, *The Education of the Hero in Arthurian Romance*, pp. 173-188.

84 M.P. Cosman, *The Education of the Hero in Arthurian Romance*, p. 188.

85 Shen, *The Old French "Enfances" Epics and their Audience*, p. 211.

its starting point. Secondly, the epics are thought probably to be aimed at the lesser aristocracy rather than great nobles, and to reflect their personal aspirations at a time when they were under social pressure, rather than presenting models of ideal rulers.[86] These aspirations are realised by means of military prowess, an individual's skills enabling him to overcome a political stalemate and achieve the financial and social rewards otherwise denied to him.

In romance, and in later epics, the hero's role as a lover is also important. We noted, in our discussion on the education of the hero and heroine, that social skills and good manners nearly always form a part, either implicitly or explicitly, of that education, and that such epithets as "bien enseigné" are very commonly found. The idea of living up to some ideal standard of courtesy is thus present in the narrative texts and once again we may detect influence from theoretical works. Courtesy literature was an important part of the educational material of the thirteenth century particularly, and beyond. Such literature suggests a society that has a clear conception of manners and correct behaviour in company,[87] and this ideal emerges strongly in literary texts, more strongly, we would suggest, than the political ideal.

One premise that is vitally important to both theoretical and literary writers is the relationship between nature and nurture. All acknowledge the power of nature and the fact that nurture must work in cooperation with it, although the treatment of the idea varies between different types of writers. Whereas the moralist writers are suspicious of the power of nature, for the poets human nature is vindicated in the hero who triumphs despite any adverse disposition of nurture. For the poets, the view that nature will prevail is generally simple and tacitly accepted; few are concerned to explore further the relationship between nature and nurture that theoretical writers such as John of Salisbury recognise must underlie any understanding of the educational process. We have seen in *Dolopathos* an instance of a writer who is more closely interested in this relationship and further examples are discussed in greater detail in Part III.

A predominantly negative view of nature governed the theory and practice of the education of women, and we have seen how medieval women's educational

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86 See Shen, *The Old French "Enfances" Epics*, p. 233, and Martin Gosman, 'Le *Roman d'Alexandre* et les *juvenes*: une approche socio-historique'.

87 J. Nicholls in *The Matter of Courtesy*, comments that the fact that "courtesy was taught and practised in the courts, monasteries and schools, argues strongly for the esteem in which the ideals of correct social behaviour were held." (pp. 3-4) He then goes on to show the importance of such ideals for a reading of the *Gawain* poet. Stephen Jaeger makes similar comments in *The Origins of Courtliness*, pp. 211-254. The influence of courtesy ideals on vernacular literature is further discussed in Part III Section 3.

opportunities were more restricted than men's. This is reflected in the literary texts in the fact that a heroine is less often educated than a hero. However, the general absence, in literary texts, of negative views about frail, female nature, compared to the importance accorded to the heroine's skills and education where they are described, suggest that, generally speaking, our poets are painting rather a rosy picture of women's education.

The nature/nurture relationship informs the poets' presentation of their characters' education. The education of the hero is designed to complement what is already his by nature, to allow him to be a perfect example of the noble or royal classes. As Doris Desclais Berkvam points out, nature is determined by the society of which the individual is seen as a representative, rather than by any uniqueness due to him as an individual. Therefore "there is no attempt to discover the "natural" gifts of tendencies of the child, no attempt to help him or her realize their potentiality". Since "medieval society does see the future adult in the child", for the child is born with that future adult role already within him, education has a specific, if circumscribed role to play.[88]

Comparison with the historical picture drawn in Part I leads to the conclusion that medieval poets base their descriptions upon the practice of their own time. They portray their heroes as educated in ways similar to young noblemen of their own time. However, the poets do idealise the picture they present, exaggerating both the facility with which the hero learns and the breadth of education received. Early poets in particular have a tendency to exaggerate the academic content of that education. One suspects that this may reflect a gap between theory and practice at the time. Although lay literacy was improving in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, it is not likely that many noblemen were skilled in the seven arts, and especially not in the arts of the *quadrivium* which were overshadowed even in the clerical sphere by those of the *trivium*. It is precisely those arts of the *quadrivium* that often seem to take the poets' fancy.

We must, therefore, beware of taking precise details from literary texts and concluding that these are true representations of reality, for it is never the poets' aim to present a "realistic" picture, rather they are using realistic elements for their own ends. To quote Pauline Matarasso in her work on *Raoul de Cambrai*:-

> Le monde féodale se reflète dans les chansons de geste à travers un miroir déformant. Et il n'y a pas que l'exagération épique. Dans l'épopée nous voyons l'idéal, les aspirations d'une société qui se

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88 Doris Desclais Berkvam, 'Nature and Norreture: A Notion of Medieval Childhood and Education', p. 176.

> cherche; ... voilà pourquoi .. celles-ci [les chansons de geste] nous renseignent .. sur la société non tant comme elle était, mais comme elle se voyait.[89]

The understanding thus gained of medieval society's aspirations is as of much value to us as knowledge of its contemporary practices.

Given a corpus of the size we have been examining, and the timespan of roughly 150 years (c.1100-c.1250) over which the texts are spread, it is helpful to assess the frequency with which education descriptions occur, to determine whether there is any developmental pattern over the period, and whether the pattern varies between the two genres we are examining, epic and romance. We can thereby form a more precise notion as to the status and importance of the education element in medieval narrative. These kinds of patterns can only be sketched in general outline because of the problem of precise dating of texts; indeed some of the texts can only be dated to within roughly 50 years.[90] The most economical way of dealing with this problem is to divide the texts into groups and observe any changes occurring from group to group. The divisions proposed are made bearing in mind approximate natural turning points within the period 1100-1250. Firstly, there would appear to be a natural break between the flourishing of the *romans antiques* and the rise of the *roman arthurien*, particularly with the works of Chrétien and the first division is thus made at c.1165. At the other end of the scale, the second quarter or second third of the thirteenth century begins to see the change from verse to prose and the declining of the literary renaissance of the twelfth century. A division is thus made at c.1230. The remaining period, c.1165-c.1230 does contain by far the largest number of texts, but this reflects the fact that this middle period is generally considered the height of the twelfth-century renaissance.

The most noticeable feature, if we look simply at those texts that do mention education as opposed to those that do not, is that the proportion of those that do not is highest, at about one third of the total, in the earliest period. This contrasts strongly with the next period in which substantially less than one quarter of texts examined make no mention of education. From this point onwards the picture varies only slightly, with a small increase in the number of texts describing education in the final period.

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89 Pauline Matarasso, *Recherches historiques et littéraires sur "Raoul de Cambrai"*, pp. 105-6.

See also the comments made by Georges Duby, *Le Chevalier, la femme et le prêtre, le mariage dans la France féodale*, p. 233: "Cette littérature, évidemment, ne montre pas la réalité des comportements, mais ce qu'on voulait qu'ils fussent. Elle étaye un système de valeurs, et ce système demeure fortement marqué par l'idéologie cléricale: nous n'entendons pas ce que disait d'elle même l'aristocratie mais le discours qu'on luie tenait, que lui tenait les clercs."

90 The dates taken for each text are given in the Appendix.

The texts that do touch upon the theme of education can be divided into two categories, those that explicitly describe the education of the hero and/or heroine, and those that refer briefly to a character as being "well educated", or mention a learned skill at some point in the narrative, without giving a specific description of the education. The proportion of the former type remains fairly constant at around 40-50% of the total in each group; again the highest figure is found in the second period, the lowest in the first. One suspects that there is a marked enthusiasm for the idea in the second period, when it first gains popularity, with a gradual "settling down" thereafter. However, the proportion of texts making the second kind of reference to education - briefer, less part of the "biography" of a character - increases quite markedly from about one quarter of the total in the earliest group to around nearly one half in the last. This inversely parallels the movement in the texts that do not mention education which decline at roughly the same rate. Hence we can conclude that the poets increasingly consider their characters as likely to be well educated people, even if they do not actually describe the education those characters receive. The concept of education is an important part of their background even when they do not bring it into the foreground with an explicit description.

That the theme of education is something of a formula in the composition of a narrative text by the end of our chosen period is neatly shown by the romance *Durmart le Galois* (c.1240). The poet claims not to want to describe the expected education of the hero as it would be boring:-

> Mais grans anuis seroit a dire
> Ne de conter to tire a tire
> Comment cil enfes est norris.
> Bien est gardes et bien servis
> Tant qu'il est venus a XV ans
> ....
> Mais trop seroit li contes lons
> A deviser tote s'enfance.
> De ce ne sui pas en dotance,
> Que Durmars li plus belz ne fust
> Que l'om a cel tens coneust. (vv. 93-97, 136-40)

The implication one draws from this disclaimer is that the audience would have expected the poet to describe the hero's education as part of the standard narrative pattern they were accustomed to, an expectation the poet pretends to be about to frustrate. However, this pretence for he does go on to describe how Durmart is entrusted to the King's seneschal and records the king's instructions to him concerning his son's education (vv. 177-194).

Looking next at the general pattern of development of the descriptions of education across the two genres, epic and romance, there is a marked difference. Whereas there is an increase in the number of romance texts that do not describe education in the last period, in the case of the epic, there is a definite decrease. In the earliest period, nearly three quarters of the epic texts made no mention of education, but by the end of our period they are nearly as likely as romance texts to describe a hero or heroine's education in detail, and nearly all refer briefly to educational matters. This movement from not being concerned with education to describing it almost as much as do romance texts reflects the changes in the epic genre under the influence of romance, that some have thought of as decadence.[91] It also parallels the increasing interest in "enfances" material in epics, explored in an important article by Friedrich Wolfzettel[92] and in L.S. Simpson's work. The latter notes that "enfances" epics were at their most popular in the last third of the twelfth century and the first third of the thirteenth;[93] we find interest in the theme of education following a roughly similar pattern, although it is sustained beyond the first third of the thirteenth century.

Given the influence of romance on epic, it is not surprising to find that the education described in the *chanson de geste* is broadly similar to that found in romance with both tending to describe a non-clerical, social education. The noticeable differences between the curriculum in the two genres is that, where an academic education is described, it is more likely to be found in romance than epic texts, and the epics tend to lay more stress on languages, especially Arabic, than the romances. Women's education is also more frequently described in romance than epic. There is no greater stress in the epic than the romance on learning military skills, indeed more the reverse. The romancers, as we saw above, enjoy lengthy descriptions of a hero learning courtly, jousting skills, which are of less interest to epic writers, but are omitted rather than transposed into training for the realities of battle.[94]

It is noticeable that descriptions of non-academic or social education do not begin to feature in the texts until the second period, from which time onwards this aspect then tends to dominate. The earliest descriptions tend to concentrate on academic skills, and are generally enthusiastic about the benefits of academic education,

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91 See, for example, William P. Ker, *Epic and Romance, Essays in Medieval Literature*, and Léon Gautier, *Les épopées françaises. Etudes sur les origines et l'histoire de la littérature nationale.*

92 Friedrich Wolfzettel, 'Zur Stellung und Bedeutung der *Enfances* in der altfranzözischen Epik'.

93 Shen, *The Old French "Enfances" Epics*, p. 183.

94 The implications of this lack of description are explored in Part III Section 2.

although the actual discernible advantage to the hero/ine of such learning is not generally apparent. The earliest romance text to deal with education, Alberic de Pisançon's *Roman d'Alexandre,* portrays a very wide-ranging curriculum which suits the impressive stature of the hero and, by implication, makes him a better man for ruling.

The last period seems to show a declining interest in education, which may well be linked to the development of prose romances. These seem to be less likely to provide descriptions of education. In the whole of the Vulgate Cycle, for example, the only detailed description of a hero's education is that received by Lancelot (Sommer Vol. III, pp. 33-40). Similarly, although the verse versions of the Alexander romance deal extensively with the hero's education, the thirteenth-century prose romance devotes very little attention to it.

The high spot for the education of women characters is the second period. In this period, for example, we find the two most educated women of all, Melior (*Partonopeus de Blois*) and La Pucele (*Le Bel Inconnu*). Later in the thirteenth century fewer women characters are endowed with an education which may well be explained by a growing antifeminism in this century contrasted with an upsurge of interest in women's roles in literature in the twelfth. As one might also expect, educated female characters are found more frequently in romance than epic, but in the latter genre once again, there is an increase in the later examples. It is unusual for a heroine's education to take precedence over that of a hero. Generally, he appears first in the narrative, and his education is described, before we meet the heroine whose education subsequently may or may not be described. One exception to this, noted above, was Fenice in *Gui de Warewic,* whose education is both superior to the hero's in its academic breadth, and is described first. This is a deliberate move on the part of the poet to enhance his heroine's standing in relation to the hero, emphasising her social superiority to him. In the case of the educated fairies, the education of the heroine is described without any corresponding description for the hero. Once again the exceptional role of these women and their role with their lover is conveyed in this approach to the theme of education.

Our analysis of the literary representation of education in twelfth- and thirteenth-century French narrative indicates that education is a sufficiently frequently occurring feature to be accorded some importance. Since descriptions of and references to education are found in the majority of the texts we have examined, we can conclude that education is felt to be worth inclusion as part of the narrative. Given the care with which particular details are included in certain examples, we can further say that poets

deliberately use a description of the education of a character for a particular purpose - the social skills of Amadas are highlighted, breadth of education is emphasised by Thomas of Kent, Aelis's needle skills are stressed.[95] In other words, education is regarded both as worth narrating in its own right, and as useful material to exploit for perhaps larger literary or other effects the poets may wish to achieve. We can account for the inherent value of education descriptions in the light of our discussions so far in Parts I and II; the exploitation of education in particular cases we have so far only hinted at and this must await fuller attention in Part III.

We can firstly account for the place accorded to education in medieval narrative by recalling the great enthusiasm for education and optimism in its efficacy that was characteristic of much of the writing we examined in Part I. This enthusiasm was initially directed towards clerical education, with its orientation towards Christianity and the resulting salutary overtones it acquired, but became increasingly true of education at court also as this attracted the attentions of theoretical writers in the thirteenth century. Education being seen as beneficial by the world at large, it is readily included into vernacular literature. We can see this quite explicitly in Hue de Rotelande's *Ipomedon*. Ipomedon, we are told

> Mult savoit d'oysaus e de chienz
> E mult esteit de bon servise.
> ....
> E si fut mult bien lettrez.
> Ki en clergie est auqes baut
> As autres sens le melz vaut;
> De plus agu engin serra,
> Une reison melz entendra. (vv. 194-5, 204-8)

It is clear that Hue prizes the "clergie" content of his hero's education above the rest, although Ipomedon's learning is of no obvious practical benefit to him later in the story. It is included because the learned man has prestige in the eyes of the audience.

Secondly, we have noted a rising interest in matters pertaining to the individual, although we must reiterate the *caveat* that "individual" in this context must not be understood as having the conntations normal for a twentieth-century reader, but rather implies interest in one person as opposed to the collectivity of people. The notion of collectivity or society predetermining and conditioning the individual is still a profound reality in the medieval period and must be held in balance to notions of individuality. However, we can say that developing interest in the maturing and experiences of human beings leads naturally to an interest in including a description of their education in

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95 The particular emphases and the different effects these create in one particular group of texts, the *Roman d'Alexandre*, are discussed in Part III, Section 1.

contemporary narratives. Education is very commonly used by our poets as part of their overall presentation of a character, as they create the attributes he or she is to have. Thus, when we examine the education of a character, we discover what kind of person his creator intended him to be. In the majority of cases, what is intended is the creation of a consummate being, worthy of the audience's respect and emulation, hence the idealisation we have detected in many of our examples.

We have noted the secular model of education from the contemporary context, and the background of theoretical works that provide the poets with raw material for their descriptions and influence the shaping of those descriptions. Of these background influences, the most pervasive is the accepted belief that nature is necessarily stronger than nurture, a belief that must inevitably colour and circumscribe their view of education. Hence the limitation of education in many cases to a part of the establishment and portrayal of a character. As we saw in the case if Ipomedon, even where education is mentioned enthusiastically in the early life of a character, it may well not play any further part in the narrative.

The enthusiasm for education and the role of nature produce in the case of the education of women characters, a slightly ambiguous result. We have suggested that the literary portrayal of female education is idealised, and more optimistically viewed than the generally negative contemporary attitudes to human nature in women might lead us to expect. We have also noted examples of suspicion towards clever women - in Guiborc and her magical powers for instance - which may hint at the underlying presence of a more negative view. We can explain the idealisation of women's education in a rather more cynical light which reconciles more with negative views of medieval woman if we adopt the overall conception of woman's role in medieval narrative put forward by critics such as Shulamith Shahar. She comments that courtly literature

> disregards the development of the full potential of woman by love, and therefore she remains essentially an object, however adored. Furthermore it often appears that the situation itself is more important than the beloved object.[96]

If we agree with this view, that woman is more important in medieval narrative for the perspective she affords on male characters than in her own right, we should not be surprised that her education is idealised in accordance with the view of her as a kind of lodestar for the hero. This view is persuasive, despite offering a rather depressing view of women characters, but more detailed discussion of education, which we shall reserve

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96 Shulamith Shahar, *The Fourth Estate, a History of Women in the Middle Ages,* p. 162

for Part III, will enable more reliable conclusions to be drawn as to the status of education with regard to women in medieval literature.

We may draw further, general conclusions about the status of literary descriptions of education as a whole from a comparison between the developments we see in the educational world and those in its literary representation, which confirm our initial premise that analysis of literary descriptions gives insight into the complex culture/education matrix. We find that the mid-late twelfth century is a significant period for the portrayal of education in narrative literature. It is at this time that the theme is most commonly referred to by poets, as it begins to take its place amongst the stock elements of their narrative; and it is also at this time that it acquires the form in which it is most usually found. At the end of our period, we begin to see the decline in the theme in romance, following the pattern of change from verse to prose within the genre. The pattern in epic follows, a few decades behind, that in romance. The development of the theme of education thus follows, in general outline, the rise and fall of literature in the twelfth-century renaissance. Hence we see that, at some point around the beginning of the final third of the twelfth century, the tendency to describe education suddenly becomes much stronger. This is the moment at which vernacular narrative production is really gathering momentum, and when developments on the educational front equally are gaining impetus. The kind of factors that fostered literary production and which we have cited as contributing to educational change - economic prosperity, social and political stability which provided patronage, the gradual secularisation of learning - tended also to foster interest in the hero or heroine as an individual and in his or her development and education.

PART III

Literary Views of Education - Exploitation

Our survey in the previous part highlighted certain aspects of the literary representation of education which merit further investigation. The purpose of this part is to undertake more detailed analyses of individual texts or small groups of texts which either stand out in some way from the general patterns identified in Part II, or alternatively provide particularly good illustrations of significant tendencies within the overall corpus of texts examined. In both cases, our aim here is to try to understand why the poets in question choose to describe education as they do.

The question of why most poets choose to describe education at all has already been answered in Part II. There it became apparent that education was part of the general raw materials of romance and later epic, forming a semi-autonomous narrative unit which poets could manipulate for their own particular ends. We begin this Part by examining this process of manipulation in more detail, using as a sample the various different extant versions of the *Roman d'Alexandre.* These constitute a distinct and manageable group of texts which all deal with the education of the hero in some detail. The fact that they all use the same basic story makes them particularly useful for exploring the variations obtainable from one thematic ingredient.

Secondly we consider in greater detail the uses vernacular poets make of the often-invoked maxim that nature is mightier than nurture. Both Parts I and II afforded evidence that this dictum exercised a significant influence on views of education, both theoretical and literary. Our discussion deliberately includes examples taken from some lesser-known works, because they illustrate how widespread the exploitation of the nature/nurture *topos* is, and because they deserve the opportunity for some critical attention in their own right. We take the opportunity in particular to look in detail at an, until recently, sadly neglected romance, *Le Roman de Silence,* which takes the nature/nurture relationship as the premise for the whole work, and is obviously, therefore, a key text in our exploration of the theme of education.

Thirdly, we explore the interaction of the education element with another significant aspect of medieval narrative, the love interest. Having noted the cross-fertilization between ideals represented in courtesy literature and those in romance, coupled with the juxtaposition of education and the inception of love in the early lives of heroes and heroines, this is a fruitful area within which to investigate the extent to which education may influence other areas of the narrative, and thus may behave in a

more complex way than the basic, semi-autonomous narrative unit. We therefore examine the interrelationship of love and education in a variety of texts, evaluating the extent to which each influences the other, and the importance of such interaction for a reading of certain texts, principally Guillaume de Lorris' *Roman de la Rose* and *Le Conte de Floire et Blancheflor*, where this is at its most complex.

Fourthly, Part II revealed a certain ambiguity in the treatment of the education of women, which indicated further analysis of this area was needed. Whilst the degree of idealisation practised suggests an over-optimistic view of their education, there is still, in the literary texts, an undercurrent of a more negative view of women and female nature that was apparent in the works described in Part I. We therefore explore the perceptions of the educated heroine, choosing as our two key texts *Partonopeus de Blois* and *Le Bel Inconnu*, which emerged strikingly in Part II for their extraordinarily well-educated heroines.

Finally, we discuss a text whose treatment of the theme of education is strikingly original in a number of ways: Chrétien's *Le Conte du Graal*. Whereas education as a raw element in medieval narrative most commonly functions as an almost independent unit, important in the part of the story where is occurs, but lacking overall significance, in *Le Conte du Graal*, education functions as a true theme, an idea that runs through and shapes the whole work. Chrétien also explores the nature/nurture *topos* in a more sophisticated manner than the majority of texts examined under our second heading: he presents an analysis of the relationship between the two and their effect upon the young hero. Chrétien is also unlike many other romancers in that he appears to be concerned as much, if not more, with the process of education as with its product, which leads quite naturally to his using education as a theme to his romance. Education must therefore form part of any reading of this text. *Le Conte du Graal*, of all the texts in our corpus, shows the most penetrating and virtuosic exploitation of the theme of education.

Section 1

Theme and Variations: The Education of the Hero in the *Roman d'Alexandre*

The *Roman d'Alexandre* exists in a number of interrelated versions in Old French, each of which includes a description of the hero's education.[1] By examining these descriptions of education, we can form some idea of the variations poets can achieve in their presentation of essentially the same material, and we can attempt to determine the factors that influence their mode of presentation.

First however, it is necessary to give a brief description of the genesis of the French Alexander material and to try to establish how the different versions of the romance from Alberic de Pisançon to Alexander de Paris originate and relate to each other (see stemma overleaf).[2] The growth of legendary material surrounding Alexander began soon after his death in 323 BC and the first "romance" or legendary biography of him was written in Greek, probably by a native of Alexandria, some time after 200 BC; it is known, because of its false attribution as the work of Callisthenes, as *Pseudo-Callisthenes.* The original *Pseudo-Callisthenes* has not survived, and the manuscripts which have come down to us are clearly at some remove from the original work. The oldest form of the romance is thought to be represented by the α recension and all other traditions derive directly or indirectly from it. This is the most important recension for the Old French *Roman d'Alexandre.* Version α was translated into Latin in the fourth century AD under the title *Res Gestae Alexandri Macedonis* by one Julius Valerius. His work was later abridged, probably in the ninth century AD and in this so-called *Epitome* form (or *Zacher Epitome* after the scholar who first edited it), it enjoyed considerable popularity. In manuscripts, the *Epitome* is frequently followed by the so-caled *Epistola Alexandri ad Aristotelem.* This is a supposed letter from Alexander to Aristotle, telling of his fantastic Eastern adventures. Deriving ultimately from *Pseudo-Callisthenes,* it enjoyed an independent existence from *Pseudo-Callisthenes* and its

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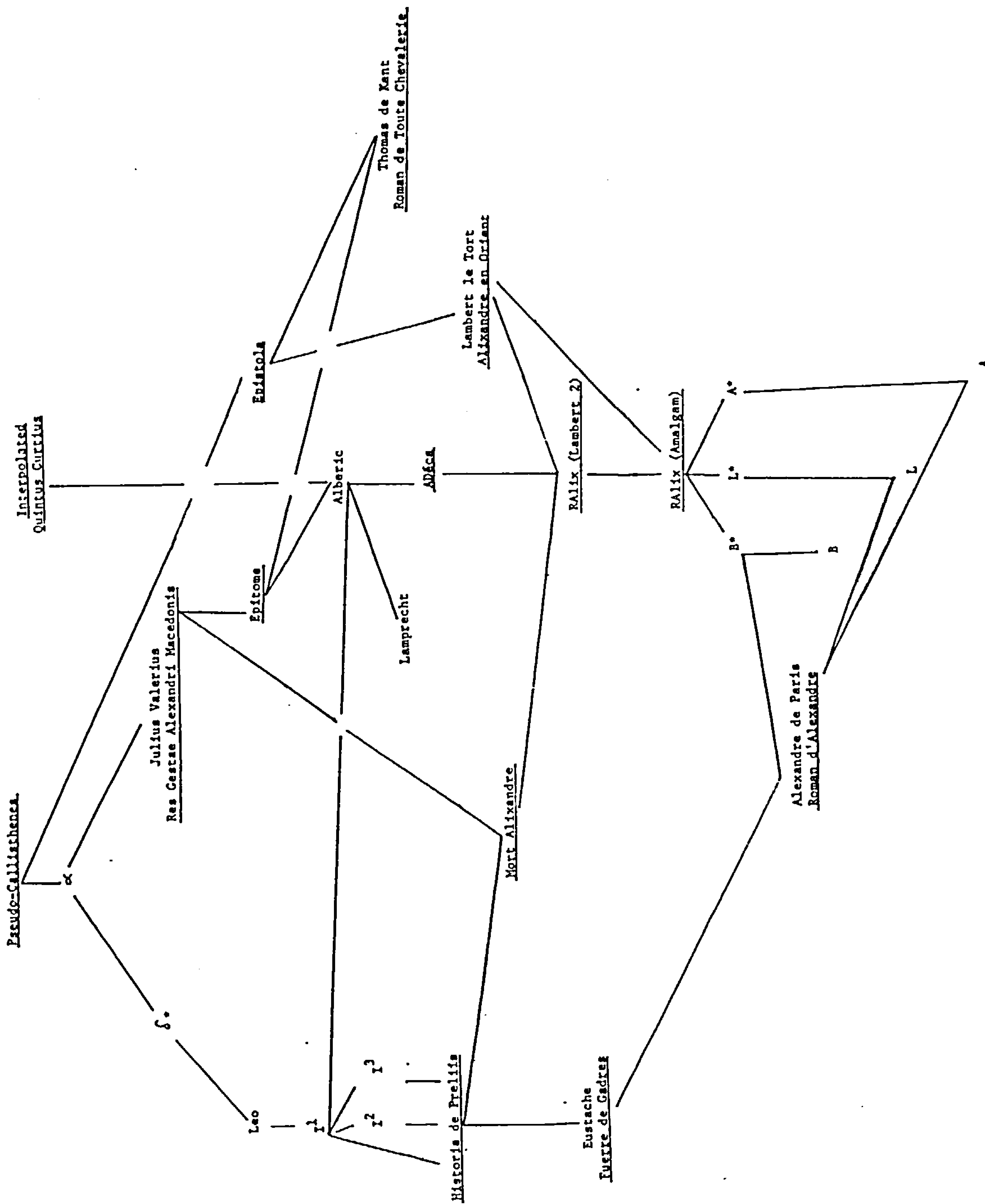
1 The general heading "Roman d'Alexandre" is taken to include the extant verse versions from Alberic de Pisançon to Alexandre de Paris, which are the texts included in the seven-volume Elliott Monographs edition. The prose romance is not included in this discussion as it is less closely related to verse versions and pays only brief attention to Alexander's education.

2 The following description and stemma are based on the invaluable work of several scholars who have untangled this extremely complicated history:- D.J.A. Ross, *Alexander Historiatus,* Paul Meyer, *Alexandre le Grand dans la littérature française du moyen âge,* George Cary , *The Medieval Alexander,* the various editors of *The Medieval French 'Roman d'Alexandre'.*

DIAGRAMMATIC REPRESENTATION OF THE GENESIS OF THE OLD FRENCH ALEXANDER ROMANCES



other descendents from an early date. The *Epitome* and the *Epistola* together form one of the most important sources for the Old French Alexander romances.

Whilst this series of developments was taking place in the α tradition, a second Latin tradition was growing from a derivative of α. In the tenth century AD a certain Archpriest Leo of Naples, on a mission in Constantinople, found a manuscript of *Pseudo-Callisthenes* which he copied and brought back with him, later translating it into Latin. Unfortunately, neither the Greek manuscript in question, nor Leo's copy of it now survive, but from the Latin translations it is clear that it was a recension of α unlike other known recensions and it is referred to as δ *. Leo's Latin translation was reworked by subsequent writers, who endeavoured to improve its style and made various interpolations from other Alexander stories. There are three main recensions, called respectively I^1, I^2, and I^3, of which the second two derive from the first. I^1 was used by Alberic and I^2 makes an appearance later in France when it forms the principal source for the thirteenth century prose romance. The various versions deriving from Leo are known collectively as the *Historia de Preliis.*

Apart from Latin material deriving ultimately from *Pseudo-Callisthenes*, there is a pseudo-historical life of Alexander by Quintus Curtius Rufus, written in the third century AD, which was much admired and imitated in the Middle Ages. As was so often the case, this led to its being interpolated with material from other sources, notably Julius Valerius, and in this interpolated form it influenced the French tradition as another of Alberic's sources.

The picture becomes considerably more complicated once Alberic's vernacular romance established the popularity of the Alexander legend in France. Alberic's romance is written in a curious Franco-Provençal dialect and all that survives of the work is a fragment of 105 octosyllabic verses, telling of the birth and education of the hero. In about 1140 a Poitevin adaptor reworked Alberic's octosyllabic verses into decasyllables. Although this decasyllabic romance (the *Alexandre décasyllabique* or *ADéca* to adopt the Elliott editors' convention) has not survived in its original form, two manuscripts of the *Roman d'Alexandre* by Alexandre de Paris, A and B, preserve the decasyllabic start to the poem before it was recast into dodecasyllables to match the remainder of Alexandre de Paris' work. It is not clear just how far the *ADéca* extended, although it would seem to be about to the point at which it is preserved in manuscripts A and B. We cannot unfortunately make deductions from Alberic since such a small fragment of his work survives, but by using Alberic's Middle High German translator, Lamprecht, as a guide, it would appear that Alberic continued to the death of Darius, since Lamprecht breaks off quite suddenly at this point, presumably

because his source also broke off there.[3] The *ADéca* portions of A and B continue to the start of the adventures in India, i.e. roughly to the point where Alberic can be assumed to have finished.

