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REBECCA DIXON

UNE MOULT ESTRANGE CHOSE:
ENCOUNTERS WITH THE ALIEN IN
BURGUNDIAN PROSE LITERATURE C. 1445 – 1468

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SUBMITTED FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF FRENCH

UNIVERSITY OF DURHAM

OCTOBER 2005



16 APR 2007

ABSTRACT

'UNE MOULT ESTRANGE CHOSE:

ENCOUNTERS WITH THE ALIEN IN BURGUNDIAN PROSE LITERATURE C. 1445 –
1468'

A thesis presented for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Rebecca Dixon, Department of French, October 2005

Under Philip the Good (1419-1467) the Burgundian Netherlands reached their political, territorial, and artistic apogee, a position gained not without the making and breaking of certain alliances. Particularly precarious was the relationship between Burgundy and the France of Charles VII. Following the signing of the Treaty of Arras in 1435 the two parties enjoyed not the intended 'particular peace' but a series of renewed hostilities which peaked in the period from around 1440 onwards. This turbulence provides the socio-cultural backdrop to this thesis.

It is, I argue here, more than coincidental that this same time-period saw the emergence at the Burgundian court of a new literary phenomenon, the so-called *mise en prose*, or the literary product of rendering an earlier verse source into a more legible form for the court. The verse sources in question are Francophone in origin; the choice and particular means of adapting these texts from c.1445 onwards can be seen as a literary response to the historical circumstances of their production.

In this thesis I offer a close reading of a representative corpus of *mises en prose* through the model of *Alienness*, a reading-strategy developed out of themes manifested in the texts, but not limited to the thematic. *Alienness* functions like Terence Cave's textual 'fêlure', and allows the location of an element in the text's unconscious through the retroactive glance of the modern critic. Through this model I illustrate how what I term *Alien* features of and in the text can provide not only a picture of the especial practices of adaptation and reworking adopted by the Burgundian authors but also elucidate a programme of metatextual identity-formation at court. Through locating the *mises en prose* in their historical context, and engaging with the corpus on a literary-critical rather than philological level, I postulate a new and more meaningful way of reading this misrepresented genre.

DECLARATION

No portion of this thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or other institute of learning.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The road from Durham comprehensive to Durham doctorate is paved with clichés, and it is my very great pleasure to set down a few more such clunking stones here. The conception, gestation, and parturition of this thesis would have been considerably more painful, and infinitely less enjoyable, without the intellectual and in many cases moral support of those named below. A number of them now know a good deal more about Burgundy and its literary output than perhaps they ever thought possible or indeed necessary; and for this I can only apologise.

It would have been impossible to even think of beginning the doctorate without the support of the Arts and Humanities Research Board, and I express here my gratitude for their awards funding both the Ph.D and my earlier MA.

I have been extraordinarily fortunate over the last decade or so to have been able to chew literary fat of the most nourishing kind with Jim Naughton, my former English teacher at St Bede's, Lanchester. His engagement with texts, his verve for his subject, and his ability back in the day to see in me what I could not, are the reason I am doing what I am now; despite his Magpie tendencies, his heart and intellect are very squarely in the right place, and for this I salute him. When I moved to 'serve another master' in Oxford inevitably further influences were brought to bear on my malleable mind; and for their intellectual rigour, passion, and infallible guidance then and now I single out Terence Cave and Angelica Goodden for especial thanks. More recently, as the Ph.D has progressed and taken shape, other colleagues have been generous with their time and scholarship: Rosalind Brown-Grant, Maria Colombo Timelli, and Graeme Small have responded to e-mail queries about aspects of Burgundy and its prose output with remarkable aplomb and, often, with unpublished work. If Burgundophiles needed a support-group then these three would be its worthy patrons.

A great boon of studying for the doctorate in Durham has been the intellectual bolstering provided by colleagues and friends in the French department and beyond. The virtual space of the Centre for Medieval and Renaissance Studies offered a very real outlet for all musings medieval; and the members of the Postgraduate

Discussion Group – in particular Simon McKinnon, Lourdes Orozco, and Laetitia Vedrenne – in the Modern Languages department has been an invaluable source of support, tea, and, often, sympathy. Jenny Burns probably knows only slightly less than I do about some of the texts discussed in this thesis and, clichetic as it might sound, I cannot thank her deeply enough for listening, suggesting, cajoling, and mopping up when the thesis situation required it, and for her friendship more generally.

An unexpected privilege of my time in Durham has been working with David Cowling who, though keeping his Burgundophilia more or less successfully hidden under his Head-of-School hat, has constantly and unassumingly supported my endeavours over the last few years. Since my brief foray into the world of Oxford medieval studies at the beginning of the Ph.D Emma Cayley has been tireless in her belief in my ability to make something of this subject, and in her friendship and largesse whether personal, professional, or – when necessary – oenological. Like her, Adrian Armstrong has convincingly pulled off fortitude in the face of prose and been unflagging – and always to Olympian extent – in his generosity of spirit and of scholarship. To all three I offer heartfelt, if somewhat puzzled, thanks.

The relationship between supervisor and supervisee is so often a hit-and-miss affair, and I am lucky enough to count myself among the happy few who have scored a resounding hit. There have been moments over the last four years when, I am sure, Jane Taylor has questioned her decision gently to suggest that I shake the dust of the primary-school blackboard off my hands and begin a Ph.D on Burgundian literature. It is enormously to her credit, though, that she has never once given an indication of having passed any such dark nights of the soul. Her apparently unshakeable belief in this project, and in me since my undergraduate days at St Hilda's, are a perennial source of amazement to me, but also a source of immense emotional and intellectual strength. I cannot thank her enough for her example and for her humanity.

As is customary, I leave my biggest debt of gratitude until last. It is not empty hyperbole to suggest that without my family behind me this thesis would never have seen the light of day. The tacit support of aunts on both branches of the family tree

has been tremendously vivifying; and my brother Nick has uncomplainingly endured brown study and purple prose – as well as blue air – from me with remarkable grit and good humour over the last few years. My parents Ann and John can never know how much their simply being there and fighting my corner means: they have lived at closer quarters than most with the research for and production of the masterwork, and are, incredibly, still speaking to me. I cannot thank them in strong enough terms for their love and belief. I dedicate the thesis, though, to my grandmothers Ellen March and Monica Dixon: the one never saw its inception and the other is not here at its completion, but both would have been (in the deliciously idiomatic words of the latter) ‘chuffed to little apples’ to raise a glass to me now.

PREFACE

‘Then I began a commentary on the works of Jane Austen, the aim of which was to be utterly exhaustive, to examine the novels from every conceivable angle – historical, biographical, rhetorical, mythical, structural, Freudian, Jungian, Marxist, existentialist, Christian, allegorical, ethical, phenomenological, archetypal, you name it. So that when each commentary was written there would be *nothing further to say* about the novel in question.

‘Of course, I never finished it. The project was not so much Utopian as self-defeating.’¹

Morris Zapp is, of course, right. Any academic enterprise with pretensions to being a complete treatment of its subject is necessarily doomed if not to failure then certainly to interminability. When I began this thesis I was to some extent unaware of this simple truth, and was clear that I wanted to examine the Burgundian prose texts of my corpus from ‘every conceivable angle’ not, unlike Zapp, in order that there ‘would be nothing further to say’ about these works and therefore to stymie other critics’ attempts to engage with them, but because they offered such a rich and previously unmined seam of material that demanded to be taken, and to be looked at, seriously. Whether the assumption that this might be possible was arrogant or simply naïve is ripe for debate; certainly it soon became apparent that such an exhaustive treatment of the material was going to be, precisely, roundly self-defeating. What remained unchanged, however, was the belief that the texts needed to be examined seriously and innovatively, and the most appropriate way to do this was to focus on one particular aspect of them in full knowledge that other treatments were equally possible, and equally legitimate. In this short preface I briefly introduce what that aspect is, what it is not and therefore what it might have been, give a broad overview of the thesis and its aims, and in the process gesture tentatively towards its originality.

The socio-cultural focus of my work is the mid-fifteenth-century court of Philip the Good, third Valois duke of Burgundy.² As Richard Vaughan suggests in the third volume of his *The Dukes of Burgundy*, under Philip the spread and political sway of the territories of the Burgundian Netherlands reached its apogee.³ This position was not, of course, achieved without the making and breaking of allegiances, especially those in the uneasy grouping of Burgundy, France, and England; and far from being a pawn in this particular game, Burgundy was a strong player, as capable of playing



France and England against one another as these were to implicate the duke into their respective political dealings. The relationship between Burgundy and England at the time of Philip's dukedom is outside the scope of my endeavours here, but would doubtless repay close examination.⁴ While not engaged in historical research – my focus is resolutely literary, as will emerge more clearly below – I am interested here in framing my analyses of the prose texts of my corpus within the context of the vexed relationship between Burgundy and France in the mid- to late fifteenth century. On 21st September 1435 the 'particular peace' between the two powers was signed in Arras (the English, who had been present at the outset of the Congress, had departed 'in a huff', as Vaughan puts it, earlier the same month);⁵ ostensibly the beginning of a beautiful friendship, the signing of the treaty seems to have been, rather, the trigger for a bout of new hostilities. As Vaughan comments, 'it seems incredible that the Burgundian councillors ... really believed that Charles VII, who had not scrupled to arrange or condone the murder of [Philip's father] John the Fearless in 1419, intended to keep to its terms', but presumably everyone deserves a second chance.⁶ And a third, and a fourth. Disputes between Philip and Charles were numerous in the 1440s especially, and at the close of the 15 years following Arras Franco-Burgundian relations were, Vaughan (under)states, 'fundamentally unsatisfactory'.⁷

These unsatisfactory relations provide a context for the texts discussed in this thesis; and their temporal situation governs my choice of the at once rather precise and rather arbitrary-seeming time-frame suggested in its title. The period from approximately 1445 until Philip's death in 1467 and the subsequent inventory of the ducal library in 1468 saw the emergence of a particular literary phenomenon at the court of Burgundy: the production of the so-called *mises en prose*, the literary product of the practice of rendering a verse text into more legible prose.⁸ What is especially interesting for my purposes here is the fact that the verse texts chosen for reworking at court, generally on commission from the duke, are Francophone in origin; and it is difficult – and I think misguided – not to see in the confluence of this and the Franco-Burgundian hostilities a particularly strident literary response to the social and political circumstances of these texts' production. The court appropriates elements of the enemy's literary genealogy, and adopts and adapts them in the construction of its own artistic heritage.

A work *mise en prose* functions, as I suggest in the following chapters, as an index of its time. It achieves this not only through the historical situation of its production, but also, at the level of the text itself, through the authorial strategies effected on a given verse avatar in order to make the reworking legible for and, crucially, palatable to its target audience at the Burgundian court. Jane Taylor and Maria Colombo Timelli, whose works I refer to throughout the thesis, have written convincingly on some aspects of this process of appropriation and levelling in the *mises en prose*, but their treatment is limited to isolated instances in, at most, a couple of texts at a time. What concerns me here, then, is how these socio-cultural indicators present themselves, and function across a larger representative sample of the Burgundian prose corpus. From a close reading of this corpus there emerges a preoccupation with alterity, aberrance, and identity, both in terms of the real, physical circumstances of the *mise en prose*'s production and its author's means of dealing with problems of interpretation thrown up by the verse source, and in terms of the material contained in the texts selected for reworking. This, in sum, is what I have termed 'the Alien', or 'Alienness'.

Alienness, I must be clear, is not necessarily a theme in the *mise en prose* (though as I mentioned above it can also be this); its importance inheres rather in its functioning as a hermeneutic tool or a reading-strategy, a concept which operates rather like the 'fêlure' described by Terence Cave in his *Pré-histoires*, a textual fissure perhaps unseen and certainly untheorised by the contemporary author, but which allows aspects of the work to be elucidated for the modern reader. The application of the matrix of Alienness to the works discussed in this thesis – as well as to others from the wider Burgundian prose corpus produced at this time – allows us to see one particularly striking and suggestive, if in many cases remarkably subtle, means of responding to the conundrum of producing a credible and acceptable reworking of a text for the duke and his entourage. Reading the *mise en prose* alongside its verse avatar through Alien encounters, reading the textual present through the textual past, draws out the small but meaningful changes effected in order to bolster – I argue further – the Burgundian sense of selfhood troubled by the court's shaky relations with France. The prose texts emerge not only as literary artefacts in their own right, but also as the socio-cultural representatives of a politically-generated

impulse to self-fashioning and the construction of a court identity distinct from that of the French rival.

My focus throughout the thesis is on the text of the *mise en prose* read through and against its avatar, not in order to enumerate all the ways in which the one differs from the other, but to pin-point areas where an Alien encounter between the two allows meaning to be derived from one or indeed both of the works. I am concerned with the words on the page and with what they have to say, and therefore refer throughout to edited versions of the works in my corpus. The nature of this enterprise, and the use to which I put the matrix of Alienness, mean that I make close reference to discrete and punctual aspects of the text; but I do not undertake any kind of analysis of the lexical fields one might derive from a theorisation of the substantive 'alien', though am convinced that this would repay closer examination. Further, I make only glancing reference to the material, manuscript circumstances of a text's production; I do not attempt to locate Alienness in any iconographical programme associated with a given text, or to adduce meaning from a reading based on the relationship of text with image. This, I am sure, would reveal a reading-strategy, and indeed a strategy of production, different from the prose-with-avatar method I have chosen, but this would be an illuminating avenue for further complementary research at a later date.

This thesis is the first full-length treatment in English of a range of *mises en prose*; three longer studies have appeared at intervals in French, two by Georges Doutrepoint in 1909 and 1939, and one in 1996 by Maciej Abramowicz. Doutrepoint's *La littérature française à la cour des ducs de Bourgogne* and *Les mises en prose des épopées et des romans chevaleresques du XIV^e au XVI^e siècles* are impressively and tirelessly comprehensive, though do not engage with the texts as anything other than items in the ducal library, do not discuss the meaning of the works themselves and the stories they contain. Abramowicz's *Réécrire au Moyen Âge. Mises en prose des romans en Bourgogne au XV^e siècle* looks heart-sinkingly promising to the modern critic attempting to effect an original reappraisal of the genre, but is disappointingly (or perhaps pleasingly?) uncritical and documentary. As I hinted above, there has been some article-length interest in elements of the prose corpus in both English and French. With the notable exception of Jane Taylor's reading of the prose *Erec* and

Cligès, and to a lesser extent the works by Maria Colombo Timelli and Elisabeth Gaucher mentioned in the Bibliography, critical treatment of the mises en prose has focused in general on the texts as philological curiosities, or as poor relations to their verse sources, with very little tangible literary value. What I set out to do in the chapters that follow, then, is to offer a corrective to this interpretation of the, if not quite neglected then certainly misrepresented, genre.

Chapter One provides an introduction to the thesis and the genre, and sets up my model of Alienness through and against a range of contemporary theories of alterity. I establish how my theoretical matrix, based on the dual and overlapping modalities of the Embodied Alien and the Ideological Alien (these are of course explained fully in the chapter), can be seen to derive but ultimately differ from this rather eclectic range of authorities. In more detail than in this brief preface, I set out the ways in which the mise en prose is very much the product of its age, and is in itself an Alien genre. This is developed in Chapter Two, where I discuss the uses of the past in the construction of a literary present at the Burgundian court, and underline in my interpretation of the prose *Cligès* the way in which its author, through creative engagement with Chrétien's work, locates and responds to a particular Alien feature of the text alongside Alienness within the work. From the deployment of the Francophone Arthurian past in the construction of a Burgundian literary genealogy I move in Chapter Three to a textually-located Alienness as the strange and distinctly un-Burgundian-seeming figure of Salhadin is assimilated into a Burgundian dynasty within the action of the text, and therefore into a literary genealogy more broadly. This happens at least in part through the location of the Turk Salhadin's identity in varying and variable readings of his racialised body, a theme developed in more gendered terms in Chapter Four. Here I discuss the chivalric identity performed – in Judith Butler's useful designation which I introduce (and explain) in Chapter Three – by Jehan d'Avennes, and the way in which his corporeal mutations and performances illustrate while also jeopardising his (masculine) identity. Chapter Five, the most promiscuously theoretical of my sections, continues the discussion of bodily identity, though with a much more positive valency than previously. In both *La Belle Hélène de Constantinople* and *La Manekine*, through the mutilation of the heroines, identities are written on and by the body; Alien bodies are once again markers of subjectivity, but here – as was not the case in *Jehan d'Avennes* – this

becomes a source of strength rather than weakness. Finally, I draw this all together with further reference to the historical realities of the Burgundian court, and gesture towards related avenues of enquiry in this regard.

The model of Alienness developed here offers but one means of reading the *mise en prose* genre creatively and, I would argue, properly. It allows not a divorcing of the prose and its source, but rather a means of separating the two from the documentary or philological approach hitherto adopted by the vast majority of critics. It permits a drawing-together of a representative sample of the broader corpus and illustrates that there are very real links between the elements of that corpus, at the level of the text and of the historical circumstances of its production. Of course it is not the only way of dealing with this material – other matrices are adducible, as I suggested above –, but this particular invalid's road to recovery has to begin somewhere. Far from being a dry repository of scintillatingly dull if valuable Picard variants, the *misés en prose* are a vibrant set of texts on which more literary work is left to be done. Whether they receive the 'utterly exhaustive' treatment, the 'examination from every conceivable angle', advocated for Jane Austen by Morris Zapp, however, remains to be seen; but it is certainly a hypothesis worth testing.

¹ David Lodge, *Small World. An Academic Romance* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1984), 24-5.

² Throughout the thesis I refer to the duke as Philip the Good rather than Philippe le Bon, as this is his more normalised English title; the same is true of, for example, Charles the Bold. Where normalisation has not yet taken place, however, I retain the French title, as in for example Jehan d'Avennes as opposed to the odd-sounding anglicised John of Avennes.

³ See Richard Vaughan, *Philip the Good. The Apogee of Burgundy* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2002). The term 'Burgundian Netherlands' is important here, for it is vital to bear in mind that what the modern reader thinks of when Burgundy is mentioned is not the same as it meant for a fifteenth-century audience: as the administrative map of Burgundy provided by Vaughan (187) shows, in the period around 1450 the territories comprised not only the Duchy of Burgundy and the Franche-Comté, but also, *inter alia*, northern regions like Artois, Hainault, Brabant, and Flanders.

⁴ Though he does not cover Burgundy under Philip *per se*, Simon McKinnon's recent thesis 'The Representation of the English in French Literature between 1450 and 1530' (submitted to the University of Durham, 2005) offers some useful insights into the phenomenon of Anglo-French relations.

⁵ See Vaughan, *op. cit.*, 99.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 113.

⁷ Ibid., 115. For a more detailed account than I can give here of the political situation between France and Burgundy at this time, see Vaughan's Chapter 4, 'Burgundy, France and England: 1435-49', 98-126.

⁸ A brief word on my treatment of this term throughout the thesis is in order here. The fixed substantive for the phenomenon being described is 'mise en prose', and this presents no problems of usage or understanding, and becomes plural, of course, by the addition of an 's' to the 'mise' element only. Some confusion or apparent inconsistency might seem to arise when the phrase is made to function adjectivally: in the chapters that follow, the reader might encounter 'mis en prose' alongside the expected 'mise en prose'. The practice I have adopted in this instance is to make the past participle agree with the gender and number of the noun I am qualifying were that noun to be in French rather than English, hence 'a text mis en prose for the Burgundian court', and 'a work mise en prose at the duke's behest' (*œuvre* presenting itself in such instances as feminine).

CHAPTER ONE
HERE, THERE, AND IN BETWEEN:
PRELIMINARY ENCOUNTERS WITH THE BURGUNDIAN ALIEN

‘So they had language, and they had fire, and they had society. And about then she found an adjustment being made in her mind, as the word *creatures* became the word *people*. These beings weren’t human, but they were *people*, she told herself; it’s not *them*, they’re *us*.’¹

Thus does Mary Malone, an Oxford scientist transplanted to a parallel universe in Philip Pullman’s *The Amber Spyglass*, come to terms with the *mulefa*. The *mulefa* are strange, elephant-like creatures which perambulate on wheels fashioned from seed-pods, and which are quite unlike anything Malone has encountered before. Her first reaction to them is a degree of shock, if not revulsion, which soon gives way to a scientist’s fascination. This in turn, in the passage quoted above, develops into something quite different. The scientist begins to accept, *and be accepted by*, the *mulefa*. This episode, though written almost six hundred years after some of the Burgundian narratives I shall be discussing in this chapter and beyond, raises some important questions about what might constitute the category ‘alien’ in the Burgundian Netherlands of the mid-fifteenth century.² And, further and more especially, it gives at least an indication of the means by which contemporary society might be thought to have dealt with that category.

Mary Malone’s reaction to the *mulefa* underlines a foundational point that any discussion of the alien ought to consider: the alien – I could use the substantive ‘different’ or ‘other’ here – is an epistemological category, and can only be theorised as such.³ The scientist’s reaction to the unusual creatures depends on her recognition of the entities as fundamentally different from herself and from her frame of reference. At first, the *mulefa* are ‘them’, in stark opposition to the familiarity of ‘us’; they are creatures, not people. Mary’s only way of envisioning them is in this relativising way; and her only means of accepting and becoming accepted by the beasts is to begin to recognise and take part in the dialogue between *us* and *them*. Noticing difference is the first step towards dealing with it.

And dealing with difference requires the sort of ideological shift – the ‘adjustment’, as Pullman puts it – that Malone makes in her mind: ‘the word *creature* became the word

people. She perceives what might be called a ‘sameness-in-difference’, in noting that the wheeled creatures are not quite like her, but equally ‘not-quite-*not*-like’ her.⁴ Once the scales – or perhaps blinkers? – fall from her eyes she is able to begin the process of assimilating the alienness of the mulefa. (In what follows I illustrate ways in which alienness and its expressions can, conversely, be rejected: difference is not always this palatable or acceptable.) And that process of assimilation causes Mary Malone – the individual – to reflect on her own identity, and on how she negotiates and will henceforth negotiate her own place within the lived environment. Responding to the alien, in other words, means taking account of, and living with, the self.

Though perhaps simplistic, this paralleling of a twenty-first-century novel and prose texts of the mid-fifteenth century serves to elucidate some of the pressing concerns of this chapter, and this thesis. What I want to explore here is precisely the notion of assimilation or rejection of alienness, whether of a physical or a more abstract order, in the literature, and the society, of Burgundy under Philip the Good. What might constitute alienness for the members of that Burgundian court?⁵ Why are some categories of difference acceptable while others are seen as reprehensible or downright dangerous? And how are acceptability and rejection given literary expression? In this chapter I shall first discuss in increasingly specific terms the different, though more generally-applicable, modes and functions of this category I am calling ‘the alien’, before moving on to a Burgundian-, and text-, centered approach to this set of phenomena, both in Chapter One and beyond. Through a close reading of some of the texts I cite below I hope to draw attention to the significance of alienness in mid-fifteenth-century Burgundy, as the bearer of identity within and outside the literary works, and as a useful strategy for reading both the texts themselves and the historical circumstances of their production (about which tentative suggestions are made in my Conclusion).

Up until now I have been using the term ‘alien’ uncritically, imputing a plurality of meanings to it without explaining what some of these meanings might be. This was not wholly unintentional; for one of the most challenging aspects of the discussion of this concept, or category of difference, is the very elusiveness, the *alienness*, of the label itself. Is what we are dealing with simply ‘difference’, or is it rather a matter of ‘otherness’, both

nouns I suggested above as synonyms for the alien? Or, given the concomitant multivalency and inadequacy of these labels, might it be something else entirely? Describing the sort of phenomena I outlined above in my discussion of the mulefa, and which I develop below, is straightforward enough; imposing a measure of theoretical and symbolic unity on them, though, is another matter entirely. I am not alone in perceiving a certain elusiveness in this terminology.

The Themes: 'Us'?

As Timothy Jones and David Sprunger note, 'over the last quarter century, this concept of the Other has become one of the most commonly-used tools for analysing experiences with foreign phenomena'.⁶ Leaving aside for a moment the loadedness of the notion 'foreign' in a discussion of this nature, I want to reflect on Jones' and Sprunger's statement and its implications.⁷ While it is undeniable that there has been in recent years a profusion of critical works discussing, to a greater or lesser extent, overtly or in a more nuanced way, ideas of difference – whether racial, geographical, psychoanalytical, or intellectual –, it is equally true to say that any real homogenisation of this corpus is impossible, and unethical. Notions of otherness have a tendency to be used as something of a catch-all means of categorisation; a 'commonly-used tool', indeed, but a tool which is used uncritically, or without qualification.

Otherness appears in some works of criticism as a sort of Causaubon-like Key to All Mythologies: if only we could penetrate its nature and meaning, our understanding of the phenomena it seeks to elucidate would be complete.⁸ The resistance to mastery the concept brings with it is shown – unintentionally – in the volume edited by Jones and Sprunger mentioned above. Vying for space in this work are essays on categories of difference as varied as ethnographical diversity, companion animals, the miraculous, insanity, and portentous births, but which are all prefaced by a (valuable) article on 'The Medieval Other: The Middle Ages as Other'.⁹ These concepts are all brought under the control of a single, apparently unifying, term – but each is clearly and fundamentally different from the other. It is important here to underline that the authors of each of the individual essays are using the notion of otherness in a way that is particular to their work;

what I am suggesting is, rather, that editorially all questions of difference appear to be lumped together under one heading. The term is elusive; the signifier floats; the critical thrust is weakened.

The most destabilising aspect of Jones' and Sprunger's introduction and their theorising of otherness (or, as they would have it, Otherness) can be seen in the remark quoted above: 'over the last quarter century, this concept of the *Other* has become one of the most commonly-used tools for analysing experiences with foreign phenomena' (the italics here are mine). In their essay, they appear to be using 'otherness', as I have said, to mean, precisely, something foreign, something strange. So far, so straightforward. But with this remark they open up their discussion – whether wholly intentionally or not – to encompass the more psychoanalytical basis of the category.¹⁰ It is quite plausible, as they say, that 'on the psychological level every self defines itself by engaging an Other, some one or thing that is attractive and repulsive, similar and different'.¹¹ This will, indeed, be a linchpin in my argument, whether on a textual or metatextual plane. But what I want to take issue with here is the way in which Jones and Sprunger use their terminology – or rather, the way in which they import, through the use of the upper case in their discussion of 'otherness', Lacanian terms into their discussion.

Any theorisation of the phenomena that I am still calling 'otherness' or 'difference' or 'alienness' cannot but be coloured by Lacanian psychoanalysis. As Dylan Evans underlines, 'the 'other' is perhaps the most complex term in Lacan's work';¹² it is also one of the most widely-known. The complexity of the term – and the concept – in Lacanian analysis stems in part from the plurality of meanings Lacan gave to it over the course of his career. In his 1930s work, by 'other' Lacan, taking his lead from Hegel via Kojève,¹³ meant simply 'other peoples'; it was not until 1955 that he began to play with its significance. In his *Séminaire II*, on the Ego in Freud, Lacan draws the distinction between *l'autre*, 'the little other' ('the other'), and *l'Autre*, 'the big other' ('the Other').¹⁴ 'The other' is 'the other who is not really other, but a reflection and projection of the ego [...], entirely inscribed in the imaginary order', whereas 'the Other' is 'an otherness which transcends the illusory other-ness of the imaginary because it cannot be assimilated [and by extension rejected?] through identification. [It] is inscribed in the order of the

symbolic'.¹⁵ The phenomena I am dealing with in this chapter, and which Jones and Sprunger treat in their essay, might be seen to correspond most closely to 'the little other', the *image spéculaire* of the self or of something connected to a person's conception of their own selfhood or identity. These editors' uncritical appropriation of the capitalised substantive 'Other' rather queers their theoretical pitch, and illustrates well, if unintentionally, the problematic status of this particular category. Lacan hovers over the notion of otherness, but his terminology cannot be used lazily.

Interestingly, in his essay in the above-mentioned volume Freedman draws attention to, and rejects, just this 'tendency to treat *alien* or *Other* as if they were stable categories'.¹⁶ This is an impossible theoretical position (though the limitations of the lexicon are such that it is hard – as I am finding here – to avoid appearing to take such a stance). Though I have underlined above the potential relevance to my discussion of the Lacanian model of the 'little other' as a projection of, and means of dealing with, the self, I need to make clear at the outset that what I shall be attempting in this chapter is emphatically not a faithful application of this model to Burgundian literature. Nor will I be framing my analysis in terms solely of the anthropological, the orientalist, the sociological, the post-colonial, the New Historicist, or the structuralist. My approach will be, rather, an eclectic one as I attempt to set out the particular matrix I adopt and apply to the texts in the following chapters. The above-named critical methodologies will, with others, permute and cohere to give at least a preliminary sketch of this fluid category to which I have given the equally malleable-seeming term 'Alien', a term chosen precisely because it incorporates but need not fully correspond to these theoretical models. I have adopted the capitalised substantive 'Alien' here – a coinage which will be maintained throughout the thesis – to distinguish the Alien as it corresponds to my particular model from distinct phenomena that are 'alien' in some way.

The Alien, according to this model, then, differs from the umbrella term 'other', but shares certain of its features. Not least among these is its potential application to myriad groups and myriad notions, and the temptation to use it as a totalising label. But the Alien as I see it, and as I describe it below, implies such a plurality of meanings that it is intellectually impossible – and wrong – to try and impose a theoretical restraining order

on it. What must be avoided is a sort of ‘fetishisation’ of the Alien,¹⁷ a misguided tendency to homogenise all difference into one grand design of the strange: there is no single model, truly, of the Alien. As Freedman underlines, ‘the most useful aspect of the concept of the other is to emphasise the arbitrary way in which groups are identified as alien, independent of actual degrees of familiarity’.¹⁸ I am trying to set out here one possible way of looking at the concept, in full awareness that there might be other equally valid models, in the same way as there are, as I mentioned in the Preface, other equally valid ways of reading the Burgundian texts I treat here.

How, then, is the Burgundian Alien to be framed? It seems to me that the category ‘Alien’ might pertinently be divided into two sub-categories. First, and most obvious, is a type of Alienness that can be physically represented: some variations on the theme I am considering here might be bodily difference such as monstrosity, dwarfism, or gigantism, race as it is outwardly representable, the marvellous (including fairies), mutilation, and mental instability.¹⁹ Secondly there are more internalised manifestations of the Alien: these include, but are not limited to, issues of sex and gender, nationality, race as a more psychological identity-marker, and doubling – in terms both of twinning, and of a more complex interplay of self and (positive or negative) specular image – as an intellectual rather than bodily phenomenon. For ease of reference I shall be calling these, respectively, the ‘Embodied Alien’ and the ‘Ideological Alien’.

The Embodied Alien is in many ways easier to judge and to map than the Ideological Alien, but it will become increasingly apparent that a binary opposition between these two modalities of Alienness cannot, and should not be adduced. The categories are porous, and tend almost despite themselves to dovetail into one another. In this respect, it is perhaps most useful to see each modality as a notional point on a continuum between, and according, to which individual representations of Alienness can be placed. As I shall show more fully in what follows, an Ideological concept can be given a physical representation; and something Embodied might be intellectualised. For example, in *La Belle Hélène de Constantinople*, the heroine’s missing arm is a marker of the Ideological Alienness consequent upon her father’s incestuous feelings for her, and the presumed monstrous birth topos; but the Alienness is represented outwardly.

One of the reasons why the Ideological Alien might be seen as more difficult to trace than its Embodied counterpart is because of the risk, or the implied threat, of treating Alienness anachronistically. As Freedman underlines, “‘Othering’ or marginalisation’ is a process ‘related problematically to historical circumstances’.²⁰ Is it possible to be entirely free of such anachronism? Isn’t there always, in any treatment of the Middle Ages or indeed any historical period, ‘un décalage, un trou entre l’image produite et le sens qu’elle livre ou dissimule’?²¹ What we see as Alien, or simply strange, is possibly not the same as it would have been to the world view of the fifteenth century. What the Burgundians intended might not be at all what we now see in their literature; the way in which we interpret their society might not correspond with lived experience; and of course modern hermeneutic tools might offer means of talking of phenomena distinct from those means available to the members of this society. As such it is often difficult to know how to theorise and respond to the Burgundian court responsibly. It is important neither to historicise nor to modernise; but the happy historical medium is not easy to strike. We can do nothing other than view the past through the relativising lens of the present, in a discussion of the Alien as in anything else; but the key is to remain aware of this and its implications.

It is of course impossible and ideologically unsound to attempt to see this or any period entirely and exclusively through the prism of contemporary concerns; but ‘while we cannot escape our own time [...], there is more to be gained from looking at a period such as the Middle Ages as much as possible in terms of its own realities’.²² And there is, too, much to be gained from bearing in mind that, try as we might, there are some things about the past that must needs elude our comprehension.²³ To treat the Burgundy of Philip the Good, and the category of the Alien within it, with integrity is to speak to both past and present, and to recognise the importance of both (this is discussed in more depth in Chapter Two). The temptation towards cultural and historical relativism is muted, too, if we speak not to the work of historians, or even literary historians or critics, but to the authority of the texts themselves. Historical encounters with the Alien are attested, and are valuable;²⁴ but what I want to discuss here is the textual, and thence sociological, import of Alienness.

As Terence Cave suggests, ‘un texte littéraire est, par définition, un objet culturel portant des signes de sa provenance’, indivisible – or virtually so – from the historical circumstances of its production.²⁵ This, Cave argues, gives the literary text a *suffisance*, and this *suffisance* implies that the text’s meaning is necessarily confined to, but is capable of going beyond, any glosses imputed to it. Further, it allows that, ‘au lieu de lire les traces d’histoire inscrites dans l’objet culturel selon la loi d’un herméneutique de consommateur, on s’efforcera d’y retrouver la forme fragmentaire d’une expérience perdue’.²⁶ It is in this respect that Cave’s notion of textual *suffisance* differs most significantly from its apparent analogue, Michael Riffaterre’s theory of catachresis.²⁷ This is essentially Riffaterre’s glossing of an ‘ungrammaticality’ in a text, the idea that a text can only find meaning or coherence through an intertextual dialogue with its own structure (or *matrix*, as Riffaterre has it).²⁸ Cave’s *suffisance* is, on the other hand, derived from a close reading of the text which turns not so much on the form of that text but on the historical context underpinning its production. In other words, the literary form adopted is a product of a particular set of historical circumstances: meaning is drawn from that particular form on one level before further significance can be adduced on a deeper, or perhaps simply different, level, as in Riffaterre’s analysis.²⁹ What I am driving at in this chapter, then, is, following Cave, the utility of literary texts in the rediscovery of some kind of ‘forme fragmentaire d’une expérience perdue’ in connection with my category of the Alien, and the idea of a Burgundian selfhood.³⁰ I do not want to – because I cannot – reconstruct the entirety of lived experience; as I have already suggested in the Preface, all I can do is provide a case-study of one category of experience lost, perhaps, to literary history.

My approach here has something in common with that of the New Historicists, for what I am seeking to achieve is emphatically not a grand synthesis. Rather, I want to recover through a comparison of more or less heterogeneous texts some indication of the ‘social energy’³¹ of those works and of the court; to produce, in short, what Clifford Geertz termed a ‘thick description’ of this Burgundian Alien.³² Geertz, in his *The Interpretation of Cultures*, draws a distinction between modes of ethnographic discussion of a culture or cultural phenomenon that he calls ‘thin description’ and ‘thick description’.³³ ‘Thin’ description is the most straightforward form of the two; it is the type of description that is suggested by taking concepts at face value, describing things as they are or appear to be

(along the lines of a – simplistic – statement like ‘monkeys live in trees’). ‘Thick’ description, on the other hand, involves the imputation of reasons, motives, or values, to phenomena introduced through thin description: monkeys live in trees primarily because they have evolved thus, unlike *homo sapiens* who did not and who are now (a ‘thick’ describer might claim) superior to smaller apes. Thick description as I understand it is essentially another person’s construction of someone else’s constructions. In terms of the Burgundians, in my study, it will approximate to a contextual analysis of the corpus of literary works I have chosen, at the level of the texts as well as on a more socio-cultural plane.

No description, of course, could ever be ‘thick’ enough to account for all the cultural and contextual factors that contribute to a work of art, even if the critic were omniscient enough to perceive them – as Geertz suggests, ‘cultural analysis is intrinsically incomplete’.³⁴ A thick description implies, then, a driving towards a paradoxical ‘partial completeness’, a comprehensive treatment of one socio-cultural, or literary, category within an overarching cultural structure. It demands a recognition of the pluri-dimensionality of elements of a corpus, but also a recognition that to attempt a description of that one phenomenon – in the case of this thesis the Alien – is necessarily to ignore further implications those works might have. My corpus of Burgundian texts illustrates this polyvalency well. Concentrating solely on what these texts have to say to the Alien rather than to other themes might be textually irresponsible – there is of course so much else that could be drawn from them –, but it is nonetheless critically necessary.

In what follows of this chapter, and of this thesis, I shall concentrate on a diffuse but interlacing body of texts, and on what they underline about Alienness and selfhood, specifically in terms of what the works themselves have to say but touching where appropriate on their wider manuscript context. The corpus is relatively small, but resonant and representative, and contains the following: the prose version of Chrétien de Troyes’s second full-length work, the *Cligès*,³⁵ the three elements of the *Cycle de Jehan d’Avennes*, especially *Le Roman de Saladin* and the *Istoire de Jehan d’Avennes* but also tangentially *La Fille du comte de Pontbier*,³⁶ and Jehan Wauquelin’s *La Belle Hélène de Constantinople*,³⁷ and *La Manekine*.³⁸ These texts all derive from earlier source texts, usually

in verse but in some cases in prose, and all were rendered in Middle French prose ('mis en prose') in the mid-fifteenth century for the Burgundian court. In different though interwoven ways the works all manifest a particular textual energy, or identity; and all can be said to be, to quote Terence Cave, 'textes troublés'.³⁹ In Cave's theorisation, a 'troubled text' comprises a series of 'perturbations textuelles' that can be read as the index of an epistemological uncertainty, or of an ontological or axiological anxiety:

Le dépistage d'un "trouble" permet de localiser une région problématique de la perception, de retrouver une sorte de fêlure dont l'auteur et ses contemporains ne sont peut-être pas pleinement conscients, mais qu'ils ressentent comme un malaise, une tache floue sur l'horizon de la pensée.⁴⁰

The notion of locating a faultline, or a *fêlure*, is especially useful in the conceptualisation of Alieness and selfhood, and in demonstrating how the Alien is dealt with in the Burgundian texts. In my discussion the 'trouble' inheres in the choice of texts singled out to be mis en prose, and the particular themes they exhibit, with the faultline 'dont l'auteur et ses contemporains ne sont peut-être pas pleinement conscients' being what I have termed Alieness, and the importance in terms of personal and social identity of this as it hovers on the margins of thought. The text – any text, but in my particular case that of the mise en prose – speaks to, even when it remains silent on, these related notions.

The mise en prose – the literary product of the practice of rendering a verse text into more legible prose – is in some measure a very Alien genre, peculiarly Burgundian, and peculiarly of its time. The ethics and aesthetics of the genre – what some critics have termed its 'grammar' – might further be said to constitute a paradigm for the conception of the Alien in Burgundy and its literature, and for how the category of the Alien can be dealt with in this context. One of the most interesting, and most troubling, aspects of this is the possible motivation behind the choice of texts to be mis en prose. Whether in a direct or more diverse sense the works chosen for 'remaniement' are Francophone in origin, the product of a specific literary genealogy that was once, but by the mid-fifteenth century is no longer, also Burgundy's. Given the tensions between the lily and the lion at this time it seems initially curious that Philip should want to have had produced for him essentially *French* stories, whether in prose or otherwise. Why should this be so?

A possible reason for the Burgundian taking-over of French works might be a hegemonical one, connected to the cultural – literary and art-historical – process of appropriation. ‘Beyond the simple acknowledgement of borrowing or influence, what the concept of appropriation stresses is, above all, the motivation for the appropriation: to gain power over’.⁴¹ The taking over – what Piero Boitani would term the ‘improvement’ – of French models allows the Burgundian court to respond to the Embodied and Ideological Alienness of Frenchness in relation to itself, and to gain cultural superiority over the courts of Charles VII or of René of Anjou in (showing itself capable of) creating a new literary aesthetic.⁴² The construction of a social and political identity is always, as this shows and as will become clearer as my matrix of Alienness develops below, to be carried out in relation to another, perhaps dominant, socio-political culture.⁴³

It is valuable here to readdress a point made earlier, that of a literary text being a product, and index, of its time. In this respect, applying the practice theory of Pierre Bourdieu to the *mise en prose* genre seems suggestive. A fundamental concept in Bourdieu’s social anthropology is that of the development and importance of the *habitus*, what he calls in *The Logic of Practice* ‘systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures’.⁴⁴ The habitus is a *generative* notion, ‘an infinite capacity for generating products – thoughts, perceptions, expressions and actions – whose limits are set by the historically and socially situated conditions of its production’.⁴⁵ There is, then, an intimate relationship between a text and its mode of transmission, a dialectical struggle between, for example, the French source text and the Burgundian *mise en prose* to gain what Bourdieu terms *symbolic capital*, ‘the prestige derived from certain practices that may be translated into high status or material gain or both’.⁴⁶

Texts can define symbolic capital as well as acquiring, and in a sense being defined by, it. It is important to be clear in this discussion of the *mise en prose* as elsewhere that, again, it is vital to be sensitive to the risk of an anachronistic over-interpretation of texts and textual practice, and the way in which transmission connects with symbolic capital. One particularly helpful aspect of Bourdieu’s practice theory in connection with the *mis en prose* is that of *connaissance praxéologique*: in its literary application this is an approach to

textual criticism and appreciation that has at its heart the relationship between the structure of the text and the practices of composition and transmission that surround these structures. While displaying theoretical links with the potentially interlacing theories of Cave and Riffaterre, of the ‘troubled text’ and of catachresis, and showing affinity thereby with my angle on the *mise en prose* as developed below, the most valuable suggestion made by and in connection with *connaissance praxéologique* is, as Adrian Armstrong has pointed out, that all literary texts are both individual utterances and the utterances of individuals, products with a particular – and particularly crucial – connection to a particular space and time of production and transmission.⁴⁷

This insistence on individuality is not, of course, to deny the primacy of the intertextual relationship between the source text, the discrete *mise en prose*, and other elements of the *mise en prose* genre.⁴⁸ As Jane Taylor has suggested, fifteenth-century literature ought to be ‘read dialectically, recognising the presence of predecessors and contemporaries [...], [as] something dynamic which generates incremental excitement’.⁴⁹ The incorporation, or otherwise, of literary predecessors and their authority is of the greatest importance in connection with the *mise en prose*. It is through this interlacing of source and product that the idea of the *mise en prose* as an essentially Alien genre is given fullest and most significant expression. The practice of the *prosateur* is certainly a dialectical one, a process of determining what in the source text can be left in the new prose, because it remains meaningful, and what ought to be excised for being in some way irrelevant or inappropriate to the particular circumstances of the text’s production and reception.⁵⁰ I will return to this point in connection with the *mise en prose*’s uses of the past in Chapter Two.

As I understand it, and as I show in different ways in the different chapters of this thesis, the *remanieur*’s job inheres in making potentially Alien features of the source acceptable to the prose text’s new audience, and the concomitant levelling or even excision of anything extraneous. The Burgundian authors’ responses to their task, and their understanding of what was required of them, are sketched in the prologues to the various texts. Singularly the most important and most straightforward Alien feature of the earlier avatars is of course the language in which they are written: that is, what we now call Old

French. This would not have been generally understood by the Burgundian court of Philip the Good more accustomed to what has become known as Middle French; this is what Jehan Wauquelin tellingly describes in the Prologue to his *Faits et les Conquestes d'Alexandre le Grand* as their 'langage maternel', or the 'cler francois' David Aubert claims to be striving after in – among other works – the *Histoire de Olivier de Castille* (Paris, BnF 12574).⁵¹ The language of the source text presented a very real barrier to comprehension, and was the most fundamental piece of levelling an author was required to undertake.⁵²

But his task encompassed a more broadly aesthetic enterprise too, and the most basic example of this in terms of the practice of the *mise en prose* is, of course, the rendering of verse into prose. As David Aubert suggests in the prologue to the Brussels *Histoire de Charles Martel* (KBR 6, 1'), 'au jour d'huy les grans princes et autres seigneurs appetent plus la prose que la ryme pour le langage quy est plus entier et n'est mie tant constraint'. The individual who undertook this almost sanitising prosification – and concomitant making of the text 'plus entier' – was a *translatteur*: as the examples given in Richard Straub's stunningly comprehensive study of Aubert's output seem to suggest, the verb 'translater' was used to denote the process of *dérimage*.⁵³ The apparently analogous 'transmuer', on the other hand and as Jane Burns underlines, is reserved more for the process of reworking a text, the making of an *histoire a compte*: this is given especial Burgundian expression in the prologue to the prose version of Chrétien de Troyes's *Erec et Énide*, where the author of Brussels KBR 7235 (the only manuscript of the two extant versions of this text to have a prologue) explains his purpose in terms, precisely, of 'transmuer de rime en prose'.⁵⁴

Quite what the problem was with verse in relation to these particular texts is, admittedly, not entirely lucid: there is once more a barrier to understanding or perhaps better to consumption in this regard, whether because of 'prolongations et motz inutiles'⁵⁵ or too great a degree of 'embellissement',⁵⁶ in the poetry, and this too must be dealt with. David Aubert rather disingenuously comments in the prologue, again, to *Olivier de Castille*, that his task inheres in rendering the avatar 'au sens litteral non regardant d'y vouloir adjouster autre chose que l'istoire ne porte'; but it will I hope become increasingly clear in what

follows that the prosateur's task was to make palatable in whatever way was necessary the French-derived source texts, at the level of the language used and, more strikingly, in terms of the manipulation of elements of that text's story. The process by which this was done corresponds, I suggest, to an overall hermeneutic of dealing with the Alien in mid-fifteenth-century Burgundy.

In his *Structuralist Poetics* Jonathan Culler talks of the dual notions of convention and naturalisation as they apply to literature.⁵⁷ Despite practice theory's rejection of the precepts of structuralism, if not of structuralism itself, the two approaches make unusually comfortable bed-fellows as regards the *mise en prose* genre.⁵⁸ As I mentioned above in my discussion of Bourdieu's *habitus* and of Cave and Riffaterre's suggestive notions relating to textual production, there is an intimate relationship between a literary work and its mode of transmission. These various theories might help in the shaping of *why* the Burgundians produced and adopted the *mise en prose* – and can therefore show us how we might read it – while Culler's structuralism serves to underline some of the processes the source text might have undergone in its *remaniement*, to underline in short what Norris Lacy has called the 'motivation and method' which underscore the *mise en prose* genre.⁵⁹ In his discussion of naturalisation Culler demonstrates how literature – paradoxically, as he points out – must be made to *speak* to its audience. The text must have a communicative function; this, one might argue, was lacking for the Burgundian in an earlier poetical work, from the point of view of language as well as form and structure. And the communicative function is restored to the work through this process of naturalisation.

Following Barthes, Culler suggests that 'the first step in the process of naturalisation or restoring literature to a communicative function is to make *écriture* a period and generic concept'.⁶⁰ (*Ecriture* is a mode of writing adopted by an author, a function given to language according to which literary creation can take place.) So while the prosateur – nor indeed the Burgundian court – did not, of course, invent the concept of writing in prose, its novelty inheres in the notion of a particular and personal *écriture*, the function fulfilled by language. Verse was thus brought to book in a form the court was able – and willing – to understand. 'The strange, the formal, the fictional, must be recuperated or naturalised,

brought within [their] ken, if [they] do not want to remain gaping before monumental inscriptions.⁶¹ The prosateur's task is one of reducing strangeness, then, and one of interpretation, 'making present what is absent, of restoring an original presence which is the source and truth of the form in question.'⁶²

This notion of interpretation is especially interesting for my purposes here. How do these Burgundian authors deal linguistically, textually, and ideologically with the unfamiliar, the Alien? These authors' creative engagement with their source text corresponds in some measure to the 'intertextual dialectic' discussed by Jörn Gruber in his work on the troubadours, the notion of connecting with and transcending past generations, past genealogies even (I come back to the question of genealogies in Chapters Two and Three).⁶³ This is not perhaps quite the same as Piero Boitani's notions of 'miglioramento' – 'improving [migliorare] [...] means making the necessary adjustments to the model in order to "save appearances" (the "phenomena") and make them tally with current data' – but there are links between the two approaches, despite the subjectivity of Boitani's remarks.⁶⁴ (I say that Boitani's remarks are subjective because, precisely, the notion of 'bettering' implies hierarchies of taste, and differences of opinion.) How the influence of past models is accommodated, or not, in these mises en prose is, like the incorporation or otherwise of the Alien, a question of dialectics and dialoguing; and it is also a question of translation and anthropological linguistics. By what means – what methods – did these authors contrive to 'transmuer de rime en prose'?

In a recent article on Burgundian reading-reception, Jane Taylor quotes Walter Benjamin's formulation that 'in the appreciation of a work of art or an art form, consideration of the receiver never proves helpful'.⁶⁵ As Taylor comments, Benjamin's remark is entirely correct in that – in a medieval context – 'the responses of translators and illustrators and rubricators and *remanieurs* tell us only about how *they* read; they do not help us to interpret the original'.⁶⁶ But what happens if 'interpreting the original' is what we do not want, or even need, to do? What if what concerns us is, precisely, the responses of the 'translators and illustrators and rubricators and *remanieurs*' to that original? In connection with the Burgundian mise en prose it seems that the reaction of the receiver, and the reading-strategies of the author, might prove very helpful indeed in

arriving at a proper interpretation and appreciation of the text, both as it might have functioned at the court of Philip the Good, and as we could read it today.⁶⁷

It is by now perhaps something of a truism – but no less pertinent for that – to point out that a work *mise en prose* for the Burgundian court functions in two interconnected ways, on a textual and a metatextual level.⁶⁸ The decisions made by the translator on a textual level – what to leave out, what to expand, how, in short, to naturalise the text –,⁶⁹ and *his* response to the work, is of great importance for the reception of the work by the patron and the court. Far from being anachronistic, a critical reading – whether structuralist, or carried out according to practice theory, or otherwise – that aims to reunite the two levels enriches and explicates the text by bringing out for the modern reader the meaning that might have been encoded within it for the Burgundian audience. Roman Jakobson has – indirectly – called the sort of strategies effected by of the *remanieur* ‘intralingual translation’,⁷⁰ a phenomenon which Taylor glosses as ‘acculturation’:

a process whereby the socio-culturally unfamiliar is recast in familiar terms, so that the reader can understand systems and phenomena in a source text corresponding to his own ideologies, preconceptions and behaviour-patterns.⁷¹

In playing with the intertextuality between the source and the text, between the text and other Burgundian literature of the period, and further between the potentially conflicting ideologies of source and eventual product, the author effects a ‘deletion of alterity’,⁷² and thereby deals for his purposes appropriately with the Alien elements of that work.

What we are looking at here in the *mise en prose*’s response to the Alien corresponds to what Sarah Kay, following Fredric Jameson, refers to as the ‘political unconscious’ of a text – its ‘underside, or *impensé*, or *non-dit*’.⁷³ Kay cites history – and by extension literary history – as being constituted by conflicts between the empowered and the disempowered, and suggests that ‘it is in [...] restoring to the surface of the text the repressed and buried reality of this fundamental history that the doctrine of the political unconscious finds its function and its necessity’.⁷⁴ While I would be tempted to mute slightly Kay’s notion of conflicts between groups – as I shall suggest below, questions of

empowerment and disempowerment are subjective –, the idea of repressed realities is a suggestive one within the context of the Alien in the *mise en prose*. Like Terence Cave's category of the 'troubled text', it underlines how reading Burgundian texts against, but not solely as a function of, their literary and historical context encourages us to get to the heart of their preoccupation with what I call the Alien, and the concomitant psychological connection this might be seen to present to Burgundian selfhood and identity. I want to turn now to the precise ways in which the texts in my corpus speak to and uncover these notions, and thereby to the originality of what I am setting out to do here. It is often, I contend, what the text does not reveal, or reveals through its silent spaces, that becomes its most telling aspect.

The Texts: Them?

I noted at the outset that the category of the Alien at the mid-fifteenth-century Burgundian court seems to me to function on two distinct levels plottable along a notional continuum. I referred to these modalities, or sub-categories, in my preliminary model of Alienness as the Embodied Alien and the Ideological Alien. My frame of reference for both of these sub-categories will be predominantly textual; the Embodied Alien, however, will be seen to be perhaps more readily connectable to 'real' life, or life outside the text. The Embodied is, after all, generally visible or palpable. The Ideological Alien, on the other hand, is where what I see to be the most interesting, most suggestive, and most valid, meaning of the Alien in the texts, and at the court, is given its fullest expression. Psychological and social anxieties in the text are, I shall suggest in the Conclusion, the expression of anxieties beyond the work of literature. It will become clearer in the chapters which follow that it is through the correct (for my purposes) interpretation of Ideologically Alien phenomena that we can most convincingly theorise the vexed questions of identities in and of the text, and by extension of Burgundian selfhood. It is important to stress that these two categories of Alienness do, indeed must, overlap. Sometimes an element that is physically Embodied can have intra-, inter-, or extra-textual Ideological consequences; and, similarly, the Ideological Alien can be given a palpable, if not always precisely physical, Embodiment. And sometimes elements can be both Embodied *and* Ideological. It is worth also reiterating that, according to my specific

use of the terms, something is liable to be termed a physical entity and/or an intellectualised one (to be Embodied and/or Ideological) irrespective of whether the label is applied to a being or a concept. A closer look at some aspects of the corpus and related works will elucidate the functioning of this fluid – dialogic – categorisation.

Much of what has been written on those categories of difference that are most akin to my notion of the Alien – specifically, as I suggested above, on ideas of ‘the other’ and the status of the strange – centres on factors that I will be considering as the Embodied Alien.⁷⁵ What we are looking at here, initially at least, is a basic sense of the Alien, the most obvious and recognisable categories of physical(ised) difference. As was mentioned above, notions such as monsters, the so-called monstrous races, and wild men, dwarfism and gigantism, and fairy peoples, might all be categorised as pure Embodied Alien.

In the Burgundian mises en prose of my corpus, there is very little that can be termed actually monstrous. As I shall point out below, there is the threat or hint of monstrous or portentous births; but the threat remains just that, there is no actualisation of the notion beyond the imaginary as there might have been in earlier works with Burgundian connections like *Le Roman de Perceforest* and *Ysajje le Triste*.⁷⁶ The question of monstrosity functions very incidentally in the works I concentrate on in the following chapters; and when it does appear it seems most often to be used merely to provide local colour, as in the following example from Jehan Wauquelin’s *La Manekine*. The king of Scotland, to whom Manekine was married and from whom she fled, leaves his kingdom in the company of three trusted seneschals in search of his wife. As they wander ‘des parties d’occident dont ils se partirent, ils avironnerent le monde en la partie de midy, de oriënt et de septentrion’, and

dist nostre histoire que par plusieurs fois ils arriverent entre gens si divers que ils ne savoïent se c’estoïent bestez suvages [sic] ou gens, puis estoient tellefois entre serpens, lyons, tigres et griffons, qui tant de dangier leur faisoïent que ce seroit une droite pité de recorder.⁷⁷

In some measure these barely-described monstrous peoples and *unheimlich* beasts are a threat to the symbolic purity of the voyagers, simply by virtue of their being strange or *marvellous*. As Mary Douglas remarks, the marvellous or monstrous is impure because it

can be seen as 'the by-product of a systematic order and classification of matter, in so far as ordering involves rejecting inappropriate elements'.⁷⁸ Anything that presents itself as different from its observer is immediately classifiable as monstrous, or dangerous, partly because it troubles self-conception. At what point does 'us' become 'them'?

The similarity-in-difference topos, and its relationship to the category of the Embodied Alien, is shown to good effect in connection with the idea of the Wild Man.⁷⁹ One particularly interesting application, or extension, of the Wild Man as Embodied Alien at the Burgundian Court is in connection with the chivalrically-unformed young man and his instruction at the knee of an older and wiser woman. I will discuss in Chapter Four the specific, and troubling, ways in which this notion is given weight in *Jehan d'Avenes*,⁸⁰ for now, though, a resolutely non-Burgundian example, that of Antoine de La Sale's *Petit Jehan de Saintré*,⁸¹ produced c.1456 for the Angevin court, illustrates well the point I want to make. *Saintré* charts the personal and chivalric progress of the eponymous Jehan de Saintré, and his instruction in the ways and wiles of life by the (implicitly or explicitly morally questionable) Madame des Belles Cousines, who wants to transform the young knight into 'ung homme de renommé'. This, and the fact that Jehan's chivalric formation culminates in a successful crusade, runs parallel to the Burgundian *Jehan d'Avenes*.⁸² Where the two works diverge, though, is in *Saintré's* offering a true Wild Man, in the boorish form of the Damp Abbé, as foil to the 'niais' Jehan; the only foil in *Jehan d'Avenes* is the hero's former self and his contrasting performances of identity.

As well as being simply the third point of the erotic triangle of Saintré, Madame des Belles Cousines and himself, the abbé functions in this text, and in one particular episode within it, as the chivalric antithesis not only of Jehan but also of the world in which he operates.⁸³ (He is also a lubricious, and therefore suspect, cleric, a throwback perhaps to the *fabliau*, this makes him not merely the Embodied Alien but also Ideologically Alien with respect to this milieu.) At a late stage in the narrative, Madame taunts Saintré and challenges him to a duel with the Damp Abbé. Saintré initially refuses, then capitulates after the Abbé questions his *bardiessse*. The two men strip to wrestle. The abbé acts immodestly 'car illeuc publiquement se mist en pourpoint, [et] destachia ses chausses',⁸⁴ which he does not even have properly laced to his *pourpoint*; Jehan, on the other hand,

disrobes at the far end of a field. Once the two are prepared for the encounter, too, their relative Alienness or otherwise to the dominant code could not be clearer. The abbé, in removing his *chausses*, shows off ‘ses grosses cuisses pelues et velues comme un ours’; Saintré remains in richly embroidered and beaded hose.⁸⁵ The abbé is the animalistic Wild Man, the Alien, *par excellence*, in his bodily attitude and dress (or lack of it) as in his morals. Saintré, on the other hand, embodies the dominant chivalric and vestimentary ideology.

