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Challenging the Authority of Identity: The Spaces of Memory in Medieval English Romance.

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As episodic narratives, romances depend upon an inherent understanding of the powers of memory and recollection to ensure that the authority of characters, narratives and the chivalric ideal are identified and sustained. Memory is mapped onto literal journeys, places, and correlative experiences, and the thesis examines the processes through which this is achieved in medieval English romances. Distractions of the present are often complicated by unfamiliarity, forgetfulness, disguises and incognito, or threats from Otherworldly challenges, (mis)fortune, and time itself. Consequently, in contrast to simple learning in the manner of mnemonics, romances promote a dynamic continuum between past and present which preserves the medieval memorial principles of order and place along with the creative freedom for interpretation advocated at the heart of medieval *memoria*. Using classical and medieval memory theories, the thesis examines the creative challenges for memory in a selection of established romances such as *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, *Sir Orfeo*, *Emaré*, and *King Horn*, including those of Chaucer and Malory, along with lesser studied, longer romances such as *William of Palerne*, *Ipomadon* and *Beves of Hamtoun*. Characters and audiences create their own stable set of memories from within and beyond each tale which they recollect, often as imaginatively changed forms, into present experiences and future situations. By avoiding the temptation to forget and remaining open to referential moments, a lost knight is united with his remembered love, situations mysteriously chime with those witnessed before, and pressures of change become the reassuring familiarity and expectation of a past reimagined. In romances the memorial places, objects, and rituals are of great importance, but so too are the spaces between these recognisable points. This is the expanse of time which allows the creative work of memory to truly flourish and preserves the identity and authority of the narratives themselves.

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Abbreviations

ANTS		Anglo-Norman Text Society
BD		*The Book of the Duchess*
CCCM		Corpus christianorum continuatio medievalis
CCSL		Corpus christianorum series latina
CFMA		Classiques français du moyen age
CSEL		Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum latinorum
EETS		Early English Text Society
	E.S.	Extra Series
	O.S.	Original Series
	S.S.	Supplementary Series
HF		*The House of Fame*
KnT		The "Knight's Tale"
LCL		Loeb Classical Library
LGW		*The Legend of Good Women*
MED		*The Middle English Dictionary*
Mel		The "Tale of Melibee"
MLT		The "Man of Law's Tale"
OED		*The Oxford English Dictionary*
PL		*Patrologia cursus completus series latina*
PMLA		*Publications of the Modern Languages Association*
Rom		*The Romaunt of the Rose*
TC		*Troilus and Criseyde*
TEAMS		The Consortium for the Teaching of the Middle Ages
Th		The "Tale of Sir Thopas"
TLF		Textes littéraires français

Acknowledgements

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction: Memories of Romance.

forsan et haec olim meminisse iuvabit.[1]

[The future is] that which cannot be anticipated and which always marks the memory of the past as experience of the promise.[2]

During the first half of the thirteenth century, at the University of Bologna, Boncompagno da Signa declared that "[m]emory is a glorious and wonderful gift of nature, by which we recall the past, comprehend the present, and contemplate the future through its similarities with the past."[3] To this day, memory is relied upon as a source of great authority socially, politically, and personally. Yet, on account of its elusiveness and inherent connection with the subject or subjects attempting to classify its workings, the faculty remains mysterious. There are great questions surrounding its longevity (the recollection of old events, apparently long-forgotten), the connections with future occasions or emotions through uncanny coincidence or *déjà vu*, and its frustrating failure at crucial moments. We therefore appreciate the ability of memory to maintain, but also question, authority itself whether in relation to information or, more disturbingly, identity. How stable are our memories, and what effect does this have on

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[1] P. Vergili Maronis, *Aeneidos: Liber Primus,* ed. R. G. Austin (Oxford: Clarendon, 1971) 203. All subsequent quotations from the *Aeneid* I will be to this edition and cited by line number. "Maybe the day'll come when even this will be joy to remember." Virgil, *Aeneid*, trans. Frederick Ahl, Oxford World's Classics (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2007). All subsequent translations from all books of the *Aeneid* will be from this edition.

[2] Jacques Derrida, "'Like the sound of the sea deep within a shell': Paul de Man's *War*," trans. P. Kurnuf, *Critical Inquiry* 14 (1988): 590-652, at 595.

[3] Boncompagno da Signa, "On Memory," trans. Sean Gallagher, *The Medieval Craft of Memory: An Anthology of Texts and Pictures*, ed. Mary Carruthers and Jan M. Ziolkowski, Material Texts (Philadelphia, PA: U of Pennsylvania P, 2002). All subsequent quotations from da Signa, in translation, will be to this edition. The original text can be found in Boncompagno da Signa, *Rhetorica novissima: Book 8*, ed. Augusto Gaudenzi, Scripta Anecdota Glossatorum, Bibliotheca Iuridica Medii Aevi 2, 1892 (Turin: Bottega d'Erasmo, 1962) 249.

the information we are trying to recall which may be, variously, a person, a situation, or even aspects of our own life? Inheriting the philosophies of classical tradition, the Middle Ages had already recognised that memory was important in guaranteeing the ongoing authority of a particular identity, both socially and personally through "*re*-collecting" or "*re*-membering" which would accommodate a past in the present context.

The late medieval period, much like today, enjoyed historical referents; there was the desire to use the past as an authoritative guide for present and future. However, the curiously medieval dynamic continuum between past and present made the workings of memory somewhat problematic: there was, ostensibly, a linear concept of time which recognised "an irretrievability of history, but [which] did not acknowledge a thorough alteration through the coming of new epochs."[4] Such an ambiguous "belief in historical progression and its consistency" is analogous to the process of recollection both in its design and the effort required in this process.[5] In essence, socio-historical aspirations encountered philosophical, theological and psychological doctrine through shared concepts and aims. Simultaneously, political, literary, theological, legal, and philosophical discourses all relied, in significant ways, upon memorial ability, prompting numerous treatises on how to maximise the effectiveness of the memorial processes which, in turn, led to much discussion concerning the workings of memory itself. Such analyses are still taking place in psychological and medical research laboratories today. From such work, medical science has concluded that recollection takes place in the hippocampus, in close proximity to the speech and emotional centres outside the retrosplenial cortex, and is divided into short and long term categories of varying immediacy and accessibility.

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[4] Hans-Werner Goetz, "The Concept of Time in the Historicity of the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries," *Medieval Concepts of the Past: Ritual, Memory, Historiography*, ed. Gerd Althoff, Johannes Fried and Patrick J. Geary, Publications of German Historical Institute (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2002) 162.
[5] Ibid.

Although these conclusions categorise and define, the memorial faculty continually urges us to think in more abstract, usually spatial, terms to disentangle the mysteries of its recollecting mechanisms or the ways in which we are prompted to remember. On a very basic level, there are familiar temporal planes of past, present and future; yet, frequently we think of designated memorial places in which individual memories are stored as images summoned by, and subsequently moved into, the present place. This movement was the prevalent belief in medieval treatises and lies at the heart of *memoria* - the medieval imaginative craft of recollection and memory. This study's preoccupation is not with why an event needs, thematically, to recall another in medieval thought (such as allusions or the end-points of medieval recollections in terms of accurate recall), but rather the journey between and across time, the communication involved, and imaginative agility and creativity required.

By examining these aspects of medieval memory through the lens of some Middle English romances, this study reaffirms the importance placed upon the craft of memory and thought in the medieval period, but also suggests that memorial ability was a key aspect of a romance's didacticism and effect. In the reception of a text and experiences of a character, the past must be carefully stored in order to clarify and order future spaces. This is how a character knows where to go and what they have learned and also how an audience supports and guides them along the way. The facts to be remembered are important, but so too are the ways in which people remember: romances, this study will argue, "may enact mnemonic processes as well as, or instead of, being about memories."[6] Identity, for the purposes of this study will be addressed at the level of character, audience, and narrative. Each of these requires a stable identity in

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[6] Katharine Hodgkin and Susannah Radstone, eds. *Memory History Nation: Contested Pasts*, Memory and Narrative (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 2003) 14. For the *phenomenon* see Esther Leslie, "Absent-Minded Professors: Etch-a-Sketching Academic Forgetting," *Regimes of Memory*, ed. Susannah Radstone and Katharine Hodgkin (London: Routledge, 2003) 172-85.

order to have a certain authority: a knight must be identifiable to the court and recognised for his qualities and achievements, the audience must be aware of whom they are hearing and what particular didactic message that character's actions are delivering and, finally, the romance narrative must support the audience in its endeavours by rewarding correct behaviour, highlighting errors, and maintaining an episodic correspondence between past, present and future. The three levels, and their respective authorities, are comparable to Caroline Walker Bynum's tertiary definition of identity: individuality, group affiliation, and spatiotemporal unity.[7] In romance these must all work together and memory, especially the broader, more imaginative medieval concept of *memoria*, is crucial in this process.

Romance performs the workings of memory through techniques which, it has been claimed, are exploited today through film "with its juxtapositions, / flashbacks, fadeouts and affective immediacy."[8] To achieve this, temporal planes are mapped onto a narrative framework which itself is allied to a physical, geographical topography whilst constructing various aesthetic, thematic, cultural and emotional continuities. In romances, we are invited to remember everything encountered. Although Arlyn Diamond believes that "prudence is a virtue deeply antithetical in some ways to the core values of the world of romances and lays, with their emphasis on *aventure*, risk, and trusting to one's heart," in the guiding light of memorial *providens*, the more authoritative individual is one who can remember previous "presents."[9] It is they who gain the authority of a stable and altogether more established identity within a narrative, in the same way as the narrative benefits from the recollection of its episodes by an audience in order to establish moral and thematic authority. Everything happens for a

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[7] Caroline Walker Bynum, *Metamorphosis and Identity* (New York: Zone, 2005) 15-36.
[8] Hodgkin and Radstone 13.
[9] Arlyn Diamond, "*The Erle of Tolous*: The Price of Virtue," *Medieval Insular Romance: Translation and Innovation*, ed. Judith Weiss, Jennifer Fellows and Morgan Dickinson (Cambridge: Brewer, 2000) 83.

reason in romance, the equivalent, perhaps, of the Derridian "promise" as an audience "make[s] informed guesses about what facts they believe are going to be especially significant for the outcome of the plot."[10] In essence, romance and its audiences acquire Paul Ricoeur's "poetic memory" which "was required to transcend the opposition between natural memory and artificial memory, to grind to dust the opposition between use and abuse" through complementary processes of recollected culture, literature, theme, and character.[11] Only slowly have neuroscientists moved from examining the faculty's role in preserving memory to its importance in guiding the future; yet such would seem to be the inherent understanding of memory in the medieval period, performed with great enthusiasm and expectation in romance.[12] As Yadin Dudai and Mary Carruthers noted recently, "Mnemosyne has a Janus face, looking to both time past and time future," and romance, it will be shown, dramatises and embodies this alternating perspective.[13]

As narratives structured by episode, romances rely upon recollection for aesthetic and moral effect, the overall "identity" of a narrative we might say which could be of loyalty, love, courtesy, or religious devotion. This is seen in the genre's roots in classical literature: Vergil's Aeneas learns through experiences designed in some way to interact with events later on his journey and, in the twelfth century, the great medieval French romancer Chrétien de Troyes continued the tradition in his narratives of youthful inexperience and gradual learning. One of the most sustained journeys of continual, changing recollection occurs in *Le Conte du Graal*. Perceval, the young Welshman, is bombarded with advice which he subsequently forgets or

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[10] Ad Putter, *An Introduction to the "Gawain"-Poet*, Longman Medieval and Renaissance Library (London: Longman, 1996) 75. Cf. Derrida, "Sound of the sea" 595.

[11] Paul Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, trans. Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer (Chicago, IL: U of Chicago P, 2004) 64.

[12] Daniel L Schacker and Donna Rose Addis, "Constructive Memory: The Ghosts of Past and Future," *Nature* 445 (2007): 27.

[13] Yadin Dudai and Mary Carruthers, "The Janus face of Mnemosyne," *Nature* 434 (2005): 567.

misremembers. Focusing on romances written more than a century after Chrétien, this study will examine the proliferation and variety of the play with *memoria* through Middle English popular, courtly, and Arthurian examples of the genre. Middle English romances are notable for their sheer variety ranging from memories of Anglo-Saxon order in *Havelok the Dane* to English redactions of established Anglo-Norman texts, the combination of courtly romance and folktale in works such as *Sir Orfeo*, and the highly imaginative depiction of memory and its challenges offered by the *Gawain*-poet.