A second French Alexander romance, deriving from the *Epitome* and *Epistola* (principally the latter) was also composed in the decades following Alberic, probably circa 1150-75. Lambert le Tort in his *Alixandre en Orient* describes Alexander's marvellous adventures in the East, as described in the *Epistola*, finishing with the capture of Babylon and the eventual death of Alexander. Thirdly, an independent story developed from an incident that appears to derive ultimately from the *Historia de Preliis*, that of a foraging expedition during Alexander's siege of Tyre which occurs in his early campaigns. Eustache's *Fuerre de Gadres* seems to have been written to emulate the conflict between *prouesse* and *sagesse* found in the *Chanson de Roland.* Finally, also written at about the same time as Lambert's *Alixandre en Orient* is the anonymous narrative of the death of Alexander, the *Mort Alixandre*, based on material from Julius Valerius, the *Epitome* and *Historia de Preliis*. This is now lost but eight stanzas interpolated into manuscript A are thought to represent a fragment of the work.[4]

These different traditions are all combined into the work of Alexandre de Paris at the end of the twelfth century, but just how the amalgamation and transformation place is not entirely certain. As shown above, it appears that the *ADéca* broke off roughly at the point where Lambert began his narrative; hence it would be an obvious step to put these two works together to form a more complete whole. There was also the choice of two endings, either from Lambert or from the *Mort Alixandre*. It appears that an anonymous redactor carried out a revision along these lines, selecting the *Mort Alixandre* version of the end of the story and producing the supposed version known as *RAlix (Lambert 2)*. This version appears then to have been filled out by the addition of more material from Lambert to give the *RAlix (Amalgam)*. We have manuscript evidence of this form, which is a very near predecessor of Alexandre de Paris' version, although the manuscripts (A, B, and L) do show signs of intervening steps between themselves and the *RAlix (Amalgam)* and seem to have diverged from the Amalgam in different ways. L in particular shows quite idiosyncratic characteristics and both manuscripts L and A show some influence from Alexandre de Paris' version.

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3 Vol iii of *The Medieval French 'Roman d'Alexandre'* gives the versions of Alberic and Lamprecht in parallel for comparison.

4 See *The Medieval French 'Roman d'Alexandre'*, vol vii, p. 1.

It is from the B tradition that Alexandre de Paris worked, recasting the decasyllabic start into dodecasyllabic form, relocating some elements in the story to make a more coherent narrative, and inserting a not inconsiderable number of lines of moral tone and indifferent quality. He incorporated the *Fuerre de Gadres* material between the decasyllabic portion and the start of Lambert's narrative. Despite the temptation to be disparaging about the literary quality of some of his work, Alexandre de Paris deserves credit for bringing the different strands of the Alexander material together into a more or less cohesive whole, and his work enjoyed enormous popularity, superseding all earlier versions. The *Roman d'Alexandre* is still divided up into four sections or branches for ease of reference, roughly corresponding to the different works that formed the basis of his compilation:-[5]

Branch I	*ADéca*	Alexander's early life to the siege of Tyre
Branch II	*Fuerre de Gadres*	
Branch III	Lambert le Tort	Alexander's exploits in the East
Branch IV	*Mort Alixandre*	

It is proposed to deal with only one more derivative of the Greek and Latin sources here, Thomas of Kent's Anglo-Norman *Roman de Toute Chevalerie.* This was initially fairly independent of the continental French tradition, and is based much more closely on its Latin sources, the *Epitome* and *Epistola.* It is worth considering in the present context since it also contains a description of the education of the hero.

The origins of the theme of education can be traced throughout the Greek and Latin traditions. *Pseudo-Callisthenes* lists Alexander's masters and the subjects they taught him:

> When he became a lad, his pedagogue was Lekretetis, a negro, his foster-father Leukonides, his teacher of literature Polynices of Pella, and of music Lemnian Alkipos, of geometry the Peloponesian Menippos, of rhetoric the Athenian Aristomenes, of philosophy Aristotle of Melos and of warfare Lampsakes ... so as time passed he was educated in formal knowledge and began to think of ruling.[6]

These are then repeated in Julius Valerius and the *Epitome*:-

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5 This convention was originally suggested by Paul Meyer in *Alexandre le Grand* and has been retained by the Elliott Monograph editors.

6 Pseudo-Callisthenes, *The Life of Alexander of Macedon*, translated by Elizabeth Haight.

Paedagogus atque nutritor nomine Leonides, litteraturae Polynices magister, musicus Alcippus Lemnius, geometriae Menecles Peloponnesus, oratoriae Anaximenes Aristocli Lampsacenus, philosophiae autem Aristoteles ille Milesius.[7]

Crescebat ergo, ut corporis gratia, ita studiorum et prudentiae majestate. Nutrix eius Alacrinus, paedagogus Leonides, Litteraturae Polinicus magister, Musicus Alcipus, geometriae Menecles, oratoriae Anaximenes, philosophiae Aristoteles ille Milesius.[8]

When we compare this to Alberic's description, we can see just how far he diverges from this model:-

Magestres ab beyn affactaz,
De totas arz beyn enseynaz,
Qui.l duystrunt beyn de dignitaz
Et de conseyl et de bontaz,
De sapientia et d'onestaz,
De fayr estorn et prodeltaz.
L'uns l'enseyned, beyn parv mischin,
De grec sermon et de latin,
Et lettra fayr en pargamin
Et en ebrey et en ermin,
Et fayr a seyr et a matin
Agayt encuntre son vicin.
Et l'altre doyst d'escud cubrir
Et de ss'esspaa grant ferir
Et de sa lanci en loyn jausir
Et senz fayllenti altet ferir;
Li terz ley leyre et playt cabir
E.l dreyt del tort a discernir.
Li quarz lo duyst corda toccar
Et rotta et leyra clar sonar
Et en toz tons corda temprar,
Per se medips cant ad levar;
Li quinz des terra misurar
Cum ad de cel entrob e mar. (vv 82-105)[9]

Alberic does to some extent follow the pattern of mentioning a master, although he gives no names plus the subject he taught. He embroiders the original, however, by giving the first teacher more than one subject, and by expanding the one-word subject titles into more detailed descriptions of what each subject covered. What we must note is that Alberic makes no attempt to describe the kind of education that Alexander, as a Greek prince, would have received. On the contrary, Alexander's education is described within the context of Alberic's own day. However, the author draws on both

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7 Julius Valerius, *Res gestae Alexandri Macedonis*, ed. Kuebler.

8 *Julii Valerii epitome*, ed. Zacher.

9 The text of Alberic's romance is found in *The Medieval French 'Roman d'Alexandre'*, vol. iii, pp. 37-41.

the clerical and non-clerical traditions, together with an element of fantasy in the range of languages learned, especially Armenian, to create a curriculum far beyond that available to any young man of the time. We deduce, then, that at least part of Alberic's intention is to describe as wonderful an education as he can devise. This agrees with the undisguised admiration Alberic evinces for his hero elsewhere in the fragment. It is interesting to note that Alberic's enthusiasm was commented upon and explicitly modified by his German imitator Lamprecht, who denies Alexander's claim to be the greatest monarch ever known in favour of Solomon, pointing out that Alexander was, after all, a heathen.[10] In accordance with this less enthusiastic view, he tones down his description of Alexander's education to a more realistic level.[11]

We should also note the implicit link between formal education and moral improvement in this description.[12] The first thing Alberic tells us about Alexander's tutors is that they taught him "dignitaz", "bontaz", "sapientia" and "onestaz", before ever mentioning the specific elements taught by the individual masters. The implication is that the overall aim of their educative process was to inculcate into Alexander the moral qualities necessary for his role as a great king, which aim they realised by means of teaching specific academic and practical subjects. Here is an echo of the themes found recurrently in the educational theorists of the period - that the acquisition of learning has a moral benefit to the recipient, and that the ruler should be a learned man.

We see that Alberic, following the pattern found in his classical sources, adopts a biographical approach to his subject, a form in which the education of the subject is also included. Alberic's romance is the first vernacular French work of a non-religious nature to adopt this biographical form, a fact considered very significant by Guy Raynaud de Lage who views Alberic's choice of a hero taken from antiquity, a source that would provide a respectable, yet not religious hero, as marking a new impetus for

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10 Salemon der was uz getan
der sich uz allen kunegen nam.
....
Man muste in wol uz scheiden
wunde Alexander was ein heiden.

Lamprechts Alexander nach den drei Texten mit dem Fragment des Alberic von Besancon und den lateinishen Quellen, ed. Karl Kinzel (Vorau text vv. 62-3, 69-79).

11 His education consists of Latin (no other languages), music, geometry, astronomy, fighting and law-keeping, see vv. 171-220.

12 K. Sneyders de Vogel, 'L'Education d'Alexandre le Grand', p. 164 comments that Alberic is unique among the Alexander poets in this respect.

secular vernacular writing.[13] It also marks a new departure from the epic heroic tradition, and has important implications for the subsequent development of epic and romance, which both become characterised by a biographical approach as the twelfth and thirteenth centuries progress. R. Bezzola suggests that the Alexander "enfances" provided the inspiration for the inclusion of childhood preludes to romances whence the practice spread to the *chanson de geste* in the adding of "enfances" epics to existing epic cycles.[14] Friedrich Wolfzettel sets this trend in its wider context, linking it with "the firm establishment of feudal society and the growth of interest in the youthful hero" and the "twelfth century courtly appetite for continuity and emphasis on individual fulfillment".[15] The Alexander romances illustrate the acceptance of the early life as a necessary part of the narrative; all Alberic's successors follow him in describing the hero's upbringing. Alexandre de Paris uses it, as we shall see, as the starting point for the introduction of an important theme, and the L redactor explicitly emphasises the "enfances" as a necessary part of his narrative (L. vv. 351-353). As shown in the discussion of Alberic, the fact that, from the start, education should be part of this picture of "individual fulfilment" is highly significant. Even within the context of a feudal society where education is, in modern terms, knowledge- rather than child-centred, education is aimed at the development of an individual, and this fact is recognised by the epic and romance writers who incorporate it into their narrative. Alberic's romance is therefore a critical text for our topic.

Let us now examine the decasyllabic version, this too being fragmentary, preserved only as the start to two manuscripts of Alexandre de Paris' version, manuscripts A and B. These two versions are virtually identical - there is just one extra line in B:-

Li reis Felips quist a son fil doctors:
De tote Grece eslist les .vii. mellors.
Cil li aprenent des esteles les cors,
Del firmament les soveirains trestors,
Les .vii. planetes e les signes auçors
E les .vii. arz e toz les granz autors,
D'eschas, de tables, d'esparvers e d'ostors,
Parler ot dames corteisament d'amors,
De jugement surmonter jugeors,
Bastir agait por prendre robeors. (A6, vv. 48-57)

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13 Guy Raynaud de Lage, 'Les romans antiques et la représentation de l'antiquité', pp. 250 and 291.

14 R. Bezzola, *Les origines et la formation de la littérature courtoise en occident*, vol 2, part 2, p. 520.

15 Friedrich Wolfzettel, 'Zur Stellung und Bedeutung der 'Enfances' in der altfranzösischen Epik'. Quotations taken from the abstract of Part I by Constance B. Hieatt, p. 53.

> Li rois Felipes quist a l'enfant dotors:
> De tot Greçe eslut le .vii. meillors.
> Cil li apristrent des estoiles les cors,
> Del firmament les sovrans raisons,
> Les set planetes e les signes auçors
> E les .vii. ars et toz les set auctors,
> De nigromançe e d'enchanter les flors,
> D'escas, de tables, d'esparviers e d'astors,
> Parler a dames cortoisement d'amors,
> De jugemant sormonter jugeors,
> Bastir arguait por prendre robeors.
>
> (B7, vv.63-73)[16]

Given that the decasyllabic romance is a direct descendant of Alberic, the description of the education has undergone some quite radical changes. To begin with, it is considerably shorter and many of the elements found in Alberic are omitted altogether - there are no languages, no emphasis on literacy, no music and the military and legal skills are reduced to the maintenance of law and order. The *ADéca* poet does however retain the mixture of lay and clerical education that Alberic had used, although his emphasis is different. Alexander learns the seven liberal arts (mentioned briefly), of which the most interesting for the poet is astronomy/astrology to which nearly one third of the stanza is devoted. The lay element is represented by a range of social skills absent in Alberic - chess, hunting and talking to ladies.

Such significant departures from the source suggest that this poet views his hero in a quite different light from his predecessor. To take first the emphasis on astronomy/astrology. Clearly it is the magical side of the subject that appeals to the poet: manuscript B's version specifically mentions magical arts as part of the hero's curriculum. The Alexander romances, perhaps more than any others, attempted to satisfy the taste of courtly society in the second half of the twelfth century for descriptions of amazing lands and wonderful people, and we see here this influencing the poet's description of the hero's education. The prominence of the fantastic in the Alexander romances has clearly coloured the *ADéca* poet's presentation of his hero's education, but this is balanced by elements drawn from the concrete reality of court life - sport, games and social intercourse. Alexander is brought up to be an accomplished courtier after the fashion of young men of the poet's time.

Let us now turn to one of the most interesting descriptions of the hero's education, which is found in an idiosyncratic version of the *RAlix (Amalgam)* represented by manuscript L. This manuscript actually contains two different descriptions of the hero's education at two different points in the story (stanzas 8 and

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16 The text of the decasyllabic romance is found in *The Medieval French 'Roman d'Alexandre'*, vol i.

16). Stanza 16 is copied virtually verbatim from Alexandre de Paris, whose work contaminated manuscript L, whereas stanza 8 would appear to be the L redactor's own original version of the hero's education. It is a much longer description, and the poet once again has placed an individual stamp upon an inherited theme:-

> Chiunc maistres mist li rois a cel enfant garder
> Des plus sages k'il pot en son regne trover.
> S'oïr volés les nons, je les sai bien nomer:
> Aristote, Clichon, Tholomer et Homer,
> Li quins Natanabus qui si sot enchanter.
> Icil le sorent bien aprendre et doctriner.
> Primes l'ont mis a letres, si sot latin parler,
> E por mius entroduire le firent desputer.
> Tous les set ars li firent aprendre et recorder,
> Et il aprist si bien k'ainc ne trova son per.
> Le bos et le riviere li refisent hanter,
> Tant ke de cest mestier ne li estut douter
> Maistre ne veneor ki l'en peüst gaber
> Pour bien prendre se beste, son chierf ou son sangler
> Des oisiaus sot maistrie de paistre et de garder
> Et de tenir bien sains et de faire müer,
> Et as boines rivieres savoit faire voler
> Faucons et espreviers et ses ostoirs geter,
> C'asés prendoit oisiaus quant s'aloit deporter;
> E che est uns deduis ke on doit mout amer.
> As eschés et as tables l'aprisent a jouer
> Tant c'assés sot d'un gu son compaingnon mater.
> A escremir l'aprisent, car mout s'en vaut pener;
> Bien sot son chief couvrir et maintenant jeter,
> Son compaignon ferir, blechier et encontrer.
> Aprés li ensaignerent ses armes a porter
> E ses chevaus a courre et bien esperonner
> Et a ferir d'espee, de lanche behourder;
> Et preudome a connoistre et chierir et amer
> Et le felon haïr et destruire et grever.
> Bien sot felon tolir et preudome doner,
> Et selonc lor maniere sot cascun honerer.
> D'estrumens li aprisent, tymbre et harpe a soner,
> De rote et de vïele et de gige canter,
> Et sons et lais et notes connoistre et atemprer,
> Et par le sien engien en tous tons cans trover.
> Natanabus ses maistres dont chi m'öés conter
> Cil li aprist par art son engien a doubler
> Et en pluiseurs manieres d'engien a tresgeter.
>
> (L8, vv. 185-223)[17]

This is the first version to name all Alexander's tutors as the Latin sources had done, although the poet reduces their number to five (*ADéca* says there were seven (unnamed), probably because it is a magical number). Aristotle was indeed tutor to the historical Alexander of Macedon and legend attributed the same role to Homer.

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17 The text of the L manuscript can be found in *The Medieval French 'Roman d'Alexandre'*, vol iii, pp. 101-154.

Natanabus is the magician from legend who, in the Greek, was reputed to have fathered Alexander on Olympias his mother, thereby adding to his importance as the son of a magician. The Old French poets firmly refute this element of the legend as lies, for in their eyes it does not add to the hero's stature to be illegitimate. However, the presence of the magician is retained, probably because he adds a fantastic element to the story, as in this text, where he teaches Alexander the arts of magic (vv. 221-223). Clichon and Tholomer are the leaders of the twelve peers whom Alexander has to serve and advise him, found in the decasyllabic romance and in Alexandre de Paris. The education begins with a token acknowledgement to intellectual training: learning to write, to speak Latin and learning the arts of dialectical debate so popular in the schools at the time - an interesting touch. As one might expect from a hero, Alexander excels in all these areas. It is, however, the non-academic skills which clearly interest the poet more and to which he devotes the far greater part of his narrative. We have a very detailed picture of a young man being taken out into the countryside, to wood and river and there learning how to pursue every kind of quarry until his skill rivals that of the professionals. Like any young nobleman he learns how to care for and breed all manner of hawks, birds highly prized by their owners. In fact, one of the earliest works on what might be called veterinary science, *De arte venandi cum avibus,* attributed to the German Emperor Frederick II, deals in detail with every aspect of the health, feeding, training and breeding of hunting birds.[18] It is also worth remarking, in the context of the stress upon young Alexander's hunting skills that, despite John of Salisbury's complaint in the *Policraticus* (Books I:5 and VI:5 for example) that society had "gone soft" and spent all its time in the idle pursuit of hunting, the pursuit of game did have a useful byproduct in that it helped to keep the marksman's skills and physical fitness well honed.[19]

Young Alexander's physical training and preparation as a warrior are also carefully described and it is here that the L poet seems to owe something to Alberic - note that the military training had been omitted from the *ADéca.*[20] The next part of Alexander's training consists in learning how to judge the character of those he meets, a very important skill in the eyes of vernacular romance and epic poets. The danger of trusting in base people is emphasised throughout the political literature of the period,

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18 This is described by Charles Homer Haskins, *Studies in the History of Medieval Science,* pp. 299-326.

19 Cf. Ernst Rust, *Die Erziehung des Ritters in der Altfranzözischen Epik,* pp. 27-8.

20 K. Sneyders de Vogel, 'L'Education d'Alexandre le Grand', p. 165 comments that the military skills have moved from the battlefield to the tourney.

and in the Alexander romances it receives its fullest treatment in the version by Alexandre de Paris.

L's original version of the hero's education is quite different from that borrowed from Alexandre de Paris (L16):-

> Si maistre si l'aprisent bel et courtoisement,
> Escritures li moustrent, li varlés i entent,
> Griu, ebriu et caldiu et latin ensement,
> Et toute la nature de la mer et du vent,
> Et le cours de estoiles et le compassement
> Ensi com le planete hurtent au firmament,
> Et le vie del monde et cank'il i apent,
> Et connoistre raison et savoir jugement
> Si comme restorique en fait demoustrement.
> Et en aprés li moustrent un bon castïement:
> Que ja felon cuivert n'ait entour lui souvent,
> Que maint home en sont mort et livré a tourment
> Par losenge et par murdre, par enpoisonement.
> Li maistre li ensaignent, Alixandres l'entent;
> Il en jure le ciel et canc'a lui apent
> Que ja nus sers par lui n'avra essaucement.
> (L16, vv. 325-40)

The two versions complement one another rather neatly; the emphasis in stanza 16 is on academic skills, which had been summarily described in four lines out of a total thirty-eight in stanza 8. In the borrowed version the languages are stressed once again (Greek, Hebrew, Chaldean = Syriac, Latin), as is astronomy. Skills of judgement and rhetoric appear, whereas the social skills are dismissed in a simple phrase - "life in society and all that pertains to it" (v. 331). The warning about treacherous types is also reiterated. The presence of two quite different descriptions of the hero's education at two different points in the story, one description being clearly copied from another source, makes one question the scribe/redactor's motive. He may simply have been careless. Stanza 16 is part of a section copied from Alexandre de Paris which describes a prophetic dream of the young Alexander. In Alexandre de Paris, the education of the hero comes at the end of this sequence and we may assume that the L redactor/scribe simply forgot to edit out the second education or to relocate it at stanza 8. However, since these two descriptions are so neatly complementary - L8 concentrates on the social and physical skills, L16 on the intellectual and judgemental - an argument can also plausibly be made for the second description being deliberately retained to balance the first, even although the result is rather clumsy.

The uncontaminated parts of manuscript L are the most idiosyncratic of the Old French Alexander stories. The L poet shows least adherence to his sources and reworks parts of the story for his own ends. For example, he takes two of Alexander's

most famous adventures - his descent to the bottom of the sea in a glass vessel and his flight into the sky in a cage powered by griffins - which are usually found much later in the romance during Alexander's mature life and adventures in the East, and retells them as youthful adventures. Instead of being examples of the amazing places Alexander went to visit, not only all over the earth, but above it and below in the depth of the sea, these adventures become the reckless exploits of a hot-headed youth who cares nothing for danger or for the anguish and difficulties his nearly getting himself killed cause to those responsible for looking after him.[21] Finally, his father has to intervene and impose a curfew on the boy to prevent further wild escapades.[22] These escapades suggest that the poet has his tongue slightly in his cheek when talking about his hero; his amazing adventures need not be taken naively as examples of greatness, but may also contain less flattering intimations of folly. Wilhelm Hertz, whose discussion of the role of Aristotle in the Alexander romances remains definitive, makes this perceptive comment on the writer's intentions in including these particular adventures in Alexander's childhood:-

> Dem Dichter schienen sie sich eher zu Aüsserungen tollkühnen Jugendübermuts und zu Vorzeichen künftiger Großtaten zu eignen, und daher verleibte er sie seiner Erzählung vom jungen Alexander ein. (p. 25)

Alexander's behaviour is seen as irresponsible by the L redactor, who makes it clear he should have heeded the advice of the wiser man, yet his destiny is to conquer the known world and his adventuring spirit should not be curbed by advice that is based on practical considerations. There is here a subtle undermining of the supremacy both of Aristotle and of Alexander. There is a hint of realism behind L's descriptions of the fantastic and ideal that lends an ironical flavour to the narrative. This ironical flavour is not apparent in the description of the hero's education, but something of the realism is, especially in the descriptions of hunting and fighting, which we may suppose had an immediate appeal to the audience.

Alexandre de Paris' version creates a rather different effect:-

> Aritotes d'Athenes l'aprist honestement;
> Celui manda Phelippes trestout premierement.
> Il li moustre escripture, et li vaslés l'entent,
> Grieu, ebrieu et caldieu et latin ensement
> Et toute la nature de la mer et du vent

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21 It is axiomatic to medieval writers that youth is "sans mesure". Such youthful behaviour leads, in literary texts, to the double effect of comedy and heroism. See Philippe Ménard, *Le rire et le sourire dans le roman courtois en France au moyen âge*, p. 149.

22 Wilhelm Hertz, 'Aristoteles in den Alexanderdichtungen des Mittelalters', p. 25 notes this relocation of these adventures and their contribution to the poet's view of his hero.

> Et le cours des estoiles et le compassement
> Et si com li planete hurtent au firmament
> Et la vie du siecle et quanqu'a lui apent
> Et connoistre reison et savoir jugement,
> Si comme rethorique en fet devisement;
> Et en aprés li moustre un bon chastïement,
> Que ja serf de put ere n'et entour lui souvent,
> Car maint home en sont mort et livré a torment,
> Par losenge, par murtre, par enpoisonnement.
> Li mestres li enseigne et li varlés aprent;
> Il en jure le ciel et quanqu'a lui apent
> Que ja nus sers par lui n'avra essaucement.
> (Stanza 15 vv. 333-349)[23]

This poet concentrates on the training of the intellect and judgement, with a token gesture towards social skills and no description at all of military skills. As in Alberic, the hero learns four languages, but the four names - Greek, Hebrew, Syriac and Latin - are specified less to give the flavour of an exotic world beyond the experience of the audience, than because they are the languages of the Bible. Indeed, a century later in 1302 the Council of Vienne recommended the Christian church to learn precisely these languages in order to be equipped for its evangelising task.[24] Equally, the mention of astronomy, when compared with its counterpart in the decasyllabic romance, is divested of its magical, mysterious potential and becomes simply an academic subject. Gone too is any idea of the hero being taught the magical arts.

Such fripperies would detract from the central theme of Alexander's education, which is not to put your trust in the wrong kind of people. The *Roman d'Alexandre* attributes the murder of Alexander to two close counsellors who were of base origin, but had been promoted in the King's favour for their part in his victorious conquests. These are precisely the sort of people one should never trust and never promote, according to both literary and non-literary texts. Alexandre de Paris makes his romance, at least partly, into a kind of *exemplum* to illustrate this truth, and the flavour of the work is often correspondingly moral. The warning not to trust these "serfs de put ere" recurs as a leitmotif throughout the romance, after making its first appearance here in the description of the hero's education.

These words come, of course, from the mouth of Aristotle, whose role as Alexander's tutor is more significant in this version than in earlier ones. From a comparison with Lamprecht, Aristotle would appear to have featured in Alberic, and if this is indeed the case, then Aristotle is the only master mentioned by name from the

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23 The text of Alexandre de Paris' romance is found in *The Medieval French 'Roman d'Alexandre'*, vol. ii.

24 Bernhard Bischoff, 'The Study of Foreign Languages in the Middle Ages', p. 224.

Latin sources. No mention is made of any specifically named tutors in the *ADéca*, although Aristotle does feature in the later narratives of A and B, giving advice to Alexander at the start of Branch III and lamenting Alexander's death in Branch IV. L mentions Aristotle as the principal of Alexander's tutors, who tries to dissuade him from his rash adventuring projects without success.

The education Alexander receives in Alexandre de Paris' version is intended to have some bearing on his future life, and important subjects are broached at this critical period in the hero's life. As the romance develops, Aristotle continues to be a loved and respected advisor to the King and frequent remarks are made upon his learning and suitability as an advisor (eg v. 1764, vv. 3825-6). He is thus able, for example, to prevent Alexander sacking Athens (Branch I, stanza 82), or to persuade him to elect his twelve peers (Branch I, stanza 31) . Alexandre de Paris draws on the moral tradition of the Middle Ages and antiquity in which the relationship of Alexander and Aristotle, a prince in close reliance upon a learned man, was held up as an example. Since Alexander serves as an exemplum in both the romance tradition and in writings on government, there will inevitably be some cross-fertilisation; Alexandre de Paris, more than any of his predecessors, has a noticeable debt to the latter.

However, the figure of Aristotle is not entirely consistently portrayed by Alexandre de Paris. In Branch IV, as the court laments the death of Alexander, Aristotle is portrayed in a less flattering light:-

> .... li bons Aristotes, li mieudres des escris
> S'apoia devant aus desous un arc vautis.
> Bien fu de philosophe ses fais et ses abis,
> Ne li chaloit de soi, tous estoit enhermis:
> Barbë ot longe et lee et le poil retortis
> Et le chief deslavé et velus les sorcis;
> De pain et d'eaue vit, ne quiert autres pertris;
> Onques n'issi d'Ataines uns seus clers si soutis.
> (vv. 1018-1025)

He is unkempt and ascetic, and although his physical appearance is linked to his station as a philosopher, caring more for learning than courtly concerns, his ugliness contrasts sharply with the refinement of an imperial court. Aristotle shared the same fate as Virgil in the Middle Ages, of acquiring a dual reputation, one favourable, the other satirical. In Aristotle's case the unfavourable view is, from an early date, linked into the antifeminist tradition in the form of an anecdote of his being ridden by a woman.[25]

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25 This was a popular subject for iconography throughout the Middle Ages. See the article 'Réception et diffusion iconographique du conte d' *Aristote et Phillis* en Europe depuis le moyen âge' by Pietro Marsilli.

Le Lai d'Aristote of Henri d'Andeli, written in the early thirteenth century, is based on this anecdote. Aristotle's usual position as the established advisor of Alexander, brooking no disobedience and immune to the blandishments of the fairer sex, is overturned in this burlesque tale, and he is reduced to the humiliating state of being ridden round the orchard by the lady he had sought to evict from the king's affections. Confronted by a desirable young woman, he is suddenly aware that his learning is worth nothing, for the call of nature is stronger. Although Aristotle uses the episode as an opportunity to deliver a homily to the king on the inherent corruption of woman, he emerges from the *Lai* as a ridiculous figure rather than a wise philosopher.

Clearly, Alexandre de Paris regards the education of the hero as an important part of his narrative, not merely as part of the stock-in-trade for describing the early life of a character. The warning about trusting *felons* is repeated by Aristotle at each appearance in the story and forms a thread throughout the romance, bringing a degree of cohesion to the otherwise somewhat disparate elements of the Alexander material. Alexandre de Paris uses an element drawn from his hero's education to create a general narrative structure into which the life and adventures of the hero can be fitted.

Our final version, Thomas of Kent's *Roman de Toute Chevalerie*, is a less close relative of the family of romances we have been studying. It is an Anglo-Norman version of the Alexander legend, probably dating from the last quarter of the twelfth century, and thought to have remained independent from the continental versions until the thirteenth century, when it was inflated with large parts of the work of Alexandre de Paris. Accordingly, the description of the hero's education does not bear a particularly close resemblance to any of our previous poets', although it parallels Alberic's in its wide range of subjects.

La mere fist l'enfant mult nettement norir:
Itant crust en oyt aunz qe bien pot roy servir.
Dis mestres ly bayllent, a qui deit obeir,
Dont li uns l'aprent sey chaucer et vestir,
Ly autre a parler e cum se deit contenir,
E li autre a juer, chevaucher e eskirmir
E a porter armes e a cheval seir,
Poyndre e ateindre e a trere e ferir.
Li set ly apernent les set arz retenir,
Cum il deit aposer e argumenz falir,
Chanter par musique et de toz mals garir,
E cum deit parler a trestoz a pleisir,
E longur e hautur mesurer par avir.
Assez aprent l'enfes si a chef put venir;
D'estre yvre ou jolifs n'ot il point de leisir;

A peine put il manger, beivere ou dormir.
(Stanza 19, 427-442)[26]

This is the only version of the hero's young life in which the mother is mentioned - in all other cases it is the father who finds the nurses for his son and engages masters. This role accorded to the mother would appear more natural, since most writers on childcare in this period suggest that a child should remain in the care of his mother and other women until he is seven, when a boy is then old enough to pass into the man's world and begin his training there. The young boy is taught to dress apprpriately and to talk and behave in the correct manner, features which are unique to Thomas. The poet then goes on to describe the more advanced skills learned by the hero. These are based around the mixture of clerical and lay education seen in Alberic. Indeed, with Alberic's rather eclectic range of subjects being repeated by Thomas, it is tempting to suggest some influence of the former on the latter, although there are not sufficiently clear parallels to prove this closer link between the continental and insular versions. The greatest emphasis in Thomas's description is on the different fighting manoeuvres learned, described with the same attention to detail we find in L.