In Chapters Three, Four, and Five, then, as the above paragraph hints, my analysis centres to a greater or lesser extent on the corporeal, and its rôle and function with regard to my two modalities of Alienness. And one of the most strident, and easily-identifiable, representations of corporeal aberrance is the figure of the giant or the dwarf, two extremes of the same bodily continuum. As Jeffery J. Cohen points out, in the giant and the dwarf we see the interesting if unsettling conjunction of absolute Embodied Alienness and absolute familiarity. What, after all, is a dwarf or a giant if not merely an under- or out-sized human?⁸⁶ Giants appear to be outside the human body, beyond and threatening its coherence; but they are also intimately linked to humanity. I shall suggest in my discussion in Chapter Three of the unexpectedly gigantic Bruyant and Corsuble as foils to the hero in *Saladin* ways in which Cohen’s pertinent comments might be useful here in moving the discussion on to the problematical relationship between inside and out, between Alienness and identity, as I attempt to situate the character of Salhadin – who exhibits both Christian and Saracen behaviours – within or alongside my categories of the Embodied and Ideological Alien.⁸⁷

I mentioned earlier the fact that these two categories of the Alien almost *should*, and do, overlap, that Alienness is a dialogic process between the relative notions of inside and out, of ‘us’ and ‘them’, and of the familiar and the strange.⁸⁸ I want to show now precisely how this functions in the Burgundian corpus; how through the partial or total fusion of these categories we enter a more performative realm of the Alien and its counterpart, selfhood.⁸⁹ Some categories of Embodied or Ideological Alienness overlap more comprehensively than some with one another, of course. For instance, it is often quite difficult to see where, in terms of a sub-category of Alienness such as gender, the Embodied ends and the Ideological begins. In Chapters Three to Five, to a greater or

lesser extent, I suggest ways in which the notions of performative (gender) identity advanced by Judith Butler might offer a means of coming to terms with this malleability of Alienness and, specifically, of Alien identities whether in or of the text. Butler's theories centre on the fluidity of selfhood, and of identity as the necessarily fluctuating product of an individual's response to circumstances.⁹⁰ This seems to lend itself well to these Burgundian narratives, though especially the ones discussed in the latter part of the thesis. I will fill in this bare outline there, but will show briefly what I mean here with examples from a text discussed only glancingly in what follows.

La Fille du comte de Pontbient, the middle section of the *Jehan d'Avennes* triptych covered in Chapters Three and Four, offers interesting analogues to and for this. In the text the (unnamed) heroine is raped by brigands, an event to which her husband Thibaut is witness. Interestingly, and originally, the couple remains together; Thibaut inflicts no ill on his wife save the denial of sexual relations. He makes the mistake, though, of recounting the tale of the rape, with the victim's identity concealed, to the heroine's father, whose reaction is much more extreme. He would have hanged the woman with her hair, or cut off her head, and then buried her: 'et ce pour mieux faire que laisser, car jamais je n'eusse eu jour de joye ne de soulas avec elle'.⁹¹ (Once he learns that the woman was in fact his daughter he goes even further in his desire to excise the Alienness: he has a barrel made to her size, seals her into it and has her thrown out to sea.) It is something of a challenge here to discern whether the comte's reaction centres on his daughter's (gendered) Embodied Alienness – her status as a woman to whom violence has been done, and whose symbolic purity has been violated –, on the Ideological Alienness of rape or of a woman who has been altered through this act, or on a combination of the two factors.⁹²

Bridging the gap between the more obviously physicalised Alien division that is monsters, for example, and deeper-structure Alienness like sexuality and violence, though, are two sub-categories that are seemingly closely linked but which can function independently, and in different ways. These are race, and place; and they are underlined through the topos of travel. All the mises en prose, and earlier prose works, I have cited here involve their hero or heroine, or sometimes both, in some kind of journey or even network of

journeys. I note in Chapter Three how travel functions in *Saladin*; but as we see in Chapter Five the most telling case of the transformative rôle of journeys is *La Belle Héléne de Constantinople*, though it is also seen to striking effect in the parallel story of *La Manekine*.

Is to travel hopefully better than to arrive? It certainly seems so in Héléne's case, if not perhaps always in the case of other voyagers in this tale. In this text approximately 20 separate journeys are undertaken by the different characters; and in each case it is, I would argue, the fact of travelling, of shifting the person from one – any – location to another that is important, not the nature or the name of the ultimate (or interim) destination. Travel, as Danielle Quéruef persuasively argues, has changed in nature by the time of the mises en prose.⁹³ Whereas in the twelfth- and thirteenth-century *romans de chevalerie* from which some of these Burgundian narratives derive a journey to a *specific* place offered an opportunity for *dédoublement* in the life of the hero, and often an increase in renown, for late-medieval authors 'le voyage, conçu d'abord comme une simple recherche de l'aventure, devient [...] la cause d'un total bouleversement du destin du héros'.⁹⁴ The journey is simply symbolic, a device for the advancement of the story, and of course with that the development of the character(s) in question.

The physical or topographical reality of Constantinople, whence Héléne starts out – like that of where she ends up and as in what historical time-frame all this happens –, ultimately matters little. East or West, North or South; all is, in real or proto-cartographical terms, irrelevant. As Danielle Régnier Bohler underlines, 'pour l'imaginaire du lecteur le nom même de Constantinople [...] porte les prestiges d'un Orient qu'a su relater ou évoquer le regard d'un croisé ou d'un chroniqueur'.⁹⁵ But for the characters in this story 'Constantinople' is the signifier not of a real, necessary geographical location; not of exotic splendour and the representation of the oriental body; but of something much more troubling. It is the site of the 'incest', the event that effects 'un total bouleversement du destin d[e l']héro[ine]'. The same can be said, in fact, of the places cited in the majority of the mises en prose. While it would *seem* self-evident that the discussion of Alien concepts would depend in large measure on the topographical framework in texts like *La Belle Héléne de Constantinople*, the *Trois Fils de Rois* and *Olivier de*

Castille, for example, the Aliennes in fact in what happens to the actors on that stage. The location of that stage is, effectively and ultimately, immaterial.⁹⁶

What the notion of travel does do in these mises en prose, though, is encourage encounters, somewhere, somehow, with the generic racial (and possibly religious) group 'Sarrasins'. In these narratives the category 'Saracen' is a multi-valent, and highly malleable, Alien group, a category which – as in the *chanson de geste* and the epic – bears little real relation to any historical race of people. The Saracen is an amalgam, as I shall show, of all that is not Burgundian, or French, or English, or indeed European (inasmuch as the concept or construct 'Europe' might be said to have existed in the mid-fifteenth century), and of all that is dangerously non-Christian. It is a general 'foreign' group, full of Eastern Islamic promise, and one which features curiously frequently in the mises en prose. (I will show below that Salhadin, of course, functions in a way opposite to this.)

The reasons for the predominance of the generic Saracen as Alien in these Burgundian narratives are historically not too difficult to discern: they centre on Philip the Good's crusading ambitions. Born in 1396, the year of the fall of Nicopolis, to a father whose crusading power was legendary, Philip always harboured desires to mount, or at least be part of, an equally successful and renowned Holy War. It appeared that in the 1450s his time had come. Constantinople fell to Mohammed II in May 1453; and by February 1454 Philip was holding a sumptuous banquet in Lille – the Feast of the Pheasant – at which he and some one hundred knights of his Order of the Golden Fleece solemnly vowed to go on crusade to stamp out the Grand Turk from Constantinople.⁹⁷ (I discuss this call to (past) arms in my introduction to the prose *Cligès* in Chapter Two.) Rather anachronistically, the Alien Saracen in the mises en prose corresponds in some measure to the broader historical notion of the Infidel, of a non-white, non-Christian, threat to be reduced. This appears straightforward and plausible enough; but the textual reality is somewhat more complex.

The hegemonic impulse thematised in the idea of crusade and the representation of the Saracen 'was a fact of culture, and its failure in the political realm in no way invalidated its hold in other areas, especially in the practice of knowledge [...]. Politically the West may

have had to grudgingly accept the existence of Islamic otherness, but in the realm of knowledge it acknowledged no such possibility'.⁹⁸ While politically Philip seemingly felt that the Islamic horde needed to be brought down – but while he was unable to do this through military action –, the text of the *mise en prose* offered ample opportunity to see this quashing in action. But, further, the notion of the Saracen Alien is played with textually in complex, but very interesting, ways. In connection with the Alien peoples 'John Mandeville' encounters and writes about in his *Travels*, Linda Lomperis coins the formula 'not quite not Christian': 'there is no such thing as essential or authentic Christian identity insofar as all sorts of others in this text can and do indeed effectively pass as Christian'.⁹⁹ Lomperis's formulation can be modified and used to quite telling effect in connection with the Burgundian textual representation of the Saracen.

In some cases – the most thorough-going example of this is of course Salhadin – it appears that the Saracen Alien is 'not quite not Burgundian', that there are degrees of acceptance of the category in these narratives dependent upon how far and in what ways the Saracen performs a Burgundian, or 'foreign', identity. It is worth pointing out here that race is in any case a plastic category of identity in the medieval period, closer to what we might call ethnicity,¹⁰⁰ and it is worth stressing also that, as I have already suggested, the Saracen is a historical, perhaps literary-historical, construct,¹⁰¹ what Cohen has called 'an abjected and fantasmic body produced through category violation in order to demarcate the limits of the Christian possible'.¹⁰² The Saracens might be viewed not as a race but an Alien culture, in Arjun Appadurai's sense of 'situated difference': he considers that group identities are produced through the more or less conscious mobilising of certain attributes that 'articulate the boundary of difference'.¹⁰³ As in, for example, the *Chanson de Roland*, once they are considered in this way the most striking attribute of the Islamic horde in these *mise en prose* is its similarity to the Burgundians.

As Sharon Kinoshita notes in connection with the *Roland*, 'beyond their exotic names and their occasionally frightful attitudes, the pagans speak the same language as the Christians', having no need for interpreters.¹⁰⁴ Each camp becomes a mirror image of the other – though with the implication that the Christian camp is that bit superior to that of the pagans; the Alien is, as Edward Said puts it, domesticated, and this process of

domestication or schematisation is in some sense a means of controlling the Ideological and Embodied Alien.¹⁰⁵ Saracens, in short, can pass as Burgundian. Or rather, *most* Saracens – and foreigners generally – in these narratives can pass as Burgundians. The representational regime of the mises en prose allows that the Saracen who behaves in a *Christian* Burgundian manner can be accommodated, can be as it were naturalised; otherwise, the Saracen remains resolutely Alien. So this is why the Saracens who fight against the pseudo-Burgundian hero in, for example, *La Belle Hélène de Constantinople* or *Gillion de Trazégnies* are not assimilated, and are visually represented as different in the manuscripts' iconography. They remain Ideologically Alien to the Burgundian world-view simply because they are not Christian, and 'fail' to act as such.¹⁰⁶ They do not, in other words, manifest appropriate Burgundian characteristics.

Other Saracens – and especially Saracen women – choose in the texts to embrace the Ideologically Alien – or perhaps, textually, their Ideological Alienness –, to confront it head-on, through converting to Christianity. (There is of course here the troubling sub-category of the eroticisation, or even fetishisation, of the Saracen woman, which would merit further investigation.) Whereas in the *Chanson de Roland*, for example, Saracens must remain Saracens so that the Christians might become Franks, in certain of the mises en prose it seems that Saracens must be converted so that the Christians might become more Burgundian. Christians, whether of Saracen or simply 'foreign' origin, are acceptable to the Burgundian ideology. The emperor Antoine in *La Belle Hélène de Constantinople*, for example, is naturalised as an honorary Burgundian in the narrative because he is a valiant *Christian* knight, albeit – perhaps in spite of being – one who has incestuous leanings. And in *Gillion de Trazégnies* Hertan, after his conversion, has become so assimilated into the dominant ideology (Gillion's Christianity and attendant whiteness) that he is forced to blacken his face when he has to escape from captivity. He has become Alien, in the Embodied and Ideological senses, to his former self; he is both more than and less than himself. There is an underlying hegemonic implication in these narratives that a person cannot be good unless s/he is Christian and, further, unless s/he is – Ideologically at least – Burgundian.¹⁰⁷ Burgundian personal identity inheres in exercising and imposing control over the Ideological and/or Embodied Alien, in demonstrating cultural and moral superiority through a deletion of alterity, whether of a textual or social order.

These questions of travel and race, and the linked notion of the erotic charge of the Alien (as I shall show in Chapter Five), bring us to the final and most performative – and also of course the most ineluctably Lacanian – categories of the Embodied and Ideological Alien as I see them. These are the ideas of doubling, and those of aspects of sex and gender, as they are envisioned in the mises en prose. These sub-categories underline the function of the Alien here as a specular image, or a counterpart; and a close analysis of these broadly psychoanalytical concepts will enable important, if at this stage tentative, hypotheses to be drawn on the thorny question of Burgundian selfhood. The conjunction of these sub-categories of the Ideological and Embodied Alien brings out the way in which textual *trouble* might locate and situate a literary and societal *fêlure* connected to the theorisation of personal and group identity at this court.

The degree to which events, and more especially characters, are doubled or paralleled in the mises en prose is quite striking. In *Gillion de Trazégnies*, for example, the Saracen court of the Sultan of Babylon at which Gillion is imprisoned is mirrored by Gillion's home court at Hainaut in all respects except that of religious faith. And, further, the Babylonian court is subjected to an attack by two rival courts, those of the emir of Orbrie and the king of Cyprus, which too are closely linked in all ways except for the fact that the emir is a Saracen in contrast with the Christian King. In *La Belle Hélène de Constantinople* the journeys undertaken by the heroine are doubled by a series of similar ones followed by her father and her husband; the letters sent by Hélène to her husband, and vice versa, are monstrously mirrored by a false set Hélène's evil mother-in-law has written to poison the mind of her son against his wife; and the portraits of Hélène that the emperor Antoine has painted on the walls of his bedchamber in Constantinople are paralleled by a set he has painted in the papal palace in Rome, and by a further set commissioned by her husband Henri. These three series of portraits are, as we shall see in Chapter Five, of fundamental importance to the narrative progression of this mise en prose, for not only do they reveal to Henri and the pope the Ideologically Alien incest that caused Hélène to flee her father's court, but they also and more crucially reveal to the King and the pontiff the heroine's identity, forfeited, as I suggest below, through her flight.

The idea of doubling as a source or indicator of personal identity, and as a site of an encounter with and possible acceptance of the Alien, is underlined through the mirroring – either positively or negatively – of individuals in these narratives. The most obvious, and most simplistic, example of this is the conventional playing-off of good and evil against each other, as in the parallelism of Hélène with her wicked mother-in-law, or in the similar trope in *La Manekine*. The process is extended, to telling effect, into the representation of what has been called ‘homosocial bonding’,¹⁰⁸ the doubling of male characters and the privileging of male-male (non-erotic) relationships over male-female ones. In *La Belle Hélène de Constantinople*, for instance, the relationship between Antoine and Henri as they wander in search of the lost heroine becomes increasingly homosocial in character; and the parallels between the two men, in terms of combat and chivalry as well as in more amorous matters, are strong. The same can be said for the encounter between Gillion de Trazégnies and the Saracen-but-soon-to-be-Christian Hertan (or Henry, after his conversion).

Their bond of companionship is particularly interesting as, at its inception, the two men are of different religions, Ideologically Alienated from one another. As their friendship develops they reach the nearest thing to mutual understanding that these Burgundian narratives afford the bond between two individuals in this regard: Hertan, who following narrative convention had always actually been interested in the precepts of Christianity, decides to convert. The bond with another man teaches him, crucially, something about himself, and his own Alienness from a dominant moral ideology. In Lacanian terms, Hertan would be the counterpart or specular image of Gillion. The counterpart is a ‘little other’, an other who is not really radically other at all, but which is in fact a reflection, the specular image of the ego or the self. Hertan’s Alienness vis-à-vis Gillion is staged, and naturalised, through his recognition of himself as the Christian’s counterpart through what Donald Maddox, in Lacanian vein, has labelled the ‘specular encounter’.¹⁰⁹ As Maddox sees it, identity is exterior as well as interior to the person; and through the specular encounter with the highly visible Embodied Alien characters receive crucial information about their own selfhood. The Alien reflects, and refracts, identity.

The *refraction* of Burgundian identity in the encounter with the Alien is played out to most dazzling effect in connection with concepts and categorisations of the Alien connected with sex and gender. As with the notion of doubling, these categorisations can be eminently straightforward but are more interesting the more complex they get. Some aspects of sexual – Ideological – Alienness are modified and brought into line through the *mise en prose*, and some are simply allowed to happen and to pass without comment. Of those naturalised by the *mise en prose* the most potent is the deletion of sexual alterity in the incest episode of *La Belle Hélène de Constantinople*, through the expedient of the portrait device. The verse source makes it quite clear that the emperor has the portraits of his daughter painted in his bedchamber as a consequence of his incestuous passion for her; this cannot be allowed to remain in the *mise en prose*. By a sleight of hand effected early in the narrative, Wauquelin the prosateur excises the incest and removes all trace of guilt, and Ideological Alienness, from the emperor. The same cannot be said for the Ideologically Alien topoi of bigamy and miscegenation in, respectively, *Gillion de Trazégnies* and *Beufves de Hantonne*. These are curiously allowed to remain in the *mise en prose*, despite the fact that there is as much reason for the prosateur to level these as there was for the removal of the Emperor's guilt in the previously-mentioned work. The reason for this might, I shall suggest below, lie in a sociological reading of the Burgundian court of Philip the Good.

The narrative of the Embodied and the Ideological Alien that is, I have argued, so foundational to the original prose narratives like *Ysajje le Triste* and *Le Roman de Perceforest* and to the *mises en prose*, seems to reflect the centrality of the divided social identity I see as being prevalent at court. As I will underline in the Conclusion, the Burgundian court is, like many of the characters in these narratives, Alien to itself; it is also in the process of 'becoming', of forging for itself a distinct – and distinctive – political and social identity. The historical circumstances in which these texts were produced achieve their full meaning in this context; as Michel de Certeau puts it, 'the text's relationship to a place gives the form and guarantee of that place to the supposed knowledge of the text'.¹¹⁰ In Terence Cave's theorisation Alienness, as demonstrated through a textually-represented *trouble* (which is also reflected societally), becomes indicative of the social and textual *fêlure* that is a lack, or a negotiation, of identity. The processes of homogenisation, and of

dealing with difference, I discuss in relation to the Burgundian texts might be seen to reflect and refract those of that society. What we are looking at here in connection with the Burgundian Alien is, if not a dialogue, then at least a dialogic or negotiatory process; literature and society appear to exist and function symbiotically, to speak to and in a sense argue with one another. As in the case of Mary Malone and the mulefa, the Burgundian assimilation of the textual Alien encourages, I would argue, reflection on that court's, and its members', status within the lived historical environment. How does – how *can* – the self define itself in relation to the Alien other? Does *them* necessarily become *us*, and vice versa? These questions will be discussed, if not entirely answered, in what remains of this thesis, beginning in the next chapter with the prose *Cligès*, an analysis of this work's textual Alienness, and of the strategies its author adopts in his coming to terms with both past and present, and similarity and difference, in and through the work.

¹ Philip Pullman, *The Amber Spyglass* (London: Scholastic, 2001), 129.

² The term 'alien' will be discussed and at least partially defined as this chapter progresses. At this stage, I merely introduce it as the descriptor of a multi-layered and highly complex category, with an unhealthy but as yet necessary semblance of disregard for the problems inherent in it.

³ I could certainly use either of these substantives *here*, but this generalising attitude will be increasingly inappropriate as my discussion develops into the specifics of the Burgundian alien.

⁴ On the utility of this formulation see below n. 99.

⁵ In citing 'the members of the Burgundian court' here, I mean not only the duke and those members of the élite group who surround him, but also those in the literary, or otherwise artistic, service of Philip. I want at least for the moment to distinguish between these Burgundians and the lower echelons of Burgundian society, while being mindful that this sort of distinction might be construed as in some measure immoral. I am merely being aware for the moment that what constitutes Alienness for the courtier is not the same as what the term would suggest to, say, a merchant dealing in silks with the Orient via Italy, or a Burgundian peasant tilling the field.

⁶ See Timothy S. Jones and David A. Sprunger, 'Introduction: The Marvellous Imagination', in Timothy S. Jones and David A. Sprunger (eds.), *Marvels, Monsters, and Miracles. Studies in the Medieval and Early Modern Imaginations*, Studies in Medieval Culture XLII (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2002), xi-xxv. This quotation is at xiv-xv.

⁷ For a potent discussion of the notion of the foreign, see Julia Kristeva, *Strangers to Ourselves*, trans. Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), in particular Chapter One, 'Tocatta and Fugue for the Foreigner'.

⁸ The most glaring example I have come across is the Jones and Sprunger volume I discuss here; the fact that it is a collection of essays perhaps encourages a diversity of approach to the phenomenon of otherness and a concomitant feeling of disunity on the part of the reader. However, there are other

examples of this terminological slipperiness, or unwillingness to pin it down. Iver B. Neuman, in his seminal *Uses of the Other: The East in European Identity Formation* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), seems never to define entirely what he means by 'other', preferring to let it remain a fluid confluence of 'other peoples' (his book is a work on international relations read through the optic of cultural studies), and 'the opposite of the self'. As I shall suggest below, my quarrel with such definitions is not so much their fluidity, nor the fact that I might not be applying the same definition to my material's Alieness (though of course there is an element of this), but rather the perceptible laziness of failing to define the terms fully, and of failing to note and in some way take account of the inescapable Lacanian overtones of the use of the capitalised substantive 'Other'.

⁹ On all these see Martin Camargo, 'The Book of John Mandeville and the Geography of Identity', in Jones and Sprunger, op. cit., 71-88; Kirsten M. Figg, 'Froissart's *Debate of the Horse and the Greyhound*: Companion Animals and Signs of Social Status in the Fourteenth Century', 89-112; Thomas N. Hall, 'The Miracle of the Lengthened Beam in Apocryphal and Hagiographical Tradition', 113-44; David A. Sprunger, 'Depicting the Insane: A Thirteenth-Century Case-Study', 227-46; Norman R. Smith, 'Portentous Births and the Monstrous Imagination in Renaissance Culture', 273-90; and finally (though firstly!) Paul Freedman's contribution at 1-26.

¹⁰ It is quite true to say that Jones and Sprunger *are* aware that they are drawing attention to this psychoanalytical otherness: as they put it, 'one of the most useful critical tools for discussing the nature of difference [...] is the idea of the Other, which offers both psychological and political means of analysing experience' (xiv). The point I want to make here, though, is that their terminology is suspect.

¹¹ Ibid., loc. cit.

¹² See Dylan Evans, *An Introductory Dictionary of Lacanian Psychoanalysis* (Hove and Philadelphia: Brunner-Routledge, 2001), 132.

¹³ According to Evans, Lacan was introduced to Hegel in a series of lectures given by Kojève in 1933-9 (op. cit., loc. cit.). See also Alexandre Kojève, *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel*, trans. James H. Nichols Jr (New York: Basic Books, 1969).

¹⁴ See Jacques Lacan, *Le Séminaire. Livre II. Le moi dans la théorie de Freud et dans la technique de la psychanalyse, 1954-5*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller (Paris: Seuil, 1978), in particular chapter 19.

¹⁵ I quote from Evans, op. cit., and his clear entry 'other/Other' at 132-3.

¹⁶ See Paul Freedman, 'The Other Middle Ages: The Middle Ages as Other', in ed. cit., 10. I am taking Freedman's capitalisation of 'other' here to be a product of an overarching editorial decision rather than a personal misappropriation of the Lacanian term.

¹⁷ I borrow the term from Nicholas Thomas, who talks in his *Colonisation's Culture: Anthropology, Travel and Government* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994) of a 'fetishisation of alterity' (159).

¹⁸ See Freedman, op. cit., 8.

¹⁹ By mental instability I mean to invoke not simply a politically-correct synonym for madness; rather, I am trying to catch in this net notions of actual insanity, and also more generalised or subjective questions surrounding the balance of the mind, such as ideas of the court fool or jester. On madness in general see Jean-Marie Fritz, *Discours du fou au moyen âge XII^e-XIV^e siècles: étude comparée des discours littéraire, médical, juridique, et théologique de la folie* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1992), and Sylvia Huot, *Madness in Medieval French Literature – Identities Found and Lost* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

²⁰ Freedman, op. cit., loc. cit.

²¹ The quotation is from Paul Zumthor's *La Mesure du monde: Représentation de l'espace au moyen âge* (Paris: Seuil, 1993), 15.

²² Freedman, op. cit., 23.

²³ On this see, *inter alia*, Terence Cave, *Pré-histoires. Textes troublés au seuil de la modernité* (Geneva: Droz, 1999), 19.

²⁴ My discussion will turn to these in due course, but for the best treatment of Burgundy as a historical concept or construct see Richard Vaughan, *The Dukes of Burgundy: Philip the Bold; John the Fearless; Philip the Good; and Charles the Bold* (all Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2002). Particularly relevant here, of course, is his *Philip the Good: The Apogee of Burgundy*. I am thinking in particular of Philip's relationship with France, and his project to undertake a crusade to the Holy Land, discussed on 1-29 and 98-126, and 334-372, respectively of *Philip the Good*. The new edition of Vaughan's seminal work cited above and edited by Graeme Small refers to more up-to-date works on the historical construct that is Burgundy; I will draw on these as relevant in what follows of the thesis. For the moment, though, I refer the reader to the original, and most straightforwardly historical (rather than, for example, sociological or psychoanalytical), treatment provided by Vaughan.

²⁵ Cave, op. cit., 11.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 13.

²⁷ The rather occlusive notion of catachresis is an idea that runs through the whole of Riffaterre's œuvre. For perhaps the most cogent theorisation of the term, see Michael Riffaterre, *La Production du Texte* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1979), in particular chapters 1 and 2.

²⁸ On the matrix and its relationship to the textual artefact see Michael Riffaterre, *Semiotics of Poetry* (Bloomington and London: University of Indiana Press, 1978), *passim*. This matrix is discussed in connection with the Vulgate Cycle by E. Jane Burns. See her *Arthurian Fictions. Rereading the Vulgate Cycle* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1985), in particular 32f.

²⁹ The reader might perceive here a certain conflict between this approach and what I say below about the composition of the *mise en prose*. It could indeed be argued that what happens there in terms of the intertextualities of the genre has more in common with the catachresis suggested by Riffaterre. But I hope it will become clear in the rest of this chapter, and indeed the rest of the thesis, that I am arguing the case for the *mise en prose* as a genre very much of its time, and which – despite, or perhaps because of, the intertextualities inherent in it – ‘port[e] des signes de sa provenance’ through historical circumstance, as Cave suggests.

³⁰ Cave, op. cit., loc. cit.

³¹ On ‘social energy’, see Stephen Greenblatt, *Shakespearean Negotiations: The Circulation of Social Energy in Renaissance England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988).

³² See Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 9

³³ *Ibid.*, 6ff.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 19.

³⁵ Leipzig Universitätsbibliothek, Rep.II.108. This single extant manuscript is edited by Maria Colombo Timelli: see *Le Livre de Alexandre Empereur de Constantinoble et de Cligés son Fils. Roman en prose du XV^e siècle* (Geneva: Droz, 2004).

³⁶ *L'histoire de tres vaillans princez monseigneur Jehan d'Avennes* is edited by Danielle Quérueil (Villeneuve-d'Ascq: Presses universitaires du Septentrion, 1997). Quérueil edits the most suggestive – because the most obviously and regionally Burgundian – of the two extant *Jehan d'Avennes* manuscripts, Paris BnF f. fr. 12572, illustrated by the Wavrin Master. A second manuscript was produced for Charles de Croÿ; this is Arsenal 5208.

³⁷ Brussels BR 9967, illustrated by Loyset Liédet. The manuscript has recently been edited: see Jehan Wauquelin, *La Belle Hélène de Constantinople. Mise en prose d'un chanson de geste*, ed. Marie-Claude de Crécy (Geneva: Droz, 2002).

³⁸ Turin, Biblioteca universale, L iv 5, anc. gall. G I 2. There is no critical edition of Wauquelin's *Manekine*, though a printed version is appended to vol. I of Hermann Suchier's edition of the *Œuvres poétiques de Philippe de Rémi, sire de Beaumanoir*, Société des anciens textes français (Paris: Didot, 1884), 267-366.

³⁹ Cave, *op. cit.*, 15.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.* As clarificatory examples of this, Cave cites the apparently random, and textually unnoticed, intercalation of the Pyrrhonism of Sextus Empiricus into the debate between Panurge and Trouillogan in Rabelais's *Tiers Livre*, and into Montaigne's discourse to the unnamed princess in his *Apologie de Raimond Sebond* (*Essais*, II.12). As Cave argues (*op. cit.*, 24), and as I shall hint in later chapters, the significance of such *troubles*, and the location of the *fêlures* they open up, is of an importance that extends beyond the merely textual and encroaches upon the societal or sociological.

⁴¹ See Kathleen Ashley and Véronique Plesch, 'The Cultural Process of "Appropriation"', *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 32:1 (Winter 2002), 1-15. This quotation is at 3; the authors are referring to intertextual, and hegemonical, tendencies in Western practices of art history, but their remark seems to lend itself well to the *mise en prose* genre.

⁴² On the highly subjective question of 'improvement' in relation to the aesthetic of the *mise en prose*, see my discussion of Piero Boitani's work below.

⁴³ I am alluding here to the importance of 'borrowed mythologies' at the Burgundian court, an importance I discuss in more detail in Chapter Two. For the moment, I refer the reader to: J. Hurlbut, *'Vive Bourgogne est nostre cry': Ceremonial Entries of Philip the Good and Charles the Bold (1419-1477)* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2003); Jennifer R. Goodman, 'Display, Self-Definition and the Frontiers of Romance in the 1463 Bruges *Pas du Perron fée*', in R. C. Trexler (ed.), *Persons in Groups: Social Behaviour as Identity Formation in Medieval and Renaissance Europe* (Binghamton, NY: Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 1985), 47-54; Jacques Lemaire, *Les Visions de la vie de la Cour dans la littérature française de la fin du moyen âge* (Brussels/Paris: Académie royale de langue et de littérature françaises, 1990), and Evelyne van den Neste, *Tournois, joutes et pas d'armes dans les villes de Flandre à la fin du moyen âge* (Paris: Ecole des Chartes, 1996); Lucie Marignac, 'Philippe le Bon et l'ordre de la Toison d'Or: les enjeux d'une référence mythique', *Razo* 8 (1986), 87-112; Agathe Lafortune-Martel, *Fête noble en Bourgogne au XVI^e siècle: le Banquet du Faisan* (Paris/Montreal: Bellarmin-Vrin, 1984); and Jeffrey Chips Smith, 'The Artistic Patronage of Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy (1419-1467)' (Ann Arbor: Dissertation Abstracts, 1983).

⁴⁴ Pierre Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice*, trans. Richard Nice (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), 53.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 55.

⁴⁶ See Simon Gaunt and Sarah Kay's Introduction – 'Theory of Practice and Practice of Theory' – to a recent special issue of *Forum for Modern Language Studies*, 33/3 (1997) 193-203.

⁴⁷ See Adrian Armstrong, 'The Practice of Textual Transmission: Jean Molinet's *Ressource du petit peuple*' in Gaunt and Kay, *op. cit.*, 270-82.

⁴⁸ The original, and still the most tireless, treatment of the *mise en prose* as a general concept is Georges Doutrepoint's *Les mises en prose des épopées et des romans chevalresques du XIV^e au XVI^e siècles* (Brussels: Palais des Académies, 1939).

⁴⁹ Jane H. M. Taylor, *The Poetry of François Villon. Text and Context* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 14. Taylor's remark refers to fifteenth-century *poetry*, of course, but the overarching point remains the same.

⁵⁰ It is important to remember that, as I shall show below, what is meaningful for the Burgundian audience is not necessarily what was, apparently, meaningful for that of the source text – and that what was significant for the Burgundians might appear to a twenty-first-century readership somewhat strange. This is what is meant, or at least implied, by cultural relativism.

⁵¹ On the *Alexandre* see *Les Faits et les Conquestes d'Alexandre le Grand de Jehan Wauquelin (XV^e siècle)*, édition critique de Sandrine Hériché (Geneva: Droz, 2000), 3. For references to David Aubert's textual practice, see Richard E. F. Straub, *David Aubert, escriptvain et clerc* (Amsterdam and Atlanta, GA: Rodopi, 1995). References to 'clerc franc(h)ois' can be found on 280.

⁵² As John Armstrong points out, French was established as the official language at the Burgundian court by Philip the Bold, the first Valois duke; and by the period that concerns me here 'there was never a doubt that [Philip the Good's] personal language was French, and since the government was based on his personal power French was necessarily the political language'. On all this see C. A. J. Armstrong, 'The Language Question in the Low Countries: The Use of French and Dutch by the Dukes of Burgundy and their Administration', in John Hale, John Highfield and Beryl Smalley (eds.), *Europe in the Later Middle Ages* (London: Faber and Faber, 1965), 386-409. The quotation here is on 398. On a more literary level too Flemish played second fiddle to French: Graeme Small discusses the rôle of translation from Flemish to French within the creation of a Burgundian 'mythology' in his 'Local Élités and 'National' Mythologies in the Burgundian Dominions in the Fifteenth Century', forthcoming in a volume entitled *Building the Past/Konstruktion der eigenen Vergangenheit* in 2006. Documents, and especially those with a regional bias like the early fourteenth-century *Brabantsche Yeesten* (first translated into Latin by Emond de Dynter in 1447, and partially rendered into French by Jehan Wauquelin before his death in 1453) produced in Flemish were speedily translated, and marshalled to the cause of Burgundian self-fashioning.

⁵³ See Straub, op. cit., 287.

⁵⁴ See Jane Burns, *Arthurian Fictions*, 31. For the prose *Erec* see *L'Histoire de Erec en prose, roman du XV^e siècle*, ed. Maria Colombo Timelli (Geneva: Droz, 2000), 101. Both extant manuscript versions of the *Erec* are presented in parallel in Colombo Timelli's edition. On the distinction between *histoire* and *compte* see Maria Colombo Timelli, 'Entre *histoire* et *compte*: de l'*Erec* de Chrétien de Troyes à la prose du XV^e siècle', in *Aspects de la littérature de Bourgogne sous Philippe le Bon et Charles le Téméraire. Etudes rassemblées et présentées par Claude Thiry. (Les Lettres Romanes, special number (51), 1997), 23-30*

⁵⁵ See *La Belle Hélène de Constantinople*, ed. cit., 14.

⁵⁶ *Le Roman en prose de La Manekine*, ed. cit., 267.

⁵⁷ Jonathan Culler, *Structuralist Poetics: Structuralism, Linguistics and the Study of Literature* (London and New York: Routledge Classics, 2002), 153ff.

⁵⁸ See Bourdieu, op. cit., and Gaunt and Kay, op. cit., especially 194.

⁵⁹ See Norris Lacy, 'Motivation and Method in the Burgundian *Erec*', in Keith Busby and Norris J. Lacy (eds.), *Conjunctures: Medieval Studies in Honour of Douglas Kelly* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1994), 271-280.

⁶⁰ Culler, op. cit., 157.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, loc. cit.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 154. A similar point is made in connection with the Vulgate cycle by E. Jane Burns in her *Arthurian Fictions*: as she states (29), 'the capacity to reveal part of the greater sense that is locked in the language of the original text' is uncovered through a reading of it by and through its continuation or reworking.

⁶³ See Jörn Gruber, *Die Dialektik des Trobar. Untersuchungen zur Struktur und Entwicklung des occitanischen und französischen Minnesangs des 12. Jahrhunderts* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1983), 2. This point is made by Jane Taylor in her suggestive discussion of the poetics of François Villon (see Taylor, op. cit., 14).

⁶⁴ Piero Boitani, *The Genius to Improve an Invention. Literary Transitions* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2002), ix; originally published as *Il genio di migliorare un'invenzione. Transizioni letterarie* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1999), 7-8.

⁶⁵ Jane H. M. Taylor, 'The Significance of the Insignificant: Reading Reception in the Burgundian *Erec* and *Cligès*', *Fifteenth-Century Studies* 24 (1998), 183-197; 183. The Benjamin is from 'The Task of the Translator' in *Illuminations*, trans. H. Zohn (London: Fontana, 1982), 69.

⁶⁶ Taylor, loc. cit.

⁶⁷ I use the term 'receiver', of course, to designate the scribe or author working from a source text and the patron who commissions the manuscript, as well as in a more modern and perhaps therefore differently-focused sense the present-day 'receiver' of the *mise en prose*. This might of course be seen to conflict with Cave's 'herméneutique de consommateur' mentioned above, but it in fact demonstrates well the need for a fusion of approaches in connection with the 'proper' treatment of the *mise en prose*: in order to retrace 'la forme fragmentaire d'une expérience perdue' in this regard we need to read these texts, as I have been suggesting, through contemporary and modern concerns and take account of these two levels of consumption.

⁶⁸ As I shall show in what follows I mean this both linguistically and societally.

⁶⁹ I am concerned here with the *semantic* level of the text. Studies of lexical and syntagmatic questions raised by prosateurs' decisions are fascinating, and crucial to our full understanding of the *mise en prose* genre; they are for the moment outside the scope of what I say in this chapter, and for the most part of what I am concerned with in the thesis as a whole. It will be seen in the following chapters that critics of the *misés en prose* before me have often concentrated on the more broadly philological side to the works, to the detriment – I feel – of the literary meaning of the words contained in them.

⁷⁰ See Roman Jakobson, 'On Linguistic Aspects of Translation', in *Selected Writings*, 5 vols. (Paris/The Hague: Mouton, 1971), II, 261.

⁷¹ Taylor, op. cit., loc. cit.. The term 'acculturation' is adapted from linguistics and anthropology; for an article summarising these various senses, see Taylor, 192 n. 7.

⁷² The term is, again, Taylor's (op. cit., 191), via Barbara Folkart, *Le conflit des énonciations: Traduction et discours rapporté* (Québec: Editions Balzac, 1991), 160.

⁷³ Sarah Kay, *The 'Chansons de Geste' in the Age of Romance. Political Fictions* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 5. This question of the *non-dit* in these texts will, as the thesis progresses, increase in importance. Is what is not said any the less important than what *is* voiced simply because it is not there?

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 5-6.

⁷⁵ See in particular the valuable but critically confused Jones and Sprunger volume I discussed above.

⁷⁶ See André Giachetti (ed.), *Ysaje le Triste. Roman Arthurien du Moyen Age tardif* (Rouen: Publications de l'université de Rouen, 1989). Though this is a fourteenth- or early fifteenth-century text (see Giachetti, ed. cit. 26, and André Giachetti, 'Ysaje le Triste et l'Ecosse', *Bulletin bibliographique de la Société Internationale Arthurienne* 15 (1963), 109-19), one of its two extant manuscripts situates it firmly in the mid-fifteenth-century Burgundian context: this is Darmstadt, Hessische Landes- und Hochschulbibliothek, 2524. There is not as yet a complete edition of the vast literary enterprise that is *Le Roman de Perceforest*. Part I is edited by Jane H. M. Taylor (Geneva: Droz, 1979); Gilles Roussineau has followed with Parts II (2 vols., Geneva: Droz, 1999 and 2001), III (3 vols., Geneva: Droz, 1988, 1991, 1993) and IV (2 vols., Geneva:

Droz 1987). As Taylor and Roussineau state – following Jeanne Lods (*Le Roman de Perceforest. Origines. Composition. Caractères. Valeur et Influence* (Geneva: Droz, 1951)) – there are four extant manuscripts of the *Perceforest*, all of which can be linked to the Burgundian milieu. Manuscript C – ‘[le] seul manuscrit à conserver le roman intégral’, according to Taylor (ed. cit., 13) –, Arsenal 3483-3494, was produced c.1459-60 by David Aubert and his *atelier* for Philip the Good as a draft for the more lavish British Library version.

⁷⁷ *Le roman en prose de La Manekine*, ed. cit., 341.

⁷⁸ Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (London and New York: Routledge Classics, 2002), 48. See also Douglas Biouw, *Mirabile Dictu: Representation of the Marvellous in Medieval and Renaissance Epic* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996).

⁷⁹ On this see Richard Berenheimer, *Wild Men in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1952).

⁸⁰ See Maria Colombo-Timelli, ‘Le ‘lai de l’homme sauvage’ de Jehan d’Avennes’, *Le Moyen français* 30 (1992), 45-61. Also, see Danielle Quéruel’s edition of *Jehan d’Avennes*, 17-20, on the young knight’s metamorphosis.

⁸¹ See Antoine de la Sale, *Jehan de Saintré*, ed. Jean Misrahi and Charles A. Knudson (Geneva: Droz, 1965).

⁸² A further interesting parallel between the two works, which is outside the scope of this chapter, is the fact that both exist in a manuscript illustrated by the Wavrin Master. It would be fruitful to compare the iconographic programme of the two Wavrin manuscripts (for *Jehan d’Avennes*, Paris BnF f. fr. 12572; for *Saintré*, Brussels, BR 9457) in the light of these remarks about the Wild Man topos, and the important points on reception raised by Jane Taylor in her article on *Saintré* that I cite in n. 83. Does the Wavrin Master, whose work is stylistically strange, have any points to make about Alienness? This, and the work of the Wavrin Master more generally, merits a further study which I plan to carry out in due course.

⁸³ As Jane Taylor shows, a critical reading of *Saintré* which privileges the erotic triangle between the three protagonists is just one reading among many; and it is further, as she points out, a dangerously limiting one in the light of the iconographic programme of the two manuscripts of the text (Brussels, BR 9457, and London, BL Cotton Nero D IX) which clearly emphasises the chivalric over the sexual. See Jane H. M. Taylor, ‘Image as Reception: Antoine de la Sale’s *Le Petit Jehan de Saintré*’, in Donald Maddox and Sara Sturm-Maddox (eds.), *Literary Aspects of Courty Culture* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1994), 265-279.

⁸⁴ *Jehan de Saintré*, ed. cit., 280.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 281.

⁸⁶ See Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, *Of Giants: Sex, Monsters, and the Middle Ages*, *Medieval Cultures* 17 (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), xii.

⁸⁷ This links, also, to the problematical relationship the post-colonial critic Homi Bhabha perceives between subject and object, coloniser and colonised, in colonial discourse. Perhaps hybridity is the consequence of the production of ‘difference’ or Alienness? See ‘Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse’, in Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994), 85-92.

⁸⁸ This is, I think, what Julia Kristeva means when she states that ‘living with the other, with the foreigner, confronts us with the possibility or not of being an other. It is not simply – humanistically – a matter of being able to accept the other, but of *being in his place*, and this means to imagine and make oneself other for oneself’. See ‘Tocatta and Fugue for the Foreigner’, in Julia Kristeva, *Strangers to Ourselves*, ed. cit., 13.

⁸⁹ On the idea of performance in connection with medieval literature and society see Susan Crane, *The Performance of Self: Ritual, Clothing, and Identity During the Hundred Years War* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), *passim*.

⁹⁰ On all this see Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble. Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (London and New York: Routledge, 1990) and especially her 'Imitation and Gender Insubordination', in Diane Fuss (ed.), *Inside/Out. Lesbian Theories, Gay Theories* (London and New York: Routledge, 1991), 13-33, and of course Chapters Three to Five below.

⁹¹ See *La Fille du comte de Pontbrien. Conte en prose. Versions de XIIIe et XV^e siècles*. Société des anciens textes français, ed. Clovis Brunel (Paris: Champion, 1923), 88.

⁹² On the ideological implications of female-centred violence, whether done by or to women, see Adrian Armstrong, 'Les Femmes et la violence dans *Le jugement poétique de l'honneur féminin* (1538)', in Jennifer Britnell and Nathalie Dauvois (eds.), *Jean Bouchet, traverseur de voies périlleuses (1476-1557): Actes du colloque de Poitiers (30-31 août 2001)* (Paris: Champion, 2003).

⁹³ See Danielle Quéruel, 'Pourquoi Partir? Une typologie des voyages dans quelques romans de la fin du moyen âge', in Alain Labbé, Daniel Lacroix and Danielle Quéruel (eds.), *Guerres, Voyages et Quêtes au Moyen Âge: Mélanges offerts à Jean-Claude Faucon* (Paris: Champion, 2000), 333-48. I shall be discussing more fully in later chapters the notions of travel, both real and text-based, and the encounters it gives rise to. For the moment, though, the following works and ideas have proved useful: for narratives of voyages undertaken by actual travellers connected with the Burgundian court, Bertrand de la Broquière, *Voyage d'Outremer*, in Charles Henri A. Schefer, *Recueil des voyages pour servir à l'histoire de la géographie* 12 (Paris: Leroux, 1892), and Nicolae Iorga, 'Les aventures 'sarrasines' des français de Bourgogne au XV^e siècle', *tirage à part of Mélanges d'histoire générale* (Cluj, 1926); on travel as a literary theme, a source of anxiety etc, see *inter alia* François Moureau (ed.), *Metamorphoses du récit de voyage* (Paris: Champion, 1986), Monique Guéret-Laferté, *Sur les routes de l'empire mongol: Ordre et rhétorique des relations de voyage au XIII^e et XIV^e siècle* (Paris: Champion, 1994), and Paul Zumthor, 'The Medieval Travel Narrative', *New Literary History* 25 (1994), 809-24.

⁹⁴ Quéruel, 'Pourquoi Partir?', 333-4.

⁹⁵ See Danielle Régner Bohler, 'De Constantinople à Rome: Quand parlent les portraits', in *Médiévales* 12 (printemps 1987), 79-81; this quotation is at 79.

⁹⁶ The exception to this will, of course, be those texts – I am thinking in particular of *Girart de Roussillon* and *Jehan d'Avennes* – in which the notion of regionalism, and anti-Frenchness, might be seen to play a part. *Girart de Roussillon* is a predominantly and perceptibly anti-French narrative. Here, pseudo-Burgundian might in the shape of Girart and his wife Berthe is plotted against the machinations of the French under Charles the Bald. See the Introduction to Quéruel's edition of *Jehan d'Avennes* for more on this notion of regionalism, to which I devote a comment in Chapter Four.

⁹⁷ For more detail on the historical reasons for, and implications of, Philip's crusading ambitions see Vaughan, *op. cit.*

⁹⁸ The quotation is from Wlad Godzich's foreword to Michel de Certeau, *Heterologies. Discourse on the Other*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), xiii.

⁹⁹ See Linda Lomperis, 'Medieval Travel Writing and the Question of Race', *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 31.1 (2001), 147-164. This quotation, and the discussion of the 'not quite not X' idea are at 155.

¹⁰⁰ See Robert Bartlett, *The Making of Europe: Conquest, Colonisation, and Cultural Change 950-1350* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), in particular 197-242. According to Bartlett, even Christianity is a form of ethnic identity.

¹⁰¹ See, *inter alia*, Michael Uebel, 'Unthinking the Monster: Twelfth-Century Responses to Saracen Alterity', in Jeffery Jerome Cohen (ed.), *Monster Theory: Reading Culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 264-91.

¹⁰² See Jeffery Jerome Cohen, 'On Saracen Enjoyment: Some Fantasies of Race in Late Medieval France and England', *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 31.1 (2001), 113-146.

¹⁰³ See Arjun Appadurai, 'Here and Now', in *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 12-14.

¹⁰⁴ See Sharon Kinoshita, "'Pagans are Wrong and Christians are Right: Alterity, Gender, and Nation in the *Chanson de Roland*", *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 31.1 (2001), 79-111. This quotation is on 83.

¹⁰⁵ See Edward Said, *Orientalism. Western Conceptions of the Orient* (Harmondsworth and London: Penguin, 1995), 60.

¹⁰⁶ This is not to suggest of course that Islam as a religion was understood by the medieval Westerner. It was, rather, seen as a misguided form of Christianity. On this see Said, *op. cit.*, 61. There is for example a definite misrepresentation of pagan worship habits in the *Roland* – the 'author', invoking an erroneous conceptualisation of all religions as predicated on the Christological notion of the Trinity, claims that Marsilies 'Mahumet sert e Apollin reclimet' (*laisse* 8); the other God is Tervagant.

¹⁰⁷ Though the obverse is of course not true – while there are very few examples of good Saracens, or at least of good Saracens who do not eventually see the light and convert, the examples of bad Christians are legion. The wicked mother-in-law in *La Belle Hélène de Constantinople* is one instance among many I shall discuss in a later chapter.

¹⁰⁸ See Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985). For an enlightening application of Sedgwick's ideas to medieval literature, see Sarah Kay, *op. cit.*, 146f.

¹⁰⁹ See Donald Maddox, *Fictions of Identity in Medieval France* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

¹¹⁰ De Certeau, *Heterologies*, 32.

CHAPTER TWO
LOST IN TRANSLATION?:
THE POETICS OF ALIENNESS AND THE POETICS OF THE PAST IN THE
PROSE *CLIGÈS*

‘If earlier ages still have a hold on us, it is through our thoughts about them’¹

In July 1468 the Norfolk nobleman John Paston III attended the wedding of his kinswoman Margaret of York to Charles the Bold of Burgundy; and, as was his custom when away from home, he wrote an account of the episode in a letter to his mother. Commenting on the sumptuous ceremonial of the event, Paston notes that ‘as for the Dwyks coort, as of lords, ladys and gentylwomen, knyts, squires and gentylmen, J here never of none lyek to it, save Kyng Artours cort’.² His words draw attention to features of the Burgundian ducal court under Philip the Good crucial to an understanding of the works discussed in this thesis and, by extension, to a proper interpretation of the principal text at issue in this chapter, the Burgundian reworking of Chrétien de Troyes’s *Cligès*.³ Here is a court for which appearance, material splendour, is all; a court with – as I suggested in the previous chapter – a keenly-felt desire to distinguish itself positively from its French rival; and a court whose primary means of dealing with, and of eradicating, its own Alieness in this regard was through appropriation of earlier cultural models, whether artistic, historical or literary, and whether Francophone in origin or resolutely unconnected to the sign of the lily. Here, too, is a court, and a literary corpus, in which the uneasy marriage of illusion and reality, of being and of seeming, is played out and exploited to dazzling, and as will be revealed in what follows surprisingly subtle, effect. Before an analysis the *Cligès* reworking, and the Alieness of and in the text, though, a fuller digression into this historico-cultural background is essential.

History Repeating Itself: Literary Appropriation and Cultural Adaptation
In Burgundy

Much of the inspiration for Burgundian court ceremonial and its themes came, precisely, from non-Francophone sources: one need only invoke Philip the Good’s celebrated proto-chivalric order, the Toison d’Or, to begin to see how far Greek mythology and mythography permeated the duke’s ideological self-fashioning, and the culpably-unreflective self-fashioning of his intimates.⁴ Central to

the fiction Philip wove into the fabric of this order, founded in 1430, is the Argonautic myth of Jason who suffered great torments in the pursuit of the Golden Fleece, and who – through the offices of Medea – succeeded in bringing the *toison* back from Colchos to Argos. The relevance of this episode to the fifteenth-century ducal court is at first not entirely clear; but its inclusion in an important piece of Burgundian ceremony illustrates the key ideological and allegorical rôle of the Jason story for Philip.

An episode, or more correctly *entremets*, at the dramatic Banquet du Faisan, celebrated in Lille in 1454 to mark the beginning of Philip's earnest crusading zeal and described by Olivier de la Marche among others,⁵ involves a re-enactment of Jason's conquest of the Golden Fleece; this 'mondain' tableau is juxtaposed with a 'pitoyable' one involving the allegorical figure of Sainte Eglise bewailing her sorry condition ('chacun me regarde et me voit/mais ame ne me recongnoit'); and this in its turn is followed by the entrance of the figure of Toison d'Or, carrying the live pheasant on which Philip and members of the order swear to perform valiant crusading deeds for the good of the lamentable and lamenting Sainte Eglise. This fusion of events suggests the Burgundian meaning of the Jason myth: his conquest of the fleece parallels, and therefore represents, the successful Christian campaign in the East, the capture and 'bringing home' of pagan hearts.⁶ An elaborate interweaving this might be; but it was nonetheless a highly effective one, at least within the court and at least for a time.

For, as Danielle QuérueI points out, the figure of Jason as a myth-making tool and patron of a chivalric order had its detractors, 'bien qu'il ait traduit les convictions du duc lui-même'.⁷ Central to their complaints was the basic caveat – indeed the same caveat as the modern reader might want to raise, as the previous paragraph suggests – that Jason was simply not obviously Christian enough to fulfil this rôle credibly. This is implied most clearly by Michault Taillevent in his 'Songe de la Thoison d'or'.⁸ Like Guillaume Fillastre in his turn, Taillevent does not explicitly reject Jason as a worthy patron; instead, he advances an alternative figure, and one whose odour of sanctity is so strong as to be almost stifling. The incumbent is Gideon:

Jason conquest, ce raconte pluseurs,
La thoison d'or par Medee s'amie

Dedens Colcos, *mais pour estre plus seurs*
 Tant a Jason on ne s'aresté mie
 Qu'a Gedeon qui par oeuvre saintie
 Arousé eut son veurre doucement
 De rouse qui des sains cieulx descent,
 Dont fut depuis dignement celebree
 Loenge a Dieu trestout premierement
 Et aux bons gloire et haulte renomee. (vv. 725-734, emphasis mine)⁹

The biblical exemplar of Gideon (Judges 6-8) does, it is true, seem to suit the Toison d'Or order's crusading aspirations, and offer a more obvious parallel, perhaps, than Jason for the projected Burgundo-Christian march on the Infidel, recounting as it does the hero's gathering of a select army of Israelites in order to overthrow the Midianite horde. That the figure found some favour with Philip is underlined by the duke's commissioning, in 1449, a sumptuous series of tapestries, designed to be hung at that year's chapter-meeting and at all subsequent ones, featuring Gideon and his trials with a fleece, and by Gideon's inclusion in the tableaux of the duke's triumphal entries.¹⁰ Aside from these episodes, though, Gideon figured less than frequently in Burgundian court art; and when he did feature elsewhere this tended to be alongside Jason, as in the frontispiece to Martin Le Franc's *Le Champion des Dames* (Paris, BnF 12476, fol. 1').¹¹ Whether this relative absence is illustrative of the fact that the duke held Jason in higher esteem as a patron than he did Gideon is of course difficult to determine with any accuracy – but this assumption could be borne out by the rehabilitation of the dubious Jason in an apparently deliberate duke-pleasing move in Raoul Lefèvre's prose *Histoire de Jason*.¹² Here, the figure of Jason speaks directly to the author-figure, asking him to clear his name:

Si te prie que tu faces un livre ou ceulz qui ma gloire quierent flappir puissent congoistre leur indiscret jugement. Et a ce faire t'ay eslu affin que ton escripture presentes au pere des escripvains, c'est Philippe, par la grace de Dieu duc de Bourignoigne et de Brabant, VIe de ce nom, qui tote sa vie a esté nourry en histoires pour son singulier passetemps.¹³

If this passage and ones like it cannot, by definition, reveal ducal preferences and predilections for one mythical figure over another – there is no explicit record of

Philip's having commissioned this codex, for example, nor of the reception it met with at court – Jason's words here bear witness nonetheless to a further facet of Burgundian myth- and identity-making, related to questions of ceremonial and court art but more directly connected with the text to be discussed in this chapter. Tellingly, the figure of Jason, through Lefèvre, makes reference to the duke's having been 'nourry en histoires', underlining the vital rôle played in the duke's self-fashioning by the resolutely literary appropriation and assimilation of figures from the past, whether of the Trojan era or of one closer in space and time to the fifteenth-century Burgundian court. While I do not want to suggest that the literary text stood as a sort of 'miroir des princes' for Philip, nor to imply that a certain heroic figure might function as a strict metonym for the duke – this facile designation is, I think, too absolute and can be too limiting –,¹⁴ it seems undeniable that texts, and the characters represented in them, constituted as I suggested in the Preface important weapons in the ducal court's artillery as it attempted to forge a history, and an identity, distinct from that of France.¹⁵

Thus the rôle literary borrowings fulfil is, if not hegemonical as such, then certainly ideological: as the (often formulaic) prologues to the mises en prose illustrate, allying heroes of old with the contemporary Burgundian cause boosts morale, and implies that if historical antecedents could behave in such valiant ways and be consigned to posterity for their brave deeds, then in doing likewise an independent Burgundian state might come to enjoy similar renown. An especially strident example of this near-syllogism occurs in the prologue to Jehan Wauquelin's *Faits et les Conquestes d'Alexandre le Grand*:

Pource que par le record et remembrance des nobles emprinses et fais d'armes, conquestes et vaillandises faites et achevees par les vaillans, puissans et nobles hommes du temps ancien et par cy devant passé, les cuers des nobles et vaillans hommes du temps present desirans et veullant attaindre le haute et excellente vertu de proesse et de bonne renomée sont esmeu et eslevé et plus en parsont incité a toute honneur et perfeccion, et aussi a tout certain entendement de raison...¹⁶

The 'vaillans, puissans et nobles hommes du temps ancien' given new life in the mises en prose are more various than those exploited in court art, but are – as I have mentioned – culled from similar sources, whether classical mythology or

Francophone literature. I want to conclude this introductory section with a brief discussion of just a few of these myriad figures and their literary deployment in order better to lay the ground for my interpretation of the prose *Cligès*, and to underline that, while the ‘matière de Troie’ was doubtless a powerful weapon for the Burgundians, equally ideologically potent was the idea of impaling the French on their own sword, and especially the Arthurian ‘matière de Bretagne’.

The Michaut Taillevent poem mentioned above offers an interesting – if implicit – insight into the usefulness of borrowed heroes to the Burgundian cause, and the chiasmic relationship of such heroes to honour. About two-thirds of the way into the ‘Songe de la Thoison d’or’, the allegorical figure of Bonne Renommee invites, ‘a cause de victoires’ (l. 455), a number of similarly worthy, though male, figures to sit at her ‘table d’honneur’:

D’ordre furent ilz voirement
 Et chascun de sienne chief,
 Car Gedeon premierement
 Qui bien mena son ordre a chief,
 Roy Alixandre de rechief
 Lequel fit tant large donneur,
 Artus, Charles, tous furent, brief,
 Ce jour a la table d’honneur.¹⁷

This pantheon of great figures, ‘chascun de sienne chief’, reads rather like the dramatis personae of certain mises en prose. From Gideon Taillevent moves to ‘roy Alixandre’: this, we can assume, is Alexander the Great, a historical character and, moreover, literary creation held in high regard by the Burgundians and, like Gideon, a figure with allegiances to the Trojan mythography cited in its visual context above.¹⁸ Jean Wauquelin produced the previously-mentioned reworking of Alexandre de Paris’s *Histoire d’Alexandre* in c.1448; and what is especially interesting about this prosification to my discussion of Alienness is the way in which Wauquelin ‘cherche [...] à désamorcer l’altérité d’Alexandre en le rattachant à l’histoire de l’Occident’, and attempts to establish a direct line of descent from Alexander to western sovereigns via the ‘matière de Troie’.¹⁹ History is appropriated for Alexander by the Burgundians, and Alexander is appropriated for Burgundian history.