By examining why romance itself is an effective lens through which to examine the function of memory, it will become clear that metrical or verse romances are highly sophisticated in the memorial capabilities expected from their audiences. Moreover, inheriting the *topos*, Chaucer and Malory recognised the inherent strengths, but also the irony and fragility, of memory in romance tales, invoking literary-philosophical implications of the narrative art and returning the genre to an imagined chronicle tradition of a paradoxically "remembered" future.[14] These later writers appropriated the workings of memory from courtly or popular romance whilst comparing these with their own, often self-conscious, artistic endeavours. Throughout, English romances continued to recollect a literary traditionalism inside and outside a narrative in "[a] celebration of both the remote and immediate past."[15] Some cultural historians have differentiated between male and female memories, the latter performing a greater memorial role in society through ritual and mourning for men fallen in battle. However, romances showcase good (and bad) memories in both sexes – if a prevalence of male memories does emerge in this study, this is surely only on account of the greater agency afforded

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[14] See introductory remarks by Corinne Saunders, "Chaucer's Romances," *A Companion to Romance*, ed. Corinne Saunders, Blackwell Companions to Literature and Culture 27 (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004) 85-88.
[15] Carol Fewster, *Traditionality and Genre in Middle English Romance* (Cambridge: Brewer, 1987) 128.

to knights in romances and possible influences from the predominantly male romance writers.[16]

The importance of memory is also reinforced at authorial and narrative levels and can therefore influence the response of an audience and their identity as a listening or reading body. In Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*, moving like the remembering subject, the poet withholds certain elements and returns to them as he sees fit: "And leten other thing collateral, / Of hym thence I my tale forth to holde, / Both of his joie and of his cares colde."[17] Such is the narrative technique that is transferred between character, poet, and audience as we all, to borrow late classical memorial rhetoric, "leten" certain memorial *imagines* and journey towards a different memorial *locus* of "other thing collateral." Similarly, in *Gamelyn,* following the romance's description of the evil brother with a broken back fettered in the hall, the narrator turns from this scene towards a new location and action: "Lete we now this fals knight lien in his care / And talke we of Gamelin and loke how he fare."[18] That narrator, by implication, commands an omniscient view over all literal and temporal places of the narrative and creates a tale in which events can be layered to produce an alternating view for an audience.[19] A great memory is apparently at work here with perfect knowledge of narrative places and their

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[16] See Elisabeth M. C. van Houts, *Memory and Gender in Medieval Europe, 900-1200*, Medieval Culture and Society (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 1999); Elisabeth M. C. van Houts, ed. *Medieval Memories: Men, Women and the Past in Europe, 700-1300*, Women and Men in History (Harlow: Longman-Pearson, 2001).

[17] Geoffrey Chaucer, *Troilus and Criseyde*, *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. Larry D. Benson, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1987) I.262-4. All subsequent references to Chaucer's works will be to the *Riverside* and cited by line number and book number if applicable.

[18] *Gamelyn*, *Middle English Verse Romances*, ed. Donald B. Sands, Exeter Medieval Texts and Studies, 1966 (Exeter: U of Exeter P, 1986) 615-6. All subsequent references to *Gamelyn* will be to this edition and cited by line number.

[19] This technique is widespread: in *Emaré*, we temporarily leave the heroine "And speke of the kyng of Galys, / Fro the sege when he come home." *Emaré*, *Six Middle English Romances*, ed. Maldwyn Mills, Everyman (London: Dent, 1973) 946-7. All subsequent references to *Emaré* will be to this edition and cited by line number. Similarly, in *Havelok the Dane*, Goldeboru remains incarcerated in a continuous state of grief until we return, later, with Havelok, from another narrative and time: "Of Goldeboru shull we nou laten, / That nought ne blinneth forto graten / Ther sho liggeth in prisoun." *Havelok the Dane*, *Verse Romances*, ed. Sands 328-330. All subsequent references to *Havelok* will be to this edition and cited by line number.

characters, manipulating the tale with a lightness of touch which allows figures to be presented and temporarily discarded ("leve we") whilst other places are explored and discussed. This was, of course, coupled with other oral formulaic features such as stock phrases and character epithets, which poets continued to use "even in increasingly textual environments…because [they were] still capable of importing into texts associations and meanings that were otherwise inaccessible."[20] This in itself is an important memorial action, as "each occurrence summons to a present reality the ongoing traditional meaning reflected in the innumerable other uses of the phrase or scene."[21] D. H Green has questioned the "memory friendliness" of romance, citing "the quantitative difficulty of composing lengthy works in the head [in]…works of great structural complexity, involving detailed parallels and contrasts, symmetries and gradations, all with a bearing on the work's meaning."[22] Although this argument concerns French romances, especially those of Chrétien, and is directed mainly in response to E. B. Vitz's view of the poet as an illiterate minstrel, the suspicion does reveal something about romance *memoria* at this very basic, but integral and influential, level.[23]

The audience also participates in preserving the tale whilst responding to it. Often, the narrative progression is interrupted as previous events are recalled and re-narrated before certain individuals, an example of *analepsis* defined by Gérard Genette

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[20] Nancy Mason Bradbury, "Chaucerian Minstrelsy: *Sir Thopas*, *Troilus and Criseyde* and English metrical romance," *Tradition and Transformation in Medieval Romance*, ed. Rosalind Field (Cambridge: Brewer, 1999) 22. For a detailed discussion of oral formulaic features and their associative memorial effects see John Miles Foley, *Immanent Art: From Structure to Meaning in Traditional Oral Epic* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana UP, 1991).
[21] John Miles Foley, *The Theory of Oral Composition: History and Methodology* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana UP, 1988) 111.
[22] D. H. Green, *The Beginning of Medieval Romance: Fact and Fiction, 1150-1200*. Cambridge Studies in Medieval Literature (Cambridge: Cambridge UP. 2002) 49. Similarly, the more lengthy narratives with important patterning of repetition and ritual such as *Ipomadon*, *William of Palerne*, *Guy of Warwick*, and *Beves of Hampton* would make exceptional demands from the memorial capacity of a particular individual.
[23] E. B. Vitz, *Orality and Performance in Early French Romance* (Cambridge: Brewer, 1999).

as an "evocation after the fact of an event that took place earlier than the point in the story where we are."[24] The technique has obvious benefits for a reader or audience: although having seen these events at first hand, they nevertheless remind us of what has happened so far – often a useful memorial tool as a narrative deepens in complexity through the addition of similar events and memorial challenges of deception, disguise, and incognito. Yet this technique also establishes a performance context *within* romance. The characters listen to a tale of which they themselves have been a part, just as the current romance has been delivered to the real audience or reader. This occurs early in *Ywain and Gawain* as Colgrevance narrates his experiences in terms that echo conventional, oral openings of romances themselves: "Herkens, hende, unto my spell; / Trofels sal I yow nane tell."[25] In *Havelok the Dane* the re-narration also begins with a conventional romance opening:

> And saide, 'Lithes nou alle to me;
> Loverdinges, iche wile you shewe
> A thing of me that ye well knewe.
> My fader was king of Denshe lond;
> Denemark was all in his hond   (*Havelok* 1400-04)

In the context of the narrative, it is of course justified as Havelok calls for silence to explain his true lineage. However, the revelation "My fader was king of Denshe lond; / Denemark was all in his hond" recalls the prologue to the beginning of *Havelok* itself where an audience learned that in Denmark there was "A riche king and swithe stark" (*Havelok* 341). The phrase "ye welle knewe" perhaps suggests that Grim's sons already know Havelok's lineage through the mysterious light that shone "Aboute the knave" (*Havelok* 590) as he slept; however, the sense of already "knowing" also resonates with an audience, similarly aware of Havelok's true identity, having witnessed the events that

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[24] Gérard Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, trans. Jane E. Lewin (Oxford: Blackwell, 1980) 40.
[25] *Ywain and Gawain*, *Middle English Romances*, ed. Stephen H. A. Shepherd, Norton Critical Editions (New York: Norton, 1995) 149-50. All subsequent references to *Ywain* will be to this edition and cited by line number.

they now remember as he speaks to the sons. These events are re-told over thirty-two lines until Havelok's narrative brings us "un to this day" (*Havelok* 1433) when "nou ich am up to that elde" (*Havelok* 1435).[26] The meta-narrative allows an audience to be both inside and outside the current romance as poet's voice and audience memory merge with that of individual characters.

Yet even before an audience can assist in the narrative's craft of *memoria,* a Middle English narrative has already inherited the traditions of Classical, Old French and Anglo-Norman romance to create a predominantly fictional, yet pseudo-historical, context. This enfolds the narrative events through temporarily "re-collecting" a past world in the present in ways that shape the identity of the Middle English narrative and which must be maintained throughout the tale. Part of the implication is that this world can, and should, be re-entered by the current audience through manufactured coincidences of culture, topography, and the immediacy of narrative performance. The way in which the past context is remembered and practically "re-collected" constructs the pathways along which an audience travels into each romance world; memories of England's earlier perfection proved as alluring as these tales' glorious supernatural realms, exotic Eastern lands, or mysterious forests. Amongst the most distinctive, and attractive, romance characteristics are acknowledgements of an oral context, ostensibly re-creating these tales' earlier existence - preserved, remembered, and shared informally and locally. *King Horn* proudly proclaims:

> Alle beon hi blithe

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[26] Similarly, in *William of Palerne*, the emperor demands the truth from the cowherd about William: "and comande att alle, / bi vertu of þing þat þou most in þis world lovest." Upon hearing the cowherd tell of how he found the child in the forest with the help of his dog, dressed him in rich clothes, and fed and cared for him, an audience can validate all that he says as they have seen these events just over a hundred lines previously. Consequently, when the emperor replies, "'y con þe gret þonke, / þat þou hast [seide] me þe soþe," an audience nods in agreement: the account correlates with the version of events that they have seen and now remember. *"William of Palerne": An Alliterative Romance,* ed. G. H. V. Bunt, Mediaevalia Groningana VI (Groningen: Bouma, 1985) 283-4; 297-8. All subsequent references to *William* will be to this edition and cited by line number.

> That to my song lithe!
> A song ich shall you singe
> Of Murry the Kinge.[27]

The effect is attractive and emotive. From the silent space of cultural amnesia or the chaotic "forest" of the present distraction comes the authoritative voice of history, the narrator assuming the power alongside that of "Murry": his first person pronouns and possessives create the impression of great memorial capabilities and personal relationship with the impending narrative in the manner of Caedmon's aptitude for remembering passages of Scripture, described by Bede.[28] The fact that Horn's "song" has been passed through generations is a guarantee of literary authority, also indicated by the small asides such as "Also ich you telle may" (*Horn* 32) as some additional information is apparently recaptured from the storehouse of memory and presented before the audience.[29] Just as the voice of a literal performance must silence the room for the tale to begin, even in a manuscript culture "Litheth and lestneth / and herkneth aright" (*Gamelyn* 1-2) had the same effect: "a talking" (*Gamelyn* 3) from the past demanded to be heard in the present. The irony is that, in this later culture, even the voice of the performer is essentially one from the past as each "song" is essentially a reading, whether literal or as a re-narration. In the conclusion to *King Horn*, oral elements reappear, "Her endeth the tale of Horn" (*Horn* 1537), and the effect is quickly recapitulated with reference to Jesus Christ as "For thus him endeth Hornes song" (*Horn* 1540). In drawing an audience back from the narrative into their current situation

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[27] *King Horn*, *Verse Romances*, ed. Sands 1-4. All subsequent references to *Horn* will be to this edition and cited by line number.

[28] See Chapter four of Bede, *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum*, ed. B. Colgrave and R. A. B. Mynors, Oxford Medieval Texts. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1969).

[29] Such is often the function of oral asides throughout romance: in *Ipomadon* "She sayd the fyrste day, I vnderstonde," an aside which also appears in *Athelston* ("I understood"), similarly assured an audience that the course of the narrative was accurate and true. *Ipomadon*, ed. Rhiannon Purdie, EETS OS 316 (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2001) 109. All subsequent references to *Ipomadon* will be to this edition and cited by line number. *Athelston*, ed. *Verse Romances* 276. All subsequent references to *Athelston* will be to this edition and cited by line number.

and surroundings through prayer, this pseudo-epilogue now implies that all the narrative details have been fully recounted.