One suspects that Thomas may realise the picture he has presented is unrealistic in terms of the breadth of Alexander's education, for there is an ironical note in the closing lines of the stanza, where he tells us that the poor child was so busy learning all he had to learn that he hardly had time to eat, sleep or drink, leave alone be at leisure. Of course, an equally good case could be made for these lines being a kind of eulogy on just how hard the young boy had to work to learn his lessons, but in either case, this is the only Alexander romance that suggests that effort on the part of the learner is a necessary part of education. The other poets have rather suggested that the acquisition of learning is an automatic response to the masters' teaching.

We have noted that the establishment of the narration of a hero's (and later of a heroine's) education in romance and epic may convincingly be linked to a growing interest in and preoccupation with matters pertaining to the individual. We can see something of this in the *Roman d'Alexandre* by looking at the broad developments occuring across the timespan of the different versions. The *ADéca* is markedly different from Alberic in the introduction of recognisably social, courtly skills into the hero's education. Both here, and also in L, the poets are interested in the skills an individual needs to function in an increasingly sophisticated world. The process by which these skills are learned is obviously of interest to the L poet in particular, in view

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26 *The Anglo-Norman 'Alexander' ('Le Roman de Toute Chevalerie') by Thomas of Kent*, ed. Brian Foster with the assistance of Ian Short.

of the degree of realism he introduces. By the time we reach Thomas of Kent, the presentation is noticeably child-conscious. There is an increase in realistic elements over the span from early to later versions, corresponding to the growing interest in the individual and his development, as the relatively mundane skills of learning taste in clothes and the proper way to talk and conduct oneself come to be considered fit elements to be included in a story.

We can thus begin to form an idea of the possibilities open to the narrative poet for his own variation upon a given theme, even within the confines of a single story. The idea of describing the hero's education is found by Alberic in his classical predecessors, and he incorporates it into his own romance. He brings to it, however, elements of his own time and culture, and the more conscious factors of his own view of his hero and the character he wishes to portray, fitting the description of the education to his admirable hero.

Alberic's romance forms the vernacular model for later treatments of the story of Alexander and he passes on the education theme, upon which other poets play their own variations. In marked contrast to the breadth and intellectual content found in Alberic, the *ADéca* lays great stress on social skills and this can, with some certainty, be attributed to a growing awareness of, and interest in, social and leisure pursuits in later twelfth century society. Equally, taking the comparison in reverse, there is no mention of hunting or game-playing in Alberic, although these elements occur in every later version. Therefore one may postulate that between Alberic and the *ADéca* there comes the change in climate that finds these subjects worthy of inclusion.

At the later end of our period, Thomas of Kent and Alexandre de Paris present the education of the hero in quite different ways again. Thomas is noticeably concerned with stressing the demands made by education on the young prince. We can argue that he illustrates the greatness of his hero in terms of the effort he expended to acquire an excellent education. This version brings the hero as an individual to the fore in the description of the education, which offers us the child's as well as his masters' perspective on the process.

These versions follow a similar pattern, in that they all use the description of the hero's education as part of their delineation of his character. The way in which they view their hero will dictate the way they present his education; the factors governing their view of their hero will, of course, be varied, stemming both from individual tastes and from trends and factors in the society of their time. This approach to the hero's education agrees with the view found in medieval romance that education, or nurture, is designed rather to express what nature intends for a person, than to alter his destiny.

Thus, the hero will be educated in accordance with what the poet considers nature intends that hero to be. Education must form part of the initial portrayal of his character.

Once education has performed this task of expressing the nature of a character, it has no further importance, and may not be referred to again. In Thomas of Kent's work, despite the careful description of the hero's education, the skills learned are not referred to later in the narrative. In manuscripts A, B, and L, the only references later in the narrative to any learned skills are to Alexander's abilities as a linguist.[27] Languages are, in fact, never mentioned in the hero's education in A, B or L8. It appears, therefore, that the education is described less to endow the hero with particular skills, than to create a particular image of him.

The exception to this pattern is Alexandre de Paris, who uses education as a structuring theme. He introduces Aristotle's advice on counsellors in the hero's formal education, thereby reshaping the content noticeably. The maxim is repeated each time Aristotle appears in the narrative, until the moment when Alexander is finally murdered by his treacherous advisors. Alexandre de Paris thus shows that education can be used as a larger narrative element, as part of the conception of the work itself, as well as of the conception of a character within the work. This larger, thematic use of education is unusual; more will be said on this point as we find other examples in the coming sections, and is most notably in our final section on *Le Conte du Graal.*

27 See reference to this in Part II p. 71

Section 2

"Nature signorist desor Noreture"[1] Implications and Applications of a Medieval Axiom

> Medieval society does see the future adult in the child, and all educational action must be directed accordingly. There is no attempt to discover the "natural" gifts or tendencies of the child, no attempt to help him or her realize a potentiality, for the child is born with his or her future role. ..... He or she is trained into adulthood rather than educated. The child's *nature* ... is determined by biological, spiritual and social standards that differ according to sex and social class, never according to individuals. These standards have been predetermined by society, and education appears to be a static rather than a growing process. The goal is neither happiness nor self-fulfilment; it is the full adaptation to social environment. ..... *Noureture* functions as a culture medium for the perpetuation of an unchangeable nature.".[2]

Thus one critic has summed up the implications for descriptions of education of the medieval axiom, to which we have referred frequently in our previous discussions, that nature is mightier than nurture. Indeed, this belief forms part of the largely unconscious preconceptions that medieval authors bring to their work. We have seen that this maxim inevitably colours the literary representation of education, that the range of influence exercised by a character's education in a narrative is subject to and circumscribed by the demands of his nature.

We have also noted more conscious applications of the nature/nurture relationship, for example in *Dolopathos* or *Le Conte du Graal*, where poets are able to see beyond a truism to its possible outworking in practice, to understand the balance between aptitude and instruction in the education process.[3] We have also made reference to the *Lai d'Aristote*, an example of a work which exploits our axiom for literary ends in its burlesque treatment of the learned man confronted by the perennial threat of morally disruptive female nature. It is these more conscious exploitations for literary effect that particularly interest us as we examine the role education plays in the medieval narrative.

The first effect we shall examine derives from a phenomenon we noted in Part II, namely the remarkable lack of descriptions of training in warrior skills for the heroes

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1 *Le Roman de Silence*, vv. 2423-2424

2 Doris Desclais Berkvam 'Nature and Noreture: A Notion of Medieval Childhood and Education', pp. 176-177.

3 See further discussion on *Le Conte du Graal* in Section 5 of this Part.

of the *chansons de geste*, despite the importance of these skills to their role in such works. In the earlier texts especially, the hero's education is unlikely to be described, although under the influence of romance some social education is seen in later epics. Even these, however, lay no particular stress on learning warrior skills. The most important characteristic of the epic warrior is his bold, heroic nature, unfettered by any considerations of education.

The true mettle of this nature can thus be seen to particular effect in the very young hero, who has not had the opportunity for extensive training and experience, but nonetheless performs splendid martial feats. The young hero becomes an increasingly popular figure in the *chansons de geste*, probably because, amongst other reasons,[4] heroic bravery can be shown in him in a very pure form.

The Guillaume d'Orange cycle provides two good examples of the young epic hero acting with a bravery beyond his years. In the *Chanson de Guillaume* we meet the young Guiot, Guillaume's nephew.[5] Unlike his brothers Vivien and Guischard, he is too young to go out to battle against the Saracens and is left behind with his aunt, Guiborc. However, this does not suit the young man's temper and he eventually cajoles Guiborc into letting him escape to join his uncle. When he arrives on the battlefield, his appearance, that of a young lad, is mocked by Guillaume:-

> ...."Qui est cel petit armé
> Sur cel cheval qui entre vus vei ester?
> Bosoing out de homes qui ça l'ad amené!"
> (vv. 1616-1618)

Recognising Gui, he then reproaches Guiborc for her lax guardianship, until Gui explains that Guiborc is not to blame. His intervention is described by the poet as wise - "dunc respunt que senez" (v. 1626) - and approved by Guillaume - "Par ma fei, nes, sagement as parlé" (v. 1636). This is followed by Guillaume's famous epigram for his young nephew: "Cors as d'enfant e reisun as de ber". Gui's nature as a valiant warrior emerges and dominates over his lack of education and age. It is part of his natural inheritance, as Guillaume later says: "Ben deis chevaler estre,/Si fut tis pere e tis altres ancestre" (vv. 1670-1671). Gui is still an *enfant*, not having reached that stage of adulthood that marks the completion of education, yet he acts as one who is *senez* and *sage*, words used frequently in Old French to denote one who is well trained or

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4 The significance of the rise in popularity is described by Friedrich Wolfzettel, 'Zur Stellung und Bedeutung der *Enfances* in der altfranzözischen Epik'.

5 *La Chanson de Guillaume*, ed. Duncan McMillan.

educated.[6] Although no education has been described for Gui, he acts as if he had had the benefit of it, namely in full accordance with the dictates of his nature.

Since Gui's youth has been emphasised at the moment of his arrival on the battlefield, the subsequent descriptions of his acts of valour against the Saracens take on extra stature. Gui, single-handed, turns an enemy army of 20,000 to flight, the enemy seeing in him a reincarnation of his fearsome brother Vivien (*laisses* CXXI, CXXII).

When the battle turns in the Saracens' favour, however, Gui is unable to withstand the enemy any longer and a new, tragic register enters the narrative. His horse is killed beneath him, he falls to the ground and is seized, bound and taken prisoner by the Saracens. Here again his youth is emphasised - v. 2077 reads : "Si unt *l'enfant* pris e estreit lïez" (emphasis mine). This cruel fate is happening to a mere child, and Guillaume responds to this with great anger, turning on the enemy, killing fifteen and wounding sixteen, an expression of his frustration at being able to do nothing to help his nephew. He expresses this again later to Guiborc, telling of his defeat. In answer to her question about Gui, he has to admit:-

"Idunc le pristrent li Sarazin felun,
Si lle lierent e les piez e les poinz;
Mes oilz veanz le mistrent en un dromunz.
Par mei n'out unques aïe ne socurs."
(vv. 2366-2369)

The youth of Gui underlines the tragedy of his fate in this *chanson de geste*, which is characterised in part by its stark and grim presentation.

Gui's brother Vivien shows a similar early precociousness. When he is knighted by Guillaume, he makes his famous pledge, recorded in *La Chevalerie Vivien*:-

"....... ne fuirai ja mais en mon aei
Por Sarrasin, por Tur ne por Escler,
....
Ja tant n'estroi en bataille apresseis."
(vv. 17-21)[7]

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6 We note too, by contrast, that those who behave foolishly, whilst being in other respects adults, are accused of childishness. Raoul de Cambrai, for example, who carries his thirst for vengeance to unconscionable lengths, is criticised by the poet: "Mais d'une chose le [Raoul] taign je a effant/Qe vers son oncle faussa de convenant" (*Raoul de Cambrai* vv. 2664-2665).

7 *La Chevalerie Vivien*, ed. A-L. Terracher.

His nature, as a member of the family of Guillaume and Aymeri de Narbonne is shown in this brave declaration, but also another aspect of youthful nature, his folly and lack of *mesure*.[8] Guillaume reproaches Vivien:-

"Niés .... molt petit durerés
Se maintenir toudis cest veu volés.
Ja n'est il hons, tant soit ne pros ne ber
N'estuet foïr a quant il est enpressés,
Por tant qu'il soit en bataille chanpeil,
S'il ne se velt laissier tot descoper
Beaus niés, cist vos ne fait mie a garder;
Vos estes jones, laissiés tels foletés."

(vv. 22-29)

In the following *laisse* this vow is repeated and as Vivien again departs on his conquests, he is referred to once more as *li enfes* (v. 50), reminding us that he is still not fully adult.

Vivien is perhaps the most tragic figure in the Old French epics, meeting death at an early age at the hands of the Saracen opponents from whom, in accordance with his vow, he never flees. His death receives a detailed treatment in *Aliscans*. In the battle at Aliscans, Vivien is mortally wounded and is found lying, nearly dead, by Guillaume:-

Viviën vit gesir desoz un guez
Desoz un arbre qui est foilliz ramez;
Parmi le cors ot .xv. plaies tes
De la menor morust uns amirez,
Tot ot les flans et les braz decopez.
De grant doleur est li quens tressüez;
Voit le Guillelmes, toz en est abosmez:
Le cheval broche come home forsenez,
Parmi les morz est cele part tornez
Devant l'enfant est li quens arestez;
Ne pot mot dire tant par fu adolez.

(vv. 770-780)[9]

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8 Philippe Ménard in *Le rire et le sourire dans le roman courtois en France au moyen âge (1150-1250)*, comments that it is axiomatic to the medieval mind that youth is by nature excessive, a truism poets use both for heroic and comic effect (p. 149). Jeanne Lods, 'Le Thème de l'enfance dans l'épopée française', also makes this point.

This compares also with the reckless folly of Alexander in manuscript L's version.

9 Quotation taken from *Aliscans*, ed. Claude Regnier.

Here again, Vivien is called *l'enfant*, his youth highlighted by the severity of his fifteen wounds, each of which would have been sufficient by itself to kill a grown man.[10] Guillaume laments Vivien's death, which he knows is not far away, for the following six *laisses* (XXIII-XXVIII). He is especially grieved at the loss of a young man he himself has brought, up and curses Vivien's doughty, noble nature that has brought him to this early death.

Both Gui and Vivien are untried when they take on their Saracen opponents. Although they know how to fight, we have never been told of their learning to do so.[11] Education is hardly important, what is significant is their warrior nature, and this is given full expression. Their extraordinary acts of bravery are heightened by the fact that these heroes are essentially inexperienced young men. Nature and nurture are contrasted and nature's dominance asserted, primarily to create a warrior of greater stature. However, the incongruity between the young men's fierce nature and their youth can also be used to create tragic effects which underline the grim and stark realities of war and death.

This incongruity is also used in *La Chanson de Guillaume* to create quite the opposite effect. The youth of the hero also leads to moments of comedy, which, although at times rather black, counterbalance the sombre atmosphere we described earlier.[12] The comedy arises from the incongruity of the warrior nature in such a young body.[13] This youthfulness interferes with the epic portrayal, for example, in the humour arising from Gui's physical size compared to that of his horse:

Petit est Gui e li cheval est grant;
N'est que pé e demi de sus les arçuns parant,
E sul trei deie suz le feltre brochant.
(vv. 1553-55)

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10 The use of the word *enfant* is found only in *Aliscans*, and is missing from the related G^2 part of the *Chanson de Guillaume*.

11 We noted in the *Roman d'Alexandre* that versions after Alberic de Pisançon cease to mention the warrior skills, concentrating rather on fencing and jousting.

12 Steven M. Taylor, 'Comic Incongruity in Medieval French *Enfances*' notes further examples of the comic exploitation of the nature/nurture mistmatch in both epic and romance texts, for a variety of ends. In the epic, he describes the comic effect of the youngsters' bravery in *La Chanson d'Aspremont* and, in *Aiol*, the unfortunate attempts of the hero to copy knightly arts he has not had the opportunity of learning in his exiled upbringing. These are similar to the comic effects created by the uncouth behaviour of the young Perceval, when he attempts to act upon his mother's parting advice to him. See also our discussion on *Octavian* below.

13 Taylor 'Comic Incongruity in Medieval French *Enfances*'

Later, he gives in to tears and frustration at not having any food, which makes him bitterly lament having left Guiborc's good home cooking.[14] He succumbs totally to this natural desire, and cannot go on unless he gets something to eat, a comic contrast to his complete lack of fear or distraction when fighting the enemy (*laisses* CXVI-CXVII). The comedy provides entertainment and relief, but also serves, in a quite different way from the starkness of the story, to emphasise further the epic bravery of the young Gui. He may be unable to bear the discomforts of hunger, but this does not mean he is distracted from the greater task of fighting the enemy. He may be small, but he bears his arms like a man of thirty (v. 1556).

These examples illustrate how a discrepancy between nature and nurture, in which nature nonetheless asserts itself true to form, allows the epic poet to enhance his narrative with the particular effects of tragedy or comedy. A different exploitation of nature's dominance is found in a number of examples, primarily in the romance genre, where a noble young man's non-noble education leads to a clash of social values.[15] We shall look in detail at two examples, the early *Guillaume d'Angleterre*,[16] sometimes attributed to Chrétien de Troyes,[17] and the later, lesser-known *Octavian*.[18]

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14 Jeanne Lods, 'Le Thème de l'enfance dans l'épopée française" cites other examples of youthful susceptibility to hunger in the epic (p. 59).

15 We described examples of this scenario in Part II, notably in *Fergus, Hervis de Metz* and *Les Enfances Vivien.*

Catherine Mary Jones, *The Noble Merchant: Problems of Genre and Lineage in 'Hervis de Mes'*, sees the contrast in *Hervis de Metz* as rather more didactic. Hervis is the son of a noble mother and bourgeois father and his attempts at merchanting are initially disastrous. However, this opposition in his make-up is resolved when, having ruined his family with his noble extravagance, he goes to sell the beautiful cloth embroidered by Biatrix, his wife, in order to raise some money. He has to play the merchant to do this, haggling to get a good price, but the proceeds are promptly given away to set to rights the poverty he has caused. This act suggests a synthesis between the noble and merchant, which may reflect the changing social perceptions and the rise of the townsman class in the early thirteenth century. However, as Hervis reverts more to the traditional epic hero in the second part of the *chanson*, protecting his city from the invading enemy, his warrior, noble nature regains the ascendency at the end of the work. This suggests a state of transition from the purely noble milieu of earlier works towards values and ideas taken from the rising town population which, as Jones suggests, is reflected in the tension between romance and epic elements in *Hervis de Metz*. Epic *matière* is treated with some of the techniques of romance, and romance elements intrude, such as the education of the hero, particularly relevant for our purposes, which is based on the social education commonly found in romances.

16 Chrétien: *Guillaume d'Angleterre*, ed. A.J. Holden.

17 A.J. Holden, whose edition we are following, reviews the problem in his introduction (pp. 31-35). His view is that, whilst the author of *Guillaume d'Angleterre* may well be one Chrétien, there is insufficient evidence to equate him with Chrétien de Troyes.

18 *Octavian*, ed. Karl Vollmüller.

The twin sons of Guillaume d'Angleterre are subjected to the hazards of birth in the wilds of the forest since their mother, Gratiene, elects to accompany her husband on his exile from society. Unexpected dangers and a series of accidents lead to the twins being separated from their parents and each other, but they eventually find themselves in the care of two merchants in the same town who bring them up as their own sons, and give them the names Marin and Lovel. Their early childhood is not described, but the narrative returns to them once they are about five years old, and the poet immediately stresses the nature of these boys which shines out and is far superior to their nurture:-

Quant ce vint au chief de .v. ans,
N'ot ou monde plus biaus anfans,
Plus cortois ne miaus anseigniez,
Qu'apris les ot et anseigniez
Bone nature, qui tant vaut,
Qui por norreture ne faut.
....
Se nature poïst cheingier,
Li anfant, qui sont ou doingier
As deus vileins qui les norrissent,
Tuit en vilenie porrissent.
Vilein fussient se norreture
Poïst contrebatre nature;
Mais nature de bone orine,
Les aprant si fort et doctrine
Qu'il ne deignent mauvaistié feire;
Ne pueuent aus vileins retreire
Par norreture que il aient;
A lor gentilliece retraient,
Si s'afaitent par aus meïsmes.
Par nature out toutes lor limes
Dom il se liment et escurent.
(vv. 1349-1389)

This lengthy excursus on nature and nurture is typical of the way poets tackle the subject, frequently suspending their narrative for a time to comment on the topic.[19] Here, the poet carefully establishes his premise that nature must emerge, despite nurture, before exemplifying it in the narrative, and his digression also enables him to stress that no taint is left upon the two boys as a result of their lowly upbringing, thus avoiding offence to the sensibilities of his presumably noble audience.

The one mitigating factor in the boys' milieu is the presence for each of his brother; although they are unaware of the closer tie between them, they are inseparable companions, and, of course, they look identical. In this circumstance their nature

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19 Such excursuses often consist of unoriginal quotations of received wisdom, possibly with little relevance to the narrative. They are a good example of the semi-autonomous unit education often forms in the narrative.

asserts itself and begins to shape their education, preserving them from too great a contact with undesirable companions, as even the merchants' friends begin to notice:-

"Des deus anfans est il mervoillie;
Que li uns a l'autre consoillie,
Et des autres anfans n'ont cure,
Espoir il leur vient de nature,
Qu'avuec aus nul n'an acompeignent."
Et je cuit bien qu'il les desdeignent,
(vv. 1419-1424)

Trouble, however, lurks ahead, for the merchants decide it is time the boys were put to learn some useful trade, in order to equip them for their future profession in their fathers' business. Here, of course, nature rebels, and each refuses to go into apprenticeship without the other. The poet evokes both pity and laughter in the ensuing disputes, pity for the boys faced with angry fathers, laughter at the *vilain* who shows his true colours and whose coarse nature reveals itself in his rage at being crossed. Fokiers, father of Marin, becomes so heated that he loses control and tells Marin where he found him, disowning him as an ungrateful son. Such harsh behaviour is condemned by the poet:-

Eur s'est li vileins esprovez,
Eur a sa nature provee
Eur avez la sausse trovee
Qui est feite d'escamonie.
Laingue de vilein soit honie!
Houniz soit ses cuers et sa boiche!
(vv. 1476-1481)

Doubtless this display of coarse temperament would be enjoyed and laughed at by a courtly audience. Lovel fares little better than his brother Marin for his father Goncelins beats him "com un gaignon" (v. 1500), "... et traïné/Et mont vilmant ot ramponé/Dou pis que dire li savoit" (vv. 1501-1503) and similarly disowns him:-

Li vileins tost li reproicha,
Come cil qui male boiche a
Et dit et feit au plus qu'il peut
Si com de nature li meut.
Toutevoie tant de bien fist,
Sanz ce que garde ne s'an prist
N'a bien feire n'i antandi,
Qu'il a l'anfant lou pan randi
Ou anvelopé lou trova.
Einsin bien et mal se prova:
Mau fist selonc s'antancion,
Qu'il n'i antandi se mau non,
Et bien, por ce qu'a l'anfant plot,
Ensin fist bien et si non sot.
(vv. 1507-1520)

The rudeness of Goncelins, characterised by his lack of *mesure* (see, for example, v. 1512), is contrasted with the meek and gracious reply of Lovel, who credits his adopted father with the highest qualities for his act in rescuing an abandoned child:-

> "L'an ne doit pas haïr son meistre
> Ne despire ne desdeignier,
> Si lou bat por lui anseignier.
> Vous qui m'avez tant feit de bien,
> De ce ne me devoiez rien
> S'il ne vos venist de freinchise;
> S'avez an moi tel poine mise
> Que vous, si con je sai or primes,
> M'avez randu a moi meïsmes."
> (vv. 1534-1542)

Lovel would betray his own nature if he were to reply otherwise. His gracious words are further highlighted by being reported in direct speech, as opposed to the indirect form used for Goncelins. However, Lovel's very graciousnesss highlights the other's coarseness and indeed is a reproof of it which Goncelins recognises a few verses later (vv 1564-66).

Determinism plays an important role here. Goncelins simply acts according to his nature; however, his act, viewed from the perspective of the primacy of Lovel's nature, has the beneficial effect of separating the two, who can never enjoy true harmony. The demands of nature are the driving force behind the plot at this point, for it is the inevitable effects of nature, in both merchant and boy, that lead to the revelation of the boy's origins and motivate him to embark upon the quest for his true destiny.

Lovel's speech here is particularly telling on the subject of education, and skilful use is also made by the poet of irony. Lovel comments that the pupil should never despise his tutor, no matter how unkind the latter's behaviour. Truly noble nature bends to discipline, for it is understood that training will be in accordance with the needs of that nature. Ironically, this is actually true of the non-noble education Lovel has received. In v. 1542, he says Goncelins has "restored him to himself", meaning both that the adoptive father has performed a worthy act in rescuing a child, but also that their now inevitable separation will restore Lovel to his true sphere in life. Lovel's noble nature recognises the debt due to the one who has taken such care over his upbringing; ironically this recognition only comes at the moment when the base nature of the merchant has revealed itself and he has beaten his son for his disobedience. Lovel's generosity of mind at once vindicates the good qualities of his adopted father - significantly he refers to his actions in caring for him as originating in *francise*, an eminently courtly quality. Yet at the moment he does this, he proves that the natures of the two are incompatible and they will have to separate.

Nature asserts her influence over education, separating the boys from their adoptive parents and thus preventing further mis-nurture. Her dominance is vindicated in the final outcome of the story as they leave their adopted parents and eventually find themselves in knightly service in Scotland, where they are reunited with their parents. In this text, therefore, the educational theme exercises a significant influence upon the narrative, forming a larger element than the relatively self-contained unit we have hitherto described. Although the poet's excursus on nature and nurture could simply remain as a digression or parenthesis, a pause to remind the audience what they know of these concepts, the idea is instead incorporated more fully into the narrative, which in turn exemplifies the comments made in the initial, theoretical exposition.

The lesser known romance *Octavian* (c. 1230-1260) similarly explores the early life of a young man caught between the conflicting values of two classes. Although the poem bears many resemblances to *Guillaume d'Angleterre*, this poet exploits inter-class suspicion rather differently, achieving effects of brilliant comedy that belie the relative obscurity and lack of critical attention given to this text.

It happens that one of Octavian's twin sons, Florent, is brought up by a *boriois* or *uilain*, Climent, along with his own natural son Gladouains. Climent had bought Florent when he was returning from a trip to Jerusalem, and it is generally believed that Florent is his child from some *liaison* on that journey. As was the case in *Guillaume d'Angleterre*, problems begin when the father starts to contemplate a useful profession for his sons. He sends Gladouains off to learn moneychanging and decides Florent should learn to become a butcher, to which the latter readily agrees. So Florent duly departs on the first morning with two of Climent's fine bulls and an axe to be taught his trade by the local butcher. However, en route, he meets a young squire with a hawk which he instantly covets and eventually obtains in exchange for the two bulls. He exhibits complete ignorance of commercial practice, or the relative worth of the respective halves of the bargain. All that motivates him is his desire for the noble prize. Of course, when he arrives home, Climent is furious, for he understands the transaction only in commercial terms and cares nothing for the noble value system in which the hawk is indeed an object to prize.

Thus the scene of Florent's homecoming illustrates the inevitable confrontation of the two cultures to which Florent is subject, one by nature, the other by upbringing. Their mutual incomprehensibility is humorously depicted by the author. All Florent can talk of is the bird's beauty, its feathers, it state of moult, and he is quite unmoved by Climent's anger:-

"Mauues garcon, mal eures!
Estes uos rois ne dammoiseaus,
Por acheter si fais oiseaus?
Ce doient porter cheualiers
Et damoiseaus et escuiers.
Ne feroi ore autre semblant,
Por mes bues ai le cuer dolent."
"Pere", dist Florens, "esgardes
Com est ore bien emplumes
Com ses plumes li sieent bien." (vv. 1115-24)

Climent, however, can only see the bird in terms of what it can provide on the economic front, and of this he is suitably scathing:-

"Voire, biax fieuz, gardes le bien,
Tot riche encore uos fera;
Or manges ce qu'il uos donra."
(vv. 1125-1127)

and to his own son Gladouains he confides:-

"De mes .ii. bues a fait meschief
Dones les a por un escoufle,
La char ne uaut pas une mufle."
(vv. 1139-1141)

This speech would be particularly amusing to an audience familiar with the courtly pursuit of falconry for, not only does Climent use the wrong word to name the bird - *un escoufle* is a wild bird of prey, not a trained falcon - but he even suggests eating it!

However, this unfortunate experience with the hawk is not enough to teach Florent to mend his ways, for the next day, sent out with Gladouains to try his hand at moneychanging, he fares no better. Gladouains is instructed to keep an eye on him and to try to teach him. Florent willingly sets off after Gladouains, bringing Climent's money as he is asked. His agreement to the plan is similar to his agreement to the butcher scheme of the day before; his rebellion against the merchant's standards and reversion to his own is entirely unconscious, emphasising the strength of nature which must assert itself. This time Florent meets a merchant leading a fine palfrey and, once again, he gives Climent's money in exchange for this fine, knightly prize. He even pays the merchant ten *livres* more for the horse than was asked, another sign of his true nature, characterised by this courtly generosity. The scene is comically treated, for both the merchant and Florent, fearing that their luck is too good to be true, hurry away as quickly as possible, casting anxious glances behind them to make sure that the other party is not coming back to call the deal off. Neither understands the other's value system, judging him rather by his own standards and thus completely misunderstanding him.

When Florent returns home this time, Climent has an even more severe fright than the first time; when he hears what has happened to all his money, he promptly passes out. On recovering, he would have beaten his son, were it not for his wife's intervention. The mood of the scene now changes and the comedy gives rise to serious consideration; Climent's wife recognises that it is Florent's nature that causes him to behave as he does and, furthermore, that nature is one he cannot have inherited from the *uilain* Climent. Questions of the boy's origins are thus inevitably raised:-

> "Sire, laisses l'enfant ester!
> D'aucune franchise li uient,
> Ains, ie quit, ne uos apartient.
> Nature, espoir, li fait entendre
> A ce que il deuroit aprendre." (vv. 1233-1237)

As in *Guillaume d'Angleterre,* recognition comes from the crisis provoked by the boy's emergent nature; it asserts itself in his behaviour, demanding recognition and acknowledgement, so that an explanation of the hero's true origins must follow. And indeed Climent now tells Florent he is the son of the emperor of Rome, Octavian. This is thus the beginning of a new chain of events by which Florent will find his way back to his proper sphere and be reunited with his own family. Again, as in *Guillaume d'Angleterre,* Florent accepts his father's chastisement meekly, as being his right if he chooses to exercise it. He does not, above all, respond in kind, descending to the level of the *uilain.*

The tempo of the scene changes once more as it closes, and the desire to exploit the comic *mésalliance* of the noble and *uilain* reasserts itself. At this moment of revelation, Gladouain enters, having waited all day, in some irritation, for Florent to appear at the moneychangers' He is not in the least impressed by what Florent has done with the money and, moreover, is rather afraid of the horse:-

> "Mau soit de l'eure qu'il fu nies,
> Qui ceens a mene tel beste.
> Quant ie le uoi drecier la teste
> Et uers lui me ueil aprochier,
> Me semble qu'il me ueult mangier."
> (vv. 1262-1266)

We thus laugh both at the nobleman, making blunders in the world of the *uilain,* and at the young bourgeois, scornful and fearful of the strange elements of the nobleman's world that obtrude into his own. Whereas in the case of *Guillaume d'Angleterre,* one may discern a note of scorn directed towards the non-noble classes, the treatment in *Octavian* is more egalitarian; we laugh neither at one class, nor at the other, rather at the inability of either to assimilate the other, at the conflict of natures and cultures.