A further literary conquest – to paraphrase Michelle Szkilnik – made by Alexander at the court of Burgundy is the *Roman de Perceforest*.²⁰ This loose baggy monster of a romance dates from the fourteenth century – its most recent editor Gilles Roussineau suggests, following Jane Taylor, that it was a Burgundian composition produced in Hainaut c. 1340 –, but evidence that it was still read at court in the fifteenth century resides in the fact that a copy was produced for Philip by David Aubert (now Paris, Bibliothèque de l’Arsenal, 3483-94; 1459-60), which was itself a draft of the more lavish British Library manuscript (BL Royal 15.E.v, 19.E.ii and iii; c. 1460).²¹ Here, as in Wauquelin’s reworking of the myth, the Alien figure of Alexander is skilfully absorbed into western civilisation, a western civilisation with, apparently, similarly direct, tangible and immutable links to the Trojan past. But the lineage into which Alexander is subtly slotted here is somewhat different from this previous one, though with important links to it and to the Taillevent poem mentioned earlier. In the *Perceforest*, the civilisation of ‘Bretagne’ – and therefore by extension the kingdom of Arthur – is explicitly stated to have derived from Trojan beginnings. In other words, one fictional construct here becomes absorbed into another: if, in Wauquelin, ‘Trojan’ Alexander becomes a sort of honorary Burgundian through feats of interpretative and genealogical gymnastics, the contortions required to accommodate the ‘Arthurian’ Alexander of the *Perceforest* securely at the heart of Burgundian ideological self-fashioning are only slightly more demanding.

What is most compelling about this is the way in which reading the one source through and as a function of the other allows us to infer the importance for the Burgundian court of appropriating that most Francophone of sources, the Arthurian material, as its own. Seated at Bonne Renommée’s table – next to another French archetype, Charlemagne – Arthur seems very much at home, a warmly-invited guest in no danger of outstaying his welcome. At least, he was under no such threat in the fifteenth century. While the court might not have described these processes and the anxieties that sparked them in the sort of terms we would use today – as Jameson puts it, ‘the production of aesthetic or narrative form is to be seen as an ideological act in its own right, with the function of inventing imaginary or formal ‘solutions’ to unresolvable social contradictions [...], resolutions of issues

that [societies] are unable to articulate conceptually',²² I am persuaded that such borrowings as described above were a conscious and valuable strategy of social and literary integration on the part of Philip and his authors.

That the ideology underpinning these Arthurian appropriations can be extended to Burgundian prose reworkings of Chrétien seems to me a vital hermeneutic tool for a proper interpretation of these texts – and by this I mean an interpretation that deals with them on their own terms, as literary products with as much autonomy as a *mise en prose* can ever truly have, rather than as poor cousins of the earlier verse sources. But in this area at least, Arthur's welcome at the more modern table of *Bonne Renommée* – the desk of the literary critic – has tended to be at best frosty. In the following section I want to discuss, with particular reference to the prose *Cligès*, how viewing the prose versions of Chrétien's first two romances through this prism of borrowing might be seen to be a surer way than the methods adopted by recent critics of giving these texts a fair hearing. Earlier ages still had a hold on the Burgundians, to paraphrase Brian Stock, and it is 'through their thoughts on' how those earlier ages relate – or not – to contemporary concerns that we can understand better the rôle and function of the Champenois poet at this fifteenth-century court.²³ Through an examination of the texts' place in the literary genealogy outlined above, and of narrative strategies adopted to contain and contend with degrees of Alienness in one of these reworkings, we will see how, and within that *why*, the Burgundians might have wanted to put old wine in new bottles.

Dead Man Walking, or Spinning in his Grave?:

Critical Reception, Critical Rejection, of the Chrétien Reworkings

Perhaps the most important reason for the confused state of scholarly opinion about the origins of Arthurian romance is the reluctance of most critics to treat their material as part of a literary history.²⁴

The most strident indication that this wine – at least for the majority of scholars writing on the prose reworkings of the *Erec* and the *Cligès* – was perceptibly corked comes in the title of Charity Cannon Willard's 1991 article 'The Misfortunes of *Cligès* at the Court of Burgundy'. Willard begins her analysis with a discussion of the material circumstances of the prose *Cligès*'s production – it exists today in a

'single manuscript written on paper in an undistinguished hand', held as Leipzig Universitätsbibliothek, Rep.II.108 –, and plausibly suggests that the modest nature of the codex might be symptomatic of its having met with a less than favourable reception from the duke.²⁵ Her argument soon begins to veer dangerously off this broadly sensible track and into assumption and value-judgement. After concluding staunchly that 'nothing about the Leipzig manuscript suggests that it met with the duke's favour' (and thereby neglecting the obvious corollary to this that nothing hard and fast suggests that it did *not*), Willard speculates as to why this might be so. Her views turn significantly on aspects of the text – some of which I shall outline in the following section – altered by the prosateur ostensibly to bring it into line with contemporary Burgundian tastes, and on some elements of Chrétien's story that Philip might not have enjoyed: most notably, she suggests that because the duke was forever womanising he could not have countenanced idealised love in its textual representation, which rather begs the question.

If the previous sentence reads contradictorily, then this is done deliberately to reflect some of the problematics of Willard's argument. Though she apparently focuses on the reception of this *mise en prose* at the court of Burgundy, in fact the opinions of Philip on the text, and its appeal for him and his intimates, are not really at issue. What matters here is Willard herself, and her own quarrel with the prose *Cligès* – a quarrel which inheres in the simple, obvious but crucial, fact that the prosateur was unfortunate enough not to be Chrétien de Troyes. The text is 'without the charm of Chrétien's style', and eradicates features of this as it adapts the text for fifteenth-century court consumption, which make the *mise en prose* 'banal' (the flaws in this value-judgement will be dealt with implicitly below). But by far the most telling remark in Willard's critique is the following, which demands comment.

Turning to the question why the prose reworking might have met with misfortune, she states that 'one should begin by considering that although the prose version follows the original in general, some of the minor variations might have affected its reception'.²⁶ The problem I see in her assertion is this: Willard discusses the changes wrought by the Burgundian prosateur on the twelfth-century text, and nothing she says suggests that anything was altered in or taken away from *the plot as Chrétien*

crafted it, nothing in other words that would significantly modify the story at this basic level. Additions might be made to raise its appeal for the later court: Willard cites a preponderance of jousts and battles in this regard. Why, then, should these ‘minor variations’ count, and for whom? The notion that ‘minor variations might have affected its reception’ suggests, moreover, that these would have been noted by the duke – which suggests that Philip knew Chrétien, which suggests a working knowledge, as listener if not reader, of Old French, which in turn suggests a fundamental redundancy in the production of a *mise en prose*, one of the purposes of the genre being, as I established in Chapter One, to render the old language into ‘cler franchois’. And all this suggests, finally, that the changes effected on Chrétien’s work by the Burgundian remanieur marred no-one’s reception of the text more than Willard’s.

This might seem an unfair – and unfairly personal – attack on Willard’s critical opinion until we read her ideas alongside those of other of these *mis en prose*’s detractors. Hers, we find, is not a lone voice. Indeed the whole tenor of her implied criticism of the prose *Cligès* is summarised in Norris Lacy’s sly left hook of a parting shot, again in an article on the reception of the *Cligès*: ‘the redactor was a reasonably capable reader of his audience and perhaps even of his text. But clearly he will not be mistaken for Chrétien de Troyes’.²⁷ This is a staggeringly limited and limiting response in an otherwise engaging article – though Lacy does, like Willard, stoop to unhelpful value-judgement in places, with comments suggesting that the prosateur had ‘more earnestness than literary talent’ in producing ‘not a very good’ reworking – which seems at least to want to find merit and interest in the *Cligès*, even if merit cannot in the end, and in his view, be found. It should be pointed out, of course, that when Lacy previously turned his attentions to the prose *Erec*, his assessment of the work and its producer tends more to defence than to defamation: but again, his conclusion sees him reluctant, almost embarrassed, to leave the reader with too favourable an impression of the *mise en prose* (and perhaps concomitantly too unfavourable an impression of Lacy’s – in fact considerable – critical acumen). The work, he suggests, ‘does not stand up to multiple readings’; it is ‘a fascinating example of a late-medieval exegesis of the earlier romance’, though ‘this is not to contend that the Burgundian text should be taken as an authority superior to our own reading’.²⁸ This shamefaced swithering is common to other critics – though

not, as I come to shortly, all critics of these texts –, as though reading the texts in question, and even seeing in them something worthwhile, were a guilty secret to be hidden from public view.²⁹

And the reason for this guilt turns, as I have been inferring, on that deft remark of Lacy's: 'clearly he will not be mistaken for Chrétien de Troyes'. The prose reworkings of *Erec* and *Cligès* suffer by association with their canonical source in ways that those with less lofty – or, perhaps better, less well-known – origins which I discuss in later chapters do not. A text achieves revered status more by good luck than good management, and to posit value-judgements on a *mise en prose* based less on the merits of that text than on the merits or otherwise of its avatar leads to the sort of critical stubbornness seen above. Modern authors can tend to approach these Burgundian reworkings as versions of Chrétien rather than as versions of earlier texts produced in a particular space and time and for a particular purpose. The works stand or, more frequently, fall on how well they compare with Chrétien, not strictly on their own socio-cultural terms. This is an unhelpful benchmark, but one which critics like Lacy and Willard seem oddly keen to persist in using. But in order to respond what I suggest is 'properly' to the Chrétien *mise en prose* we need to step, not entirely away, but back, from the status of their source, to achieve what Peter Haidu has in another context termed 'aesthetic distance' from and with regard to the Burgundian texts as the Champenois poet's poor relations.³⁰

Jane Taylor, in her 'The Significance of the Insignificant' article mentioned in the previous chapter, makes some very positive moves in this direction.³¹ Taylor states that she was 'pre-empted' in an earlier thesis for the article by some of the critics alluded to above, a thesis which would have allowed her to analyse 'the interpretative responses of the Burgundian *mise en prose* to some of the larger and more ethical questions raised for us by Chrétien's romances'.³² This is of crucial importance, and is a mode of analysis I shall return to in due course – but for the moment what concerns me is the way in which Taylor suggests this examination could have been carried out. Her enquiry would have centered on 'the narrative conundrums' the twelfth-century text might have posed for the *remanieur* – how did he interpret the 'Joie de la Cort' in *Erec*? What of *Cligès* as read against the *Tristan*? –, and in short could have fallen foul of some of the problems experienced

by the ‘usurpers’. Instead, she produces something fresh, and highly persuasive: in viewing the mises en prose as intralingual translation, and susceptible of a process ‘whereby the culturally unfamiliar is cast in familiar terms’, Taylor is able neatly to sidestep the issue of Chrétien as source. What matters here is not what the source is, nor its status, but how the problematic aspects of parts of that source become subsumed under more specific Burgundian concerns. In exploring how two of these problems – the hunt for the white stag in *Erec* and the nature of Jehan’s tower in *Cligès* – are ‘written out’, explicated to conform to contemporary comprehension, in the Burgundian texts, Taylor refocuses the critical lens and thereby achieves a certain ‘aesthetic distance’ from her own and the texts’ precursors.

This perspective, which places Burgundian rather than critical reception squarely at the heart of the matter, is a useful one on which to build my analysis in what follows of this chapter. I would underline here that what I am advocating in Taylor’s study, and which was lacking in others I took issue with previously, is not that the source-text is occluded – this is far from being the case, in fact –, but rather that the stultifying weight of expectation is lifted from the mise en prose if the source-text’s roots in Chrétien de Troyes are set aside. The avatar’s *canonical* status should be disregarded; but the ontological status of the (of any) avatar should not. It would be foolish to try and discuss a prose reworking without reference to its earlier version – Taylor’s pertinent remarks on intralingual translation and acculturation would be redundant if we did –, but I contend that the authorship of that source should not colour, or cause hierarchies in, our interpretation. The approach I take, in this chapter and those that follow, hinges on this symbiotic relationship between source and product, and between past and present.

The uses to which the Burgundian remanieur of the *Erec* and the *Cligès* put the past, then, are no different from those of Wauquelin in his *Alexandre*, or of Lefèvre in his *Jason*: they form part of the ideological design based on constructing a social and cultural court identity through the appropriation of models from established sources, not a ham-fisted plot to sully the memory of Chrétien, as Lacy appears to hint.³³ This is essential to an understanding of this late-medieval Arthurian material, but it is not the whole story. It only explains what and why the Burgundians borrowed, not necessarily how the borrowed commodity was dealt with. An

interpretative model that takes into account the prehistory of a source of any kind as well as its afterlife is crucial – what we need, as Lacy suggested, is an awareness not only of motivation but of method too. I mentioned earlier the importance latent in Taylor’s apparently throwaway comment that she might in her article have attended to the ‘responses of the Burgundian *mise en prose* to some of the larger and more ethical questions raised for us by Chrétien’s romances’. This is precisely what needs to happen. Whether or not the romance at issue is by Chrétien de Troyes, the prosateur’s rôle consists in responding to the ethical or exegetical questions it raises for him and his target audience – and a proper interpretation of this rôle on the part of the modern critic inheres in an appreciation of what strategies are used in that response.

As Taylor suggests in a different context, it is vital that we ‘see these late-medieval *romanciers* as mature and expert readers who use their [...] skills to map out and engage with the work of their predecessors, redeploying the constituent elements of the latter at the service of new coherences’.³⁴ I want in the rest of this chapter to examine some of these new coherences, and the ways they are arrived at, in the prose *Cligès*. Through a discussion of the prosateur’s response to the Aliennes of the text and the Aliennes in the text, I will illustrate the hermeneutic process that invests the twelfth-century text with fresh and appropriate meaning for the fifteenth-century audience. By interweaving verse with prose, and past with present, I reveal the ways in which a dead man comes to ‘walk’ in late-medieval Burgundy.

One of the more diverting aspects of the critical derision that we saw levelled at the prose *Cligès* on account of its not being Chrétien – whose name, despite the protestations made above, I will for convenience’s sake use – is this: most Chrétien scholars, when discussing the work alongside other of the Champenois author’s romances, seem to view the *Cligès* as his ‘difficult second album’, an uneasy departure from the model established in *Erec et Enide*, worth a listen but not, perhaps, repeated playing. That this is in itself an unfair judgement seems clear; but it is not my purpose here to rehabilitate Chrétien’s second full-length work. I make this point simply to illustrate not further wrong-headedness in critics of the *mise en prose*, but rather the fact that the twelfth-century *Cligès* might

not always be quite the paragon of literary creation that such unfavourable comparisons might have suggested it was. Chrétien's text is fraught with interpretative problems and unresolved questions – sometimes left intentionally so by the author, sometimes not –, and it is in this context that the prosateur begins his task, to these issues that he must respond as he devises his reworking.

Though disingenuously decrying his 'engin [...] non suffisant ad ce' in the prologue, in rethinking and rewriting the *Cligès* for his Burgundian patron the prosateur is revealed to be a subtle and suggestive reader of his verse avatar.³⁵ He encounters, and wonders about, many of the same troubling issues as does the twenty-first-century reader of Chrétien's ironic, ludic and often tantalising text; and he seeks, like the modern critic, to impose an order – one amongst many possibilities – on these many questions. In what follows I examine some of the strategies adopted by the remanieur as he seeks to do this. We will see that moments of crisis, often of an amorous kind, perceptible in Chrétien's text are given expression and levelled by the Burgundian through a stunning, and very specific, 'deletion of alterity'.³⁶ In so doing, I implicitly refute Norris Lacy's suggestion that the prose reworkings 'd[o] not stand up to multiple readings', for here as elsewhere it is only by close and repeated engagement with the *mise en prose* through and against its source that we get to the heart of the matter.³⁷

Before arriving at that heart, though, and despite the verse avatar's well-known status, an outline of the plot of *Cligès* is in order, and will function as a *prise de position* on the text. As I suggested in connection with Charity Cannon Willard's criticisms of the *mise en prose*, both source and product are broadly the same in this basic sense – the prose version has just one original added episode which I will discuss presently –, and have small but highly significant differences only at the level of interpretation. What happens, then, is as follows.³⁸

The scene is initially the court of Constantinople, ruled at this time – which, the prosateur infers from a reasonably creative reading of his earlier source, is the time when Arthur governs Britain – by the emperor Alixandre.³⁹ He and his wife Thantalis have two sons, one of whom is also called Alixandre, and another named Alix, considerably the younger of the two. The young Alixandre, as he passes from

adolescence to the 'aage de jeunesse', decides he would like to take up arms as a knight – not, however, in Greece, where the opportunities for such an enterprise are, he realises, scant. By some means he hears tell of the court of King Arthur, and the renown it enjoys the world over. His fate is sealed. There the young Alixandre must go. He asks for an audience with the emperor, and demands leave to travel to Britain. This his father gladly grants him, sprinkled with Polonius-like paternal advice, pleased that his son is apt to fulfil the potential he saw in him. The boy's mother is less enamoured of the idea – upon hearing the news she falls in a faint – and weeps hot tears until Alixandre *père* suggests that she pull herself together, for their son is quite capable of handling himself and should not be held back in his ambition merely because his mother is unable to cut the apron strings. Thantalis sees the sense in this, and emperor and empress wave their son off as he sails out for the court of Arthur.

Alixandre sails through days and in and out of nights, eventually docking in Southampton, much to the relief of his queasy colleagues. Fortuitously, Arthur's court is sitting at Windsor; Alixandre and his Grecian compatriots travel there and are granted an audience with the king. Arthur, greatly taken by Alixandre's beauty, summons the young man to speak with him, and is equally impressed by his level-headedness and strong desire to be a knight in the Arthurian household. He welcomes him effortlessly into his circle, much to the delight of Alixandre's intimates, and of the often-sceptical Gauvain. Shortly afterwards, Arthur decides to go sporting in Brittany and, leaving Britain in the hands of the count of Windsor, sets out to sea accompanied only by his queen Guinevere, Gauvain's sister Soredamours, and Alixandre (many more knights follow in larger vessels). This episode is crucial, for while on the way to Brittany Alixandre and Soredamours fall in love with each other, a fact which does not pass unnoticed by Guinevere – who tradition tells us doubtless knows a thing or two about such matters –, but which causes much soul-searching on the part of the two lovers (this will be discussed more fully below).

Four or five months into their sojourn in Brittany, the company is visited by messengers bearing frightful news from London and Canterbury. The count of Windsor has laid siege to London, holing himself up there and declaring that he will

be ruler. Arthur is incensed, and gathers to him the chivalric flowers of Gaul, 'qui maintenant est nommee France'.⁴⁰ They travel to Britain. Alixandre is dazzled by the assembly, and with the hyperbole of an Olivier believes the whole world to be there.⁴¹ He is so impressed that he wishes to be made a knight, a desire which Arthur duly grants him and his companions. The ritual bathing takes place in the sea 'par deffaulte de aultres baings'. Guinevere presents Alixandre with a silken chemise that Soredamours has embroidered with golden thread and strands of her hair, in order to see whether gold or hair lasts longer.⁴² Alixandre accepts the gift, but does not know that it was worked by Soredamours. The army depart for London where, eventually, the count of Windsor is unceremoniously defeated, of course by Alixandre. Woven through this episode like the threads on the shirt is the problem, as they see it, of Soredamours' and Alixandre's attraction to each other. However, through the offices of Guinevere and other agencies, this is soon solved. They marry, to much celebration; and nine months later Soredamours gives birth to a son. This is Cligès.

Cligès is still a babe in arms when his paternal grandparents, the emperor and empress of Constantinople, die. After their funeral, it is realised that Alixandre is heir to the throne of Constantinople, and so word is sent to him. The boats carrying the messengers are shipwrecked; only one man survives, and returns to his court peddling the lie that it was not the messengers but, long previously, Alixandre *filz* who met a watery end. Alixandre's younger brother Alix is crowned king. Soon, though, Alixandre learns the truth and heads with his family to Constantinople to claim what is rightfully his. Alix is understandably surprised to see his elder brother alive, and is discomfited. The brothers reach an agreement: on condition that he does not take a wife, Alix will simply wear the crown, while profit and honour will be Alixandre's. Though curious, this arrangement seems to work. Presently, age catches up with Cligès's parents; Soredamours dies, and Alixandre feels himself in the grip of illness. He summons his son to him, and tells him that he must go to Arthur's court and serve as he did previously. As he utters these words, he dies. Alix and Cligès mourn.

After the death of his brother, the notion of being without a wife begins to rankle with the youthful Alix. His counsellors – who, typically, are young and unwise –

suggest that he take a wife; and he is soon persuaded. He hears that the emperor of Germany has a daughter, Fenice, and the more he learns of her the more he falls in love with her. Germany is happy at the prospect of giving his daughter to Greece, but the spanner in the works is the duke of Saxony who also wishes to marry Fenice. This, opines Germany, should not pose too much of a problem: if Saxony comes laying claim to Fenice there are enough people there to fend him off, and this will not in any case be troublesome if Alix comes in person to fetch Fenice. This he does.

A further problem arises: Fenice has seen Cligès, and Cligès Fenice, and they have fallen in love. Cligès is soon presented with something to take his mind off this happy and unhappy circumstance – the duke of Saxony's nephew appears on behalf of his uncle, but is summarily dispatched –, but Fenice is not so fortunate. Misery is written all over her face; but her nurse Thessala, though 'experte en enchanteries', cannot read its cause. Fenice does not want to reveal her secret but, concerned that Thessala will find out by fouler means, tells her. She is in love with Cligès but has been given to 'le viellart de Constantinople' whom – in ways that will be described below – she cannot and will not love. Fenice cannot see a way out of this, especially as their marriage will be celebrated the next day. The wily Thessala works out an expedient, however: she will brew up a potion that Alix will drink, and which will fool him into thinking that his marriage to Fenice has been consummated.

This she does. Cligès – who is ignorant of the stratagem – gives the delicious brew to his uncle. The latter goes to bed that night with his timorous bride; he falls asleep, and in a troubling episode finds himself attempting to kiss and fondle an oneiric representation of Fenice, meeting with resistance before 'elle s'acorde autant par amour que par force'. This enchanted dodging of carnal relations continues unhindered and unsuspected. Meanwhile, the duke of Saxony is still aggrieved, and makes another attempt to get Fenice. Cligès kills his nephew, but a Saxon band kidnaps Fenice. Cligès liberates her, and fights with Saxony. After an evenly-matched clash between youth and age, a truce is called; the duke returns home, and Cligès decides he would like to fulfil his father's dying wish and go to Arthur's court. He asks Fenice's permission to go, for she is his 'dame souveraine'; she grants it, but with a heavy heart.

Cligès sets off and soon finds himself in Wallingford. He asks where he can find Arthur, and is told that the king is in Oxford. Once there, Cligès slots neatly into chivalric life by means of a tournament: reasoning that 'il ne demoura pas sans avoir de lui un coup de lance', he vanquishes Sagramors, Lancelot, Perceval, and his uncle Gauvain (in the verse, these two are evenly-matched, no more). He makes himself known to Arthur and Gauvain, but cannot put Fenice out of his mind. Soon he leaves Britain for Constantinople, where he speaks to Fenice and they declare their love for one another. The only fly in the ointment is Alix, but again Thessala finds a way out of this: simply, change the ointment.

She brews up another potion, which this time will be drunk by Fenice and will make her appear as though dead, so that she can be carried out of the emperor's palace and into a convenient hideaway Cligès has had made in his house by his loyal servant Jehan. Fenice 'dies'; her husband mourns. As mischance would have it, passing through Constantinople at this time are three doctors – quacks – from Salerno. They very shrewdly realise that Fenice is in fact alive, and set about proving this by elaborately violent means: they whip her, pour molten lead in her palms, and are just stoking up a pyre to roast her when they are rumbled and thrown from the palace windows by Fenice's ladies. Fenice is taken out in a coffin and laid in church. Thirty armed men guard her body, but Cligès succeeds in snatching it and taking his 'dame souveraine' to the space he has prepared. After a troubling period when it seems that the potion might actually kill Fenice, the two live secretly and happily for a time. One day, though, they decide to take some air in the garden – and are seen by Bertrand, a knight whose hawk has flown from him into this garden. He tells Alix what he has witnessed, and the emperor sends troops after the lovers. But Fenice and Cligès have fled, under a charm effected by Thessala, leaving Jehan with much explaining to do. Almost a month later the pair arrive at the court of Arthur, where all ends happily: Alix has died of grief in their absence, and Arthur gives his imprimatur to their union. They marry, found many chapels, have beautiful children, and die without stain.

So far, so Chrétien, then. Aside from the few small modifications I have noted, it would seem from this apparently bald account that the prosateur has produced a

relatively faithful version of the earlier poem, carefully underlining in his title – *Le Livre de Alixandre Empereur de Constantinople et de Cligès son fils* – the bipartite structure of the source, and deviating little from it in his retelling. Why get so exercised by critical reactions to the *mise en prose*? What is there to interest us in this text, which seems no more Alien than its always-*invraisemblable* avatar? In what ways was my account a *prise de position*? Where are the ‘new coherences’ and show-stopping exegeses I mentioned previously? Of course these questions are fair; and of course they are easily answerable. The interest, and the Alienness of and in the text, is revealed not through a cursory reading, or an informative retelling, of it, but rather through an examination of the spaces in between bare issues of plot development. These spaces are shown up only through the ‘multiple readings’ Lacy seemed reluctant to countenance, through an engagement with the moments of crisis – what Terence Cave would call ‘fêlures’ or loci of textual ‘trouble’ – keenly felt by the remanieur in the prose text.⁴³ These centre on the episodes I focused on most closely in the above recounting – the respective fallings-in-love of Alixandre and Soredamours, and of Cligès and Fenice. Problems are perceived by the author, and are communicated and solved, I contend, in the creative ways described below.

‘Bon sens et engin’: Narrative and Amorous Strategies in the prose *Cligès*

In the Introduction to her edition of the prose *Cligès*, Maria Colombo Timelli makes a passing, unqualified, comment about personifications in the text ‘permettant de projeter à l’extérieur les sentiments mêmes des personnages’.⁴⁴ In this edition, as in her earlier prose *Erec*, the Italian critic takes the trouble to list every occurrence of such personifications – of abstract notions such as Raison, Adventure, Mort, and Amours –, which makes it all the stranger that she does not reflect further on this remark, itself apparently based on an allusive line of Norris Lacy’s.⁴⁵ This is unfortunate (or, perhaps for my purposes here, fortunate?), for her *désinvolte* suggestion goes, I think, to the very heart of the prosateur’s strategies for dealing with textual Alienness, and for finding new and more appropriate coherences when faced with Chrétien’s poem. The exteriorisation of characters’ sentiments through what I shall call ‘personified abstractions’ – my reasons for rejecting the more straightforward ‘personifications’ will become clear – is fundamental to the Burgundian author’s response to and smoothing over of

exegetical and ethical conundrums in his source. In order to elucidate in detail how this is so, I draw on just one set of examples of the phenomenon: the specific use to which the prosateur puts the personified abstraction of 'Amour(s)' in the two halves of his text. In both halves this turns on the rightness, whether moral or otherwise, of love.

The first of these uses – a small but significant one – occurs in the first meeting of Alixandre and Soredamours on the boat to Brittany. This episode, whether in Chrétien or in the prose, is also the reader's first encounter with the enigmatic Soredamours, and is of immense importance: as the prosateur tells us, 'celle qui ne daigna oncques amer chevalier ny escuier tant fust preu ne hardi au jour d'ui par une nouvelle mutacion sera convaincu et soubmise au lachs d'Amours'.⁴⁶ Even here, so early on, those past participles are revelatory – the Soredamours of the prose, unlike her verse predecessor, is 'persuaded', 'held in thrall by', Amours, and the way in which this 'nouvelle mutacion' in the proud maiden is effected can be seen from what follows, which is worth quoting at length. Seated in the boat, as her eyes are drawn almost despite themselves towards Alixandre, whom she cannot but rank as the most beautiful man she has ever seen,

le fiert Amourz de la saiette ferree d'or, voire au milieu du cuer [...]. Le ruide entendement de ceste damoiselle, *naguere* obstiné en indignacion envers lez hommes, par ung ray soudain des vertus d'Amours est corrompu et rendu serf a remirer la beaulté d'Alixandre. Si devés savoir qu'au desracinement de ceste *malditte obstinacion* que Soredamours avoit envers lez nobles, qu'il convenoit bien a Amours monstrier patatement ses vertus comme il fist.⁴⁷

The apparently conventional motif of Cupid's arrow piercing the heart of an unsuspecting victim takes on a deeper significance here, or perhaps shrugs off its erstwhile significance and assumes a new one. Here, as a prelude to the further examples of this to be analysed, I want to suggest that what is important is not so much the arrow's passage 'voire au milieu du cuer', but the fact that Amours actively, intentionally, shoots that dart.

The arrow, then, hits Soredamours – whose name might, misleadingly here, signal affinity with its marksman – and works its magic. Or in fact and more tellingly it works its magic on her 'ruide entendement', which becomes corrupted and held

spellbound by Amours. This, it must be stressed, has happened through no volition on the part of Soredamours. She has been the passive ‘victim’ of an outside agent, the personified abstraction of Amours; and though she tries to fight it with the help of similar personified abstractions, she is weakened. Her confusion is palpable:

Car, nonobstant que son cuer fust enrudi et resistant aux vuloirs de Nature, commandemens et semoncez d’Amours, voire et a Raison, attendu qu’elle cuidoit nul homme estre suffisant pour parvenir a sa bonne grace, toutesvoies en soubit *par ce ray qui descendi du soleil estant ou ciel d’Amours, d’autant qu’elle estoit rebelle et non daignant personne amer, d’aultretel et plus fust elle engrant d’amer.*⁴⁸

As the italicised sections in the above two quotations underline, Soredamours’ previous state, her ‘obstinacion’, was something controlled by and contained within her. She is described as ‘celle qui ne daigna oncques amer’ – and her disdain was a conscious, active reaction, unlike the passive bending to the offices of Amours here. From being defiantly ‘rebelle’, Soredamours has been made ‘engrant’ to love. This is vital to the prosateur’s purpose.

Of course, the attentive reader of Chrétien might dispute this, or any claims to the originality of the device’s use in the prose version. After all, this same pot-shot is taken in the twelfth-century source, for apparently the same reasons:

Et la reine voirement	Se li pleüst a ce antandre;
I amena <i>Soredamors</i>	Mes oncques n’i volt metre antante.
<i>Qui desdaigneuse estoit d’amors:</i>	<i>Ox la fera Amors dolante.</i>
Oncques n’avoit oï parler	<i>Et molt se cuide bien vangier</i>
D’ome qu’ele daignast amer,	<i>Del grant orguel et del dangier</i>
Tant eüst beauté, ne proesce,	<i>Qu’ele li a toz jorz mené.</i>
Ne seignorie, ne hautesce.	<i>Bien a Amors droit assené:</i>
Et ne por quant la dameisele	<i>El cuer l’a de son dart ferue</i>
Estoit tant advenant et bele	Sovant plaist, sovant tressue,
Que bien deüst d’amors apandre,	<i>Et maugré suen amer l’estuet.</i> ⁴⁹

This does not initially seem wholly unfair, and might appear to attenuate my argument somewhat. Here is Chrétien, three centuries previously, giving us the same information as the prosateur does – Soredamours has never found a man whom she would deign to love, Cupid takes matters into his own quiver and shoots an arrow

into her heart, and she loves despite herself –, so what, it might be asked, is the point? The answer to this lies in the personified figure of Amours in the two versions: Chrétien, I suggest, uses the figure in its conventional Ovidian sense, to invoke the simple fact of Soredamours having fallen in love, whereas the author of the prose uses Amours here as the very real agent of that love.

In fact, I would draw attention to the name I gave Chrétien's figure in connection with a remark made previously in order to clarify this subtle but crucial distinction: the twelfth-century source is using Cupid as a literary device, a standard personification, while the Burgundian author has developed a 'personified abstraction' that he calls Amours from its previous use in the verse avatar in order to provide him with a legitimising narrative strategy. The 'personified abstraction' is not a literary stock-in-trade as seen in Chrétien and elsewhere, but a valuable interpretative tool for dealing with textual Alienness. This device is not, I should reiterate, an allegorical one: it is not the same sort of personification as we meet more widely in medieval texts, the obvious example being the ubiquitous *Roman de la Rose*.⁵⁰ The strategy effected by the prosateur is derived from this, doubtless, and from the vogueish use of such a trope in contemporary works such as the 'Songe de la Thoison d'Or' mentioned above, or the *Douze Dames de Rhétorique*.⁵¹ But closer inspection reveals this other and more subtle use of the personification as a hermeneutic device in the *Cligès*: this subtlety is why I have coined the apparently oxymoronic phrase 'personified abstraction' to describe it. What I am trying to get at here is not the sort of *abstractum agens* described by Strubel: the prosateur goes beyond this straightforward use, abstracts the personification of Amours from its more generally-performed rôle in order that it might fulfil this new exegetical function.⁵² The stock motif has been turned, I contend, to considerable literary account.

Much of the problem perceived in Chrétien's text, and the reasons for wanting to smooth it over, on the part of the remanieur are perhaps inadvertently underlined by Norris Lacy in his assessment of the episode described above. In what he terms 'a solid exercise in subtlety reduction' (a judgement with which I absolutely take issue), Lacy remarks that in altering the nature of Soredamours' prior disdain for love to include the tempering 'qu'elle cuidoit nul homme estre suffisant pour

parvenir a sa bonne grace', the Burgundian author misrepresents both Soredamours and Chrétien's text – what we find in the *mise en prose* 'appears less an unwillingness to love than a simple determination merely to wait for the right man'.⁵³ This is precisely the point: what the prosateur is doing here is interpreting – not undermining – Chrétien, offering *his* reading of this confusing episode. As Lacy points out, the verse avatar features a fifty-line internal monologue from Soredamours in which she debates the fitness or otherwise of the curious emotions she experiences, which is reduced in the prose to a remark on the 'batailles qu'Amourz et Orgoeul' fought in her.⁵⁴ The monologue is unnecessary to the Burgundian's reading, for what he derives from Chrétien is indeed that Soredamours exhibited – might have exhibited – 'a simple determination merely to wait for the right man'. And the right man – as Amours noted – is of course Alixandre. That the prosateur is persuaded of this rightness is apparent from further uses of the personified abstraction of Amours in this section of the *Cligès*.

Immediate links, designed to suggest their having been 'made for each other', are posited between Soredamours and Alixandre ('si Soredamours est grandement pensifve et melancollieuse, Alixandre ne l'est pas moins').⁵⁵ The same thing happens to him as happened to Soredamours: he is ineluctably drawn to looking at her and reflecting on her beauty, and as he does so, 'Amours le fiert'. But the personified abstraction does not in this instance stop there, for 'lui commence a faire [ung] advertisement', telling him that it seems to 'him' (the abstraction) that Alixandre would be very happy with Soredamours, who is 'belle' just as Alixandre is 'bel'. This discourse sets Alixandre thinking, and gives him licence, almost, to vent his feelings for Soredamours and about the love he experiences:

Il eslieve son cuer a remirer la courtoisie de ceste tant gente pucelle, et ne cesse de fonder soupirs et sangloux correspondans a ceulx de celle qui l'ayme. Moult est ceste amour lealle et naissant d'une vraie fondacion et lumiere amoureuse.⁵⁶

His last comment – I suggest that the remark 'moult est ceste amour lealle' is free indirect discourse – is derived by the prosateur directly from Chrétien's 'ceste amors est leax et droite' (*Cligès*, l. 528). This underlines the interpersonal intertextuality inherent in the Burgundian's rewriting of Chrétien's poem: he selectively assumes

the authority of the earlier author's words to buttress his interpretation and, further, gives them and the responsibility for them to one of his characters. Within this, too, something more interesting is going on: if the personified abstraction of Amours can speak, and persuade a character of something through voice as well as through action, as we saw in the case of Soredamours above, then this is a further and – *pace* Lacy – much more subtle hermeneutic strategy. The prosateur interprets the verse source but, perhaps concerned that the 'freille entendement' mentioned in the prologue might let him down or perhaps for much more telling reasons, puts the onus for that interpretation onto his abstraction. It is not him, the prosateur, who is passing judgement as to whether this love is right, but a different – higher – authority, Amours. This abdication of authorial responsibility is the key to a proper understanding of the *mise en prose*, as we shall see.

The select band docks in Brittany. Guinevere has noticed that Alixandre and Soredamours have been exchanging looks which 'font les messages et ambassadez d'Amours', but she does not blame them for this because they seem so well-suited, as though 'ilz aient autresfois parlé ensamble, ce que non'.⁵⁷ Further evidence of their similarity and fitness for one another comes when we are told that both are assailed by happiness and doubts in equal measure during the day, and that during the night they are both victim to 'ymaginacions diverses et pencees melancolieuses', explicitly because of what Amours has done to them. Their respective speeches illustrate this. First comes Alixandre who reflects on his lovesickness as an intractable ailment, or rather one for which there is but one antidote that can only come from one source, a homeopathic application of the very germ that caused it. He cannot himself administer this; he must wait to be acted upon as he was acted on previously. Casting himself in the rôle of passive victim, as the italicised sections of the quotation show, he bewails this imprisonment and wonders how it came to be that he was caught so unawares:

"...[P]our ce seul regard *j'eusse esté enserré* en ceste paine dolloureuse [...]. Et cuide bien moy que je feroie grant sens se plus a elle ne penssoie, *si ne scay comment je puisse faire*, car *Amours espoir me veult chastier et monster* [sic] *sa puissance sur moy* [...], et cuide bien moy que Amours qui est juste juge, après ceste griefve souffrance aydera a consoler *mon cuer qu'il a trespercié* de son dart".⁵⁸

His state of confusion is such that he cannot seem to decide whether Amours is cruel or just; and he only adds to this confusion when he comes to reflect – as did Chrétien’s Alixandre – on the logic of what befell him when the arrow struck him. How, he wonders, did it pierce him? It can’t have gone through his eye, for if it had it would have damaged the organ, which remains ‘net et sain’; so he would love to know how ‘Amours m’a en mon coeur si trescruellement navré’ without leaving a mark on his body. The verse Alixandre spends some three hundred lines debating this physiological curiosity with himself (it is not without ironic double meaning that Chrétien suggests at the monologue’s conclusion that ‘granz est la complainte Alixandre’, l.863), while the prosateur finds a strategy to deal with this lengthy poetic debate and bring the authority of the voice of Chrétien, ventriloquised by his fictional creation, into line with his thesis on the rightness of this love. Alixandre is (un)fortunate enough to be visited by another garrulous personified abstraction, this time of Enseignement:

“Mon beau fils, qui enquiers comment Amours te puisse avoir feru au cuer, saces que ses euvres sont si soubtilles qu’elles ne sont pas a asavourer magnifestement du premier coup, et sachiés que, lorsque premierement tu gectas tes yeulx pour voir Soredamours et elle te samblat belle, lors Amours te regarda de son haultain siege imperial et par le milieu de ta pencee getta sa saiette, qui dedens ton cuer entra sans blecier le corps, comme le soleil passé parmi la verriere sans le casser”.⁵⁹

He is given several pieces of information useful both to him and to a fuller understanding of the Burgundian author’s ways of reading Chrétien. Amours works in mysterious ways, and is a higher authority than any human, but acts in ways that are considered right by and for that human. He saw Alixandre looking at Soredamours, and because it was the right thing to do, sealed the lovers’ fate with an arrow.

The rightness of the love, and the notion that logic is a futile weapon to use against it, is underlined by Soredamour’s parallel monologue. She realises, like Alixandre, that she has not, and cannot have, any power over what she feels,

‘car, nonobstant que je me veulle reposer et cesser de pencer a lui, ce ne me vault, car Amours m’a trop asprement envabie, et convient que je amodere mon corage et que je obtempere aux soudains

commandements d'Amours, auxquels j'ay longuement contredit et resisté que plus faire ne puis.
Il me convient faire ce qu'Amours m'annonce'⁶⁰

She refers explicitly to changes that 'Amour veult' that she effect on her character, that she swap her pride and hot-headedness for loyalty and obedience, and moreover is happy to do this, for 'Raison me denonce que il me convient une fois acquitier envers Amours'. Indeed, Soredamours is so enthralled by Amours, and by the notion of love, that she appeals gladly to another level of predestination, a rather obvious one that she has not, however, seen (or been in a position to see) previously:

'[J]e ferai ce que mon nom m'enseigne. Car 'sore' vault autant dire comme couleur de l'or, qui plus est sor et plus est affiné, et l'autre partie 'damours' avec ce premier mot 'sore' doit estre dit 'sororee d'amours', c'est a dire la plus especialle qui jamés fut touçant les fais d'amours'⁶¹

The prosateur again appropriates almost verbatim the definition given by Chrétien's Soredamours and uses it in support of his own exegesis, of the 'new coherences' he wishes to forge in his reworking.

That love is controlled by outside agents, and within this that the love between Soredamours and Alixandre is right and, as Norris Lacy hinted, a question of the most appropriate match having been found by this higher authority, is illustrated by one final example from this first section of the *mise en prose*. There is a curious episode which occurs in both the Burgundian text and in its source shortly after the monologues described above. Upon hearing that the count of Windsor has captured London and that a deputation must be sent from Arthur's court to stop him, Alixandre wishes to be made a knight, and Arthur duly invests him. A further vestimentary token is offered to Alixandre by Guinevere: she presents him with a chemise that has been worked in gold thread and strands of hair by Soredamours (it is not made clear in the prose version whether Soredamours countenances or is ignorant of this gift of her handiwork). This chemise presents a conundrum, for the prosateur has significantly, though apparently randomly, altered Soredamours' reasons for using both silk and hair in her embroidery. Chrétien explains her decision as follows:

S'avoit antrecousu par leus
 Lez l'or de son chief un chevol
 Et as deus manches et au col,
 Por savoir et por esprover
 Se ja porroit home trover
 Que l'un de l'autre devisast (ll. 1152-7).

The prosateur's version of events, on the other hand, is this: 'Si y avoit enlacié ung chevel avec le fil d'or pour savoir lequel dureroit le plus, ou l'or ou le chevil'.⁶² It is, I think, relatively straightforward in light of what I have been saying above to work out why the prosateur might have changed Soredamours' motivation in his reworking: if her test is designed to reveal whether a man exists who can tell the difference between the two strand-types, and since the challenge and hence the likelihood of one being found to rise to it is delivered in the subjunctive ('devisast'), then this suggests the pride and unwillingness to love that characterised the verse Soredamours that the Burgundian author is at pains to sideline.

What is less easy to divine, however, might be why the remanieur has presented the change in such terms. A persuasive answer to this can be derived from reading the *mise en prose*, and Alixandre's response to learning that the chemise was worked by Soredamours – a revelation necessarily absent from the verse as it is Soredamours herself who presents him with it –, through the authority of Chrétien. What seems to me important to bear in mind is that Chrétien offered the embroidered shirt as a site of testing, and specifically of a test taken by men. While this is absent from the prose reworking – it seems as though the empirical testing of the threads' durability is for Soredamours only –, the knowledge of its having been the case in his source is not absent from the reworker's mind. Implicit in Alixandre's reaction to finding out that the woman he loves embroidered the shirt, then, is this notion of challenge. A further problem inheres in the fact that at first it seems as though Alixandre fails the test: upon hearing the happy news, he kisses and embraces the chemise, and falls asleep with it in his arms. He has apparently mistaken the shirt for the real object of his affections, prioritised the glister of gold over true worth.⁶³

But as in all the best cryptic clues, the real meaning behind the change effected is found at another level of abstraction. When in Chrétien's text Alixandre discovers

that the chemise has hair in it, his delight is presented proverbially – ‘Bien fet Amors d’un sage fol/Quant cil fet joie d’un cheval’ (l.1621-2) –, a proverb which Maria Colombo Timelli in a footnote to her edition suggests is absent from the prose.⁶⁴ It is not. It is present, but interwoven into the prosateur’s version as subtly as were the strands of hair in the shirt. After the troubling moment when it appears that he has reacted wrongly, we are told of the ‘remerciemens que Alixandre fera aux dieux et dieuesses pour le cheveil qu’il a de Soredamours’. Authority is posited, mockingly and in reverse, in Chrétien’s text, which the remanieur assumes in more positive terms as his own. If Amours acts properly, he implies, then joy is indeed to be taken in a hair. Alixandre rises to the latent challenge; his reaction is the correct one; and, most crucially, the prosateur underlines that the love between Soredamours and Alixandre is right, and meant to be. It is caused and countenanced by higher, or prior, authorities: the personified abstraction of Amours in the first instance, and the intertextual polyphony of verse with and through prose in the second.

I mentioned earlier, following Jane Taylor, that what I would be examining here would be the ‘responses of the Burgundian *mise en prose* to some of the larger and more ethical questions raised for us by Chrétien’s romances’. What we have seen in my analysis of the first half of the prose *Cligès* might not, one could argue, be strictly definable as large, or even ethical, questions. The prosateur’s skilful employment of the personified abstraction of Amours in proving a love’s fitness might, it is true, be seen as a perfect, polished, but ultimately useless, jewel, indicating a certain skill in the interpretation and rewriting of a verse avatar but showing a belletristic desire to allow style to triumph over function. It is a relief to be able to refute this charge. The full import of the prosateur’s strategy in the first part of his *mise en prose* is revealed when the same device is used in the second, more troubling, part of the work. Through it, the remanieur establishes in creative ways his own *Ars Amatoria*, one which functions on the hypothesis that right love is externally-driven and externally-countenanced, and one which allows him neatly to refocus the ethical Alienness evinced in his source, and to delete the potential alterity of the relationship between Cligès and Fenice.

Cligès, we recall, is the son of Alixandre, himself the elder son of the emperor of Constantinople. When Constantinople died, the crown should have passed to Alixandre, but after a ship-wreck on the way to give him the news a malevolent – or hydrophobic? – messenger returns to the Greek court and says that *Alixandre fils* is in fact dead. Alix, the young Alixandre's uncle, will rule in his place. Alixandre heads to Constantinople, though, and a decision is reached whereby 'Alix porteroit seulement la couronne et jamais ne prendroit femme, et Alixandre d'autre part aroit les proffis et seroit honnouré comme empereur'.⁶⁵ It is not made clear whether a similar arrangement will continue between Alix and Cligès after the death of the latter's father. What is more limpid in this, though, is the following: when Alix takes Fenice, the daughter of the emperor of Germany, in marriage, he is violating the terms of the agreement previously made with his brother; and when Cligès sees Fenice and falls in love with her, he is falling in love with his uncle's wife, that is his aunt.

Twin issues of legitimisation are bound up in this: the rightness of monarchy and the rightness of love. The most pressing of the two in Chrétien scholarship is the second: if Cligès is in love with his aunt, surely this is incest? And despite the fact that Cligès and Fenice are not bound by blood, as Elizabeth Archibald points out this was indeed the way the relationship would have been perceived both in Chrétien's time and in the fifteenth century.⁶⁶ I will discuss in Chapter Five two especially potent, and especially interesting, *mises en prose* in which incest is the dominant theme, and underline the way in which their *remanieur* smoothes out the incest-threat. In the prose *Cligès* we witness a similar, though differently expressed, desire to 'normalise' a potentially Ideologically Alien circumstance, this apparently endogamous union between nephew and aunt. I illustrate here the way in which the *prosateur* elides, or perhaps sidesteps, the issue through the use of the same personified abstraction of *Amours* seen in the earlier part of his work.⁶⁷ In order to show how this is so, and to emphasise his view of the relationship between Cligès and Fenice as palpably the legitimate one, I begin, conversely, with a discussion of the complex conjugals of Fenice and Alix, and a comment on the duke of Saxony's pursuit of Fenice.

Maria Colombo Timelli devotes a section of the Introduction to her edition of the *Cligès* to the legitimacy or otherwise of the aunt-nephew union. She makes the point, part of which I contest below, that ‘l’amour de Fenice et de Cligès est présenté dès le début non pas sous le jour de la fatalité, mais sous celui de la légitimité’, and implicitly contrasts its fitness with the problematics of the marriage of Fenice and Alix. Her contention appears to be that this union is flawed because Alix has no right to marry any woman, under the terms of his agreement with his brother Alexandre; though she makes this point allusively, it seems to me that what Colombo Timelli is suggesting is that the union to be countenanced is one between Fenice and the legitimate emperor, and in her view this is Cligès. Further, she sees this opinion as being shared by the remanieur, and as being communicated by him in subtle fashion: in support of this she invokes the deliberate ambiguity introduced into the reworking by the prosateur with his use of the impersonal ‘empereur de Constantinople’. This is reasonably persuasive as far as it goes and taken on its own terms, even if it fails to legislate for a reader of the *mise en prose* who is able to follow basic plot and characterisation issues: at this point we have not, as I mentioned above, been given any indication that Cligès actually has any claim in Constantinople after his father dies, and are quite able to see that Alix is in fact who is being referred to as ‘empereur de Constantinople’, even if later Fenice states that Cligès ‘doit par raison avoir la juridiction et empire de Constantinople’. I find this means of problematising the relationship between Alix and Fenice in itself problematic, then; but what is valuable in Colombo Timelli’s exposition is her recognition that the prosateur adopts a strategy to communicate his negative reading of this relationship. Or, as I shall describe in what follows, we can more correctly state that in order to indicate the valency he places on Fenice and Alix’s marriage in contrast with that of Fenice and Cligès, the prosateur adopts the very significant strategy of, precisely, not adopting his strategy.

In other words, the personified abstraction of Amours is absent from this section of the text. The union between Fenice and Alix is presented in mercantile, hierarchical and disturbing terms, rather than as something to be desired or sought after – which contrasts sharply with the aunt-nephew strand. Alix decides – without having seen her – that he would like to be married to Fenice, not because of any inherent worth in her but because he is assured that she is ‘belle a droit entre cent mille’, having

stipulated not simply that he would contravene his brother's proscription and take a wife, but also that said wife would be 'belle outre mesure' – because, in short, she conforms to an earthly ideal. In order to achieve his wish, he need only petition her father, and contract an agreement with him: Fenice is not asked her opinion on the matter. There is, then, a basic lack of parity between the two before they even meet; and this is only perpetuated, as is later implied by Fenice, once they do. Fenice is presented in these early snapshots of their relationship as a 'damoiselle', or 'pucelle'; Alix, though significantly the *cadet* of his brother Alixandre, can hardly by this stage of the story be enjoying the first flush of youth, a surmisal only confirmed when Fenice is talking about her predicament with Thessala her nurse on the eve of her wedding to Alix. 'Je vous dis que je suis trop marrie', she says, 'de ce que mon pere me donne a fenme au faulx parjure *le viellart* de Constantinople', his advanced age being, I suggest, more troubling to her than his perjury. This fundamental discrepancy between the two parties when read through the view of love presented by the prosateur in the first half of his reworking, in connection with Alixandre and Soredamours and the perfect equipoise between their respective sentiments, ought to give us pause for thought. Clearly something troubling, 'not right', is at work here.

This sense of wrongness surrounding Fenice and Alix's relationship as the prosateur sees it is confirmed through a last telling example. When Fenice speaks to her nurse of her unwillingness to be married to 'le viellart de Constantinople' and by implication to have sex with him, she mentions the fact that she views it as 'corrompu' to give her body to a man if she cannot also give him her heart ('cil qui de moi aura le cuer, seulement il sera sire par soi du corpz').⁶⁸ Given that their wedding ceremony is to be held the next day, she realises that there is not a great deal she can do about this – the wedding, it appears, cannot be cancelled. Damsel and nurse do not hatch the same plot of flight as do other such couplings in the mises en prose (see for example the strategy adopted by nurse and mistress in *La Manekine* as discussed in Chapter Five below); and non-consummation on the wedding-night would be viewed suspiciously by the new husband. Thessala, however, has a suggestion: she will make up a 'breuvage' that Alix will drink, and which will cause him to have no desire to 'baisier n'acoler' any woman, save the simulacrum of one in his dreams, with whom he will 'prendre grant plesance'. This

potion – whose links with the *Tristan* myths are explicitly stated in both verse and prose – is not what concerns me here. Rather, it is the behaviour of Alix under its influence that disturbs me, and convinces me of the tenor of the prosateur's reading.⁶⁹ Disparity is taken to new heights as – in a small but pertinent departure from the verse avatar – Alix subjects his new bride to an oneiric rape:

Il lui samble qu'il le baise cent mille fois et qu'il mennie ses tetins, més *elle se defend*, et lui samble qu'*elle ne veult* baisier n'acoller comme ne font les aultres pucelles la premiere nuit qu'elles coucent avec leurz maris, més aux conclusions *il lui samble qu'elle s'acorde autant par amour que par force*.⁷⁰

This account of the marriage-bed has parallels with the later episode when the duke of Saxony's men attempt to take Fenice 'par amourz ou par force'; the repetition of this troubling phrase serves to highlight the similarities between the two amorous prospects other than Cligès in the prose text, and to underline their similar unsuitability – illegitimacy – for Fenice. Both these men exert violent sexual strength over her; and, further, neither has his actions countenanced by the personified abstraction of Amours. In this, I suggest, they stand in stark and deliberate contrast with Cligès.

From the first meeting of Cligès and Fenice the prosateur is at pains to stress their parity, and concomitantly, as in the case of Alixandre and Soredamours, the rightness of what they feel for one another. Their parity with one another, indeed, is communicated as a function of their disparity with other people. In the case of Fenice, as with Soredamours, this is expressed in her name:

Le nom de la pucelle ne lui mentoit pas: elle estoit nomme Fenice, et ainsi que le fenix, qui est seul oiseau de son plumage *impareil a tous aultres*, pareillement est il de la damoiselle. Car elle est la plus de plus, *sans per* et sans ce que nul aultre dame soit digne d'estre comparee a la tierce parti de sa haultaine beaulté. Et, au vray dire, chascun disoit *qu'il n'estoit possible a Nature*, nonobstant qu'elle soit soubtille, *qu'elle sceust advenir a composer de toutes choses ung chief d'œuvre pareil ad ceste*.⁷¹

This last remark of the prosateur's is perhaps susceptible of some modification, for we learn a few lines later that in fact Nature (note again the personified abstraction) has formed a work 'pareil ad ceste': this is Cligès, who is described in startlingly

similar terms. After a blason-like description of his physical qualities, we are told that 'estoit il tant bien tourné que *Nature en ung million d'honmes ne sauroit advenir a en faire ung de telle fourme*, n'estoit par la permission de Dieu a cui rien n'est impossible'.⁷² The moral and ideological stage is set, and soon a familiar actor makes an appearance. Fenice is brought before her father and Alix, in the presence of Cligès:

Elle fu assise decoste l'empereur son pere. Cligès, qui la voit en ceste honneur, *ne se peut contregarder* qu'il ne faille que *Amours vertisse et tourne ses yeulx* vers elle.⁷³

As previously, with Alixandre and Soredamours, the lover's eye cannot be drawn from the object of his affections; and, again as previously, the same thing happens to the woman ('et elle pareillement envers Cligès'). The personified abstraction of Amours acts physically and unbidden on the unsuspecting victims, as illustrated by the active verbs in the binomial construction 'vertisse et tourne' (whose sense is quite different in Chrétien's 'Mes Clygés par amors conduit/Vers li sez ialz couvertement', ll. 2760-1, which centres on Cligès's own volition, and where the 'amor' featured is the emotion itself and not an abstraction of it), and a few lines later by the fact that 'Amours fait leurz deux pencees convenir en ung seul et arresté desir, et [...] qu'ilz soient attains des traits d'Amours egalement et a juste mesure'.⁷⁴ Equality and ineluctability are the dominant characteristics of their nascent relationship; and the remanieur continues to take pains to convince the reader of this, of the powerlessness of Cligès and Fenice when faced with this headstrong outside agent, when telling us that on a further occasion Cligès looks at Fenice 'par l'enhortement d'Amours', and later having Thessala remark pertinently to Fenice that 'il n'est chose plus certaine que *Amours vous tient a son service*'.⁷⁵

A few further episodes of the personified abstraction being used, as Colombo Timelli hinted in her introduction, to 'projeter à l'extérieur les sentiments mêmes des personnages' should be adduced here. All centre on the legitimacy of the love between Fenice and Cligés, but allow more comment to be made on why the prosateur might want to focus so strenuously on this. The first of these is apparently minor, but is a necessary prelude to what follows. After he has dealt so successfully with the duke of Saxony, chivalric ambitions are awakened in Cligès and he heads to Britain and the court of Arthur. There he participates in many tournaments,

vanquishing heroes such as Perceval, Lancelot, and his maternal uncle Gauvain. While jousting against this last he thinks of Fenice; the thought spurs him on to enough renewed vigour to allow him to beat Gauvain as he did not in Chrétien (there they are so evenly matched there that Arthur cannot say 'quiex ert miaudres, ni li quiex pire', l. 4902). The confluence of this serendipitous thought and the sole episode of the prose *Cligès* with no foundation in Chrétien – the meeting between Cligès and a weeping damsel – have led critics, and notably Maria Colombo Timelli, to see this episode as a 'simple instance narrative, à la fonction de déclencheur d'une nouvelle action, le départ du protagoniste'.⁷⁶ I suggest there is more to it than this. Rather than being a simple plot device, this added episode functions as part of the prosateur's strategy of levelling the Ideological Alieness of Cligès and Fenice's union.

The damsel bewails her sorry amorous lot: the knight whom she loves, and whom she does not name, is, she fears, lost to her, for her father wanted to marry her to someone else. This, which recalls Fenice's situation, is why she has escaped. While she weeps, she combs her 'chevellure belle et blonde', an echo of the shirt Soredamours wove with her hair and with gold for Cligès's father. After he has heard her story, Cligès pronounces her 'lealle en Amours', which in its turn harks back to Alixandre's indirect pronouncement of the nature of his and Soredamours' attraction, 'moult est ceste amour lealle', and stresses thereby the rightness of the damsel's sentiments. These three things should, I would argue, be read alongside and through Cligès's decision to return to Constantinople, as further evidence of the legitimacy of what he is returning to. As Cligès himself says, 'le pleur de ceste damoiselle est digne de grant merite, voire et d'ausi grant guerredon qu'est le pleur d'un homme leal en ce service d'Amours'.⁷⁷ The added episode is less call to arms for Cligès than confirmation.

Upon his return to Constantinople, Cligès and Fenice meet and discuss the means by which they will get out of the predicament in which they find themselves. Cligès sees it as a matter of some urgency that they do this, and underlines a further level of rightness in their union: not only has the personified abstraction of Amours countenanced it, but the supreme arbiter is also invoked in support of it. 'Il plaist Dieu'.⁷⁸ This is an especially important point for the remanieur's process of deleting

the potential alterity of this relationship. It is outside the control of its victims, and is desired not by them but by higher authorities. This is underlined when Fenice implements her plan to allow herself and Cligès to be together, and pretends to be dead (having drunk a 'breuvage' made by Thessala). Alix is in mourning for her when some doctors from Salerno who are passing through Constantinople offer to take a look at her. They very quickly see that she is feigning death, and attempt to jolt her out of it with torturous trials: they whip her and pour molten lead into her palms to impel her into speech. But speech comes there none, for 'Amours les gardera de faire parler la dame'; to such an extent does 'elle a en son ayde Amours'⁷⁹ that her ruse goes unproven, and she and Cligès can elope to the tower Cligès has had built.