Authors such as Chrétien and Marie de France emphasised the textuality of their work whilst simultaneously establishing the credentials of oral origin. Marie, for example, highlights her task in the "Prologue" to the *Lais*: "Des lais pensai k'oi avie… / Rimez en ai e fait ditié, / Soventes fiez en ai veillé."[30] The Middle English romances we read today, having been recorded in manuscripts, could therefore stem from this particular impulse – the desire to record popular, "heard" narratives for posterity and entertainment. Recording romances prevents the tales being "forgotten" and lost between cultures and periods, "Ne[s] voil laisser në oblïer" (*Lais* Pr.40), yet behind this impulse there is a connection between the desire to remember and the adoption or emulation of the apparently "redundant" features of oral culture.[31] Such is the prevalence of these features, Nancy Mason Bradbury notes that "oral performance, real or fictionally evoked, is an aspect of their narrative art," allowing an audience to share in the immediacy and apparent spontaneity of each romance.[32] Middle English romances are not unique in this respect: earlier Old French and Anglo-Norman tales

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[30] Marie de France, "Prologue," *Lais,* ed. Alfred Ewert, Blackwell's French Text (Oxford: Blackwell, 1947) 33, 41-2. All subsequent references to Marie's *Lais* will be to this edition and cited by tale and line numbers.

[31] The term "redundance" is used by Susan Wittig in *Stylistic and Narrative Structures in the Middle English Romance* (Austin, TX: U of Texas P, 1978) 15-16. Wittig recognises that highly socialised patterns of language and formulae in the romance have additional functions connected to the culture's preservation of a particular ideology. This in itself can be seen as an act of collective memory. These include song-like rhythms, repeated formulae and stock epithets in addition to more explicit, direct addresses to a listening audience and references to the context of oral performance. It is this effect which has led many to associate romance with the lays: indeed, some romances (such as *Lay le Freine*) explicitly state this relation between the current written tale and an earlier, oral analogue. See also John Finlayson, "The Form of the Middle English 'Lay'," *The Chaucer Review* 19 (1985): 352-68, at 355.

[32] Nancy Mason Bradbury, *Writing Aloud: Storytelling in Late Modern England* (Urbana, IL: U of Illinois P, 1998) 3. Of course, the effect of this depends upon how romances *were* received, and whether this had changed during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. This has been summarised by Karl Reichl: either "(1) a text from a manuscript is read silently in private or (2) it is read aloud, either to oneself or (3) to a group of listeners; and there is finally the possibility (4) that 'reading' a tale means narrating it without a text." Karl Reichl, "Orality and Performance," *A Companion to Medieval Popular Romance*, ed. Raluca L. Radulescu and Cory James Rushton, Studies in Medieval Romance 10 (Cambridge: Brewer, 2009) 134. See also Ruth Crosby, "Oral delivery in the Middle Ages," *Speculum* 11 (1976): 88-110; Paul Saenger, "Silent Reading: Its Impact on Late Medieval Script and Society," *Viator* 13 (1982): 391-414.

also emphasise orality within narratives which were already being composed by individual authors – consequently, "[c]laims to orality and claims to literacy do not mark off one type of poem from the other in England."[33] Although, in the early stages of romance formulation, it is likely that "the recital situation was the only reality for the majority, for those who could only listen; it was for them a reality, not a fictive orality," the persistence of oral residue in the manuscripts promoted orality as a mark of veracity and accuracy.[34] Ostensibly, a tale had been preserved by voices of the past and its current performance in the present enhanced its remembered appeal as Stephen Medcalf notes that, in the later Middle Ages, "[p]rivate perusal need not imply abandonment of an oral feeling for literature," and the reasons behind this suggest a process of literary recollection, fictitious performance of the past, and even cultural nostalgia.[35] This is part of the inherent romance *memoria*. Indeed, both French and English romances "complicate our response and channel it now through the author's, now through the narrator's engagement and/or disengagement": a sense of play which becomes even more pronounced as narrators continue to be presented as authors or creators, manipulating memories recollected from the past, thereby retaining a spontaneous (re)creation of a past narrative.[36] Contrary to what we might expect from our textual culture, a tale remembered and recited had more authority having been preserved in cultural memory.[37]

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[33] Melissa Furrow, *Expectations of Romance: The Reception of a Genre in Medieval England*, Studies in Medieval Romance 11 (Cambridge: Brewer, 2009) 113. Furrow also believes that the orality reflects the influence of *chansons de geste* upon Middle English Romance. However, English romances are generally later than the French, therefore throwing the contrast between orality and textuality into greater relief.

[34] Green, *Beginning* 54.

[35] Stephen Medcalf, "On reading books from a half-alien culture," *The Later Middle Ages*, ed. Stephen Medcalf, The Context of English Literature (London: Methuen, 1981) 15.

[36] Matilda Tomaryn Bruckner, *Shaping Romance: Interpretation, Truth, and Closure in Twelfth-Century French Fictions*, University of Pennsylvania Press Middle Ages (Philadelphia, PA: U of Pennsylvania P, 1993) 208.

[37] M. T. Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record: England 1066-1307*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993) 34-5. Clanchy notes, in relation to the Domesday Book, that written testimony was only gradually accepted as oral testimony continued to be the more privileged source. This is also discussed, in relation

Crucially, the world within the narratives themselves is also one of oral culture and entertainment and often plays important thematic roles such as that of Orfeo's musical ability, "A better harper in no plas."[38] Likewise, the *Stanzaic Guy of Warwick* seems implicitly to equate the minstrels within the romance with the current tale:

> Minstrels of mouthe and mani dysour
> Toglade tho bernes blithe.
> Ther nis no tong may telle in tale
> The joie that was at that bridale[39]

Again, an audience *hears* of oral entertainments whilst "in tale" refers to the way in which such a scene could be described. Although "Ther nis no tong" that could adequately record the minstrels' music and harping this is, ironically, achieved by the preceding description (*Stanzaic Guy* 191-4) and the audience is thereby invited to establish a connection between the current medium as an emulation of such entertainments.[40] In this way, Middle English romances are continually conscious of their identity *as* romances: tales with some connection to earlier *romanz* culture and language - indeed, Reinald Hoops listed twenty-four poems which explicitly refer to themselves as romances.[41] Of course, we should remember Paul Strohm's caveat that, despite the generic term's relative stability in modern scholarship, "the medieval

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to deliberate oral aspects of later historical chronicles, in Jesse M. Gellrich, "Orality, Literacy and Crisis in the Later Middle Ages," *Philological Quarterly* 67 (1988): 461-73. Indeed, at the start of the *Prose Lancelot*, it is explained that knights swore an oath to tell the truth when they returned, which Arthur's clerks subsequently recorded to form, in effect, the source of the romance. See Elspeth Kennedy, "Failure in Arthurian Romance," *Medium Ævum* 60 (1991): 16-33, at 29.

[38] *Sir Orfeo*, *Verse Romances*, ed. Sands 16. All subsequent references to *Orfeo* will be to this edition and cited by line number. There are also frequent allusions to minstrels at court entertainments. The current "performance" therefore mimics the entertainments enjoyed within these past worlds, initiating a memorial journey with the past re-imaged and re-vitalised through the present "voice." Consequently, *Emaré*'s description of minstrels, "Ther was all maner thing / That fell to a kyngus weddyng, / And mony a ryche menstrall" (*Emaré* 466-8), is also demonstrated through the current narration, masquerading as a similar piece of oral entertainment.

[39] *Stanzaic Guy of Warwick*, ed. Alison Wiggins, TEAMS (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 2004) 198-210. All subsequent references to the *Stanzaic Guy* will be to this edition and cited by line number.

[40] Another romances featured in this study which also makes reference to minstrel entertainments is *William of Palerne* but examples can also be found throughout the romance genre whether Anglo-Norman or Middle English. Cf. *William* 5355.

[41] Reinald Hoops, "Der Begriff Romance in der mittenglischen und frühneuenglischen Literatur," *Anglistische Forschungen*, Heft 68 (Heidelberg: Winter, 1929) 34-7.

understanding of *romaunce* and of its sources in [Old French] *romanz* and *roman* was considerably less circumscribed."[42] Yet their self-conscious oral authorities and features, real or fictional, re-affirm some sense of a coherent identity through corresponding with the oral culture created by their own lines. This is a world which the current narrative aims to re-create through a vivid, performative, remembrance. In the manner in which Chaucer depicted Criseyde reading romances *in* a romance to great ironic effect ("the geste / Of the siege of Thebes" [*TC* II.83-4]), a correspondence between the past ideal and its reception in the present facilitates the memorial function of romance in late medieval England. [43]

The authority, bound up with present identity, for the current remembrance has been established through remembering others' earlier, similar performances. In *Emaré* the fictional performer qualifies by recalling "As Y have herd menstralles syng yn sawe" (*Emaré* 319), which echoes an earlier definition of the current performance: "As I here synge in songe"(*Emaré* 24). In this way, the audience becomes complicit in the preservation of the narrative. Even in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* the narrator claims to have heard the tale locally, "as I in toun herde," again suggesting the authority of the narrative.[44] However, often in English romance, there is a curious mixture of textuality and orality as the voice of an oral performer makes some tentative reference to a written authority. In *Athelston* "In romaunce as we rede" is repeated three times (*Athelston* 276, 383, 623), whilst *Ipomadon* cites written authority for the narrative

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[42] Paul Strohm, "Storie, Spelle, Geste, Romaunce, Tragedie: Generic Distinctions in the Middle English Troy Narratives," *Speculum* 46 (1971): 348-59, at 354.

[43] For a discussion of this, with particular relation to gendered reading see Carolyn Dinshaw, *Chaucer's Sexual Politics* (Madison, WI: U of Wisconsin P, 1989) 52. Furrow also considers *Troilus and Criseyde* in terms of Chaucer's examination of the truth or falseness of romance fictions and their possibly harmful effect upon "reality." Furrow 218-9.

[44] *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, *The Poems of the Pearl Manuscript: "Pearl", "Cleanness", "Patience", "Sir Gawain and the Green Knight"*, ed. Malcolm Andrew and Ronald Waldron, 4th ed., Exeter Medieval Texts and Studies (Exeter: U of Exeter P, 2002) 31. All subsequent references to works by the *Gawain*-poet will be to this edition and cited by line number.

action: "Forthy the bokys tellyth ychore" (*Ipomadon* 2501).[45] The memorial store of romances could therefore also be textual, developing the belief that the author with a superior memory is he who can provide the greatest narrative detail; something that Strohm has noted with regard to the prologues in medieval Troy narratives where "this pretension of historicity undoubtedly had much to do with their success.[46] Consequently, Chaucer, in his version of *Troilus and Criseyde*, follows an explicit acknowledgement of his written authority, "As writ myn auctour called Lollius," with a promise to recount Troilus' "every word right thus / As I shal seyn," in contrast to Lollius who gave "only the sentence" (*TC* I.394-8). The authority that came with greater recollected detail is later emphasised by Robert Henryson's subsequent re-telling of the same events in his *Testament of Cresseid*: "Quha wait gif all that Chauceir wrait was trew? / Nor I wait nocht gif this narratioun / Be authoreist."[47] Henryson has concerns regarding the details that Chaucer claimed to know ("wait"), suggesting that he invented, or perhaps misremembered, certain details, yet cast them as historical fact.

Re-creating (actually or fictionally) a performance in the present is the first stage in romances' ability to employ the glorious past of chivalry to combat the troubles of the current age. At a cultural level, the memorial task was to connect with this distant, past ideal and discover ways in which these memories could live on in the present, as was demonstrated by Edward III's creation of the Order of the Round Table in 1344, at about the same time that the greatest romance collection, the Auchinleck MS, was collated. At the heart of Middle English romance, part of established romance tradition,

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[45] This also occurs in earlier French romances such as Chrétien's *Cligés*.

[46] Strohm, "*Storie, Spelle*" 348. Strohm cites Benoît de Saint-Maure's *Roman de Troie* as an example of a text which claims to be a straight translation of a historical account for a vernacular audience, whilst Guido della Colonna's *Historia Destructionis Troiae* approaches Chaucer's technique in terms of criticizing earlier writers who have been untruthful in presenting a misremembered or false course of events. See also Brian Stock, *Listening for the Text* (Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins UP, 1990) 35. For a detailed discussion of the social implications and manifestations of this period of transition see Clanchy.