In *Octavian* and *Guillaume d'Angleterre*, the primary function of nature lies in determining social class. Whereas *Guillaume d'Angleterre* draws a more moral conclusion by showing the superior behaviour of the twins in face of the rage of the *vilain*, *Octavian* creates a more lighthearted and comic effect. In both texts, however, incompatibility between nature and nurture leads to an inevitable crisis which forms an important turning point in the story, and thus accords questions of education a significant role in the narrative.

Our final text, Heldris de Cornualle's *Roman de Silence*,[20] gives education an even more prominent role, for the central theme of the work is the question of education in the context of a conflict between nature and nurture. The heroine, Silence is a young girl brought up as a boy by her parents who need a male heir in order to secure their rights to their estates. The female nature is thus subjected to male, and therefore inappropriate, education. Heldris explores the dilemma in which Silence is thus placed in detail, and the romance thus provides one of the most complex and comprehensive analyses of the relationship between nature and nurture.

Silence's dilemma is epitomised by her name, the name, of course, being an important and significant attribute in the Middle Ages, expressing the nature of its possessor. Her father decides upon the name "Silence" for two reasons. Firstly, it expresses the silence that must be maintained about his daughter's true nature:-

"Sel faisons apieler Scilense
El non de Sainte Paciensce,
Por cho que silensce tolt anse.
Que Jhesus Cris par sa poissance
Le nos doinst celer et taisir,
Ensi com lui est a plaizir!"
(vv. 2067-2072)

Secondly, it can be given a masculine or feminine ending in its Latin form and can therefore be modified to suit the possible future revelation of her sex.

"Il iert només Scilenscius;
Et s'il avient par aventure
Al descovrir de sa nature
Nos muerons cest -us en -a,
S'avra a non Scilencia.
Se non li tolons dont cest -us
Nos li donrons natural us,
Car cis -us est contre nature,
Mais l'altres seroit par nature."
(vv. 2074-2082)

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20 Heldris de Cornuälle, *Le Roman de Silence*, ed. Lewis Thorpe.

Heldris puns on the Old French word "us", meaning usage or custom, or, as here, training or education, and on the Latin suffix "-us" denoting a masculine form. For Silence education means masculinity; her name, her identity is changed to the masculine form by means of these two letters. Silence's very name, therefore, sums up the lie which she has to live. This lie provokes a crisis when she reaches the age of twelve. Her femininity is reawakened and Nature chastises her for submitting to this inappropriate upbringing and for spoiling the beautiful creation she designed her to be.

> "Tol toi de chi! cho dist Nature.
> ....
> Cho violt de nature li us.
> Tu nen es pas Scilentius! -
> Et cil respont: Tel n'oï onques!
> Silencius! qui sui jo donques?
> Silencius ai non, jo cui,
> U jo sui altres que ne fui.
> Mais cho sai jo bien, par ma destre,
> Que jo ne puis pas altres estre!
> Donques sui jo Scilentius,
> Cho m'est avis, u jo sui nus."
> Dont se porpense en lui meïsme
> Que Nature li fait sofime:
> Par cho que l'-us est encontre us
> N'a pas a non Scilentius. (vv. 2527-2542)

Silence has been brought up to identify with her adopted masculine self and when this is undermined by stirrings from her true nature, the effect is profound. It is significant that this crisis occurs at the age it does, when Silence is entering adolescence and questions of sexuality become important. Similarly, in *Guillaume d'Angleterre* and *Octavian* the crisis occurs at a turning point in the heroes' lives, when a new phase is entered. Suddenly Silence finds she no longer knows who or what she is (v. 2532). Heldris uses a mismatch between nature and nurture to explore the identity of his heroine in greater depth, and he creates a convincing and sympathetic picture of a girl who is forced to question the fundamental concepts she has had about herself all he life. She cannot be what she truly is, yet the life she lives is a lie. She is only able to resolve the dilemma by following the dictates of Raison which point out that she has begun to destroy her feminine nature and her only course of survival lies in continuing the pretence she has lived thus far.

Whilst Heldris's exploration of the gender dimension of nature is potentially the most interesting aspect of the romance, he also explores the moral dimension in some detail. Whilst his essential position, like that of other poets, is that nature must prevail

over nurture,[21] there is scope within it for a more complex view of the relative balances between nature and nurture. Heldris recognises that Nature, whom he personifies throughout the romance, does not always create an entirely pure being, and may allow an element of baseness to appear in an otherwise noble person, and vice versa (vv. 1795-1860). Equally, the effects of nurture are not always cut and dried. Whereas good education may inculcate good values and behaviour, and give the appearance of essential nobility, the base nature remains unchanged and will inevitably reveal its true colours. The effects of bad education are, however, more serious and may corrupt natural designs:-

> Car gentils cuers, s'il acostume
> La malvaistié et l'amertume,
> Se il s'enprent a enivrer
> Envis s'en puet si delivrer
> Com li malvais del bien retraire.
>
> (vv. 2329-2333)

This passage is taken from one of several long disquisitions on the subject of nature and nurture in which Heldris indulges in the romance.[22] Although the ideas he expresses are not always linked back to the events of the plot, the corruption of bad education does have some implications for Silence when she herself comes to consider what the effects of her male education will be on her female nature. She fears that her male lifestyle will have coarsened her physically (vv. 2646-7) and that she will never learn any of the skills appropriate for a woman (vv. 2831-72), so that she will not be able to function as a woman should she ever be able to reveal her true nature.

The other half of Heldris' view of nature and education is that a good education may be able to give the appearance of nobility to that which is naturally bad, or may be able to hide, temporarily, the true nature beneath it. This too is true of Silence. She receives a good training for a noble young boy and this enables her to appear to be indeed an excellent young man. Firstly we are told of the child Silence that she responded naturally and quickly to the moral upbringing given her by the seneschal and his wife who are responsible for her during her early life.

> L'enfant estruist et si l'enthice
> De bones mors de faire honor
> Et al gregnor et al menor.
> Moult bien le doctrine et ensegne.

---

21 .... nus hom tel pooir n'aroit
Qu'il peüst vaintre et engignier
Nature al loig, ne forlignier."

(vv. 2296-2298)

22 See, for example, vv. 1795 ff., 5153 ff. 6669 ff.

Li enfes pas ne la desdegne,
Ainz est moult liés de l'apresure
Car cho li fait bone nature.
Li enfes est de tel orine
Que li meïsmes se doctrine.
Ceste vos est sovent retraite
Que bons oisials par lui s'afaite.
Et cis par soi meïsme aprent
Moult plus qu'a son eé n'apent.
Enfans ot donc ens el palais
De la tiere et d'allors nais
E cis a cestui s'aparelle;
Mais nus a cest ne s'aparelle,
Ne de bonté, ne de science.
(vv. 2378-2395)

Silence's nature is made up not only of her sex, but also of her class, and her innate nobility responds to the noble education she receives. Since education is designed to realise features already naturally present, the true worth in Silence quickly reveals itself when exposed to this education.

Nurture is also able to mask Silence's sex in later life, because her noble nature again responds to the chivalric training she receives. She learns to excel as a knight and indeed enjoys these skills. It is at this time that Noreture enjoys the greatest ascendency in Silence's life, and Heldris does not condemn this:-

Dire peüst que Noreture
Puet moult ovrer contre Nature,
Quant ele aprent si et escole
A tel us feme tendre et mole.
....
Et savés que dist mes corages?
Que bien ait tols jors bons usages.
Car bons us tolt moult vilonie
Et fait mener cortoise vie.
Car bons us a qui bone vie uze
Et vilonie le refuse.
Mains home fait tols jors de s'onor
Que s'il eüst flairié honor
Et maintenue dé l'enfance
Ki n'avroit cure de viltance.
S'il fait le honte n'en puet nient
Qu'a cho qu'il a apris se tient.
Silences ne se repent rien
De son usage ains l'ainme bien.
(vv. 5153-5156, 5165-5178)

Heldris stresses here that good education cannot coexist with *vilonie*, emphasising the social and moral aspects of education, rather than its appropriateness for the gender of the recipient. Silence knows nothing of *vilonie*, but is truly *cortoise* and therefore can accept this part of her education happily.

Heldris thus explores the gender facet of nature, and the moral aspect, which he links also to considerations of class. Towards the end of the romance, he combines the moral and gender dimensions of nature in the contrast between a naturally good woman and a naturally wicked one, although neither is yet fully recognised for what she is, in Eufeme and Silence. Eufeme is the wife of Ebains, King of England, of whom Silence's parents are vassals, and to whose court Silence is sent to complete her (his) education. Eufeme is attracted to the good-looking Silence and propositions him. When rejected, she tries repeatedly to have Silence put to death, claiming he has tried to rape her. Although her husband at first tries to avoid taking such drastic action, he eventually comes to believe Eufeme's complaints and agrees to send Silence away on a quest to find and capture Merlin, a task they believe to be impossible in the light of a prophecy stating that Merlin will never be captured by a man.

God, however, intervenes to help Silence, sending an old man to tell her how to entrap Merlin. The nature of the trap is very significant; Merlin, Silence is told, lives like a wild man in the forest, eating herbs and roots. Silence should go to a place where Merlin has recently been coming to drink, and there she should prepare a delicious piece of roasted salt meat, which Merlin will be tempted to come and eat. She should also provide milk and honey and finally wine for him to drink. The wine will send him to sleep and Silence will have him prisoner. The success of the trick relies upon the fact that the smell of the meat will appeal to Merlin's dormant nature, that of a civilised man who enjoys such dishes, and will overcome the effects of nurture which have rendered him a wild man of the woods.

Nature and Noreture dispute vigorously as Merlin approaches Silence's delicious cooking, but it is Noreture this time who is beaten in the encounter and who sees her power diminish:-

> "Ahi fait Noreture. Ahi!
> Com cil sont malement trahi
> Ki noriscent la gent a faire
> Cho que lor nature est contraire.
> Quanque jo noris et labor
> Me tolt Nature a un sol jor.
>
> (vv. 5997-6002)

These word refer ostensibly to Noreture's loss of power over Merlin, but they refer equally to her loss of power over Silence. The story is now nearing its *dénouement* and Silence's true nature is about to be revealed. Merlin's magic enables him to see the true nature behind any situation, however contradictory appearances may be. Having been taken prisoner, he laughs repeatedly and the king insists on knowing what lies behind this apparently random behaviour. Merlin explains that he laughs to see a

peasant with new shoes for he knows that the peasant will die as soon as he gets home; he laughs at some poor mendiants outside the abbey for they do not realise that a treasure is buried beneath their feet; and he laughs at a priest burying a dead child, for the lamenting father does not realise that his wife has deceived him and that the child is the priest's and not his own.[23] Finally, Merlin laughs at himself, Silence, Ebains, Eufeme and a nun in the queen's retinue. He explains that the nun is in fact a man dressed in woman's clothing, a lover whom Eufeme has managed to secrete into her household. She has thus been deceiving Ebains. Silence, he reveals, is a woman beneath her man's clothing, and she has tricked the whole court and Merlin himself, for Merlin acknowledges the truth of the prophecy, quoted by Ebains, which declared the magician could only be captured by a woman.

Silence's true, feminine nature asserts itself finally in the romance for circumstances are unable to hide it forever. The hint that the battle between nature and nurture is won within her comes in the fact that she captures Merlin by redressing the balance of power between the two within him. When the moment of truth comes, and Silence's identity is about to be revealed, she fears that she has become a victim of her own trick, for the consequences of her deception of the court may be disastrous. However, her misdemeanours are nothing compared to those of the queen, who has lived with the appearance of goodness whilst deceiving her husband, and has kept a man in disguise in her household for that purpose. Silence, by contrast, is morally pure, as the king acknowledges:-

> "Silence, moult as esté prols,
> Bials chevaliers, vallans et buens;
> Mellor n'engendra rois ne cuens."
> (vv. 6579-6581)

Furthermore, her deception is provoked by an unjustly harsh ruling from this same king, that women should not have the right to inherit land, a ruling which Ebains now happily revokes. Nature is thus vindicated in Silence and gives her final seal of approval by removing all traces of the coarsening effects of nurture and restoring all the former beauty she had intended for Silence.

Heldris affirms the innate goodness of his heroine in the closing lines of the romance, laying aside considerations of her sex which are considered resolved in Nature's recreative work. Silence should be ranked more highly as a good woman than

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23 For comments on the links between this scene and the *Estoire Merlin*, see the Introduction to Thorpe's edition of *Silence*, pp. 28-32.

Eufeme blamed for being a wicked one, a balance Heldris stresses he himself has tried to maintain:-

> Maistre Heldris dis chi endroit
> C'on doit plus bone feme amer
> Que haïr malvaise u blasmer.
> Si mosterroie bien raison,
> Car feme a menor oquoison
> Por que ele ait le liu ne l'aise
> De l'estre bone que malvaise,
> S'ele ouevre bien contre nature.
> Bien mosterroie par droiture
> C'on doit faire gregnor plait
> Que de celi qui le mal fait.
> Se j'ai jehi blasmee Eufeme
> Ne s'en doit irier bone feme.
> Se j'ai Eufeme moult blasmee
> Jo ai Silence plus loëe.
> Ne s'en doit irier bone fame
> Ne sor li prendre altrui blasme
> Mais efforcier plus de bien faire.
> (vv. 6684-6701)

We find, therefore, that there are two aspects of Silence's nature that the poet explores. She receives an education that is inappropriate to her sex and Heldris uses this tension to explore, with considerable skill, the question of identity, the importance of gender to that identity and the effects of its loss. Secondly he contrasts an innately good nature with a wicked one, both of which are to some extent obscured, but are finally revealed in their true light. He opposes a good woman with a wicked one, and in this he is far less original, drawing on the common medieval ideas of the natural perverseness of woman, despite his disclaimer at the end to have considered Silence more than Eufeme.[24]

Heldris elects to explore a common *topos* in greater depth than do most other romancers,[25] combining the different facets of nature and their interaction with nurture with some skill. However, the prevailing, negative view of women's moral nature that undoubtedly does influence his presentation of Eufeme unfortunately overshadows the more interesting use made of the nature question as a means of lending psychological depth to the heroine earlier in the romance. One feels that the work falls slightly flat in Heldris's closing remarks, exorting women to show moral goodness like Silence. It appears that, even if he is able to offer an astute critique of his society's views on nature

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24 We do not follow Kathryn Brahney, 'When Silence was Golden: Female Personae in the *Roman de Silence*', in seeing the romance as an affirmation of the potential of woman.

25 The notable exception to this must be Chrétien, whose *Conte du Graal* we explore in Section 5.

and nurture, he is nonetheless unable to free himself from their influence upon his perception of humankind.

Despite any dissatisfaction we may feel at Heldris's priorities at the end of his work, we cannot deny his skill and perception in exploring the relationship between nature and nurture. He takes a commonplace idea and uses it not only as the basis for an entertaining plot, where the usual concerns of medieval narrative - the acquisition of prestige, patrimony and partner - are viewed through the unusual perspective of the education of the heroine.

Medieval poets are profoundly influenced by the prevailing belief in the supremacy of nature over nurture. This axiom, undoubtedly part of their inherited presuppositions, is nonetheless recognised by some as susceptible of deliberate exploitation in a narrative. In these cases, education, as part of nurture, inevitably comes to play a role of some importance in the text. Our examples have shown an increasing prominence for questions of nature and nurture, and therefore of education, and a diversity of different exploitations of a common element, such as we found in the variations played upon the theme of Alexander's education in the previous section. In the case of Heldris de Cornuälle, prominence and diversity of approach are combined to produce a romance in which we may conclude education is a key theme.

Section 3

Loving, Learning and Learning to Love

We concluded in Part II that the education of the hero or heroine is at its most basic level a more or less self-contained element in the narrative. In this final part we are exploring the exceptions to this rule. Factors have emerged in our discussions in Parts I and II which suggest that education may not always be limited to its self-contained slot, but can influence other aspects of the narrative. For we find that there is an interaction between the concepts of learning and those of loving, which is worth our attention since love is an important ingredient of medieval narrative. Ideals of courtesy represented in didactic literature are often reflected in the arts of love that flourished in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.[1] As interest in the matter of love grew, so too did interest in the proper behaviour surrounding love. In our examination of narrative texts in Part II, we also found a number of instances where the love interest of the story was initiated or furthered during a period of education.[2] This suggests that love may be an integral part of the character's education or development, or that education fosters the growth of love. The aim of this section is, therefore, to explore the love-education relationship further, in order to offer some conclusions as to the ways in which the two ideas interact, the importance of this interaction to our understanding of both love and education, and its importance for particular texts in which these ideas occur.

To begin with, we can explore how education and love interact by studying examples where education appears to be a necessary precursor to love. The idea that the educated man makes the better lover is presented very clearly in a group of love debates, extant in both Latin and Old French, which take the form of arguments between two young ladies upon the relative merits of a clerk or a knight as a lover.[3] Upon appeal to the god of Love, the question is finally decided in favour of the clerk. The earliest French version of this debate is the anonymous late twelfth-century/early thirteenth-century *Florence et Blancheflor*,[4] in which Florence is the beloved of a

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1 See Part II, pp. 63, 92-93

2 See Part II, p. 62.

3 These are described in Edmond Faral, 'Les Débats du clerc et du chevalier dans la littérature des XIIe et XIIIe siècles' in *Recherches sur les sources latines des contes et romans courtois du moyen âge*, pp. 191-303.

4 The text of this debate is given in Faral's chapter, pp. 251-269

knight and advocates his profession as producing better lovers, Blancheflor taking the side of the clerk.

The respective merits of the two types are presented in such a way that the clerk implicitly emerges as the superior man, even before the judgement is given. Blancheflor describes her lover as:

"Un clerc cortois, loial et bon
....
Il est mout biaus, mais sa bontés
Vaut mieus assés que sa biautés."
(vv. 103-106)

Florence, on the other hand, reports rather different virtues of her lover:

" ... mes amis est biaus et gens
Quant il va as tornoiemens
Et il abat le chevalier,
Il m'en presente le destrier.
Chevalier sont de mout haut pris;
Il ont sour toute gent le pris
Et le los et le seignourie."
(vv. 119-125)

Whereas Florence describes her lover's advantages in worldly and material terms, Blancheflor's clerk possesses the moral qualities of *bonté* and *courtoisie*. His learning has engendered moral goodness in him, in accordance with the view of education described in Part I, and he is adept in courtesy, the refinement of mind and manners necessary for the perfect lover. However, the clerk not only has the advantage of refinement; according to the nightingale, one of the bird "barons" of the god of Love called upon to adjudicate the case, it is the clerk, with his learning, who has kept the lore and practice of love alive:

"Et si vous di bien sans mentir
C'amors fust grant pieça perdue
Se clers ne l'euist maintenue." (vv. 354-6)

The Latin learning of the past, therefore, not only provided knowledge of philosophy or the seven liberal arts, it also provided knowledge about loving. Indeed, the author of the Latin model to *Florence et Blancheflor* clearly knew his Ovid, who significantly influenced medieval discussions of love.[5] The clerk has the advantage of learning on the subject of love, the opportunity of learning to be *cortois*, and the moral superiority which knowledge affords. It is not surprising to find that the judgement on the debate,

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5 Faral p. 195.

in the form of a judicial combat between the nightingale (for the clerk) and the parrot (for the knight), is given in favour of Blancheflor and her clerk.

In this love debate, the academic aspect of education equips the clerk to be the better lover. The social aspect of education may, however, be equally important. In Part II, for example, we noted that Aymeri, in *Aymeri de Narbonne*,[6] is referred to several times as being "bien enseigné", and exhibits perfect social accomplishment, precisely at the moment where he is introduced to his intended bride Hermenjart.[7] Whilst this marriage is seen as a political move, and a necessity to Aymeri in order that he may establish his *lignage*, the poet stresses that for Hermenjart at least, love does feature in the choice of a husband.[8] Although her love is not generated by his social accomplishment, rather by her knowledge of his military exploits, it is nonetheless significant that the meeting between the two intended partners causes the poet to emphasise Aymeri's social education.

In *Guillaume de Palerne*,[9] it is precisely the hero's rapid progress in acquiring a courtly education that attracts the heroine Melior to him. Guillaume finds himself at the imperial court, having been brought up in the forest by a farmer. The poet stresses the rapidity with which Guillaume adapts to his new environment (for which his unsuspected noble birth and nature suit him), and his learning of the new skills necessary for it:-

Tant i a l'enfes son cuer mis
Et tant entendu et apris
Qu'ançois que fust passés li ans
Fu il si prex et si sachans
Qu'il n'est hon qui le puist reprendre
(vv. 737-741)

He becomes "frans et debonaire, serviçables, cortois et prous" (755-6), learns generosity, fair speech, chess, dice games and hunting (757-763). His repute spreads far and wide:-

Des biens de lui que la gens conte;
Chascuns en fabloie et raconte
Tous li pueples communement. (779-781)

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6 *Aymeri de Narbonne*, ed. Louis Demaison.

7 See Part II, p. 60.

8 See comments on this text by Penny Sullivan in 'Love and Marriage in Early French Narrative Poetry', pp. 86-89.

9 *Guillaume de Palerne*, ed. H. Michelant.

Finally, the stories reach Melior, the emperor's daughter, and begin to work upon her heart and mind:-

> Quant Meliors la debonaire
> Ot del vallet le los retraire
> Et les grans biens qui en lui sont,
> Et voit qu'il n'a si bel el mont
> Ne damoisel de sa valor,
> Fil de roi ne d'empereor,
> Ne de si boine renoumee
> Trestot son cuer et sa pensee
> Tot maintenant vers lui atorne. (817-825)

Thus it is that she falls in love with the young hero. It is clearly the case that he is prepared as a lover by means of education. Without it, Melior would not have been attracted to him, and equipped with it, he is now ready to move into the next phase of his life, that of loving and winning the woman of his choice.

Having discovered that education may be seen as a necessary prerequisite of love, we can now reverse the equation and ask whether love is seen to be a necessary part of education, whether it is viewed as an essential part of growing up. Clear evidence in the affirmative can be found in the *Roman d'Eneas*, in the character of Lavine.[10] This is a particularly appropriate work to examine since it is one of the earliest texts to show the influence of Ovid in the torments and soliloquies on love of the hero and heroine.[11] The *Roman d'Eneas* also exercised considerable influence on the portrayal of love in later romances, and is thus a strategic text to examine.[12] We shall also look at a second text, again fairly early in our period, Chrétien's *Cligès*, showing similar Ovidian influence in the characters' love laments.

In the *Roman d'Eneas*, the hero encounters Lavine towards the end of the story when he lands in Italy and comes to the city of Latium, which is to be his promised new land. Lavine is the king's daughter, betrothed already to one Turnus. Eneas, however, persuades the king to alter his alliance and promise his daughter to himself, thus starting the conflict between the two rivals for Lavine's hand. Lavine's mother, who favours her daughter's match with Turnus rather than with the Trojan interloper Eneas, takes her daughter aside and attempts to persuade her that it is time for her to learn to love, and tries to direct her affections into the proper path:-

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10 *Le Roman d'Eneas*, ed. J.J. Salverda de Grave.

11 On the influence of Ovid on the *Roman d'Eneas*, see E. Faral, *Recherches sur les sources latines des contes et romans courtois du moyen âge*, pp. 73-157.

12 Salverda de Grave's edition indicates Ovidian influence and the influence of the *Eneas* on other texts in vol. ii, pp. 130-137.

"Par foi, tu es de tel aage
que tu doiz bien savoir d'amors
et les agaiz et les trestors
et les angins et les guinniers.
Tu t'i doiz traire volantiers,
envers celui [i.e. Turnus] qui formant t'aimme."
(vv. 7878-7883)

Lavine's mother presents love as a recognised part of growing up, appropriate at a certain age in the life of a young person. In her mind, this stage has now been reached by Lavine, both for emotional and, significantly, political reasons.[13] She speaks in a markedly didactic way, laying down the precepts of love that she wants her daughter to observe, and describing the sufferings of love as if they are the obligation (note the frequent appearance of the verb *estovoir*), rather than the fate of the lover:-

"Pire est amors que fievre agüe,
n'est pas retor, que l'an an süe;
d'amor estuet sovant süer
et refroidir, fremir, tranbler
et sospirer et baallier,
et perdre tot boivre et mangier
et degiter et tressaillir,
müer color et espalir,
giendre, plaindre, palir, penser
et sangloter, veillir, plorer:
ce li estuet fere sovent
qui bien aimme et qui s'en sent.
Teus est amor et sa nature;
se fu i velz metre ta cure
sovant t'estovra andurer
ce que tu m'oz ci aconter
et asez plus ...." (vv. 7919-7935)

Lavine herself, however, affects ignorance and indifference to this new experience her mother urges on her, and finally rejects love, saying she wants nothing to do with it, when she hears what pain and suffering it involves. She speaks too soon, however, for catching a glimpse of Eneas from a window in the tower of the castle, she is instantly smitten with love for him. A day and night of torment follow, and so altered is her appearance the next morning that her mother immediately recognises love's handiwork. She catechises her daughter, determined to know who has inspired this passion. There is a markedly dialectical cast to the two interchanges between Lavine and her mother, which form a well-balanced pair. In the first encounter (vv. 7857-8024), it is Lavine who elicits information from her mother by means of questioning and challenging her to defend the validity of this unpleasant-sounding experience she is trying to advocate. In the second conversation (vv. 8444-8662),

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[13] The significance of this dual aspect is explored below, p. 160.

Lavine is questioned by her mother who eventually persuades her, by force of dialectical argument, to confess that she is indeed in love. In these two speeches, we can see evidence of two influences from the classical world of education. Much of the material on the sufferings of love comes from Ovid, but the influence of dialectic can also be seen in the opposition between joy and pain in love, and in the forming of rules by which love is experienced and recognised.

The second scene is amusing as Lavine initially pretends ignorance of what she feels, saying she is surely physically ill, although in her soliloquies in the last twenty-four hours she has often enough addressed Amors as the author of her anguish. She feigns surprise that the sickness she has suffered is the result of love until she is forced to admit that this is indeed the case. Part of Lavine's coyness arises from the fact that she is indeed uncertain about the nature of this new sensation, although she may suspect its true identity; in part too she is fearful of admitting to her mother that it is not Turnus she loves but Eneas, but she also enjoys the game of trying to mislead her mother, as any lively teenager might with an interfering parent, or an awkward pupil might in the schoolroom.

Lavine is ignorant of love, and has not benefitted from her mother's instruction on the subject, because she has refused to learn from the teaching offered. Romance authors frequently stress the fact that education is only of benefit to those children who are willing to learn, a willingness generally present as part of the endowments of their noble nature.[14] We are reminded once again of Hugh of St. Victor's stress on disposition as well as hard work. In mitigation to Lavine, however, it should also be said that love is often seen as something that cannot be learned theoretically, but must be learned experientially, as we shall see in our next example.

The necessity to learn about love and to suffer in it greatly as a result of previous indifference is also found in the couple Alixandre and Soredamors, parents of Cligès in Chrétien's romance. Because of their ignorance, love, personified as the god Amors, has to intervene to teach them. Alixandre resigns himself to his suffering, recognising Amors' superiority over him:-

"S'Amors me chastie et menace
Por aprandre et por anseignier,
Doi je mon mestre desdaignier?
Fos est qui son mestre desdaingne;

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14 Doris Desclais Berkvam, *Enfance et maternité*, p.84.

See also our discussion on Lovel in *Guillaume d'Angleterre* in Section 2.

Ce qu'Amors m'aprant et ansaingne
Doi je garder et maintenir." (vv. 674-679)[15]

Soredamors must reach a similar state of resignation:-

"Or vuel amer, or sui a mestre,
Or m'aprendra Amors ......" (vv. 938-939)

They are now under Amors, learning his ways in his school which is a harsh one, an image that becomes commonplace in these laments of love. Of course, the idea of a personified god of love is not new to the Middle Ages, but it is indicative of the nature of the medieval view of the love experience that Amors is so often seen as a schoolmaster, with its harsh, disciplinarian overtones. The schoolmaster motif is carried further in the relationship between Alixandre and Soredamors, for we find that eventually the queen intervenes to bring the lovers together, having noticed their reciprocal, unexpressed passion. She takes the pair to one side and begins to lecture them (vv. 2241 ff.), casting herself in the role of a tutor:-

"D'Amors andoctriner vos vuel,
Car bien voi qu'Amors vos afole:
Por ce vos vuel metre a escole" (vv. 2252-2254)

Her lesson is simple: the two should confess their mutual passion (vv. 2260-61), which should lead in turn to an honourable marriage that will preserve their love (vv. 2266-69).

As we noticed in the queen's speech in *Le Roman d'Eneas*, we find in *Cligès*, that Alixandre and Soredamors speak of the pangs of love they experience in preceptive terms, instructing or reminding themselves (and their audience), as it were, of known facts about love. For example, Alixandre describes his suffering as if it were happening in accordance with set rules and the known phenomena of love:

"Nel set qui ne l'a esprové,
De quex jeus Amors s'antremet.
Fos est qui devers lui se met,
Qu'il vialt toz jorz grever les suens."
(vv. 664-667)

His sufferings are measured in terms of what is commonly known of love, lending them an authenticity and validity as an example to the audience.

We see in the experience of Alixandre and Soredamors that love is learned in a particular way. Theoretical knowledge may be of some benefit, but what emerges from

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15 Chrétien de Troyes, *Cligès*, ed. Alexandre Micha.

the example of this couple is that practical experience is the most important part of love. This is expressed clearly by Soredamors, who fears that her love may risk being unreciprocated if Alixandre is not astute or experienced enough to notice her suffering and respond to it. She, of course, is dependent upon his making the first move.

> "Bien s'an savra aparcevoir,
> S'il onques d'amors s'antremist,
> Ou s'il par parole en aprist.
> Aprist? Or ai ge dit oiseuse.
> Amors n'est pas si gracïeuse
> Que par parole an soit nus sages,
> S'avoec n'i est li boens usages."
> (vv. 1010-1016)

From this speech it is clear that the theoretical knowledge (*parole*) is not sufficient in itself; it must be accompanied by *usage*, by a practical application of that theory.

Love is thus akin to other courtly skills, such as horse-riding or chess-playing, which have to be practised to be learned, rather than absorbed automatically from a master's teaching. The importance of the practical experience of love is also seen in the case of Lavine. She does not recognise love from the theoretical description given by her mother - a description, moreover, that makes her wish to reject rather than embrace love - but when smitten with love for Eneas, she is able to identify her emotion. However, either in pretence or in reality, she is initially unable to reconcile the theoretical description with her practical experience and tries to attribute her emotional suffering to mere physical illness.