This particular agency of the personified abstraction of Amours is a crucial one to the point I want to make about the prosateur's narrative strategy here. The abstraction, I emphasise, is helping Fenice (as it will later help Cligès when Fenice is apparently truly dying of the potion's effects); the abstraction is preventing the doctors from extracting speech from Fenice; and it was initially, we recall, the abstraction which with its wily dart made Cligès and Fenice, and Alixandre and Soredamours, fall for each other. This, as I have been saying all along, is suggestive of the prosateur's conviction that the unions in question are legitimate, and – with a little sophistry – that right love is externally-driven and externally-countenanced. This is all very well, but clearly we are dealing here with an author who possessed some facility with the written word: why, one could argue, does he not just tell us this? After all, he is happy to deviate to a greater or lesser extent from the model he adopts, adapts, and interprets, and to offer sections of a *mise en prose* based on a creative reading of that avatar – there would have been nothing to stop him either writing in, or more explicitly articulating, this thesis. Why use a personified abstraction?

The reason for this, I suggest, inheres not in the relationship between Alixandre and Soredamours, but in the morally delicate nature of the attraction between Cligès and Fenice. We remember of course that the pair are nephew and aunt, and that despite their lack of blood ties a union between them would have been viewed as incest. The Ideological Alieness of this would have presented a problem for the

Burgundian author just as incest did for Jehan Wauquelin in his rewriting of the two texts I discuss in Chapter Five: our prosateur seems here to have wanted not only the happy ending for his tale lacking in Chrétien's text, but also a happy ending for his enterprise in terms of the book's reception at court. To be seen to be promoting an incestuous relationship might not have been viewed favourably. By developing a narrative strategy and a thesis on love through the use of the personified abstraction in the first half of his text, in which the only problem in terms of love is not ethical but within the characters themselves, the prosateur ingeniously supplies himself with a device through which he can deal with the more problematic second half. What the personified abstraction allows him to do in connection with this potentially troublesome incestuous love is, as I mentioned before, externalise the lovers' sentiments – but to place them at more of a remove than I have previously suggested. Not only does he externalise the emotions from within the characters, and hence take any possible blame for what they might feel away from them, in using as agent the personified abstraction of Amours he is also and more crucially able to abdicate any responsibility for these emotions *himself*. Amours caused this, not the prosateur with the 'engin non suffisant ad ce'.

Far from having an 'engin non suffisant', then, the Burgundian remanieur assumes a subtle and suggestive narrative strategy to overcome a large ethical question – a textually-located Alienness – posed for him by his verse avatar, reading through and interpreting the authority of that work to present and promote new coherences in that work for his target audience, and exhibiting, conversely, considerable 'bon sens et engin'. In the Burgundian *Cligès*, as in the works I discuss in the following chapters, the prosateur listens to echoes of the past in his source text and communicates an impression of that past read through contemporary concerns in his mise en prose. Contrary to the remarks made by some of the critics I invoked in the earlier part of this chapter, the source material does not become diluted or sullied through the production of a mise en prose. Rather, as Jane Burns suggests in connection with the continuations of the Vulgate cycle, what happens here is a two-way process in which light is cast on the later version by reading it through the source, but which also has 'the capacity to reveal part of the greater sense that is locked in the language of the original text'.⁸⁰ For the Burgundian audience this 'greater sense' centres on the position of these verse avatars as representative of,

and a possible means to achieve through their reworking, a literary genealogy. As we turn our attentions to *Saladin* in the next chapter, we see how genealogy *in* literature as well as genealogy *of* literature offers a new strategy for levelling Alieness on the part of the prosateur, and the concomitant way in which the full import of a text is not lost, but found, in translation.

¹ Brian Stock, *Listening for the Text. On the Uses of the Past* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), 1.

² See James Gairdner (ed.), *The Paston Letters*, 3 vols. (London: n.p., 1901), II. 317. On John Paston's presence at the wedding ceremony, which took place in a time-frame just outside the scope of this thesis, see also Richard Vaughan, *Charles the Bold. The Last Valois Duke of Burgundy* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2002), especially Chapter Two, 49 and 53. Vaughan also cites in footnotes on these pages those Burgundian chroniclers present at, or who otherwise offered an account of, the marriage of Charles and Mary. On the political and social context of the Pastons, see Richard Barber, *The Pastons. A Family in the Wars of the Roses* (London: The Folio Society, 2001), and Helen Castor, *Blood and Roses. The Paston Family in the Fifteenth Century* (London: Faber, 2005).

³ For the text, see *Le Livre de Alixandre Empereur de Constantinoble et de Cligès son Fils. Roman en prose du XV^e siècle*, ed. Maria Colombo Timelli (Geneva: Droz, 2004). As I mentioned elsewhere, I have elected to focus this discussion of Alieness in the Chrétien reworkings solely on the *Cligès* as it offers a more rounded illustration of this method of reading than does the *Erec*, which shares Alien features with other texts but does not deploy them, I suggest, to such interesting ends. This latter work will, though, make the odd cameo appearance in the chapter, and across the thesis as a whole. For the text, see *L'Histoire de Erec en prose, roman du XV^e siècle*, ed. Maria Colombo Timelli (Geneva: Droz, 2000).

⁴ On the Toison d'Or, whose historical specificities must needs be outside the parameters of this chapter and indeed of this thesis, see for example Lucie Marignac, 'Philippe le Bon et l'ordre de la Toison d'Or: les enjeux d'une référence mythique', *Razø* 8 (1986), 87-112, and particularly Françoise de Gruben's exhaustive *Les Chapitres de la Toison d'Or à l'époque bourguignonne* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1997). I term the order 'proto-chivalric' not in deference to the responses of these two critics, or any others, but rather to suggest my own interpretation of the rôle and function of chivalry (itself never too far removed from mythifying tendencies) at the court of Burgundy, an interpretation which will become clearer as I discuss a range of chivalry-oriented works in the following sections of the thesis.

⁵ For a cogent recent exposition of the (sometimes) synoptic accounts of the Banquet du Faisan provided by chroniclers, see Catherine Emerson, 'Who Witnessed and Narrated the 'Banquet of the Pheasant' (1454)? A Codicological Examination of the Account's Five Versions', *Fifteenth-Century Studies* 28 (2002), 124-37. See also Catherine Emerson, *Olivier de la Marche and the Rhetoric of Fifteenth-Century Historiography* (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2004).

⁶ On the Jason entremets at the Banquet du Faisan see for example Olivier de la Marche, *Mémoires*, in J. F. Michaut and G. Poujoulat, *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire de France*, 8 vols. (Paris: s.n, 1837), III, 301ff. De la Marche's subjective and disingenuous account of the Lille festivities occurs at 478-89, with the Sainte Eglise and Jason 'pitoyable' and 'mondain' episodes being described on 483-5. On the artistic and ceremonial aspects of the feast more generally, see Jeffrey Chipps Smith, 'The Artistic Patronage of Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy (1419-67)' (Ann Arbor: Dissertation Abstracts, 1979), in particular 145ff; and Agathe Lafortune-Martel, *Fête noble en Bourgogne au XV^e siècle: le Banquet du Faisan* (Paris/Montreal: Bellarmin-Vrin, 1984).

⁷ See Danielle Quéruel, 'Jason, héros d'une biographie chevaleresque?', in *Bien Dire et Bien Apprendre* 20 (2002), 159-70. I will return in due course to this question of the duke's commitment to certain mythical or historical figures over others.

⁸ The first to raise an objection to Jason on these grounds was the Toison d'Or order's founding chancellor, Jean Germain, tellingly a bishop. This point is made by Georges Doutrepoint, 'Jason et Gédéon, patrons de la Toison d'Or', in *Mélanges Godefroid Kurth*, 2 vols (Liège and Paris: Liège &c, 1908), vol. 2, 191-208; 191-3. For Taillevent, see Robert Deschaux, *Un Poète bourguignon du XV^e siècle: Michaut Taillevent (Édition et étude)* (Geneva: Droz, 1975). The 'Songe' is on 59-86.

⁹ Deschaux, ed. cit., 82-3. The implied superiority of Gideon over Jason in Taillevent's book is also suggested in stanza LIX of the 'Songe', a stanza to which I shall briefly return. On Guillaume Fillastre's views on the Toison d'Or patron, see *Le premier et second volume de la Toison d'or* (Paris: François Regnault, 1516), cited in Quérueu, art. cit.

¹⁰ On the tapestry series, which was destroyed in the eighteenth century, see Smith, op. cit., 149-59. Smith makes on 154 what he terms 'a conjectural attempt' to reconstruct the scenes of the eight tapestries, based indeed on little more than subjective surmises. On the rôle of Gideon in Burgundian entries see especially Jeffrey Chipps Smith, 'Venit nobis pacificus Dominus: Philip the Good's Triumphal Entry into Ghent in 1458', in Barbara Wisch and Susan Scott Munshower (eds.), *All the World's a Stage: Art and Pageantry in the Renaissance and Baroque. Part 1: Triumphal Celebrations and the Rituals of Stagecraft* (Pennsylvania: Department of Art History, Pennsylvania State University, 1990), 258-91. According to Doutrepoint (art. cit., 201), other entries featuring Gideon include Arras in 1455 and, under Charles the Bold, Abbeville in 1466 and Dijon in 1473. Graeme Small is currently working on the historical and artistic specificities of the Burgundian entry; for a preliminary discussion of the subject as we await Small's scholarship see Jesse D. Hurlbut, 'The City Renewed: Decorations for the 'Joyeuses Entrées' of Philip the Good and Charles the Bold', in *Fifteenth-Century Studies* 19 (1992), 73-84.

¹¹ On this see Smith, *Artistic Patronage*, 150.

¹² An article that might offer gestures towards an answer to this question of the duke's preferred hero is Michel Pastoureau, 'Quel est le héros littéraire préféré des princes à la fin du Moyen Âge?', forthcoming in the proceedings of a conference held in Bordeaux in 1999, *Le Goût du lecteur à la fin du Moyen Âge*, quoted in Colombo Timelli's edition of the prose *Erec* cited above.

¹³ Raoul Lefèvre, *L'histoire de Jason. Ein Roman aus dem 15. Jahrhundert*, ed. Gert Pinkernell (Frankfurt: Athenäum Verlag, 1971), 125. This passage is also quoted, to broadly similar ends, by Danielle Quérueu, art. cit., 165.

¹⁴ This sort of substitution is central, for example, to Elisabeth Gaucher's thesis in her *La Biographie chevaleresque. Typologie d'un genre (XIII^e-XV^e siècle)*, (Paris: Champion, 1994). While it is true to say that any writer producing a manuscript for Philip the Good would do well to have a sympathetic character as his male protagonist in order to flatter the duke and the illustrious court, and while a number of these characters are indeed called Philippe, it becomes critically unhelpful to suggest each time this happens that the sole function of the character is to stroke the ducal ego. The social circumstances of literary production are important, as I am attempting to illustrate in this chapter; but there is more to these mises en prose than a straightforward game of 'I Spy'.

¹⁵ On the more general rôle and function of historical figures and their 'mythologising' importance see for example Yvon Lacaze, 'Le rôle des traditions dans la genèse d'un sentiment national au XV^e siècle: la Bourgogne de Philippe le Bon', in *Bibliothèque de l'École des Chartes* 129 (1971), 303-85, or more recently Graeme Small, 'Local Élités and 'National' Mythologies in the Burgundian Dominions in the Fifteenth Century', forthcoming in a volume entitled *Building the Past/Konstruktion der eigenen Vergangenheit* in 2006. I am grateful to the author for allowing me sight of this prior to its publication.

¹⁶ See *Les Faicts et les Conquestes d'Alexandre le Grand de Jehan Wauquelin (XV^e siècle)*, édition critique de Sandrine Hériché (Geneva: Droz, 2000), 3. Examples of this posturing are not at all infrequent in the mises en prose: for a flavour of just some in the manuscripts of one remanieur, see Richard E. F. Straub, *David Aubert, escriptain et clerc* (Amsterdam and Atlanta, GA: Rodopi, 1995), 288-92. A similar point is made by Michaut Taillevent: see 'Songe', ed. cit., 72 (stanza LI).

¹⁷ Taillevent, ed. cit., 74.

¹⁸ On the fascinating figure of Alexander the Great at the Burgundian court, see the edition of Wauquelin's text by Sandrine Hériché mentioned above, as well as Catherine Gaullier-Bougassas, 'Les versions en prose de XV^e siècle du *Roman d'Alexandre*: le manuscrit de Besançon et l'*Histoire du bon roy Alexandre* de Jean Wauquelin', in *L'épopée tardive*, special issue of *Littérales*, 22 (1998), ed. François Suard, 129-50, and Christine Ferlampin-Acher, 'Alexandre et le Miroir: Réflexions autour du mythe du conquérant dans le *Roman d'Alexandre en prose*', in *Miroirs et jeux de miroirs dans la littérature médiévale*, ed. Fabienne Pomel (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2003), 191-214. On the more general vogue of Alexander in the medieval period, see *The Medieval French Alexander*, ed. Donald Maddox and Sarah Sturm-Maddox (New York: State University of New York Press, 2002). Especially pertinent to the issues discussed here are the articles by Martin Gosman ('Alexander the Great as Icon of Perfection in the Epigones of the *Roman d'Alexandre* (1250-1450): The *Utilitas* of the Ideal Prince', 175-92), Michelle Szkilnik ('Conquering Alexander: *Perceforest* and the Alexandrian Tradition', 203-18), and Jane H. M. Taylor ('Alexander Amoroso: Reading Alexander in the *Roman de Perceforest*', 219-34).

¹⁹ The quotation is from Gaullier-Bougassas, art. cit., 139. This article is especially good on the precise way in which Wauquelin has adapted and 'translated' his source text and, since this subject is outside the scope of this brief discussion, I refer the interested reader there. Also pertinent to my argument in this chapter is Gaullier-Bougassas's 'L'altérité de l'Alexandre du *Roman d'Alexandre*, et en contrepoint, l'intégration à l'univers arthurien de l'Alexandre de *Cligès*', in *Cahiers de recherches médiévales (XIII^e–XV^e s.)* 4 (1997), 143-9.

²⁰ The vast *Roman de Perceforest* is not yet edited in its entirety. Those parts that are edited are the following: *Le Roman de Perceforest*, première partie, ed. Jane H. M. Taylor (Geneva: Droz, 1979); *Le Roman de Perceforest*, quatrième partie, ed. Gilles Roussineau, 2 vols (Geneva: Droz, 1987); *Le Roman de Perceforest*, troisième partie, ed. Gilles Roussineau, 3 vols (Geneva: Droz, 1988-94); and *Le Roman de Perceforest*, deuxième partie, ed. Gilles Roussineau, 2 vols (Geneva: Droz, 1999 and 2001). The unedited parts are held in the Bibliothèque de l' Arsenal: Paris, Arsenal, fr 3483-94.

²¹ On the dating and provenance of the text, see Jane Taylor, ed. cit., 23-4, and Gilles Roussineau, *Le Roman de Perceforest*, quatrième partie, vol. I, xivff. Roussineau argues (xix) that David Aubert produced, 'conformément aux habitudes littéraires de son temps et de son milieu', a reworking of the Hainaut author's core text for the Burgundian court. It is interesting in this regard that Aubert was – apparently – so committed (by commission?) to the *Perceforest* project that he produced both a draft and a presentation copy. The draft contains the work in its entirety. On the origins of the *Perceforest* see also Gilles Roussineau, 'Édition critique et commentaire de la quatrième partie du Roman de Perceforest' (unpublished *thèse d'Etat*, Université de Paris-Sorbonne, 1982), 63-7.

²² See Fredric Jameson, *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as Socially Symbolic Act* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982), 79.

²³ See Stock, *The Uses of the Past*, cited in n.1.

²⁴ The epigram is from Eugène Vinaver, 'The Dolorous Stroke', *Medium Ævum* 25.3 (1956), 175-80; 175.

²⁵ Charity Cannon Willard, 'The Misfortunes of *Cligès* at the Court of Burgundy', in *Arturus Rex: Acta Conventus Lovaniensis*, 2 vols, ed. Willy van Hoecke, Gilbert Tournoy, and Werner Verbeke (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1991), vol. 2, 397-403. This remark is on 399. It should be noted, of course, that a work's having only one extant manuscript is only a sensible *suggestion* as to the circumstances of its reception, not a hard and fast indicator.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 400.

²⁷ See Norris J. Lacy, 'Adaptation as Reception in the Burgundian *Cligès*', *Fifteenth-Century Studies* 24 (1998), 198-207. This remark is on 205.

²⁸ *id.*, 'Motivation and Method in the Burgundian *Erec*', in Keith Busby and Norris J. Lacy (eds.), *Conjunctures: Medieval Studies in Honour of Douglas Kelly* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1994), 271-280, with these comments occurring on 280.

²⁹ Under this umbrella I place Bette Lou Bakelaar and Martha Wallen who, despite having independently brought the prose reworkings of Chrétien's first two works to wider public attention, seem even still reluctant to adopt the sort of critical detachment from the texts as reworkings of this particular author I would advocate here. See, respectively, Bette Lou Bakelaar, 'From Verse to Prose: A Study of the Fifteenth-Century Versions of Chrétien's *Erec* and *Cligès*' (Diss., Ohio State University, 1973), and Martha Wallen, 'The Art of Adaptation in the Fifteenth-Century *Erec et Enide* and *Cligès*' (Diss., University of Wisconsin, 1972). See also the articles by Bakelaar and Wallen cited in the Bibliography. I have been unable to consult the recent dissertation on the prose reworkings undertaken at Louvain-la-Neuve by Catherine Deschepper ('Mise en prose' et 'translation'. La traduction intralinguale des romans de Chrétien de Troyes en moyen français', thèse de doctorat, 2003) – it has a moratorium on it until 2013 –, though I would be surprised if it responded in such negative terms.

³⁰ See Peter Haidu, *Aesthetic Distance in Chrétien de Troyes: irony and comedy in 'Cligès' and 'Perceval'* (Geneva: Droz, 1968).

³¹ Another critic who attempts at least to see worth in the mises en prose is Maria Colombo Timelli. Some of her articles – those that I have found most useful – will be referred to in more detail below. Others, which turn mostly on Colombo Timelli's preferred theory as to the prosateur's method of exegesis, the meaningful 'attaque de chapitre', are noted in the Bibliography.

³² On all this see Jane H. M. Taylor, 'The Significance of the Insignificant: Reading Reception in the Burgundian *Erec* and *Cligès*', *Fifteenth-Century Studies* 24 (1998), 183-197. This quotation is on 183.

³³ Lacy, 'Motivation and Method', 280. Lacy, it should be said, couches this suspicion in more positive – if surprised-sounding – terms, describing the author of the *Erec* as 'considerably more than a clumsy prosifier who contrived to frustrate Chrétien's desire for immortality'.

³⁴ See Jane Taylor, 'Alexander Amoroso', 219. Similar comments are made, in connection this time with the Vulgate Cycle, by E. Jane Burns. See her *Arthurian Fictions. Rereading the Vulgate Cycle* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1985), in particular 29ff.

³⁵ *Cligès*, ed. Colombo Timelli, 65. Timelli herself retains the foliation of Leipzig Universitätsbibliothek Rep. II.108 in the chapters of the text, and in her own criticism of the work, but I will for the sake of convenience keep with page numbers in my own account.

³⁶ As seen in Chapter One, this useful term is borrowed from Jane Taylor, 'The Significance of the Insignificant', 191, via Barbara Folkart.

³⁷ Lacy, 'Motivation and Method', 280.

³⁸ My account here is based on the evidence of the prose text: though, as I have said, the two versions share a plot, details are of course added to the prosateur's plot to 'spice up' and add local colour to his narrative. Some of these details – for example the considerable youth of Alix compared to Alixandre *fils*, Thantalís's swoon – might, therefore, find their way into my summary, and might prove important to the following analysis. Many are noted – to little useful effect – in the notes to Colombo Timelli's edition (op. cit., 165-87). Whereas previously in this chapter I have been using anglicised versions of names such as Alexander, here I revert to the spellings given in the mise en prose to avoid confusion – except, for similar reasons, in the case of 'Cligès' which I always spell with a *grave*.

³⁹ 'Reasonably creative', for the verse source begins firmly in the empire of Greece, mentioning Arthur on one occasion (l.10) to situate the as-yet-unnamed hero in the lineage of the Briton, and only after sixty or so further lines of background detail is the key line – 'Artus qui lors reignoit' (l.67) – delivered. For the Chrétien poem, see *Les Romans de Chrétien de Troyes. II Cligès*, publié par Alexandre Micha (Paris: Champion, 1975).

⁴⁰ *Cligès* (prose), 80.

⁴¹ The mention of Olivier, of course, refers to *La Chanson de Roland*, and the episode where Olivier watches the Saracen horde advancing: 'tant en i ad que mesure n'en set' (l. 1035).

⁴² This is a crucial modification made by the prosateur: Chrétien's Soredamours does something similar, but this time to see whether a man exists who can tell the difference between the two. This will be discussed in more depth below.

⁴³ On this see Terence Cave, *Pré-histoires. Textes troublés au seuil de la modernité* (Geneva: Droz, 1999), 15ff.

⁴⁴ Colombo Timelli, ed. cit., 38. Her remark is made in connection with the significant added episode of the weeping damsel which I shall discuss, in different ways from this critic, in due course. Colombo Timelli returns to this episode in greater detail in her "Talanx li prant que il s'an aille" (Cligès, v. 5056): d'un vers de Chrétien de Troyes à l'invention d'un prosateur de XV^e siècle', in *Favola, mito, e altri saggi. Studi di letteratura e filologia in onore di Gianni Mombello* (Alessandria: Edizioni dell'Orso, 2004), 359-75, but only in connection with the personification of 'Dieu', and in different ways from my own. I am grateful to the author for allowing me to have a copy of her contribution to this elusive volume.

⁴⁵ Colombo Timelli, ed. cit., 195. For personifications in the prose *Erec*, see Colombo Timelli (2000), 262-3. Norris Lacy suggests in his 'Adaptation as Reception' (203) that the Burgundian author has a particular view of love, and infers rather than explicitly states that this influences the changes wrought on Chrétien's text.

⁴⁶ *Cligès*, ed. cit., 72.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 72-3.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, loc. cit.

⁴⁹ *Cligès*, ed. Micha, vv. 435-57 (14-15).

⁵⁰ On allegory in the medieval period see, *inter alia*: *Rereading Allegory: Essays in Memory of Daniel Poirion*, ed. Sahar Amer and Noah D. Guynn, special number of *Yale French Studies* 95 (1999); Armand Strubel, 'Grant senefiance a': *Allégorie et littérature au Moyen Âge* (Paris: Champion, 2002); and Virginie Minet-Mahy, *Esthétique et pouvoir de l'œuvre allégorique à l'époque de Charles VI. Imaginaires et discours* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2005).

⁵¹ See *Les Douze Dames de Rhétorique*, ed. David Cowling (Geneva: Droz, 2002).

⁵² Strubel talks of the various levels and functions of allegorical personifications in his seminal 'En la foret de langue actente: Réflexions sur le style allégorique de Charles d'Orléans', in Daniel Poirion (ed.), *Styles et Valeurs. Pour une histoire de l'art littéraire au moyen âge* (Paris: SEDES, 1990), 167-86. He distinguishes between personifications and reifications, or personified and non-personified abstract qualities, in order to attempt to establish the ways in which certain lexemes like 'amour', 'fortune', and so on are used in Charles d'Orléans's work, how they function in given contexts, and whether they should be capitalised or not. This is different from my method, and the way I use abstractions, here.

⁵³ Lacy, 'Adaptation as Reception', 200.

⁵⁴ *Cligès* (prose), 73.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, loc. cit.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 73-4.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 74.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 76.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 77.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 78.

⁶¹ Ibid., loc. cit.

⁶² Ibid., 81.

⁶³ On the potential problematics of such a reaction, see my comments on the incestuous fathers in *La Belle Hélène de Constantinople* and *La Manekine* in Chapter Five. For an interesting and generally persuasive vestimentary account of the *chemise* episode in Chrétien, see E. Jane Burns, *Courtly Love Undressed. Reading Through Clothes in Medieval French Culture* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), 63-5.

⁶⁴ Colombo Timelli, ed. cit., 172.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 101-2.

⁶⁶ See Elizabeth Archibald, *Incest and the Medieval Imagination* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001). In Chapter One, 'Medieval Incest Law – Theory and Practice', Archibald discusses the various levels of consanguinity acceptable, or not, when relatives were minded to marry. 'There is little sense in these texts', she claims, 'of a hierarchy of forms of incest in which partners within the nuclear family are differentiated from more distant relatives, or from *spiritual kin*' (my italics; 38). Incest law of course developed throughout the Middle Ages; Archibald argues, however, that little was altered in terms of the degrees of affinity and, for the most part, their observance between the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215 and the sixteenth century when new laws were devised by the Council of Trent for Catholic Europe and Henry VIII for Protestant England (41). For a (rather unreflectively psychoanalytical) discussion of the topic of incest in Chrétien's romance, see Leslie Dunton-Downer, 'The Horror of Culture: East-West Incest in Chrétien de Troyes's *Cligès*', *New Literary History* 28.2 (1997), 367-381. Interestingly, in her one reference to *Cligès*, Elizabeth Archibald claims that 'technically' the relationship between aunt and nephew is not incest because Fenice's marriage has not been consummated, but she concedes – and I think this is the key point – that 'the shadow of incest must have hung over the story for audiences and readers' (223).

⁶⁷ Significantly, there is no hint of a personification of Amours in the second half of Chrétien's poem and in connection with Fenice and Cligès's love as there was, as I suggested above, in the section dealing with Alixandre and Soredamours. Clearly the prosateur is exploiting his prior strategy to level and legitimise here.

⁶⁸ *Cligès*, 112.

⁶⁹ One could of course argue here that to impute any significance to the behaviour of a character when under the influence of a potion is foolish – certainly at least half of the criticism of the *Tristan* myths is predicated on overturning just this assumption. As will become clear though, what I want to underline here is not the contrast between the 'clean' and drugged Alix, but rather the contrast between the presentation of him and that of Cligès. The episode described here is further proof, I would suggest, that the prosateur does not view Alix as a suitable candidate for Fenice's affections; and that the fact that it comes in this section is the more telling. After all, we will see below how Cligès, too, is 'under the influence' in the text – but this influence, though arguably just as unreal or real as that exerted by a potion, is strictly and directly countenanced by the prosateur, and is central to his persuasive strategy.

⁷⁰ *Cligès*, ed. cit., 115.

⁷¹ Ibid., 104-5. As is not the case in Chrétien's poem, Fenice has already been named by this point in the prose. In her introduction to the text Maria Colombo Timelli denigrates the prosateur for having failed to notice the 'retardatio nominis' in the verse source, and suggests that thereby the Burgundian text 'semble avoir perdu [...] quelque chose de la poésie du roman original' (ed. cit., 47). One could make a facetious comment here about prose by definition being poetry lost; but further than that this

comment is troublingly unnecessary. As I am attempting to show, the prosateur's purpose here does not need him to incorporate this aspect of a reading of Chrétien. What matters is the rightness of the relationship between these two parties, named or not.

⁷² Ibid., 105.

⁷³ Ibid., loc. cit.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 106.

⁷⁵ These two quotations are on 110 and 111 respectively.

⁷⁶ Colombo Timelli, 'Talanz li prant que il s'an aille' (the article proved impossible to track down except in an unpaginated e-mail attachment generously supplied to me by Colombo Timelli).

⁷⁷ *Cligès*, ed. cit., 136.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 140.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 151.

⁸⁰ E. Jane Burns, *Arthurian Fictions*, 29.

CHAPTER THREE
SPACE, TIME, AND CONVERSION?:
RACE, ALIENNESS, AND IDENTITY IN *SALADIN*

On 6th May 1432 the van Eyck brothers' magnificent triptych the *Adoration of the Mystic Lamb* was unveiled in St Bavo's Cathedral, Ghent. And on the same date, in the same place, Charles de Charolais, the future Charles the Bold, was baptised. Whether or not there was a direct historical coincidence between these two events is unclear;¹ but the notional confluence of the so-called Ghent Altarpiece's installation, and the committal of Philip the Good and Isabella of Portugal's only surviving son to the church, allows interesting reflection to be made on the relationship between art, genealogy, and cyclicity at the court of Burgundy.² We saw in the previous chapter how the construction of a literary heritage is central to the court's self-fashioning at this time, and how a genealogy of literature is established through listening to the echoes of the past. In this chapter, on the prose *Saladin*, I shift the focus slightly, and turn attention to the way in which genealogy might be used in literature to further this project of autonomous Burgundian myth-making and concomitant identity formation, both within and outside of the text.

Saladin is the third section of the so-called *Cycle de Jehan d'Avennes*, a series of texts also including, respectively, the *Istoire de Jehan d'Avennes* discussed in Chapter Four below, and the story of *La Fille du comte de Ponthieu*. The circumstances surrounding the production of the two extant manuscripts containing the cycle, BnF 12572 and Arsenal 5208, are unclear – we do not know whether the three works were commissioned together and always intended to appear together, or whether their correspondence is more the product of serendipity than of design.³ What is reasonably clear, though, is that the prosateur's – or perhaps better the manuscripts' compiler's – essential project appears to have been to insert the 'vaillant turc et courtois Salhadin' into an illustrious line of Burgundians, to underline, rather as we saw previously with the figure of Alexander the Great, the distinctiveness of Burgundy's provenance (I discuss this further below). The compilation lends itself, as I see it, less to being viewed as a cycle in the strict senses laid out by Jane Taylor and others than as a series of texts linked

notionally by the common genealogy of the characters presented in it, but also, and in some ways more crucially for my purposes here, able to be interpreted at a remove from and independently of that unifying theme.⁴

In this sense, then, the three texts collected here closely resemble the panels in a triptych like the Eyckian altarpiece mentioned above – they are part of a composite whole, but can function discretely. The various sections of the Ghent Altarpiece can be read separately, in a linear progression or more selectively; and the nature of that reading impacts on the interpretation placed on them. In seeking to elucidate the narrative of Embodied Alieness to a more Ideological aberrance, I have chosen a selective reading of elements of the so-called *Cycle de Jehan d'Avenes*, and am knowingly playing with the chronology imposed by its compiler. Like that between the *Adoration of the Mystic Lamb* and the baptism of the young Charolais, the allusive correspondence between genealogy, corporeality, and identity in *Saladin* and *Jehan d'Avenes* allows light to be shed in interesting ways on a sometimes-silent notion, in this literary instance Alien encounters at and for the court of Burgundy.

Looking Gift Horses in the Mouth: ‘Le vaillant turc et courtois Salhadin’, An Oxymoron at the Court of Burgundy?⁵

Babylonia, 1169.⁶ Still smarting at the murder of his father, a valiant young nobleman vows that no crown will ever grace his head unless it be the crown of his father’s assailant. Learning one day that this felon is holding court nearby, the young nobleman hatches a plot. He disguises himself as an ass and, with forty companions suitably decked out as baton-wielding carters, infiltrates the murderer’s court. To this curious apparition the courtiers’ reaction is one of amusement: what a strange and pitiful thing it is to see this once-great young man scabbling on all fours at the feet of their ruler! Their amusement, though, is short-lived. The donkey-man leaps to his feet and pulls out the dagger he had secreted beneath his disguise. Shouting orders to his men-at-arms, he stabs the man at whose hands his father fell. The courtiers’ derision turns first to consternation, then to admiration. The palace is given over to the young nobleman; and the erstwhile ass is introduced to a magnificent charger. Whomsoever

mounts this mysterious beast – and no-one has dared ride it before – shall be made ruler, and be renowned in this realm and beyond. No sooner does the young man see the horse than he is on its back. The prophecy had been fulfilled; the longed-for crown is his. Cue gift-giving, feasting, and much celebration.

Despite appearances to the contrary, the episode described here features in neither a Hollywood blockbuster starring Brad Pitt, nor a forgotten out-take from *Monty Python and the Holy Grail*. It is, rather, the opening scene from the fifteenth-century *Saladin*, produced at the court of Burgundy before 1468.⁷ The scene, and the ‘moult estrange chose’ it describes – Salhadin’s murder, and appropriation of the kingdom, of the Emir of Cairo –,⁸ has received surprisingly little critical attention; and when it is dealt with at all, it is treated, like so much of the romance, in what I will argue is a reductive, or at least limited and limiting, fashion.⁹ Established critical reception of the legend of Salhadin in general, and (for my purposes here) of its fifteenth-century Burgundian manifestation in particular, has tended to concentrate on certain issues which are, as I see them, peripherally important if self-perpetuating and self-fulfilling, and which ultimately contribute little to a proper understanding of this baroque text.¹⁰

In their treatment of such questions as how the various historical and literary manifestations of the Salhadin legend converge and diverge,¹¹ whether *Saladin* can be theorised in terms of chivalric biographies of worthy heroes,¹² whether and how the fifteenth-century version forms part of the *Cycle de Jehan d’Avennes*,¹³ or of the broader historical and topographical realities described in the tale(s),¹⁴ critics seem content simply to document rather than interpret, to scratch at the surface of meaning without leaving any real impression. They fail to explore what the episodes they tease out might really signify in the textual world of *Saladin*, preferring to elide the work’s problems and blunt its subtleties rather than confront its contradictions head-on.¹⁵ In so doing, I argue, they look a particularly significant gift horse squarely in the mouth.

The fifteenth-century *Saladin*, like so many of the works in my corpus, is an unruly text – and it is precisely this unruliness that makes a proper interpretation of it both infuriatingly difficult and satisfying. Though at first glance it seems something of a

Jamesian 'loose baggy monster', a network of allusions culled from myriad sources but with little apparently to say for itself, a closer look through the kind of prism I propose here reveals that *Saladin* – more so perhaps than some of the mises en prose I discuss elsewhere – is much more than the sum of its parts.¹⁶ As the episode I quoted at the outset might underline, *Saladin* offers a rich harvest of possibility for an interpretation of what might constitute the Alien, or Alienness whether Embodied or Ideological, at and for the court of Burgundy. Salhadin's murder of the Emir of Cairo illustrates and encapsulates issues of race and religion, of chivalric and personal identity, of self and other, which run as leitmotive through the text and which, along with other themes, raise questions about the status of the Alien both within the work and outside it, and of how we might legitimately theorise this without anachronism. Before these issues are tackled, though, a brief summary of *Saladin*'s plot is in order.

We join the story where that of *La fille du comte de Ponthieu* ended (I refer to this text and its plot in Chapter One). Reunited with her husband, Thibaut de Domart, and her father, the eponymous Count, Fille – the heroine is never named – has fled the court of the Sultan of Almeria for more parochial Burgundian shores. She has taken with her the son she bore the Sultan, but left behind their daughter, henceforth known as 'La Belle Chétive', 'pour ce ansi que son pere ne la pooit voir n'encontrer pour le deplaisir qu'il prenoit quand il la veoit, pour la souvenance de sa dame'.¹⁷ This daughter eventually marries one Malaquin de Baudas, and bears him a daughter who in her turn marries the Sultan of Damascus. They have a son: this is Salhadin.¹⁸ He grows up to be 'sage, humble et courtois' (and of course a Saracen), and excels in numerous martial exploits before the revenge-killing of the Emir of Cairo. Once the Emir is dispatched and the crown of Cairo and Babylonia is his, Salhadin sets about making his mark on governance, his first task being the fragmentation and redistribution of an emerald-encrusted throne, one of the glories of the Saracen world and a money-making attraction for the previous ruler. Despite textual insistence on his 'courtoisie', Salhadin's maxim for law-making appears to be 'might is right': he achieves prominence, and personal and political renown, through contact and combat with hordes both Christian and Pagan. The apogee of this period is the killing of, and the taking of Jerusalem from, Baudouin de Bouillon.

Salhadin has always been mindful of having descended from Western stock, and the house of Burgundy – and so it apparently comes as little as a surprise to him as it does to the habitual reader of the perfectly *invraisemblable* *mise en prose* genre that the Saracen ruler should meet his cousin Jehan de Ponthieu, serendipitously on pilgrimage to the Holy Sepulchre. A joyous recognition scene ensues in the midst of battle – shortly before Salhadin (generously saving his relative from death) takes Jehan prisoner. He hopes Jehan will help him enter France, ‘ou [il a] devocion d’aler’. In the company of Jehan, Salhadin dispatches the Bâtard de Bouillon, and takes another Christian prisoner: this is Huon Dodequin.¹⁹ The happy band of three – along with the Saracen horde – battle further, and explore, in and around Jerusalem. Salhadin’s interest in Christianity is awakened (though not yet enough to allow him to be converted, as one young woman hopes, by the simple expedient of bread stuffed with pork). He asks Huon Dodequin many questions, and has him explain the chivalric dubbing ceremony to him. After the significance of the various stages and accoutrements of the ceremony has been elucidated, it is generally agreed that Salhadin is a knight, in name and appearance at least.

Some years elapse; eventually, the three travel to France, where Salhadin’s interests are less ethnographic than bellicose. He does however take an interest in, and pass not always favourable comment on, French court ceremonial, to which he gains access through two troubling episodes featuring women, ‘une dame de Ponthieu’ who is betrothed to but treated badly by one Lambert de Berry, and the Queen of France. The ‘dame de Ponthieu’ is Jehan’s sister, whom he left behind some ten years ago when he set off on pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Lambert de Berry fell for her, ‘pour ce qu’elle est belle damoiselle, riche et noblement nee’,²⁰ and does his best to make her his. She flatly refuses; and the consequences of this are to be serious. She is to be burnt on a pyre the next day if she does not produce her champion who will fight against Lambert. Salhadin presents himself as this champion, and vanquishes Lambert. He encourages the two to marry. As is conventional, at the wedding feast there is a tournament at which the French queen sees, and conceives a passion for, Salhadin, unaware that he is a foreigner or, perhaps more crucially, a ‘payen’.

The queen avers that she has never seen a man so beautiful in all her life, and seems to view it as her sovereign right to have him. Salhadin initially resists honourably, but then changes his mind. They spend some time together in the Queen's chamber before the King's return from a hunting-party signals their need to take leave of one another, at least temporarily. The King announces his intention to have a tournament, for which Salhadin buys a new and expensive horse, and at which he unseats Richard the Lionheart. A dinner is held as part of the tournament; the Queen is amazed to discover that one so beautiful and chivalric as Salhadin could be 'estrangier'. Salhadin, ignorant of the Queen's knowledge, departs the court – in order to conquer France 'a l'ayde de Mahon' and, curiously, his two Christian prisoners. He decides to do this via England, as there is not 'au monde terre plus propice a porter nuysance aux françois que le royaume d'Angleterre'.²¹ He enters England by way of its well-known county of Scotland (the geographical realities of the fifteenth-century proto-Europe are not generally the prosateurs's strongest suit), and heads down to Warwick. Near here there is a mountain pass hotly defended by Richard the Lionheart and his entourage. Salhadin asks Jehan and Huon to help him take it and, when he receives a somewhat weary response, thinks his Christians are out to betray him.

Whether or not this turns out to be the case, Salhadin and his host seize the pass, henceforth known as the 'pas Salhadin'. Not content with this, though, Salhadin hatches a cunning plan to entrap Richard: he decides to send his horse, along with a squire, into Richard's camp. By fair means or foul, Richard is to mount the horse and be borne willy-nilly back to Salhadin's base. Richard, apprised of the plot, ensures that Antoine de Chavigny goes in his place. This does not seem to bother Salhadin quite as much as might have been thought: Antoine's valour seems to satisfy Salhadin of his value. Antoine is passably entertained; and Salhadin announces that there is to be a battle between two Christians (from the English band) and two Saracens (from the pagan horde). The Saracens that Salhadin chooses, Bruyant and Corsuble, happen to be giants – though in traditional fashion, when pitted against Chavigny and Guillaume Longue Espee, their superior size is no advantage. The giants are defeated; Chavigny slices Bruyant in two. Shortly afterwards, Salhadin returns to Jerusalem with his men,

having given Jehan and Huon leave to go back to France, despite or perhaps because of Huon's having betrayed Salhadin to the English assembly.

Meanwhile, the Queen of France continues to have thoughts of Salhadin – both amorous and malevolent – on her mind. She announces to her husband that she intends to travel overseas in order to convert the pagan knight, and the King gives her leave to do so, on one condition: Chavigny is to chaperone. Once in Jerusalem, the Queen has an audience with Salhadin – and Chavigny's suspicions as to the current or previous nature of their relationship are aroused. Once he has obtained further proof to support his surmises, Chavigny reports the Queen to her husband. She wishes to stay with Salhadin, 'dont le roy fut molt marry sur la royne', and to which he does not give his assent.²² Many battles ensue, both as a consequence of this and not. At an episode in Damascus, Salhadin fights as he has never fought before, and is gravely wounded. He is carried from the battlefield and, after conversing with a Pagan, a Jew and a Christian, Salhadin asks for a basin of water to be brought to him. He utters some words, and makes the sign of the cross over the water, before in one final act he pours some over his head. 'Si faict a supposer qu'en celle fin il se converty a nostre seigneur Jhesu Crist'. Salhadin dies, but according to the prosateur his memory lives on, 'jusquez en la fin du monde'.²³

It is difficult not to allow the telling of a tale one is about to assess critically to become a sort of *prise de position*, a manifesto of one's angle on that text; and whether this is viewed as a fault or a virtue depends of course more on the reader's than the writer's interpretation of the work in question. As I have already suggested, critics of *Saladin* before me have seen in the work areas of importance quite different from those I want to elucidate here and which my précis of the story might be seen to bring out. In order to arrive at what (in my terms at least) is a proper understanding of this stubborn text, to tease out how far and in what ways the story and character of Salhadin speak to the notion of the Burgundian Alien, we need in this case to leave behind issues of textual provenance and overlap, reject easy divisions and binary oppositions, and look, precisely, at some of the issues and episodes my account adumbrates. In this chapter I want to move from the textual Alienness described in the previous chapter to a more

physicalised – Embodied – manifestation of it, and to the ways in which degrees of Alienness permute and cohere to bring out troubling features of the text. What manner of a man is Salhadin? Why is he so universally lauded and respected – if indeed he is? What is the nature and value of chivalry in the text? Who, or what, is the Alien here? And why does this matter? To answer these questions we must go back to the beginning of Salhadin’s story, and of the story I am telling in this section too.

**‘On Ne Trouveroit Son Pareil’: Race, Alienness, and Some Problems of Identity
in *Saladin***

Saladin, I am suggesting, is a text suffused with paradoxes. Not least of these is the fact that while it should be always and everywhere apparent that Salhadin is a Saracen, and that the greater part of the drama of the tale is enacted in the East, it actually takes something of a leap of faith to remember that this is so. The reason for this inheres in the portrayal of Salhadin, and the terms used to describe him; and in the prosateur’s reluctance, almost, to accept or even acknowledge Salhadin’s Embodied and Ideological Alienness except on the rare occasions when it might happen to suit some narrative political purpose. That Salhadin’s race and religion are subsumed under ‘safer’ ideas of westernised chivalry and a coming-to-knighthood in the fifteenth-century work serves only, and paradoxically, to highlight them for the attuned reader and critic of the text.

Because Salhadin’s bodily and political Alienness are nowhere, one sees them everywhere, in ways that might or might not have been perceptible to the work’s contemporary Burgundian audience. I hope to show in what follows that a character like Salhadin in the *mise en prose* functions, to use Terence Cave’s helpful designation, as a textual ‘trouble’, ‘le signe textuel d’une réponse psychologique à un phénomène qui pour nous est historique’. ‘Cette définition’, Cave underlines, ‘repose sur la présupposition qu’un texte ne veut pas toujours dire ce qu’il dit, et inversement’ (my emphasis).²⁴ As I suggested in Chapter One on my discussion of the *misés en prose* and the potentially overlapping theories of Cave and Riffaterre, the notion of a ‘trouble’ allows

for the pin-pointing of ‘une sorte de fêlure dont l’auteur et ses contemporains ne sont peut-être pas pleinement conscients, mais qu’ils ressentent comme un malaise, une tache floue sur l’horizon de la pensée’.²⁵ Salhadin is quite clearly a troublesome figure in the story, for us as for the prosateur, but the clearest picture of this emerges from reading between the lines of the Burgundian text rather than from approaching it directly. I would contend not that the prosateur was unaware of what he was doing in *Saladin*, but rather that the gestures he makes towards elucidating the ‘sorte de fêlure’ the work belies are the more telling and meaningful for being tentative; and that these gestures can be readily seen through a careful, if at times creative, reading. In the following section I propose a close study of the character of Salhadin as it emerges from his contact with groups both Saracen and Christian, and of ‘comment on fait chevaliers a la loi crestienne’ as far as Salhadin is exposed to it, with a view to making some tentative gestures of my own towards the Alieness of Salhadin, and of *Saladin*.²⁶

The drama of *Saladin*, then, begins squarely in the East. Its earliest pages are heavily peppered with exotic-sounding names of people and places – ‘Malaquin de Baudas’, ‘Baudouyn de Seborc’, ‘Amulaine de Cahaire’, Damascus, Babylon, Jerusalem –, all of which seem ultimately a rather vain attempt at the addition of local colour. Only these names give any indication that this tale is being told not of France or Burgundy but of a notional Oriental location and its inhabitants: Salhadin’s family history is told, for example, in terms similar to those used of Western heroes in other mises en prose such as the *Trois Fils de Rois* or the *Roman du comte d’Artois*, and Salhadin himself is introduced as are other young occidental nobles elsewhere in the corpus.²⁷ ‘Ilz [Salhadin’s parents] gaignerent ung beau filz’, we read,

nommé fu Salhadin [...]. Si amenda l’enfant comme a souhait jusquez a tant qu’il eust discretion et congnoissance dez armes porter, ce en quoy il se delita sur toutez riens, et aprenoit lez tourz de la guerre plus volentiers que toutez aultrez choses. Et en sa jeunesse, tant vertueux que de son pareil n’en savoit l’en parler, il estoit de son eage froid, sage, humble, et courtois, bien atempré et, somme toute, tant bien morigné que chascun l’aimoit et veoit volentiers.²⁸

Only the briefest allusion is made, even at this early stage in the text, to Salhadin's Pagan heritage: his grandfather Malaquin de Baudas's marriage ceremony is explicitly stated to be a Saracen one, though the prosateur is at pains to underline Malaquin's credentials as a 'vaillant chevalier', and to make plain that all is generally above-board with this lineage.²⁹ Salhadin's defining feature is not to be his paganness; rather, what is stressed here as elsewhere is his 'courtoisie', and the fact that he has been well brought up in what seems to be a heavily westernised, chivalric – one might even say Burgundian – manner. There appears to be a clear agenda at work here in the prosateur's use of Saraceness: Salhadin is allowed to be a Saracen because it is really just an accident of birth in his case, a consequence of his having been born of an illustrious line of Burgundians, some of whose members happened to take up with some equally illustrious pagans, as it is not in the case of other Saracens in the text and elsewhere, as I mentioned in Chapter One. Other mises en prose have a very clear idea of the benighted status of the Saracen; troublingly, but interestingly for my purposes here, *Saladin* operates a double standard.

Perhaps the most seductive thing about this double standard is, as I have suggested already, that the prosateur seems so uncomfortable with it. He takes great care not to make Salhadin and his ancestors into figures of Embodied and Ideological Alienness in these early pages by ensuring that their paganness is either not mentioned, or is at least thrown into relief through proximity with westernised chivalric virtues (as when Salhadin is described as 'subtil, *prudent* et *courtois* [...] sur tous lez payens qui por lors regnoient', emphasis mine),³⁰ but then seems abruptly to remember that he has a Saracen theme that he ought to exploit. This is perceptible much later in the text when, after years of co-habitation with and behaving like the Christian knights Jehan and Huon, Salhadin is suddenly made regularly to expostulate 'Par Mahon'; but the ambiguity of the prosateur's position can readily be seen at this early stage of the story, in the murder episode I described at the outset. A closer analysis of the curious incident of the man in the donkey-suit will show that the writer seems caught between poking the conventional fun at a Saracen and, as I suggested, using such an episode to introduce a number of important points about this text.

In this darkly comic scene, Salhadin wishes to avenge the death of his father at the hands of the (pagan) Emir of Cairo; '[il] fist veu que jamais couronne ne porteroit s'il ne la prenoit premierement au Cahaire en Babilonne'.³¹ And, 'voyant qu'il [the emir] n'estoit a prendre se nom [sic] par subtilité',

il pensa en soy mesmez, prinst ung bas a son col chargié de busse et s'arma d'un couteau qu'il mist contre sa cuisse sans aultrez garnements de guerre. Puis prinst .xl. chevaliers qu'il atourna comme laboureux ou chartons, bailla a chascun une verge en sa main comme pour le chassier a guise d'un asne.

In disguising himself as an ass, Salhadin has made himself into an Embodied Alien – precisely the kind of Embodied Alien the prosateur, in denying Salhadin any real Saracen identity, was at pains to quash. He has become much less than he was previously: man has transformed himself into beast in a reverse metamorphosis that strips away, if temporarily, any human identity and replaces it with animalistic humiliation. His submissiveness and lowly position makes him to the Saracens of Cairo, one might argue, what Saracens elsewhere are to Christians – subordinate, corporeally different, piteous, and not a little amusing:

Demander ne fault pas quel pueple [sic] s'assembla autour de luy, car il alloit a .iiiiij. pattes comme une beste et sez gens le sieuvoient atout leurz vergez es poingz, qui moult estoit estrange chose. Et pour ce, petis et grands accoururent celle part veioir la merueille. Et l'allerent noncier au roy, quy [...] eult grant pitié de Salhadin qui, a son semblant, se reputoit asne.³²

What the king here fails to recognise, of course, is that even docile-seeming beasts can – like Saracens elsewhere in the *mise en prose* corpus – be dangerous. Salhadin's disguise has misled the king and his courtiers; he has not come to 'prier mercy' as the emir assumes, and soon makes his intentions clear:

Salhadin l'aproca, il s'esdreça sur ses piés, getta le bas et la busce au loingz et, en escriant a ses gens qu'ilz feissent leur devoir, il sonna son cor. Et asseurement tira son couteau dont il fery le mulaine, voyans tous sez princez qui de la grant hardiesse et entreprinse de Salhadin furent sy espoantés que sy hardy n'y ot de soy mettre a deffence, ains se mirent a mercy.³³

We see here a subtle growth in the status of Salhadin through this episode, which culminates in his being granted the kingdom of Babylon and Cairo. He approaches the king ‘a .iiij. pattes comme une beste’, but then ‘il s’esdreça sur ses piés’ – goes, in other words, from low to higher, from crawling to a standing position –, a process which might be seen to parallel the modern-day conception of the evolution of *homo sapiens* from the apes. Salhadin becomes perhaps more human, certainly more worthy, through his murder of the emir; but the prosateur seems again to be swithering between his presentation of Salhadin as ‘vaillant’ and ‘courtois’, and viewing him as some sort of Saracen ‘estrange chose’.

In other words, the author is struggling to come to terms with the very Alieness of a figure like Salhadin, to theorise ‘them’ in terms of ‘us’ as we saw Mary Malone attempting to do at the beginning of Chapter One, while having an unclear understanding of into precisely which category Salhadin falls. What is troubling here is the manner in which Salhadin murders the emir, not through frank and fair chivalric combat but ‘par subtilité’: a knife secreted beneath a disguise is ingenious, certainly, but it is also devious. Of course, as Yvette Guilcher and others have pointed out, this episode is attested to in the sources for this fifteenth-century version of *Saladin*; but as is apparent from the evidence of other mises en prose I discuss in this thesis, an episode’s presence in an earlier avatar is no guarantee that it will be kept in the Burgundian retelling. Salhadin’s murdering the emir in this way remains, I suggest, in the Burgundian version of the story for its very ‘Saraceness’: the prosateur assumed that it would amuse a patron historically and currently concerned with the eradication of the ‘péril turc’, but failed perhaps to bring this assumption into line with his prior, and indeed subsequent, ideological purpose.³⁴ Willy-nilly, Salhadin becomes the Embodied and Ideological Alien, at least for a time.

Once the emir has been dispatched, though, the blood-thirsty, bestial presentation of Salhadin again gives way to a more positive characterisation. As we have seen, Salhadin has ‘evolved’, and is now an upstanding figure – ‘et mesmement firent lez princez reverence a Salhadin dez icelle heure’. His donkey disguise, and his antipathetic (and

perhaps unintentionally comic) delineation, are thrown off, and he becomes even more lauded, and even less pagan in presentation. Salhadin receives not blows in return for his murderous act, but the gift of the emir's palace. In the palace, there is a magnificent horse, 'sur lequel nul n'avoit oncques osé monter',

et avoit esté sorti que celui qui sus saroit monter seroit une fois roi du Cahaire et de Babilonne et renommé entre lez Sarrasins. Et sy tost que Salhadin le vey, il monta sus. Et luy fist le cheval si grant chiere qu'il se prist a hunnir, dressier lez oreillez et houer de piés. Et par ce, ceux du Cahaire l'onnourent et s'escrierent haultement qu'il estoit leur roy.³⁵

The man-ass has become a horseman; and in so doing the Saraceness of Salhadin lessens to the point where it starts to become obscured by his coming-to-chivalry. Despite it being said that he is 'renommé entre lez Sarrasins', I would suggest that at this point in the text we see the beginning of the 'Christianisation' if not of Salhadin himself – if this happens at all then it occurs much later in the story – then certainly of his portrayal.³⁶

It is ideologically less disturbing for the prosateur to present Salhadin in the sort of westernised terms I have already mentioned; and this evolution from donkey to man to horseman allows a certain intellectual and political transformation to be effected, and we begin to see Salhadin not even as slightly pagan, or as 'not-quite-not-Christian', but as a proto-Christian knight. This happens through the very presence of the predestined horse. In his recent book on medieval identity Jeffery Jerome Cohen discusses – following Deleuze and Guattari – the intimate relationship that exists between a knight and his horse, and suggests that a complex assemblage of possibility and meaning is constructed in the space that circulates, metaphorically, between rider and steed.³⁷ Cohen calls this the chivalric circuit, 'a network of meaning that decomposes human bodies'

and intercuts them with the inanimate, the inhuman. No single body or object has meaning within this assemblage without reference to the other forces [...] and within which it is always in the process of becoming something other, something new.³⁸

Thus at the moment when Salhadin gets onto the horse – fails, one might say, to look a gift horse in the mouth – we are prompted to begin seeing him in more actively chivalric terms, to collude in some measure with the prosateur in his Christianification of Salhadin, and see the character begin a process of becoming. Certainly, from this point, Salhadin's actions, and his conquests, are much more innocuously Westernised in flavour; and any hint of Saraceness in his character appears to cede position, for the author and hence for us, to a more 'moderate' – and more Burgundo-chivalric? – *modus vivendi*. And this, as will become apparent, makes for an interesting conjunction, or perhaps disjunction, between Christian, Saracen, and Salhadin in the story.

From the brutal murder of the emir, then, Salhadin paradoxically garners if not precisely honour, then definitely the respect of the courtiers of Cairo, and indeed the prosateur: 'lez citiens et soldoiers furent ainsi comme confus et enchantés et enbausmués de la vertu de Salhadin quant ilz luy virent tuer leur roy en la presence de tant de pueple'.³⁹ When Salhadin pulls his dagger from the emir's corpse, the author even observes that 'laquelle *proesse* donna amour et paix a Salhadin de ses plus cruelz adversaires' (my italics). He is immediately assimilated into the court, accepted 'comme se ce fust leur seigneur naturel', and is led into

une chambrette tant riche que merveillez, en laquelle estoit le perron de Babilonne, qui estoit la plus precieuse et riche chose qui fut en tous lez roiaulmez sarrasins, car nul ne le veioit qui ne paiast un besan d'or au roy. Et qui ja demanderoit quel chose c'estoit de ce perron, respond l'histoire que c'estoit la masse dont toutez lez esmeraudez, dont il en est tant par le monde, vindrent.⁴⁰

Salhadin's reaction to this artefact further sets him apart from the emir before him, and by extension from Saracen behaviour (as it is located specifically in this text) in general: 'prestement que ce joiel fu rendu a Salhadin, il ne vould retenir a son singulier proffit si precieuse chose'. Instead of charging his subjects 'un besan d'or' for the privilege of seeing the perron,

oyant dez lapidairez que la pierre tant digne se pooit licitement despiecier par morseaulx, premierement il se fist sus couronner roi du Cahaire et de Babilonne [...]. Si fut fait grant sollempnit   a lui mettre la couronne ou chief et baillier en la main sceptre roial comme a cil qui le valoit, car par sa courtoisie et plaine largesse il dist qu'il feroit a son couronnement ce qu'oncques roy, soudan n'admiral n'avoit fait.¹¹

And this he does, almost immediately. He has his use of the perron, sitting atop it to be crowned, before straight away having this potent symbol of his kingship dismantled by lapidaries. 'Il donna a ung chascun de sez gens, selon sa porcion, si largement que tous le loerent de son large cuer et francise.' If the perron functions as a metonym for Salhadin's r  le as ruler of Babylon and Cairo, then by extension the dismantling and reapportioning of it serves as a physical marker of Salhadin's largesse: not only does he demonstrate generosity with his material possessions, he will, we might understand, be generous with himself too ('give everyone a piece of himself'). Salhadin sets himself apart from previous Saracen rulers, ironically through the use to which he puts 'la plus precieuse et riche chose qui fut en tous lez roiaulmez sarrasins'. While not exactly rejecting his paganness, Salhadin appears certainly to call its valency into question through his deviation from its pre-existing strictures. What, and where, is the Alien in *Saladin*?

This question becomes the more difficult to answer the further we get into the textual world of the story. Just as the perron, the potent symbol of the Saracen world, is shattered into discrete pieces here, so too from this point Salhadin's identity as a Saracen – and indeed as a Christian – is fragmented, broken into segments of different sizes and orders that by the end of the tale conjoin again to make a more or less coherent whole. He is never again described in terms which would mark him as entirely Saracen, but only eventually do the descriptors used have a Christian point of reference. The ever-shifting kaleidoscope of Salhadin's identity is formed through comparing his depiction with that of the other Saracen characters in the narrative, especially Bruyant and Corsuble, and, in turn, with that of the Christians. Some sense at least of this oxymoronic 'vaillant Turc et courtois Salhadin', and his chiasmic function as Alien or otherwise, is made when identity is placed on a continuum of relationality, and of *performativity*, especially in the Butlerian sense alluded to in Chapter One. Salhadin



occupies a specific, if at times hazily-defined, space in the text; and it is the interpretation placed on this space and his position within it that leads to an understanding of his character, and the value of Alienness in this troublesome work.