[47] Robert Henryson, *The Testament of Cresseid*, *The Poems and Fables of Robert Henryson*, ed. H. Harvey Wood, 2nd ed. (Edinburgh: Oliver, 1958) 64-6.

was a collective process of recollection.[48] "Herkneth" summoned not only a fictitious oral audience, but the idealized order of the past and with it, a chronological correspondence with a present which could, paradoxically, become that past through memory. At the heart of this was the "court," frequently that of Arthur or perhaps an earlier Anglo-Saxon or Classical culture clad in late medieval costume, which formed memorial constructs symbolizing the order and authority that England desired and emulated to varying degrees in the thirteenth to the fifteenth centuries. The mythical court of Arthur was seen as a distillation of the great courts of Charlemagne, Rome and even Troy; yet the journey into the darkness of a mythical past was illuminated by historical courts and figures which were more immediate in cultural memory, their reputations disseminated through the historical chronicles. Specifically, the courts of Eleanor of Aquitaine, Henry II of England, Philip of Flanders, Thibaut of Champagne, and Beatrice of Burgundy were more recent indications that socio-economic perfection *could* apparently be achieved, serving as real-life markers along the memorial path to chivalry's mythical ideal. Although (given the later dates of the English vernacular romances) English knighthood was no longer as exclusive, nor courtly life as important, as it had been in France, it was perhaps even more crucial as late medieval England's attractive, but largely memorial, construct.

Velma Bourgeois Richmond notes that "with very few exceptions, [courtly knighthood] [was] not an immediate confrontation with the present"; yet one could argue that because of this the importance of chivalric romances was even greater and

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[48] The main catalyst for this in Britain was Geoffrey of Monmouth's *The History of the Kings of Britain* which established quasi-historical legends, employing many memorial fictions as the origin of Britain was traced to classical roots in addition to establishing a fictional cultural inheritance with the Norman Conquest returning lands to rightful owners, as prophesied by Merlin. For a brief outline of Geoffrey's influence upon romances see Helen Cooper, *The English Romance in Time: Transforming Motifs from Geoffrey of Monmouth to the Death of Shakespeare* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2004) 22-40. Geoffrey's discussion of the Norman Conquest and inheritance is given specific discussion in John D. Niles, "The Wasteland of Loegria: Geoffrey of Monmouth's Reinvention of the Anglo-Saxon Past," *Reinventing the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, ed. William T. Gentrup, Arizona Studies in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance 1 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1998) 1-18.

their challenge altogether more acute.[49] Fourteenth-century and fifteenth-century England in particular was a time of unrest and disorder in comparison to the ordered, feudal ideal. Individual events such as the 1381 "Peasants' Revolt," the Black Death, abdication of Edward II in 1327, and imprisonment of Richard II in 1399 were set against a greater background of popular dissolution from the late thirteenth-century onwards resulting from economic depression, struggles with France in the Hundred Years' War, and widespread local legal and clerical corruption.[50] In addition there was the importance of social aspiration; as Chris Given-Wilson has noted, "the popularity of books of courtesy (which clarified rules of social precedence), and the blatant social overtones…all point to the fact that status was becoming even more defined."[51] The stable, structured society of romances could be inherited through the tales' reception and appreciation by both courtly and non-courtly audiences, as the genre promised both escape and advancement through an imaginative harmony of voices: past tales, present narration, and future emulation.

The social attraction of the genre is suggested by Chaucer's Dreamer in *The Book of the Duchess* who takes "A romaunce…/To rede and drive the night away" (*BD* 48-9). The past has a power, a latent energy, which can mobilize the present and replace it with a more attractive image. The Dreamer's definition of romance continues:

> And in this bok were written fables
> That clerkes had in olde tyme,
> And other poetes, put in rime
> To rede and for to be in minde,
> While men loved the lawe of kinde.   (*BD* 52-6)

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[49] Velma Bourgeois Richmond, *The Popularity of Middle English Romance* (Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green U Popular P, 1975) 20.

[50] For a discussion of the social consequences of the Black Death see Norman F. Cantor, *In The Wake of the Plague: The Black Death and the World It Made* (New York: Free P, 2001).

[51] Chris Given-Wilson, *The English Nobility in the Late Middle Ages* (New York: Routledge, 1987) 57. The continuation of social definition into the fifteenth century is discussed in Claire Sponsler, "Society's Image: Estate Literature in Fifteenth-Century England," *Semiotica* 63 (1987): 229-38.

Chaucer strips away romance's memorial fictions, recognising that to engage with narratives of the past, making them "in minde" just as Marie de France desired, would not only preserve the tales themselves but also re-establish "the lawe of kinde" in the present. Romance, in this instance, combats the Dreamer's insomnia; however, we can also appreciate romance providing an escape from the disordered "night" of late medieval England, a literary journey which recalls Boccaccio's storytellers' escapes into the country in the *Decameron*. Interestingly, Chaucer's poem draws heavily upon Guillaume de Machaut's *dits*, in particular the *Jugement dou Roy de Behaingne* along with its companion piece, the *Jugement dou Roy de Navarre*.[52] The opening 458 lines of this latter work describe in detail the horror of the Black Death and thus, as Chaucer quotes from this poem, we are urged to contrast such chaos and death with "the lawe of kinde" offered by romance. This allusion to "natural law" looks back to the idealised classical Golden Age as the antithesis of the current "night."[53] Northrop Frye famously stated that "the romance is nearest of all literary forms to the wish-fulfilment dream" and it seems that this was not only an individual dream, but also one of a collective consciousness seeking comfort and stability in recollections of a more ordered past.[54] Despite the concern that "[a]n ideal of knighthood culled from what appears so often to be essentially a literature of escape…[is]…scarcely a promising model for a social historian to make much of," the *attraction* and popularity of that ideal in the later Middle Ages offers a wealth of information concerning the literary and social appetites

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[52] For a consideration of Chaucer's use of the work of French poets in the poem, particularly Machaut, see James I. Wimsatt, *Chaucer and the French Love Poets: The Literary Background of the "Book of the Duchess"*, University of North Carolina Studies in Comparative Literature 43 (Chapel Hill, NC: U of North Carolina P, 1968).

[53] For Chaucer's images of the classical Golden Age see John M. Fyler, *Chaucer and Ovid* (New Haven, CT: Yale UP, 1979).

[54] Northrop Frye, *The Anatomy of Criticism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1952) 186. For an additional consideration of this aspect of romance see Kathryn Hume, "Romance: Perdurable Pattern," *College English* 36 (1974): 129-46. Erich Auerbach discusses the role of Platonism in the courtly ideal, citing Count Castiglione's *Il Cortegiano* as a prime example of the division between idealism and reality. Erich Auerbach, *Literary Language and its Public in Late Antiquity and in the Middle Ages* (New York: Pantheon, 1965) 425.

of the period, not to mention society's enthusiasm and aptitude for the challenge of cultural *memoria*.[55]

Maurice Keen sees memorial work as essential to all medieval romance, believing that "[f]rom the very first…true chivalry was always presented in antique dress"; an aspirational ideal that could be recaptured by reading the romance and appreciating its themes and events.[56] Similarly, Johan Huizinga also recognized the inherent attraction towards an antique life, facilitated by a coincidence of terminology and understanding regarding love, war and faith.[57] These provided "the mirror that the twelfth- and thirteenth-century versions of them held up to life,…what they had to tell the knightly world about itself, its history and values."[58] Chrétien associated this courtly ideal with Arthur, Charlemagne, Rome, and Troy and the historical costuming of the ideal was continued across medieval romance in France and England against a background of ever increasing social necessity and attraction. John Leyerle writes that "King Arthur's court was not seen as a fiction, but as an ideal society from a vanished golden age, remote in time but most worthy of imitation, indeed, especially worthy because remote."[59] This interpretation is supported by Geraldine Heng who casts Arthur as a mythical figure "who serviceably defeats monstrosities from a crusading history that is integrally intertwined with the Anglo-Norman past and present, the meaning of which continued to be revised, contested, and pursued."[60] These assessments stress the

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[55] Maurice Keen, *Chivalry* (New Haven, CT: Yale UP, 1984) 3.

[56] Maurice Keen, "Huizinga, Kilgour, and the Decline of Chivalry," *Medievalia et Humanistica* 8 (1977): 1-20, at 7.

[57] Johan Huizinga, *The Autumn of the Middle Ages*, trans. Rodney J. Payton and Ulrich Mammitzsch (Chicago, IL: U of Chicago P, 1996) 67-71.

[58] Keen, *Chivalry* 103.

[59] John Leyerle, "Conclusion: The Major Themes of Chivalric Literature," *Chivalric Literature: Essays on Relations between Literature and Life in the Later Middle Ages*, ed. Larry D. Benson and John Leyerle, Studies in Medieval Culture 14 (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 1980) 131-2. For a discussion of the increasing search for perfection, both secular and sacred, see Marjorie Reeves and Stephen Medcalf, "The ideal, the real and the quest for perfection," *Later Middle Ages* 56-107.

[60] Geraldine Heng, *Empire of Magic: Medieval Romance and the Politics of Cultural Fantasy* (New York: Columbia, 2003) 41.

appeal of this "golden age," but also the historical awareness of a society that perpetuated the myth. As Aristotle and the later memory theorists will be shown to have emphasised, *memoria* must involve a recognition of the passage of time and such is the case as audiences recognised past narrative voices as those from times before, but with a curious connection to their present world.

Romances were summoned to meet the cry from Ramon Lull's thirteenth-century *Book of the Order of Chyvalry*, subsequently translated and printed by William Caxton in the late fifteenth century: "O ye knights, where is the custom and wage of noble chyvalry that was used in tho days?"[61] Before an audience could recollect the behaviour of "noble chyvalry" within the tale, it first had to remember the romance world itself – "tho days" when such tales were composed and performed which have not completely disappeared, but were temporarily forgotten. These should now be remembered and "heard" all the more vividly. To return to the opening of *Sir Gawain* we see that the length of time between the past legend and present moment is emphasised, but what connects an audience is the very tale that is about to begin; the act of listening or reading which creates sufficient space for *memoria* to recapture the past in the present:

> Forþi an aunter in erde I attle to schawe,
> Þat a selly in siȝt summe men hit holden,
> And an outrage awenture of Arthurez wonderez.
> If ȝe wyl listen þis laye bot on little quile,
> I schal telle hit astit, as I in toun herde,
>   With tonge.
>   As hit is stad and stoken
>   In stori stif and stronge,

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[61] Ramon Lull, *Book of the Order of Chyvalry*, *William Caxton*, ed. N. F. Blake (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1973) 111. Caxton's choice of material to print reveals a continuation of the desire to recapture the "golden age" of chivalry: in addition to the *Morte Darthur* and Lull's work he printed the *Recuyell of the Histories of Troy* in 1471, the *Chronicles of England* in 1480 and, later, made a printed translation of Christine de Pisan's *The Book of the Fayttes of Armes and of Chyvalrye*. For a fuller quotation from Lull and discussion of Caxton's choice of printed material see Reeves and Medcalf 93-5. The difference here, of course, is the conscious attempt to recapture the lost ideal, in contrast to the earlier popular romances which engage an audience to presume that it can still exist today.

> With lel letteres loken,
> In londe so hatz ben longe.   (*Gawain* 27-36)

What will become apparent, and perhaps a defining characteristic of romances is their invitation for an audience to engage in *memoria*, both consciously and unconsciously. Raymond Williams, in his definition of "popular" notes the presentation of new or specialised knowledge in an accessible way.[62] This is, in essence, the chivalric code which should be used by an audience to judge characters in a tale and also carried from the narrative into their own lives as an *exemplum*.

The process is replicated throughout each individual tale, often through deliberate mistakes where an audience can remove itself from the character and remember the chivalric code or the correct course of action which should have been taken. This, essentially, is how one learns through initial understanding, temporary forgetfulness, gradual recollection through creative labour and, finally, assimilation and adaptability. Through the dynamism of romance narratives an audience is not only complicit in, but vital to, creating and preserving the identity of characters, the authority of chivalry, and the narrative itself.[63] Oaths must be remembered, experiences recollected, and past places revisited in order to maintain order inside and outside the narrative. Taken at a glance, romance's memorial storehouse is constructed on the basis of multiple challenges, each one as important as the next, existing at the level of character, plot, narrative and literary, social and historical contexts.[64] C. S. Lewis noted "romancers create a world where everything may, and most things do, have a deeper meaning and a longer history than the errant knight would have expected; a world of

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[62] Raymond Williams, *Keywords* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1976) 230. See also Jean Radford, "Introduction," *The Progress of Romance: The Politics of Popular Fiction*, ed. Jean Radford, History Workshop (London: Routledge, 1986) 3.

[63] Jacques Bretel's poem *Le tournois de Chauveney* describes actual participation in a "dance-play" by the Countess at Chauveney in 1285. See Victoria L. Weiss, "Blurring the Lines between the Play World and the Real World in *The Earl of Toulouse*," *Chaucer Review* 31 (1996): 87-98, at 93.