The idea emerges, therefore, that love is an important, if not essential part of growing up, both for male and for female characters. In the case of Lavine, it is linked to age (v. 7878): love is appropriate at a certain stage in a young person's development. The idea of certain characteristics being suitable to certain ages is, of course, the premise behind such genres as the ages of man literature, and the divisions of age found in the works of educational and political theorists.[16]

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16 Considerations of age are also invoked when the young hero comes to be knighted. Variations on the formula "when he reached the right age" are commonly found, for example in *Ille et Galeron* we find:

> Et quant eages l'adevise
> Que li vallés soit chevaliers,
> Li rois l'adoube volentiers.
> (vv. 106-8)

Gautier d'Arras: *Ille et Galeron*, ed. Frederick A.G. Cowper.

An interesting parallel to the notion of love being a necessary part of development is found in the twelfth-century French version of the *Song of Songs*.[17] In the Introduction to his edition of the work, Pickford draws attention to the closing lines of the poem, where the poet asks that his work should not fall into the hands of children, for whom it is not appropriate and might even be harmful. Earlier in the poem, children (*enfanz*) are precisely defined:-

> Les jovenceles ont l'onor
> De Toi amer, e le valor,
> Kar li enfant e li viellard
> Font a tel chose nul reguard.
> Chaus doit hom enfanz apeler
> Ki comencié n'ont a amer.
>
> (vv. 235-240)[18]

Children are characterised here less by age, than by a stage in development - they are those who have not yet learned about love. Whilst the poet of the *Song of Songs* clearly deals with love in its spiritual form, this is nonetheless a parallel to human love, especially as the human love relationship is the vehicle through which divine love is described in this text.[19] The idea that love is part of one's spiritual development, is a concept most consistently advocated by St. Bernard of Clairvaux.[20]

We have seen from our example in *Cligès*, that the characters' experience in love may be seen to have a didactic impact on the audience. Alixandre's soliloquy both expresses his feelings and presents those feelings as a model for the audience. Stephen Jaeger views the courtly romance as a weapon in the hands of clerics wishing

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17 On the influence of the *Song of Songs* for vernacular literature, see Tony Hunt, 'The Song of Songs and Courtly Literature'.

18 *The Song of Songs: A Twelfth-Century French Version*, edited from Ms 173 of the Bibliothèque Municipale of Le Mans by Cedric E. Pickford. See especially Introduction, pp. xxi-xxiii.

19 Evelyn Birge Vitz, in an article on the *Roman de la Rose* makes the following comment on the relationship between views of sacred and secular love in the Middle Ages:

> ... the twelfth and thirteenth centuries were, as is well recognised today, fascinated by the phenomenon of love, both human and divine. the number of theological and literary texts of the period that are devoted to the nature of love is no less than staggering. Numerous attempts were made in this period to account for love theoretically. But it happens that most learning in this period was religious in its orientation, that most theories and most logic were then strongly theological. Thus, it is quite natural that there should have been, and quite obivous that there was, mutual influence between secular and religious notions of love. ('Inside/Outside: First Person Narrative in Guillaume de Lorris' *Roman de la Rose*', p. 159).

20 Jean Leclercq, *Monks and Love in Twelfth-Century France*, discusses the influence of Bernard and of the *Song of Songs* in this period.

to promulgate a civilising, courtly ideal in the warrior, knightly classes.[21] Love is one of the areas that fosters and responds to refinement of manners and it is, of course, an essential ingredient of romance. Love may be seen as the most advanced expression of a courtier's refined behaviour. Love in turn becomes the object of the poet's didactic intentions, instruction in love being an integral part of the instruction in courtliness, an ideal of behaviour that the romances seek to promote.[22]

This leads logically to a fusion of the romance form and art of love form, seen at its best in the *Roman de la Rose* of Guillaume de Lorris. Here we begin to see concepts of love and education exerting a mutual, and more complex influence. In his opening to the allegory, Guillaume describes his work as both a romance and an art of love:

> ce est li *Romanz de la Rose*
> ou l'art d'Amors est tote enclose.
> (vv. 37-8)[23]

It is both implicitly and explicitly an art of love, implicitly in its presentation, via a dream, of an exemplar of the love relationship, and explicitly in the speech of the god Amors to the lover who becomes his vassal. This is a long discourse on the correct behaviour and attitude of a lover, and of the experience of love he must undergo (vv. 2049-2748). Once again, Amors is cast in the role of a teacher. His discourse is prompted by the request of the Lover to know the god's *comandemanz* - a strongly didactic term - (vv. 2041-2048), in order that he may know what he is to do as a lover.

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21 Stephen Jaeger, *The Origins of Courtliness: Civilising Trends and the Formation of Courtly Ideals 939-1210*, esp. chapters 11-12, pp. 211-254.

22 See the comments by J. Nicholls, *The Matter of Courtesy*, pp. 50-51:

> A consequence of thee interest generated in the ideals of courtliness was a concern on the part of many people to act in accordance with these new patterns of behaviour. This anxiety led to the desire of having exemplary models to follow, and many romances supplied part of this want in their descriptions of the hero. Medieval romances were not mere entertainment. Many of them have a strain of didacticism, often openly admitted in their prologues, and in her study of what she defines as 'society romances', Sarah Barrow comes to the following conclusion:
>
> > Trite motivation, the confusion of motives due to unskilful adaptation of borrowed material, and, particularly, indifference to consistency and proportion, may dull his point, but the poet always seeks, however perfunctorily and clumsily, to enunciate some principle of conduct, to demonstrate through the object lesson of his story that certain virtues of the heart are the most potent influence and the most exquisite grace of refined society.

23 Guillaume de Lorris, *Le Roman de La Rose*, ed. Félix Lecoy. The dual form is noted by Maxwell Luria: *A Reader's Guide to the 'Roman de la Rose'*, p. 26

Amors adopts the persona and vocabulary of the teacher, immediately responding to the request and warning his pupil:-

> "Li mestres pert sa poine toute
> quant li deciples qui escoute
> ne met son cuer el retenir
> si qu'il l'en puise sovenir." (vv. 2051-2054)

This is something of a truism, which could be applied to almost any context of teaching and learning, of which falling in love is seen here as one example. The relevance of Amors' speech for the audience and for their instruction is reiterated a few verses later, before the actual content of the *comandemenz* is given, signalling that an important part of the work is approaching:-

> Bien les [comandemenz] devise cist romanz;
> qui amer veut, or i entende,
> que li romanz des or amende.
> ....
> Qui dou songe la fin ora
> je vos di bien que il porra
> des jeus d'Amors assez aprendre. (vv. 2058-2067)

The content of Amors's speech falls into two parts, the first dealing with behaviour and manners, the second with experience and emotion. Firstly Amors stipulates attitudes that the Lover should shun - *vilenie*, coarse speech, pride. Then he turns his attention to physical appearance, stressing the importance of attractive clothes, of personal hygiene and tidiness, of an attitude of happiness and gaiety, and of exhibiting one's abilities and talents to best advantage. Finally, the importance of largesse is stressed. Then follows Amors' description of the Lover's emotional experience. He must always think of love and give himself wholeheartedly to it. As a result he will suffer sighs, will turn hot and cold, flushed and pale, and will sometimes forget himself entirely in thoughts of his beloved. He will try in vain to see her, although a glimpse will afford him immeasurable delight. He must often walk near her house, though he will be dumb with confusion if he sees her. His nights will be torment and he will get up just to visit her house under cover of darkness. He should also secure a reputation for generosity and worthy behaviour amongst the lady's entourage. In order to ease the pain of love, Amors also promises comfort from Esperance, Douz Pensers, Douz Palers and Douz Regart.

The division of Amors's speech and his emphasis first on matters of behaviour immediately sets love into a wider context. The experience of love presupposes an ideal of behaviour, and love thus becomes an impetus for the pursuit of courtesy. In Guillaume's work, love is not seen in isolation, but in its wider social context, as we see from the very beginning in the figures on Deduit's garden wall, warning would-be

entrants that certain types of people and behaviour are not admitted to his realm. There are echoes of these figures in Amors' speech: Vilenie appears in both, and Covoitise and Avarice appear on the wall, whilst Amors enjoins their opposite, generosity.

Amors' speech presents love in both a prescriptive and a descriptive way, indicative of a significant progression in the way love is presented in the *Roman de la Rose*. First comes the prescription in the rules that Amors enjoins on the Lover. Then comes the description of the experiences he can expect in love; finally comes the Lover's own experience of love in his desire for the Rose and his confrontations with the obstacles in his way. Jean-Charles Payen observes that this progression is based on an excellent pedagogical principle, where the rules are explained, their outworking described and finally the pupil is allowed to put them into practice.[24]

The relationship between the subject of the romance (love), the poet and his audience is particularly complex in this text. Guillaume writes an allegory of love, casting it in the form of a dream, which has validity as an example to others, and in which he is both narrator and protagonist. The distinction between Guillaume the poet, the narrator and the lover is blurred, thus breaking down the distinctions between reality, the creative work and the dream within that work. As a result, the words of Amors have a stronger and more immediate impact on the audience, which is reinforced by Amors' presence both inside and outside the dream. Inside the dream, Amors instructs the Lover in his ways, but outside the dream, it is Amors too who tells the poet to recount his vision for the benefit of others:-

> Or veil ce songe rimeer
> por vos cuers plus feire agueer
> qu'Amors le me prie et comande. (vv. 29-31)

The blurring of distinctions increases the immediacy of the experience described in the narrative to the audience, and, therefore, also of its instructive content. The role of Amors both within and without enables Guillaume to blend most effectively his twin elements of art of love and romance; the art of love is contained within the romance, but the authority behind the art is also the authority behind the romance, thus fusing the two concepts. Guillaume's text marks one of the most overt and most accomplished interaction of the two concepts of love and education, a microcosm set in Deduit's garden of the loving and learning experiences.

Guillaume's work fuses the love and education concepts for largely didactic ends. A rather different exploitation of them is found in *Le Conte de Floire et*

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24 Jean-Charles Payen, 'L'Art d'aimer chez Guillaume de Lorris', p. 144.

Blancheflor, where ideals of love and eduation are used as underlying themes around which the *conte* develops. This poet chooses to exploit the love-education relationship for more purely literary ends. This romance contains one of the most appealing descriptions of education in Old French romance, being the only example we find of a hero and heroine undergoing their education together.[25] The description is lengthy compared to the usual description of education in narrative, and presents a charming cameo of the two young lovers:-

Es les vos andeus a escole!
Cius fu molt liés de la parole.
Cascuns d'aus .ii. tant aprendoit
pour l'autre que merveille estoit.
Li doi enfant molt s'entramoient
et de biauté s'entresambloient.
Nus d'aus .ii. conseil ne savoit
de soi quant l'autre ne veoit.
Au plus tost que souffri Nature
ont en amer mise lor cure.
En aprendre avoient boin sens,
du retenir millor porpens.
Livres lisoient paienors
u ooient parler d'amors.
En çou forment se delitoient,
es engiens d'amor qu'il trovoient.
Cius lires les fist molt haster
en autre sens d'aus entramer
que de l'amor de noureture
qui lor avoit esté a cure.
Ensamle lisent et aprendent,
a la joie d'amor entendent.
Quant il repairent de l'escole,
li uns baise l'autre et acole.
....
Et quant a l'escole venoient
lor tables d'yvoire prenoient.
Adont lor veïssiés escrire
letres et vers d'amours en cire!
Lor graffes sont d'or et d'argent
dont il escrisent soutiument.
Letres et salus font d'amours
du cant des oisiax et des flours.
D'autre cose n'ont il envie,
molt par ont glorieuse vie.
En seul .v. ans et .xv. dis
furent andoi si bien apris

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25 Although it is quite common for a couple to meet when the boy spends time at the girl's home for part of his education, this is the only text we find where hero and heroine are brought up together, and where we are specifically told that they are educated together. The closest parallel might be *Galeran de Bretagne*, where Fresne and Galeran are both brought up at Beauséjour. Unfortunately the detail of their early life is missing because of a lacuna in the manuscript, although it is perhaps unlikely that this describes a joint education since we later find descriptions of the content of each character's education.

que bien sorent parler latin
et bien escrire en parkemin,
et consillier oiant la gent
en latin, que nus nes entent.
(vv. 217-272)[26]

The poet deliberately creates a link early in the narrative between love and education in his unusual tactic of having his lovers educated together, and the two ideas together form part of a thematic warp to the text. We find that love first inspires the form of their education, as Floire refuses to go to school without Blancheflor. Once in the schoolroom, education fuels love, for the subject matter of their learning fosters their love, an idea we have already noted in the nightingale's defence of the clerk in *Florence et Blancheflor*. Floire and Blancheflor together read "livres paienors", which tell them more about love, its ways and strategies, and open new vistas of loving to them beyond the "amor de norreture" which they have hitherto known. They practise writing on wax tablets with a stylus (an interesting touch of realism), but use their art to write love letters and poems. They learn Latin, but use this as a means of talking secretly to one another when other people are around.

If education fuels love, however, love also fuels education for Floire and Blancheflor, who learn with phenomenal ease and rapidity because they are together. The determinism of nature is seen once again here, as in the cases of Marin and Lovel in *Guillaume d'Angleterre*. We already know Floire and Blancheflor are destined to be future lovers by their common birthday at Pentecost, with all its romantic associations. Nature then shapes their education to that end, and their education is particularly effective because it is cooperating with nature. However, this harmonious relationship is broken when Floire is separated from Blancheflor by his parents who are worried by the incipient romance between them. He is sent away to an aunt at Montoire to continue his education, but he is unable to learn anything at all. He pines for Blancheflor and, deprived of her company, he learns almost nothing, despite listening to plenty of lessons. Although motivated by a desire to comment on the strength of the love between the children, this observation also shows an appreciation of the educative process which contrasts with the more common configuration, noted in Part II, whereby a master teaches and a pupils learns automatically. Here, the poet realises that many factors may distract a child from his lessons, and that his overall well-being is also an important consideration.

The poet illustrates a reciprocal process in operation between love and education in the life of his two chief characters, but, as Roberta Krueger points out in a very

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26 All references are to *Le Conte de Floire et Blancheflor*, ed. Jean-Luc Leclanche.

interesting article, this is part of a larger theme in the text whereby the concepts of loving, reading, writing and the telling of the romance itself are interwoven.[27] It is worth examining two of her examples in greater detail to see the larger implications of the love-education relationship in the text.

Floire and Blancheflor are seen writing love letters with a stylus on a wax tablet in the education scene. The stylus reappears later in the story as the weapon Floire chooses for a suicide attempt when, deceived by his parents, he believes that Blancheflor is dead. Since the king's lions refuse to devour him, he selects a stylus from a silver case given him by Blancheflor and prepares to stab himself with it. The same item that had been used to write love letters to Blancheflor is now being used to express the hero's love in a more dramatic way in his desire to die and be reunited with his love (Krueger p. 68). The stylus "writes" Floire's love, cutting here through his heart, rather than through the wax of his school tablet.[28] The same willingness to die for love is witnessed later in both Floire and Blancheflor when each wishes to persuade the *amirail*, who has captured them, that he or she alone is to blame for their escapade and should be the only one to die, thus sparing the other.

The love/education/narrative cluster is also found in connection with an important motif in the romance, the golden cup received in payment for Blancheflor when she is sold by Floire's parents who want to separate her from their son (Krueger p. 68). The cup is elaborately worked and is described in detail (vv. 441-512). Its history is also given - it was taken by Eneas when he left Troy and given to his lover Lavine, remaining in the treasury of the Roman emperor until it was stolen and came into the hands of the merchants who gave it in payment for Blancheflor. The cup provides a tangible link between the classical past and the poet's present, a symbol of the *translatio studii*, the rebirth of the glory of the Graeco-Roman past and learning in vernacular French. Despite the uncertainties over the dating of *Floire et Blancheflor* and its position relative to the *Roman d'Eneas*, the evidence for our poet knowing the *Eneas* does seen persuasive.[29] Assuming the reference to Eneas and Lavine in the history of the cup to refer to the *Roman d'Eneas*, there is here another resonance in the love/reading/writing *topos*. Lavine falls in love with Eneas, although she has been promised to Turnus. She is smitten with dire pangs of love for the stranger and her

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27 Roberta Krueger, '*Floire et Blancheflor*'s Literary Subtext, the *Version Aristocratique*'.

28 An interesting reflection on this part of the story is Raymond Cormier's note that this death resembles that of John Scotus Eriugena, stabbed to death by his pupils. See Raymond J. Cormier, 'Death by Stylus: A Note on the *Roman de Flore et Blancheflor*'.

29 See the comments by Jean-Luc Leclanche, 'La date du *Conte de Floire et Blancheflor*'.

torment is described at length. In her desperation, Lavine decides to reveal her love to Eneas, engaged in battle against Turnus outside the castle. She makes her declaration in a letter which is tied to an arrow and fired towards Eneas. The arrow and its letter become for Eneas the dart of love, tormenting him as it had Lavine. The love letter is a motif in the love-story of Eneas and Lavine as it is in the story of Floire and Blancheflor.

The scenes on the cup tell the love story of Paris and Helen - the judgement of Paris, the abduction of Helen, the siege of Troy - all the handiwork of Vulcan. The story of Paris and Helen is also one of the most famous of love stories, indeed it is a concrete example of the love from "pagan books", which had encouraged Floire and Blancheflor's love in its infancy. It acts as an encouragement to Floire when he sets out, with the cup, to trace the missing Blancheflor. The sight of Paris carrying away Helen restores Floire's flagging courage during his quest, strengthening his resolve to carry his beloved away also. The cup is instrumental at important points in the narrative in advancing the story of Floire and Blancheflor. It is given in payment for Blancheflor, helps Floire retain his courage, it secures the connivance of the porter in gaining Floire's admission to the Tower of Maidens where Blancheflor is imprisoned, and finally it is returned to the *amirail* in exchange for Blancheflor when Floire finally receives her back. The progress of the love affair is reflected in the movements of the cup, which "tells", as it were, the story of Floire and Blancheflor, as it tells the story of Eneas and Lavine and Paris and Helen.

The story of Floire and Blancheflor also has a relationship to the poet's audience; it is told or written with the idea of instructing them in love, as Krueger points out. The poet tells us: "Se mon conte volés entendre/molt i porrés d'amors aprendre" (vv. 5-6). Floire and Blancheflor are educated in love, but so too are the audience. A story may be a vehicle to "teach" about love, in a more or less overt manner.

In *Floire et Blancheflor* we find that love and education act in a two-way relationship, each element affecting the other. Education engenders and fosters love, love determines the pattern of education. Having set up this interaction between love and education, the poet then uses this nexus of ideas as a recurrent theme throughout the work, notably via the richly symbolic gold cup, which lends classical resonances and depth to an apparently simple tale. Although the prologue suggests, as we have seen, that the poet does intend some instructional benefit to be obtained from his work, the relationship between love and education in this romance is exploited more for literary

than for purely didactic ends. This is an important aspect of the work's appeal and originality.

It emerges from the examples we have studied that concepts of learning are inherent in those of loving in medieval narrative. We can offer several explanations for this phenomenon, before proceeding to consider its wider implications.

Firstly, education is regarded with increasing enthusiasm in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and the poets increase the stature of their hero by making him an educated man. The educated man, if we view education in its largest sense, is the one best fitted to function in society, and therefore the one most worthy to be held up as an ideal and to adopt the role of lover. It is therefore inevitable that love and courtesy - social distinction and refinement - will be inextricably linked. Since the Middle Ages inherited a wealth of material dealing with love and courtesy, and relating the two, from their classical antecedents, this tendency is reinforced. Norman Shapiro suggests that the classical model for the arts of love, especially in the work of Ovid, is particularly important, given the degree of authority accorded by the Middle Ages to Latin authors. This tendency can be further appreciated if we bear in mind the fact that the primary producers of the new romance form were those who had been educated in the schools.

A second feature of medieval presentations of love is the categorisation of love in terms of rules. The popularity of the arts of the love in the period illustrate that love was a subject that courtly society enjoyed discussing, analysing and defining in terms of rules.[30] This emerges strongly, for example, in Andreas Capellanus' *De Amore*, written as a series of models of approach and response by a man and a woman of various social ranks, and containing a number of judgements on matters of love. Whatever view one may take on the register and intent behind this work,[31] it is clear that the approach owes much to the dialectical method of the schools. Educated clerks brought to the new focus of interest in vernacular literature, namely love, the method of intellectual enquiry acquired in the schools.

This shaping of love by education has important implications for our understanding of the view of love held by the Middle Ages, and we soon find that this is quite different from our own. We saw in the soliloquy of Alixandre in *Cligès* that love was personified as a schoolmaster, an image found frequently in other romances also.

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30 A point made by Norman R. Shapiro, *The Comedy of Eros - Medieval French Guides to the Art of Love*. See especially Introduction.

31 A useful overview of critics who read Andreas literally and those who view him ironically can be found in Charles Dahlberg, *The Literature of Unlikeness*, pp. 76-81.

This image conveys ideas of authority, didacticism, discipline and pain. It epitomises a view that love is to be understood as a training or refining process. The end of love is not some ideal of personal happiness or fulfilment, but rather true integration into the social order; the lover must learn perfect social refinement through love, and establish himself in a position of social responsibility in the marriage relationship. Hence, the emotional and political implications are jointly found in Lavine's mother's lecture to her daughter. The "happy ending" of medieval romance is the marriage of the lovers, less for their own satisfaction (although this is, undeniably, an important by-product) than for the establishment of their proper place and role in society. This, for example, is what Erec and Enide need to understand.[32] This is not to deny that there is any element of happiness or joy in the love experience found in medieval narrative - without such emotional reward, love could not carry out its function - but the happiness in itself is not the ultimate object of the experience.

This view of a love which is not specifically aimed at personal fulfilment parallels the attitude to education in the period. Education is not designed to satisfy personal aspirations or potential, but rather to equip the individual for his role in society. Like education, love is not primarily a matter of personal satisfaction - indeed both may be a painful experience.[33]

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32 Much has been written on the *sen* of this romance, but on a specifically educational aspect, see Penny Sullivan, 'The Education of the Heroine in Chrétien's *Erec et Enide*'.

33 This emerges rather neatly in Gottfried von Strassburg's *Tristan und Isolde.* Gottfired stresses the pain that characterises the love experience of the lovers, as he also stresses the pain that education implies for Tristan:

Liep unde liet diu wâren ie
an minnen ungescheiden
....
von den diz senemaere seit
und haeten die durch liebe leit,
durch herzewunne senedez klagen
in einem herzen niht getragen
sone waere ir name und ir geschicht
sô manegem edelen herzen niht
ze saelden noch ze liebe komen. (vv. 206-217)

(In love, joy and sorrow ever went hand in hand ... If the two of whom this love-story tells had not endured sorrow for the sake of joy, love's pain for its ecstasy within one heart, their name and history would never have brought such rapture to so many noble spirits.)

Daz was sîn êrstiu kêre
ûz sîner frîheite:
dô trat er in daz geleite
betwungenlîcher sorgen,
die ime dâ vor verborgen
und vor behalten wâren.

This focus less on the individual and more on the larger social dimension of love is also reflected in the tendency to see love in a rule-based and formalised way. Love is not a variable, individual experience - it is a set experience individuals undergo. This explains why love, as we noted in Amors' presentation in the *Roman de la Rose*, is portrayed in a prescriptive way, as much as, if not more, than a descriptive way. Love is viewed as something that must be put into practice. The theoretical aspect is important in ensuring that love is directed towards the proper goal, but what is learned must be also worked out in experience in order for love to achieve that goal. This is the experience of both Lavine and Soredamors, and is reminiscent too of the equation we found in the educational theorists in Part I: that the pursuit of knowledge is the pursuit of virtue, and the fruit of learning is a practical outworking of virtue in life.

An understanding of the medieval view of education is thus essential to an understanding of its view of love, and we find that educational ideas have a pervasive influence on the shape of medieval narrative. We have seen examples where the education of the characters and the love interest of a text interact, and we have also found that this interation may form an underlying, or indeed overt theme for a particular work. Early in our period, we find the poet of *Floire et Blancheflor* linking the love and education descriptions in his schoolroom scenario, and then further exploiting the link in other motifs in the romance to create a cohesive and rich literary work around a simple plot. Towards the end of our period, Guillaume de Lorris's *Roman de la Rose* encapsulates the medieval view of love as a painful, refining, educative process,

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in den ûf blüenden jâren,
dô al sîn wunne solte erstân,
dô er mit fröuden solte gân
in sînes lebenes begin
dô was sîn beste leben hin:
dô er mit fröuden blüen began,
dô viel der sorgen rîfe in an,
der maneger jugent schaden tuot,
und darte im sîner fröuden bluot
in sîner ersten frîheit
wart al sîn frîheit hin geleit.
der buoche lêre und ir getwanc
was sîner sorgen anevanc. (vv. 2066-2084)

(This was his first departure from his freedom; with it he joined company with enforced cares which had been hidden and withheld from him until then. In the blossoming years, when the ecstasy of his springtime was about to unfold and he was just entering with joy into his prime, his best life was over: just when he was beginning to burgeon with delight the frost of care (which ravages many young people) descended on him and withered the blossoms of his gladness. With this first experience of freedom his whole freedom was cut short. The study of books and all its stern discipline were the beginning of his cares).

Text taken from Gottfried von Strassburg, *Tristan und Isolt*, ed. August Closs and the English version from the translation by A.T. Hatto, pp. 44 and 68.

promulgating this view to his audience. His skilful use of the dream allegory fuses literature and didacticism, love and education in a particularly satisfying way.

Section 4

Women, Learning and Magic: Perceptions of the Educated Heroine

Melior, the heroine of the romance *Partonopeus de Blois,* is exceptional amongst the female population of Old French epic and romance for the education that she receives. She is a young lady of considerable powers, attributed by her to that education, which is astonishing in both its compass and intensity. She describes it herself to the hero, young Partonopeus, whom she has enticed to her castle at Chef d'Oire:-

> Je fui fille d'empereor,
> ....
> Mes pere par argus fu cers
> Des ço que fui petite en bers
> Qu'il n'avroit nul autre oir de moi
> S'en prist grant cure et grant conroi
> De moi afaitier et garnir
> De l'empire par sens tenir:
> Maistres oi buens et de grans pris
> Et je molt bonement apris;
> Maistres oi de tos escïens
> Par foïes plus de deus cens
> Dex me dona grasse d'aprendre,
> Et d'escriture bien entendre.
> Les set ars tot premierement
> Apris et soi parfitement.
> Aprés apris tote mecine
> Quanqu'est en herbe et en racine,
> Et d'espisses, de lor valor;
> Aprés, le froit et la chalor,
> Et de tos maus tote la cure
> Et l'ocoison et le nature;
> Fesique ne puet mal garir
> Dont je ne sace a cief venir.
> Puis apris de divinité
> Si que j'en sai a grant plenté
> Et la viés loi et la novele
> Qui tot le sens del mont chaële.
> Ains que eüsse quinze ans passés
> Oi mes maistres tos sormontés.
> Aprés apris espirement
> Nigremance et enchantement.
> (vv. 4573, 4583-4612)[1]

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1 All references are to *Partonopeus de Blois, A French Romance of the Twelfth Century*, ed. Joseph Gildea.

By the time she is fifteen years old, Melior has mastered the seven liberal arts, medical knowledge, theology and, finally, magic.

Compared to the picture of women's education in medieval narrative generally, this education is indeed extraordinary. Descriptions of academic learning for women were seen in Part II to be generally rare, limited usually to basic reading skills and normally overshadowed by practical, moral or social instruction. Melior's education appears even more extraordinary when considered in the context of women's education in reality in the Middle Ages, as discussed in Part I. The opportunities for academic training were limited, and since society generally regarded intellectual women with suspicion, only a few exceptional individuals would have had the opportunity to pursue such skills to a significant level. It is conceivable that a girl, having had the chance to learn Latin, and having access to books, could familiarise herself with some of the subject matter of the seven liberal arts, as Melior has done. However, the higher studies - law, medicine, theology - that eventually came to be studied in the universities, were an exclusively male preserve, and would be completely closed to women. Thus for Melior to have learned medicine and theology (one thing she learns which no other female character does, although there are quite frequent references to women knowing their Psalters and prayers) would have been virtually impossible. Theology especially, as the summit of learning, would have been regarded as particularly unsuitable for a woman, with her morally corrupt nature.[2]

It is intriguing to wonder why the poet has chosen to give his heroine such an astonishing education. It is also clear that this is a key text through which to view medieval poets' perceptions and exploitations of the education of the heroine. To some extent the description can be explained by the poet's wish to idealise, making his heroine of greater stature than normal, a use of the description of education we noted in Part II. Hence she learns everything perfectly, and is able to surpass her teachers before she is fifteen, a fact which necessitates an intensive programme with, at times, more than two hundred masters engaged at once. The poet devotes much more space to the description of her medical skills - in which once again she is infallible - than to the more prosaic seven arts, and the description

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2 This is clearly a prejudice that has taken some time to fade. According to Patricia Labalme in *Beyond Their Sex: Learned Women of the European Past*, the first woman Doctor of Theology was created only in the twentieth century (p.3).

of the education quoted here is immediately followed by a lengthy description of the amazing illusions she is able to create by her skills in "espirement, nigremance et enchantement". We noted in Section 1 on the *Roman d'Alexandre* that those elements of the curriculum that suggest the fantastic, the supernatural and the extraordinary were prized, especially by the decasyllabic poet, as a spice to add to the creation of an escapist, fantasy world. This is no less true of *Partonopeus de Blois*. An important part of the interest of the first section of this romance comes from the descriptions of Melior's fantastic land and castle and the illusions that enable her to keep Partonopeus there in secret.

However, this is not the whole explanation for the poet's choice of education for his heroine. The location of the description in the narrative is significant, and once again this does not conform to the usual pattern of romance narrative. Usually a heroine's education is described at the moment when she first appears in the narrative, or during a description of her early life if this forms part of the story. Melior's education is described in her own words - again an unusual touch, found elsewhere only in *Le Bel Inconnu* - at a critical moment in the narrative. She has established a relationship with the hero which has been going on for some time, although she remains a shadowy figure, because she only ever visits him at night in his bed in the castle to which she has magically drawn him. She has enjoined upon him never to try to see her until the time eventually comes for their marriage. It is when Partonopeus breaks this taboo, and so shatters the illusion which had allowed Melior to keep him secretly in her castle and enjoy his company without her subjects knowing who he was, that she describes her education to him. This is the turning point in the story. Partonopeus had been enjoying his lady's favours; now, by his infraction of her command he is exiled both from her land and her affections and the remainder of the narrative is concerned with his attempts to regain them. From the apparently ideal situation between the knight and his lady a disaster arises, precipitating a revaluation and reworking of the relationship. The appearance of the description of the heroine's education at this critical point needs to be explained.