Various points should be made about Christian and Saracen, about religion and race, in *Saladin*.⁴² The first, and most crucial, of these is that initially it would appear that such easy binary oppositions between the two distinct groups are impossible to draw, and in fact textually untenable. As I suggested previously, the prosateur seems to want to plot a steady course through his portrayal of Saracens and Christians, to suggest that neither is 'better' or 'worse' (whatever one might mean, of course, by such value-judgements) than the other. If he is attempting to paint Salhadin the Saracen in a positive light then there must, apparently, be no suggestion of a negative image of the pagan group, at least at the outset. A couple of examples will illustrate this.

The scene is close to Jerusalem, in the town of Tabarie, 'de laquelle ung vaillant crestien regeneré – *car* aultresfois avoit esté payen – en estoit roy'.⁴³ The Christian horde, led by Baudouin, the king of Jerusalem, Huon Dodequin, and the Bâtard de Bouillon, assembles to fight that of the Saracens, led by Salhadin and his uncles Bruyant and Corsuble (of whom more below). The author is careful – indeed anxious – to present the two groups as equally valiant, and equally deserving of our readerly allegiance: 'et *devés sçavoir* que se lez payens furrent soigneux de leur besoigne lez crestiens ne le furent pas moins' (my italics).⁴⁴ In battle both are evenly matched, and have the same end in sight:

Au fort, ilz furrent prestz d'une partie et d'aultre et firent sonner trompettez et clarons pour lez cuers resvillier, puis s'entreaprocerent a belle bataille. Et de prime face, Salhadin couca la lance, hurta le destrier et, a belle coite, dez payens es crestiens se ficha en telle façon que tout abbati devant luy et fendy l'ost *dez crestiens tellement que lez paiens se mirent entre lez deux parties*, et la commencerent la plus cruelle bataille du monde. Sy y eult au premier coup *moult de chevaliers et hommes* d'armes decapités, affolés, navrez, mors ou abbatus et tant qu'ilz ne sont a mettre en nombre, *car crestiens et paiens ne guettoient et ne tendoient après aultre chose que tollir la vie l'un a l'autre*. (all emphases mine)⁴⁵

At the close of battle, the author asserts again that ‘se bien se portoient lez Sarrasins de leur part, vous devés sçavoir que lez crestiens ne dormoient pas; chascun faisoit le mieux qu’il pouvoit’.⁴⁶ All points to an even-handed, distinctly unpartisan, depiction of the two sides; but all, unsurprisingly, is not quite as straightforward as the prosateur would have us believe. Both here and in the rest of the text, perhaps in attempting to remain free of bias, and in trying to envisage how best to present (‘come to terms with’) Salhadin, he seems unsure of his narrative position on both Christian and Saracen, and on which is the more Ideologically Alien group. Sometimes he favours Christians, and therefore allies Salhadin with that group, while on other occasions his allegiance seems to be with the Saracens, which allows the bracketing of the hero with that group in its turn. Though this might look like mere carelessness, the product of the kind of authorial slapdashness I rather facetiously hinted at above, there is in fact a very clear reason for this, based on how race was perceived in the medieval period, which can in turn be aligned with the theoretical models of performative identity discussed in detail below.⁴⁷ I want in what follows to discuss two troublingly diverse, and diversely troubling, portrayals of the Christians and Saracens before making some preliminary suggestions about how (and why) they relate to this ‘oxymoron at the court of Burgundy’, and to its author’s intentions.

Reading the battle-scene at Jerusalem described above is disturbing, and not simply because of its lusty descriptions of combat and carnage. Among the curious but admittedly rather bland fare of the carefully-balanced depiction of the opposing sides and their actions are peppered some rather piquant moments concerning the aberrant behaviours of one of them – and this, counter-intuitively, is the Christians. While in other of the mises en prose – one thinks immediately, for example, of *Gillion de Trazégnies*, or *La Belle Hélène de Constantinople* – the racial group singled out for especial calumny is of course the generic Saracen horde, here it seems that the prosateur directs some of that derision at the Christians. In this particular episode in *Saladin* it seems, in short, that the Christians behave *like* Saracens. Whereas in other texts the default racial group, and hence the group with an entirely positive valency, has been the Christians, here things are somewhat subverted. Locutions and actions that we have hitherto

expected to see performed by Saracens are enacted by Christians, and negative or deviant acts are imputed to them not, as previously, to the pagans.⁴⁸

Elsewhere across the *mise en prose* corpus strange practices (often the product, it must be said, of the prosateur's skewed understanding of the realities of these practices) are very much the province of the Saracen. In *La Belle Hélène de Constantinople*, for instance, a pagan king is cited as having 'fait faire ung homme de cuivre ou d'arain en maniere d'une ydole' which he worships, and makes his people worship, as a false but all-knowing god.⁴⁹ But in *Saladin*, and especially here, such out-of-the-ordinary practices are Christianised, or perhaps better Christianised practices are presented as counter to the norm. To invoke one very minor but nonetheless telling example, before the Jerusalem skirmish Baudouin sends a messenger to Huon and the Bâtard asking them if they will come and support him. When he arrives at court, 'se mist le message a genoulx devant lez princez, lesquelz il salua *a la maniere crestienne* (my italics)'.⁵⁰ This 'maniere crestienne' is quite clearly something like the sign of the cross; but the mention of it here is initially unsettling and arresting precisely because we are not usually asked to make hermeneutic connections of this kind, for the standard point of reference tends to be, precisely, Christianity. This is the *a priori* position; Saraceness, on the other hand, is commonly the 'counter-culture', the one that requires glossing and the one that tends to attract exoticising and deterritorialising statements like 'a la maniere sarrasine'. That it is Christianity here is destabilising.

Two further examples of this subversion of racial behaviours trouble the reader in this battle episode; and both turn on the same proto-Biblical imagery. Though, as we have seen above, the author is careful to avoid seeming anything other than even-handed in his treatment of Christians and Saracens, and to steer clear of *Roland*-esque totemic utterances of the 'païen unt tort et crestiens unt dreit' variety, it is nonetheless true that the weightings are in some senses at least unequal. In a challenge to the reader's expectations, the Christians are portrayed as the stronger party, but their strength apparently turns not on their superior skill but rather on their greater cruelty. Twice the bucolic Christianised image of the flock of sheep is used to denigrate Baudouin's horde: here, as the two sides go into battle, the Saracens are the more peaceable sheep set

upon by the Christian wolf. 'Baudoyne se fery dedens neantmoins, et d'une grande hache pesant lez escarpilloit tellement qu'il n'y avoit payen qui ne le fuist ne plus ne moins que lez moutons a troupeeles fuyent ung loup'.⁵¹ And later the simile is extended, the wolf is more violent, and the softer feminine noun 'ewe' is substituted for the generic 'sheep': 'ilz se rengerent neantmoins et coururent sus aux paiens tout ainsi qu'un loup affamé queurt en ung tropeau de brebis'.⁵² Christians here are quite plainly, and – as will become clearer – quite significantly, both the Embodied and Ideological Alien. Disturbingly enough, however, the same can be said of the Saracens – or in particular of two of them – later in the story.

Salhadin and his army have, through the agency of the captured knights Jehan de Ponthieu and Huon Dodequin, arrived in England. While there, they fight the English army led by Richard the Lionheart for the control of a mountain pass; they lose, but the pass is nonetheless henceforth known as the 'pas Salhadin'. The loss grieves Salhadin; he wants revenge on Richard. His attempt to get this, an ingenious plan that involves sending his horse Moreau into the English camp 'car il est de telle condicion qu'il n'est roy, duc, conte ne chevalier, s'il estoit monté dessus par aulcune adventure, que le cheval ne ramenast en vostre tref malgré lui',⁵³ backfires somewhat when the knight Moreau brings back is not Richard but his aide Anthoine de Chavigny (or 'Hardy et Habandonné'). The English, in short, have rumbled Salhadin. The two parties, for reasons that are not altogether clear, decide to settle their differences in a battle involving two (English) Christians fighting against two Saracens. This dual duel is interesting for my purposes here not so much for its outcome (in fact the Saracens are defeated) but rather for the two individuals from his host Salhadin chooses to take part.

He assembles his company around him, and 's'il n'y eult la Sarasin qui ung seul mot respondit',

quand Corsuble son oncle dit, puisque c'estoit pour l'onneur de Mahon en quy il avoit fiance, il seroit l'un dez deux. Et adont se leva ung aultre roy, nommé Bruyant, noble, grand et puissant de corps et de ricesse, car il tenoit en son seignourie Grece, et dist qu'il seroit le second.⁵⁴

The only information that the prosateur has ever given us about these two is, precisely, as we see here, that one is Salhadin's uncle, and that the other is the king of Greece; both are Saracens, wise, and good fighters. So it comes as something of a surprise to the reader – and, it seems, to the author himself – when the two are introduced again just before battle: '[q]uand les deux crestiens virent Corsuble et Bruyant devant eux, ilz s'esmeruillèrent assés de leur grandeur, car – comme racompte l'istore – c'estoient deux jayants plus grans d'eux chascun d'un pié ou mieux!'⁵⁵

Why, then, should this gigantism suddenly be mentioned when it has not been even hinted at before? I think the answer to this lies less in a theorisation of Bruyant and Corsuble as giants enacting the sort of *extimité* or intimate and foundational alterity Jeffrey Jerome Cohen has discussed in Lacanian terms in his work on gigantism than in the question of the two as Saracens, or 'more-than-Saracens'.⁵⁶ They are the Embodied Alien, but their corporeal unruliness functions here as the outward sign of a particular Ideological aberrance connected both to their race and to the particular valency attachable to that race at this point in the text. What is crucial in terms of race (whether that of Christian or of Saracen) in this work is, as I shall demonstrate, the relationship of a particular racial group at a particular time to Salhadin. His identity is in some measure only possible or perceptible when set against that of another – which is of course central to Judith Butler's arguments on performative identity sketched in Chapter One and developed below. Before turning my attention to this structuring of selfhood, though, I should first briefly outline the related concept of contemporary views on race and racialised identity.

In his *The Making of Europe*, Robert Bartlett has persuasively argued that race in the Middle Ages was a more plastic category of identity than we would view it as today, and therefore had more in common with our modern notions of ethnicity. He suggests that 'its medieval reality was almost entirely cultural', and that it was a social identity that had very little to do with bodies as colour-defined, or racialised, entities.⁵⁷ This is certainly consonant with what we have seen in *Saladin*: 'Christian' and 'Saracen' seem theoretically-malleable constructs whose valency depends more on circumstance than on fixity, and neither group is ever defined as, or with reference to, having a different

skin-colour from the other. An obvious example of this is the fact that though Salhadin is a Turk and might plausibly be expected (by the modern consciousness at least) to be dark-skinned or to present an otherwise non-Caucasian countenance, the French queen ‘fu toute esbahie [...] quant elle sceut que Salhadin estoit payen’.⁵⁸ Indeed, ‘quant elle aperçut que Salhadin estoit estrangier, considerant qu’elle s’estoit a luy habandonnee, memorative de sa beaulté, advertie de sa grant noblesse et haulte chevalerie, elle laissa son cuer ou il estoit’.⁵⁹

As this quotation might underline, Salhadin’s race is not given Embodied form, but is in fact Ideologically generated out of social commerce, and out of his relationships, whether sexual or political, with members of another group (Bartlett’s constitution of race as a cultural category is especially resonant here). His racial identity – and that of other characters – can only be given proper expression through being juxtaposed with another (contrasting?) one. What is particularly interesting in *Saladin* is that the hero’s identity is fluid, and can be allied with either Saraceness or, more often, Christianity – just as sometimes Christians are portrayed positively while at other times this fortunate rôle is accorded the Saracens. It is this plasticity that might explain the sudden imputation of gigantism to Bruyant and Corsuble, and indeed the unexpectedly unfavourable characterisation of the Christian horde at Jerusalem. That is, the nature of their depiction seems to depend on whichever racial identity the prosateur wants Salhadin to exhibit in order for the character to be cast in the most positive light.

At Jerusalem, Salhadin is still fighting with Saracens, and ‘as’ a Saracen (though, as I suggested above, an increasingly tempered one); because this is the identity-group he is to fit into at this point, it stands to reason that in order to provide the most telling contrast the Christians need to be shown negatively. And, in the case of Bruyant and Corsuble, the opposite holds true. By this point, conversely, Salhadin is to all intents and purposes acting ‘as’ a Christian – he has been performing the rôle of Christian knight appropriately (on this see below) for many years; and, indeed, his deathbed conversion is not far off –, and so lest there be any residual doubt in our minds that Salhadin is no longer a Saracen, the ultimate and most troubling contrast to his racial and somatic identity has to be provided. Hence the sudden and unexpected description

of the two Saracens as ‘jayants’: there is nothing else physically to suggest that Salhadin is ‘not quite not’ like them, to use Linda Lomperis’s useful designation,⁶⁰ so the author makes sure he presents his Saracen pair on a new and more troubling level of Alienness.

This suggests that identity, like race and, indeed, like Alienness itself, is a fluid category, and one that it would be illegitimate to try and fix. Firmness in identity terms is, in fact, impossible to achieve or impose: as we see here, in the course of one text – and by extension one lifetime – Salhadin’s identity swithers from Saracen to Christian, touching various notional and overlapping points in between. Even though, as I shall show in what follows, by the end of the text the hero’s identity might seem concrete in fact it continues to be in flux, to a certain extent at least. This might sound contradictory, but it is in fact quite plausible. In the next and final section of this chapter I want to illustrate, with reference to Judith Butler’s formulations on performative identity, how this is so. Salhadin’s enactment of a chivalric identity, when set against Butler’s theories, shows firstly how in this text Salhadin is *sui generis* (how ‘on ne trouveroit son pareil’) but secondly – and, in light of this, paradoxically – how a model of identity might be devised and used to elucidate Alien selfhood across the *mise en prose* genre.

**‘Comment On Fait Chevaliers a la Loi Crestienne’: The Character of (the)
Character and Solving Problems of Identity in *Saladin***

As I mentioned above, *Saladin* has often been described by critics as a chivalric biography.⁶¹ While I disagree with this limiting designation – as I hope to show in this chapter and in connection with other texts in the two following ones, there is much more to it than this –, it is nonetheless impossible to ignore the centrality of chivalry, and of Salhadin’s interest in it, to the story. The chivalric – Alien – identity exhibited by Salhadin in the text is dependent on Christianity; and Salhadin’s Christianity in this connection is dependent upon a particular spatial and temporal confluence, centred firstly and most importantly on the hero’s serendipitous meeting with his relative Jehan de Ponthieu, and secondly on their passage into France. Salhadin is part of, while also and simultaneously standing outside of, two identity groups – this is why I called him

sui generis above →, and this dual rôle elucidates the particular point about identity I want to make about Salhadin and *Saladin*.

In the midst of the battle at Jerusalem a Christian knight is brought to (the at this point ‘not-quite-not-Saracen’) Salhadin. He questions the Christian as to ‘dont il estoit et s’il estoit roy, duc or conte, mais bien luy deffendy le mentir’. The Christian speaks, and the truth of his utterance gladdens Salhadin’s heart:

‘Sachiés, sire’, fet il, ‘que je suis crestien du pays de France et mie ne suis roy ne si grant seigneur. Je suis chevalier, noble homme et conte d’une terre qu’on appelle Pontieu’ [...] Dieux! comme fut Salhadin joyeux quant il ouï Jehan parler de Pontieu, car il sçavoit bien qu’il estoit descendu d’une dez filles du conte Jehan d’Avennez.⁶²

Salhadin asks Jehan whether he would like to renounce his Christian faith in order to have his life spared; Jehan declines; and so impressed is Salhadin at his ‘bonne volenté’ in this that he decides not to have him killed after all, but to take him prisoner instead, seeing that in fact Jehan could be very useful to him indeed. ‘Et me aiderés a conduire en France ou j’ay devocion d’aler ainsi que vous estes venus par deça’.

What is especially interesting here is Salhadin’s ready acceptance of the Christian enemy (even if expedience does form some of the background to that acceptance), in contrast with Jehan’s reaction. Addressing Salhadin explicitly as a Saracen he opines that ‘d’avoire en moy fiance ne ferés vous mye grand sens, *car aymer ne vous pourroye*’ (my emphasis).⁶³ Salhadin answers this with a mere laugh, indicating not only a generosity of spirit startling in a Saracen but also, I think, the beginnings of a willingness to ally himself with Christianity that will become of vital importance in the rest of the text. This recognition scene, then, is a real turning-point, both for the narrative and in terms of Salhadin’s identity. After his imprisonment of Jehan de Ponthieu, he collects another Christian captive in the shape of Huon Dodequin; and from this point on his interest in Christianity, and its particular brand of knighthood, is ever more aroused. He is initially more Saracen than not after taking his prisoners, more Ideologically Alien than they are, but soon afterwards there occurs a curious episode that sows the seed in the reader’s

mind of his possible conversion and of how the hero's identity (unlike that of his Christian captives) might be viewed as something of a moveable feast.

Salhadin and his assembly head out from Jerusalem to lay siege to the town of Sur. During this time he is told of a castle situated not far from the town, an Arthurian-sounding (if not, indeed, *Python*-esque) place where 'il avoit [...] plus de .ij.^c. damez que damoiselles, entre lesquelles il y en avoit l'une plus belle que les aultrez'.⁶⁴ The siege has meant that the women have been unable to find food for more than eight days; the least Salhadin can do is go and help them. The most beautiful of all the women welcomes him to the castle; 'il fu tout esbahy quand il la vey sy tres plaisant', and she appears to have taken a shine to Salhadin which for various reasons she does not act upon. These seem implicitly or explicitly to turn on their different religions or, better, on Salhadin's not being a Christian. The first indication of this occurs when a young lady, serving at table throughout a meal the hero shares with 'l'une plus belle que les aultrez', tries to take matters into her own hands:

Laquelle cuida convertir Salhadin par une maniere bien couverte, car elle trencha par deux fois du pain qu'elle engressa de char de porc et qu'elle mist devant Salhadin qui mie n'en menga et qui ne fist que rire sans dire aultre chose, dont la dame, non sachant pourquoy il rioit, l'interroga de son ris. Et il luy respondy qu'elle en demandast la cause a la demoiselle [...]. Si confessa son cas, donnant a entendre qu'il rioit pour ce qu'elle avoit mis devant Salhadin le pain gras de porc, dont les Turcz ne mengeoient point, en disant qu'elle l'avoit mis devant luy en intencion que, s'il en eust une fois gousté, il fut devenu crestien.⁶⁵

Maria Colombo Timelli is misguided, I think, to see this event as having 'évidemment aucune valeur', and as being 'un épisode marginal qui détend l'atmosphère créée par une suite d'aventures militaires'.⁶⁶ It is, rather, of immense relevance to Salhadin's position in the story, in terms of his non-Christian identity and of the fact that the prosateur is seemingly trying to shift the sands of readerly perception. As is underlined when Salhadin propositions the beautiful damsel, his identity here is 'not Christian', but equally he is not described as Saracen. His place is affirmed negatively not positively:

Salhadin tira la dame a part, a laquelle se devisa de plusieurs propos. Si la trouva tant sage et adrescie en toutez façons qu'il laquist d'estre sa dame et sa maistresse, ce que par adventure elle eult volentiers fait *s'il eult esté crestien* et s'elle eust esté impourveue de mary (*italics mine*)⁶⁷

Identity here is as though on a continuum with Saraceness at one extreme and Christianity at the other; and Salhadin is moving gradually along this scale. He is beginning to leave his Saracen identity behind, because the author requires it for the progression of the narrative and for the quasi-hagiography of Salhadin. The assimilation – if this is to happen at all – of the hero into the dominant culture, Christianity and by extension Burgundianness, can be effected best if he conforms to a Christian male norm, that of the knight.⁶⁸ Whether in doing this Salhadin becomes less Ideologically Alien or, in fact, more so, will be discussed below. Now, though, I want to examine Salhadin's chivalric trajectory as a process of identity-performance in the Butlerian mode.

Having left what might be called the 'Castle of the Two Hundred Women', Salhadin and his host head back towards Jerusalem. Plainly, the seed of Christianity has been sown in the hero's mind for, encamped once more, he asks Huon 'par la foi que vous devés a vostre dieu que vous me monstrés comment on fait *chevaliers a la loi crestienne*' (*emphasis mine*).⁶⁹ Initially Huon is reluctant to countenance Salhadin's request, but is talked around by the forceful not-quite-not-Saracen:

'Haa! Sire', dist lors Huon, 'ja Dieu ne plaise que je mette si haulte chose comme l'ordre de chevalerie sur tel corps comme le vostre!' 'Pourquoy?' fet Salhadin. 'Pour ce, sire', ce dist Huon, 'que n'estez pas ydone ni habille a si noble ordre recepvoir a cause que n'estez pas crestien'. 'Huon, Huon', ce respondi Salhadin, 'ne me blasmés point devant moy, car vous estes en ma prison. Et ce vous faites ce dont je vous ay requis et vous en ralés cy après en vostre terre, ja ne trouverés vous homme qui vous en blame, pour tant qu'il sace raison entendre'.⁷⁰

What is especially interesting here, and in the stylised dubbing ceremony that follows, is the insistence upon and connection between Christianity and chivalry. Salhadin is unfit 'a si noble ordre recepvoir' because he is not Christian; but Huon bethinks himself and avers that 'se vous fussiés crestien, bien fust en vous chevalerie assize', thus allowing

himself – giving himself moral or ideological licence – to carry out the dubbing in the most ecclesiastical of terms.⁷¹

In his *Jeux d'errance du chevalier médiéval*, Michel Stanesco discusses the question whether what he terms 'le rituel symbolique de l'adoubement' was historically a religious or secular ceremony. According to Stanesco, opinions differ on this matter, or on how far a symbolic rite can become either suffused with or divorced from religious connotations; and he suggests, unsurprisingly, that the valency carried by the dubbing episode in life as in literature altered from century to century.⁷² What is particularly relevant here, though, are the remarks made by Stanesco about the avatars of this episode in *Saladin*. 'Le premier texte qui se propose de décrire d'une façon complète le rituel de l'adoubement', he says, 'est le *dit* de *L'Ordene de chevalerie*, poème attribué à Hugues de Saint-Omer, seigneur de Tibériade et compagnon d'armes de Godefroy de Bouillon': in short, one of the manifold sources of the fifteenth-century prose *Saladin*.⁷³ In this work, the Christian aspect of the ceremony is highlighted, as it is in the prose text under discussion here. As we have seen elsewhere, the prosateur could quite easily have tempered this had it not suited his purpose; the fact that he has not, though, suggests that it chimes with his textual ideology, as I have been suggesting throughout this chapter, to have Salhadin moving along a continuum towards Christianity, and Christianised chivalry.

As a prisoner who knows what is good for him, Huon takes charge of the dubbing of Salhadin, explaining as he goes the significance of each stage in Christological terms: as Stanesco says, 'dire ce qu'est l'adoubement chevaleresque n'est pas le dire avec des mots, mais l'exécuter par des actes'.⁷⁴ There are eight 'actes' in all, beginning with the washing of Salhadin's head, the trimming of his beard, and the ritual bathing, 'que c'est ensigne de pureté, car tout aussi net et cler que l'enfant ist des fons, doit estre celui qui le degré de chevalerie reçoit'.⁷⁵ There follows the dressing first in a white chemise, and then a vermillion robe 'd'escalatte ou de soye', which signify respectively 'que vous devés vivre honnestement' and 'le saing que vous devés respandre sur les ennemis de la foy Jhesu Crist'. Next Huon introduces the brown hose, which represent the earth whence we came and whither we shall return, and the white belt or sash, meaning 'vous

devés estre chaste de corps car puis que homme est chevalier, il ne doibt faire villonnie de son corps'.⁷⁶ Then comes the giving of golden spurs, signifying the knight's willingness to leap into action for Church Militant, and of 'une espee belle et bonne' whose meaning is three-fold: security, rectitude, and loyalty. Huon then tells Salhadin that 'l'en donne ung don a l'espee chandre, mais je ne le vous diray orez, car bien vouldroie que homme plus hault de moy le vous donnast': this is the 'collée', or the act of being touched on the shoulder with a sword, representative of the knight's need to be strong in the face of any temptation thrown at him. Finally, a 'blance coiffe' is placed on Salhadin's head, to remind him that he must resist blasphemy, and fast once a week in honour of Jesus Christ.⁷⁷ Thus our Saracen becomes a knight 'a la Loi Crestienne'.

Or does he? Certainly, after a ten-year period over which no-one, 'tant fust prouchain ne loingtain, ne lui mouvoit ne menoit guerre' and at which point Salhadin decides he would like to enter France, he believes himself to exhibit this identity ('puisque je suis chevalier').⁷⁸ This view, however, is not shared by Huon once they are in France. Salhadin, in his own eyes a knight and therefore fulfilling the requisite criteria, wants to take part in a tournament, but Huon cautions against this, explaining that were he a knight, he would by definition have to be a Christian: 'car suppose que chevalier soiés, si convient il que vous soyés crestien'.⁷⁹ Though the dubbing ceremony was carried out on him, in Christianised terms, Salhadin has not converted. What is at stake here, it seems, is the particular view of identity perceptible in *Saladin*, and what constitutes Salhadin's chivalric identity. The important thing is less what the external observer – in this case Huon – thinks, but rather what Salhadin himself feels. In the ten-year interim between the dubbing and his wanting to enter the tournament, though no external force has come to assail him and jump-start any chivalric behaviour, it is nonetheless true that Salhadin has been inhabiting a Christianised chivalric body, and feeling himself to be *performing* this identity before his own, and society's, eyes.

As I have been suggesting, then, identity that can be theorised as dependent on a subject's acts rather than on any kind of essential inherent selfhood, and which is mediated to a greater or lesser extent by society, calls to mind Judith Butler's theories of performative identity outlined in Chapter One. 'For Butler [...], identity is performative,

insofar as it derives from the subject's actions and society's perception and understanding of these actions (and the subject's own perception and understanding of that perception and understanding).⁸⁰ In this theoretical model, identity is a fictional construct that proceeds from actions or performances, that exists only in and as a consequence of these performances. Repeated performances conduce – as here, in Salhadin's ten-year stretch as a dubbed knight – to an identity; but because no act of repetition can ever truly replicate what it set out to repeat, each performance is doomed to failure and must therefore be continually repeated. The subject is thus permanently non-self-identical; and identity is no longer describable in terms of a narrative with a beginning, a middle and an end. Rather, it only exists in the present.⁸¹

This theorisation of performative identity brings us some way closer to explaining why it might be that Salhadin's selfhood is so difficult to grasp in this text; why sometimes he seems more Saracen than Christian, and vice versa; and why, therefore, ascertaining who or what constitutes the Alien in this richly-crenellated text is so challenging. Identity is a repeated performance carried out in response to present events and stimuli, rather than as a result of any definite essence of being. This is why at the outset it is legitimate for Salhadin to ally himself with the Saracen group and why they are 'allowed' to be presented in positive terms with the Christians conversely fulfilling the function of the Embodied and Ideological Alien; and why later, in the dubbing scene for example, the hero can quite plausibly be 'acting like', performing the identity of, a Christian knight against the ideological and physical excesses of Saracens such as Bruyant and Corsuble. It is also why Salhadin can curiously – and troublingly – occupy a mid-point of identity in which he is neither Saracen nor Christian, but 'not-quite-not-either'. He can be in between both orders – an 'oxymoron at the court of Burgundy' –, as two final examples will illustrate.

When he has been brought by his two Christian captors into France, Salhadin appears to function as something of a Spivakian 'native informant', a hermeneutic figure that observes and allows the outside to be brought inside, that holds a mirror up to a new or parallel social structure – a mirror which 'tantôt [...] reflète à vos yeux l'azur des cieux, tantôt la fange des borbiers de la route' – and allows 'them' to be brought closer to

‘us’.⁸² When set at French social mores, Salhadin’s mirror most definitely reflects the latter negative image. He is shocked at the treatment to be meted out to Jehan de Ponthieu’s sister – she is to be burned on a pyre for the crime of refusing to marry Lambert de Berry –, and especially at the attitude shown towards a group of paupers at a court dinner:

Salhadin, qui regardoit toutez lez ordonnances de la court, veant a une table en la salle assis .xij. povres en la reverence des disciplez de Jhesu Crist, demanda a Jehan de Ponthieu la seignifiance. Et luy dist qu’ilz estoient messagiers de Jhesu Crist. [...] “Et de quoy les repaist l’en?” dist lors Salhadin. “Je ne voy rien porter devant eulx se non ce qui demoure devant les serviteurs”.⁸³

He is quite scandalised that this apparently retrograde practice is perpetuated, and – in a remark that ‘fait partie d’une série assez touffue de critiques mues, bien plus qu’à la religion chrétienne, aux attitudes des chrétiens’ –⁸⁴ states that ‘ne doibt l’en avoir foy a vostre loy, qui dittes que les biens que vous avés et dont vous vivés viennent du dieu ouquel vous croés, et a ses menistres, serviteurs et messagez ne donnés que ce qui vous peut demorer ou quy jamais ne vous peult servir’.⁸⁵ Christianity, in his book, is alarmingly flawed.

Though the dominant identity Salhadin comes to perform, in relation to what is happening in the textual present, is that of the Christian knight, as the above quotation shows Christianity can function as a concept whose tenets are Ideologically Alien to him – and whether this means that he is himself the Ideologically Alien or in fact its control is still, and always will be, in flux. One last episode lends support both to the view that Salhadin performs a Christian identity *faute de mieux* – he does not want to be, and textually and ideologically cannot be, Saracen, and enacts a Christian identity as it is closer to his lived reality, and more positive than other available options –, and to the fact that the performance of identity (any identity) is doomed to failure and cannot ever be truly fixed.

Salhadin fights one last battle against a Christian army (unfavourably presented, of course) at Damascus, and is seriously wounded. He is carried from the field, back to Babylonia. ‘Si manda lors par saulf conduit’

le plus sage juis de Judee, le plus sage crestien qu'on peult trouver et le plus sage payen de sa terre, lesquelz il fist longuement ensemble disputer et deviser ensemble de leur loy, foy et creance. Et lorsqu'il les eut bien et sensiblement entendus, il demanda ung grand bassin d'argent et de l'eave clere et nette dedens. Si fist chascun tirer arriere de luy, et dist, les yeulx levés amont, troix mots – ne scet l'istore quelz – puis en faisant la signe de la croix en disant: "Autant y a il de cy jusquez la, qu'il a de la jusquez a cy".⁸⁶

He dies. 'Si fait a supposer' that he has in this way finally converted to Christianity, but nothing is actually concrete. His identity – whether Christian, Pagan or, now, Jewish – is still in question, reflected pertinently in the confusing chiasmus of his last words. Even as Salhadin's life ends, his selfhood continues to be performed and striven for; death does not end this knight's, and this text's, quest for identity.

Closure in *Saladin* is impossible. The work remains at the end, as throughout, a resolutely Alien text, and functions as something of a metaphor for the charting and reining-in of Alienness at the Burgundian court. The Alienness of Salhadin, and of Philip's court, is dependent on to what or to whom he/it stands in relation. Sometimes our hero is the Embodied, and hence the Ideological, Alien because he is Saracen, while at other times his attempts to perform the character of a Christian lead him to be viewed as physically or intellectually aberrant, and vice versa. Identity, across the mise en prose genre as in connection with the court, is incapable, according to the Butlerian performative model, of being fixed. What is important here is not the need to impose an order on Salhadin's selfhood, but rather the fact that identity is a state forever in mutation. We see in Salhadin and in *Saladin*, then, the point at which Embodied and Ideological Alienness in the mises en prose converge but then begin to diverge. The Embodied, and corporeal, difference exhibited by Saladin in relation to Christian and Saracen groups gradually cedes position to a more Ideological interpretation. And we find, consequently, an ever-changing kaleidoscope of identity through which we can view, in the chapters that follow, other of the works in my corpus. In Chapter Four I bring together notions of performative identity, and of the body as the site where my two types of Alienness coalesce and converge, in a discussion of chivalry and gender in *Jehan d'Avennes*. As we will see as we look further at elements of this Burgundian prose

polyptych through and against this model, the picture of Aliennes and identity changes more or less significantly even as the apparatus stays the same.

¹ Indeed, no source – to my knowledge – mentions the two events as having happened at all simultaneously, or as having been attended by the same guests, in particular the ducal party. The *Adoration of the Mystic Lamb* was not of course commissioned by or even for Philip: despite Jan van Eyck's close connections to the duke's court, the panel was done for Joos Vyd, a prominent citizen of Ghent, as shown by the donor portraits of Vyd and his wife Elizabeth Borluut in the lower panels of the closed altarpiece.

² As will become clear below, I ultimately reject the term 'cyclicity' in connection with these three texts. For the moment, however, I use it for the sake of convenience.

³ As Catherine Gaullier-Bougassas suggests in her *La Tentation de l'Orient dans le roman médiéval. Sur l'imaginaire médiéval de l'Autre* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2003), on the basis of current scholarship it is impossible to know whether the three texts are the project of a single author, or whether they were assembled by copyists (357). As Gaullier-Bougassas notes, in her *thèse d'Etat* on *Jehan d'Avennes* Danielle Quérueu insists on 'les effets de continuité' between the three texts in each of their manuscript contexts – but this tells us only about the effect of the *mise en livre*, rather than the circumstance of production or the intention behind the project. On this see Danielle Quérueu, '*Jehan d'Avesnes* ou la littérature chevaleresque à la cour des ducs de Bourgogne au milieu du XV^e siècle' (unpublished *thèse d'Etat*, Paris IV-Sorbonne, 1988), 521-4.

⁴ For pertinent discussion of the important notion of cyclicity in the late medieval period see especially Jane H. M. Taylor, 'Order from Accident: Cyclic Consciousness at the End of the Middle Ages', in *Cyclification. The Development of Narrative Cycles in the Chansons de Geste and the Arthurian Romance*, eds. Bart Besamusca, Willem P. Gerritsen, Corry Hogetoorn and Orlanda S. H. Lie (Amsterdam: Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1994), 59-73; and ead., 'The Sense of a Beginning: Genealogy and Plenitude in Late Medieval Narrative Cycles', in Sara Sturm-Maddox and Donald Maddox, *Transtextualities. Of Cycles and Cyclicity in Medieval French Literature* (Binghamton: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1996), 93-124. In 'Order from Accident', Taylor establishes two interlinked models of cyclicity which she terms 'sequential cyclicity' and 'organic cyclicity'. The first, in very basic terms, supposes a linear conception of time, while the second implies circularity. The texts of the *Cycle de Jehan d'Avennes* might, depending on the Rumsfeldian 'known unknowns' of their respective composition, correspond to either or both of these categories; I am however happiest – at least for the purposes of my argument in this thesis – to see the texts not as a cycle but as discrete units nonetheless having a thematic link of sorts with each other. That this link is ultimately ascribable to their Aliennes, and therefore to something necessarily outside their author(s)'s purview matters – as I argue elsewhere in connection with the *mise en prose* as product of a particular space and time – both less and more than might seem appropriate.

⁵ My title is of course loosely based on that of Danielle Quérueu's article, 'Le 'vaillant turc et courtois Salhadin'. Un Oriental à la cour de Bourgogne', in *Images et Signes de l'Orient, Senefiance* 11 (1982), 301-9. While Quérueu's article provides a useful *point de départ* on the Burgundian *Saladin* her emphases – and those of other critics of the text – are, as will be seen, different from my own.

⁶ This is the historical date upon which, according to the sources (see below), Salhadin deposed the emir, and took up government, of Cairo. See Larry S. Crist (ed.), *Saladin. Suite et fin du deuxième Cycle de la Croisade* (Geneva: Droz/Paris: Minard, 1972), 177. It is on these sources, and their relationship to the fifteenth-century *Saladin*, indeed, that most critics of the legend concentrate. A fuller account of *Saladin* scholarship will emerge as the chapter progresses, and will appear in my Bibliography. For the moment, though, see for example: Suzanne Duparc-Quioc, *Le Cycle de la Croisade* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1955); Robert F. Cook and Larry S. Crist, *Le Deuxième Cycle de la Croisade. Deux Etudes sur son développement*

(Geneva: Droz, 1972; see especially Crist's section, 'Etude sur *Saladin*, suite et fin du deuxième Cycle de la Croisade', 57-154); and Margaret Jubb, *The Legend of Saladin in Western Literature and Historiography* (Lewiston/Queenstown/Lampeter: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2000). It will become clear that my assessment of *Saladin* is informed by, though is much less indebted to or bounded by any historical realities than, the one proposed by these critics.

⁷ For this episode, see Crist, ed. cit., 26-8.

⁸ See *Saladin*, ed. cit., 27.

⁹ See, for example, Yvette Guilcher, 'De la *Chronique d'Ernoul* au roman *Saladin*. L'adaptation du motif du meurtre de l'Amulaine du Caire par Salhadin', in *Bien Dire et Bien Apprendre* 13 (1996), 257-67, which ultimately promises much more in its title than it delivers in its substance.

¹⁰ It is worth noting here that, following Crist, I adopt two different spellings of the eponymous hero's name in this chapter: 'Saladin' refers to the text, and 'Salhadin' is the character within that text.

¹¹ Most criticism of *Saladin* in fact concentrates on just such questions – but for a flavour of how and to what ends critics approach the notion see for example: Gaston Paris, 'La légende de Salhadin', *Journal des Savants* 1893, 284-99, 354-65, 428-38, 486-98; the works by Duparc-Quioc, Crist and Cook, and Margaret Jubb, cited in n.2; Guilcher, op. cit.; Edouard Langille, 'Le "courtois Salhadin"', *Dalhousie French Studies* 38 (1997), 25-30; and Anna Maria Finoli, 'Salhadin entre deux cycles', in Maria Colombo Timelli and Claudio Galderisi (eds.), 'Pour acquérir honneur et pris'. *Mélanges de Moyen Français offerts à Giuseppe di Stefano* (Montréal: CERES, 2004), 253-63.

¹² The notion of the chivalric biography was pioneered by Elisabeth Gaucher in her vast and masterly study *La Biographie chevaleresque. Typologie d'un genre (XIII^e-XV^e siècle)* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1994). Gaucher makes only a passing reference to *Saladin* in her book, but the matrix established through her work informs many discussions of the romance and texts like it. See, *inter alia*: Margaret Jubb, op. cit.; Yvette Guilcher-Pellat, 'Le cas Salhadin: la tentation biographique, ébauches et dérives', in *Bien Dire et Bien Apprendre* 20 (2002) (a special number of the periodical, edited by Gaucher and Aimé Petit, on 'La biographie dans la littérature médiévale'), 101-13; and the discussion of *Saladin* in Catherine Gaullier-Bougassas, *La tentation de l'Orient*. As I have suggested elsewhere in this thesis, and as I hope will become clear as this section, and this chapter, progress, I do not mean to imply a blanket denunciation of the chivalric biography as a hermeneutic tool; indeed, it is often the most useful means of approaching these curious romances. I want however to heighten awareness of the fact that on occasions to reduce a story like that of Salhadin to a simple biography or hagiography of a hero is to be content to ignore what else it has to offer.

¹³ As well as the more general works on cycles and cyclicity mentioned above, see Anna Maria Finoli, 'Le Cycle de *Jehan d'Avennes*: réflexions et perspectives', *Le Moyen Français* 30 (1992), 223-241, and ead., 'Salhadin entre deux cycles', in *Mélanges di Stefano*. A similar issue is also raised peripherally by Danièle Quéruel in 'Le "vaillant Turc et courtois Salhadin"' (see n.1).

¹⁴ All of the critics thus far cited fall to a greater or lesser extent into this trap – and in so doing find themselves in the company of the many critics of (Burgundian) literature I mention in this thesis. Although here as elsewhere place and space take on a particular significance, this is of a more ontological order than the mere documenting of a notional topographical or geographical reality might imply. This will be discussed below, both in terms of *Saladin* and, especially, of the *Istoire du tres vaillans princez monseigneur Jehan d'Avennes*. Space becomes much more than a dumb container in these texts.

¹⁵ On the recent vogue for seeing contradiction as a valuable critical and discursive tool in medieval studies, see for example Catherine Brown, *Contrary Things: Exegesis, Dialectic and the Poetics of Didacticism* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), Sarah Kay, *Courty Contradictions. The Emergence of the Literary Object in the Twelfth Century* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), and Constance Brittain Bouchard,

Every Valley Shall Be Exalted: The Discourse of Opposites in Twelfth-Century Thought (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003). These ideas will be addressed implicitly in my treatment of the rôle and function of Salhadin in his text.

¹⁶ *Saladin* is not, of course, technically describable as a *mise en prose*, for we have no direct avatar for this fifteenth-century version. It is, rather, a reworking in prose of numerous fragments of legends. I discuss in Chapter Two the ‘grammar’ of the *mise en prose* genre, and the linked notion – relevant here – of the insistence on the reapplication of history and historical figures to a Burgundian literary and political mythology.

¹⁷ *Saladin*, ed. cit., 23. The father’s reaction here can, perhaps fortunately, be contrasted sharply with that of the two fathers I discuss in Chapter Five, ‘The Father’s Seduction?: Incest, Images, and the Hermeneutics of Alienness in *La Belle Hélène de Constantinople* and *La Manekine*’. The sultan here cannot bear to look upon his daughter because of the memories her person excites, whereas the two rulers dealt with in Chapter Five are drawn in troubling ways to their daughters for precisely this reason. The Burgundian Alien takes many forms.

¹⁸ An indispensable guide to these complex family ties is provided by Crist in his edition of *Saladin*. For the ‘fifteenth-century’ relationships, see 202.

¹⁹ Crist’s edition of *Saladin* offers a useful *index nominum* and description of the often difficult historical provenance of the characters in the story, some of whom are – like the text itself – composites of various figures derived from various sources: see 171-202.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 83.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 113.

²² *Ibid.*, 155.

²³ *Ibid.*, 169.

²⁴ See Terence Cave, *Pré-histoires. Textes troublés au seuil de la modernité* (Geneva: Droz, 1999), 16.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 15. There is something interesting to be made here, I think, by bringing Cave’s ideas on fêlures and faultlines, and the slightly less alluring but interesting work by Riffaterre on catachresis, together with Foucault’s notion of the *épistémè*, ‘l’ensemble de relations pouvant unir, à une époque donnée, les pratiques discursives qui donnent lieu à des figures épistémologiques, à des sciences, éventuellement à des systèmes formalisés’ (See Michel Foucault, *L’Archéologie du savoir* (Paris: Gallimard, 1969), 250) in connection with what I think is happening in the *misés en prose* and with what I am calling the Burgundian Alien. What I want to suggest is that there is quite clearly something interesting at work in these texts that the modern eye can see quite patently, and can theorise as having been important in the construction of a Burgundian nation-state, but which the contemporary architects of that state were not perhaps able to see quite so clearly, or describe in the same terms, as we do, because the archaeology of their knowledge was different from ours. See also Michel Foucault, *Les Mots et les choses: une archéologie des sciences humaines* (Paris: Gallimard, 1966), and Richard Scholar, ‘The *Je-Ne-Sais-Quoi*: Faultlines in Foucault’s Classical *épistémè*’, in *Biblio 17*, 147 (2003), 255-65.

²⁶ *Saladin*, ed. cit., 73. It is worth pointing out at this early stage that what I am not concerned to do here is to offer a post-colonial reading of Salhadin or of *Saladin*: this, I feel, is to limit the text theoretically, and to occlude almost by accident the contradictoriness of the character’s portrayal by the prosateur. I do not deny that there is worthwhile mileage to be had from a post-colonial perspective on medieval literature – such as the work currently being done by Sylvia Huot on the *Perceforest* (see her *Postcolonial Fictions: Culture, Identity, and Hybridity in the Roman de Perceforest* (provisional title), forthcoming with Boydell and Brewer, 2006) –, nor indeed from such a reading of *Saladin* in different circumstances. What I want

to do here is, as I suggested in Chapter One, to provide one way of reading these texts in full knowledge that there might be other, equally valid though differently-focused, ones.

²⁷ For these texts and the episodes alluded to here see *Les Trois fils de rois*, ed. Giovanni Palumbo (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2002), 83-5, and *Le Roman du comte d'Artois*, ed. Jean-Charles Seigneuret (Geneva: Droz, 1966), 2-3. Also relevant here, of course, are the prose reworkings of Chrétien de Troyes mentioned in the previous chapter.

²⁸ *Saladin*, 25.

²⁹ It is of course interesting to note the retention of the time-honoured pagan prefix 'Mal-' in Malaquin de Baudas's name. Crist (ed. cit. 189) underlines the disparity between this figure and the historical realities of Salhadin's lineage. Crist notes that a Malaquin de Baudas is mentioned in connection with the Round Table in the *Chevalier au Cygne*, one of many potential sources for the anonymous author of *Saladin*.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 26

³¹ *Ibid.*, loc. cit.. It is tempting to see in this episode a parallel with Philip the Good's own situation, and his quarrels with France on account of its king's murder of his father. Is Salhadin's abasing himself with the donkey disguise only to be raised up further upon the horse to be viewed perhaps as a metaphor for or at least an allusion to Burgundian aspirations towards an identity distinct from and superior to that of France?

³² Both quotations in this paragraph are from *S* 26-7.

³³ *Ibid.*, 27.

³⁴ On the historical circumstances of the duke's crusading ambitions see Richard Vaughan, *Philip the Good. The Apogee of Burgundy* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2002), especially Chapter 11, 'Burgundy, France and the Crusade: 1454-64', 334-72; see also Rima Devereaux, 'Reconstructing Byzantine Constantinople: Intercession and Illumination at the Court of Philippe le Bon', *French Studies* 59.3 (2005), 297-310. Also useful in this context are the works mentioned in Chapter Two in connection with the Feast of the Pheasant.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 27.

³⁶ It seems to me legitimate here to make this explicit connection between westernised chivalry and a more Christianised set of behaviours from Salhadin: though perhaps ideologically unsound it is certainly a reading countenanced by the text, and indeed by the presentation of the dubbing ceremony here and elsewhere. See below, and the reference to Michel Stanesco's *Jeux d'errance du chevalier médiéval. Aspects ludiques de la fonction guerrière dans la littérature du Moyen Age flamboyant* (Leiden/New York/Köbenhavn/Köln: E.J. Brill, 1988).

³⁷ Jeffery J. Cohen, *Medieval Identity Machines* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2003); see especially Chapter Two, 'Chevalerie', and the section on 'Two Deleuzoguattarian Horses' (41ff) in particular.

³⁸ Cohen, op. cit., 76.

³⁹ *Saladin*, 28.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, loc. cit.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, loc. cit.

⁴² Clearly, I am using the terms 'race' and 'religion' here as near-synonyms in full awareness of the fact that the one is not always, and not necessarily, definable in terms of the other. In the case of texts like *Saladin* though (as with earlier epic such as the *Roland* or perhaps the *Cycle de Guillaume d'Orange*, for example) the descriptor 'Saracen' holds within it both religion and genealogical provenance, for the author and his reader if not necessarily ethically or legitimately for us. As I mentioned in Chapter One, and as will be discussed later in this chapter, race in the medieval period is a plastic category of identity, more socially-constructed than blood-governed, and more like our modern category 'ethnicity'. On this see below; and Robert Bartlett, *The Making of Europe: Conquest, Colonisation, and Cultural Change 950-1350* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), in particular 197-242, and Michael Uebel, 'Unthinking the Monster: Twelfth-Century Responses to Saracen Alterity', in Jeffery Jerome Cohen (ed.), *Monster Theory: Reading Culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 264-91.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 34.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 35.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 35-6.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 46.

⁴⁷ I am referring, of course, to Judith Butler in particular, though as will be seen from what follows other theorists' work (notably that of Jeffery Jerome Cohen in his *Medieval Identity Machines* mentioned above) has interesting angles on this. Rather than anticipate my argument here, I refer the reader to the following sections of this chapter on race and on chivalric identity.

⁴⁸ Of course, and as I shall make plain below, I do not mean to suggest that the Saracen company is entirely untainted in this episode: quite the contrary. We have already seen that the two groups are equally bellicose and thirsty in battle. The point I am making is, rather, that we *expect* Saracens to be implicitly or explicitly criticised in these texts; what we do not expect, but do find, here is that Christians are portrayed negatively, in similar ways and for similar reasons as we have seen in the Saracen case elsewhere.

⁴⁹ See Jehan Wauquelin, *La Belle Hélène de Constantinople. Mise en prose d'une chanson de geste*, ed. Marie-Claude de Crécy (Geneva, Droz: 2002), 146-7.

⁵⁰ *Saladin*, 41.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 45.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 51.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 124.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 134-5.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 137-8.

⁵⁶ On the question of gigantism and the Lacanian question of *extimité* see the remarks made by Jeffery Jerome Cohen in his *Of Giants: Sex, Monsters, and the Middle Ages* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), *passim*, but especially the Introduction and Chapter One. Cohen's masterly theorisation, or theoretical refocusing, of the giant is not applicable to Bruyant and Corsuble, I think, because in their case bodily excess is being used to signal a different category of identity from the one Cohen sees in his corpus.

⁵⁷ See Robert Bartlett, *The Making of Europe: Conquest, Colonisation, and Cultural Change 950-1350* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993). It should be noted that similar remarks are turned to similar, though not of course Burgundian, account in Jeffery J. Cohen's *Medieval Identity Machines*. See especially Chapter Six, 'On Saracen Enjoyment', and indeed the article on which this is based, 'On Saracen Enjoyment: Some Fantasies of Race in Late Medieval France and England', *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 31.1 (2001), 113-146.

⁵⁸ *Saladin*, 109. The only – and very subtle – indication we are given of Salhadin's physical difference from the Christians he captures occurs in the dubbing scene I discuss below in connection with the performance of chivalric identity. Huon Dodequin explains the process to Salhadin, and then 'fist a Salhadin laver la chief et la barbe tondre' (*S*, 74). At this time, fashion dictated that Christians – and certainly Burgundians – were clean-shaven. Beards were the sole preserve of pagans, or otherwise deviant characters (and by 'deviant' here I mean also those who do not correspond to the historical norm, and stand outside of fashion, such as saints). When, for example, Girart de Roussillon is wandering in exile he is depicted in a miniature in ÖNB 2549 (fol. 72^r) wearing torn habits and sporting if not a full beard then a few days' growth of stubble. On this see Margaret Scott, *Late Gothic Europe (1400-1500)* (London: Mills and Boon, 1980), and Rebecca Dixon, 'Je ne vois oncques la pareille: Dress, Making and Meaning at the Court of Philip the Good, Third Valois Duke of Burgundy, as refracted through the iconography of 'Girart de Roussillon' (ÖNB 2549)' (unpublished MA Dissertation, Courtauld Institute of Art: London, 2001).

⁵⁹ *Saladin*, 109.

⁶⁰ On this see Linda Lomperis, 'Medieval Travel Writing and the Question of Race', *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 31.1 (2001), 147-164.

⁶¹ See n. 12 above on chivalric biography and *Saladin*.

⁶² *Saladin*, 56-7.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 58.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 68.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 69-70.

⁶⁶ See Maria Colombo Timelli, "'Banquets, disners, soupers'" dans le cycle *Jehan d'Avennes*: suspension ou progrès de la narration?', *Fifteenth-Century Studies* 19 (1994), 279-300. This quotation is on 290.

⁶⁷ *S*, 70.

⁶⁸ For more on the Burgundian chivalric ideal and its opposite, see Chapter Four on *Jehan d'Avennes*. The changing face of chivalry in Burgundy would merit further study, but is outside the scope of this thesis.

⁶⁹ *S*, 73.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, loc. cit. What is interesting in this quotation in light of my remarks on racialised identity is the way in which Huon identifies Salhadin's body – the very specific and loaded-seeming 'tel corps comme le vostre' – as a site of potential meaning, the container and mediator of one sort or mode at least of identity. That the body functions as such a site of potentiality or confluence of meaning in the *mises en prose* more generally is discussed in Chapter Four below, in connection especially with *Jehan d'Avennes*, and with Zoë Sofia's writings on containment: 'in the intersubjectivist model of subject formation, the self is understood as an entity given shape through various dynamic relationships of containment that both construct and occur in spaces that are interpersonal, imaginative, real, active, the products of conscious efforts as well as unconscious or automatic labours' See Sofia, 'Container Technologies',

Hypatia 15:2 (Spring 2000), 181-201, with this quotation at 184-5. On bodies as sites and containers of meaning in a slightly different sense see also Chapter Five below.

⁷¹ *S*, 74.

⁷² On all this see Michel Stanesco, *Jeux d'errance du chevalier medieval*, especially Chapter 3, 'Le rituel symbolique de l'adoubement'. This chapter gives a much more thorough-going account of the dubbing ceremony across the centuries and the literary genres than is possible – or indeed necessary – for my purposes here.

⁷³ Stanesco, op. cit., 52-3. On the sources of the fifteenth-century *Saladin* see, *inter alia*, Cook and Crist, *Le Deuxième Cycle de la Croisade*, and Jubb, *The Legend of Saladin*.

⁷⁴ Stanesco, op. cit., 54.

⁷⁵ *S*, 74.

⁷⁶ All quotations are from *S*, 74-5. Huon's glosses of the significance of the items and their colours are comprehensive enough for the purposes of this text; they do, however, call the mind to works of later medieval colour theory that would have been known to the Burgundian court, especially Olivier de La Marche's *La parement et triumphes des dames* (Paris: Baillieu, 1870), *Le Blason des couleurs en armes, livrées et devises par Sicile Hérault d'Alphonse V, roi d'Aragon*, ed. Hippolyte Cocheris (Paris: A. Aubry, 1860), or Geoffroi, *The 'Book of Chivalry' of Geoffroi de Charny: Text, Context, and Translation*, ed. Richard W. Kaeuper and Elspeth Kennedy (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996). The remarks made by Huon here can be pertinently applied to the different colours donned by Jehan d'Avennes as part of his chivalric endeavours; though it is worth pointing out of course that each 'colour-theorist' had his own, often wildly divergent, opinions on what various colours signified (and indeed on the plausibility of certain colours being worn or even obtainable in real life).

⁷⁷ All quotations are, again, from *S*, 74-5.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 78.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 84.

⁸⁰ I quote from Peregrine Rand, 'Narrative Closure in a Thirteenth-Century Manuscript – Chantilly Musée Condé 472', unpublished PhD thesis, University of Cambridge (1998), 166. Rand's treatment of chivalric identity in Chapter 4, 'Chivalric Identity and Narrative Closure', contains a number of subtle points that are relevant to my discussion here, though it should be noted that his purposes are different from mine. Rand is arguing, cogently, that the performance of chivalric identity problematises narrative closure, while I am suggesting that Butler's theories are useful in that they confuse in order paradoxically to elucidate questions of Embodied and Ideological Alienness in *Saladin*.

⁸¹ On all this see Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble. Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (London and New York: Routledge, 1990) and especially her 'Imitation and Gender Insubordination', in Diane Fuss (ed.), *Inside/Out. Lesbian Theories, Gay Theories* (London and New York: Routledge, 1991), 13-33.

⁸² On the question of the 'native informant' see Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason. Towards a History of the Vanishing Present* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1999). The quotation, on the other hand, is from Stendhal, *Le Rouge et le Noir* (Paris: Classiques Garnier, 1989), 342.

⁸³ *S*, 81.

⁸⁴ This comment is Maria Colombo Timelli's. See her "Banquets, dinners, soupers..." 290.

⁸⁵ S, 81-2.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 169.

CHAPTER FOUR
SUBVERSION AS RECUPERATION:
SEX, CHIVALRY, AND THE RECONFIGURATION OF ALIEN IDENTITIES IN
JEHAN D'AVENNES

D'ou sont venues les grans vaillances, les grans emprinses et les chevalereux faiz de Lancelot, de Gauvain, de Tristan, de Guron le courtois, et des aultres preux de la Table Ronde, aussi de Ponthus et de tant d'aultres sy tresvaillans chevaliers et escuiers de ce royaume [...], sinon par le service d'amours acquerir et eulz entretenir en la grace de leurs tresdesirees dames; dont j'en congnoiz aucuns, qui, pour estre vrais amoureux, et de bien servir lealement leurs dames, sont venues en sy hault honneur, que a tousjours mais en sera nouvelle.¹

With these richly ironic words the knowing Madame des Belles Cousines needles the timid young page Jehan de Saintr . Her textual (and broadly sexual) teasing, designed to impel Jehan into noble acts of chivalry as well as to discomfit the unformed thirteen-year-old before Belles Cousines and her ladies, is also extra-textually suggestive, for her speech unwittingly draws attention to certain themes that will prove to be of great interest and importance to an interpretation of the work I shall be discussing in this chapter. In *L'histoire du tres vaillans princez monseigneur Jehan d'Avennes*, questions raised by Belles Cousines' words about chivalry and its changing face, about the relationship between men and women and (by implication) of the sexes to chivalry, and about the formation of gender identities, are posed and, to a greater or lesser extent, answered. The means by which these answers are arrived at is, as I shall show, central to the development, manipulation, and ultimate reconfiguration of the models of Embodied and Ideological Alienness traced in the previous two chapters.