[64] In addition to the metaphor of the treasure-chest or storehouse appearing in memory theories, it also appears as a metaphor for story in the twelfth century *Livres des Rois*. See John Stevens, *Medieval Romance: Themes and Approaches* (New York: Norton, 1974) 153.

endless forest, quest, hint, prophecy."[65] Through the imaginative possibilities of romance, this storehouse of memory can be negotiated along a logical memorial chain (the *catena* of classical and medieval memory theory) or negotiable pathways between stored experiences and a present situation, in a process that recalls Frederic Bartlett's early work depicting memory pulling together information from various locations.[66] The art of memory offers a cultural, moral and even psychological commentary on the romance, its characters, and an audience. Narratives form models of memorial agility, the precious memorial storehouses forming images of past perfection which are enhanced by an ability to be creatively adapted within a continually changing present. Characters and audience must accept the memorial challenge and negotiate seemingly unpredictable and unprecedented present times - *"[p]er varios casus, per tot discrimina rerum"* (*Aeneid* I.204).[67] Through building, re-entering, and adapting places of the past romances can begin to make sense of the present and create important routes into the future.

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[65] C. S. Lewis, "The Anthropological Approach," *Critical Studies of "Sir Gawain and the Green Knight",* ed. Donald R. Howard and Christian K. Zacher (Notre Dame: U of Notre Dame P, 1968) 70.

[66] Frederic Bartlett, *Remembering: A Study in Experimental and Social Psychology* (London: Cambridge UP, 1932).

[67] "[T]hrough these varied events, these many critical junctures."

CHAPTER TWO

Medieval Memories in Theory and Performance.

We all use memory everyday and although recent research in neuroscience and its related fields can be highly complex and technical, the subjects of these investigations – the memories themselves – are essential to all human behaviour or existence and the way we interact with other people and the world. We use, and are exposed to, memories hundreds of times everyday and so, in fact, are already well versed in their abilities and limitations. Such inherent awareness is also discussed by scholars working on the history of memory in the medieval period such as Frances Yates and, more recently, Mary Carruthers.[1] It is not necessary, and indeed it would be hugely inaccurate, to claim that the lay public, the audiences of Middle English romances, had any real knowledge of complex classical and medieval memory theory. However, as today, they had exposure to its performance – in church, in human relationships, and narratives of life. A significant aspect of the medieval conception is an emphasis upon inheritance and invention, both of which have strong influences on the medieval view of memory. It is the reason why medieval memory theories have been employed in this study of romance, rather than the more psychologically and scientifically "sophisticated" developments of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries which focus predominantly upon the accuracy and efficient retrieval of memories. Nevertheless, at the heart of all medieval *memoria* was the fundamental concept of memorable images that could be carefully stored in distinct places to be recollected along memorial chains from a past experience into the

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[1] Frances A. Yates, *The Art of Memory* (London: Routledge, 1966); Mary Carruthers, *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture*, 2nd ed. Cambridge Studies in Medieval Literature (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2008). For the social and practical importance of memory in the Middle Ages specifically see Lucie Doležalová, *The Making of Memory in the Middle Ages*, Later Medieval Europe (Leiden: Brill, 2009).

present time. These conceptualisations can be understood explicitly in the writings of influential philosophers and theologians such as Boethius, Saint Augustine, and Saint Thomas Aquinas, but they are also implicitly performed through the intricacies of manuscript layout, historical and cultural mythologizing, art, architecture, and narrative. Indeed, Paul Ricoeur notes that "[a]t the dawn of the Middle Ages, Alcuin, whom Charlemagne entrusted with restoring the educational system of antiquity in the Carolingian empire, declared to his emperor that memory is the 'treasure house of all things'."[2]   This chapter will discuss the fundamental understanding of memory as the human desire for progression, educated retrospection, and creation (both actual and mental), along with the mechanisms and attitudes which could be shared by the memorial faculty and romance genre. To accomplish this, a certain amount of technical language from classical and medieval theories will be highlighted and discussed such as *catena*, *ductus*, *skopos*, *locus* and *imago*. Although it would be artificial to apply these directly to non-learned tales such as romances, and indeed it should in no way be implied that these theories and technicalities were widely known in the late medieval period at all, the purpose is to draw out the scale of such conceptions and their inherent connection to human concerns for past knowledge, order, and logical narrative. Memory will be shown to encompass all three temporal planes, alongside an influence upon cognition, imagination, and prophecy.

Memory and the Visual in Aristotle.

From the second half of the twentieth century psychologists have re-evaluated the more visual concepts of memorial work. Their earlier understanding of memory as a verbal phenomenon has been challenged by conclusions from many experiments which suggested that at the core of memory is the mind's ability to visualise images

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[2] Paul Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting* 64.

or scenes of the past through links with material encountered in the present.[3] This has produced many tangential theories in order to explain the different ways in which this process is achieved such as concepts of short and long term visual memories and the persistence of an "eidetic memory," as a subject benefits from the enduring image of a particular visual scene.[4] However, this re-evaluation has also exposed many new areas which psychologists still seek to understand and theorize such as why visual memory is quite so effective, what exactly initiates or indeed constitutes an eidetic memory trace, or even "how…a memory trace of a past experience [can] be identical in structure with that experience, if the trace has no definite structure."[5] What contemporary science still seeks to explain is the memorial *catena*, also the important concept for medieval memory theories, that provides a very physical metaphor (a chain) for links between past and present, or an images (*imago*) and place (*locus*) of memory. In the late classical and early medieval periods these same questions were addressed by prominent philosophers and memory theorists in relation to the art of rhetoric – how to remember the material one had consumed at the appropriate moment in the present, or to store new learning for the future. As early as the fourth century B.C. Aristotle, in *De memoria et reminiscentia*, was drawing upon the concept of memory as a storehouse, a development of Plato's aviary, which was also to become Dante's book metaphor.[6] Ironically, to re-evaluate our apparent misconceptions of memory's exclusively verbal qualities, we turn to

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[3] Alan D. Baddeley, *The Psychology of Memory* (London: Harper, 1985) 219.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Norman Malcolm, *Memory and Mind* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1977) 164.

[6] The extended metaphor of Plato's aviary implied that if mistakes were made it was because we had caught the wrong bird. The book did not become an alternative to memory in philosophical concepts, merely another metaphor. It was only later, through medieval developments in writing and print technologies such as the production of the Bible in a single volume and the use of manuscript annotation and glossing, that books were accepted as memorial items in themselves. See Douwe Draaisma, *Metaphors of Memory: A History of Ideas about the Mind*, trans. Paul Vincent. (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2000) 27-38.

theories that saw visual memory as the key to verbal artistry and argument – the skill of rhetoric.

Aristotle's understanding of memory's visual foundation leaves little room for misinterpretation: "ἡ δέ μνήμη, καὶ ἡ τῶν νοητῶν, οὐκ ἄνευ φαντάσματος ἐστιν. ὥστε τοῦ νοῦ μὲν κατὰ συμβεβηκὸς ἂν εἴη, καθ᾽ αὐτὸ δὲ τοῦ πρώτου αἰσθητικοῦ."[7] Memory, therefore, depends entirely upon images which can even be formed when what needs to be remembered is not a material object, but an abstract concept such as a thought or emotion. Richard Sorabji notes that this can be traced to many of Plato's writings which also suggested that memory and the imagination involved some use of mental pictures; however, in Aristotle, we are urged to consider the different nature and deployment of the images themselves.[8] The key to constructing such pictures lies in the way in which they were first experienced through the senses; this gives the images their variety and individuality. Indeed, a little further on, Aristotle's definition of these images becomes dependent upon personal experience and present perspective: "ᾗ μὲν οὖν καθ᾽ αὐτο, θεώρημα ἢ φάντασμά ἐστιν, ᾗ δ᾽ ἄλλου, οἷον εἰκὼν καὶ μνημόνευμα" (*Memoria* I.450b25-7).[9] The memory image does not need to be identical with the information to be recalled but should be chosen for being particularly memorable, and yet still somewhat related to the original sensation. For Aristotle, these sensations occur in the soul through the body and are stored in pictorial form; as David Bloch explains, "after the disappearance of the original

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[7] Aristotle, *On Memory and Recollection*, *Aristotle on Memory and Recollection: Text, Translation, Interpretation, and Reception in Western Scholasticism*, ed. and trans. David Bloch, Philosophia Antiqua 110 (Leiden: Brill, 2007) I.450a12-14. All subsequent references to *On Memory and Recollection* (*Memoria*) will be to this edition and cited by chapter, folio and line number. "Now, memory, even memory of the objects of thought, does not occur without an image. Thus, memory will belong accidentally to the mind, but essentially to the primary faculty of sense." All translations from *Memoria* will be from Bloch's edition

[8] Richard Sorabji, *Aristotle on Memory* (London: Duckworth, 2004) 5. Sorabji cites Plato's *Philebus*, *Phaedo*, *Timaeus*, and *Theaetetus* as examples of writings that refer to mental imprints.

[9] "The affection is a contemplation and an image, and qua being of something else it is something like a representation and a memory impression."

object the content of the form might remain in the primary organ of sense as a φαντάσμα."[10] Elsewhere in Aristotle's writings, images may not always be literal "pictures" such as in *De anima*, *Parva naturalia*, and *De motu animalium*; however, in his discussion of memory, images *are* pictorial: it is this which gives them their representational, and often metaphorical, value.[11] Far from being a simple copy, the use of mental pictures offers opportunities for imaginative constructions between mental images through links or memory traces that operate on literal, and often metaphorical, levels. Such is the case when Aristotle himself employs a painting of Corsicus to illustrate his argument for pictorial representations, the benefits of which are an almost unconscious connection between present appreciation and any earlier experiences and their stored impressions (*Memoria* I.450b29-451a8). As Sorabji notes, after perception is over, the objects of memorial thought reside in images and, as Aristotle and our modern psychologists have discovered, are all the stronger for this.[12]

Unusually, Aristotle is keen to separate memory from thinking and the imagination, despite the intellect being necessary during the creation of memorial images. Bloch attempts to clarify this contradiction by explaining that "imagination is the faculty by which images occur in us after they have been produced by prior sensation and stored in us."[13] The imagination, therefore, is engaged in the process of relating present events to the earlier sense impressions, and is responsible for developing these impressions into appropriate memorial images. This creative aspect of memory is a prominent concept in Aristotle and illuminates the reasons why, in

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[10] Bloch 67.

[11] The pictorial qualities of Aristotle's images are discussed in detail in M. C. Nussbaum, ed. *Aristotle's De motu animalium* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1978) 249-50. See H. S. Lang, "On Memory: Aristotle's Corrections of Plato," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 18 (1980): 379-393, at 391.

[12] Sorabji xix.

[13] Bloch 62.

mythology, "Memory" is often made the Mother of the Muses – it is from here that the memorial material can be discovered and the process of re-creation in the present can begin, now "de-materialized and de-temporalized by the present action of mind."[14] Aristotle explored this. Not only was memory a receptacle for prior sensations imaginatively transformed into images, but offered a way in which images could be retrieved from this store and manipulated to "attest that the material has been fully grasped and adapted."[15] It is the "re-collection" from places and subsequent remembering of their images which constitutes the art of *memoria*.

Aristotle reminds us that "μελέται τὴν μνήμην σωζουσι τῷ ἐπαναμιμνήσκειν" (*Memoria* I.451a12-13) and these "μελέται," logically, can be taken as the art of recollection itself: a sequential process moving from the present moment, backwards in time, towards the appropriate memory image (*Memoria* II.451b16-22).[16] This mental journey between images is defined thus: "τὸ γὰρ μεμνῆσθαι ἐστι τὸ ἐνεῖναι δύναμιν τὴν κινοῦσαν· τοῦτο δέ, ὥστ' ἐξ αὐτοῦ καὶ ὧν ἔχει κινήσεων κινηθῆναι, ὥσπερ εἴρηται" (*Memoria* II.452a.10-12).[17] Movement is emphasised ("κινοῦσαν," "κινήσεων," "κινηθῆναι") and the semantics range from emotional movement to actual, physical re-location. The memorial images, linked between present and past, should be sufficiently vivid or emotive to "move" the individual, whilst we also

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[14] Janet Coleman, "Late Scholastic Memoria et Reminiscentia: Its Uses and Abuses," *Intellectuals and Writers in Fourteenth-Century Europe*, ed. Piero Boitani and Anna Torti, Tübinger Beiträge zur Anglistik 7 (Tübingen: Narr, 1986) 30. Later memory theorists, such as Hugh of Saint Victor, compare and act of remembrance with creative processs, often with reference to the Creation itself where order and logic (hallmarks of a successful memory) are created from the primordial wasteland.