Up until this point in the narrative all we really know of Melior is her magical skill. Hers is the mysterious ship that brings Partonopeus to Chef d'Oire, hers the illusions that provide him with food, music and clothes from unseen hands. The usual interpretation of Melior is that she is based on a Breton fairy-mistress

type,[3] but she has evolved somewhat from her origins and in this romance she is cast into two almost distinct roles.[4] In the first part of the story she is indeed close to the fairy type - practising magic, enticing a mortal man into her affections. However, upon the breaking of her taboo she loses her powers and becomes a creature of mere flesh and blood, capable of showing human frailty. She is portrayed as petulant, refusing to forgive her errant lover. Later she must face an agony of uncertainty waiting to see if Partonopeus will be proclaimed victor of the tournament for her hand.

The transformation from one type of character to the other is explained in this romance by the loss of Melior's powers after Partonopeus has contrived to look at her. Melior's abilities are shown to arise, not from her being some other-worldly figure, but from her acquired magical skills.

However, it is not clear that the poet is trying to render Melior simply into a more believable figure than the fairy type found in his source. Whether we think of the process as rationalisation or not, it is clear that education is used to account for a chracter's supernatural powers and we can find evidence in other texts that other authors also view education as a powerful tool for operating permuatations on inherited character types. An obvious transformation process can be seen in operation in the case of Medea in *Le Roman de Troie*,[5] if we compare Benoît with one of his sources, Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, which provided him with some details for the Medea story.[6] In Book VI of the *Metamorphoses*, there are lengthy descriptions of Medea's dark rites for bringing rejuvenation to the ageing Aeson. Throughout she appears as a fearsome, powerful sorceress. In the *Roman de Troie*, however, Medea is presented as an essentially mortal princess, the more demure

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3 The elements of *Partonopeus de Blois* that are attributable to Celtic sources are explored in Helaine Newstead, 'The Traditional Background of *Partonopeus de Blois*'. See also further discussion in Lillian M. McCobb, 'The Traditional Background of *Partonopeus de Blois* An Additional Note'.

4 Catherine Hilton, *Convention and Innovation in 'Partonopeus de Blois'*, p.9.

5 *Le Roman de Troie*, ed. L. Constans. The Jason and Medea episode is found in vol i of this edition.

6 See E. Faral, *Recherches sur les Sources Latines des Contes et Romans Courtois du Moyen Age*, p. 318 and vol vi of Constans' edition of the *Roman de Troie*, p. 236 for details of Benoît's sources

type of romance heroine. Her magical abilities, which will be necessary to help Jason obtain the Golden Fleece, are attributed to her education:-

> Trop ert cele de grant saveir;
> Mout sot d'engin e de maistrie,
> De conjure e de sorcerie;
> Es arz ot tant s'entente mise
> Que trop par ert sage et aprise;
> Astronomie e nigromance
> Sot tote par cuer dès enfance;
> D'arz saveit tant e de conjure,
> De cler jor feïst nuit oscure;
> S'ele vousist, ço fust viaire
> Que volisseiz par mi cel aire,
> Les eves faiseit corre ariere:
> Scientose ert de grant maniere.
> (vv. 1204-1216)

The sorceress figure of the Latin tradition is rejected by the Old French poet in favour of a mortal, with acquired powers,[7] who is, moreover, fallible, for, despite her education and magical powers, Medea is ultimately unable to keep Jason faithful to her.[8]

Her education can thus be viewed as a means by which the poet can account for the change in Melior, by making her skills acquired (and therefore subject to loss), rather than inherent. Magic is learned as part of the heroine's education. Part II has already illustrated the connection between learning and magic in, for example, the preference accorded to astronomy above the other arts of the *quadrivium*, because of its supernatural overtones. In the Middle Ages, magic was accepted as part of the canon of learning, even if it was not necessarily approved of.[9] This leads Stanesco to challenge the view that the learning of magical skills is a kind of rationalising of the character into a more believable figure by providing an explanation of his or her magical powers.[10] Thus, for Melior, magic is the pinnacle

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7 The fairy figure which occurs most commonly in medieval romance and is based on the Celtic fee, is quite different from the sorceress of the Latin tradition. We find an example of this second type in *Amadas et Ydoine,* in the fairies who assist Ydoine, and who have a distinctly dark and fierce aspect, unlike the often sensual characteristics of the Celtic fee.

8 See note 20 below for Benoît's comments on the breakdown of the relationship.

9 Michel Stanesco, 'Nigromance et université: scolastique du merveilleux dans le roman français du Moyen Age', p. 131.

10 Stanesco, 'Nigromance et université ...', pp. 129-131.

of her learning, the subject for which all her previous studies have been a preparation. It is a valid part of learning, rather than an arcane or esoteric branch of knowledge.

In *Partonopeus de Blois*, education allows the poet to transform a fairy type into a super-endowed mortal, but the use of the device to account for her powers also allows him to denude her of them and show her as an unexceptional mortal. Her skills are learned and are as fallible as anything else in the mortal world. The skills have enabled her to create an illusion, but the illusion cannot be maintained once Partonopeus attempts to see his mistress.

In Renaut de Beaujeu's *Le Bel Inconnu*, a text which has much in common with *Partonopeus de Blois*, and which we shall be discussing further in detail, there is also an opposition between a learned fairy and an ordinary mortal, but here it which operates in a rather different way. The hero is torn between two ladies, the fairy La Pucele as Blancs Mains and the mortal Blonde Esmeree whom he rescues from an enchantment. The contrast between these two objects of his attention is sharpened by the suggestion that they may represent two facets of the same idea, that they are in some sense the "same" person.[11] La Pucele's revelation to the hero that she had controlled his quest to save Blonde Esmeree and that hers was the mysterious voice that revealed his name, Guinglain, when he succeeded mitigates against the view of Blonde Esmeree as an independent rival to La Pucele for Guinglain's affections. The principal distinguishing characteristic between the two ladies is the fact that La Pucele is highly educated, whereas Blonde Esmeree has no intellectual pretensions. Guinglain is thus appealed to by two aspects of feminine charm: education (La Pucele) versus conventional social status (Blonde Esmeree).

The transformation of the heroine is also related to questions of genre. Hilton sees the transformation of Melior before and after the crisis with Partonopeus as reflecting a move from notions taken from the *lai* to that of the romance (p. 53). The fairy mistress of the *lai* assumes a dominant role over her mortal lover, initiates him in love, imposing in return her taboo upon his actions. The heroine of romance must be sought out and won by her hero. Hence Partonopeus has to work towards

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11 On a possible Jungian interpretation of the two female figures in *Le Bel Inconnu*, see Gérard Chandes, 'Amour, marriage et transgresion dans *Le Bel Inconnu* à la lumière de la psychologie analytique'.

regaining Melior's favour and competes for her hand in the tournament. The use of similar techniques is illustrated in *Le Bel Inconnu* by Peter Haidu.[12] The Pucele as blancs mains is the lady of the *lai*, whereas her rival, Blonde Esmeree, is the heroine of romance. La Pucele dominates over Guinglain, pretending not to want to grant him her favours before initiating him in the act of love, and casting him away from her when he tries to leave her. Blonde Esmeree is won in the common romance *topos* of the quest and becomes the hero's match by virtue of his knightly prowess.

In both *Le Bel Inconnu* and *Partonopeus de Blois*, therefore, the poets contrast a learned heroine who can practise magic and behaves in a way resembling the Breton fairy type, with a more "ordinary" heroine. Education is used as part of the distinction between them. Moreover, education in these two particular texts seems to be fundamental to their reading, and it is therefore worth exploring more fully. Their similar approach also suggests that there may be strong parallels between the works.[13]

A similar reason for their exceptional education is given by each heroine when she describes her upbringing. La Pucele explains to Guinglain:-

> "Mes pere fu molt rices rois
> Qui molt fu sages et cortois.
> Onques n'ot oire ne mes que moi
> Si m'ama tant en bonne foi
> Que les set ars me fist aprendre
> Tant que totes les soc entendre.
> Arimetiche, dyometrie,
> Ingremance et astrenomie,
> Et des autres asés apris.
> Tant i fu mes cuers ententis
> Que bien soc prendre mon consel
> Et a la lune et au solelc,
> Si sai tos encantemens fare
> Deviner et conoistre en l'are
> Quanques dou mois puet avenir." (vv. 4933-4947)[14]

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12 Peter Haidu, 'Realism, Convention, Fictionality and the Theory of Genres in *Le Bel Inconnu*'.

13 These similarities have not been thoroughly explored, but for one point of comparison see John L. Grigsby, 'The Narrator in *Partonopeus de Blois, Le Bel Inconnu,* and *Joufrois de Poitiers*'.

14 Renaut de Beaujeu, *Le Bel Inconnu,* ed G. Perrie Williams.

Since she was her father's only child, she received special love and privilege from him, and she implies that her education was intended to allow her to fulfil the responsibilities of being his heir. The idea of a girl receiving special attention on the educational front because she is an only child is not unique, and we noted examples from other texts in Part II.[15] Similarly, Melior tells us that she had been brought up to be resourceful in order that she would be fit to take control of her father's empire on his death, she being his only heir (vv. 4583-4588). Her education is unheard of for a girl - she receives an education more like that normally given to a boy.[16]

However, the *Partonopeus de Blois* poet takes the transposition of gender roles one stage further and shows Melior not only learning, but also behaving as a male, rather than a female.[17] It is in this role that her affair with young Partonopeus begins. She instigates the relationship, engineers his arrival at her land and brings him to her bed, where once again she is the initiator and instructor in the act of love, albeit with a superficial guise of coyness.[18] Melior is in complete charge of the relationship and Partonopeus merely accedes to her wishes and design. However, it is hardly a mature or a satisfactory relationship. The control exercised by Melior in the relationship does not allow for any expression of the wishes or thoughts of Partonopeus, and her dominance is symbolised in the taboo she imposes on him. Her terms also condemn the hero to isolation from the society of which he would normally be part. Precisely this kind of isolation is the object of criticism in the *Joie de la Cort* episode in Chrétien's *Erec et Enide.*

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15 See, for example, Yseut in the Tristan romances and Fenice in *Gui de Warewic.*

16 Joan Ferrante, 'The Education of Women in the Middle Ages in Theory, Fact and Fantasy', p. 33, comments: "This is an interesting corroboration of modern findings about successful professional women. The point seems to be that these medieval women, like many of their modern counterparts, were educated like men because they filled the place of sons for their fathers."

17 In the case of Silence, whose education was analysed in Section 2, this imposition of the male role upon the female is taken to its furthest extreme, with considerably more far-reaching consequences. Unlike Melior, however, Silence is never seen in a position of dominance or strength because of her education. The extreme nature of her situation serves rather to heighten her awareness and practice of the feminine virtues.

18 In Part II, p.66, in discussing the theme of advice-giving, it was noted that it is Melior who gives Partonopeus instructions about how to behave, emphasising her role as the dominant party.

Despite its glory, her education creates a problem for Melior, as indicated by its revelation at a time of crisis. It has bred in her too strong a desire to control her situation, an excessive wish to dominate. This is one aspect of her behaviour that needs to be modified after the crisis. In the second part of the romance, therefore, she has to unergo a new period of education and has to learn to be powerless and trust to factors beyond her control. She has to wait for Partonopeus to win her, to come to her rather than bringing him forcibly herself. It is precisely when Partonopeus first performs something approaching an autonomous action, or at least one which lacks Melior's sanction, namely looking at her, that her dominant role is threatened and her power begins to crumble. The loss of her powers, therefore, has a sound psychological explanation.

However, it is not merely the heroine who needs to review her education. Partonopeus himself also needs to undergo a maturing process. He is acknowledged to be young when he is first called to Chef d'Oire, and although one of the first things he receives from Melior is a sexual education, there is more than this for him to learn about love. He has to prove himself worthy of Melior, as indeed she urges him to do when he first leaves her to go back to France (vv. 1907-1942). If Melior plays the dominant role, then Partonopeus plays the passive one in this first part of the romance. He accepts the conditions laid down by his mistress and complies with her injunction not to try to see him. His youth, with respect to Melior is emphasised, as is his inexperience. The crisis occurs because he does not have sufficient confidence in himself or faith in his lady to resist his mother and the archbishop's attempts to separate him from her. He therefore allows his mother to persuade him, against his desire and better judgement, to break Melior's command and try to see her. Certain common character traits can be seen in Melior and Partonopeus' mother. Both dominate him and practise deceit upon him, for example, and this parallel behaviour is significant. A psychological interpretation in terms of the young man choosing for his companion a woman who resembles his mother is questionable, but there is undoubtedly an echo here of the blurred foster mother/mistress role often found in the fairy characters of the *lai*.[19]

Partonopeus further shows a passive reaction in his utter self-disgust and wish to commit suicide after offending Melior, but he is eventually persuaded by

[19] See comments by Helaine Newstead in 'The Traditional Background of *Partonopeus de Blois*, p. 932.

Urraque to take a more positive view and work actively towards reconciliation with his mistress. When he finally fights for and wins Melior in the tournament held to find the worthiest knight to make her a suitable husband, their relationship is reestablished on the conventional romance principle that love for the lady inspires prowess in the man, whose prowess in turn inspires the lady's love.

The idea for the initial role reversal in *Partonopeus de Blois* probably comes from the combination of sources that are generally accepted to form the background to the romance, namely the legend of Cupid and Psyche plus Breton fairy mistress narratives. The male and female roles in the Cupid and Psyche legend are the opposite to those in *Partonopeus de Blois*. In the classical legend, the god Cupid entices the beautiful mortal maiden Psyche to his castle, where she is ministered to by unseen hands and where Cupid visits her at night in bed, asking of her only that she should not try to see him. The transposition of roles in the Old French romance arises from the influence of the fairy-mistress model which tends to accord the magical role to the female partner. This transposition is not, however, mere carelessness or an unconscious response to an influence; rather it is deliberately used by the poet to enable him to explore the respective roles of the hero and heroine in his romance.

The question of the fairy lady's dominance is also present in *Le Bel Inconnu*, although less explicitly explored or resolved. The Bel Inconnu, although greatly attracted by La Pucele on their first meeting, and although keen to enjoy the favours of her love, is unwilling to abandon everything to be with her. Significantly, he does not allow the pleasant interlude of their meeting to interrupt his quest for Blonde Esmeree, thus allowing himself to become subject to the rival attractions of the two ladies. Having returned to the fairy, and secured her love, he is still unwilling to let her rule his life so completely as to separate him from knightly pursuits or the counter-attractions of Blonde Esmeree. Which of the two poles of the magnet - the educated heroine with the concomitant risks of an overbearing manner, or the less exciting, but more submissive wealthy heiress - will finally draw the hero is deliberately left unresolved in Renaut's ambiguous ending. He tells us that Guinglain does desert La Pucele and marry Blonde Esmeree, although the former always remains his true love. The poet, however, will not arrange for that relationship to be satisfied unless he himself receives the satisfaction of a *bel sanblant* from his own lady:

Si ert Guinglains en tel esmai
Que ja mais n'avera s'amie.
D'autre vengeance n'a il mie.
Mais por la soie grant grevance
Ert sor Guinglain ceste vengance,
Que ja mais jor n'en parlerai
Tant que le bel sanblant avrai (vv. 6260-6266)

This is a covert means of leaving the final choice as to the outcome with the audience who have seen that, whilst the educated heroine possesses undeniable attractions, she also brings with her certain disadvantages.[20]

The actual description of La Pucele's education is treated in a similar way to that of Melior in *Partonopeus de Blois*, a treatment which further implies it may not be an entirely helpful attribute to the heroine. La Pucele's revelation to Guinglain about her powers is made at a time of change. Although he has just enjoyed the favours of her love, and been forgiven for leaving after their first meeting to continue his quest, her clairvoyance reveals that if he leaves again, he will never return. He will be married to Blonde Esmeree. Although it was her power to see into the future which told her Guinglain would leave her when he did, and that he would come back, and although she has in fact controlled his path from his leaving Arthur's court, her power is not sufficient to keep the hero with her. she senses that he will wish to depart again, and that she will be powerless to prevent it, able though she has been to control all his previous adventures. All this she explains to him, and tells him about her unusual education. As in the case of Melior, La Pucele's education, the source of her power over the hero, is fully revealed only when that power begins to diminish. Furthermore, in this text, this description of

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20 To return to *Le Roman de Troie*, an example we referred to earlier, Medea also loves and magically assists Jason, but is finally abandoned by him. She uses her education to try and secure his affection, believing that if she assists him, he must love and be faithful to her in return. In this she acts without *mesure*, and Benoît criticises her finally for her foolishness and the extent to which she goes for love, although Jason too is condemned for his behaviour:-

Grant folie fist Medea:
Trop ot le vassal aamé,
Por lui laissa son parenté,
Son pere et sa mere e sa gent.
Assez l'en prist puis malement;
Quar, si con li Autors reconte,
Puis la laissa, si fist grant honte.
(vv. 2030-2036)

the heroine's education is demoted by being, strictly speaking, redundant to the audience's understanding of her role and character. We already know that La Pucele has considerable skills and education, for on first introducing her into the narrative, Renaut tells us:-

> Les set ars sot et encanter
> Et sot bien estoiles garder
> Et bien et mal, to ço savoit;
> Mervillous sens en li avoit. (vv. 1933-1936)

It is only because La Pucele wishes to expand further on her education herself that the second description is given. She proudly tells the hero of her past, yet ironically it is told only when the glory of that past has become tarnished.

Although both poets suggest that a relationship where the woman plays a dominant role is unhealthy, they are able to exploit this anomaly for entertaining narrative effects, such the spectacular illusions created in the magical castle of Chef d'Oire. The situation also gives rise to moments of delightful comedy.[21] In *Partonopeus de Blois* there is a humorously erotic encounter on the first night Partonopeus spends in Chef D'Oire, when he unwittingly goes to sleep in the room belonging to Melior. Her manner when she finds the young man in her bed is an amusing combination of outraged modesty and seductive enticement to Partonopeus to do what it was she wanted him there for in the first place. For Partonopeus, this is his first experience with a woman and he is uncertain what to do, whereas Melior manages to teach him and let him think he is taking the initiative at the same time.[22] She thus conforms to the expected fairy behaviour of initiating a mortal in the act of love.[23] The instructive possibilities of the encounter are well developed. Not only

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21 These poets are not the only writers of the Middle Ages to exploit the comic possibilities of male/female role reversal. The idiosyncratic *chantefable Aucassin et Nicolette* achieves considerable comic and parodic effects by casting the heroine in a decisive role and the hero in a weak one.

22 It would probably, however, be stretching a reading of the romance too far to suggest that this is any reflection of an approved pedagogic practice, after the manner of Socrates!

23 We are also told of Maugis d'Aigremont, for example, that his fairy foster mother Oriande took his education firmly in hand, making sure he was an accomplished horseman, chess and dice player and musician. Finally, after he had been knighted:

> Si en fist son ami, que mout le pot amer.
> Son cors li abandone besier et acoler,
> Desoz son covretor ensemble o li jöer.

does Melior teach Partonopeus, but the whole scene could be read as an amusing lesson to the audience, as "advice to the young man finding himself in bed with a woman for the first time". There are echoes here of the Ovidian art of love tradition which included quite explicit advice on bedroom tactics and behaviour. The love/education relationship we discussed in Section 3 thus receives in this scene a novel and comic application. The character who instructs another in matters of love is not simply a counsellor, but is one of the pair of lovers, and, moreover, the female partner. Her lesson will obviously be practical rather than theoretical, giving rise to possibilities that our poet is not slow to exploit.

Renaut de Beaujeu in *Le Bel Inconnu* uses the expected initiation into love by a fairy to create an even more impressive *tour de force* of comic and erotic suspense. Having arrived at her castle and defeated Malgiers li Gris, Le Bel Inconnu is accepted by La Pucele as her future husband, and she declares she loves him greatly. She comes to his bed that night scantily clad, because she wants to be with him. However, whilst she is happy to embrace him, at the first sign of an attempt at a kiss from the knight, she recoils, affronted, saying that this behaviour could easily turn to *lecerie* (v. 2451) and is not appropriate until they are married, whereupon she abruptly departs. Le Bel Inconnu is left dumbfounded and fired by pangs of love, the audience frustrated in their expectation.

The next day, unbeknown to the lady, the hero continues on his quest to rescue Helie's mistress from her enchantment, returning a day later to La Pucele whose outrage at his desertion of her in pursuit of his quest he gradually overcomes. That night, as his bed is prepared, she gives Guinglain some apparently simple, but in fact somewhat ambivalent instructions. He is to stay in his bed and not behave to her as he did last time. Her bed is next door and she will leave the door open, but he must not attempt to come in, unless she bids him (vv. 4489-4504). The audience is thus prepared for a replay of the earlier scene, this time with the *dénouement* they had been anticipating. Guinglain waits for the expected bidding, but it does not come. He cannot understand the conflicting signs from his lady - she forbade him her bed, but gave him to understand at the same time that she did

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(laisse XXI, ll 640-642)
Maugis d'Aigremont ed. Philippe Vernay

Helaine Newstead cites other examples of this dual mistress/mother role in 'The Traditional Background of *Partonopeus de Blois*' p. 931, n. 47

want him (vv. 4529-4533). On two occasions, therefore, he summons the courage to rise and go to the door of the adjoining room. On each occasion, though, he suddenly finds himself in a mortal peril - on a narrow plank over a raging torrent, and secondly, under falling masonry from the collapsing roof above him. His cries for help on each occasion summon the lady's attendants, who show him that he must have been dreaming for he is actually only clinging to the perch of the lady's falcon or has his pillow over his head. Having, by means of these illusions, made Guinglain appear thoroughly foolish, the lady finally sends one of her maids to summon him. Renaut, however, continues to tease his audience as Guinglain has been teased, for, in describing the love scene when Guinglain is finally admitted by La Pucele, he tells of their initial embraces and kisses, then tastefully goes no further saying: "Je ne sai s'il le fist s'amie/Car n'i fui pas, ne n'en vie mie", thus retaining propriety, but also frustrating an expectation from the audience that he might have told more. He does admit, however, that the lady that night "non de pucele perdi" (v. 4817).[24]

The comic exploitation of the bedroom scene is yet another parallel between Renaut's poem and *Partonopeus de Blois*. Indeed it appears quite probable that Renaut is gently mocking the earlier text here, especially in his rather self-righteous modesty in not describing the final outcome of the scene. Whereas in *Partonopeus de Blois* the poet amuses his audience with quite explicit descriptions of the lovers' encounter, Renaut capitalises on the expectation that this is what he, too, will offer, by deliberately refusing to indulge that expectation. Not for him, he seems to imply, is audience approval gained by such dubious means; rather he prefers the more subtle effect of subverting a carefully fostered presumption.

When we examine the education of the heroine in these two texts, therefore, it becomes apparent that there are many parallels between them: the presence of an educated versus a non-educated woman, the revelation by the heroine of her education at a critical time in the affair, the scope of that education and the exploitation of the dominant woman for erotic comedy. All these suggest at least that Renaut de Beaujeu knew and probably that he drew upon the earlier romance

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24 Chrétien, in his description of the wedding night in *Erec et Enide* (vv. 2052-2054), uses a similar euphemistic formula in a false display of coyness.

for his own work.[25] Moving on to examine the wider implications of the education of the heroine, we find another common aspect which provides further evidence that in *Le Bel Inconnu*, Renaut is presenting his reading of *Partonopeus de Blois*. We have already referred to Haidu's comments on the role of genre in *Le Bel Inconnu*. In his article, he notes the presence of a large number of woman characters in the romance. Not only do we find the heroine of *lai* and romance (respectively La Pucele and Blonde Esmeree), but also the Lady of courtly lyric in the narrator's own extra-textual lady, whose *bel senblant* is appealed for at the end as an arbiter between the claims of La Pucele and Blonde Esmeree. We are alerted to the similarly large number of female roles in *Partonopeus de Blois* by the deliberate presentation of Melior in both magical and non-magical personae. Women are important characters in this romance, often pushing the male figures into the background. A further exploration of the two who appear in the second half of the work, Urraque and Persewis, tells us more about the poet's view of his heroine and her relationship with the hero.

The appearance of Urraque, Melior's sister, in the second part of the romance is slightly odd. When Melior told Partonopeus about her extraordinary education, she accounted for it by the fact that she was her father's only heir (vv. 4583-4588), i.e. that she was an only child. It is then surprising, not to say inconsistent, to find the poet introducing us to Urraque in the second part of the romance. Although Urraque is needed for the progress of the plot, she does not actually need to be Melior's sister to carry out the necessary actions. Her appearance as a sister at this point invalidates what Melior had said earlier about her being an only child. Furthermore, the only person whose testimony we have about that particular fact is Melior herself, it is not corroborated by any other character or by the narrator. Hence Urraque's sudden appearance tends to undermine the legitimacy of Melior's extraordinary education by invalidating the reason given for it.

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25 The precise date of *Le Bel Inconnu*, and therefore the relative position of these two romances is not certain. Levy places *Le Bel Inconnu* at around 1190, and our editor, Williams, in the first third of the thirteenth century, although Alain Guerreau 'Renaud de Bagé *Le Bel Inconnu*, structure symbolique et signification sociale', places it potentially earlier in the twelfth century. However, both the dates suggested by the first two critics fall after 1188, the date before which *Partonopeus de Blois* was written.

Urraque can be seen as a "deputy heroine" to Melior in the second part, the blood relationship between them serving to emphasise that Urraque is, in some measure, an *alter ego* to Melior.[26] There are many parallels between the two. Urraque uses her skills to practise deceptions upon Partonopeus as Melior had done (although hers are not magical), but with the selfless motive of enabling the two lovers to be reunited, rather than with the selfish motive of securing her own happiness. Indeed, the poet emphasises the fact that Urraque herself is attracted to the hero, but she lays aside the temptation to take him for herself and instead works for his reconciliation with Melior. She persuades Partonopeus to abandon his suicidal self-abnegation after his exile from Chef d'Oire, by allowing him to believe that she has been sent by Melior and that Melior still loves him, fostering this hope later by the provision of false love-letters from Melior. Catherine Hilton perceptively comments that the "lie" practised here by Urraque - she has not been sent by Melior and Melior is still adhering to her petulant policy of not wishing to reopen negotiations with her offending lover - is in fact partly true (p. 41). Whatever her protestations to the contrary, Melior does still love Partonopeus, and the only obstacle to her being reconciled to him is her pettishness at having ceased to have her own way and having been made to look foolish by the discovery of her illicit liaison with the young boy. Urraque's presence functions in two ways. Firstly, she is a contrast to her sister, acting calmly and rationally whilst Melior is enraged or sulky, using her skills altruistically and wisely instead of selfishly. She thus points up the flaws in her sister's behaviour. Secondly, however, the close relationship between them suggests that Urraque is not merely a contrast but a representation of what Melior could be, if she chose, a function that encourages the audience to believe Melior will indeed learn more kindly and docile behaviour.

The third female character related by blood to these two is Persewis, Melior's cousin and attendant. Like Urraque, she is attracted by Partonopeus and indeed falls seriously in love with him during the time she and Urraque care for him after his near-suicide in the Ardennes forest. However, her unselfishness enables her to sublimate her wishes and work instead for the realisation of those of the hero and his heroine.

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26 Fay Fisher: *Narrative Art in Medieval Romances*, p. 47.

We thus find the poet multiplying the female characters in the romance: two *personae* of Melior, her sister and her cousin.[27] Each of these female characters can be seen as a projection or suggestion of the heroine figure, who is thus built up in a multi-layered way in the romance. The poet does this in order to explore the dynamics of the human love-relationship, focussing particularly on the perspective of the female partner, and in this he is highly original. The initial model for the heroine, the fairy-type Melior, is proved by the breaking of the taboo to be inappropriate. Thereafter, the second half of the romance illustrates the heroine's attempt to find a better model. Both Urraque and Persewis, in their self-effacing, rather than self-seeking manner, suggest that the role of the female lover is one of submission rather than dominance. Urraque illustrates, however, that this need not imply negation of a woman's skills or intelligence, rather that those skills need to be used unselfishly.

Penny Sullivan draws attention to the three marriages that occur at the end of the A version of the story,[28] where each of the three women, Melior, Urraque and Persewis, are satisfactorily united to a worthy husband.[29] She argues that the author of the A *remaniement* of the romance is exploring a range of possible preliminaries to a satisfactory marriage, and this bears out the view that the poet is using a multi-layered effect to explore the human love/marriage relationship. Melior and Partonopeus' marriage is based both on political interests and personal inclination, the realisation of which the two protagonists have had to work hard to achieve. Urraque's union with the French king, Lohier, is based on respect rather than love and is a match made appropriate by political considerations. Persewis and Gandin (Partonopeus' companion-at-arms in the tournament) are united for the love that burgeons between them, as the other two couples are united. This last union makes one final reference in the romance to the notion of the correct ratio of

27 Another female character we might also include Partonopeus' mother, who, whilst not a blood relation to Melior, shows similarity in character to her, as we noted above. She mirrors some of the less attractive qualities of the heroine. She appears only the first half of the romance, when Melior is acting the dominant role.

28 *Partonopeus de Blois* exists in several different manuscript versions and this manuscript is the only one to choose this means of ending the romance. The validity of A's testimony as to the content of the romance is shown by its use for the edition by Crapelet and by its inclusion in the more recent edition by Gildea, although he bases his edition upon manuscript B.

29 Penny Sullivan, 'Love and Marriage in Early French Narrative Poetry'.

dominance and submission in the male/female relationship. Gandin proposes marriage to Persewis, offering her his homage, an act which she explicitly refuses to accept as suggesting an improper dominance of female over male; she reasserts the idea of proper feminine submission (Sullivan p. 99). This must be understood in the context of the happy union of Partonopeus and Melior and, like the final *Joie de la Cort* episode in Chrétien's *Erec et Enide*, serves to illustrate that a happy medium has been found by the hero and heroine in their love relationship.

Relating these three models to the genre roles Haidu describes for *Le Bel Inconnu*, Melior can be seen to represent both the fairy and the romance heroine, the latter role predominating, and being reinforced by the presence of Urraque who makes the traditional "appropriate" marriage. In the relationship of Persewis and Gandin, we find Persewis refusing to accept either illicit love outside marriage or the undue homage of her lover; these may be taken as covert references to the model offered by the lyric poets, rejected here in favour of the romance model. Renaut can thus be seen to be aware of the *Partonopeus* poet's wish to explore different models for a heroine, and offers a similar choice in his own romance. However, his presentation is more allusive, and he finally makes no explicit statement as to which model he prefers. The choice is rather left with his audience.