Madame's disingenuous evocation of Lancelot among other celebrated *chevaliers* here is, as Jane Taylor has pointed out, on one level hardly surprising: it is, after all, traditional to invoke these as models of a perfect – if by the fifteenth century dated – brand of chivalric endeavour.² But what does unsettle in her discourse is the ready alliance of 'les grans vaillances, les grans emprinses et les chevalereux faiz' with 'le service d'amours': surely a wilful realignment, if not misrepresentation, of the motivation for these noble deeds? This could simply look like an example, of which there are many more, of Belles Cousines' manipulation of Saintr , his heart and mind, for her own devious amatory

ends, were it not for the fact that this realignment chimes with the focus, or perhaps refocusing, of other fifteenth-century narratives.³ In the previous chapters we have seen, implicitly and explicitly, the performance of an outwardly-directed, public-oriented, chivalric identity on the older Arthurian model; Embodied and Ideological Alienness are mediated through this conscious contact with what was happening outside. But there is another group of mises en prose in which chivalry becomes a more inwardly-channelled enterprise, geared not towards the greater good of the court but rather towards the personal honour and renown of the hero, and – as *Belles Cousines* suggests – a more blatant means by which to ‘eulz entretenir en la grace de leurs tresdesirees dames’.⁴

These works, of which *Jehan d’Avennes* is an especially strident and telling example, serve to turn attention away from the male and on to the object of his affection – to project, thereby, the narrative focalisation onto the woman.⁵ Whether this is a positive or negative focalisation (what I mean by this will be explained through the examples that follow), it highlights for the reader distinctions between masculine and feminine identities, and between subordinate and dominant characters and characteristics.⁶ The clash of gender and sexual identities – the distinction is, it will be seen, a valid one – functions in these texts as the site of an interpretative ‘trouble’, the faultline out of which theorisations of physical and intellectualised Alienness can surface and elucidate.⁷ From the realignment in the relative power and authority of male and female actors in the dramas there emerges, for the critical twenty-first-century reader if not the original fifteenth-century Burgundian one, an interesting if disturbing picture of deviant behaviours.⁸ In *Jehan d’Avennes* embodied aberrance gives rise, and gradually cedes position, to difference of a more troublingly ideological order. Through a discussion of the developing ‘relationship’ between Jehan d’Avennes and the comtesse d’Artois, I want in this chapter to illustrate how – in anticipation of Chapter Five’s treatment of *La Belle Hélène de Constantinople* and *La Manekine* – the subtle subversion of binary opposites (here, masculine/feminine, reality/illusion, speech/silence, or voice/gaze) facilitates something of a recuperation of the balance of power, and of Alienness, in these mises en prose. I begin with *Jehan d’Avennes* proper, and a (necessarily top-heavy) outline of its plot.⁹

**'Ung engin si subtil que de femme': Love, Manipulation, and Identity in
*Jehan d'Avennes***

The scene is the court of Artois. Its overlord the count is perpetually absent, and is instead stationed near Jerusalem and engaged in valiant deeds against the Infidel. His trust in his wife the countess is complete, and he is content to leave the day-to-day running of the household, his lands, and his finances in her hands. The comtesse d'Artois is assisted in her husbandry (I use the term consciously – see below) by one monseigneur Gaultier, a noble, well-liked and level-headed knight. One evening, after dinner, the countess asks Gaultier, apparently innocently if belatedly, whether he has any children. Much as he would like to deny it, the maître d'hôtel confirms that he has a son – Jehan d'Avennes – whose behaviour and mien give him great cause for concern. When pressed, he states that his son prefers the company of common country-folk from their village to the commerce of the court deemed more suitable for a young man of his station. Nothing he can do can turn his son from this misguided sport; Gaultier is a man quite plainly at the end of his tether. Recognising this, the countess offers – for reasons that are never made fully clear but that are not, as we shall see, altogether altruistic – to take Jehan in hand, and to occupy herself with his chivalric and amorous formation.

The next day Jehan is brought to the countess, just as she stipulated, in his natural state – and she is shocked at precisely how 'natural' the young lad is, with his torn robe and filthy hood, his dirty face, mucky hands and long black nails, his muddied shoes and wrinkled hose. After a lengthy interview in which the countess attempts to talk Jehan out of his base ways, and in which the page falls hard and fast for the older woman (of whose married state he is and remains ignorant), the fortnight's dirt is washed from his hands and he is allowed to début his objectionable table-manners. Despite these, despite his slovenly appearance, and despite the relative lack of success achieved by the initial discussion, the countess is prepared to persevere with her project. She presents Jehan with a belt and a purse, which she rather disingenuously informs him are to be given to the woman who most captures his heart; she exhorts him to shun the company

of the low-born in his village, and he graciously vows to do so. Father and son leave the court and return to Avennes, happy in their different ways. Gaultier's heart is further gladdened upon witnessing his son's first action on returning home – he begins to scrape the mud from his shoes and tidy up his apparel and countenance before deciding to have new clothes made, all this of his own volition and for the love of the countess. Jehan mopes around, and expresses a strong wish to return to court – and so that he might capitalise on this new-found enthusiasm, Gaultier (who has not yet guessed the true cause of his son's change of heart) decides to take him back the next morning.

Once at the court of Artois Jehan acquits himself well, and cuts such a – clean – dash that the ladies and especially the countess fail to recognise him immediately. Jehan, however, cannot take his eyes off the countess; and his infatuation grows stronger. His pureness of purpose is not matched by the countess, it soon becomes clear. After dinner a game is played – and it seems (as I will describe in more depth below) that the countess chooses this particular game intentionally – that is open to noblewomen and *chevaliers*, but not to *escuyers*, of which Jehan is of course one. The evening draws to a close, and just as Gaultier and the dejected Jehan are leaving the countess calls her charge to her. She presents him with a diamond ring; she tells him in crassly ambiguous terms that it is to be a souvenir of his lady-love, quite clearly aware of, and relishing, the effect she is having on the blushing boy.

Again Gaultier and Jehan return home; and the previous pattern of sighing and moping repeats itself, such that even Gaultier cannot remain ignorant of its cause. Seeing perhaps how the situation can be turned to account (this is not explicitly stated, though is an assumption entirely consonant with what follows), the maître d'hôtel engineers an opportunity for his son to return to court. He pretends that he has some letters that he needs to deliver to the countess, and allows Jehan to take them. The letter the son bears to the countess is less business than pleasure, though quite whose is not wholly clear: he has written to the countess to tell her of his son's feelings for her. He need not have bothered for not only does the countess already know the state of affairs but almost immediately upon his arrival Jehan declares himself to her. In a move that ultimately though not immediately pleases both son and father, and which cannot fail to give the

countess herself a little sport if not something stronger, she replies that a woman of her standing could not possibly take up with a mere squire. If he were a knight, of course, the story would be very different. Jehan is downcast, and returns pensively to his father, carrying with him a letter in which the countess has outlined her wily scheme to Gaultier. By the time he greets his father, Jehan's mind is made up: he must do all he can to become a knight.

Almost immediately Jehan leaves his father's house and embarks on what will be a lengthy but rather illustrious chivalric trajectory. The would-be knight sets forth, and heads for the court of France. On his way, he helpfully slays a dragon that has been chasing a messenger through the forest; and is later, and as an indirect consequence of this, called upon to help the archetypal damsel in distress, a young orphaned woman wrongly accused of having poisoned her parents. Already fulfilling the rôle of knight with some aplomb, then, Jehan adds further lustre to his cause on arrival at the king's court in Paris. There he engages in combat with, among others, the king of Germany, whom he roundly beats (and who dies suddenly later, which is not good news for Jehan, for the king's brother wishes to exact revenge); and he is given permission to take part in a pas at Bordeaux and a tournament in Compiègne. In each case he fights incognito (this will be important for my argument later), as the Chevalier Blanc and the Chevalier Vermeil respectively, and in each case he wins the day. At Bordeaux his prize is fifteen rubies.

Jehan has been away from Avennes for almost a year; and absence has made his heart grow fonder, and raised his chivalric currency considerably. He decides to return home to visit his father and mother, and while there he pays the countess a visit. He tells her of his exploits on the battlefield, and avers that he did them all in her name. Jehan presents the countess with the fifteen rubies; she takes them, but not his further protestations of love. She feels he is not experienced enough in love's commerce to be worthy of her hand, and sends him away once again with a flea in his ear and, crucially, without an inkling that she is married. He may return in a year. This he does, after further distinguishing himself in the French King's service. Again she turns him down, as he is not yet illustrious enough; Jehan is moved to ask whether she has given her

heart to someone else. The countess replies, in a manner that recalls Yseut's famous *escondit*, that her heart remains the property of the person to whom she has already given it. Jehan takes false hope from this and confirms that he will return once more after a year, a year which he fills in Spain in combat against a pagan army.

He arrives at the court of Artois on New Year's Day, the day when – the text tells us – lovers must give a gift to the object of their affections. Jehan offers the countess himself, body and soul. Finally the duplicitous countess gives him an honest answer, though not the answer he craves. She reveals that she is married, and that her affections were a mere ruse to impel him towards noble chivalric deeds. She hopes that he will not take her amiss, and underlines that she has (in her view at least) done rather a lot for him. Unsurprisingly, of course, Jehan is destroyed. He flees the court, and human commerce, taking refuge in the forest of Mourmay. He throws off his worldly trappings, exchanging with a hermit his rich cloak for a ragged mantle. For seven long years he subsists on roots and berries, and wills death to come. One day, as he sings a song with this powerful message, a party of nobles passes through the forest. With implausible serendipity it is the countess and her entourage: she has been on pilgrimage to the nearby shrine of St Hubert to pray for the soul of her husband who has died. As expeditiously as she previously turned him down, the countess agrees to marry Jehan – as soon as he, as at the outset, has paid attention to his wild appearance. Back at court the marriage is celebrated; a tournament is held at which Jehan fights and wins the day as the Chevalier Noir; and all's well that ends well.

Or is it? While the text gives the impression of having resolved its tensions and arrived at some sort of closure, there is a very real sense in which this is not the case. In fact it is this very insistence on resolution that casts a pall over the work and affirms the distasteful sense of Alienness perceptible to a greater or lesser extent throughout it. This Alien sentiment centres, I will show in this and the following section of the chapter, on the fundamental unviability of the chivalric identity performed by Jehan, and on the countess's wily manipulation both of that masculine identity through her bogus love, and of her own feminine identity in this very act of manipulation. While it would be inaccurate to suggest that the countess *makes* Jehan fall in love with her, it is

nonetheless fair to say that in failing to inform him of the actual state of affairs she behaves rather less altruistically than we are initially given to believe. Jehan's identity as a knight and as a man is undermined here through the disjunction of a woman's speech and silence, of one being deployed where the other would be preferable; and that identity, I argue, has not been restored by the story's conclusion, far from it. In this work, as in its pendant *La Fille du comte de Ponthieu* but in more troubling ways, the day is won by feminine identity.

Within the textual economy of *Jehan d'Avennes*, then, speech and silence conspire to give meaning to the drama – or indeed to take that meaning away. The same can be said on an extra-textual, but also intertextual, level. There is considerable, and highly illuminating, discursive 'play' between the *mise en prose* and its thirteenth-century verse avatar, the *Dit du Prunier*, the earlier work's manifold intertexts,¹⁰ and between *Jehan d'Avennes* and *Le Petit Jehan de Saintré*.¹¹ Often the full import of *Jehan d'Avennes*'s silences emerges from a dialogue between it and these works; an interpretative space is opened up in their interstices that allows us to see more plainly the prosateur's (not especially successful) attempt to delete the alterity of the text, and especially in terms of the relationship between Jehan, chivalry, and the countess. I propose in light of this a closer look at the means by which love finds its way into Jehan's heart, and by which masculine and feminine, chivalric and amatory, identities are manipulated by the countess, followed by a discussion of Jehan's own self-construction through tournament and battle, in order to establish a new – more faithful because more openly critical – of this unsettling work.¹²

Michel Zink has pointed out that by the fifteenth century, 'les romans [...] font une place de plus en plus grande à la cruauté, à l'horreur, à l'ambiguïté ou à la perversion morales'.¹³ While not openly horrific – as my later discussion shows, this epithet is best reserved for *La Belle Hélène de Constantinople* or *La Manekine* (see Chapter Five) –, *Jehan d'Avennes* and especially the countess's behaviour in it can nonetheless be described as cruel, ambiguous, and even morally corrupt. In the figures of Jehan and the comtesse d'Artois there is effected a chiasmus of Embodied and Ideological Alienness, evident from their first interview, in which positions are ceded and reassumed, and through

which readerly impressions of courtliness and identity are turned on their head. While critics of the text have hitherto been content to see the countess as some sort of pattern of female perfection, it seems to me that her ambiguous behaviour towards Jehan (and indeed to his father, monseigneur Gaultier) marks her out more as an anti-heroine in the mould of Madame des Belles Cousines in *Saintré*, and the more troublingly Alien for that, as I shall explain in what follows.¹⁴

Jehan, then, is brought by an embarrassed Gaultier to the court of Artois in his natural state, the archetypal young ‘nice’ ripe for indoctrination and exploitation. Once she has recovered from the – real or feigned – shock of seeing ‘ung si beau jeune homme adoubé de robe deschiree [..., et] defaillant de tous honnestez atournemens appartenans aux nobles’, the countess wastes no time in beginning her programme (‘je l’endocrinerai tellement a pou de langagez que s’il a cuer de gentil homme, il se admendra bref’, emphasis added).¹⁵ Her effect on Jehan is immediate, and immediately disturbing; whether out of nervousness or the beginnings of love, the young lad ‘commença a rougir tres fort et changier couleur’. She begins the interview with leading questions, wondering – while already knowing the answer – what Jehan has been doing that has prevented his appearing at court, opening up even at this early stage the gap between her reality and motives, and those of the naïve Jehan. Gaultier has told her, it seems, that his son enjoys the company of young countrywomen; to tempt him to court, then, the countess tells Jehan of her ladies and their appeal:

Je vous jure ma foy que vous n’y eussiés rien perdu, se venu y fussiés pieça pour vous esbattre avec mez damez et damoisellez qui souventesfois font festez, dansez, carollez et dient dez milleurs mottés du monde. Et pour ce, se vous y fussiés venu, pour l’amour de moy et de monseigneur vostre pere, ellez vous eussent conjoÿ, honnouré et amé autant haultement que damez et demoisellez le pœuent faire.¹⁶

As later in the text (on this see below), the countess’s words here as she invokes the charms of her courtly company serve to shift the amorous focus, and therefore any suspicion, away from her, and unsettlingly recall the behaviour of Belles Cousines in her first interview with Saintré – is he, could he not be, in love with one of the ladies sitting

nearby? But Jehan's head cannot be turned. He is unable to believe that anything could be better than the girls from his village:

Vostre mercy, madame! dit Jehan. J'aymme trop mieulx d'estre avec lez fillez de nos villez qu'avec aultres quelconquez qu'elles soient; car il m'est advis, *sauf vostre reverence*, qu'*ellez me honnouereroient mieulx que ne feroient celles de ceans*, car il n'y a grands ne petite a nos villagez qu'il ne *me face la reverence et me nomme monseigneur*, en moy faisant *toutes lez bonneurs du monde*.¹⁷

This little speech of Jehan's serves to highlight the disjunction between the person Jehan is, the status he actually enjoys, and the impression of these he himself has. As he stands here before the countess, tattered and torn, he is on one level *déplacé*, transported from his natural environment and as such the Embodied Alien; he does not (yet) fit in at court in the same way as he feels he does at home. And yet this is the crucial point: as the phrases I have italicised in the above quotation illustrate, his sense of fitting in in his 'villez et villagez' is an illusory one. In his commerce with the countryfolk, Jehan is not an equal at all: 'chascun devant [luy] s'enclinoit et deffuloit quant on [le] pouoit voir devant ou derriere [...], fussent vacquiers, porquiers, ou bouviers de charue'.¹⁸ He is treated with a respect that suits his social position as the son of their lord, though he seems disturbingly ignorant of this slippage. In Avennes as at court, then, he is the Embodied Alien; as we will see in what follows, Jehan's inability to recognise the extent to which he might belong in a particular social space, and his imperfect understanding of what such belonging might entail, are essential factors in the text's power to unsettle. And what is also of note in the above passage is that very early indication of the countess's rôle as mediator between the two spheres, and between Jehan's reality and his illusion of it.

Perhaps seeing the effect she has had on Jehan – his blush, his citing her as better than both the 'filleressez et femmelettez' and her own noblewomen –, the countess raises the bar of what I see as her morally ambiguous behaviour a little higher. The power in this interview is all hers; her own status as a woman and therefore apparently the Embodied Alien – already muted by her rôle as governor of her husband's lands in his absence – is smoothed over (only to be troubled again later, I will argue) by her elevated social and authoritative position.¹⁹ Safe in the knowledge of this at least, she makes a move that is

symptomatic of her willingness to use her femininity (consciously or unconsciously) to achieve her aims. In the course of the interview, which is taking place *huis clos* in the lady's chamber, 'desirant de le retraire de sez folliez, *non obstant qu'elle fut mariee*, elle l'a pris doucement par la main, puis lui remonstra sa simplese par plusieurs raisons'.²⁰ In taking Jehan's hand despite, and perhaps in defiance of, her married status the countess behaves in a morally-unjust manner; and denies through her behaviour – in silence not through speech – the very fact of this state which is, as we shall see, at the root of a further clash between Jehan's reality and what he imagines to be possible. The ethical aberrance, the Ideological Alienness, of this is given truer and more especial resonance in light of an episode in its thirteenth-century source, the *Dit du Prunier*.

The thirteenth-century text, whose bitter pithiness contrasts with the more tempered prose reworking, begins with a *moralité*. Once upon a time there was a plum-tree growing in a walled garden. This tree represents Prouesse, and the garden Honneur – honour providing a fertile ground in which prowess can grow – while the walls of the garden indicate the effort needed to attain a position of prowess. Two people stand outside the garden; the one cannot get over the wall into the garden unless the other helps him (*Prunier*, ll. 27-28). According to the *moralité*, the 'compagnons' can be compared to two categories of women, whose response to the problem of scaling the garden walls would differ according to their respective station (*Prunier*, ll. 29-32). The first response might be given by women who, being 'vesves et a marier', are ready and able to offer all kinds of gifts and favours to men so that the latter might make something of themselves. The second, on the other hand, could be given by married women, who would not dream of helping a man achieve prowess for fear of gossip. Married women, the poem states, have no intention of risking the abundant fruit they have in their own garden for the sake of another's needs. In *Jehan d'Avennes* the countess (improperly) behaves like the first category of woman: and this deviance from correct behaviour is shown to startling effect by the combined evidence of verse and prose versions.

The countess uses and abuses her femininity to impel Jehan to listen to her, offering – as the rest of the interview makes plain – an apparently ripe plum that turns out to be

sour. Her honeyed words ('elle qui mieux eust amé morir que pincer se non attraire Jehan en vie honorable') have perhaps even more than the desired effect on Jehan, but operate in quite another way on the reader. It is quite plain, indeed explicit, from what comes next, as well as from further similar episodes, that the countess is mocking her young charge, playing with him – and enjoying it: '[elle] lui commença a rire couvertement'²¹ while giving him apparently heartfelt advice. This advice runs as follows:

'Mon bel amy, s'ainsi estoit que je fusse assez bonne et suffissante pour vous conseiller, sur ma foy je suis celle qui volentiers vous conseilleroye. Et quant a ce, ne vous doubtés ja, car en verité je voudroye autant vostre grand bien que dame qui soit au monde [...]. Il seroit bon que vous relenquissiés aux follies qui aveuglent *vostre cuer noble* [...] et choisissiés aulcune dame pour la *servir de cuer amourusement*, lesquelles choses moult vous seroient honnourablez et proufitablez. Sy vous pry que veuillez *en vostre cuer* descripre lez parrolez que j'ay profferées'.²²

Her counsel, though predicated on a (false, of course) modesty topos – since she is here offering him advice, she clearly believes herself to be 'assez bonne et suffissante' to do so –, is in itself broadly innocuous. What is troubling, however, is the way it is taken by Jehan; as she speaks, he blushes repeatedly, moved, I would argue, in precisely the way the laughing countess intended him to be through her repetition of 'cuer'. Through a wily manipulation of the situation and of Jehan's naivety, the countess has managed to ensure that the boy feels that he has received 'pluseurs signez d'amours' (*JA*, 49) from her while never having to utter those words. Again illusion and reality, and speech and silence, collide in the space between Jehan and the countess, and between Embodied and Ideological Alienness.

After a dinner at which the countess and her ladies 'souvent rioient couvertement' at Jehan's table-manners while making a frank and roundly positive appraisal of his promising corporeal beauty, the comtesse d'Artois calls Jehan into her dressing room; and there follows an episode whose unsettling nature is underlined by its intertextual links with a similar one in *Le Petit Jehan de Saintré*. The irony is palpable, and painful, when she asks 'Jehan, que vous semble de mes damez et damoisellez? Sont ellez aussi bellez que lez filleres de vostre ville? Par vostre foy, *en amés vous point l'une?*'²³ Of

course he does; and the sigh he gives in response to this question is all the proof we – and indeed the countess – need of who represents the object of his affections. ‘Elle lui avoit donné a muser’, as she recognises; her ego is stroked, and she glows with beauty (*JA*, 50). The countess knows the extent of Jehan’s feelings, but chooses not to acknowledge them (because, of course, she can use them to her, and ostensibly Jehan’s chivalric, advantage). In the troubling scene that follows, she refers again to the hypothetical ‘dame que vostre noble cuer aime le mieux’ while leaving us in no doubt of the personal and sexual symbolism of her actions.

As does Belles Cousines in *Saintré*, the countess presents Jehan with a belt and a purse, ‘pour l’amour de la dame que vostre noble cuer aime le mieux, vous priant que ceans revenés bien souvent et qu’il ne vous chaille plus de sivre lez filleressez de villagez’. It should be noted that, unlike Belles Cousines’ gift, the countess’s purse is not explicitly offered so that the young man might rectify his slovenly appearance. That Jehan returns to Avennes and decides to tidy himself up somewhat, and order some new clothes, is testament to the fact that ‘il se commençoit a hontoier de sez folliez’ because of his feelings for the countess – or, more exactly, as a consequence of the offices of Amours.²⁴ (I will return to this important distinction below.) The confluence of the former focus of Jehan’s amorous endeavours, the court ‘ceans’ and its mistress, and the potent sexual symbol of the ‘gibbeciere’ (which conventionally represents the scrotal sac), and the intertextuality between this and the *Saintré* gifting elucidates well the countess’s aberrant, morally suspect purpose.²⁵

Once back in Avennes, Jehan pines for the court to such an extent that his (as yet uninitiated) father takes him back; and an episode that closely parallels the one described above confirms that the countess is nothing if not consistent in her Embodied and Ideological Alienness, and has crucial if disturbing consequences for the construction of Jehan’s chivalric (Alien) identity. This second presentation at court contrasts with the previous one: whereas on the last occasion Jehan’s outward appearance was so abhorrent that the assembled company could not stop staring at him, this time he is so well turned-out that he blends in (‘il estoit tant changié que nulle n’y avoit qui le recognut’, *JA*, 54) until his rather feminised beauty turns heads.²⁶ Again

the countess invites him to dine; and this time he distinguishes himself with impeccable manners. She is pleased, to a certain extent, that ‘cez briefvez parollez avoient permué de mal en bien le noble courage de Jehan d’Avennes’ (*JA*, 54-5); but the cat has still further sport with her mouse.

After dinner the comtesse d’Artois proposes the playing of a game – and it is ‘ung jeu fait a propolz ou les chevaliers estoient et les escuiers non’. Jehan, of course, is not a *chevalier* and is debarred from the sport: in his new finery he presents an outward appearance that conforms with what is acceptable at court, but still he stands outside of proceedings as the Embodied Alien. He is no longer a scruffy bumpkin; but neither is he a knight, and ‘[d]esquelz veoir jouer moult estoit marry Jehan a cause qu’i ne sçavoit entremettre *comme les autres qui fais estoient* pour jouer’.²⁷ As we shall see later, the fact that Jehan is both actually and metaphorically not ‘made for playing’ is of the utmost importance for the development of his character and of my argument here. And, further, it is one of a number of features that set him apart from the countess, for she is emphatically a schemer. Suggesting this particular game is, it appears, another stage in her highly original plan to impel Jehan towards change. When a young woman at court asks her ‘pour quoy Jehan et lez aultrez escuiers ne juoient point’, the countess gives the following answer:

Sy sachiez que *lez escuiers ou tamps jadis*, tant fussent ilz descendus de haulte generation, *estoit mis plus bas par bonne raison*; car c’estoit affin qu’ilz preissent en eulz corage et hardement tel que par leur hardement ilz peussent avenir au noble estat de chevalier, qui est le plus haulte degrei que gentil homme puist obtenir. [emphasis added]²⁸

Her enterprise, quite plainly, is to cast Jehan ‘plus bas’ – and, even if her reasons here seem on this level at least laudable, by the end of the story it is quite clear that she has succeeded in her aims, and perhaps more roundly than either she or the author intended.

As we have seen, neither Jehan nor his father has any inkling that her behaviour is in this sense morally questionable. Jehan is depressed at having been excluded from the game, but can have no perception of the project behind that exclusion; and the

countess's next action would convey to Jehan no double-dealing. Indeed at the very least it would imply generosity – if not something more, and more troubling. Gaultier decides that they should be on their way, and so they take their leave of the countess. In another highly dubious incident, where the smile on the countess's lips spells mockery not affection,

la dame le regarda doucement en souriant tant que muter lui fist la couleur fresce et amoureuse et lui donna ung diamant en disant: 'Or ça, mon gracieux ami, bien voy qu'il vous en convient aller, mais affin que par dela *vous ayés souvenance de vostre dame par amours, je, pour l'amour d'elle*, vous donne ce diamant, vous priant que tousjours soiés parseverant a bien faire.²⁹

Once again, as she did when she presented Jehan with the belt and purse, the countess is able to step outside of herself, fracture her identity into two halves – the woman with whom Jehan is in love and who is well aware of that love, and his innocent altruistic protectress.³⁰ As far as she is concerned the diamond is given as a token Jehan will give to his hypothetical and as-yet-undiscovered lady-love, not as a token of her own love for him. The mischief – and the Ideological Alienness of the episode – inheres in the fact that Jehan listens not to what the countess says, but to what she leaves unvoiced and hanging between her words. He, I would suggest, hears nothing but the 'vostre dame par amours, je'; he accepts the diamond as a lover's gift; and he leaves the court of Artois, his heart full of Love.

My use of the capitalised substantive 'Love' here is deliberate, for I want briefly to draw attention to a further way in which truth and reality are juxtaposed and juggled in *Jehan d'Avennes*, and in Jehan d'Avennes. I hinted above that when Jehan returns from court for the first time, and decides to do something about his tawdry mien, he does this as a consequence not explicitly or specifically of his feelings for the countess, but rather as the product of the worthy offices of Amours:

Il mist hors de son cuer noble imbecilité et folie et y pose *par le vuloir d'Amours* science et abundance de sens. [...] Et par *ainsi Amours aient fait expunger* le cuer de Jehan d'Avennez de toutez choses tendons a vie irraisonnable et inhonorable [...]. Lesquellez chosez faictes, *Amours lui commanda* qu'il feist faire robbez et habillemens nouveaulx pour parer et orner sez

beaux membres [...]. Desquelz habillemens il soy atourna de pure et france volenté *sans enhortement de personne sy non d'Amours*.³¹

This personification of love is not unique in the work, though it is absent from the parallel episode in the *Dit du Prunier*. Whenever it occurs it troubles our reading of the story and its import, on several interconnected planes. On this reading, Jehan is in thrall not to the charms of the wily countess, but rather to the figure of Amour – which might serve, disturbingly, to exonerate the countess from the morally suspect behaviour that, I have been arguing up until now, she exhibits towards Jehan.

If changes have been effected in him ‘sans enhortement de personne sy non d’Amours’, then it follows that the countess is apparently blameless. I am reluctant to let this interpretation stand, however, and for these reasons. What we have here, I think, is a quite clear case of the prosateur engaging with his verse intertext and being unsettled by the behavioural alterity – the Ideological Alienness – he finds there. The author does not ‘want’ the countess to be blameworthy – just as, we shall see in Chapter Five, Wauquelin does not ‘want’ his kings to be guilty of incest –, and so effects a marked if nuanced deletion of that alterity. Amour, he suggests, has put these feelings in Jehan’s breast, not – by definition – the countess; as far as the prosateur is concerned, the name of Artois is in the clear (which is of great importance, given that Philip the Good was, of course, also the count of Artois). The fact remains, however, that the author himself has the countess reveal to Gaultier that she ‘*faidoit de l’amer s’il estoit chevalier*’ (*JA*, 60); and that any notional trustworthiness that might inhere in the countess is in any case subverted by the intertextuality between the *Dit du Prunier* and *Jehan d’Avennes*.

Through the transference of emotions here the author is simply contriving to undermine what Jehan feels rather than actually encouraging us to see the countess as innocent; and through an interleaving of verse source and prose reworking at a later stage of the story we perceive all the more clearly the pernicious effect the countess has on Jehan. The prosateur’s attempt to scrub out the Ideological Alienness of the countess’s ruse fails; it is all too obvious that her pretence is real enough, even while being equally evident that Jehan is allowing himself to live a lie. The unsettling

consequences that this lie – and indeed this deletion of alterity – have for Jehan’s masculine and chivalric identity will be explored in the following section.

**‘Homs sui je, dame, vraiment’: Ideological Alienness and Interpretative
Ambiguity in *Jehan d’Avenes***

This complex trigonometry of reciprocal relationships between Jehan, the countess, and ‘Amours’ is expressed to good effect when Jehan returns to the court for the third time, bearing the letter his father has written to the countess.³² Though on two levels an ironically redundant act – both because the countess is of course already fully apprised, and because Gaultier’s letter writes out any doubt –, Jehan reveals his love, and tells of how everything he has done to better himself has been for what he thought was love, and for the countess. Though she has exhorted this admission from the young page in her familiar fashion, remarking with a smile and a cunning identity-transfer that ‘il me semble que nouvellement vous avés fait et mis vostre cuer sur *l’amour d’aucune dame*, de laquelle chose je seroye moult joyeuse s’ainsi estoit’ (*JA*, 58), Jehan fails to see the duplicity and answers entirely honestly, and at great length. As such, the countess’s response leaves him ‘dolant’:

Je vous prie que vous m’aiés pour excusee se je pareillement comme vous m’avés fait ne vous donne mon amour. Car je iroye *contre mon honneur*, attendu que *vous n’estez que simple escuier*, non obstant toutesvoyez que je ne fay reffus de ce que vous m’avés dit et présenté. Mais se vous estiés ja sy heureulx comme de *parvenir a l’estat de chevalerie*, la dignité est si grande que *vous en vauldriés de mieux envers toutez damez quelconque* et en seriés moult a prisier.³³

Her courtly language masks the moral bankruptcy of her purpose; and, one might argue, occludes for Jehan the true meaning of her words. She does indeed go counter to her honour if she accepts his declaration, his ‘corps et cuer’, but not because he is a ‘simple escuier’: rather, it would be dishonourable because she is already married. Jehan, of course, does not learn this until it is too late; and is able to make an unwarranted connection between chivalric endeavour and sexual success, not with ‘toutez damez quelconque’, but with one particular woman. The countess places herself and the

dignity of being a knight in opposition, and this works on the young squire in unfortunate ways. In a skewed process of cause and effect, Jehan resolves to become a knight, not because he desires it intrinsically, but because, precisely, he desires the countess. And thus begins a troubling correlation between his chivalrous and amorous trajectories, and his masculine – personal and social – identity: the codes of knighthood to which he ascribes seem to depend not on a sincere desire to improve himself *qua* knight, but rather on a self-centered wish to appeal to the countess. Jehan's whole chivalric career turns, then, on this fundamental deception, which makes his identity as a knight unsound; he fails to recognise the need to incorporate a code of publicly-oriented authenticity into his chivalric behaviour. By the end of the tale he is, we shall see, no better off than he was at the beginning, and might in fact be rather worse. The machinations of the countess effect a change in his identity that proves unviable; she is responsible for the construction and destruction of his identity as a knight and, more crucially, as a man.

It is perhaps surprising, given the angle I have taken so far in this chapter, to realise that Jehan's becoming a knight occupies the greater part of the story: at least three quarters of the text's one hundred and fifty-three chapters are filled with his – to a greater or lesser extent – derring-do, whether of the dragon-, knight-, or pagan-slaying kind, a proportion which is broadly supported by ms *B*'s iconographic programme.³⁴ While we cannot of course ignore this aspect of the text's physical make-up – it is after all evidence, as I suggested in Chapter One, of the court's taste in literature – it is important to be clear that my purpose here turns on a more creative, and equally legitimate, reading of *Jehan d'Avenes*. This reading depends on locating the text's faultline, or 'fêlure', the point in the work's unconscious that magnifies and elucidates Aliennes – and at which Aliennes in its turn elucidates and magnifies meta-textual social or cultural concerns –, and on going beyond the surface themes of the story. The greater part of the tale is concerned with the formation (and destruction) of a chivalric identity; but what I am interested in here is not the exact nature of Jehan's exploits, but the very fact that he undertakes them and to what ends. As Maria Colombo Timelli has suggested, '[l]a biographie du héros, toute terrienne qu'elle est, demeure de fait une indéniable *quête d'identité* menée par un véritable *chevalier errant*':³⁵ but though Jehan is a

‘chevalier errant’ in fact and in act, what concerns me is the nature of the ‘sens du monde’ he should also be seeking. The troubling misunderstanding behind what constitutes this ‘sens’, and the means by and for which he goes off ‘aventures querant’, then, will be explored in what follows through a selective discussion of the text, and in particular the tournament episodes in which our hero participates.³⁶

In *Jehan d’Avennes* there are three of these tournament episodes, taking place at Bordeaux and Compiègne, and back at the court of Artois; in each, Jehan fights *incognito* as the Chevalier Blanc, Vermeil and Noir respectively.³⁷ The trio of tournaments, and the respective disguises, are traditionally treated critically as a homogeneous unit; this, though, seems to me to neglect the proper Alien function of the scenes for Jehan’s identity quest, and the decadence of that identity.³⁸ Teasing these apart, while in fact reinstating them to their proper textual position and distance from each other, allows a clearer image to emerge of the vexed inauthenticity of Jehan’s enterprise, and its fundamental and important circularity. There are, as we shall see, links here with the construction of a chivalric identity as discussed in *Saladin*, but once again intra- and intertextual connections serve only to highlight the inherent Alienness of *Jehan d’Avennes*, and of Jehan d’Avennes and his place in society. To illustrate how this is so, I turn now to a brief discussion of the Bordeaux and Compiègne tournaments.

Though these two episodes are different in motive and structure – despite its textual primacy the Bordeaux tournament (or more correctly ‘pas’) is a much more parochial affair than the politically-charged event at Compiègne –, there are nonetheless marked and important similarities between them, as indeed there are between these and the Chevalier Noir incident I deal within due course. In each case Jehan fights for the duration, and triumphs; he retires to the forest after each event to rest and change;³⁹ and after the close of each tournament he returns to the court of Artois – the proper element for any knight, not merely this love-struck one, being the court – to present the spoils of battle to his lady. And, of course, in each Jehan fights *incognito*. The reasons for this disguise are not made at all clear in the text; and clarification cannot be sought in this instance – as it can be, *mutatis mutandis*, in other cases and in connection with other mises en prose – in the *Dit du Prunier*, for the tournament episodes are neither included

nor even alluded to anywhere in the verse source. As Maria Colombo Timelli underlines in her article on Jehan d'Avennes and Lancelot, the notion of fighting *incognito* has an impressive – Arthurian – pedigree;⁴⁰ but I would want to go further than does Colombo Timelli's discussion in suggesting that this confluence, far from shedding light on questions of disguise and chivalric identity, muddies the waters of *Jehan d'Avennes* even further.

Unless the authorial purpose here is similar to that of Antoine de la Sale in *Saintré* – which previous evidence suggests is unlikely –, and unless positing a notional link between Jehan d'Avennes and Lancelot is ironic, the conjunction of that most perfect of knights and Jehan's *incognito* appears misguided.⁴¹ Colombo Timelli seems to imply that the confluence lends lustre to Jehan and his enterprise; but the fact that the two knights cannot be on the same footing actually tarnishes things. The sincerity – the authenticity – of Lancelot's (at least chivalrous if not quite amorous) endeavours, whether we read them in Chrétien, or the *Prose Lancelot*, or elsewhere, is entirely at variance with the inauthenticity of Jehan's; and the particular nature of this inauthenticity – which I shall discuss below – is only highlighted by the presence, if again not the fact, of *incognito*.

There is of course a fundamental paradox inherent in discussing any form of disguise as a means to identity – for surely if identity is to be known, the mask will have to slip and the disguise needs must be seen through? This is certainly – usually – true in the case of *incognito*. The double nature of armour, whether bearing insignia or otherwise, is that it both conceals and reveals identity of one sort or another; and the paradox of chivalric *incognito*, as Susan Crane suggests, is that it 'amounts to a peculiar kind of self-dramatisation that invites rather than resists public scrutiny'.⁴² If the knight is fighting for honour and renown, what is the value of being in disguise; and if, like Jehan, the knight does not allow his identity to be revealed, what is the value of any public interest aroused in him?

The notion of exposure to scrutiny that Crane discusses presupposes that chivalric identity is an undifferentiated and publicly-defined identity, constructed on the basis,

broadly, of garnering personal and political honour; and while this might hold true for Saladin, or by implication the Cligès and Erec alluded to in Chapter Two, the presupposition cannot be extended to Jehan d'Avennes. The particular function of *incognito* in this instance – for the modern reader at least – is in fact to underline how far removed Jehan's method and purpose are from the chivalric norm, and the very real sense in which he, as we saw previously, is ever the outsider. Personal and political renown mean nothing to him; and the only person by whom he wishes to be recognised is the countess. So what is important here is not, precisely, the significance of the colours worn by Jehan, for example, or even the intertextual parallels inherent in the act of disguising himself, but the way in which the notion of *incognito* can be negatively extrapolated to illustrate both this important feature of Jehan's Alien identity and how he renders himself the more Alien in and through his attempts to forge that chivalric identity.

What is the more telling, then, is the place of repetition in this process. I argued in the previous chapter that Saladin's fluctuating identity as a Christian knight was best viewed as performance on the model set out by Judith Butler; the identity expressed there was based on a series of repeated actions carried out in response to events and stimuli in the here-and-now and these, when viewed together, by the individual knight and by the social body that regulates those actions, conduce to a portrait of the self. According to Butler's dense theory that portrait of the self is, further, destined to be forever a fiction, because it exists only as a consequence of a particular perception of the actions at any given moment: 'coherent gender, achieved through an apparent repetition of the same, produces as its effect the illusion of a prior and volitional subject'.⁴³ So, just as the subject is a fictional construct inferred from performance, the model each performance attempts to repeat is a fiction; and because no act of repetition can ever truly replicate what it sets out to, the performance is doomed to failure and the subject to an endless cycle of repetitions. This is crucial to Jehan's identity-performance: he *repeatedly* adopts a disguise, just as he *repeatedly* retires to the forest, and *repeatedly* returns to the court. And he is repeatedly thwarted in his amorous and indeed chivalric purpose because of a fundamental discontinuity between reality and his fictionalised construction of it.

The notion of performance suggests, of course, the presence of an audience. For Butler this is, broadly, society; in *Jehan d'Avennes* that audience is the court of Artois, and specifically the countess. The identity that Jehan performs through acts of chivalry is directed towards the countess, which is apparent in his journeys back and forth to court (as was the identity he projected initially in the three parallel return journeys to court commerce). He performs the identity solely to win the love of the countess, not in response to any inherent desire to be chivalrous, which begs the question. And that his performances are doomed to failure is underlined most distressingly in his third return to court. He has determined to give himself 'le corps et le cuer' to his lady, but the reaction from the duplicitous countess is not the one he hoped for:

Gentil chevalier, dist la dame, sur ma foy je ne vous feray plus languir, ains vous confesseray mon cas. Si sachiés que j'ay seigneur a mari et que lez doulz regards que je vous ay donnés et l'esperance ausi, n'a esté sinon pour vous entretenir au noble mestier d'armez, auquel par le consentement de moy d'Amours vous avés esté promeu.⁴⁴

The identity Jehan has been performing has been for nothing; he does not – for, as we, the countess, and his father know, he was never likely to – get the woman for whom he has been performing his chivalric actions.

The countess rather disingenuously expresses the hope that 'vous soiés comptent de moy et qu'il vous plaise prendre en grei le service que je vous ay fait et la peine que j'ay eu pour vous introduire';⁴⁵ again divorcing herself from a pernicious identity and its effect on Jehan, the countess clearly believes that she has acted honourably towards him. He has, after all, excelled – on one level at least – as a knight: where, she appears to suggest, is the problem? She has achieved *her* purpose; and whether Jehan has achieved his, and indeed what that purpose was, is to her immaterial. Through her Ideologically Alien behaviour and the expression of a dangerously doubled identity, the countess has – as we shall see in what follows – knowingly set Jehan up for a fall, both as a knight and, more unsettlingly, as a man. Jehan is compelled thus to become, I would argue, on several planes both the Embodied and Ideological Alien; and this coming-together of the fragments of his identity, on a meta-textual level if not for the

character in the story, is seen to interesting effect through the topos of the forest, an Alien space, as mediator of identity.

As was mentioned above, in the *incognito* tournament episodes, the forest was the place to which Jehan retired to rest and to change out of his chivalric disguise – in a sense to substitute the trappings of one identity-performance for another. Here again, after the disturbing encounter with the comtesse d'Artois Jehan is emphatically not 'comptent' – 'tout sens lui fault et telle desesperance le sourprent qu'il ne la puet plus oir parler, ains s'en part' – and he seeks solace in the forest of Mourmay. Seeing that the identity he has been performing through chivalric endeavour has proven to be unworkable he is drawn apparently instinctively to the forest and, at the entrance – in an act that must surely be viewed as the symbolic throwing-off of the constraints of chivalry and courtly existence –, Jehan encounters a hermit, 'et lui donna son coursier et sa robe pour avoir ung malvaix manteau que cest hermite avoit affulé'.⁴⁶ (This is an interesting deviation from the *Dit du Prunier* – in the thirteenth-century text the courtly accoutrements are thrown into the sea –; and the presence of the hermit adds a Christian dimension to the mise en prose that seems to be of intertextual note later.) The only reminder of his former self he retains – the prose, unlike the verse, informs us in due course – is the diamond ring the countess gave him, in 'souvenance de [son] dame par amours'. Jehan enters the forest, noting as he passes the fallen leaves of the trees and equating their state – their lack of 'bellez robbez' – with his. It would be tempting to argue that the forest functions here as a place of safety, a *locus amoenus*, in which Jehan can stop performing, and return to some notional natural state. This is in some measure true, though in a much more troubling, and much more compelling, sense than is first apparent.

Jehan does, in some senses, stop performing in the forest, but this is far from being a positive measure: he no longer performs, precisely, because his chivalric identity has become unsustainable and hence, in Butlerian terms, unrepeatable. As Butler suggests, identity becomes dangerously disrupted when repetition fails: this illusion is shattered and identity is disrupted.⁴⁷ What happens when Jehan enters the forest, in fact, is that he assumes a new set of performances. Mad for love of the countess the erstwhile courtly hero metamorphoses into the fabled Wild Man (as the *Dit du Prunier* tells us,

‘partout estoit velus q’uns hours’, v. 1194), dressed in his hermit’s ‘malvaix manteau’ and tucked away from society in the hollow trunk of a tree. This change represents, in terms of Jehan’s identity, a retrogression: Lucken expresses it well when he suggests that ‘Jehan se retrouve au point où il était avant de fréquenter la cour, dans un état de déchéance comparable. En pire’.⁴⁸ It is worse, of course, because, as Lucken points out, whereas previously the young ‘unreconstructed’ Jehan simply resembled a wild animal with his messy hair and long nails, now he is in fact ‘saulvaige’ (*JA*, 189). He has become the Embodied Alien *par excellence*, his Embodied state, though, is a direct response to his psychological, Ideological, one, and a consequence of the countess’s devious ways.

Jehan is here still performing an identity, certainly, but one whose Butlerian connotations might be further elucidated in terms of Elizabeth Grosz’s concept of corporeality. For Grosz, ‘[a]ll the effects of depth and interiority can be explained in terms of the inscriptions and transformations of the subject’s corporeal surface. Bodies have all the explanatory power of minds’.⁴⁹ The specific feminist reconfigurations of the body, and its textuality, of Australian philosophers of the body like Grosz or Moira Gatens reject the traditional philosophical dualities of, for example, mind and body, or inside and out. In simple terms, for Grosz et al, the body *is* the mind, and the mind *is* the body, with no perceptible overlap or point at which the two entities – if of course they are legitimately to be described as two – converge or diverge. So instead of the traditional mind/body dualism what is required for the accurate representation of a person is an ‘embodied subjectivity’ or a ‘psychical corporeality’. This, I think, is what we have here in the case of Jehan: his outward, ‘saulvaige’ self reflects, because it is a consequence of, his interiority.

Jehan has, in other words, become to an extent his own monstrous double: his wild appearance ‘explains the share of destruction he cannot contain’.⁵⁰ The particular destruction of identity Kristeva is referring to here is especially relevant when applied to the forest-dwelling Jehan – or, better, when applied to the forest-dwelling Jehan as read through his thirteenth-century avatar. He is in this state – the ‘omme saulvaige’ – now as a consequence of the particular process of construction and deconstruction his love

for the countess has occasioned in him. If blame is to be apportioned – and we should be clear here that, as I suggested above, the prosateur is careful not to do this –, then at least a share of it should be laid at the feet of the countess. Her unsettling omnipotent rôle as at least co-author of Jehan's destiny here, in the *mise en prose*, is especially well understood through the intertextuality between it and its verse source. When, in the *Dit du Prunier*, the squire is reunited with his lady, he makes explicit the correlation between her and his current plight: 'Dame, en ordure me presistes/ Et en vilté me remesistes,/ Vous m'avez fait et puis deffait'.⁵¹ And if, further, we read this against the construction of Jehan's 'embodied subjectivity' in the forest as what Grosz has called 'the in-between' space – 'the in-between is what fosters and enables the other's transition from being the other of the one to its own becoming, to reconstituting another relation, in different terms'–,⁵² we come some way closer to a proper interpretation of this text and its Alienness.

The in-between space of the forest mediates and fosters Jehan's identity precisely because of its dual function as a utopia (a 'lieu de reposz') and a dystopian space in which even the singing of the birds underlines to Jehan how far removed he is from society and its charms – 'comme il lez oït chanter par grant joieuseté, il qui remiroit la joie qu'il cuidoit avoir, par impatience et inconstance, se pamma, et de plus s'esjoïssoient lez oiseillons, de plus se douloist et surcroissoit son amertume de courage'.⁵³ And it underlines, further, the sense in which Jehan is always destined to be an outsider. He retired to the forest as the social identity he was performing proved unviable; and in the forest, an apparent haven, he becomes an 'omme saulvaige' who does not sit well in those surroundings. He has been 'fait et deffait'; and quite how the fragments of his identity might fit back together eludes him. The fullest expression of this correlation between Jehan's embodied subjectivity, his fragmentary self, and his surroundings, occurs in the curious episode of the *lai* he sings.⁵⁴

This is a peculiar moment both at the level of the text, in connection with the themes it highlights, and in more general terms: for, while the verse source mentions the fact that 'ung lay que jadis fait avoit/ou temps de sa chevalerie/et pour sa dame' is sung, it does not provide the text for it.⁵⁵ The anonymous author of *Jehan d'Avennes* has therefore

composed the lyric text of the *lai* for the express purpose of inserting it here;⁵⁶ and has consequently included themes which are central to the identity-performance undertaken by Jehan here and, importantly, in what remains of the story. The *lai*'s main theme is the expression of unrequited love; but in close counterpoint to this are interconnected notions of death and selfhood.⁵⁷ In this respect it serves to highlight well the circularity of Jehan's career or, better, the parallels between its later stages as described at this point, and its inauspicious beginnings. Here, as throughout the story, Jehan is at variance with his surroundings; and, wherever he is, his anguished heart 'confort avoir ne pue[t]'. As we saw in his first meeting with the countess, Jehan – when cast low as he is here – seems to want to cut a unique, if not superior then certainly *sui generis*, figure. In the *lai* (which, the intertextual relationship between it and the verse source reminds us, was ostensibly composed 'jadis' but remembered now) he insists upon the originality of his grief, his status as 'le plus dez plus dez doulans', apparently to set himself apart from the common weal of love-struck knights. Certainly, as this brief extract from the ninety-six-line poem illustrates, the strength of the emotions is never in question: so far removed from this place – any place – does he feel, alone in the utopian-dystopian wilderness of the forest, Jehan wishes for death.

A toy, Dieu d'Amours, je me plains,
 De douleurs plains
 Plus que nul aultre de ce monde.
 De tez fais du tout me complains,
 Si ne me plains
 De la douleur qu'en moi redonde.
 Mieux aime que Mort me confonde
 En aulcune unde,
 Car, sur ma foy, je suis certains
 Que suis a mes jours desrains
 Et que remains
 Cil ou le plus de duel habonde.⁵⁸

When not wishing for death, of course, Jehan apostrophises Venus, asking her to 'fai sans sillence/Savoir mon duel a mon maitresse [...] /Affin que ma martire cesse' – and,

ironically if unsettlingly serendipitously, this does happen, though not through the offices of Venus. Though not fitting the models set out by Jane Taylor in her article on the lyric insertion, the lyric nonetheless has a dual diegetic function here: as well as illustrating Jehan's state of self, the singing of the *lai* facilitates the reunion of the knight and the countess.³⁹ Following the death of her husband the countess has been on pilgrimage to the shrine of St Hubert; her route back to court takes her through the forest of Mourmay, where she hears Jehan singing. Jehan recognises the lady immediately, but is chased through the forest by the men of her entourage for she does not yet know him. When caught, Jehan allows the lady to approach him; he shows her the diamond ring she gave him and which he retained; thereby she recognises him, and informs him of her widowhood. The countess again gives Jehan a new suit of clothes and sends him to her cousin to be cleaned up before he heads to the court of the King of France. The king tells Jehan he may choose a bride; Jehan chooses the countess. They marry, with much celebration.

And they should, it seems – certainly from the lively tone of the *mise en prose* –, live happily after. But the conjunction of the marriage with the themes of the *lai*, the intertextual contrast between the recognition scene in verse and prose, and the confluence of these with Jehan's final performance of chivalric incognito, ought to give us pause for thought. Just lines before, in the fifteenth-century text, Jehan was the Embodied and Ideological Alien; he fulfilled this rôle as a consequence of his Wild Man metamorphosis, occupying in the forest a troubling liminal space outside, as we have seen, of the commerce of society as well of the forest itself. The sense of unease we – as critical twenty-first-century readers – feel when we see Jehan, through his marriage to the countess, slotting back apparently effortlessly and thoughtlessly into the ways of the court is explicable when read through the recognition scene in the *Dit du Prunier*. Whereas in the prose version, the countess approaches the ostensible 'omme saulvaige' and asks him/it 's'il est crestien', in the verse 'la dame le conjura/De tout le pooir que Dieux a/Que il ly die s'il est homs/Ou s'autre est se condicions' (ll. 1251-4). The Wild Man's response is clear and, in the context of what I have been saying about the *mise en prose*, troubling: 'Homs sui je, dame, vraiment'. The marriage unsettles precisely

because of what this remark reminds us about the nature of Jehan and the countess's (not only amorous) relationship.

The comtesse d'Artois is responsible for impelling Jehan to chivalric endeavour; and she is also, if less directly, at the root of his taking refuge in the forest and concomitant 'sauvaige' performance. As we saw previously, she has 'fait' Jehan, but has also 'deffait' him. The identities he performs are directed to a greater or lesser extent towards her and the winning of her love; and even now, after they marry and Jehan apparently achieves this aim, these identities prove unviable. As Lucken points out in his article on the *Dit du Prunier*, though with a slightly different emphasis, by the end of the story nothing has actually changed: the lady is no more in love with Jehan than she was before and, because of her machinations on him and his identity, Jehan is no more the knight, or the man, she suggested at the outset he should be. If chivalric identity can be seen as a specific performance of masculinity, then through the events of the tale and Jehan's pseudo-knightly trajectory, and the countess's rôle in them, we see that Jehan's status not only as a knight but more crucially as a man has been undermined. The chivalric identity proved unviable, as did – at the beginning as in the forest – that of the 'noble savage'. Marriage or no marriage, we leave Jehan where we found him, performing an inauthentic identity.

That this is not lost on Jehan himself can be demonstrated through a final example. I mentioned earlier that there are three episodes of Jehan adopting chivalric *incognito* in this story. The last occurs in a tournament mounted to celebrate the marriage of Jehan and the countess. Jehan fights this time as the Chevalier Noir; again he wins the day, and again he retires to 'ung logis' in the forest to disarm. He is apparently performing the same kind of chivalric identity as he was previously, and with the same futility – if before he was performing to win the love of the countess, what is the value of the performance now that he has it or, more especially, now that he knows there is no love to garner?⁶⁰ The futility of the performance in this regard is the more disturbing when read in conjunction with the colour-symbolism of Jehan's *incognito* here: this time, he wears black, the colour of mortality. The dovetailing of this with the morbid themes of the *lai* and the intertextuality between verse and prose suggests Jehan's recognition that

his chivalric exploits have been, and will continue to be, woefully misdirected – and as a consequence that his identity as a man means little. Through her duplicitous attempts to mould Jehan to a chivalric career, the countess has endangered, almost to the point of collapse, his masculinity. From her apparent position as the Embodied Alien – because she is a woman –, and through her Ideologically aberrant behaviour, she has gained the political and sexual upper hand over Jehan. And Jehan has become the Embodied and Ideological Alien, and continues to perform an embodied subjectivity – to inhabit, in fact, a body that does not suit his subjectivity. At the end of the story we cannot share the certainty of the *Dit du Prunier's* Jehan, and are forced instead to conclude more interrogatively ‘homs [est-il], dame, vraiment?’. My discussion of the mutilation narratives *La Belle Hélène de Constantinople* and *La Manekine* in the following chapter takes up, again, the notion of Alien bodies as markers of subjectivity, and as mediators of selfhood. As here, though in more violent and more troubling ways, we see how identities in these two final texts are written on and by the body.

¹ Antoine de La Sale, *Jehan de Saintré*, ed. Jean Misrahi and Charles A. Knudson (Geneva: Droz, 1965), 9. This passage has become something of a commonplace in *Saintré* scholarship, especially since the relatively recent wave of criticism on the rôle of Madame des Belles Cousines in the text (for some articles pertinent to the subject see below); since the value of the commonplace, though, tends to be its truth, there is no harm in quoting these knowingly manipulative remarks again, and to somewhat different ends. All subsequent quotation from *Saintré* will be from this edition.

² See Jane H. M. Taylor, ‘Courtly Patronage Subverted: *Lancelot en prose*, *Petit Jehan de Saintré*, *Medioevo romanço* XIX (1994), 277-292. I will return to Taylor’s essay in the course of this chapter, particularly in my discussion of the Avennes-Artois couple in *Jehan d’Avennes*. I am necessarily leaving unexplained here what I mean by ‘a dated brand of chivalry’; this will I hope emerge more clearly as the chapter progresses.

³ On the relationship between *Saintré* and *Belles Cousines*, and the abuse of the power she holds over him see, for example: Taylor, op. cit.; Jane H. M. Taylor, ‘The Parrot, The Knight and the Decline of Chivalry’, in *Conjunctures: Medieval Studies in Honor of Douglas Kelly*, ed. Keith Busby and Norris J. Lacy (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1994) 529-544; Anne Caillaud, ‘The Search for Power: A Female Quest on Antoine de la Sale’s *Petit Jehan de Saintré*’, *Fifteenth-Century Studies* 24 (1998), 74-83; Roger Dubuis, ‘Le chevalier, la femme et l’abbé: la structure du *Saintré*’ and Danielle Quéruel, ‘Veuvage, amour et liberté: la Dame des Belles Cousines dans le roman de *Jehan de Saintré*’ in *Revue des langues romanes* CV (2001), special issue ‘*Saintré* d’Antoine de la Salle. Entre tradition et modernité’, 51-70 and 129-142 respectively; and Michelle Szkilnik, *Jehan de Saintré. Une carrière chevaleresque au XV^e siècle* (Geneva: Droz, 2003), especially Chapter II, ‘Le service de l’amour’. It is I think worth quoting these works in full here as they have all to a greater or lesser extent informed my reading of *Jehan d’Avennes*, on which there is depressingly little stimulating scholarship. I will discuss this, and the illuminating intertextuality between *Saintré* and *Avennes*, in what follows of the chapter.

⁴ I am thinking especially of the early stages of *Girart de Roussillon*, of Gillion de Trazégnies at the court of the Sultan, or – to a lesser extent – the *Roman du comte d'Artois*. (For editions of these works, see the Bibliography.)

⁵ On focalisation in literature, see Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), in particular Chapter Six; see also my Chapter Five, below.

⁶ As will become apparent in what follows it is on occasion easier to discuss and to theorise femininity and female identity, it being the habitual Alien category of identity with masculinity as its default 'natural' opposite – rather as I suggested Christianity was to the Alien paganness in the previous chapter on *Saladin*. Studies of the construction of feminine identity have mushroomed in recent years, and the past decade – one thinks, to name but a couple, of E. Jane Burns, *Bodytalk. When Women Speak in Old French Literature* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993), or Roberta L. Krueger, *Women Readers and the Ideology of Gender in Old French Verse Romance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993) –, while much less attention has been accorded to medieval perceptions of masculinity. The obvious exception to this is, of course, Simon Gaunt, *Gender and Genre in Medieval French Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995). See also, and more generally, C. A. Lees, *Medieval Masculinities: Regarding Men in the Middle Ages* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995), or Ruth Mazo Karras, *From Boys to Men: Formations of Masculinity in Late Medieval Europe* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003). Some useful work in connection with gender identities in the mises en prose is being done by Rosalind Brown-Grant; for a helpful *état présent* of her work see her article 'Learning to be a good husband: competing masculine identities in the *Roman du Comte d'Artois*', *Cahiers de Recherches Médiévales* IX (2002), 179-197.

⁷ The term is of course Terence Cave's. For a more thorough-going discussion of this categorisation as laid out in *Pré-histoires. Textes troublés au seuil de la modernité* (Geneva: Droz, 1999), and of how it differs from Foucault's similar-seeming notions on faultlines and the *épistémè*, and from Riffaterre's catachresis, see above, especially Chapter One.

⁸ It is, I think, important to draw attention to this apparent disjunction between a modern and a contemporary Burgundian reading of the texts at issue here. As I will show below, the ideology of the text as presented, for example, through the range, positioning and subject-matter of its miniatures often differs quite markedly from the interpretation I place on them; this ideology must, of course, be respected and not overshadowed. Indeed, when read against my Alien theorisation, contemporary concerns can take on a further meaning. The point about the textual 'fêlure', and indeed of the construct of Alienness, as I have suggested above, is that they provide tools with which to tinker with these texts, to take them apart in meaningful ways that might not have been available to their contemporary readership but which reveal valid interpretations nonetheless.

⁹ I shall be referring throughout to Danielle Quérue's edition of the text, *L'Istoire du tres vaillans princez monseigneur Jehan d'Avennes* (Villeneuve-d'Ascq: Presses universitaires du Septentrion, 1997), rather than the earlier edition by Anna Maria Finoli (*Jehan d'Avennes, romanzo del XV secolo* (Milan: Cisalpino-Goliardica, 1979). The two editions are based on the two extant mss of the text: Finoli refers to ms A (Paris, Bibliothèque de l' Arsenal 5208), while Quérue has chosen ms B (Paris, BnF ff 12572). The two different mss are of course rubricated differently and, as a consequence, critics' references to the story's chapters often appear to dissonate; readers should be aware of this. My reasons for choosing Quérue over Finoli are essentially arbitrary; though BnF ff 12572 was of course produced for Philip the Good (Arsenal 5208 was done at the behest of the duc de Croÿ), and boasts a total of 17 pen-and-wash miniatures by the Maître de Jean de Wavrin. As Quérue explains (op. cit., 8-10), neither ms is exactly datable; but it is legitimate to affirm that BnF ff 12572 was produced before 1468 as it appears in the posthumous inventory made of Philippe le Bon's library: see J. Barrois, *Bibliothèque prototypographique...* (Paris: Treuttel et Würtz, 1830). Both mss, of course, as stated at the outset of my Chapter Three, contain all three elements of the *Cycle de Jehan d'Avennes*.