[15] Wolfgang Kemp, "Visual Narratives, Memory, and the Medieval *Esprit du System*," *Images of Memory: On Remembering and Representation*, ed. Walter Melien and Suzanne Küchler (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institute, 1991) 107.

[16] "[E]xercises preserve the memory by repeated reminding." Modern psychologists tend to differentiate between three types of memory: recollective (the memory for personal experiences), habit, and semantic (the memory for facts).

[17] "For to recall is the internal presence of a moving potential; and this, as has been stated, must be understood in the way that the person is moved by himself and by the movements he has."

"move" into our memorial *loci* from the present.[18] Aristotle also implies the way in which recollection should make one "move" or act at the current time, supported by the secondary meaning of κινειν as "to originate, author, or create": the recollecting subject is made the author or creator. Janet Coleman examines the sustained popularity of Aristotelian theory into the early fourteenth-century, and offers an interesting assessment of the way in which the past can be re-written in the present through memory: "if memory is the mind's present and holds the past in present images, then this must mean that the past is as open to evaluation, judgement and understanding as is the present and in the same way."[19]

Consequently, the events that occurred in the past and have been stored cannot simply be applied to the present indiscriminately, but must be adjusted with respect to changed circumstances. Harry Caplan defines this recollective process as mental reasoning: capturing the interplay of past and present images within a process of adjustment.[20] However, Caplan also implies (misleadingly) that this is a conscious process; yet, the benefit of employing memorial images, for Aristotle, is their ability to connect with present situations through "movements" which may be partly unclear even to the recollecting subject. Although in terms of the art of rhetoric such a technique was an indication of the rhetorician's skill or style, *energeia* (or the actualization of some natural, philosophical, or psychological state) is comparable to the "movements" involved and created through Aristotle's *memoria*.[21] As images form before the eyes of the audience, so too must the memories silently appear in the

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[18] The term *locus* (pl. *loci*) is used to refer to memorial places to accord with the later memory theories in Latin rather than Aristotle's Greek. The same applies to *imago* (pl. *imagines*) which is substituted for Aristotle's φάντασμα (pl. φαντάσματα) on the grounds of consistency with the later, Latin theorists discussed in this study.

[19] Coleman 35.

[20] Harry Caplan, "Memoria: Treasure-House of Eloquence," *Of Eloquence: Studies in Ancient and Medieval Rhetoric*, ed. Anne King and Helen North (Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1970) 203.

[21] For a detailed discussion of *energeia* see C. A. Kosman, "Substance, Being, *Energeia*," *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 2 (1984): 121-49, at 138.

mind of the remembering subject: the process illuminates the words of the rhetorician just as the memories (hopefully) clarify and contextualize the subject's present experience and future direction.

Aristotle advocates the use of "places" for these memorial images: "δεῖ δὲ λαβέσθαι ἀρχης. διὸ ἀπὸ τόπων δοκοῦσιν ἀναμιμνησκεσθαι ἐνίοτε" (*Memoria* II.452a12-13).[22] These places also reinforce memory's dependence upon temporality: during our memorial journeys we cannot fail to acknowledge the different temporal plane of the past in comparison to that of the present. Each exists in a discrete *locus*. Aristotle expands upon this: "τὸ δὲ μέγιστον, γνωρίζειν δεῖ τὸν χρόνον, ἢ μέτρῳ ἢ ἀορίστως" (*Memoria* II.452b6-7).[23] The explanation behind this caveat, frequently overlooked by commentators, seems to be that the person recollecting must remain aware of from where they are bringing the memorial image – this is from the past which, despite resembling the context of the present, will never be totally identical with a current situation. In this respect, Aristotle likens recollection to an act of deduction (συλλογισμός) and deliberation (βουλευτικὸν) (*Memoria* II.453a9-14): the memory images are identified, but then one must "deliberate" the ways in which they should be used in the present and how they could be applied in the future.

This initiates a dominant aspect of late classical and medieval *memoria* - "voluntary intellection."[24] This is "autonomous of material events and it pertains to

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[22] "Now, a starting point must be taken. This is why people sometimes seem to recollect from 'places'." Contemporary psychologists also recognise the benefit of such a technique; the mind employing two distinct systems to recognize objects and to locate these objects in a space. For a psychological discussion of these techniques see Martha J. Farah, Katherine M. Hammond, David N. Levine and Ronald Calvanio, "Visual and Spatial Mental Imagery: Dissociable Systems of Representation," *Cognitive Psychology* 20 (1988): 439-62.

[23] "But the most important point is that one must cognise time, either with an exact measure or indeterminately."

[24] Coleman discusses this development in relation to the early fourteenth-century writings of John Duns Scotus in his *Cuestiones Cuodlibetales* which discusses intellection as distinct from the

the active intellect to express what it knows"; such a memory would therefore not be dependent upon present sense objects in order to function, but could operate independently through the agency of the remembering subject.[25] Although this development ostensibly threatens to contradict the Aristotelian theory of memorial images, it actually incorporates such understanding within a new framework of independent agency. Despite masquerading as voluntary or artificial (in terms of the organization of memory by a subject), the individual will still employ the "involuntary" ways of functioning - indeed, some experience will always be required in the present to initiate *memoria*. The mind is understood to assume an authority over memory with "a shift from a passive notion of memory as a place where visual data are stored to be tapped when necessary to an active notion of memory as a process correlative to and coincident with image production."[26] The medieval acceptance of a "voluntary" memorial action suggests that the subject must be willing to initiate their own *memoria*, and become receptive to the past in the present through the fluidity of a memorial *catena* or "eidetic" imagery. The subject is given the agency to create their own prudential qualities: they store their past and, ultimately, imagine their future in the Janus sense of *memoria*. To engage with one's memory was to work, create, and understand.

The Virtues of Prudence and Voluntary Intellection.

An individual's subjective agency is inherent in Thomas Aquinas' medieval dialogue with Aristotle, his thirteenth-century *De memoria et reminiscentia commentarium*, in which he states quite categorically that a memory "*[n]on autem est sine*

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perceptual part of mind. However, as can be seen, this concept has its roots in earlier memory theory from classical philosophies. Coleman 31-5.

[25] Coleman 44.

[26] Walter Melien and Suzanne Küchler, "Introduction," *Images of Memory* 3.

phantasmate" and "*Unde per se memoria pertinent ad apparitionem phantasmatum,*

per accidens autem ad iudicium intellectus."[27] Robert Pasnau clarifies this

distinction with reference to the classical imagination: "[p]hantasia preserves the

forms taken in through the senses; it is our storehouse of familiar images, sounds,

and so on. Memory, in contrast, preserves the intentions apprehended through the

estimative (or cognitive) power."[28] Both of these processes require some form of

mental imaging which allows the present sensations to be more readily compared

and connected to the "intentions" preserved in memory.[29] In addition, Aquinas

offered his own thoughts concerning the ways in which mental images could be

created from seemingly abstract concepts: "*Formae enim et motus interiors*

proportionaliter correspondent magnitudinibus exterioribus, et forte ita est de

magnitudinibus sive distantiis locorum et temporum, sicut de speciebus rerum"

(*Commentarium* VII.390).[30] Echoing Aristotle's example of the painting of Corsicus,

Aquinas' words serve as a working definition of metaphor in its translation between

abstracts and concretes – an aspect which we have seen as analogous to the creative

workings of memory. The link between present and past forms a *catena* between

images and their respective places as the subject "*...movetur quidem ab ipso*

praesenti phantasmate, sed considerat ipsum inquantum est imago alterius, quod

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[27] S. Thomae Aquinatis, *In Aristotelis libros, De sensu et sensate, De memoria et reminiscentia commentarium*, ed. Raimondo M. Spiazzi, 3rd ed. (Turin: Marietti, 1949) II.321. All subsequent references to the *Commentarium* will be to this edition and cited by chapter and line number. "[D]oes not exist, however, without a phantasm" and "[M]emory relates essentially to the appearance of phantasms, incidentally to the intellect's ability to judge." Trans. John Burchill, "*Commentary* on Aristotle, *On Memory and Recollection,*" *Medieval Craft of Memory* 153-88. All translations from Aquinas' *Commentray* will be from this edition.
[28] Robert Pasnau, *Thomas Aquinas on Human Nature: A Philosophical Study of Summa Theologiae 1a 75-89* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2002) 280.
[29] Aquinas discusses phantasms at various point throughout the *Summa Theologica*, particularly their engagement with the intellect. Cf. *Commentarium* III.340-5.
[30] "For the internal conceptual forms and movements correspond proportionately to external magnitudes, and perhaps the situation with respect to magnitudes or distances or places and times is the same as that for concepts of things."

prius sensit vel intellexit" (*Commentarium* III.346).[31] Moreover, this process of recollection is, again, the key to memorial agility: the space between mental images is traversed as "*reminiscentia nil est aliud quam inquisition alicuius quod a memoria excidit*" (*Commentarium* V.362).[32]

It is the movement between places in the mind whilst "turning your soul towards an already established internal image" which draws concepts together in the act of recollection as an active, subjective, highly intellectual, and physical engagement with the faculty: "*Et ideo reminiscendo venamur*" (*Commentarium* V.362).[33] Although the images are created almost unconsciously, memory now requires the active participation of the intellect in order to illuminate these pictures. It is this which establishes a paradigm for memory, experience, and learning. Anthony Kenny believes that "we are given no account of how reflection on phantasms helps the mind to knowledge of that individual which is itself"; yet the work of memory provides a clear link between mental images, the intellect, experience, and the self.[34] Correspondingly, in order to use memory or "our capacity for handling impressions that have specific associations," intellectual thought must make active use of mental images.[35] Images are created by the imagination, acting as a translating device for storage as was initially suggested by Aristotle's "deliberations" and it is for the subject to draw upon these impressions and to learn from them.

If the subject is willing to work, memory provides the knowledge and power to endure questions of the future and the willingness to be taught forms the virtue of

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[31] "[I]s moved indeed by the present phantasm itself, but considers it in as much as it is the image of the external object which he previously sensed or understood."

[32] "[R]ecollecting is nothing other than searching for something that has slipped from the memory."

[33] Bloch 203. "Thus when we recollect we are hunting."

[34] Anthony Kenny, *Aquinas on Mind*, Topics in Medieval Philosophy (London: Routledge, 1993) 122.

[35] Pasnau 283.

Prudence. Carruthers notes that Prudence is an "intellectual virtue," combining both reason and will; both are hallmarks of "voluntary intellection."[36] One of the finest definitions of Prudence and its relation to memory comes from Cicero in his *De inventione*, from the first century B.C., that unites Aristotle's original thoughts with Aquinas' emphasis upon the intellect in his later commentary:

> *Partes eius: memoria, intellegentia, prouidentia. Memoria est per quam animus repetit illa quae fuerunt; intelligentia, per quem ea perspicit quae sunt; prouidentia, per quam futurum aliquid uidetur ante quam factum est.*[37]

Prudence prepares for future events, providing that the mind is willing to perform the necessary "work"; for Cicero, this process is inextricably linked with "intelligence." The somewhat enigmatic sense of ascertaining "quae sunt" comprised the discovery of past images, an examination of them, and their subsequent connection to a present experience. Moreover, given the ability of this process to provide answers to any future questions, the work of memory and intelligence constitutes "pro[v]identia." Although, for Cicero, this quality is likened to that of a premonition or vision of the future, the memorial store actually provides a form of pseudo-foresight, or perhaps intellectual intuition.

Writing between the fourth and fifth centuries A.D., the highly influential Saint Augustine also employed the Aristotelian rhetoric of images, yet offered a more practical example of the way in which memory could enlighten present situations: "*Cum vero non de his, quae coram sentimus, sed de his, quae aliquando sensimus, quaeritur, non iam res ipsas, imagines ab eis impressas memoriaque*

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[36] Carruthers, *Book of Memory* 83.