How, then, do these two poets view the educated woman, and how does this perception compare with those views we discovered in Part II? The educated heroine has an undeniable appeal for the hero - Partonopeus and Guinglain are both attracted to their learned, magical mistress. She has an added excitement and novelty lacking in other women, and since this is often brought to bear in the physical relationship, she becomes highly desirable. She conforms, perhaps to a male fantasy ideal. The attraction of the magical heroine for poet and audience is that she can use her powers to ensnare her mortal lover and can be a teacher to him in matters of love. The educated heroine acts as an instructor in love to the hero, bringing her superior knowledge to bear in their relationship, which gives the poet the opportunity to talk with a degree of freedom about the intimacies of love.

The role of the educated woman, however, is devalued by being primarily a means of adding piquancy to her relationship with the hero. The appeal of the heroine lies in the establishing of the love relationship; when, however, it comes to the development of the relationship, the poets present a less favourable view of their heroines. The education of the heroine is not seen as intrinsically important, but

rather as an exploitable novelty. We thus find more evidence to support our suggestion in Part II, that women's education is included to accord with their role in a given work, and that that role is defined in terms of the relationship with male characters.

Views of women who practise magic also have their more overtly negative side: they are sometimes regarded with suspicion, reflecting the fact, emphasised by Stanesco, that magic, if accepted as part of learning (for a man or a woman) was still subject to disapproval (pp. 134-5).[30] Partonopeus' family fear that Melior is some kind of demon, and she herself hastens to reassure him that she is a Christian when she first comes to him at night. (vv. 1535-56) We also noted in Part II the suspicion cast upon Guiborc who practises magic, a suspicion doubtless reinforced by the fact that she is a Saracen (p. 88).

Secondly, the women themselves both seem to regard their learning in a positive light. Both speak proudly to their lovers of their education, and Melior certainly seems to reproach Partonopeus with the fact that his act in trying to see her has made her lose powers she valued.[31] However, the need for Melior to learn more docile behaviour, and the question mark over La Pucele's final claim to Guinglain suggest that other people do not regard the educated heroine so favourably. Despite their appeal as characters, neither of these women is granted her wishes.[32] In *Partonopeus de Blois* the education of the heroine is described to account for her magical skills precisely at the point where she loses them, this point being a crisis in her relationship with her young lover. We wonder what the value of learning can be for Melior if it can be overcome by the actions of one young

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30 Patricia Labalme in *Learned Women of the European Past* comments on the link, both in the Middle Ages and later, between the black arts and intellectual skills:

> The figure of the sorceress, so often associated in medieval literature with a brilliant heroine, is still adumbrated in later accusations of mental instability. The attraction of magic powers ... could raltionalizethe vulnerability men felt, and if not magic or madness, then malice was charged. (pp.5-6)

31 We do not agree with Joan Ferrante's view that these women only reveal their education when they sense they are losing the hero because they "fear that men are put off by too much learning in a woman." ('The Education of Women in the Middle Ages', p. 33).

32 We also have reservations about Ferrante's views that we are supposed to identify with the educated heroine in these two romances ('The Education of Women in the Middle Ages', p. 35).

man. Her learning builds up a world of fantasy which is shattered when Partonopeus symbolically sheds the light of his lantern from the real world on her. The appeal and validity of the fantasy world is limited; the characters in the romance need to learn to live in the real world. Hence Melior has to find a new way of winning her lover that is not dependent upon magic. The permanent love relationship sought out in this romance, as in *Le Bel Inconnu,* does not accommodate intellectual skills in the woman, despite their appeal in lending her an aura of mystery.

Educated heroines are also devalued by being presented as "honorary men", by the fact that their education needs some explanation and is not accepted in its own right or in any way as normal. Both our examples, and others noted in Part II, are treated as "pseudo-boys"; they are educated in depth only because of the absence of any male heir in the family. The idea, noted in Part I that a good ruler should be an educated person is applied to the female characters and made more explicit than in cases where a male character is prepared for ruling. In this context, the beneficial effects of nurture seem to be able to counteract the potential weakness of the female nature.

The poets' attitudes towards their educated heroines can best be described as ambivalent. They appear, at least, to be a kind of conundrum, worthy in the eyes of these two poets of extensive exploration in a romance, yet not wholeheartedly approved. This is neatly exemplified in *Le Bel Inconnu.* The solution that exists at the end of the romance as Renaut left it is that Guinglain is united with Blonde Esmeree, although La Pucele remains his true love. The solution is pragmatically satisfactory - Guinglain has won his heroine and made a good political match - but it is emotionally unsatisfying, a tension which is deliberately not resolved. Despite her appeal, the learned woman is ultimately kept at arm's length by the poet who will not completely commit his hero to her without some external encouragement to do so. He presents an uncertainty about the learned woman, shared we may assume, by his audience. The idea of the educated woman appeals to the imagination of the poets and their audiences, but is not one which they wish to bring into their own reality. They prefer to keep the educated woman as some other-worldly being where she is not too great a risk to accepted convention and where she can be exploited for whatever novel or exciting effect her creator might choose.

Section 5

Chrétien's *Conte du Graal*: The Theme of Education as a Key to Interpretation

In examining the descriptions of education in a large number of romances and epics from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, *Le Conte du Graal* emerges as one of the few works that considers the process of education rather than its product, or that offers any exploration of the relationship between nature and nurture which that process implies. Furthermore, it is one of the few that uses education as a narrative theme. When we survey the abundant criticism that the romance has engendered, we find remarkably little attention devoted to the theme of education.[1] This is surprising in the light of a comment made by Rita Lejeune in her study on the function of this theme in *Le Conte du Graal.* She comments on the tacit agreement amongst the majority of scholars that "*Le Conte del Graal* constitue, en grande partie, un code de chevalerie, un récit de l'éducation d'un jeune prince" (p. 51). Lejeune suggests that *Le Conte du Graal* can be read as a *miroir de prince,* basing her argument upon the fact that Chrétien's patron, and the dedicatee of the work, Count Philip of Flanders, was, during the period when the romance is thought to have been composed (1178-1181), tutor and regent to the young king Philippe-Auguste. Given Lejeune's evidence that Count Philip was indeed concerned about questions of education (p. 71), it seems clear that these are an important part of at least the background of the romance. One might be tempted to view the scholarly consensus on this fact, to which Lejeune points, simply as an indication that the theme is self-evident, requiring no further elucidation, unlike the questions of sources or possible interpretations of the work, which have engaged extensive attention. However, we have evidence that at least one near contemporary of Chrétien based his reading of *Le Conte du Graal* on the education theme. As both Michelle Freeman and D.D.R. Owen have demonstrated, the opening section of *Fergus* carefully parodies Chrétien's works, notably *Le Conte du Graal.*[2] It is

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1 The principal critical discussions of the subject can be found in:- Alexandre Micha, 'Le Perceval de Chrétien de Troyes (roman éducatif)', Rita Lejeune, 'La date du *Conte del Graal* de Chrétien de Troyes' and Madeleine Pelner Cosman, *The Education of the Hero in Arthurian Romance.*

2 Michelle Freeman, '*Fergus*: Parody and the Arthurian Tradition' and D.D.R. Owen, 'The Craft of Guillaume le Clerc's *Fergus*'.

precisely the theme of education that Guillaume selects from this romance, parodying Chrétien's untrained hero and the process by which he acquires experience, in his own hero Fergus, who is brought up in ignorance of knighthood, but is fired with a passion for it after seeing Arthur and his knights pass one day. He sets off for the court, where he, like Perceval, is mocked by Kay, but his subsequent adventures and remarkable prowess prove him to be the worthiest of knights.

Hence, one medieval writer at least, amongst the many imitators of Chrétien, regarded education as important for a reading of *Le Conte du Graal*, and we should not ignore this view. Although modern criticism has treated this aspect of the romance only cursorily, we do find hints here too that it is worth our attention. Madeleine Pelner Cosman suggests, in *The Education of the Hero in Arthurian Romance*, that education is one of the structuring motifs in the work. She observes that Perceval receives training on three occasions, from his mother, Gornemanz and the Hermit. Each phase of his education follows a similar pattern, consisting of what Cosman terms practical Instruction followed by four items of Advice, which she summarises as follows:-

Mother

1. Offer help to ladies.
2. Ask the name of your companion
3. Seek the company of *prodomes*.
4. Remember to go to church and pray.

Gornemanz

1. Have mercy on a defeated opponent.
2. Do not talk too much.
3. Offer help to ladies.
4. Remember to go to church and pray.

Hermit

1. Believe in, love and worship God and go to church.
2. Honour good men and women.
3. Rise in the presence of a priest.
4. Be of assistance to the weak

In the case of Gornemanz and the mother, they are broadly similar, in that each offers first advice about behaviour in the world of knights and chivalry, and gives finally an exhortation to religious observance. Furthermore, two of the mother's

dicta are repeated almost verbatim by Gornemanz. The order is reversed in the advice of the Hermit, who stresses religious belief above correct behaviour, but here too the four elements are broadly similar. As Cosman points out, the patterning in the advice parallels the broad outline of the plot, indicating that a turning point has been reached by the time the hero arrives at the Hermit's cell.

Cosman therefore draws attention to a deliberate patterning found in the descriptions of Perceval's education, and to the fact that this pattern follows the overall orientation of the plot. It follows that some account must be taken of education as a theme where we form our interpretation of the romance as a whole. The contribution of education to the construction of the romance needs further exploration. We notice that each item of advice from his mother and Gornemanz gives rise to certain actions on the part of the hero (since the romance is incomplete, we have no corresponding actions for the Hermit's advice). Each piece of advice is remembered by the hero and used by him to justify a later action in a clear and deliberate pattern in which the relevant portions of the text can easily be matched up. Chrétien thereby clearly suggests that we should note the relationship between the advice received and the hero's subsequent actions. Let us take first the mother's speech, in which we find six separate requirements (the first three corresponding to the first dictum in Cosman's fourfold division). Each requirement is commented and acted upon by the young Perceval:-

ADVICE

"Biaus filz, un san vos vuel aprandre
Ou il vos fet mout bien antandre,
Et s'il vos plest a retenir,
Granz biens vos an porra venir.
Chevaliers seroiz jusqu'a po,
Filz, se Deu plest, et je le lo:
Se vos trovez ne pres ne loing
Dame qui d'aïe et besoing,
Ne pucele desconseilliee,
La vostre aïe apareilliee
Lor soit, s'eles vos an requierent;
Que totes enors i afierent.
Qui as dames enor ne porte,
La soe enors doit estre morte.
Dames et puceles servez,
Si seroiz par tot enorez;
Et se vos aucune an proiiez,
Gardez que ne li enuiiez;

Ne feites rien qui li despleise.
(vv. 527-545)

CONSEQUENCE

Dist: "Pucele, je vos salu,
Si con ma mere le m'aprist:
Ma mere m'anseigna et dist
Que les puceles saluasse,
An quel que leu que jes trovasse."
(vv. 682-686)

ADVICE

De pucele a mout qui la beise;
S'ele le beisier vos consant,
(vv. 546-547)

CONSEQUENCE

"Einz vos beiserai, par mon chief,"
Fet li vaslez, "cui qu'il soit grief;
Que ma mere le m'anseigna."
(vv. 693-695)

ADVICE

Le soreplus vos an desfant,
Se leissier le volez por moi;
Et s'ele a anel an son doi
Ou a sa ceinture aumonsniere,
Se par amor ou par proiiere
Le vos done, bon m'iert et bel
Que vos an portoiz son anel:
De l'anel prandre vos doing gié
Et de l'aumosniere congié.
(vv. 548-556)

CONSEQUENCE

"Ancor" fet il, *me dist ma mere*
Qu'an vostre doi l'anel preïsse,
Mes que rien plus ne vos feïsse:
Or ça l'anel, jel vuel avoir!"
(vv. 712-715)

ADVICE

Biaus filz, ancor vos vuel dire el:
Ja an chemin ne an ostel
N'aiiez longuement conpeignon
Que vos ne demandiez son non;
Le non sachiez a la parsome;

Car par le non conoist l'an l'ome.
(vv. 557-562)

CONSEQUENCE

Et li vaslez dist a son oste:
"Sire, *ma mere m'anseigna*
Qu'avuec home n'alasse ja
Ne conpeignie o lui n'eüsse
Granmant que son non ne seüsse;
Je vuel le vostre non savoir."
(vv. 1540-1546)

ADVICE

Biaus filz, as prodomes parlez,
Avuec les prodomes alez;
Prodon ne forsconsoille mie
Çaus qui tienent sa conpeignie.
(vv. 563-566)

CONSEQUENCE

"Sire, *ma mere m'anseigna*
Que vers les prodomes alasse
Et que a aus me conseillasse,
Se creüsse ce qu'il diroient;
Que preu i ont cil qui les croient."
(vv. 1402-1406)

ADVICE

Sor tote rien vos vuel proiier
Que an yglise et an mostier
Alez proiier nostre Seignor,
Qu'an c'est siecle vos doint enor
Et si vos i doint contenir
Qu'a bone fin puissiez venir."
"Mere", fet il, "que est iglise?"
"Uns leus ou an fet le servise
Celui qui ciel et terre fist
Et homes et bestes i mist."
"Et mostiers quoi?" - "Filz, ce meïsme:
Une meison bele et saintisme
Et de cors sainz et de tresors,
S'i sacrefie l'an le cors
Jesucrist, la prophete sainte,
Cui giu firent honte mainte:
Traïz fu et jugiez a tort,
Si sofri angoisse de mort
Por les homes et por les fames;
Qu'an anfer aloient les ames
Quant eles partoient des cors,
Et il les an gita puis fors.

Cil fu a l'estache liiez
Batuz et puis crocefiiez
Et porta corone d'espines.
Por oïr messes et matines
Et por cel Seignor aorer
Vos lo gié au mostier aler."

(vv. 567-594)

CONSEQUENCE

"Deus! or voi je vostre meison.
Or feroie je mesprison,
Se aorer ne vos aloie.
Voir *me dist ma mere* tote voie,
Qui me dist que mostiers estoit
La plus bele chose qui soit,
Et me dist que ja ne trovasse
Mostier qu'aorer n'i alasse
Le Criator, an cui je croi.
Je l'irai proiier, par ma foi,
Qu'il me doint ancui a mangier,
Que j'an avroie grant mestier."

(vv. 655-666)[3]
(Italics mine)

Chrétien underlines his pattern by the repetition of the key phrases "me dist ma mere" or "ma mere m'anseigna", which is even more effective to an audience hearing the poem rather than reading it (see italicised text, vv. 684, 695, 712, 1541, 1402, 658). However, there is a flaw in the pattern - there is an instance of the "ma mere m'anseigna" repetition which does not refer back to any of the dicta in her parting lecture to her son. This occurs at the point where Perceval, looking for a night's lodging, finds himself at Gornemanz' castle and he approaches the old man to make his request:-

Cil qui vient a bien retenu
Ce que sa mere li aprist,
Car il le salua et dist:
"Sire ce m'anseigna ma mere." (vv. 1360-1363)

The first two lines are obviously ironical; Perceval thinks he remembers what his mother told him but, in fact, does not for she never specifically told him about greeting people. Perceval reveals in these words just how imperfectly he has remembered his mother's advice, and how little benefit his behaviour has gained

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3 All references are to *Der Percevalroman (Li Contes del Graal) von Christian von Troyes*, ed. Alfons Hilka.

from it. The pattern, with its deliberate flaw, forces the audience to consider the relationship between the advice and the resultant actions, which is important for an understanding of the romance.

In the immediate context of Perceval's attempts to do as his mother told him, the most obvious effect that can be derived is, of course, comedy, which Chrétien fully exploits.[4] The comedy both entertains the audience and further highlights the gap between the intended and actual consequences of the advice given to the hero. Hence we find Perceval acting roughly with the Tent Maiden in a way that would be tantamount to rape were is not for the hero's firm belief that he is behaving in an entirely proper way, which renders the scene comic. Far from encouraging the courtly treatment of ladies as she had hoped, his mother's advice is being used for the justification of completely uncouth behaviour. Similarly, in his encounter with Gornemanz, her advice serves not to lend a courtly air to the boy's manners, but his gauche attempts to act upon this advice rather emphasise his lack of refinement. Gornemanz recognises immediately that the boy is "nice et sot", but treats him nonetheless with perfect good breeding, which further emphasises the other's shortcomings.

Perceval genuinely attempts to put his mother's words into effect, but his misapplications show how little he has understood them. He mistakes the letter of the advice - you may accept a ring from a young lady, you should ask your companion's name - for the spirit of true, courtly, chivalrous behaviour that lies behind it. This has comic consequences, but it is also indicative of a fundamental problem of perception and perspective in the hero which is important for our interpretation of the romance.

Having found a deliberate patterning between the mother's advice and its consequences upon Perceval's behaviour, we are alerted to look for a similar pattern in the Gornemanz section. A pattern is indeed found, but this time it is more complex. Again, there are four items of advice - have mercy on a defeated opponent, don't talk too much, offer help to those who need it, remember to go to church, but in this instance, each of the first three items of advice leads to two

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4 Philippe Ménard notes Chrétien's use of the folklore motif of the *nice*, the inexperienced person acting wrongly and therefore comically in new situations in 'Le thème comique du *nice* dans la chanson de geste et le roman arthurien'.

occasions, rather than one, where the advice is recalled and acted upon. The third piece of advice, offer help to those who need it, is virtually identical to his mother's counsel about succouring ladies, and in this case, Perceval's recollection of the advice is implicit rather than explicit. Lastly, we notice that the final piece of advice, remember to go to church, has no corresponding behaviour, although this, too, was contained in his mother's advice as Perceval himself remembers:-

> "De toz les apostres de Rome
> Soiiez vos beneoiz, biaus sire;
> Qu'autel oï ma mere dire." (vv. 1672-1674)

This rather complex scheme can be illustrated thus:-

i HAVE MERCY ON A DEFEATED OPPONENT
(vv. 1639-1647)

First Implementation
Defeat of Anguingerrons (cf Clamadeus)

Recall of Advice
Si li sovint il neporquant
Del prodome qui li aprist. (vv. 2238-2239)

Second Implementation
Defeat of Orguelleus

Recall of Advice
Et cil qui onques n'oblia
Le prodome, qui li pria (vv. 3933-3934)

ii DO NOT TALK TOO MUCH
(vv. 1648-1656)

First Implementation
Arrival at Belrepeire

Recall of Advice
... del chasti li sovenoit
Que li prodon li avoit fet (vv. 1858-1859)

Second Implementation
At the Grail Castle

Recall of Advice
... del chasti li sovenoit
Celui qui chevalier le fist,
Qui li anseigna et aprist
Que de trop parler se gardast,
(vv. 3206-3209)

Que toz jorz an son cuer avoit
La parole au prodome sage, (vv. 3246-3247)

Por le prodome se tenoit,
Qui doucemant le chastia
De trop parler, et il i a
Toz jorz son cuer, si l'an sovient.
(vv. 3294-3296)

iii OFFER HELP TO THOSE WHO NEED IT
(vv. 1657-1662)

First Implementation
Blancheflor

Recall of Advice
Implicit

Second Implementation
Tent Maiden

Recall of Advice
Implicit

iv REMEMBER TO GO TO CHURCH
(vv.1663-1670)

First Implementation
NIL

Second Implementation
NIL

Chrétien's intentions with this pattern are broadly similar to those in the case of the mother's advice - the hero's reaction to the education offered to him reveals something about his internal state. We move away from comedy and from the essentially *nice* young boy to see a hero who has made some progress towards knightly accomplishment. The idea of a progression in the hero's education is important and has been commented upon by Alexandre Micha who sees Perceval's education progressing on three fronts: knighthood, love and religion. These follow on one from the other so that Perceval does not begin to make progress in love (with Blancheflor) until he has learned the basic precepts of knightly behaviour, and the

refinement of learning to love prepares him for spiritual development.[5] The idea of progress is further emphasised in the pattern of actions following Gornemanz's advice by the fact that, in each case, two occasions are provided for the hero to exercise his grasp of the precept he has been taught. His recall of the advice to offer help to those in need was seen to be implicit in this case; in other words, Perceval has reacted spontaneously, he has absorbed the instruction and acted correctly upon it. Hence, he acts as a true knight in coming to the rescue of Blancheflor, and is able to vindicate the honour of the Tent Maiden, whose plight has been caused by his previous misguided treatment of her. Similarly, in the case of Gornemanz's first piece of advice, to offer mercy to a defeated opponent, we see Perceval recalling the advice in his battles with Anginguerrons and Orguelleus, and acting correctly upon it. However, at this point in the narrative, Perceval still has further progress to make, for the last piece of advice, remembering to go to church, has not been acted upon at all, a hint that all is not well with the hero in other domains than the martial. The second piece of advice, remembering to hold his tongue, leads to Perceval's failure at the Grail Castle. That neither of these two precepts is successfully transposed into Perceval's actions suggests a significant link between the two. The relationship between the theme of education and the overall *sen* of the romance is underlined here. Whatever interpretation one chooses to place upon the romance, the scene at the Grail Castle is clearly one of the most important in the work. Perceval's reaction to education he has received plays a crucial role, highlighted by Chrétien's mentioning the effect Gornemanz's advice has had on him three times instead of only once. This failure at the Grail Castle is brought about by the same problem of mistaking the letter for the spirit of advice that had characterised Perceval's misapplication of his mother's words. Perceval believes he should remember not to talk so much, and therefore tries to keep silent whenever he can. However, the import behind Gornemanz's words is less simple; he wishes Perceval to realise that there are times when it is inappropriate to speak,

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5 See also Jean Frappier, *Chrétien de Troyes et le mythe du Graal*, p. 68:- "Autre agencement non moins évident: la gradation des épisodes qui jalonnent les apprentissages de Perceval ... L'initiation à la chevalerie et au savoir-vivre est suivie d'une initiation aux délices sentimentales de l'amour courtois, puis d'une initiation plus difficile et plus lente à la vie spirituelle."

but equally, by implication, *there are times when it is proper to speak.*[6] It is this implication that Perceval's judgement fails to discern.

Perceval is acquiring good chivalric behaviour, but his tendency to mistake the superficial for the deeper meaning persists, and he has paid no attention to progress in the spiritual sphere. Clearly, if the pattern we see Chrétien devising is to be continued, these are two key areas that will be further explored. It is not, therefore, surprising that the next person to give Perceval advice is the Hermit, and that, in this encounter, spiritual counsel becomes the most important, occurring first in the speech and dominating the briefer mention of other points of behaviour:-

> " ... biaus niés, mes ore antant:
> Se de t'ame pitiez te prant,
> Si aies an toi repantance,
> Et va el non de penitance
> A mostier einz qu'an autre leu
> Chascun jor, si i avras preu,
> Et si ne leisse por nul plet,
> Se tu es an leu ou il et
> Mostier, chapele, ne parroche,
> Va la quant sonera la cloche
> Ou ençois, se tu es levez:
> Ja de ce ne seras grevez,
> Einz an iert mout t'ame avanciee.
> Et se la messe est comanciee,
> Tant i fera il meillor estre
> Tant i demore que li prestre
> Avra tot dit et tot chanté.
> Se ce te vient a volanté,
> Ancor porras monter an pris,
> S'avras enor et paradis.
> Deu croi, Deu aimme, Deu aore,
> Buen home et buene fame enore,
> Contre le provoire te lieve;
> C'est uns servises qui po grieve,
> Et Deus l'aimme por verité

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6 The proper use of speech is a common feature of courtesy literature, and is a topic Hugh of St. Victor discusses in his *De institutione novitiorum*: "In locutione quinque res sunt observandae, hoc est quid dicatur, cui dicatur, ubi dicatur, quando dicatur, quomodo dicatur." (*PL*, CLXXVI, col 943, quoted by J. Nicholls, *The Matter of Courtesy*, p. 37). Chrétien, as an educated man, may well have been familiar with Hugh's works and we note below, p. 202, resonances from the *Didascalicon*.

On speech in courtesy literature in general, see also Mark D. Johnston, 'The Treatment of Speech in Medieval Ethical and Courtesy Literature'. Penny Sullivan, 'The Education of the Heroine in *Erec et Enide*', p. 327, notes a similar treatment of the importance of speaking at the right moment.

Por ce qu'il vient d'umilité.
Se pucele aïe te quiert,
Aïe li, que miauz t'an iert,
Ou veve dame ou orfeline;
Icele aumosne iert anterine:
Aïe lor, si feras bien

(vv. 6439-6469)

However, we have no corresponding examples of Perceval's acting upon this advice; a few verses after this speech, at v. 6514, the story reverts to Gauvain's adventures. The romance breaks off at v. 9234 without ever returning to Perceval. Whilst it is not particularly fruitful to speculate about how Chrétien may have intended the romance to end, the pattern of advice and its consequences makes it reasonable to expect that he intended at least to give his hero opportunities to put into practice the advice he receives from the Hermit. Given too, his ability to set right his earlier wrong towards the Tent Maiden, and his new awareness of the importance of spiritual advice, which is important for his proper perception of the world, we might also expect him to succeed, were he to come a second time to the Grail Castle.

Perceval's incorrect perception is the fundamental problem standing in his path to that success. It is from his distorted, or rather, incomplete view of life, that his sometimes disastrous attempts to act upon the education he receives arise. M.P. Cosman explains his problems of perception in the following way:-

> His mistaken applications of past learning ... are literal adherences to incomplete conceptions. His mistaken expectations of functions derive from Perceval's confusion of metaphor and symbol with concrete realities. He believes that praying is for food when hungry, that knighthood is merely for the asking and that a knight's advice is for literal obedience. (p. 58)

Perceval sees only the exterior surfaces of the world and none of the interior meaning behind them. This is illustrated in the early part of the romance by his attidude to clothing. When he meets the Five Knights, Perceval is fascinated by the armour of the leader; for him, this is what makes this person a knight - he even asks him if he was born with chain mail on him. On arriving at Arthur's court and being confronted by the Red Knight, it is the latter's armour that he covets and that he demands from Arthur. When he finally comes to despoil the corpse in order to appropriate his prize, he has to enlist the help of the young squire, Yonet, who tries to persuade him to change his rough clothes, given him by his mother, for the rich

clothing of the Knight. This Perceval refuses to do and straps the armour on over his old clothes; he has therefore simply changed his external appearance, but underneath remains exactly the same ignorant youth, and is quite unaware that any more effort or training is involved in becoming a knight.

This confusion of metaphor and reality is significant when taken in the context of medieval thought. Religious thought in the twelfth century was profoundly "symbolist", seeking, in the exegesis of Scripture, the greater meaning that lay behind the literal and, in the wider sphere, seeking to discern the order or meaning behind the purely natural world.[7] M.-D. Chenu argues that this "mentalité symboliste" permeates the whole of medieval thought, not simply the religious.[8] He quotes the words of Nature in Alain de Lille's *De Planctu Naturae* on its expression in the poetic sphere:-

> In superficiali litterae cortice falsum resonat lyra poetica, sed interius auditoribus secretum intelligentiae altioris eloquitur, ut exteriore falsitatis abjecto putamine, dulciorem nucleum veritatis secrete intus lector inveniat.[9]

This is reflected in the use of allegory and the importance of metaphor in medieval literature, Latin and vernacular; it is implicit in Chrétien's differentiation between the *sen* and the *matière* of his works. In *Le Conte du Graal* the reader discovers the meaning behind the superficialities of life through the progress of the hero, who must himself discover what lies behind the metaphors of his existence; a greater reality lies behind the apparent reality of the material world.[10]

Chenu's comment upon the richness of medieval symbolism bears upon the search for the sources of Chrétien's romance and the large number of possible interpretations to which it has given rise. It has been read as representing a mystic

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7 See, for example, M. D. Chenu: *La Théologie au douzième siècle,* especially section VII *La mentalité symbolique,* pp. 159-90.

8 See quotation given in Part I, p. 13.

9 *PL,* CCX, col. 451c. Quoted by Chenu p. 159.

10 See also M.D. Chenu p. 159:- "la métaphore [n'est pas seulement] un procédé littéraire (tropus) pour évoquer poétiquement une réalité spirituelle, mais un moyen homogène pour signifier le contenu intérieur des choses ...la quête du Graal ne fournit-elle pas le plus beau thème à cet art?"

initiation connected with fertility rites,[11] as a covert description of alchemic mysteries,[12] as an allegory militating against the dualist Cathar heresies rife at Chrétien's time,[13] as an allegorical call in crusading spirit to Christian knights to rise to the defence of Jerusalem which was threatening to fall back into pagan hands,[14] or as a re-enactment of the Jewish *Seder* or annual celebration of the Passover,[15] to give but a few examples. The flavours of these interpretations suggest that both religion and folklore inspired Chrétien, in accordance with the generally accepted view that originally Celtic elements in the romance were overlaid by Chrétien, and increasingly by later epigones, with a Christian interpretation.

Pierre Gallais names just a few of the overtones he perceives in the Grail scene - vendetta, liturgy, Christianity, destruction, sexuality - but emphasises that we may not select any one of these in preference to any other.[16] This is the crucial fact to bear in mind; rather than suggesting any one, exclusive interpretation, Chrétien deliberately evokes a multiplicity of ideas to create an intangible and richly symbolic ideal that supersedes any of the worldly aspirations Perceval may have.[17] If such a disparity of elements seems incongruous to a modern reader, it would not have appeared so to the medieval mind, especially the educated mind, which had a strongly syncretic bent. As William Nitze observes of Chrétien: "All was grist for his mill, provided it lent itself to the syncretic, unifying method he

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11 Jessie Weston, *The Legend of Sir Perceval, Studies upon its Origin, Development and Position in the Arthurian Cycle.*

12 Paulette Duval, *La Pensée alchimique et le 'Conte du Graal',*

13 Leonardo Olschki, *Il Castello del Re Pescatore e i suoi misteri nel 'Conte del Graal' di Chrétien de Troyes.* Translated into English by J.A. Scott.

14 Helen Adolf, *"Visio Pacis" - Holy City and Grail. An Attempt at an Inner History of the Grail Legend.*

15 Eugene J. Weinraub, *Chrétien's Jewish Grail.*

16 Pierre Gallais: *Perceval et l'initiation.*

17 M.-D. Chenu comments on the richness of medieval symbolism, "un symbolisme que tant d'analyses critiques ont aujourd'hui désagrégé" (p. 173).

employed."[18] The richness of Chrétien's symbolism is part of his evocation of the fact that life cannot be judged on a superficial level; there is always a greater significance behind apparent reality. An understanding of this principle is the basis for interpreting the romance and has produced a number of critical works.