¹⁰ For the thirteenth-century text see *Le Dit du Prunier – Conte Moral du Moyen Age*, ed. Pierre-Yves Badel (Geneva: Droz, 1985). As elsewhere in this thesis, my purpose here is not to provide a strict correlation between the mise en prose and its verse source; this is redundant both because it does not – except in the examples I give below, or within the ‘grammar’ of the mise en prose outlined in Chapter One – add a great deal to an interpretation of *Jehan d’Avennes*, and more basely because coverage of this is given in Badel, op. cit., 27-30, Finoli, ed. cit., xxxiv-xxxviii, and Quérue!l, ed. cit., 12-14. For a thorough discussion of the *Prunier*’s complex intertexts, see Christopher Lucken, ‘Fiction et défection de l’amour: le *Dit du Prunier* ou la “disjointure” du roman courtois’, in *Ce est li fruis selonc la letre* *Mélanges offerts à Charles Méla*, textes réunis par Olivier Collet, Yasmina Foehr-Janssens et Sylviane Messerli (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2002), 385-404. Lucken’s article is the only work dealing, broadly, with the *Avennes* material that seems to me to get to the heart of that material’s contradictions; perhaps for this reason, therefore, it will be seen that some of the conclusions he arrives at on *Prunier* parallel, *mutatis mutandis*, some of my own on *Jehan d’Avennes*.

¹¹ Though Lucken (op. cit.) confidently asserts that ‘Antoine de la Sale s’inspire en particulier de *Jehan d’Avennes*’ (386), the precise nature of the links between the two works is in fact much more difficult to discern. This centres in particular on the vexed question whether de la Sale can be described as a Burgundian author. According to Doutrepoint (*La Littérature française*, 312), *Saintré* emerged in 1456, when its author was still in the service of the Angevin court, but by 1459 and the publication of *Des anciens tournois et faicx d’armes* he had shifted allegiance to Louis of Luxembourg. As I suggested at the beginning of the previous chapter, the dating of both *Jehan d’Avennes* mss is rather more problematic: Quérue!l (ed. cit.) asserts that ms *A* is datable to 1460, while *B* was produced before 1468. On this evidence it seems to me that Lucken’s hypothesis does not stand scrutiny, though it might nonetheless be plausible to assume at least that the two works knew each other, and that the Burgundians knew *Saintré*.

¹² Scholarship on *Jehan d’Avennes* is both depressingly, and happily for my purposes, limited and limiting. The field is dominated by the Anna Maria Finoli-Maria Colombo Timelli-Danielle Quérue!l triumvirate; as such what exists is faultless as far as it goes, but simply fails to go far enough. As I suggest in my Introduction, much of the critical writing on the mises en prose is too ‘obedient’, or concentrates too much on the philological or topographical background to the work in question. The introduction to Quérue!l’s edition cited above, for example, spends a lot of time on how the text betrays its Northern provenance; perhaps because of this, and because of its proximity to the ducal court, the text is treated as a simple love story in which everyone behaves impeccably and lives happily ever after – a view which is self-evidently textually untenable. For a flavour of *Avennes* criticism see, *inter alia*, Anna Maria Finoli, ‘Le cycle de *Jehan d’Avennes*: réflexions et perspectives’, *Le Moyen Français* 30 (1992), 223-241; ead., ‘Joutes, tournois, guerres et batailles dans la structure narrative de *Jehan d’Avennes*’, in *Guerres, Voyages et Quêtes au Moyen Age. Mélanges offerts à Jean-Claude Faucon*, eds. Alain Labbé, Daniel W. Lacroix, and Danielle Quérue!l (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2000), 161-5; Maria Colombo Timelli, “Banquets, disners, soupers” dans le cycle *Jehan d’Avennes*: suspension ou progrès de la narration?, *Fifteenth-Century Studies* 19 (1994), 279-300; and Danielle Quérue!l, ‘*Jehan d’Avesnes* ou la littérature chevaleresque à la cour des ducs de Bourgogne au milieu du XV^e siècle’ (unpublished *thèse d’Etat*, Paris IV-Sorbonne, 1988). The reading I propose here goes beyond these.

¹³ See Michel Zink, ‘Le Roman’, in *Grundriss der romanischen Literaturen des Mittelalters VIII/1. La littérature française aux XIV^e et XV^e siècles*, ed. Daniel Poirion (Heidelberg: Carl Winter Universitätsverlag, 1988), 197-218. These remarks are on 216.

¹⁴ An interesting sub-theme, which merits further exploration, of the mises en prose is this very ambiguity exhibited by older women. I am thinking in this regard of the French queen in *Saladin*, and especially the devious mothers-in-law of *La Belle Hélène de Constantinople* and *La Manekine*. The last two figures are briefly referred to in Chapter Five below.

¹⁵ Both quotations are from *Jehan d’Avennes*, ed. cit. (hereafter *JA*), 45.

¹⁶ *JA*, 45-6.

¹⁷ *JA*, 46, emphasis mine.

¹⁸ *JA*, 47.

¹⁹ It is interesting to note that these initial scenes between Jehan and the countess do not feature in ms *B*'s iconographic programme; later illustrations of the couple – importantly, once their relationship is more 'balanced' – have them depicted as of equal size and stature, but especially in light of the remarks made by Jane Taylor in connection with the iconography of *Saintré* it is tantalising to wonder what the Wavrin Master might have made of these early episodes. See Jane H. M. Taylor, 'Image as Reception: Antoine de la Sale's *Le Petit Jehan de Saintré*', in Donald Maddox and Sara Sturm-Maddox (eds.), *Literary Aspects of Courtly Culture: Selected Papers from the Seventh Triennial Conference of the International Courtly Literature Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 265-279.

²⁰ *JA*, 47.

²¹ Both quotations in this paragraph are from *JA*, 48. For further examples of the countess punctuating ostensibly genuine sentiment with a wry laugh or a sardonic smile, see *JA* 59 ('en souriant'), or 160 ('en riant lui demanda s'il avoit point fait de nouvelle dame en amours'). These episodes could of course be read entirely innocently, but this is I think to neglect a major aspect of the text and its propensity to Alienness.

²² *JA*, 48.

²³ *Ibid.*, 50. This can be fruitfully compared with Belles Cousines' 'Mais de celle que plus vous amez et voulriés qui fust vostre dame, puis quant ne la veistes vos?', quoted above.

²⁴ The use of Amours referred to here is, it should be noted, not the same strategic employment as seen in Chapter Two. There, the rôle of the personified abstraction of Amours was the fulfilment of a hermeneutic function, to allow the prosateur a means of levelling and legitimisation. The device is brought to bear in this instance in interesting, but in eminently more straightforward, terms, as will be noted in what follows.

²⁵ Compare this with *Saintré* 49-50: 'Mon ami, je vous donne ceste boursectte telle qu'elle est. Si veul que les couleurs dont est faite et les lettres entrelassees, dores en avant pour l'amour de moy vous portez'. As Jane Taylor has pointed out ('Courtly Patronage Subverted', 286), 'the episode, by an effect of *mise en abyme*, has Madame pre-empting the boy's future chivalric self by stamping it with her own identity'; while we do not learn whether or not the 'gibbeciere' that the countess give Jehan d'Avennes is monogrammed, the confluence of the two episodes and their possible meanings is mutually suggestive.

²⁶ 'Et s'il estoit naturellement taillié de toutez lez beaultés qu'en corps d'homme se pouoit comprendre, il ne fault pas demander de sez contenancez, car lui qui avoit tendre face, blanche et bien coulouree, levres et joez vermeillez, et yeulx rians en doulz regards...' (*JA*, 54). This feminised, *blason*-like description will be important later to my discussion on the construction and destruction of Jehan's masculine identity.

²⁷ *JA*, 55.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, loc. cit.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 56, my italics.

³⁰ This discursive practice has troubling parallels with the words of the King of Hungary in *La Manekine*. As I note in Chapter Five, he effects a similar bifurcation of his identity when proposing an incestuous union to his daughter: 'je vous ay mariée, et vous ay donné baron, par lequel vous serez couronnée royne et damme de terre la plus honouree qui soit vivante. Lequel baron n'est point loing de vous, mais

vous est tresprivez, et je vous diray qui il est'. The baron he has chosen is, of course, rather too close for comfort: it is the king himself.

³¹ *JA*, 51.

³² We should note here the parallel between Jehan's returning to court three times before the countess sends him away, and the three times he goes back and forth after she has dispatched him towards chivalric endeavours.

³³ *JA*, 59.

³⁴ Of ms *B*'s 17 watercolour illustrations, only six do not feature Jehan engaged in chivalric exploits. This disjunction between textual reality and my argument as it stands thus far should not give cause for alarm: what I am trying to show – and this will emerge further as the chapter continues – is how Alieness, and more aberrant themes, function beneath the text's surface as a sort of seismograph of a broader socio-political concern that the contemporary Burgundian reader might not have been conscious of. For a corrective to my reading of text and image in this case, though, see for example Jane H. M. Taylor, 'Image as Reception: Antoine de la Sale's *Le Petit Jehan de Saintrè*', and Elisabeth Gaucher, 'Le Livre des Fais de Jacques de Lallain: Text et Image', *Le Moyen Age* XCV.1 (1989), 503-18.

³⁵ See Maria Colombo Timelli, 'Le Jeu chevaleresque *incognito* de Jehan d'Avennes et de Lancelot', *Rendiconti dell'Instituto Lombardo* 124 (1990), 127-38. This quotation is on 128. Colombo Timelli raises certain of the same points in this article as I do here, though it will be seen that my approach differs significantly from hers.

³⁶ The inauthenticity of Jehan's endeavour, based as it is on his attempts to win not personal honour but the love of the countess, can be viewed as doubly problematic in light of my comments above on the curious personification of, and imputation of blame to, the figure of Amour. If Jehan is acting because of what Amour has told him, rather than out of genuine emotion for the countess, then his chivalric progress is an even greater sham.

³⁷ The references to these in the text are as follows: Bordeaux, 73-98; Compiègne, 98-118; Artois, 192-5. It is interesting to note, in light of the countess's apparent rejection of Jehan on account of his being an 'escuier' rather than a 'chevalier', just how quickly this latter designation is applied to Jehan once he has struck out from court.

³⁸ On the tournaments in *Jehan d'Avennes*, see for example Maria Colombo Timelli, 'Le jeu chevaleresque', or Anna Maria Finoli, 'Joutes et tournois, guerres et batailles'. For several reasons – not least of these because I argue that the reality of what happens in the tournaments is less important than their hermeneutic function –, the historical specificity of these events is outside the scope of this thesis. For a thorough discussion of this, though, see (*inter alia*) Richard Barber and Juliet Barker, *Tournaments, Jousts, Chivalry and Pageants in the Middle Ages* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1989), or Evelyne van den Neste, *Tournois, joutes et pas d'armes dans les villes de Flandres à la fin du moyen âge* (Paris: Ecole des Chartes, 1996). An interesting digression – which again I have not the space to make – would be provided by looking at the tournaments in *Jehan d'Avennes* in connection with the contemporary works on tournaments, by Antoine de la Sale and René d'Anjou, cited in the Bibliography.

³⁹ There is perhaps a further intertextuality here – given that the tournaments are absent from the verse avatar – between *Jehan d'Avennes* and a twelfth-century poem, Hue de Rotelande's *Ipomedon* (ed. A. J. Holden (Paris: Klincksieck, 1979)). In *Ipomedon*, the forest functions as an important space of metamorphosis and repose in much the same way as it does here, as I discuss further below. See *Ipomedon*, ll. 3564-8, 4523-8, and 5542-6. My thanks are due to Penelope Eley for the initial suggestion of the potential (thematic) links between the two texts.

⁴⁰ See Maria Colombo Timelli, *op. cit.*, *passim*. Colombo Timelli also suggests ‘rares sont en effet, au XV^e siècle, les chevaliers bourguignons [...] qui ne se battent pas *incognito* ou assumant l’identité des personnages arthuriens, dans leurs entreprises chevaleresques’ (*op. cit.*, 131). It is not immediately clear, but what I think Colombo Timelli is suggesting here is that the ‘entreprises chevaleresques’ in question were not actual battles but rather the sorts of themed tournaments integral to the popular Burgundian *pas*. The attempted connection between these and the sorts of episodes Jehan engages in – which I would argue are different in nature – further troubles the issues of identity, and its links with the real and the imagined, in this text. For reference to *incognito* in these *pas*, see Colombo Timelli’s n. 14 (131).

⁴¹ On de la Sale’s ironisation of the Lancelot/Saintré intertextuality, see Jane Taylor, ‘Courtly Patronage Subverted’.

⁴² Susan Crane, *The Performance of Self: Ritual, Clothing, and Identity During the Hundred Years War* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), 125.

⁴³ Butler, ‘Imitation and Gender Insubordination’, in Diane Fuss (ed.), *Inside/Out. Lesbian Theories, Gay Theories* (London and New York: Routledge, 1991), 13-33. This quotation is at 24. As we shall see in what follows, the true core of Butler’s remark – gender, rather than simply personal, identity – is equally relevant to *Jehan d’Avennes*. A question we need to ask by the end of the story is, precisely, whether a coherent gender identity has been achieved or not in Jehan’s case.

⁴⁴ *JA*, 183

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, loc. cit.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 184

⁴⁷ See Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999), 174-5.

⁴⁸ See Lucken, ‘Fiction et défection de l’amour’, 400.

⁴⁹ Elizabeth Grosz, *Volatile Bodies. Toward a Corporeal Feminism* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994), vii.

⁵⁰ Julia Kristeva, *Strangers to Ourselves*, trans. Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), 183.

⁵¹ *Dit du Prunier*, ed. cit., ll. 1265-7.

⁵² Elizabeth Grosz, *Architecture from the Outside. Essays on Virtual and Real Space* (Cambridge, MA, and London: The MIT Press, 2001), 93.

⁵³ *JA*, 184

⁵⁴ The text does not actually *say* that Jehan sings, but it seems legitimate to suggest that he does. This is despite the fact that his lyric is preceded in the text with the words ‘duquel la coppie s’ensuit’ which, *mutatis mutandis*, heralds *written* documents such as the Roman Emperor’s ‘mandement’ to summon knights to his aid (*Jehan d’Avennes*, 76) – is this an authorial illogicality or oversight? Certainly the countess *bears* Jehan’s words.

⁵⁵ *Dit du Prunier*, ed. cit., ll. 1209-12. Two things are interesting to note in these three lines from the verse: firstly, the distinction that is drawn between the countess and ‘sa dame, *non amie*’, and secondly, the fact that here Jehan’s chivalric days appear to be in doubt. A couple of lines previously, Jehan has been

described as 'ly bachelers', while later he is 'escuier et chevalier'. His identity fluctuates in the verse intertext, again, in ways that retroactively cast light on the *mise en prose*.

⁵⁶ On the mechanics and problematics of the lyric insertion in a prose text, see the special issue of *Perspectives médiévales*, 3 (1977) and in particular the articles by Jacqueline Cerquiglini ('Pour une typologie de l'insertion', 9-14), and Christiane Marchello-Nizia ('La forme-vers et la forme prose, leurs langages spécifiques, leurs contraintes propres', 35-42); Jane H. M. Taylor, 'The Lyric Insertion – Towards a Functional Model', in Keith Busby and Erik Kooper, *Courtly Literature. Culture and Context* (Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 1990), 539-48; and Maureen Boulton, *The Song in the Story: Lyric Insertion in French Narrative Fiction, 1200-1400* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993).

⁵⁷ This point is also made by Maria Colombo Timelli in her 'Le "lai de l'homme sauvage" de *Jehan d'Avennes*', *Le Moyen français* 30 (1992), 45-61. This is a more philological, and therefore less thematic, study of the *lai* than I offer here.

⁵⁸ *JA*, 187

⁵⁹ See Jane H. M. Taylor, 'The Lyric Insertion – Towards a Functional Model'.

⁶⁰ The contrary could be argued here, that Jehan's need to keep up the chivalric performance is if anything the more pressing because he now has a seigneurial status to live up to (the example of Chrétien's Erec is telling in this regard), and that consequently this final chivalric performance succeeds in incorporating the code of inauthenticity woefully absent from the previous ones. But what I am suggesting here is, rather, that Jehan's repetitions in this respect are still the manifestation of a troubled and unviable identity: circumstances have changed but his responses have not.

CHAPTER FIVE
THE FATHER'S SEDUCTION?:
INCEST, IMAGES, AND THE HERMENEUTICS OF ALIENNESS IN
LA BELLE HÉLÈNE DE CONSTANTINOPLE AND *LA MANEKINE*¹

This king unto him took a peer,
Who died and left a female heir,
So buxom, blithe, and fair of face,
As heaven had lent her all his grace;
With whom the father liking took,
And her to incest did provoke.
Bad child, worse father, to entice his own
To evil should be done by none.²

Despite the moralising protestations and hand-wringing of the Chorus-figure³ in Shakespeare's *Pericles*, in literature at least 'entic[ing] his own to evil' in the form of incest was apparently something that a father quite often might – and indeed should – do. In her magisterial study *Incest and the Medieval Imagination* Elizabeth Archibald cuts a broad swathe through the law and literature of endogamous relationships both real and fantasy, and discusses the abiding popularity of the topos in literature from the Classical era to the dawn of the modern period and beyond.⁴ My purpose here is less ambitious: in this chapter I want to draw attention to two interconnected incest narratives in currency at the mid-fifteenth-century Burgundian court, Jehan Wauquelin's *La Belle Hélène de Constantinople* and *La Manekine*, and to assess how Alienness – Embodied and Ideological – is constructed, mapped, and often made legitimate, through the treatment of sexual deviance. Further, by paying close attention to these texts' method of dealing with incest and its consequences, and in light of my remarks on corporeality in the previous chapters, I will illustrate how identities – whether masculine, feminine, or Alien – are constructed and destroyed in *La Belle Hélène* and *La Manekine*, and move towards drawing tentative conclusions about how this might be seen to parallel Burgundian (social and political) identity-formation.⁵

As I noted in my introduction to *Jehan d'Avennes* in Chapter Four, in his contribution to the *Grundriss der romanischen Literaturen des Mittelalters* Michel Zink points out that in the

late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries 'les romans [...] font une place de plus en plus grande à la cruauté, à l'horreur, à l'ambiguïté ou à la perversion morales', with a 'succès particulier' having been enjoyed by tales of rape and incest.⁶ Works of literature featuring such violent episodes or chains of events appear to have been especially popular at the court of Philip the Good: as well as the 'crusading' narratives like *Jehan d'Avennes* or *Gillion de Trazégnies* alluded to above, in which valiant pseudo-Burgundians mete out just desserts to wrong-headed pagan hordes, and whose appeal for the crusade-hungry duke is not difficult to comprehend, the ducal library housed a rich collection of tales featuring Alien – and potentially Alienating? – sexual violence.⁷ Some of these, like *Valentin et Orson*,⁸ the *Roman d'Apollonius de Tyr*,⁹ and *La Fille du comte de Pontbieu*,¹⁰ as well as *La Belle Hélène* and *La Manekine*, were mises en prose for the duke and his entourage, while others – *Les Cent Nouvelles nouvelles*¹¹ and *L'Histoire de Baudouin de Flandres*¹² for example – were original prose compositions undertaken in response, perhaps, to this predilection. *La Belle Hélène* and *La Manekine*, then, form part of a rich intertextual, and intratextual, tradition: these fifteenth-century mises en prose engage in dialogue not only with their verse sources, and verse and prose analogues, but also and particularly directly with each other and (in the case of *La Belle Hélène*) with themselves.¹³

It is perhaps because of this intertextuality that the two works tend to be treated by critics as a more or less homogeneous unit.¹⁴ And, it is true, at the most basic levels of plot – in outline at least – and of origins, *La Belle Hélène* and *La Manekine* do have points in common. Both are so-called 'flight from incest narratives', a genre which Elizabeth Archibald has suggested only became current in the Middle Ages;¹⁵ both tell the story of a young woman who, faced with the incestuous longings of her father, flees court to save her moral skin. This, however, casts the unfortunate heroine out of the frying pan and into the fire (or, in the case of *La Manekine*, the reverse – her father wanted to have her put to death on a pyre). There follows a series of more or less *vraisemblable* twists and turns in the narrative, in which both heroines, in different circumstances,¹⁶ lose a hand or arm, and are both falsely accused by jealous mothers-in-law of giving birth to monsters, before finally being reunited with the fathers and the land that banished them. And all, presumably, live happily ever after. My use of this formula is deliberate;

for, as even the bare plot summary given above shows, these are in origin if not in fact fairy – or folk – tales. The framework for the narratives, and what holds all the peripeteia together, however tenuously, is closely related to that of the so-called ‘Constance’-type story, after the ill-starred heroine of Chaucer’s *Man of Law’s Tale*, which is itself linked to the type of folk-tale known generically as ‘The Maiden Without Hands’.¹⁷

On a deeper narrative level, too, *La Belle Hélène* and *La Manekine* share certain features which will form the basis of my discussion in this chapter. In both works, I suggest, a subtle interplay of images, doubles, and mirrorings ensures the transmission and – in most cases at least –¹⁸ levelling of the Ideological Alienness that constitutes the fathers’ desires for their daughters; these images, further, are vital in the construction or decadence of identity in the two texts. Equally, though in different ways, the mutilation of the heroines and the fashion in which it comes about – in which the heroines become Embodied Aliens – speaks to these dual questions of Ideological Alienness, and identity. And Wauquelin’s practice of translating these two works, his ‘deletion of alterity’ in his treatment of the incest-threat,¹⁹ is in the end destabilising, and gives rise to another Alienness: where might the blame for the father’s incestuous desires be laid? Whose point of view can we trust in these texts? In *La Belle Hélène* and *La Manekine*, is it a case, as it was in *Pericles*, of ‘bad child, worse father’ – were the two parties complicit, or is something else, something more ambiguous, in play? Though both texts manifest these similar features, and address similar issues, they arrive at their respective conclusions in ways so diverse that I think it unethical to discuss the two works in any way but in a separate, linear fashion.²⁰ I will begin with the more complex of the two narratives, *La Belle Hélène de Constantinople*, and a more thorough outline of its plot.²¹

Place, Painting, Personhood: The Alienness of *La Belle Hélène de Constantinople*

La Belle Hélène de Constantinople exists in two principal versions: a verse *chanson de geste* of over 15000 lines from the fourteenth century; and a prose translation completed ca. 1448.²² In both versions, the story is relatively complicated, if *invraisemblable*.²³ It

concerns neither Helen of Troy nor St. Helen the mother of the Emperor Constantine and founder of the True Cross – this has confused some critics –,²⁴ but rather a different Helen entirely, this time a fictional one. Helen is the daughter of Antoine, Emperor of Constantinople; a fact which is the beginning of our heroine's problems. In Wauquelin's retelling, as in the fourteenth-century verse source, after the death of her mother Héléne's father conceives an incestuous passion for his daughter and wants to marry her. By devious means he receives papal dispensation to do so. The virtuous Héléne, perceiving the sinfulness of her father's desires, and the concomitant threat to her person, takes flight. And so begins an amazing incident-packed trajectory through many nations, and what appear to be numerous a-historical historical periods.²⁵ From Constantinople, Héléne reaches Newcastle, and the court of King Henry of England

This court seems initially the antithesis of that of Constantinople; where there was danger there is now safety. All this changes, however, when the jealous Queen Mother, seeing the rootless Héléne married to her only son, hatches in her son's absence a plot to rid England of Henry's queen. The Queen Mother, in a series of complex machinations involving purloined letters and counterfeit seals, gives her son to understand that his wife has borne him twin monsters; and she lets it be thought abroad that Henry wants his wife put to death on a pyre (ironically the fate that will ultimately befall *her*). A (relatively) compassionate duke at court cannot let Héléne die, though; instead she is cast out to sea on an unmanned vessel, accompanied by her infant sons, devoid of her right arm, cut off as an outward sign of the sin she did not commit. (The motives laid out in the texts are similarly confused-seeming.) Mutilated and impoverished, Héléne wanders for 30 years through, variously, France, Flanders and Italy (in particular, Rome); meanwhile her father and husband are themselves wandering in search of her. After many years, false starts, near-misses, and recognitions – not to mention a fair share of ancillary battles and the successful conversion of several pagan rulers – Héléne and her family are reunited; Héléne's arm, husbanded in a casket by one of her sons over the years as a sort of objective correlative, is miraculously restored to her.

Though both the fourteenth-century version of the text and the *mise en prose* tell the same basic story, they do so to quite different ends. There is in the fifteenth-century tale a perceptible, and systematic, concern with the reinterpretation of the source text, centred on an interpretation of the incest topos. We see a deliberate and self-conscious smoothing-away of tensions through which Wauquelin plays with the intertextuality between source and prose, between the prose text and other Burgundian literature of the period, and between doubled episodes in the text itself. Through creative manipulation of the notions of painting and place, and presence and absence, Wauquelin creates a work palatable to the 'target audience'; and, further, these interconnected concepts become key to a proper interpretation of this polyvalent story. As I have been suggesting throughout this thesis, one of the key operations of the Burgundian prosateur involves the 'deletion of alterity' present in the source text when producing a remaniement. Wauquelin begins to effect this most notably in his handling of place, the geographical and topographical sites mentioned in the story.

As I noted in Chapter One, and as in other texts *mise en prose* in the period (one thinks especially of *Gillion de Trazégnies*, *Girart de Roussillon*, *L'Histoire de Charles Martel*, *Girart de Nevers*, *La Fille du Comte de Ponthieu*, and of course *La Manekine*), the notion of journeying appears to be a device, a *moteur* for the drama proper of the story of *La Belle Hélène de Constantinople*. In this text there are approximately 20 separate journeys undertaken by the different characters; and in each case it is the fact of travelling that is important, not the ultimate destination. I referred in Chapter One to Danielle Quéruel's suggestive argument that travel as a literary device has changed in nature by the time of the *mise en prose*.²⁶ Whereas, in the twelfth- and thirteenth-century *romans de chevalerie* from which these Burgundian narratives derive, a journey to a specific place offered an opportunity for *dédoublement* in the life of the hero, and often an increase in renown, for late-medieval authors 'le voyage, conçu d'abord comme un simple recherche de l'aventure, devient [...] la cause d'un total bouleversement du destin du héros'.²⁷ The journey is merely symbolic, a device for the advancement of the story.²⁸

The most important journey for the narrative advancement of the *Belle Hélène* is, of course, Hélène's flight from the incestuous desires of her father.²⁹ Without this flight

from Ideological Alienness there would quite simply be no real story: her journey ‘met en communication le temps présent de la relation avec le temps passé de son voyage, mais en outre [...] il assure la liaison entre le monde des autres et son propre monde’.³⁰ It ensures, in fact, a triangulation between the world of the heroine in the story, the Burgundian readership, and our interpretation of the tale. This voyage, unlike the majority of those undertaken in other mises en prose, fails to fit into Quérue’s typological framework; principally, it does not begin in the West. It soon becomes apparent, though, that the physical or topographical reality of where Hélène starts out – like that of where she ends up and in what historical time-frame all this happens – ultimately matters little. East or West, North or South; all is, on an interpretative level, irrelevant. As Danielle Régner Bohler underlines, ‘pour l’imaginaire du lecteur le nom même de Constantinople [...] porte les prestiges d’un Orient qu’a su relater ou évoquer le regard d’un croisé ou d’un chroniqueur’.³¹ But for the characters in this story Constantinople is the signifier not of a real, necessary geographical location, full of Eastern promise; not of exotic splendour and the representation of the oriental body; but of something much more troubling.

Constantinople becomes for Hélène (and by extension for the reader) little more than the starting-point for flight.³² It is a ‘non-place’, essentially, ‘a textual fragment of uncertain provenance, dredged up from the past and pointing towards a possibility of ethical meaning’. It is also, by the same token, ‘an enigma, a phenomenon that raises questions but does not wholly answer them’.³³ It is reduced to an enigmatic, troubling bedchamber in an imperial palace: in it are enacted and encoded, in the multiple portraits the emperor has painted on the walls, the secret desires of Antoine vis à vis his daughter, and that daughter’s imprisonment within herself and her reactions to these desires.³⁴ Constantinople functions as a metonym; its ‘[un]ethical meaning’ is sin, and the only response to that, from the virtuous heroine’s point of view, is the flight, and a paradoxical loss and redoubling of her identity.³⁵ But this flight – whether to England or ultimately to Rome – only poses more problems, both for the heroine and for our, and indeed the prosateur’s, interpretation of her story.

If Constantinople raises questions – about the sins of the father and the responses of the daughter – then Rome, which stands in bipolar opposition to the Oriental city in the text,³⁶ can be said to answer them. Rome is the other side of the moral coin, a locus of truth. The portraits Antoine has painted on the walls of his Constantinople residence are paralleled by a series of identical ones done at his behest on a visit to Rome and the Papal palace. And when Henry of England, brought there in search of his wife, sees these images and hears the story of the incestuous father recounted to him by the Pope, all – the identity of his wife and her provenance – is made clear to him. As Régnier Bohler puts it, 'la découverte des portraits romains saura, à elle seule, révéler l'inceste et devenir la parole même de l'aveu'.³⁷ These paintings mask, and unmask, the incest,³⁸ or so, at least, it would seem.

What I want to explore now is, precisely, the idea of these portraits, and the use Wauquelin puts them to, in conjunction with the topos of the heroine's flight and its reasons. While being mindful of the fact that what these images imply, and continue to imply, for Hélène and observers other than Antoine is something rather less innocent, I argue that they are in fact crucial to the processes of acculturation and deletion of alterity discussed above and common to the *mise en prose* genre, and to the mediation and levelling of Ideological Alienness in *La Belle Hélène*. Through the interaction of the portraits of Hélène, the heroine's reaction to them and to the desire of her father, and the falling of the emperor's gaze on the images and/or his daughter, in the prose text a very different picture is painted of the incest-threat, and of identity, from that of the verse source. And this interaction points to further uses of images as hieroglyphs of, and channels for, incestuous leanings both in *La Belle Hélène* and in *La Manekine*. Both these texts reflect and refract incest; but whether they are actually *about* incest pure and simple will be discussed in the conclusions to this chapter, and to the thesis as a whole.

Wauquelin introduces the emperor's desiring of his daughter, in the sixth chapter of the text, in an especially allusive, but economical, manner; and he does so after numerous paeans of praise to Antoine, who 'entre les vaillans hommes pour lors regnans estoit le plus cremeu, le plus redoubté et le plus puissant [...], saige et prudent homme'.³⁹ The emperor's virtue as a ruler and as a man is apparently unquestionable; what *can* be

challenged, however, is the narrative focalisation here, as elsewhere in the episode (see below).⁴⁰ What, precisely, is the remanieur's purpose here? Is he really setting up Antoine as a paragon, whose incestuous longings for his only daughter are a temporary aberration, or rather setting him – and the reader's expectations – up for a fall? Perhaps surprisingly (and difficult perhaps to reconcile with protestations of Ideological Alieness), the former explanation appears the soundest. A close analysis of the incest episode will illustrate this.

After the death of her mother, Hélène is cared for in childhood by, first, a wet-nurse for two-and-a half years,⁴¹ and then a series of 'dames et damoiselles' chosen by the emperor. 'Ceste noble demoiselle Helaine',

venue à l'eage de treze ans, commença fort former et embellir et tant que on disoit que de corps et de façon, de bouche et de nez et de toutes autres membres,⁴² c'estoit la plus belle fille que on peust regarder et, se elle estoit belle et gente de corps et de façon, encores estoit elle plus belle de meurs et de religion...⁴³

Like father, like daughter: the daughter is not only beautiful but is also, as is her father, virtuous and God-fearing. The description of the heroine Wauquelin gives us here – derived, it is true, from the verse source but much expanded – seems to be a traditional blason-like enumeration of a young woman's burgeoning charms, just as the foregoing description of Antoine's valour appeared a conventional *précis* of the standard military ruler. But can we, sophisticated critical readers armed with the knowledge that there is incest to be threatened, really trust appearances here?

The editor of the mise en prose, Marie-Claude de Crécy, clearly – though in this instance erroneously – cannot. She has read the description in the previous chapter of Hélène's having been placed with the nurse for two and a half years, and allowed this to colour her interpretation of the next chapter, the one featuring the incest-episode. As we have seen, Wauquelin brings us into events when Hélène has 'venue à l'eage de *treze* ans' (my emphasis),⁴⁴ but de Crécy is persuaded that the author meant 'trois'. While it is true to say that in the verse source the introduction of the incest-threat takes place 'a .III. ans aconplis',⁴⁵ it is not clear whether this means that the heroine has reached her

third birthday, or that the events about to be recounted occurred an indeterminate and undetermined three years after the emperor, perhaps, first conceived the incestuous desire for her, outside the space and time of the narrative. As de Crécy herself points out, were Héléne three rather than thirteen at this point, the attractiveness attributed to her would be somewhat precocious and unlikely; and, further, any Ideological Alienness perceptible in the emperor's desires darkens all the more if the child is a mere toddler on the textual and sexual stage. Even if Wauquelin read his source as suggesting that Héléne was three, he has clearly decided that this is an internal incoherence, a further narrative and moral alterity that must be stamped out.

In doing so, however, he has left himself open to another, perhaps more troubling, charge. Is the remanieur colluding in the incest? He expands the description of the young Héléne, places beautiful feature upon beautiful feature; and in so doing almost seems to applaud the father's seduction-intent:

Et pour sa beauté, bonté et prudence, dont elle estoit grandement aornee, son pere l'ama tellement *et non sans cause* que à peïnes pouoit il estre sans elle jour ne nuyt, mais la faisoit coucher en son lit et l'acoloit par tresgrant affection et amour, comme celui qui son pere estoit (my italics).⁴⁶

Here, as in a parallel incident in *La Manekine* when it is noted that 'n'estoit cuer d'homme s'il veist qui ne la desirast',⁴⁷ Wauquelin seems to want to legitimise the father's behaviour – so delightful is Héléne that it is not 'sans cause' that a man might find her attractive and fall for her, even if that man happens to be her father –, and make it seem natural, while at the same time stressing the daughter's great prudence and religiosity. Indeed, Antoine is, Wauquelin troublingly suggests, behaving in the proper fatherly manner, welcoming his daughter into his bed and embracing her simply 'comme celui qui son pere estoit'. What is the dominant ideology here? Where, if anywhere, are right and wrong, blame and sympathy, to be laid? Is it a case, as in *Pericles*, of 'bad child, worse father' – or perhaps even of 'bad father, worse child'?

In fact the answer to this is not as clear-cut as either of these remarks might suggest. Wauquelin's treatment of the Ideological Alienness in this incest episode, and of Antoine's reactions to his daughter, though ambiguously focalised, is more subtle than this. A particularly well-wrought sleight of hand, rooted in the passage quoted above, that the remanieur effects in the interpretative space between the prose text and its avatar skews – while nonetheless clarifying – the moral position. Any suggestion of the rightness of this as parental behaviour is absent from the verse text – its anonymous author either takes for granted that the emperor's actions would be viewed thus indulgently, or that he does not need to point out their folly to his audience –, so its inclusion here is seemingly the prosateur's first step in attempting to mask, or delete, the alterity of Antoine's intentions.

The next stage, as a comparison of an episode from the verse and prose texts respectively illustrates, is much more destabilising than what has gone before. In each case this episode is the moment when the incestuous feelings of the father become externalised, when the emperor summons a painter to his bedchamber; in each case the emphasis has been added:

*Tant l'enama ly rois qu'a .III. ans aconplis
Ne vault oncques souffrir que li enfans gentis
Fust couchiés en nul lit fourques ou sien toudis.
De plus en plus l'enaïme ly fors rois postais,
Et de plus devint grande, plus y a sen cuer mis.
Tant ot luy d'amour, che nous dist ly escripts,
Quë ou non de se fille que tant a cler le vis,
Fist ung paintre mander que estoit ses subgis,
Et se ly a fait paindre d'or fin et d'asseur vis
Le fourme de se fille en .IX. lieux ou en .X.
Dedens se maistre cambre la ou estoit ses lis.
La jurent les ymages bien faites a devis,
En la fourme d'Elaine dont il estoit espris.⁴⁸*

[...] à peïnes pouoit il estre sans elle jour ne nuyt, mais la faisoit couchier en son lit et l'acoloit par tresgrant affection et amour, *comme cellui qui son pere estoit*. Et de fait *pour la tresgrant amour qu'il avoit à elle*, il fist venir ung paintre en sa chambre, en laquelle il dormoit continuellement, et lui fist paindre la façon de sa fille, tant prenoit il plaisir en elle, et non point seulement en ung lieu mais en .IX. ou dix lieux. *Laquelle chose parveant, l'Anemy de toute creature, comme très envieux par son attisement commença à esmouvoir et atisier le cuer de ce bon empereur Antoine, et le fist decliner e[n] une mauvaise et perverse pensee.⁴⁹*

Wauquelin, then, has manipulated the source text – or rather the intertextuality between it and his new version – to striking effect. The anonymous fourteenth-century text, and the fact that it does not stress Antoine’s loving his daughter ‘comme celui qui son pere estoit’, gains, as Julia Kristeva would have it, a kind of authority because Wauquelin’s text, precisely, has posited such authority by *not using* the earlier material. ‘Pour devenir lui-même un présupposé, le texte se pose en s’appropriant ce qu’il présuppose’.⁵¹ Wauquelin (pre)supposes that in the verse text Antoine is guilty of incestuous desires for his daughter, and as a consequence of this has the images of her painted on the walls, to nurture and propagate these desires. Indeed, this is apparent from the section quoted above: ‘*Tant ot luy d’amour [...] / [q]uë [...] / Fist ung paintre mander [...], / Et se ly a fait paindre d’or fin et d’asseur vis / Le fourme de se fille en .IX. lieux ou en .X.*’

This, though, does not suit the Burgundian author’s purpose, for reasons that will shortly become clear; what Wauquelin does is turn round his source in order to legitimise the Ideological Alienness of incest, and smooth out problems of interpretation. In the *mise en prose*, as my italicisation of the prose passage quoted above makes plain, Antoine is not in love with his daughter – sexually – *until and after* he has had these portraits painted. It is upon seeing this quirk of behaviour that Satan ‘*commença à esmouvoir et atisier le cuer de ce bon empereur Antoine*’, in similar – though less positive – ways to those exhibited by the personified abstraction of Amours discussed in Chapter Two.

The emperor is shown here to be made to fall in love with his daughter through the images; or rather, he falls in love not with the physical presence of his daughter but, Pygmalion-like, with her portrait.⁵¹ He does indeed love her ‘comme celui qui son pere estoit’, until he has the portraits painted – as Wauquelin shockedly informs us, not just once but nine or ten times –; only then do Satanic forces do their worst, and ‘*le fist decliner e[n] une mauvaise et perverse pensee*’.⁵² The physical love he *thinks* he feels for Hélène, and which makes him think marrying her a legitimate and desirable action, is really, I would argue, simply a transgressive transference of the emotions the pictures excite in him. The pictures are Hélène, or rather one version of her, the one that the father has fallen in love with. (Indeed, this is reinforced later when, in Rome,

Wauquelin mentions ‘le plaisir qu’[Antoine] prendroit en remirant sa fille, *c’est assavoir sa pourtraicture*.⁵³) Rather than being, as Régnier Bohler seems to suggest,⁵⁴ the objective correlative of the emperor’s sinful feelings, the portraits are actually the at first innocent stimulus of them.⁵⁵ Wauquelin appears to be ‘writing out’ the alterity, and attempting to legitimise Antoine’s – to us, and indeed to Wauquelin – morally suspect behaviour. A closer look at the functioning of these images, and others in this text and beyond, as hieroglyphs of incest goes some way to explaining how, and why, this is so.

In both verse and prose the emperor is attempting to fill a lack with the portraits: the loss of his wife, and the concomitant absence of his daughter from the bedchamber (‘à peignes pouoit il estre sans elle jour ne nuyt’). The portrait – conventionally – comes to signify a presence-in-absence here,⁵⁶ representative not only of the humans who are not there, but also of the fact that the emperor is more innocent of sinful behaviour that might previously have appeared. These pictures come to function as a sort of *imago clipeata*.⁵⁷ The *imago clipeata* – a *concept* in art theory rather than a medium or a genre – is thought to have originated in the latter years of the Roman Empire, and continued into the Middle Ages. Its uses are varied; but most interestingly for the present purpose is the use of *imagines clipeatae* in Rome and Byzantium frequently to bring together different individuals, some living, some dead; some human, some divine. ‘The *clipeus* is thus used to indicate absence; the device draws together those absent and those present’.⁵⁸

Perceptible here is what Danielle Régnier Bohler has neatly termed ‘un chassé-croisé entre le réel et l’illusion’.⁵⁹ Antoine constructs, as I discussed above, a version of his daughter, the version painted on the walls, that it is somehow legitimate (at least at this point in the text) to love. The focus of his gaze – of which more below – on these simulacra of Héléne ensures a melding of truth and falsehood, real and illusory appearance. And indeed, as a further episode involving Antoine (though much less directly) and images in an incestuous relationship suggests, the emperor might be seen to be unable to distinguish between the two. He wishes always, and until the reunion with his daughter, for a presence-in-absence. The parallels between this next episode and the Constantinople incest-threat, as well as between its verse and prose

manifestations, are striking, and essential to an understanding of Alienness here and, I shall further suggest, in *La Manekine*.

Hélène has been absent from the court of Constantinople for nearly thirty years, and Antoine has set out to look for her, in order to expiate his guilt for what he now realises was inappropriate – Ideologically Alien – behaviour.⁶⁰ The scene is Bavaria. ‘Lequel pais tenoit ung roi moult felon et crueux, nommé Grimbault’, who, we learn, has conceived an incestuous passion for his daughter.⁶¹ This king is at once like Antoine, and completely different from him, as Wauquelin is at pains to imply: Grimbault wants to ‘violier et espouser’ his daughter, as did Antoine;⁶² but Antoine was not committing the further Alien sin of being a pagan like Grimbault. The pagan king’s character and motives for the incest are immediately and continually called into question; here are no protestations of his valour, or his being ‘entre les vaillans hommes pour lors regnans [...] le plus cremeu, le plus redoubté et le plus puissant [...], saige et prudent homme’.⁶³ His paganness means that Wauquelin’s attitude, and his focalisation of the episode, are clear: ‘paiens unt tort, e crestiens unt dreit’, whatever it is that the Christian might be doing. (This is the sort of negative portrayal of the generic Saracen found in the mises en prose that I mentioned in connection with the more problematic Salhadin in Chapter Three.)

Upon entering the city, Antoine straightaway runs into Clariande, Grimbault’s daughter, who is fleeing Bavaria. Her innocence is never doubted; she has the advantage over her father of having converted to Christianity and, in Antoine’s eyes, the greater moral and ideological fillip of reminding him of his daughter:

[Q]uant il la vist, il cuida soudainement que ce fust sa fille Helayne. Si corust tantost vers elle en lui escriant qu’elle s’arrestast, car elle lui avoit fait assés peine, et courust tant après elle qu’il la prinst par le bras et commença à aviser et cogneust que ce n’estoit point sa fille et fut comme tout honteux et lui dist: ‘Ha, ma tresbelle damoiselle, je vous prie, pour la saincte amour de Jhesucrist, que vous me pardonnez, car, par ma foy, je cuydoye avoir trouvé une autre demoiselle que j’ay longuement quise par pluseurs paÿs’.⁶⁴

So keen is the emperor to find Héléne, to fill the lack her absence has left, that he misrecognises this girl – who, interestingly, he does not yet know to be fleeing the incestuous advances of her father, and who therefore exhibits a similarity to his daughter ideologically as well as physically. (The misrecognition here is especially ironic when we reflect that when Antoine and Héléne meet for the first time in thirty years, the daughter recognises the father but he does not reciprocate immediately.⁶⁵) Antoine is apt, it seems, to mistake reflection for reality, to transfer his emotions onto images and onto the faint surrogates or representatives of what he craves; and Wauquelin is apt, it seems, to want actively to let him. Though the Bavarian excursus is present in the verse, the misrecognition is not. Just as we saw with the portraits in the bedchamber and the comparison of that episode in the verse and prose versions, Wauquelin has here expanded his source to include a detail that, on a number of levels, legitimises Antoine's behaviour. Again, a doubled image has been accorded the place of Héléne.⁶⁶

Recovered from the embarrassment of identifying Clariande as Héléne, Antoine proceeds to question the young Bavarian as to the cause of her extreme sadness; it is at this point that she reveals her father's wish to marry her. As she tells it, her story – staccato, disconnected, breathless – is as follows:

Lequel roy est nommé Grimbault et est ung trescruel homme et de mauvaise foy, combien qu'il soit mon pere. Car, par son mauvais art et par l'Anemy qui le tient en ses las, il a fait faire ung homme de cuivre ou d'arain en maniere d'une ydole, qui rent responces es gens à la volenté de mon pere, et non autrement [...]. Il me vouloit violer et espouser, moy qui suis sa fille et de son propre corps engendree ou ventre de ma mere, que Dieu absoille! Et affin que je me consentisse à sa volenté accomplir, il avoit devant hier fait assembler tous se barons de son royaume [...] et leur enjoist en la presence de son ydole d'arain que sa volenté estoit de soy remarier.⁶⁷

The barons are made to kneel before the idol; and, unsurprisingly, when the idol speaks its verdict is clear. Grimbault must marry his daughter, 'de laquelle il avroit une generacion que après son trespas gouverneroit son royaume trespoussamment'.⁶⁸ What is interesting here, when viewed against the Constantinople incest-threat, is the way in which again an image is used to legitimise and make acceptable a father's desire for his daughter. Playing perhaps on an intertextuality between *La Belle Héléne* and *Valentin et*

Orson, in which a bronze head speaks and decrees that the heroine should be banished, Wauquelin adopts and adapts this motif to make a more subtle point. In the case of Antoine's incest-longings, the portraits of Hélène could actually absorb any alterity; but here, in Grimbaut's case, the alterity is compounded by the presence of the idol. Not only does this king want to marry his own daughter, but he also takes instructions to do so from an idol, the symbol *par excellence* of his dangerous paganness. (In the verse source this is much more strongly stated: whereas in the prose we are led to believe that the desire for the daughter was there before the father spoke to the idol, in the verse the idol clearly and originally tells Grimbaut that 'je vouel que tu espouses en che palais haultain/Clariande te fille, que tant a douc le sain'.⁶⁹) Here again an alternative reality is constructed through the meeting of incest and image; but, unlike Antoine's alternative, it cannot be countenanced. Images clearly have different meanings in different circumstances.

This point is stressed by a final example, from *La Manekine*. In this work too, images – in this case mirror-images rather than paintings or statuary – play a vital rôle in the incest threat posed by the father, the king of Hungary, to the daughter, Joïe. If, in the above example of the Bavarian incest, the melding of the Embodied and Ideological Alien in the pagan incest trope must surely have been too much for Burgundian sensibilities to bear, what might well have appealed to the court are the reasons of Grimbaut, and the 'ydole', for the marriage to the daughter: in order to have 'une generacion que après son trespas gouverneroit [le] royaume trespuissant'. This – in a further example of intertextuality between not only *La Belle Hélène* and *La Manekine* but also between these two works and the narratives of dynasty discussed in Chapters Two and Three – is the reason given for the father's attempts at seduction in *La Manekine*. I want now to examine this episode before drawing this section of the discussion to a close with reflections on the role played by incest and the father's gaze in the construction of identity in these two works.

The Eyes Have It: Desire and the Gaze in *La Belle Hélène* and *La Manekine*

The story of *La Manekine*, which it is worth recounting in full here, begins at the court of the King of Hungary. Upon her deathbed the king's wife, and the mother of the heroine, exacts from him a solemn promise that he will not remarry – unless his barons demand a (male) heir to the throne, in which case remarriage would be countenanced as long as it was to a woman who exactly resembled the queen. The barons do indeed require an heir, and the king must remarry. The barons search all four corners of the globe for a bride for their king, but return empty-handed. Back in Hungary, though, a terrible realisation dawns upon one of these barons – a woman who fulfils the royal criterion does exist, and rather closer to home. The King's daughter, Joïe, is a carbon copy of her mother. So the barons take responsibility for the matter, acquire clerical dispensation for the union, and then put their idea to the King. Naturally, he is appalled; but the idea gradually begins to take root in his mind. Joïe is horrified, and vows never to consent to such a union. In order that this might never happen, she chops off her own left hand at the kitchen window; it falls into the moat below, and is swallowed by a passing sturgeon. When he hears of Joïe's felony – her taking matters into her own hands, one might say –, the King is furious, and orders her to be burned on a pyre. A kindly seneschal releases her, however, burning an effigy in her place and sending Joïe off across the sea in an unmanned vessel.

Eventually Joïe arrives in Scotland, and is welcomed by the young king who falls in love with her. She refuses to tell him her name or her provenance so, observing that she has but one hand, the king dubs her 'Manekine'. All is well until the king has to leave Scotland, and his pregnant wife, to go to a tournament in France. This gives his wicked mother ample opportunity to get her claws into Manekine, effect some complex but not unexpected machinations involving counterfeit letters, and apparently get her son to order Manekine to be burned (again). Again, she is taken pity upon, and set adrift across the sea. She fetches up in Rome, where she lodges for many years with a kindly senator until, to cut an already long story short, her husband and father are both reunited with her. The plucky sturgeon also makes its own pilgrimage to the Holy City, and

regurgitates the swallowed hand into the fountain at St Peter's. The pope miraculously restores it to our heroine, and all live happily ever after.

Before this point, though, many ideological rivers have to be crossed as a consequence, as in *La Belle Hélène*, of the incest episode. This, as we recall, comes about as a result of a promise Joïe's dying mother extracts from the father on her deathbed. She would very much rather – for unexplained and perhaps inexplicable reasons – that he didn't remarry, but 's'il advient que les prinches et les barons de vostre terre et de ce paÿs de Hongroie ne veullent point souffrir que la dominacion demeureche en ma fille',

et que il vous veullent a aucune haulte damme remariër a intention de avoir fil qui puist regner apriès vous sur eulx, de laquelle chose je me contente assez, il vous plaise moy acorder ne non prendre femme, s'elle n'est de otel samblant comme moy et comme j'ay esté jusques a present.⁷⁰

This promise is duly noted by the barons, who do indeed balk at the thought of a female governing Hungary;⁷¹ a search is mounted 'tant par terre que par mer'; but 'en quelque marche qu'ils fuissent, ils ne seurent oncques trouver feme de tel estat et condition'.⁷² The only woman in the whole of Christendom to fit the bill is Joïe.⁷³ The barons put this to the king. Initially he refuses; but eventually, as we shall see, he capitulates to the will of the barons and to the charms of his daughter.

Again, as in *La Belle Hélène*, the innocence of the father's desires is stressed at the outset: even after agreeing in principle to the barons' scheme that he marry his daughter Joïe, the king of Hungary (called, in Wauquelin's prose reworking as he is not in the verse source, Salomon) is described in similarly untarnished terms to those used of Antoine: 'Et le roy demoura aveucq sa fille, *laquelle il aimoit sur toutte rien comme pere aime son enfant*, si le faisoit servir et honnourer comme son estat appertenoit, mais son corage se tourna d'un aultre volenté [...]' (my italics; again these emphases on proper parental affection are absent from the verse source).⁷⁴ But, as we have seen elsewhere, the Ideological Alienness of incest is never far away; the moral tone darkens, Salomon's behaviour becomes more suspect. This happens simply because one day he decides that, having reflected awhile on his barons' suggestion, he would like to go to his daughter's chamber to pay her a visit:

Laquelle estoit ja levee et vestue d'une cotelette tant gentement *qu'i sambloit que ce fuist une ymage faite et entaille pour gens regarder*. Car on veoit la fachon de son corps tant gentement formé, que n'estoit cuer d'homme, s'il le veist qui ne la desirast.⁷⁵

Wauquelin's comments here – and I think we are hearing the voice of the prosateur and not the character he constructs – illustrate not only, as was mentioned in connection with a similar episode in *La Belle Hélène*, his rather ambivalent attitude to a father's incestuous feelings for a daughter who happens to be pleasing to the eye, but also something rather more unsettling. In the line I have italicised in the above quotation – which once more is absent from the thirteenth-century source –, the author ensures that Joïe is denatured, regarded by his audience as an object and, further, an object that has been constructed so that people (men?) might look upon her. Wauquelin thus enters into a relationship of complicity with Salomon, the Ideological Alienness of whose actions he is supposed to deplore. As I shall show further in due course, author and father become voyeurs.⁷⁶

The king enters his daughter's chamber; his daughter – in a scene apparently constructed for its sexual charge – is combing her hair. 'Et encore lui [to Joïe] avint d'aventure que, quant son pere entra en sa chambre, elle rougi comme un peu honteuse.'⁷⁷ Salomon watches; 'et lui commencha a sambler que oncques nature n'avoit si belle creature fourmee,'

non mie Helaine par qui les Troïiens furent destruis de laquelle il avoit par plusieurs fois oÿ les fachons et manieres, et bien lui sambloit que il n'y avoit point de comparison a sa belle fille Joïe. Si le regarda par si grant affection, que il ne se donna gharde quant ung dart amoureux lui vint ferir au coer si souillelement que il le conmencha a convoitier tresardamment, comme si se ne fust pas sa fille [...] Lequel dart lui avoit tellement feru parmy le coer, que il en fu en tresgrant dolleur, et tellement que ung tresgrant meschief en advint.⁷⁸

What we have learnt to see as the inevitable, then, has happened. Salomon, like Antoine and Grimbaut before him, has fallen in love with his daughter – or rather, he has fallen in love with an image of her and what that image represents. As with the example of Antoine's portraits in *La Belle Hélène*, Salomon's emotions become transferred onto the

image he sees before him, the daughter he sees ‘comme si se ne fust pas sa fille’ – as though, in fact, it were his dead wife. As Claude Roussel eloquently puts it, ‘l’héroïne est ainsi non seulement le reflet de sa mère, mais un reflet idéalisé, annihilant miraculeusement le temps passé. L’amour incestueux du père prend alors l’apparence d’une tentative – évidemment vouée à l’échec – pour retrouver sa propre jeunesse’.⁷⁹

The king apparently desires not his daughter but her double, the mother, his wife. A false identity is constructed for Joïe: she becomes in Salomon’s eyes – through the falling of his gaze on her – at once not herself, and more than herself (I will return to this below). He creates a composite image of her, more perfect than any reality could be. In these two narratives, the image of the daughter the father sees – whether painted on the walls of his chamber, or present before him as the ‘exact resemblance’ of a dead wife – becomes for each father (and, because she flees the incest the projected image propagates and represents, each daughter) the reality of that daughter’s identity. Responsibility for the daughter’s identity is laid at the feet of the father; and identity is constructed and destroyed by the incest encapsulated in the image. A discussion of the question of the gaze, and of the presence or absence of desire in these texts, will show this to be the case, and will conclude this section.

Love, conventionally, begins with a look. But that look, as Laura Mulvey suggests in a different context, ‘[while] pleasurable in form, can be threatening in content, and it is woman as representation/image that crystallises this paradox’.⁸⁰ Fathers can (in these texts if not as a general rule) enjoy looking at daughters or their transferred representatives; but daughters – because they cannot see themselves as transformed into those representatives – tend to be less than keen on being viewed. What is at stake in these incest narratives I have been discussing is, precisely, this imbalance of power, this ill-matched play of gazes and desires. Who loses and who wins the game is quite interesting to consider, and vital to my purposes here.

Elizabeth Grosz glosses Lacan on desire as follows:

[It] always refers to a triangle – the subject, the other, and the Other. The other is the object through whom desire is returned to the subject; the Other is the locus of signification which regulates the movement by which this return is made possible. The subject's desire is always the desire of the Other.⁸¹

This is an especially useful way of looking at relationships within *La Belle Hélène* and *La Manekine*. In each case, the subject is the father, the other is the daughter (or what she comes to represent for the father), and the Other is the incest, or rather the differing moral value placed on that by both parties. The father desires the daughter whom he has transformed into something else, thus making his desire legitimate; the daughter does not know that she and the desire have been somehow legitimised, and so continues to see the father's wishes as Ideologically Alien to her and to the prevalent moral code. Because the Other does not have the same valency for the two characters, the triangle is broken; incest cannot be committed; and the daughters must flee.

This is why, as Mulvey's analysis shows, men can enjoy looking but women do not enjoy being seen in these two works. It explains, in fact, an aspect of *La Manekine* mentioned above that has proved problematic in criticism of the work, both for the critics themselves and their readers. When Salomon enters her chamber, Joïe 'rougi comme un peu honteuse'. Thelma Fenster sees this as an example of the triangle of desire being closed and completed: Joïe, Fenster argues, understands her father's intention upon entering her room, and shares it. To adapt the Lacanian formulation to Fenster's argument, subject, other, and Other are in harmony, and this is illustrated by the blush. This, as I hope the foregoing discussion has suggested, is an untenable position. Fathers might desire daughters but daughters do not reciprocate. Joïe's blush, as Wauquelin's text (and that of the verse source) makes plain, is a consequence of her shame not at being the object of incestuous desires, but at being the object of the gaze – or rather, if Sartre and his take on the gaze are right, at being even capable of being looked at.⁸²

In both *La Belle Hélène* and *La Manekine*, both fathers are voyeurs, or engage in scopophilia (a 'pleasure in looking' akin to, but not the same as, voyeurism). Through what Mulvey, in Freudian vein, has termed 'fetishistic scopophilia', the fathers build up

the physical beauty of the object of their gaze, their daughters or more precisely the images of them that they construct, 'transforming [them] into something satisfying in [themselves]'.⁸³ The male gaze when directed onto the female is ostensibly a bearer of power: indeed, what the father conveys through his looking at the daughter, and through her misinterpretation of what that look contains, governs the advancement of the rest of the narrative. There is a power of sorts in both Antoine and Salomon's constructing of images and hence identities for their daughters; but this power, when looked at more closely, proves to be much less than the sum of its parts. The identities of the daughters crafted by the fathers and posited here are, it becomes clear, inauthentic, because stipulated not by the daughters themselves but by an outside agent. Neither daughter performs the identity her father wants her to – wife-substitute, concubine – and instead constructs, to a greater or lesser extent, her own identity. The game of gazes, desires, and identities, begun by the father, is concluded, and won, by the daughter. That this is the case, and that these two works are about much more than just incest, will be explored in the concluding section of this chapter, on Joïe, her alter-ego *La Manekine*, and the question of mutilation.