[37] Cicéron, *De L'invention*, ed. G. Achard, Collection Des Universités De France (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1994) II.53.160. "Its parts are memory, intelligence, and foresight. Memory is the faculty by which the mind recalls what has happened. Intelligence is the faculty by which it ascertains what is. Foresight is the faculty by which it is seen that something is going to occur before it occurs." Trans. H. M. Hubbell, *De inventione, Topica, De optimo genere oratorum*, LCL (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1949).

mandatas loquimur."[38] Here we see the links which are established between a present situation and an experience in the past which has been stored as appropriate memorial images. Although Gareth Matthews understands this to imply that a person in the present is somehow limited to that which he can perceive by the images of his memory, this neglects the sense of security and reassurance advocated by Augustine.[39]   Having been asked a question in the present, any momentary uncertainty is quickly clarified as the mind makes its memorial journey back to a previous situation to provide the appropriate "answer." This does not limit our response to present situations, but enhances our answers with learning, speed and, most importantly, authority. Although Augustine never explicitly states that memories will need to adapt in order to be assimilated with present "questions," this memorial work is implied by the very mental journey itself. Travelling towards an appropriate mental image requires the recognition of Aristotelian temporal distance, and the ways in which our "answer" is brought forward will re-cast the past in the new light of the present. As we have seen in Aristotle and Aquinas' commentary, images are especially suited to this purpose as they carry a wealth of explicit and implicit links and associations which unite a seemingly disparate present "question" with an appropriate "answer" from the memorial store of the past.

The authority carried by such answers is underlined by Augustine's terminology. Memorial images are repeatedly referred to as "*documenta*" and the term's Modern English derivative, "documents," seems highly appropriate given the medieval metaphor for memory as a wax tablet or parchment inscribed with images

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[38] Aurelius Augustinus, *De Magistro*, ed. G. Weingel and W. M. Green, CSEL 77 (Vienna: Tempsky, 1960) XII.39. "When a question arises not about what we sense before us, but about what we have sensed in the past, then we do not speak of the things themselves, but of images impressed from them on the mind and committed to memory." Trans. Gareth B. Matthews, "Augustine on Speaking from Memory," *Augustine: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. R. A. Markus, Modern Studies in Philosophy (New York: Anchor, 1972) 168.

[39] Matthews 172.

to be remembered. However, the Latin definitions, "example, pattern, warning, proof," introduce the importance of *learning* from one's experiences. Memories act as a guide for future behaviour, providing examples to follow, but also "warnings" of actions which have proved dangerous in the past. The etymological root of "*documenta*" is particularly appropriate: "*docere*," "to teach or instruct," highlights the ways in which memories should continue to shape present and future experiences. It is useful to examine Augustine's thoughts on teaching in his *De doctrina christiania* where he asserts "…*ita dicere debere eloquentem, ut doceat, ut delectet, ut flectat.*"[40] Although aimed specifically to illuminate the proper concerns of Christian art, we can nevertheless see the importance placed upon teaching, and the way in which it can complement enjoyment and emotion.[41] Moreover, in order to "delight" and "move" seems to suggest the rewards emanating from effective teaching: voluntary intellection (as being receptive to memorial teachings) offers the possibility to be delighted and moved in all the ways previously suggested by Aristotle's use of "κινειν." Many of the later medieval writings on memory and the concepts that were absorbed into learned and popular understanding were shaped by the above instructions on how to ensure the effectiveness of such "movements." These theories became the architecture of the memorial store and the workshops for *memoria* in which places were reclaimed from anonymous or disordered space, images created and adapted, and journeys mapped-out.

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[40] Sancti Avrelii Avgvstini, *De Doctrina Christiana, De Vera Religione*, Ed. Joseph Martin, Opera Avgustini XXXII, CCSL (Turnhout: Brepols, 1962) IV.xii.27. "…that he who is eloquent should speak in such a way that he teaches, delights, and moves." Trans. D. W. Robertson, *On Christian Doctrine*, Library of Liberal Arts 80 (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1958). Augustine and memory is examined in Paige Hochschild, "Memory in the theological anthropology of St. Augustine: 'in memoria est cogitandi modus'," diss. U of Durham, 2005.

[41] Richmond 16.

Building the Strongbox: Composition, Exploration, and Narrative.

Carruthers summarizes the correlation between memory and identity (or prudential morality) as one of continued recollection and intellection throughout life: "[o]ne's ethical character (as the virtue of prudence or judgement) functions within the matrix of one's own memorial and retrieval systems."[42] Through knowledge and experience, the past can shape a virtuous future. A particularly effective, if complex, matrix is constructed by Hugh of St. Victor (c.1096-1141) in his *Libellvs De Formatione Arche* (previously known as *De Arca Noe Mystica*). In this treatise, the Augustinian monk and theologian, latterly resident at the monastery of St. Victor in Paris, develops classical notions of image inlaid against locational backgrounds into a spontaneous creation.[43] This traces the spiritual learning of an individual throughout their life (imaged as journey through the ark), carefully storing the knowledge consumed so that it may be retrieved when required from a specific compartment before moving on to the next "deck" or "cubit."[44] Although Richard Unger notes that "Hugh was as much interested in the invisible ark…the ark as a spiritual building symbolizing the Church and the body of Christ," the simultaneous emphasis upon a literal ark and its contents gives valuable insight into the conceptualization of medieval memory as a narrative of place and images.[45]

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[42] Mary Carruthers, "The Poet as Master Builder: Composition and Locational Memory in the Middle Ages," *New Literary History* 24 (1993): 881-904, at 884.

[43] Hugh also discusses memory in his *Didascalicon*, especially III.vii and VI.iii. *Didascalicon*, ed. C. H. Buttimer (Washington, DC: Catholic UP, 1939). References are to book and chapter numbers.

[44] A longer work also exists, known as *De Archa Noe Pro Archa Sapientie*, which may have been composed before the shorter book; differences between the two texts show Hugh's changing conceptions of the workings of memory. This is discussed in detail by Conrad Rudolph, "'First I Find the Center Point': Reading the Text of Hugh of St. Victor's *The Mystic Ark*," *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* 94 (2004): 1-61.

[45] Richard W. Unger, *The Art of Medieval Technology: Images of Noah the Shipbuilder* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers UP, 1991) 65. Hugh's conception of memory is given very full discussion in Patrice Sicard, *Hugues de Saint-Victor et son Ecole* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1991); Grover A. Zinn, "Mandala Symbolism and Use in the Mysticism of Hugh of St. Victor," *History of Religions* 12 (1972): 317-41.

Crucially, Hugh's memorial places are not pre-existing: they are constructed as the journey takes place, performing medieval *memoria* spontaneously as additional space is encountered and subsequently ordered. The journey begins in complete darkness, with Hugh taking the first tentative step to order the space through finding its centre-point:

> *Primum in planitie, ubi archam depingere uolo, medium centrum quero, et ibi fixo puncto puram quadratum equilateram ad similitudinem illius cubiti, in quo consummate est archa, ei circumduco.*[46]

"*[F]ixo*" and "*circumscribo*" emphasise *memoria*. The subject becomes an artisan, marking out his raw materials which become his own mental places.[47] Moreover, "*fixo,*" with its sense of "fastening," establishes the strength such places must possess in order to endure for a lifetime of constant reference. In addition, "quero" marks this as the beginning of some quest or even adventure - a memorial expedition which seeks to conquer disorder or emptiness of space with order through the various structures and images which will be of value. Larger places, already tamed from undefined space, are divided into smaller, more manageable areas: "*et apposite regula…et ita duas alias quadraturas sexes similiter longas ad latitudinem suam efficio*" (*Arche* I.67-71).[48] Once such places have been constructed, "*Quo facto, perfectus est cubitus*" (*Arche* I.24-5); they can be entered and filled with the appropriate, vivid memorial images.[49]

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[46] Hugh of Saint Victor, *Libellvs De Formatione Arche*, ed. P. Sicard, CCCM 176 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2001) I.1-4. All subsequent references to *De Formatione Arche* (*Arche*) will be to this edition and cited by chapter and line numbers. "First, in order to show in a figure the religious significances of the Ark of Noah, I find the centre of the plane on which I want to draw the Ark, and there, I fix a point. Around this point I make a small square, which is like the cubit from which the Ark was constructed." Trans. Jessica Weiss, *A Little Book About Constructing Noah's Ark, Medieval Craft of Memory* 41-70. All translations from the *Arche* will be from Weiss.

[47] For a discussion of Hugh's and others' use of building metaphors see Carruthers, *Book of Memory* 51-55.

[48] "[U]sing my ruler…so as to form two other rectangles with a length-width proportion of six to one."

[49] "Then the cubit is finished."

Developing the connection between memory, perception and emotion, colour must be skilfully applied to make these pictures particularly vivid against their backgrounds: "*Deinde spatium limbi circumquaque purpureo et uiridi colore induo*" (*Arche* I.21-2).[50] Although Jessica Weiss translates "induo" as "paint," with its etymology of "drawing-over," the verb also carries a secondary meaning of "leading in," thereby continuing the sense of an on-going composition, coupled with the metaphor of a physical journey through and "into" this new place. In another memorial treatise, *De tribus maximus circumstantiis gestorum*, Hugh's definition of memories themselves compares to the vivid images that should be created. These are referred to as riches: "*thesauros bonos, thesauro immortales, thesauro incorruptibiles.*"[51] Such is their metaphorical vibrancy, always perceptible by the remembering subject from the perspective of the present, they "*numquam veterascunt, nec speciem claritatis suae amittunt*" (*Gestorum* 7).[52] The "treasure" metaphor also supports the literal and metaphorical memorial journey through life (and mind) as experiences are discovered and recorded in memory. Consequently, "*sapientia thesaurus est et cor tuum archa*" (*Gestorum* 5) combines vivid memorial images, richly enamelled and highlighted with gold, with the wealth of experience and future guidance that they also represent.[53] A similarly effective medieval metaphor for memory was the wax tablet (the equivalent of a memorial place) with "*colorem et formam simul et situm positionnemque litterarum*" (*Gestorum* 490.21-

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[50] "Then, in the space within the band I paint two bands of colour."

[51] William M. Green, "*De tribus maximus circumstantiis gestorum*," *Speculum* 18 (1943): 484-93, at 488.6. All subsequent references to the *Gestorum* will be to this edition and cited by line number. Translations are also from Green's edition.

[52] "[N]ever decay nor lose the beauty of their brightness."

[53] "[K]nowledge is a treasury and your heart is its strongbox." For a discussion of links between memorial treasure and Scripture see Mary Carruthers, *The Craft of Thought: Meditation, Rhetoric, and the Making of Images, 400-1200*, Cambridge Studies in Medieval Literature 34 (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1998) 244-5.

2).[54] Crucially, in contrast to the places, such "letters" or images are not fixed: they can be moved and manipulated according to the needs of the present; yet, on account of the images' relative fluidity, Hugh does warn of the problems when one image obliterates another (*Gestorum* 490.14-17). This is an example of forgetting – to protect against this, the images (once discovered) should be placed carefully in their backgrounds, clearly ordered, and displayed without occlusion.

The equivalent of a memorial *catena* or link between places and their respective images, ladders facilitate Hugh's exploration; they allow movement between decks on the ship whilst the areas between the rungs, as newly sequestered places, provide miniature storage compartments for additional images – each one relates to various books of Scripture. The twelve ladders on the ark (*Arche* IV.62-3) imply that the journey through life is ascension from vice through virtue, enabled by a powerful memory which employs the apparatus.[55] Just as experiences provide one with useful precedents for future events, so will a knowledge of Scripture which can be recalled and revisited throughout life as one now climbs these ladders. Indeed, the repeated use of opposing sensations (from hot to cold or cold to hot) emphasises the personal, spiritual changes that take place during such a journey, whilst also continuing the theme of order as the states lie in clear opposition. Moreover, Hugh's journey up the ladders indicates the way in which time could be represented spatially.

Similarly, as *memoria* cannot (and indeed should not) be separated from time, as underlined by Aristotle (*Memoria* II.452b.6-7), Hugh casts the timeline of the Church in physical terms integral to the ark and journey: "*Longitudo autem*

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[54] "[T]he colour, shape, position, and placement of the letters." On wax tablets as a metaphor for memory see Carruthers, *Book of Memory* 24-5, 251-2, 260-1; Draaisma, 24-7.

[55] The important symbolic interpretation of this journey is examined by Grover A. Zinn, "De Gradibus Ascensionum: The Stages of Contemplative Ascent in Two Treatises on Noah's Ark by Hugh of St. Victor," *Studies in Medieval Culture* 5 (1975): 61-79.