The fact that a greater and a lesser reality operate in Perceval's life is suggested by David C. Fowler, who, in *Prowess and Charity in the "Perceval" of Chrétien de Troyes* describes the conflict between the motivation of the hero by prowess or by charity, the former being inherited from his father, the latter from his mother.[19] Rupert Pickens' study on paradoxicality in *Le Conte du Graal* is an attempt to reveal the essential paradox of the work: the ideals of the Arthurian and the Grail worlds seem to be antithetical, i.e., in terms of the medieval concept of antithesis, the ideals of one cannot be held to be true whilst the ideals of the other are held to be true. Yet, in Perceval, both are seen to obtain.[20] "Paradoxically", says Pickens, "experience in the Arthurian world is required for success in the world of the Grail" (p. 53). Hence Perceval's progress throughout the romance may be visualised as a kind of spiral, moving upwards along two axes (the Grail and the Arthurian) and also between them, with movement along one being implicit in movement along the other.[21]

The question of the status of the two ideals is crucial. The text does not support Fowler's theory that they are mutually exclusive. Firstly, the fact that Perceval is the product of both his parents suggests the idea of some kind of synthesis.[22] Secondly, at no point in the romance does Chrétien imply that Perceval should not become a knight; moreover, even his mother, who represents the Grail, or charity, says he should have been a knight:

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18 William Nitze, *Perceval and the Holy Grail - An Essay on the Romance of Chrétien de Troyes.*

19 David C. Fowler, *Prowess and Charity in the "Perceval" of Chrétien de Troyes.*

20 Rupert T. Pickens, *The Welsh Knight - Paradoxicality in Chrétien's Conte del Graal.*

21 See also Eugene Weinraub, p. 145, who also comments on the helical movement of the narrative with the hero moving away from and then back to his starting point, but on a higher plane.

22 Pierre Gallais, p. 19, makes the same point: "Il me semble que Chrétien insiste beaucoup moins sur l'opposition des deux "principes" [prouesse/charité] que sur leur nécessaire union."

"Chevaliers estre deüssiez,
Biaus filz, se Damedeu pleüst,
Que vostre pere vos eüst
Gardé et vos autres amis." (vv. 412-415)

and she approves of the fact that he will be made a knight by Arthur shortly after he leaves her:-

"Chevaliers seroiz jusqu'a po,
Filz, se Deu plest, et je le lo:" (531-532)

Rather, Perceval's success in the Arthurian world is only part of the greater whole, his success in the Grail sphere. He needs to learn how the two ideals synthesise in his life; to see only the part and not the whole, to see the former as the only goal and to ignore the latter, is to have a distorted and severely limited world view.

This is indeed Perceval's problem. He believes his destiny is to become a knight, whereas it is in fact *tot el.* Acting upon this principle, he makes mistakes from the moment he leaves home, culminating in his failure at the Grail Castle. The importance of the two levels of meaning to his life is reflected in the explanations given of this failure. It is given a psychological motive at the time it occurs by Chrétien - Perceval is remembering Gornemanz's advice - but is attributed later by the Weeping Maiden to a sin - bringing about the death of his mother. These two motives are, in fact, one and the same, seen from different viewpoints. It must be understood that Perceval does not cause his mother's death simply by leaving her; as shown above, although grieved that he is going, she is nonetheless resigned to it. It would not make sense for the mere fact of leaving to be a sin; without some initial motivation for leaving the Gaste Forest, Perceval would be condemned to the same sterility which that environment and his widowed mother represent, and would never make any progress towards the Grail Castle. Indeed Perceval's education may be thought of as a dynamic or generative process; deprived of the normal channels of educaiton, he is forced to find substitutes by himself. Neither is leaving to become a knight a sin - Perceval's mother acknowledges his right to do this (vv. 412, 531-2). What is wrong is his callous indifference to his mother's feelings in his new obsession to become a knight, which blinds him to the greater destiny her lineage represents. More than abandoning her physically, he abandons her emotionally, such that when he sees her fall in a dead faint by the bridge as he leaves, he does not exercise compassion, "charité" and turn back to help her, rather he touches his horse with his whip and

rides on. This gesture of abandoning his mother is symbolic of his failure to recognise the spiritual Grail heritage his mother bequeaths to him and which he only comes to realise at the Hermit's cell when he recognises and repents of the sin he committed against his mother. At the Grail Castle he is still in this state of sin, pursuing his worldly ambitions, unaware of his greater inheritance, and is therefore unable to ask the questions, for he concentrates on securing personal honour (by acting on Gornemanz's advice) above any other consideration. The theme of education plays a critical role in this pivotal scene where the two ideals meet and conflict, rather than harmonise as they must later come to do. Perceval has been following his education only in a superficial way and has ignored the vital deeper meaning, contained in the spiritual component.

It is not until he reaches the Hermit and confesses his five-year neglect of God that he begins to show spiritual awakening. During these five years his aim had been to find out the answers to the questions he had failed to ask and he is no nearer to this, although he has considerably enhanced his knightly reputation. Perceval has, for these five years, been confusing means and end, as Gallais points out (p. 53). He believes the end of his quest is to find out the answers to the questions, whereas the questions are rather the means whereby the real end, the healing of the Roi Pescheor, may be achieved. This is another representation of Perceval's confusion of surface and deeper meaning. In order to perceive the true end, he needs to be motivated by *charité*, rather than the desire to redeem the shame he has suffered by his previous failure, and for this he needs the Hermit's education. The event that sets this in motion is his meeting with the group of pilgrims who remind him what day it is, Good Friday, and thus bring him back to an awareness of time, but now within the Christian calendar. This is a significant meeting, parallel to Perceval's first meeting with the Five Knights in the "Gaste Forest", which initiated his education process. Several motifs reappear: Perceval had been fascinated by the leading knight's armour; now he is questioned by the pilgrim leader about his own wearing of armour on such a holy day. In the earlier scene his encounter had aroused in him the desire to seek King Arthur and be made a knight; now he experiences a desire for repentance and spiritual counsel from the saintly hermit. This parallelism shows us that Perceval has now shifted the object of his quest, he has turned away from the motivation by the purely worldly sphere of knighthood and recognises his call in the greater sphere also. Significantly, a further part of his education is also signalled here. Perceval now perceives the

spiritual dimension in his life, leading to a revelation of the Grail perspective in his destiny: his perception is now true.

Perceval receives from his uncle the final part of his education which emphasises the importance of his relationship with God - nearly twice as much space is devoted to this as to the other three parts of his instruction - whilst not forgetting also the knightly duty to help those in need, mentioned by his mother and Gornemanz. These latter are, however, predicated upon the former. He also learns about his Grail heritage, and is ready to understand its significance in his life. It is only now that Perceval begins to have a proper sense of priority; he listens humbly to the Hermit, having begged him for the counsel he realised he desperately needed, in contrast to the dismissive attitude he adopts with his mother and the fortuitous way he receives Gornemanz's teaching. He is primarily interested by what Gornemanz says because he admires, and wishes to emulate the older man's weapon technique.

Perceval's education has not simply been designed to aid his progress in the Arthurian world, as might appear from first sight, but does, from the start, contain elements that should draw his attention to a higher spiritual dimension in which he should understand the significance of the Grail. However, it is up to him to develop a consciousness of the larger reality that lies behind the apparent and to allow education to shape him as it should. Chrétien suggests throughout *Le Conte du Graal* that nature and nurture need to work in cooperation. His systematic use and exploration of this principle mark both his originality over other romance writers and the importance of the theme of education in the work. In *Le Conte du Graal* the opposition between the two forms an echo to the opposition of ideals in the hero's life and, just as those ideals are finally synthesised, it can be shown that Chrétien also favours a collaboration between "nature" and "norreture".[23]

It is characteristic of *Le Conte du Graal* that things are not always what they seem to be, a feature which applies also to Perceval in the early part of the romance. He exhibits an obvious mismatch between what is on the surface and what lies beneath. Gornemanz is struck by the incongruity of the knight's equipment on such an uncouth young man. However, Perceval's lack of "norreture" cannot mask

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23 We do not concur with Micha's view that nature is seen as inferior to nurture in the work (Micha, p. 130)

his true "nature". The court at Carduel is struck by the appearance of a rustic fool who yet has a noble bearing about him:-

> Nus qui le voit nel tient a sage;
> Mes trestuit cil qui le veoient,
> Por bel et por jant le tenoient. (vv. 976-978)

Arthur can see the potential in him:-

> "Por ce, se li vaslez est nices,
> S'est il, espoir, mout jantis hon;
> Et se ce li vient d'aprison
> Qu'il a esté a vilain mestre,
> Ancor puet preuz et sages estre." (vv. 1012-1016)

And, much to the annoyance of Keu, a young girl in the room laughs at Perceval, thereby announcing his destiny to be the greatest knight the world has seen.

It is a common epic and romance motif that for the inherent nobility of a young hero shines through despite adverse external circumstances (see, for example the eponymous heroes of the *Enfances Vivien, Guillaume de Palerne* and *Aiol*), but Chrétien makes this common theme more complex by reflecting in Perceval's "nature" the two ideals, the Grail and the Arthurian that will characterise his quest. He inherits his love of and aptitude for chivalry from his father; however, part of his "nature" also derives from his mother and part of his destiny is also to come to the Grail Castle and ask the crucial questions. That he has, by nature, the necessary qualities for this is covertly made clear by Chrétien in the period when Perceval is most under his mother's influence, before he leaves the Gaste Forest. During the encounter between Perceval and the Five Knights one of the group is driven to remark disparagingly:-

> "..Galois sont tuit *par nature*
> Plus fol que bestes an pasture." (vv. 243-244)
>
> (italics mine)

The outburst is provoked by his leader's lack of progress in eliciting from the boy any information about the kidnapped damsels they are trying to track down, progress which is hindered, as the leader explains, by the boy being unable to keep to the point and persistently asking questions about what he can see:-

> "Qu'a rien nule que li demant
> Ne respont il onques a droit,
> Einz demande de quanqu'il voit
> Comant a non et qu'an an fet." (vv. 238-241)

We learn from this that Perceval is naturally curious and disposed to ask questions - and the knight's description of his questions "comant a non et qu'an an fet" are strikingly similar to the form of question he is to be required to put at the Grail Castle.

It is clear from the early part of the romance that Perceval has considerable potential. Chrétien makes it clear from his hero's stupid blunders, however, that for this potential to be fulfilled, some process of education is required, although no amount of training would be of use where nature was not already predisposed, since "mout griés chose est de fol aprandre" (v. 1173). It is Gornemanz, Perceval's knightly tutor, whose words reveal most about the importance of this collaboration between "nature" and "norreture". On meeting Perceval, Gornemanz is confronted by a youth whose words and manner show him to be "nice et sot", yet who wears the outward trappings of a knight. He clearly does not know how to use this equipment, but on further questioning reveals a passionate desire to learn (vv. 1460-1462). Gornemanz reassures him:-

> Ce qu'an ne set, puet an aprandre,
> Qui i viaut pener et antandre,
> ....
> Il covient a toz les mestiers
> Et painne et cuer et us avoir:
> Par cez trois puet an tot savoir.
> (vv. 1463-4, 1466-8)

Verses 1467-8 echo the words of Hugh of St. Victor's *Didascalicon*: "Tria sunt necessaria studentibus, natura, exercitium, disciplina" (III.7).[24] Gornemanz sees the innate motivation to learn to be a knight and seeks to show his young pupil how to develop his natural talent by means of training and application. Up until now, Perceval has had no conception of the effort involved in becoming a knight. He had imagined that he could go to Arthur and instantly be made one, simply by being given some armour. Perceval takes the lance and shield and mounts to copy the demonstration Gornemanz has just given him:-

> Et il comança a porter
> Si a droit la lance et l'escu
> Con s'il eüst toz jorz vescu
> An tornoiemanz et an guerres
> Et alé par totes les terres

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24 *PL*, CLXXVI, col. 770.

> Querant bataille et avanture;
> Car il li venoit de nature,
> Et quant nature li aprant
> Et li cuers del tot i antant,
> Ne li puet estre riens grevainne
> La ou nature et cuers se painne. (vv. 1474-1484)

Chrétien intervenes here to underline the efficacy of cooperation between nature and nurture, which already indicates here just how good a knight Perceval will become.

Balance is required between nature and education, neither one nor the other taking precedence, as Perceval himself needs to learn. At first he fails at the Grail Castle and does not ask the critical questions, although he longs to question his host about the mysterious Grail and Lance he sees before him. In his desire to reach knightly perfection he strives too hard to put his education into effect, concentrating too much on the application of Gornemanz's words. He therefore ignores the call of his heart, the instinct of that part of his "nature" which would urge him to put his questions. It is this side of his "nature" that would be developed by pursuit of the spiritual ideals that both his mother and Gornemanz have enjoined upon him, but which he has misapplied and then ignored. The balance is redressed once he comes to the Hermit.

The education received by Perceval is uncharacteristic of the theme in twelfth and thirteenth century literature; typically, a hero (or heroine) will learn social skills, with perhaps some intellectual ones, and will learn them with remarkable speed and efficiency. Thereafter no further mention is made of the education which tends to remain a semi-autonomous unit used in the portrayal of a character. This is clearly not the case in *Le Conte du Graal* where Chrétien appears interested primarily in the process of his hero's education, and this underlines the fact that the theme has a functional rather than a decorative purpose. This is borne out by the fact that the theme forms part of the narrative structure. Perceval has to initiate his educative process for himself and each instance of counsel leaves him needing to find further guidance until he finally comes to the Hermit. Unlike the education described in the majority of narratives, Perceval's education is not immediately sufficient; nor is he immediately adept in appropriating and applying its content. The theme also underpins the description of the hero's progress towards his final goal; new events are generated as he acts upon each section of advice received, and his success or failure in so doing are a

yardstick of that progress. Perceval's search for the Grail is an outward expression of his inward need to develop a true perception; once this is achieved he will be able to succeed in whatever it is the Grail Kingdom requires of him. His attitude to his education, whether he allows it to be a help or a hindrance illustrates the degree to which he has acquired that necessary understanding. Chrétien stands alone in using the theme of education in such a complex manner. Instead of using education merely to endow his hero with outstanding qualities, he uses it to show a young man acquiring those qualities, thereby earning the right to the title of hero and superlative knight. The process is illustrated with the remarkable psychological insight that characterises Chrétien's talent.

CONCLUSIONS

Having surveyed the educational history of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, examined its representation in literary texts and the exploitation of characters' education by the poets, we can begin to form an opinion as to the the extent to which education is an important element of medieval narrative and why.

It is clear that the twelfth and thirteenth centuries are a critical time for the history of education. Changes and developments occurred in these centuries that were to have a lasting effect on education in the future. In Part I we saw the increased range of study available as more works of ancient Greek learning became available to western Europe, which in turn fostered the rise and dominance of dialectic as the principal tool of intellectual enquiry. There was a move away from the monastic to the town sphere, giving an increasingly secular stamp to education, seen also in the rise of the universities as the major institutions of higher learning. We saw too the enthusiasm and optimism with which learning and education, clerical and secular, were viewed in this period.

Such enthusiasm is reflected in the volume of theoretical writing on the subject of education, which is itself indicative of the importance of education to the period. Not only do we find that is an enormous wealth of works of educational theory produced in these centuries, but there is also a striking diversity of writers: our survey in Part I included works by moralists, monastic churchmen, political theorists, encyclopaedists, writers of courtesy manuals. This diversity is matched by a move away from Latin as the exclusive medium for theorising, and the vernacular emerges, particularly from the mid-thirteenth century, as a rival vehicle for such didactic writing.

Education is, therefore, an important and topical subject in the life of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and changes and events in the educational sphere form part of the background context within which vernacular literature is produced. This is reflected in the representation of education found in narrative literature. Part II illustrated the extent of such representations, which begin to appear in the mid-twelfth century and proliferate in the latter third of that century and in the first part of the thirteenth century. Significantly, this is both the time during which Old

French literature was enjoying its heyday and is also the period when many of the developments we saw in Part I were occurring. We therefore find evidence to support our premise that there is a specific relationship between events in the educational world and the changing face of contemporary vernacular literature. This can, moreover, be seen in our particular area of study, the education of the characters of medieval French narrative.

When we examine the education of these characters and compare it with what we know of education in fact in the Middle Ages, we find that, as in most other areas of everyday life which are portrayed in medieval narrative, the education of the hero or heroine is based upon the real world of the poets and their audiences. The education described in literature is clearly based upon the upbringing of a royal or noble son or daughter, with the emphasis being upon leisure skills such as hunting or chess, social skills such as conversation, and the male sporting skills of fighting and jousting. A smaller place is accorded to the academic skills, these generally being limited to literacy, but with the occasional appoearance of a wider academic curriculum. There is no attempt at historical veracity in the *romans antiques*, for example, a tendency which has, in the past, brought charges of anachronism. Nor is there any wish to present a completely fictional picture, since medieval literature subtly blends escapism with elements drawn from the daily life experienced by its consumers.

Since the romance and later epic are primarily concerned with the hero's life in society, it is entirely to be expected that his education should be based upon the non-clerical model in real life. In very general terms, the literary texts probably reflect reasonably accurately the practice of education of a young nobleman, who was provided foremost with social and military skills, although these did not preclude academic training if this was felt desirable.

Although medieval poets base their descriptions upon the practice of their own time, showing their heroes to be educated in similar ways to the young noblemen of the time, they do also idealise the picture they present, exaggerating both the facility with which the hero learns and the breadth of education received. Early poets in particular have a tendency to exaggerate the academic content of that education. One suspects that this may reflect a gap between theory and practice at the time, the theoretical model representing the ideal towards which society and the poet aspired, this being translated into practice in the idealised context of fictional

narrative. It may also be accounted for by the lower profile of non-clerical education in this period, compared to the thirteenth century which marks a significant upturn in the number of general works on education and childrearing.

We must, therefore, beware of taking precise details from literary texts and concluding that these are true representations of reality, for it is never the poets' aim to present a "realistic" picture, rather they are using realistic elements for their own ends. The education bestowed on the hero or heroine reveals more of the aspirations of the poets society than of its practice, and more of the poets' own intentions than their everyday life. The idealisation we find illustrates the enthusiasm felt by twelfth- and thirteenth-century society for learning and education.

However, such enthusiasm is tempered by the prevailing view of nature, seen, as we have found, to be superior in influence to nurture. This has important consequences for the way in which education is described. We noted the ambivalence in the portrayal of women's education, where a rosy portrayal is nonetheless unable to eradicate completely a predominant suspicion of female nature. Hence, even where an educated woman plays a central role in a work, such as in the two examples we studied in Part III, her abilities and position are not wholly approved by the poets.

Education is an important part of the early life of a hero that poets are usually careful to describe, but it generally has a particular purpose, being designed to complement what is already his by nature, and to allow him to be a perfect example of the noble or royal classes. Education operates as a means of expression for what nature has determined within the child, rather than as a means of supplying what is not already there. It is often, therefore, described by the poets as an automatic process: the master teaches, automatically transmitting his lessons to the pupil who thereby learns.

Education is not necessarily endowed with any further narrative function, once it has been described, for once the hero has become what nature designed he should be, the education process has done its task and need no longer be considered. Since, too, education is the junior partner to nature, giving expression to nature's work, but never changing or adding to it, it gives the recipient no skills that were not already his own. Hence few works make any mention of the education of the

hero or the value of the skills learned after the education process has been described and its content presumed assimilated by the hero. The benefits of academic education are less for any specific knowledge imparted, than for the general perceived benefit of learning that is so pervasive in the Middle Ages. If knowledge makes for a better man, then it may be seen by the vernacular romancers as a useful part of their portrait of an excellent man. Education is part of the conception of an ideal man and is far less an expression of that man's individuality.

The description of the education of the hero can be likened to panegyric, a motif taken from the classical model in which the learned ideal was praised in both poetry and prose biography.[1] Interestingly, the only characters who are consistently portrayed as receiving an education, apart from occasional references to minor characters, are heroes and heroines. Education is part of the process by which they are elevated above the common run of characters and prove those superlative qualities that make them fit to be a hero or heroine.

The description of education may thus be said to function in a similar way to the portrait of the hero or heroine, described by Alice Colby, i.e. as a "semi-independent ... unit, much of the content of which is stereotyped".[2] We should not expect this semi-autonomous unit necessarily to function later in the narrative.

Within the general category of a "semi-autonomous narrative unit", we nonetheless find that medieval poets shape even a small part of the narrative to suit their own ends and to accord with the overall tenor of their work, as we saw in our examination of the *Roman d'Alexandre*. Education is thus a revealing area of study, even where it plays only a minor role in medieval narrative. This is true of the majority of the texts we examined in Part II, but our more detailed studies in Part III revealed examples where education takes on a greater thematic and structural significance, and in these instances we may legitimately talk of the theme of education.

The uses and effects of this theme are as many and diverse as the poets who exploit it, illustrating its richness as a source for inspiration in both subject and

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1 See, for example, the comments of M. P. Cosman, *The Education of the Hero in Arthurian Romance*, pp. 176-177.

2 Alice M. Colby, *The Portrait in Twelfth-Century Romance*, p. 178.

form. Heldris de Cornuälle explores education within the context of the nature/nurture topos, and by throwing the general rule and current presuppositions about nature and education into question, gives himself the opportunity to explore the psyche of his character Silence in greater depth. Whereas the educated fairies' unususal education tended not to lead to greater understanding of them as individuals, Silence is treated with considerable sympathy. Even if Heldris appears finally to confirm the premise he has questioned, and to evoke further commonplaces about the nature of woman which belie his earlier sympathy, he creates a fascinating romance from his exploration of education.

In *Le Conte de Floire et Blancheflor*, education is brought into prominence in the narrative by being linked to the love interest in the story, and its role is further enhanced by associations between and surrounding love and education being used as a repeated, underlying theme. This is an early text, in which the combination of love and education in this way is original and unlike the relationship that develops in later texts. For we find that education exerts a considerable influence on the medieval view of love. This, in turn, is further evidence for the importance of an understanding of medieval education and its representation in literature, for an appreciation of medieval narrative. The ultimate fusion of love and education is to be found in Guillaume de Lorris's *Roman de la Rose*, a romance that describes a love experience in the context of the contemporary lore of love. This is a text in which education is a key element, although explored in a quite different way from that found in *Floire et Blancheflor* or *Le Roman de Silence.*

The educated fairies are yet another, different example of the importance of the theme of education to a reading of medieval narrative. Far from their education being simply formalised description, it actually informs their role in the narrative. The highly educated woman, compared to the male equivalent, is unusual in medieval society and narrative, and she inevitably occupies a dominant role in the text in which she appears. However, she is included for a specific purpose - in the case of the two particular examples we examined, as a means of exploring the male-female love relationship and the feminine ideal, and to add sexual excitement. It must be said that these treatments of the educated heroine are comparatively unsympathetic to her *qua* an educated woman, concentrating most particularly on her interaction with and perception by other male characters. Even though education is not merely formalised description in these examples, it is not used to

offer insights into an individual (as a twentieth-century reader might understand the term), rather as part of a story concerning an individual person's attempt to accommodate to the role marked out by society for him or her. Education in these texts is thus more revealing of the society surrounding women than of women themselves.

Chrétien's *Conte du Graal* uses education in perhaps the most complex way of all the texts we have examined. Perceval's education forms a deliberate structural pattern throughout the work, thus contributing to form. His education is also revealing of his psychological state, and affects the nature and progress of his quest. It is thus essential to an overall reading of the romance, to which, by virtue of its rich, symbolic complexity, many other resonances also contribute. Chrétien furthermore enhances the education theme by his exploration of nature and nurture, which is both an informed critique and an integral part of the *sen* of the romance. We find in this romance an example of the richness available from education as a literary theme.

We find a whole spectrum of uses of education, ranging from the simple feature to the fully thematic. This diversity, and particularly the thematic use of the topic, shows that medieval narrative poets do indeed consider education an important ingredient in their works, capable of a rich variety of literary manifestations and exploitations. Our study of these, whilst it cannot be exhaustive, illustrates the range of these exploitations and provides a model and framework within which a similar approach might be adopted to other works.

Education is an important element in medieval narrative of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. It is a basic ingredient of the narrative which rises into prominence in this period and begins to decline as the enthusiasm of the twelfth-century renaissance wanes. It also reflects the enthusiasm for education that had marked so much of the theoretical writing of the time. The literary representation of education is affected both by trends in literary development and in education in the outside world. Insofar as it is affected by the educational concerns of the time, and is based on contemporary reality, it can be taken as a potentially useful source for information on medieval education, provided it is used intelligently.

The importance of education in medieval life is reflected by romance and later epic writers, who incorporate it into their narrative. That achievements of

human intellect begin to take their place beside descriptions of human strength and emotion illustrates not only the clerkly provenance of much Old French literature, but also those changes in society at large that accord such achievements recognition. The familiar *topos* of the hero inspiring love in his lady through his martial prowess starts to be paralleled by the lady's attraction to a man who is "bien enseigné", as the courtly ethos takes over from the warrior. In this education plays an integral part. The skills that make a good lover begin to feature in the education of the hero and love further begins to be seen as something that can be learned.

The primary field of interest in the education element for the critic of medieval literature is the way in which the poets exploit education. Whilst it is used most commonly as a motif, conveying the poet's view of his character and enhancing his stature as an ideal being, we find texts at the other end of the spectrum where education may truly be said to be a theme, forming a major component in the text in both content and structure.

The study of the theme of education provides insights into the poets at work upon their narratives, shaping elements to a particular end, it affords new perspectives on particular texts, and it informs our understanding of the relationship between literature and its social and historical context.

APPENDIX

Alphabetical List of Texts Surveyed in Part II with Approximate Dates

Full bibliographic details of edition used are given in the Bibliography. The date is taken from that edition or from Levy's *Chronologie approximative*, preference being given to the editor's opinion. Where Levy's date is used, this is marked by an (L).

Aimon de Varennes,	*Florimont*	1188
Aiol		1173
Aliscans		(L) 1165
Amadas et Ydoine		1190-1220
Ami et Amile		c. 1200
Anseis de Cartage		c. 1200
Athis et Prophilias		c. 1200
Aubery le Bourgoing		(L) 1250
Aucassin et Nicolette		1200-1250
Aye d'Avignon		1195-1205
Aymeri de Narbonne		1205-1225
Bertrand de Bar-sur-Aube	*Girart de Vienne*	c. 1200
Blancandin et l'Orgueilleuse d'Amour		1200-1230
Bodel, Jean,	*La Chanson des Saisnes*	c. 1196
La Chanson d'Aspremont		c. 1190
La Chanson de Guillaume		after 1166
La Chanson des Quatre Fils Aymon		c. 1200
La Chanson de Roland		1080-1125
Le Charroi de Nîmes		1144
La Chevalerie Ogier de Danemarche		1192-1200
La Chevalerie Vivien		late 1100's
Le Chevalier au Cygne		
Chrétien,	*Guillaume d'Angleterre*	(L) 1165
Chretien de Troyes,	*Le Chevalier a la Charrette*	1177-1181
	Le Chevalier au Lion	1177-1181
	Cliges	c.1176

	Li Contes del Graal	1178-1181
	Erec et Enide	c. 1170
Le Couronnment de Louis		c. 1130
Doon de Mayence		(L) 1205
Doon de La Roche		c. 1195
Durmart le Galois		(L) 1240
Elie de Saint Gille		before 1173
Les Enfances Guillaume		1205-1250
Les Enfances Vivien		c. 1200
L'Evangile de l'Enfance		
Fierabras		(L) 1170
Le Fille au Comte de Pontieu		1200-1250
Floire et Blancheflor		1162
Floovant		1170-1200
Florence de Rome		1200-1230
Floriant et Florete		13th century, probably late
Gautier d'Arras,	*Eracle*	1164-1185
	Ille et Galeron	1167-1185
Gautier d'Aupais		(L) mid 1200's
Gautier de Tournay,	*L'Histoire de Gille de Chyn*	1230-40
Gaydon		1230-1234
Gerbert de Montreuil,	*Le Roman de la Violette*	1225-1230
Girart de Roussillon		1150-1200
Gui de Bourgogne		1211-1240
Gui de Nanteuil		1164-1207
Gui de Warewic		1240
Guibert d'Andrenas		1211 -1225
Guillaume de Berneville,	*La Vie de Saint Gilles*	after 1170
Guillaume le Clerc,	*Fergus*	(L) 1216
Guillaume de Lorris,	*Le Roman de la Rose*	1225-1230
Guillaume de Palerne		(L) 1205
Heldris de Cornuälle,	*Le Roman de Silence*	after 1230
Henri d'Andeli,	*La Bataille des .vii. Ars*	(L) 1242
	Le Lai d'Aristote	c. 1200-1230
Herbert,	*Dolopathos*	c. 1222-1225
Herbert le Duc de Danmartin,	*Folque de Candie*	1180-1185

Hervis de Metz		1200-1230
L'Histoire de Guillaume le Marechal		(L) 1226
Horn		c. 1170
Hue de Rotelande,	*Ipomedon*	(L) 1180
	Protheslaus	(L) 1185
Huon de Bordeaux		1216-1229
Joufroi de Poitiers		13th century
Jourdain de Blaye		(L) early 1200's
Le Lai d'Haveloc		1138-1140
Mainet		1150-1200
Marie de France, *Lais*		(L) 1160-1189
Maugis d'Aigremont		1230-1250
Les Narbonnais		c. 1210
Octavian		1230-1260
Orson de Beauvais		after 1185
Otinel		1200-1250
Partonopeus de Blois		before 1188
Piramus et Thisbé		1100-1122
La Prise de Cordres et de Sébille		1190-1195
La Prise d'Orange		(L) 1148
Raoul de Cambrai		(L) 1180
Renart, Jean,	*L'Escoufle*	1201
	Galeran de Bretagne	1195-1225
	Le Lai de l'Ombre	(L) 1221
	Le Roman de la Rose ou de Guillaume de Dole	(L) 1213
Renaut de Beaujeu,	*Le Bel Inconnu*	(L) 1190
Richard de Fournival,	*Consaus d'Amours*	(L) 1233
Richars li Biaus		(L) 1250-1275
Robert le Diable		(L) 1195
Robert de Blois,	*Beaudous*	(L) 1255
	Floris et Liriopé	(L) 1255
Le Roman d'Alexandre		1120-1190
Le Roman d'Eneas		c. 1160
Le Roman des Sept Sages		1200-1250
Le Roman de Thèbes		c.1150

Le Roman de Troie		c. 1165
Le Romans de Witasse le Moine		1223-1284
Le Siège de Barbastre		(L) 1150-1200
Sone de Nansai		(L) late 1200's
Thibaut	*Le Roman de la Poire*	mid 1200's
Thomas de Kent,	*Le Roman de Toute Chevalerie*	1174-1200
La Vie de Saint Alexis		(L) 1040
Vulgate Version of the Arthurian Romances		1215-1225
Wace	*Le Roman de Brut*	(L) 1155
	Le Roman de Rou	(L) 1169

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