Written on the Body: Constructing and Performing Alien Identities in

La Manekine

As was noted above, in the stories of both *La Belle Hélène* and *La Manekine* the heroine loses an arm or hand, as an indirect or a direct consequence of the incest-threat. Hélène's arm is cut off by the Duke of Gloucester, while Joïe cuts off her own hand to preclude the possibility of marriage to her father. In each case a performance of Embodied Alienness comes out of an act, or spectre, of Ideological Alienness. And while each of these acts of mutilation is, as I shall show, qualitatively different from the other, both play a part in the vexed question of identity in these two works. In what follows I want to discuss briefly the mutilation of Hélène, as read against a more thorough analysis of Joïe's self-mutilation. Using the commonplace, but in this case helpful, notion of the body as a palimpsest, or more correctly as a surface upon which identity can be 'written', within theories of corporeality and performative identity, I

shall show how Joïe writes her *self* on her body through her Embodied-, and Ideologically-, Alien action of mutilation.

Following her father's proposal of marriage – the Alienness of which will be discussed below –, Joïe retreats, deeply troubled, to her chamber. After a lengthy apostrophe to the Virgin Mary, in which she asks for the same counsel as was given to 'la bonne Judich contre la malisce et perversité Holofernes',⁸⁴ the heroine decides on the right and only course of action:

Et ensi que elle se lamentoit, elle oÿ le huëe et le noise de ceulx qui ja estoient venus en sa chambre qui le demandoient. Et pource tout prestement elle, qui tenoit le coutiel devant dit en la droite main, mist son puing sensetre sur le bort de la fenestre qui estoit subz la rivièrre devant ditte, et leva le coutiel, et puis le ravalla tellement sur son poing que elle le fist voler en la rivièrre.⁸⁵

But why does Joïe feel that this is the only escape available to her? Could she not simply run away from her father's court and commerce, as did Héléne and Clariande? Flight alone, in fact, would have been futile: for the Joïe who ran from Hungary would have been, in terms of her identity, the same as the Joïe her father desired. Through committing this singular act of violence *on herself*, the heroine is using her body as the surface on which to write or inscribe a specific crisis in her subjectivity. As Elizabeth Grosz underlines, 'all the effects of depth and interiority can be explained in terms of the inscriptions and transformations of the subject's corporeal surface. Bodies have all the explanatory power of minds'.⁸⁶ In *La Manekine*, Joïe's interiority, her reaction to the threat of incest from her father, are 'written' on, or performed through, her body.

As was pointed out in Chapter Four, in the case of Australian philosophers of the body such as Grosz or Moira Gatens, tradition mind-body, or internal-external dualisms are rejected in favour of a more collapsible distinction in which body *is* mind, and inside *is* outside, with no perceptible point of convergence or divergence. In order to make this important point the clearer, Grosz adopts the Lacanian figure of the möbius strip. This, as Dylan Evans explains, is 'a three-dimensional figure that can be formed by talking a long rectangle of paper and twisting it before joining its ends together [...] [It] subverts

our normal way of representing space for it seems to have two sides but in fact only has one'.⁸⁷ Running one's finger along its edge demonstrates that the two apparent sides are just one. Tracing the outside of the strip, Grosz suggests, leads one to the inside without having ever felt that one had left the outside. So again, as in the case of Jehan d'Avenues adduced above, instead of the traditional mind/body dualism what is required for the accurate representation of a person is an 'embodied subjectivity' or a 'psychical corporeality'. This is what, *in petto*, I think we see in Wauquelin's text and its heroine. What is Alien here is superficially Embodied, but the Embodiedness of Joïe's Alien identity is Ideological in motivation, content, and kind. What 'should' be inside is outside, and her outer self narrates – if we keep with the 'textualised body' metaphor derived from Grosz – her interiority. Alienness, and Alien identity, are written on the heroine's body.

The missing arm is the consequence or, as discussed in previous chapters, in Judith Butler's terms the *performance*, of an identity crisis. According to Butler, identity is performative, inasmuch as it derives from the subject's actions, and society's perception of these actions (and the subject's own perception of that perception). The self is not, as Butler sees it, essentialist; rather, it is a fiction that proceeds from, and exists only in and through, these performances.⁸⁸ Joïe's performance of her identity, and moreover a crisis in that identity occasioned by the incestuous desires of her father, is dramatised in her singular act of mutilation. In cutting off her hand she imposes a new, second identity upon herself, inscribes it on her body; but of course she also takes away the right, as it were, to her prior identity. One corporeal text is substituted for another; as Jean-Claude Huchet puts it, 'effacer n'est donc pas créer un blanc, mais substituer un texte à un autre, pour le re-présenter différent et identique à la fois'.⁸⁹ A discussion of the primacy, and complexity, of names in *La Manekine* will illustrate this.

What I am viewing as the crisis in Joïe/Manekine's subjectivity is first narrated when she arrives at the court of the King of Scotland in Berwick. As I will show further below, in cutting off her arm and fleeing her father's court Joïe has denatured herself; she is not, and can no longer be, Joïe, to anyone but herself. She cannot admit her born

identity to the Scottish king, and as such has no identity, until the King gives her one *faute de mieux*:

‘Par ma foy, damoiselle, puis que aultre chose de vostre estat savoir ne poons, raison nous ensaigne que nous vous apellons par aucun non, a celle fin que nous en sachons comment parler. Si ay reghardé en moy meismes que, puisque vous ne avez que une main (je ne say la cause dont ce vient) que je vous mettray nom, selonc ce que l’escriture dist que *mancus* c’est a dire homme qui n’a que une main, et *manca* c’est une femme qui n’a que une main, et pource je vous mech a non *Manca* qui sera a dire en Rommant Manequine⁹⁰

As this shows the King names the heroine according to the identity she has performed through her mutilation. She has no name, and then she has two – Joïe and Manekine. Her identity as Manekine is thus performative as it refers to a specific act – the loss of her arm and the loss of her father. Her doubled identity is the consequence of a crisis; and the two names are never really harmonised, not even – despite some critics’ arguments to the contrary –⁹¹ when the hand is restored to the heroine after the reconciliation with her father. What should be noted, in fact, is that the two names the heroine has are qualitatively different: ‘Joïe’ posits identity as derived from her father, whereas ‘Manekine’ results from the heroine’s imposition – indirectly, admittedly – of an identity upon herself through her mutilation. The doubled or overlapping identities narrate, further, the subject’s non-self-identity as written on the body and read through the incest trope.⁹²

The crisis in the heroine’s subjectivity that can be seen as a consequence of the incest threat is rendered – perhaps unintentionally – problematic in the provocative but ultimately unpersuasive article by Thelma Fenster quoted above. Fenster seems to be arguing on one level that, before she cut off her hand, Joïe lacked any kind of autonomous identity, that she was simply a function of and mirror image of her mother; the mutilation, as I shall show below, allows Joïe to no longer resemble her mother, and as such to exhibit an independent identity.⁹³ Alongside this she claims that the miraculous restoration of the hand brings about the return of Joïe’s identity. Fenster clearly favours a static, essentialist model of identity: rather than seeing selfhood as a continual process of becoming, as Moira Gatens would have it,⁹⁴ she seems to posit that

the only true identity is the one possessed before any changes were wrought upon it. Mutilation gives Joïe an identity, but it is in some measure the 'wrong' one.

But it will I hope be reasonably clear from what I have been saying that there is no value-judgement that can be made in terms of identity performance, whether Alien or otherwise; and that, further, any value-judgements about right and wrong are difficult to draw in relation to this text. This is especially true in the authorial treatment of incest, to which Fenster's otherwise problematic analysis draws attention willy-nilly. What does the loss of the hand represent in terms of and in relation to the heroine and the incest threat? And what does this say about the father's Alien identity?

Paternal identity in this text is, as the previous discussion of the incest threat might have suggested, a particularly vexed question. Because he constructs an alternative reality, because he is surprised by a wily 'dard amoureux' hitting him squarely in the heart, and because he is thereby able to abdicate responsibility for his behaviour, the king is textually divorced from his actions. This is nowhere more apparent than when he proposes marriage to his daughter. He is made to perform an identity resolutely different from his own in the Ideologically Alien notion of a father desiring his daughter; but can engineer the resumption of his former selfhood as the marriage is suggested:

Sachiés, ma tresbelle fille, que par le gré de tous ses prelas, abbez, evesques, prinches et barons de ceste terre je vous ay mariée, et vous ay donné baron, par lequel vous serez couronnee royñne et damme de terre la plus honouree qui soit vivante. Lequel baron n'est point loing de vous, mais vous est tresprivez, et je vous diray qui il est.⁹⁵

The king here can be seen to have two identities he must perform, just as Joïe will have – he is at once the good, solicitous father and the bad, concupiscent baron. He makes his proposal in the third person, as though on behalf of someone else; identity is again made Ideologically Alien, though represented as Embodied (or perhaps disembodied here?); and the textual universe is again destabilised. Unlike the one we shall see from Joïe, however, the father's identity-performance is flawed: the performance stops, he

resumes his prior identity both as incestuous father and, later, as king. Nothing, but nothing, is gained from his behaviour.

Joïe, then, cuts off her hand to escape incest; and in so doing performs her identity, writes it on her body, by making herself *unlike* the mother whom she allegedly resembles, removing thereby the very root of the incest topos, as outlined in the foregoing discussion. In order to perform an identity that is acceptable to her – that is, to make herself acceptable to her own subjectivity –, Joïe must make herself the Embodied Alien by corporeally erasing the Ideological Alienness of incest. As she herself (rather triumphantly) explains to her father, ‘vous savez que le roy ne peult avoir femme s’elle n’a tous ses membres, seloncq vostre propre ordonnance’.⁹⁶ Possibly through basing their analyses solely on the verse source, critics have tended to misread this explanation as the letter of the law – ‘no king [...]’ etc –, and hence implausible because of course Manekine marries a king later on. Certainly, the verse is unequivocal: ‘Et rois ne doit pas prenre feme/Qui n’ait tous ses membres, par m’ame’.⁹⁷ But in substituting definite article for indefinite, and in adding ‘seloncq vostre propre ordonnance’, Wauquelin has reinterpreted and rewritten his source text, and put words in his heroine’s mouth for a specific purpose. *La Manekine* is here underlining the way in which Salomon – in the prose – is hoist with his own petard: as suggested above, he has created a reality for himself and an identity for his daughter which seem to make legitimate his plan to marry her, but that daughter, making reference to an extratextual law the king has apparently passed, subverts the possibility of that marriage, and of that selfhood. The triangle of desire – and its opposite – is broken. The identity Salomon wanted his daughter to perform is impossible and inauthentic; the self the heroine creates, independent of her father’s wishes, is the correct and tenable one. The daughter – the subaltern – has triumphed.

This is also the case in *La Belle Hélène*, though it does not come about through the mutilation in the same way as we have seen happening in *La Manekine*. In her discussion of corporeal inscriptions, Elizabeth Grosz makes the point that the same inscription can be read differently on a different body: ‘as any calligrapher knows, the kind of text produced depends not only on the message to be inscribed, not only on the inscriptive

tools used, but also on the quality and distinctiveness of the paper written upon'.⁹⁸ As we recall, in *La Belle Hélène* the heroine's arm rather than her hand is removed; and the deed is done, as follows, by the Duke of Gloucester after the absent King of Scotland has (having been given wilfully incorrect information) ordered the death of his wife:

‘Madame, sachiez en verité qu’il vous convient morir, dont il me poise. Et pour le commencement de vostre martire premierement et affin que monseigneur le roy retournera, nous lui monstrons aucune chose de vostre noble corps, je vous trencheray ung bras devant et en la presence de tous ceulx qui cy sont’. Adonc il prist le droit bras de la royne et lui trencha d’une espee bien trenchant en presence de tous.⁹⁹

The mutilation here cannot be described, as it could be in *La Manekine*'s case, as an identity-performance. Unlike *Manekine*, *Hélène* does not – clearly – have any part to play in the decision to divest her of her right arm; and unlike *Manekine* therefore, *Hélène* has an identity bestowed on her. *Manekine* is more autonomous; but for all that *Hélène* is still, less directly it is true, empowered by her mutilation. After the episode quoted above, she sets out again on the high seas; she arrives in Rome and is housed by a kindly senator through whose resolutely non-sexual ministrations she comes to construct for herself an identity independent of men – while regaining the trust in men the behaviour of her father, and indeed of her husband Henry, caused her to lose.

Both *La Belle Hélène* and *La Manekine*, then, offer us heroines who, from a position of weakness, gain strength. The women become more than simply the *dissecta membra* of their mutilated bodies, or of their ‘flight-from incest’ trajectories; they win the game of identity hide-and-seek, and are the ostensible subalterns in their stories who come, perhaps surprisingly, to speak the loudest. For this reason alone – and of course for others – these two narratives become about much more than incest, on a textual and metatextual level. They are not so much a discourse on the thwarting and subversion of male or paternal power as a discussion, more broadly, of how David can vanquish Goliath, or Thierry Pinabel: the small, apparently insignificant character gains the upper hand over the bearer of strength or a dominant identity. Why such narratives should be appealing enough to the Burgundian court audience to be *mises en prose* is not, on this reading at least, difficult to comprehend. The search for, and gaining of, an autonomous

identity in the case of both women, *La Belle Hélène* and *La Manekine*, illustrated perhaps for Philip and his entourage that an independent Burgundian identity, distinct from that of France and gained through crusade or through other more artistic means, was not beyond their grasp. This theme, first discussed in Chapter Two and carried through the whole thesis as was Hélène's severed arm in the casket around her son's neck, will be examined in the following section. In the Conclusion I make necessarily tentative suggestions about how the gradual ceding of position of Embodied Alienness to its Ideological counterpart, and how authorial strategies for containing and contending with aberrant themes and themes of aberrance, across the *mise en prose* corpus examined here might allow us a fuller understanding of Burgundian identity formation at the court of Philip the Good. Out of a vanishing past, and in subtle textual ways, we see the creation of a dazzling present.

¹ The first part of my title is adapted from Jane Gallop, *Feminism and Psychoanalysis. The Daughter's Seduction* (London: Macmillan, 1982). Gallop's reading of the father-daughter relationship in terms both of psychoanalysis and (indirectly) of the incest taboo is entertaining though not always altogether persuasive; it will, however, implicitly inform parts of the argument set out below. It should be reiterated here that both *La Belle Hélène* and *La Manekine* manifest many features aside from the incest topos they share that could be construed as Alien; but as I suggested in Chapter One, what I am concerned with in this thesis is setting out one possible way of interpreting the elements of this polyvalent corpus, in full knowledge of the fact that there might be other, equally valid, ways of dealing with that corpus.

² William Shakespeare, *Pericles, Prince of Tyre*, Act I, scene i, ll. 21-28.

³ In fact the personification of the poet John Gower, author of the (late fourteenth-century) *Confessio Amantis* on which *Pericles* is based. The significance of Gower's *Confessio* to the discussion of incestuous unions will be discussed below.

⁴ See Elizabeth Archibald, *Incest and the Medieval Imagination* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001). Especially pertinent to my discussion are Archibald's first and fourth chapters, 'Medieval Incest Law – Theory and Practice' and 'Fathers and Daughters'. For a more thorough-going treatment of the complex laws governing medieval incest than I can – or need to – give here, I refer the reader to Archibald. As will become clear from what follows, the legal aspect of projected or actual incestuous unions is only peripherally relevant to what I say in this chapter. Often what is most important is not the fact of the incest-threat, but rather its consequences for the characters; and at all events any societal law within the textual universe that might or might not have governed such behaviours is roundly flouted. Fathers construct their own laws, and hence their own realities, as we shall see.

⁵ On the construction of gender identities in the *misés en prose*, see also my discussion of *Jehan d'Avennes* in Chapter Four. Rosalind Brown-Grant's forthcoming work on the construction of masculinities in late-medieval prose literature promises some valuable further insights on this.

⁶ See Michel Zink, 'Le Roman', in *Grundriss der romanischen Literaturen des Mittelalters VIII/1. La littérature française aux XIV^e et XV^e siècles*, ed. Daniel Poirion (Heidelberg: Carl Winter Universitätsverlag, 1988), 197-218. These remarks are on 216. On the notion of the changing aspect of cruelty in the pre-modern

period, see Daniel Baraz, *Medieval Cruelty. Changing Perceptions, Late Antiquity to the Early Modern Period* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2003).

⁷ Baraz makes the interesting related point that, as the Middle Ages drew to a close, the use of violence in literature as a manipulative or propagandist tool became increasingly prevalent (see Baraz, op. cit., 123). This is especially pertinent to what I have termed 'crusading narratives', but is an intriguing notion too in relation to the two works I discuss in this chapter. The question of propaganda for the Burgundian court is one that is, except glancingly, outside the scope of this study.

⁸ This work was, according to Doutrepoint (see his *Les Mises en prose des épopées et des romans chevaleresques du XIV^e au XVI^e siècles* (Brussels: Palais des Académies, 1939), 220), mise en prose in the fifteenth century from a thirteenth-century verse source; neither verse nor prose survives, so our knowledge of the Francophone texts derives from early printed versions, on which see Doutrepoint, op. cit., loc. cit. There is also a Middle English version of this tale (see Arthur Dickson and Henry Watson, *Valentine and Orson* (London: Early English Texts Society, 1937)), as indeed there is of many of the prose works discussed here.

⁹ See Michel Zink (ed.), *Du noble roy Apollonie. Version française du XV^e siècle de l'histoire d'Apollonius de Tyre publiée et traduite d'après le manuscrit Vienne National-Bibl. 3428* (Paris: Christian Bourgois, 1981). The legend of Apollonius of Tyre is an especially potent one in the literature of incest, forming to a greater or lesser extent the source for other works in the genre (one thinks, outside the Burgundian milieu, of Gower's *Confessio Amantis*, and Shakespeare's *Pericles*), and by virtue (vice?) of being one of the few incest-narratives to feature a consummated incestuous union. On this see especially Elizabeth Archibald, op. cit. and her earlier *Apollonius of Tyre. Medieval Themes and Variations, Including the Text of the Historia Apollonii Regis Tyri with an English Translation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

¹⁰ *La Fille du comte de Ponthieu. Conte en prose. Versions de XIII^e et XV^e siècles.* Société des anciens textes français, ed. Clovis Brunel (Paris: Champion, 1923).

¹¹ See Franklin P. Sweetser (ed.), *Les Cent Nouvelles nouvelles* (Geneva: Droz, 1966).

¹² See Constant Philippe Serrure and Auguste Voisin (eds.), *Le Livre de Bandoyn, comte de Flandre, suivi de fragments du Roman de Trasignyes* (Brussels: Berthot et Périchon, 1836).

¹³ For a more thorough discussion of the practice and the 'grammar' of the mises en prose, and the necessarily intertextual nature of the genre, see Chapter One.

¹⁴ See, *inter alia*, Claude Roussel, 'Wauquelin et le conte de la fille aux mains coupées', *Bien Dire et Bien Apprendre* 14 (1996), 219-236, Madeleine Jeay, 'Chercher une fille, une épouse. Sexualités déviantes et parcours de rédemption', *Florilegium* 18.1 (2001), 65-82, or the contributions by Rosalind Brown-Grant and Maria Colombo Timelli to the recent conference on Wauquelin, 'Jehan Wauquelin (ca.1428-1452): De Mons à la cour de Bourgogne', Centre d'études supérieures de la Renaissance, Université François Rabelais (Tours), 20-22 September 2004. The articles are, respectively, 'Ré-écritures de récits d'inceste: Jehan Wauquelin et la légende de la "fille aux mains coupées"', and 'La rhétorique épistolaire dans deux mises en prose de Jehan Wauquelin: la *Manequine* et la *Belle Hélène de Constantinople*'. I am grateful to the authors for generously allowing me to see their work (via unpaginated e-mail attachments) prior to its publication in the conference proceedings.

¹⁵ See Archibald, *Incest...*, 150ff. Archibald cites the thirteenth-century Latin *Vitae Duorum Offarum* as the earliest extant version of the 'flight from incest' story, but speculates that its currency was not perhaps wide enough to have influenced the later rash of such stories (see 152) on both sides of the Channel, and indeed beyond.

¹⁶ The different circumstances surrounding the heroines' mutilation are, as I shall suggest below, of crucial importance to my argument on the construction – and performance – of identity in *La Belle Hélène* and *La Manekine*.

¹⁷ On all this see A. Aarne and S. Thompson, *The Types of the Folktale* (Helsinki: Academia Scientiarum Fennica, 1964), 240-1; the 'Maiden Without Hands' tales correspond to Type 706. See also Hélène Bernier, *La fille aux mains coupées: conte-type 706* (Québec: Presses de l'université de Laval, 1971), and Susan Gordon, 'The Powers of the Handless Maiden', in *Feminist Messages: Coding in Women's Folk Culture*, ed. Joan Newlon Radnor (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1993).

¹⁸ The exception to this might be seen to be the Bavarian incest episode in *La Belle Hélène* which I discuss below.

¹⁹ See Chapter Two for a fuller discussion of what this means, and of its consequences for a text mis en prose.

²⁰ Questions of dating surrounding these two works are problematic, and remain as yet unsolved. In his 'Wauquelin et le conte de la fille aux mains coupées' Roussel notes what he terms 'effets d'écho' between the two prose texts in connection with the parallel themes of the incestuous father and the miraculous restitution of the cut member, and suggests that *La Manekine* was the first of the two. Maria Colombo Timelli takes this up in her 'La rhétorique épistolaire dans deux mises en prose de Jehan Wauquelin', and hypothesises as to the respective dates based on the sets of purloined letters in each text. She concludes that Roussel's suggestion about *Manekine's* anteriority is proven by her analysis: 'les reprises d'un roman à l'autre me paraissent évidentes: l'allusion à la culpabilité de la protagoniste en particulier, dans la dernière fausse lettre, se justifie pleinement dans la *Manekine*, mais n'a aucun fondement dans la *Belle Hélène*'. This seems to me to prove very little – after all, this could easily be argued in the opposite sense to prove the prior composition of the *Belle Hélène* –, except that we are faced here with a classic and for the moment intractable chicken-and-egg situation.

²¹ As I hope will become clear in what follows, I mean to suggest that the narrative structure of *La Belle Hélène* is more complex, because more labyrinthine, than that of *La Manekine*. The issues raised by both works are equally challenging.

²² These two versions of the story can be found in two recent critical editions, Claude Roussel, *La Belle Hélène de Constantinople: Chanson de Geste du XIV^e siècle* (Geneva: Droz, 1995), and Jehan Wauquelin, *La Belle Hélène de Constantinople. Mise en prose d'une chanson de geste*, ed. Marie-Claude de Crécy (Geneva, Droz: 2002). Unless otherwise stated, all quotations from the works will be from these editions. There are, of course, many other, minor, versions of the tale, extant in manuscript form, which space prevents my discussing. On these see R. Ruths, *Die französischen Fassungen des Roman de la Belle Helaine* (Greifswald: Kunike, 1897); Paul Verhuyck, 'Les manuscrits du poème de la Belle Hélène de Constantinople', *Studi Francesi* 47 (1972), 314-24, and the introduction to Claude Roussel, ed. cit., as well as Barbara Ferrari, 'Histoire de la Belle Hélène de Constantinople: Edizione critica di una 'mise en prose' anonima del XV secolo' (tesi di Dottorato di ricerca in Francesistica, Università degli Studi di Milano, 2003). Discussions of the Burgundian manuscript, Brussels KBR 9967 – which is outside the parameters of my argument here –, can be found in the following studies: A. Pinchart, 'Miniaturistes, enlumineurs et calligraphes employés par Philippe le Bon et Charles le Téméraire et leurs œuvres', *Bulletin des Commissions royales d'art et d'archéologie* 4 (1865), 481; *La Librairie de Philippe le Bon; exposition organisée à l'occasion du 500^e anniversaire de la mort du duc* (Brussels: Bibliothèque royale Albert 1^{er}, 1967), 159-60; Jeffery Chipps Smith, 'The Artistic Patronage of Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy (1419-1467)' (Ann Arbor: Dissertation Abstracts, 1983), 137ff; and Christine van den Bergen-Pantens, *Manuscrits à peintures 1460-1486* (Brussels: Bibliothèque royale Albert 1^{er}, 1989). The manuscript, believed to have been produced between 1460 and 1467, contains 26, generally half-folio, illustrations by Loyset Liédet. For black and white reproductions of these illustrations see J. van den Gheyn, *L'Ystoire de Helayne: Reproduction des 26 miniatures du ms 9967 de la Bibliothèque royale de Belgique* (Brussels: Bibliothèque royale, 1913). On Liédet, see Smith, op. cit., 350f; and Lorne Campbell, *National*

Gallery Catalogues. The Fifteenth-Century Netherlandish Paintings (London: National Gallery Publications, 1998), passim.

²³ As is noted by A. H. Krappe, in his 'La Belle Helaine de Constantinople', *Romania* 63 (1937), 324-53. As he suggests, 'signaler toutes les contradictions, toutes les répétitions, toutes les improbabilités, voire toutes les absurdités de ce récit [...], ce serait vraiment abuser de la patience du lecteur' (329). Of course, it can sometimes be the improbable aspects of and repetitions in this work that lend it meaning.

²⁴ Most notable among these is Smith, who is so befuddled that one suspects him of having read a different story entirely, a 'wholly unhistorical tale' in which 'Hélène, a widow, travelled to Rome hoping to secure papal permission to remarry. Once granted, she stayed to help free the Holy City from a Saracen siege. Continuing her journey she eventually married King Henry of England, by whom she bore several children!' See Smith, *op. cit.*, 138.

²⁵ Commentators on the story have been exercised by what I have called here the 'a-historical historical periods'. It is true that, as Nancy Black asserts, 'the historical time-frame of the story is difficult to determine with any precision' (see her 'La Belle Hélène de Constantinople and Crusade Propaganda at the Court of Philip the Good', *Fifteenth Century Studies* 26 (2000), 42-51; the quotation is on 43). Certainly, as Black shows (*loc. cit.*), both the fourteenth-century poet and Wauquelin seem a little confused about when events take place – for example, Clovis is uncompromisingly transported back to the time of Vespasian, Titus and Pope Clement –, but the nature of the time-frame only becomes problematic if one tries as Black does to insert this text into the 'historical fiction' genre. The 'great deal of fantasy and invention' in the *Belle Hélène* and the texts like it discussed by Ruth Morse in her 'Historical Fiction in Fifteenth-Century Burgundy' (*The Modern Language Review* 75 (1980), 48-64) is illustrative, at a basic level, I think, of the fact that such works cannot, and should not, be taken at face value. What matters here is not historical or geographical veracity; as I shall discuss below, something much more subtle is in play.

²⁶ See Danielle Quérue, 'Pourquoi Partir? Une typologie des voyages dans quelques romans de la fin du moyen âge', in Alain Labbé, Daniel Lacroix and Danielle Quérue (eds), *Guerres, Voyages et Quêtes au Moyen Âge: Mélanges offerts à Jean-Claude Faucon* (Paris: Champion, 2000), 333-48. See also the works referred to in Chapter One n. 94 above.

²⁷ Quérue, 'Pourquoi Partir?', 333-4.

²⁸ And this is why, as we have seen elsewhere, the reality of the destination, and its possible exoticism, matters little to the discussion of Alienness.

²⁹ For more or less convincing accounts of the function of the journey in 'flight from incest' narratives as a structuring device, and catalyst for the furtherance of plot, see Carolyn Hares-Stryker, 'Adrift on the Seven Seas: The Medieval Topos of Exile at Sea', in *Florilegium* 12 (1993), 79-98, and Carol J. Harvey, 'Time and Space in *La Manekine*', in Sarah Grace Heller and Michelle Reichert (eds.), *Essays on the Poetic and Legal Writings of Philippe de Remy and his Son Philippe de Beaumanoir of Thirteenth-Century France*, *Studies in French Civilisation* 21 (Lewiston/Queenstown/Lampeter: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2001), 69-93. As I shall suggest below, Harvey's discussion of space in *La Manekine*, though impressively comprehensive, is flawed in that its author presses continually against an anti-mimetic interpretation of geographical locations.

³⁰ See Michèle Guéret-Laferté, *Sur les routes de l'empire mongol: Ordre et rhétorique des relations de voyage au XIII^e et XIV^e siècles* (Paris: Champion, 1994), 111.

³¹ See Danielle Régner Bohler, 'De Constantinople à Rome: Quand parlent les portraits', in *Médiévales* 12 (printemps 1987), 79-81; 79.

³² In this respect, Constantinople has the same valency as does place in general in other 'flight from incest' narratives of the period, such as *La Manekine* and *Valentin et Orson*.

³³ The quotation is from Terence Cave, 'Reading Rabelais: Variations on the Rock of Virtue', in P. Parker and D. Quint (eds), *Literary Theory/Renaissance Texts* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 78-95; 80.

³⁴ For texts, both fictional and not, in which Constantinople functions differently from the way I am describing it here, see Rima Devereaux, 'Reconstructing Byzantine Constantinople: Intercession and Illumination at the Court of Philippe le Bon', *French Studies* 59.3 (297-310).

³⁵ Hélène refuses from this point on to tell anyone her true identity as daughter of the emperor of Constantinople; instead, she invents multiple backgrounds and identities for herself as she progresses on her paradigmatic journey. In this, as I shall discuss in due course, lies both presence and absence.

³⁶ On this sort of East-West opposition in the medieval text, see for example Jean Batany, 'Rome dans un schéma narratif bipolaire au Moyen Age', in Raymond Chevallier (ed.), *Influence de la Grèce et de Rome sur l'Occident moderne. Actes du Colloque de Tours 1975* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1977), 43-54.

³⁷ Régnier Bohler, *op. cit.*, 81.

³⁸ This formula is derived, indirectly, from Danielle Régnier Bohler, 'Morphologies du clandestin. Etre ou ne pas être: le portrait-masque de l'inceste', in Marie-Louise Ollier, Daniel Poirion and Paul Zumthor, *Masques et déguisements dans la littérature médiévale* (Montreal/Paris: Presses de l'université de Montréal-Vrin, 1988), 141-8.

³⁹ *La Belle Hélène de Constantinople*, ed. Marie-Claude de Crécy (hereafter *La Belle Hélène W*), 22.

⁴⁰ On the question of focalisation in literature, see Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), in particular Chapter Six. Rimmon-Kenan has – following Genette – coined the term 'focalisation' to dispel confusion between authorial perspective and narration (71). Focalisation and narration are – in theory at least – distinct concepts: so, as we shall see, Wauquelin (or any author-figure) can present events in a way that does not necessarily correspond with his ideologies, but which might initially appear to be his 'take' on them. The multiple readings possible with a text like *La Belle Hélène* are a consequence of a clash between narratorial ideological positions, whether 'real' or imagined.

⁴¹ *La Belle Hélène W*, *loc. cit.* The length of time Hélène is with her nurse has little consequence for the progression of either the narrative or of my argument here, but it is the source of a fundamental misreading, and attempt at a 'deletion of [a perceived] alterity' in the text, by its editor. I will discuss this fully in due course.

⁴² Even though this is of course a traditional and completely normal way of referring to a heroine's beauty, the fact that it occurs in the description of both Hélène and Joïe in *La Manekine*, both of whom become dismembered, can never quite be free of (dramatic) irony.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, *loc. cit.*

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, *loc. cit.*

⁴⁵ Roussel, *La Belle Hélène* (hereafter *La Belle Hélène A*), 137

⁴⁶ *La Belle Hélène W*, 23.

⁴⁷ *La Manekine*, in *Œuvres poétiques de Philippe de Rémi, sire de Beaumanoir, Société des anciens textes français*, ed. Hermann Suchier (2 vols., Paris: Didot, 1884), vol. 2, 281. Maria Colombo Timelli is producing a new critical edition of the text for the Droz *Textes Littéraires Français* series. For the verse avatar, see Barbara

Sargent Baur, Alison Stones and Roger Middleton (eds.), *Le Roman de la Manekine/Philippe de Rémi; edited from Paris BnF fr. 1588* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1999).

⁴⁸ *La Belle Hélène A*, ll 109-121, 137.

⁴⁹ *La Belle Hélène W*, 23.

⁵⁰ See Julia Kristeva, *Révolution du langage poétique* (Paris: Stock, 1974), 339.

⁵¹ For an interesting discussion of the 'Pygmalion syndrome' in art see Ernst H. Gombrich, 'Pygmalion's Power', in *Art and Illusion. A Study in the Psychology of Pictorial Representation* (London: Phaidon, 1959), 80-98.

⁵² On the conventional nature of the Devil, or Satanic forces, being 'blamed' for incestuous fathers' actions, see Archibald, *Invest and the Medieval Imagination*, 165.

⁵³ *La Belle Hélène W*, 34.

⁵⁴ 'De Constantinople à Rome', loc. cit..

⁵⁵ 'The only way of expressing emotion in the form of art is by finding an 'objective correlative'; in other words, a set of objects, a situation, a chain of events which shall be the formula of that *particular* emotion; such that when the external facts, which must terminate in sensory experience, are given, the emotion is immediately evoked'; T. S. Eliot, 'Hamlet', in *Selected Essays* (London: Faber and Faber, 1932/1969), 141-146; 145. Of course, the process I have just described is in itself a sort of objective correlative, but one which functions in reverse of that described by Eliot and by extension Régnier Bohler; and of course the objective correlative is an expansion of the notion of ekphrasis, which I shall deal with below. On this see Linda M. Clemente, *Literary Objets d'Art. Ekphrasis in Medieval French Romance 1150-1210* (New York: Peter Lang, 1992).

⁵⁶ As it does, indeed, in a rather more famous example of ekphrasis in medieval literature, that of Lancelot's etching of images of Guinevere on the wall of his cell in *La Mort le Roi Artu*. As Michel Zink notes, 'les fresques peintes par Lancelot ont donc pour fonction de compenser, autant que faire se peut, l'absence de la reine'. See Zink, 'Les Toiles d'Agamanor et les Fresques de Lancelot', *Littérature* 38 (mai 1980), 43-61. The quotation is on 54.

⁵⁷ On this see Marcia Pointon, *Hanging the Head. Portraiture and Social Formation in Eighteenth-Century England* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993), 65-6.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 66. Pointon also notes the use in Roman times of the image of the Emperor on the shield of soldiers going into battle; they were thus armed with a device that was an image of the literal bearing-forth of the emperor's body when the victor raised the body of their emperor aloft on their shields. This offers a paradigm for a further manifestation of the *imago clipeata* in *La Belle Hélène*. When Henry sets out into battle while on his quest for Hélène, he has the image of his wife painted on his shield (four times) for he claims – in an echo of Antoine's words to the Pope in explanation of the painted Roman chamber (34) – they embolden him. (And of course at the end of his quest, in victory, he will metaphorically 'bear his wife on his shield' in reclaiming her as his own.) On the mnemonic function of images and resemblances, see also the section on *La Manekine* (below).

⁵⁹ See Danielle Régnier Bohler, 'Morphologies du clandestin...', 142.

⁶⁰ This is, of course, a further example of the troubling narrative focalisation Wauquelin offers in *La Belle Hélène*. While on the one hand deleting the alterity of the incest through the sleight of hand outlined above, the prosateur still feels that the incest topos is sufficiently potent and blameworthy to merit the pricking of the emperor's conscience and this vast peregrination – what Madeleine Jeay (op. cit.) calls a 'parcours de rédemption' – to make good the sin. On the notion of redemption and the odour of lay

sanctity surrounding Héléne and, especially, Manekine, see: Jeay, op. cit.; Carol J. Harvey, op. cit., and also her 'From Incest to Redemption in *La Manekine*', *Romance Quarterly* 44:1 (1997), 3-11; and the 'Etude Littéraire' in Marie-Claude de Crécy's edition of *La Belle Héléne*. This subject, though interesting, will not form part of my discussion of Alienness in these texts.

⁶¹ *La Belle Héléne W*, 145.

⁶² Ibid., 146. It should be noted here that 'violer' did not in the fifteenth century have the sense it holds in modern French of rape or overt sexual violation. What Clariande is suggesting here, I think, is a moral sully, a violation of her good – Christian – character. In this respect too her case parallels that of Héléne and Joie: both object to their fathers' incestuous advances on moral Christian grounds rather than legal ones. On the terminology of rape in the medieval period see Kathryn Gravdal, *Ravishing Maidens. Writing Rape in Medieval French Literature* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1991), and Corinne Saunders, *Rape and Ravishment in the Literature of Medieval England* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2001).

⁶³ Ibid., 22.

⁶⁴ *La Belle Héléne W*, 145.

⁶⁵ *La Belle Héléne W*, 390. This failure to recognise Héléne could, of course, be seen as further evidence of Antoine's desire to recapture a replica of what he has lost: thirty years, and the mutilation, would bring many changes to the woman's appearance, and make her not what she was *then* but (clearly and conventionally) what she has become *now*.

⁶⁶ It is interesting to note, too, that later, in an internal monologue Antoine apostrophises his daughter, saying 'Ha, ma chiere fille Helayne, vecy vostre compaigne...' (see *La Belle Héléne W*, 148).

⁶⁷ *La Belle Héléne W*, 146-7.

⁶⁸ Ibid., loc. cit..

⁶⁹ *La Belle Héléne A*, ll 4314-5, 291.

⁷⁰ *La Manekine*, ed. cit., 271.

⁷¹ The barons' reasoning for this is interesting, especially in light of the discussion of Burgundian Alienness and (specifically French) nationality discussed in previous chapters. 'C'est que la dignité est telle que femme n'y a point de possession, *comme ont Franchois*' (my italics; see *La Manekine*, 274). Clearly it is fine for the French to have women regents; Hungary (and by extension Burgundy) is a different country, and they do things quite emphatically differently there. This comment, it should be noted, is absent from the verse source.

⁷² *La Manekine*, 276.

⁷³ A problem emerges with this, however. Though Joie is cited as the only woman who resembles her mother, and thus is the only possible candidate to be her father's bride, she is more often than not referred to in the text as *nonpareille* – on 269, for example, she is described as 'la plus belle creature, la mieulx fourmee de tous membres que nulle riens sceuwist ou peuwist deviser ne regarder, souhaider ne penser. Et de tant que sa mere passoit toutes aultres dames, passoit elle sa mere en toute maniere...'. This, rather than the fact that, as Thelma Fenster suggests (in her 'Beaumanoir's *La Manekine*: Kin D(ε)ad: Incest, Doubling, and Death', *American Imago* 39:1 (1982), 41-58), the only way that Joie can achieve full parity with her mother is through death, is immensely troubling: at least one can argue that Joie does not under the terms of the promise made by father to mother need to be dead, as the mother does in fact stipulate that the wife should be 'd'otel samblant comme moy et *comme j'ay esté jusques a*

present. If Joie does not actually resemble her mother, the whole incest threat was – on this assumption – less Alien than utterly unnecessary.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 281.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, loc. cit.

⁷⁶ For a discussion of the voyeuristic aspect of the medieval poet that goes beyond what I have space and cause to say here, see A. C. Spearing, *The Medieval Poet as Voyeur: Looking and Listening in Medieval Love Narratives* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

⁷⁷ *La Manekine*, ed. cit., 281. This blush is significant – though not perhaps in the way that critics like Thelma Fenster suggest. I will discuss the episode in due course.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 81-2.

⁷⁹ Claude Roussel, *Contes de Geste au XIV^e siècle. Inspiration folklorique et écriture épique dans 'La Belle Hélène de Constantinople'* (Geneva: Droz, 1998), 157.

⁸⁰ See Laura Mulvey, 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema', in *Visual and Other Pleasures* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1989), 14-26. This quotation is on 19.

⁸¹ See Elizabeth Grosz, *Jacques Lacan. A Feminist Introduction* (London and New York: Routledge, 1990), 80.

⁸² See Jean-Paul Sartre, *L'être et le néant. Essai d'ontologie phénoménologique* (Paris: Seuil, 1943), especially 317-9 on the transgressive potential of the gaze.

⁸³ Mulvey, op. cit., 21. In other words, desire, as Žižek would have it, becomes 'sublimated': libidinal cathexis is displaced 'from the brute object alleged to satisfy some basic drive to an 'elevated', 'cultivated' form of satisfaction'. On this and other aspects of the gaze in Lacan and beyond see, for example, Slavoj Žižek, *Looking Awry. An Introduction to Jacques Lacan Through Popular Culture* (Cambridge, MA, and London: The MIT Press, 1991). This quotation is on 83. See also Sarah Kay, *Žižek. A Critical Introduction* (Cambridge: Polity, 2003), 53-4 and 77-9.

⁸⁴ *La Manekine*, ed. cit., 286-7. Linda Marie Rouillard makes the point that though Joie compares herself to Judith, in fact she surpasses the Biblical heroine in virtue and fortitude: for though Judith weakened, Rouillard suggests, in killing her aggressor, Joie on the other hand exhibits strength in turning the knife on herself instead. See Rouillard, 'Reading the Reader: Wauquelin's Prose Adaptation of *La Manekine*', *Medieval Perspectives* 15 (2000), 93-104, in particular 97.

⁸⁵ *La Manekine*, 288.

⁸⁶ See Elizabeth Grosz, *Volatile Bodies. Toward a Corporeal Feminism* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana, 1994), vii.

⁸⁷ See Dylan Evans, *An Introductory Dictionary of Lacanian Psychoanalysis* (Hove and Philadelphia: Brunner-Routledge, 2001), 116, and also Grosz, op. cit., 116-7.

⁸⁸ On Judith Butler and performative identities, see her *Gender Trouble. Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (London and New York: Routledge, 1990), and especially 'Imitation and Gender Insubordination', in Diana Fuss, *Inside/Out. Lesbian Theories, Gay Theories* (London and New York: Routledge, 1991), 13-33. For a useful discussion of these concepts in connection with medieval literature in particular, see Peregrine Rand, 'Narrative Closure in a Thirteenth-Century French Manuscript: Musée Condé 472' (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Cambridge, 1998), Chapter Four.

⁸⁹ See Jean-Charles Huchet, *Littérature française et psychanalyse* (Paris: PUF, 1990), 201.

⁹⁰ *La Manekine*, ed. cit., 300. Critics of *La Manekine*, whether in its thirteenth- or fifteenth-century manifestations, have been much exercised by the fictional and actual etymology of the heroine's sobriquet. See, *inter alia*, the works by Suchier and Harvey mentioned above. Much of what has been written suggests – or is prepared to accept – the suffix ‘-kine’/‘-quine’ as a feminine diminutive, which seems plausible. An interesting slant on this in terms of a Burgundian reception of this is found in one of Molinet's ‘Pronostications joyeuses’: he uses the masculine ‘mannequins’ in an allusion to worms, which might point to *mannequin(e)*'s ability to be used to refer to small animals as well as humans (see Jean Molinet, *Encoires pronostication*, in Jean Molinet, *Les Pronostications joyeuses*, ed. Jelle Koopmans and Paul Verhuyck (Geneva: Droz, 1998), 165-202; the reference in question occurs in *De la ville d'Anvers* (181): *Se Anvers se pooit ou volloit desfaire d'ung tas de menus mannequins chetifz et nuds, vivans de corruption et desquelz pluseurs gens sont et seront mengiés, elle aroit an a souhaidier*, with the editors' gloss of the *Anvers/an vers* pun on 196. That Molinet knew the story of *La Manekine* is shown by his allusion to her in the *Naufrage de la Pucelle* (1477): the allusion is made by Cœur Leal, a personified supporter of the eponymous Pucelle, who represents the unfortunate state of Mary of Burgundy after the battle of Nancy. In the context of a consolatory speech featuring worthy exempla, Cœur Leal cites Manekine, as follows. ‘Et si tu ne vœus toullier tes dois en sang humain pour honesteté de ton sexe et catholicque religion, fiche ton œul en la misericorde du gubernateur sempiternel, unique largiteur des victoires et reduis en ta memoire la souffrance de la belle manequine, injustement traictie, condennée en exil de mer, recluse en une petite navire et abandonnée a tous vens. La plus des plus desconfortee, tres douce fleur de jeunesse, fille et espouse de roy, souef nourrie en chambre roiale, accompagniee de dames et damoiselles, branlant seulle en la mer, nagant entre undes et roches cruelles, au lieu de danses au tambourin navioit au son du vent marin et touteffois, après que Fortune en eust faict son marcheplet, qu'elle fust purifiée comme l'or en la fournaise, empreinte au coing de patience, soubz le martel de tribulation et ployee de grace divine, elle fust par œuvre miraculeuse reparee de ses torsfais et enfin arriva au regne pardurable’. See Jean Molinet, *Le Naufrage de la Pucelle*, in *Les Faictz et Dictz de Jean Molinet*, ed. Noël Dupire, 3 vols (Paris: SATF, 1936-39), I, 77-99. The quotation is on 86-7. I am indebted for this to Adrian Armstrong.

⁹¹ See for example Thelma Fenster, art. cit., 43ff.

⁹² It is important to make clear here that when I talk here of a ‘doubled identity’ I do not mean to suggest – as I think Fenster might be doing (art. cit., 48f) – a confluence with the figure of the Double in literature and psychoanalysis. As Morgan Dickson underlines (see her ‘Female Doubling and Male Identity in Medieval Romance’, in Philippa Hardman (ed.), *The Matter of Identity in Medieval Romance* (Woodbridge: D. S. Brewer, 2003), 59-72), most works – literary or psychoanalytical – that feature the Double are about male characters able to perceive their own *Doppelgänger*. This is resolutely not the case here, either with Manekine or, as I mention later, her father as exhibitor of a doubled identity.

⁹³ Fenster, art. cit., 48-50.

⁹⁴ See Moira Gatens, *Imaginary Bodies: Ethics, Power, and Corporeality* (London: Routledge, 1996), 149. Also relevant is Claire Colebrook, ‘From Radical Representations to Corporeal Becomings: The Feminist Philosophy of Lloyd, Grosz, and Gatens’, in *Hypatia* 15.2 (2000), 76-93.

⁹⁵ *La Manekine*, ed. cit., 284.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 290.

⁹⁷ *La Manekine*, ed. Sargent-Bauer, Stones etc, ll. 787-8.

⁹⁸ See Grosz, *Volatile Bodies*, 156.

⁹⁹ *La Belle Hélène W*, 121.

CONCLUSION

History is in many ways a construct, a retroactive and often subjective piecing-together of elements of the past seen through the relativising lens of the present, however temporally close to or remote from events that present might be. This is no less true for the establishment of a literary history. The narrative I have woven around the *mise en prose* genre in the foregoing chapters is dependent on my locating, as I have underlined throughout, what Terence Cave has termed a 'fêlure', the textual representation of a metatextual concern visible to modern eyes but which might not have registered quite so strongly on the contemporary Richter scale, in this instance at the Burgundian court. This 'fêlure' is what I have called *Alienness*. I have argued here that the prose texts discussed in this thesis – as well as other texts within the *mise en prose* corpus necessarily left out of this representative sample – might be seen as a literary response to the troubled Franco-Burgundian relations of the period from around 1445 until Philip the Good's death in 1467. Burgundian socio-cultural identity is asserted, I suggest, within and through this particular, and peculiar, method of textual production.

What this thesis reveals most strongly is that the *mise en prose* genre can be seen as a fertile site of cultural negotiation for and at the court of Philip the Good. The negotiatory process functions on two interconnected levels of appropriation and adaptation, in terms – to borrow again Norris Lacy's useful designation – of the motivation and method informing Burgundian textual production in this period.¹ The assertion of a distinct social identity through these texts is dependent on the means by which court authors assimilate their chosen Francophone avatars (the process of reworking verse into prose), on the sense in which, further, a literary heritage or genealogy is shaped through this process (the practice of appropriating literary-historical figures within texts to feed particular Burgundian hungers), and alongside this on the punctual method(s) by which this heritage is adapted to speak pertinently to its new readership (in the case of this thesis, through the modalities of *Alienness* given expression in the texts under discussion). I offer here a case-study of Burgundian identity formation as it occurs through creative cultural dialogue with the past; as suggested in the Preface, my approach is distinct from that of other critics in that it brings together source and product, social realities and literary

output, in ways that allow broader – and necessarily gesturing – conclusions to be drawn about artistic production as a response to political circumstance.

The first means by which this cultural negotiation is effected, then, is in the very practice of the *mise en prose* itself, and in the motivation behind these prose reworkings of earlier Francophone literary models. One of the more initially curious aspects of the *mise en prose* genre as a means of asserting, as I am arguing here, a discrete identity for Burgundy is, precisely, the derivation of the elements of its corpus from just that culture the court wished to divorce itself from. If the court of France and all it represents was so abhorrent, why should Philip and his intimates have wanted to have had produced for them what were essentially French stories? In response to this I suggested in Chapter One that these earlier avatars speak to a Burgundian need for cultural superiority, an almost hegemonical desire to gain power over the French court by ‘improving’ (to adopt Piero Boitani’s terminology) its literary models in the creation of this new literary aesthetic.² In this sense the text becomes a very real site of negotiation, the product and index of its time: in response to a particular set of socio-political circumstances a new literary artefact or genre is created, a set of texts which are both individual utterances and the utterances of individuals (in this case the Burgundian court) whose structures – in Bourdieusian terms – link closely with the practices of transmission surrounding these structures.³

This, in short, is why the Burgundian practice of the prose reworking is so important – or rather why the practice of reworking these earlier texts in prose is so crucial. As I argued above, the fact of reshaping the Old French verse avatar in Middle French prose allows that particular text to become assimilated into a Burgundian literary genealogy (of which more below), to become ‘naturalised’ as part of that culture through acquiring a particular communicative function at the level of language and, more pertinently, of form and structure. In the terms established by Jonathan Culler in his *Structuralist Poetics*, while the Burgundian court did not of course invent the concept of writing in prose, what prose offered this court in its attempt to distinguish itself positively from France was an *écriture* of its own – a mode of writing adopted by an author, or a function given to language that allows literary creation to take place.⁴ Language, form and structure become closely

linked under this aesthetic; and in this specific sense, then, the Burgundian author negotiates productively with prior cultural models, and with another cultural heritage, and begins to derive from this dialogue a new, and distinct, mode of literary transmission. This new and distinct mode of transmission, and the concomitant identity formation it occasions, do not happen solely at the level of language and structure in the *mise en prose*. They depend, too, on the content of those reworkings; and as I mentioned previously, this particular negotiatory and assimilatory process can concern appropriation as well as adaptation. These two aspects are of course interlinked, and bear certain (superficial) similarities, but for the sake of clarity here I shall deal with each in turn.

As I noted in Chapter Two, a further sense in which the Burgundian court assimilates and responds creatively to the Francophone avatars from which the *misés en prose* derive is through the particular way in which it appropriates and reworks prior – and broadly French-‘owned’ – historical, pseudo-historical, or literary-historical figures. I contend that this especial negotiatory process, seen in the taking over of figures such as Jason, Gideon, Alexander the Great, and, most pertinently for my purposes here, Arthur, in these prose texts allows the creation at court of a distinct literary heritage or genealogy, vital to the construction of what Graeme Small has termed Burgundian ‘national mythologies’.⁵ In the prologue to his *Histoire de Jason*, Raoul Lefèvre makes the important point that Philip the Good had throughout his life been ‘nourry en histoires’,⁶ thereby underlining the foundational rôle played in court identity formation by the literary text and within it the appropriation and assimilation of these figures from the past. What I am at pains to avoid in this thesis – and here I am at variance with certain other critics of the *mise en prose* – is any suggestion that a text functioned as a ‘miroir des princes’ for the duke and his intimates, or any implication that the historical figure stands as a metonym for Philip.⁷

This sort of epigonality, while in and of itself interesting and often useful, lends little to my argument; what I want to advance goes somewhat deeper than this, and is concerned with the formation of cultural identities and particular ideologies – what Jane Taylor has termed in this context ‘new coherences’ –⁸ through these figures and in the social energy that circulates between the source text and the Burgundian

product in this regard. I am concerned here with the ideological, not the metonymical, value of appropriating a figure like Jason from Trojan myth, or especially of Arthur and that literary heritage from France. My interest lies in the precise and pertinent ways in which the prosateur listens to and engages with the voices of the past communicated through the source-text, and the ways in which these are made to speak anew in his reworking in the negotiation of a new cultural heritage, and through this a separate identity, for the Burgundian court. As I suggested above in connection with the court's appropriation of these Francophone avatars, the creative assimilation of literary figures like Arthur, Erec, and especially Cligès becomes in a very real sense a means of gaining power over the French, a way of 'beating them at their own game' in the cultural arena that can, with just a little sophistry, be translated into a socio-political fillip in identity terms.

What I am suggesting, then, is that the prose reworking, at the level of its structure and its various methods of appropriating and assimilating prior Francophone models, offers Burgundy a particular means of creating a sense of cultural identity. In some ways this is hardly startling – though few critics have explicitly made this point in connection with the *mise en prose* –,⁹ but what is I think original about my findings in this thesis is the way in which, against this backdrop of structural and historical innovation, the reworked texts themselves, through their themes and the way in which these are adapted to suit Burgundian 'new coherences', can be seen to speak to and help in the process of identity negotiation. What I am concerned with here are specific questions of what happened at the level of the text to illustrate this, the ways in which the prosateur adapts and reworks his text to make it more palatable to his target audience and to respond to that audience's socio-political concerns – processes which Jane Taylor has helpfully glossed as 'deletion of alterity' in the text, and 'acculturation'.¹⁰ As I noted in the Preface there are of course manifold ways in which the *misés en prose* could be creatively and critically approached; but I have here pinpointed just one of these ways, which I think permits well the exploration and elucidation of these particular issues of textual and metatextual identity formation.

The strategy I adopt is the theorisation of the phenomenon I have called Alieness. As I have noted throughout the thesis, Alieness functions like the 'félure' Terence

Cave discusses in his *Pré-histoires*, a mark on the textual unconscious that allows the revelation of concerns beyond that text, in the social and/or political sphere. In the six works that form the representative sample of the *mise en prose* genre discussed in this case-study, it becomes clear that through Alien themes and the means by which these are adapted and assimilated a further and particular cultural negotiation occurs, paralleling and strengthening the process of identity formation at court. In each of the reworkings studied, though in different ways, a textual identity is revealed for the work itself and the characters within it. Across the six works of my sample I trace a continuum of Alienness according to the two modalities – the Embodied and the Ideological –, developed and explored in detail in Chapter One, which allow these various textual identities to emerge. From the discussion of ‘borrowed mythologies’ (outlined above) in Chapter Two, I move into a more punctual examination of the prosateur’s method of adapting his source text in my discussion of the prose *Cligès*, of the particular strategies effected to negotiate a particular space for the reworking within a distinct literary heritage and accord the new work a discrete identity of its own.

From the *Cligès* I move to the exploration of the character of Salhadin and the Embodied location of his – and the text’s – Alienness. It is with this work that begins my discussion of identity *within* the texts under scrutiny, alongside the examination of their reworked textual identities as in the above case. In each of the remaining works, *Saladin*, *Jehan d’Avennes*, *La Belle Hélène de Constantinople*, and *La Manekine*, I locate the negotiation of the characters’ identities in their various corporeal performances. Using the theories of corporeality advanced by Judith Butler and to a lesser extent Australian feminist philosophers like Elizabeth Grosz – this is in itself an aspect of the originality of my work –, I suggest ways in which a character’s (racialised, chivalric, gendered, or mutilated) body reveals not only their identity but the ideologies behind that identity. In Butlerian terms, the repeated performances effected by the characters within these texts shape a particular sense of selfhood which, further, when plotted along the continuum of Alienness I advance here, from Embodied Alienness towards a more physically manifested but Ideologically important permutation of the episteme in *Jehan d’Avennes*, to its full Ideological import in *La Belle Hélène* and *La Manekine*, allows textual and metatextual

reflection to be made on the ways in which the apparently weak might be seen to draw strength within the *mise en prose* genre more broadly.

One of Judith Butler's pressing concerns in her work is what happens when an identity performance becomes disrupted, inapt to be continued and forced to cede position to a new performance. In many ways this parallels the impetus behind the production of the *mise en prose* for the Burgundian court. The breakdown of relations with the French court in the period under discussion here signalled the end of one set of performances for Burgundy, and occasioned the need for new ones. One way in which these fresh identity performances were played out was, as discussed above, the shaping of a new literary heritage distinct from the French model in these *prose reworkings*. Burgundy enacts a process of cultural negotiation in these texts which provides the court with, and allows it to perform, a new and distinct socio-political identity. In the *misés en prose* discussed in this thesis the Burgundian authors confront the variegated problems and ideological challenges of the source-texts head-on, and deal with them creatively, subtly, and suggestively, to formulate of them a new and more relevant aesthetic. Out of a past that was eluding their grasp the Burgundian court constructs a vibrant literary present that was theirs alone. Like Mary Malone invoked at the outset of this thesis, the court achieves a sense of its own particular identity through a reflection on and assimilation of something outside of it. Difference becomes a sort of sameness, or a one-ness; the 'them' of the Francophone avatars becomes, through the peculiar strategies effected by the *prosateurs* and described here, resolutely the 'us' of a Burgundian present.

¹ 'Motivation and Method in the Burgundian *Erec*', in Keith Busby and Norris J. Lacy (eds.), *Conjunctures: Medieval Studies in Honour of Douglas Kelly* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1994), 271-280.

² See Piero Boitani, *The Genius to Improve an Invention. Literary Transitions* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2002), ix.

³ On this see Pierre Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice*, trans. Richard Nice (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990).

⁴ Jonathan Culler, *Structuralist Poetics: Structuralism, Linguistics and the Study of Literature* (London and New York: Routledge Classics, 2002), 153ff.

⁵ See 'Local Élités and 'National' Mythologies in the Burgundian Dominions in the Fifteenth Century', forthcoming in a volume entitled *Building the Past/Konstruktion der eigenen Vergangenheit* in 2006. As Small himself suggests, the question of 'nationality' at this court, and indeed at this time, is a

somewhat vexed one, but it happens nonetheless to be one of the more useful designations for the court's process of noting and negotiating its 'entre-deux' position.

⁶ *L'histoire de Jason. Ein Roman aus dem 15. Jarhhundert*, ed. Gert Pinkernell (Frankfurt: Athenäum Verlag, 1971), 125.

⁷ This approach is central to, for example, Elisabeth Gaucher's thesis in her *La Biographie chevaleresque. Typologie d'un genre (XIIIe-XVe siècle)*, (Paris: Champion, 1994).

⁸ Jane H. M. Taylor, 'Alexander Amoroso: Reading Alexander in the *Roman de Perceforest*', in *The Medieval French Alexander*, ed. Donald Maddox and Sarah Sturm-Maddox (New York: State University of New York Press, 2002), 219-34; 219.

⁹ Only Jane Taylor hints at this in connection with the mises en prose in her 'The Significance of the Insignificant: Reading Reception in the Burgundian *Erec* and *Cligès*', *Fifteenth-Century Studies* 24 (1998), 183-197.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 184ff.

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