Ecclesie consideratur in diutunnitate temporum, sicut latitudo in multitudine populorum" (*Arche* II.5-7).[56] The life of the Church is represented by the length of the ark; yet, at the same time, an increase in followers is represented by the width ("*latitudo*") of the vessel. Time is now represented on two planes as the number of followers increases with the years creating, conceptually, the hull of the ship from the narrow prow towards its wide stern. This very technique was defined recently by Ulric Neisser as "A system that originally evolved to deal only with movement through space [that] now helps us to keep track of 'movement through time' as well" and it would appear that Hugh was already practised in making this conceptual transition between time and space (or, more accurately, place).[57] Elsewhere, Hugh notes "*Memoria enim semper gaudet et brevitate in spatio et paucitate in numero*" (*Gestorum* 6-7).[58] As has been seen, this does not necessarily restrict the scale of what is being remembered (in this case, the entire life of the Church), rather it dictates that *loci* should be fairly small in size, and perhaps grouped in such a way so as to ensure "*paucitate in numero.*" The permeability of places, so fundamental to *memoria*, is imaged in a metaphor of doors and windows. An open door in the ark is a way to remember what has been experienced before, and Hugh quotes from John 10:9, "*Christum significant, qui dicit: 'Ego sum ostium'*" (*Arche* VII.2), Christ identifying himself as the door to wisdom and knowledge.[59] Such knowledge is discovered if Hugh peers through open doors and into the various compartments and cubits of the ark, a metaphor equally applicable to a narrative, or life itself. Conversely, a closed door is associated with forgotten experiences, or perhaps those

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[56] "The length of the Church is its temporal duration, just as the width of the Church is its number of affiliated peoples."

[57] Ulric Neisser, "What Is Ordinary Memory the Memory Of?" *Remembering Reconsidered: Ecological and Traditional Approaches to the Study of Memory*, ed. Ulric Neisser and Eugene Winograd (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1988) 370.

[58] "For the memory always rejoices in both brevity of length and paucity of number."

[59] "[I]t signifies Christ, who said: I am the door."

deliberately ignored: "*et hoc ostium clausum esse debet, ut amplius ad antiques errores non reuentamur*" (*Arche* VII.10-12).[60]

Clearly, part of memorial training, and a key concept of medieval memory, is not simple mnemonics or learning by rote, but the ability to adapt memories to a current situation through searching the places of past experience. Indeed, Hugh advocates the use of a catalogue system in order to relate the relevant experience of the past to that of the present: "*ut interrogates sine dubitatione respondere possim, sive ordine prolatis, sive uno aut pluribus intermissis, sive converse ordine et retrograde nominatis ex notissa aut pluribus intermissis*" (*Gestorum* 36-8).[61] Correspondingly, the richer memory would be one with many experiences from which to draw: "*Ad hanc discretionem pertinent illud etiam ut et ex ipsa qualitate temporis quando hoc vel illud didiscimus mentem postmodum ad rerum memoriam revocare sciamus*" (*Gestorum* 34-6).[62] Again, we see Hugh promoting the use of order through memorial clues such as time of day or weather (*Gestorum* 37-8), whilst also suggesting that memory improves with age as more "occasions" will have been lived through. It is partly this which explains Hugh's (and others') use of ageing as an analogy for memorial training. Not only was it in youth that memorial techniques were first taught, but it provides a greater sense of the value of remembered experience. We shall later consider the greater wisdom and confidence of a seasoned romance audience on account of the number and variety of tales previously encountered. Hugh draws together these ideas in a remarkably concise definition of the medieval craft or journey of memory:

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[60] "This door ought to be closed, so that we cannot return again to our ancient errors."

[61] "[S]o that, when asked, without hesitation I may answer, either in forward order, or by skipping one or several, or in reverse order and recited backward according to my completely mastered scheme of places."

[62] "This classification is relevant in a situation when, according to the varying nature of the occasions on which we learned something, at a later time we may be able to recall to our mind a memory of the content."

> *…quia oblectamentum puerite est in auditu doctrine, oblectamentum iuuentatis in exemplo operis, oblectamentum uirilis etatis in appetitu probitatis, oblectamentum senectutis in experienta uirtutis.*[63]
>
> (*Arche* XI.27-30)

We see how experience should be gained over the course of one's life, with a particular emphasis upon the work ("*operis*") undertaken as the memorial craft of learning, recollecting, and developing knowledge. Particularly relevant is the final link between this journey, or craft, and virtue: the virtuous one stores his experiences, revisits them regularly, and can adapt them to present and future situations. This person has the "virtue" of Prudence and, like Conrad Rudolph, can appreciate the "complete vision" of Hugh's creation and the whole "ark" of memory.[64] Moreover, it is interesting to note Hugh's emphasis upon enjoyment. His repetition of "*oblectamentum*" suggests that this should not be an arduous process, but a pleasurable one – this is a craft to be relished throughout the narrative of life. Related to this is Hugh's final suggestion that perhaps his own treatise could be just as emotive as the images it urges us to manufacture: "*hoc interim exemplari affectum suum prouocet*" (*Arche* XI.121).[65] Carruthers highlights that "Making the scheme is a creative task. When the master builder raises his tropes on the foundation stone of an actual text…he must smooth, scrape, chip off, and in other ways shape the *dicta et facta memorabilia* he is using as his materials."[66] As Hugh stresses, such "chipping" and "scraping," although demanding, is ultimately enjoyable, and can take place in such a way as to give a feeling of spontaneity and adventure as *loci* are created,

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[63] "This is because the delight of boyhood is in listening to teachings; of youth, in the example of work; the delight of manly age is in the appetite for goodness; the delight of old age is in the experience of virtue."

[64] Rudolph 37. Rudolph is referring to Hugh's depiction of the history of the world which, in his two ark treatises, he is attempting to represent and memorize.

[65] "[H]e might at the same time rouse his emotion with his exemplar."

[66] Carruthers, "Poet as Master Builder" 899.

revisited, and developed, and their images are sifted and re-called into the present by audience and reader.

Other theorists advocated much the same techniques as Hugh, although with emphases on various different aspects which, likewise, aligned *memoria* with artificial creativity, inherent natural ability, and rapacious voluntary intellection. M. Fabius Quintilian, writing his *Institutio oratoria* in the first century A.D., was particularly influential to many later medieval theorists as he advocated familiarity in one's memorial store, using the metaphor of a recognisable building such as a house.[67] The fourth century saw Consultus Fortunatianus, in his *Ars Rhetorica*, emphasising the ways in which natural ability could be aided by mnemonic art in much the same way as the artificial craft needed to interact with the human faculty, an understanding which also influenced Cassidorus in the fifth and sixth centuries.[68] C. Julius Victor would then continue to advocate the importance of division and arrangement in the eighth and ninth centuries in the *Ars rhetorica*, which in turn influenced Alcuin of York, the tutor of Charlemagne.[69] The twelfth century Dominican, Albertus Magnus, observed in his commentary on Aristotle's seminal treatise, that memorial images should not be too bright and, that in order to recollect, one must first forget (thereby reiterating the importance of an awareness of time explained by Aristotle).[70] Almost a contemporary of Albertus, Boncompagno da

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[67] M. Fabius Quintilian, *Institutio oratoria*, ed. M. Winterbottom, 2 vols, Oxford Classical Texts (Oxford: Clarendon, 1970) XI.ii. Quintilian's use of rooms in his *De institutione oratoria* is discussed in Paolo Rossi, *Logic and the Art of Memory: The Quest for a Universal Language*, trans. and intro. Stephen Clucas, Athlone Contemporary European Thinkers (London: Continuum, 2000) 9; Carruthers, *Book of Memory* 92-3.

[68] Consultus Fortunatianus, *Ars Rhetorica*, ed. L. Calboli Montefusco (Bologna: Patron, 1979) III. Cf. Cassiodorus Senator, *Institutiones*, ed. R. A. B. Mynors, Oxford Classical Texts (London: Oxford UP, 1937).

[69] C. Iulii Victoris, *Ars rhetorica*, ed. Remo Giomini and Maria Silvana, Bibliotheca scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana (Leipzig: Teubner, 1980) cap. 23. Cf. Alcuin, *De rhetorica et de virtutibus*, *PL* CI.919-46.

[70] Albertus Magnus, *Opera Omnia, vol IX: Commentary on Aristotle's De memoria et reminiscentia*, ed. August Borgnet (Paris: Ludovicum Vives, 1890).

Signa, in Book Eight of the *Rhetorica novissima*, imaged forgetfulness as a labyrinth with doors (as with Hugh) that could be opened by various keys.[71] Through employing a similar metaphor of travel, Francesc Eiximensis, during the late fourteenth and very early fifteenth centuries, described the various routes or roads into memory and emphasised the importance of intellect in their construction.[72] Moreover, the metaphorical workings of the faculty, in addition to the work of Aquinas, were also re-addressed in Jacobus Publicus' late fifteenth-century treatise, *Ars memoratiua Iacobi publicii florentini*, influenced by humanist circles in German and Burgundian courts, which examined the use of signs to carry multiple meanings for memory to extract.[73]

However, arguably the most influential piece on memory in the Middle Ages was the *Ad C. Herennium*, erroneously first attributed to Cicero, which dates from the first century B.C. and was taught largely without relevance to practical life and in accordance with Cicero's own *De invention* and *De bono*. The *Herennium* recognises the correspondence between the natural and artificial, stating that "*naturalis memoria,…similis sit huic artificiosae, porro haec artificiosa naturae commode retineat et amplificet ratione doctrinae.*"[74] Crucially, however, one must be willing to recognise, observe and work towards following (or creating) these "disciplines" in an individual memorial store. The backgrounds or places identified by Aristotle are now carefully delineated as small in scale, complete, and conspicuous (*Herennium* III.xvii). They should also be clear and free from distraction: "*propterea quod*

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[71] da Signa, *Rhetorica novissima* 249-79.

[72] Francesc Eiximensis, "L'*Ars praedicandi* de Francisc Eixemensis," *Analecta sacra tarraconensia* 12 (1936): 301-40.

[73] See translation by Henry Bayerle, "The Art of Memory," *Medieval Craft of Memory* 226-54.

[74] [Cicero], *Ad C. Herennium De ratione Dicendi (Rhetorica Ad Herennium)*, ed. Harry Caplan, LCL (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1981) III.xvi. All subsequent references to the *Herennium* will be to this edition and cited by chapter and argument. "[T]he natural memory…is often like this artificial memory, and this artificial memory, in its turn, retains and develops the natural advantages by a method of disciplines." Trans. Caplan. All subsequent translations will be from Caplan.

frequentia et obambulatio hominum conturbat et infirmat imaginum notas"
(*Herennium* III.xix).[75] If the images become weaker, they are less easily assimilated
with Augustine's present "questions," thereby increasing the challenges for *memoria*
or, even worse, allowing one to forget past experiences altogether. Moreover these
places, which are likened again to wax tablets, must be differentiated from each
other so as to avoid confusion (*Herennium* III.xix). This would arise if the wrong
background was entered and therefore the incorrect memorial images retrieved and
moved into the present situation. Thomas Bradwardine, writing his work *De
memoria artificiali adquirenda* in the fourteenth century, offered skills in logic and
mathematics, including his theological conception of Grace and Free Will, to the
memorial faculty and his remarks illuminate the *Herennium*. In this respect,
Bradwardine considers the importance of perspective whilst viewing these
backgrounds from the temporal (and conceptual) distance of the present: "*fingat se
positum in distantia optima et sic inspiciat illum locum*."[76] These are manufactured
constructions with which the remembering subject must become very familiar and
learn how to negotiate.

The emphasis in the *Herennium* upon the willing creation of memorial places
is striking and looks forward to the master builder of Hugh's ark: "*Cogitatio enim
quamvis regionem potest amplecti, et in ea situm loci cuiusdam ad suum arbitrium
fabricari et architectari*" (*Herennium* III.xix).[77] Here the action of "fashioning" and
"constructing" is allied to some imaginative power – again, memory is linked to the

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[75] "[B]ecause the crowding and passing to and fro of people confuse and weaken the impress of the images."

[76] Thomas Bradwardine, "*De memoria artificiali adquirenda*," ed. Mary Carruthers, *Journal of Medieval Latin* 2 (1992): 25-43, at 36.45-6. All subsequent references to the *Artificiali* will be to this edition and cited by line number. "One should imagine oneself positioned at an optimal distance from [one of the memory locations], and from there one should view that single place." Trans. Mary Carruthers, *Medieval Craft of Memory* 205-14. All translations from Bradwardine will be from Carruthers.

[77] "For the imagination can embrace any region whatsoever and in it will fashion and construct the setting of some background."

creative possibilities of the imagination in much the same way as Aristotle's consideration of mental images. Echoing the clear differentiation of places, images themselves must be distinct and are all the better if particularly unusual as "*insignes et novae diutius manent in animo*" (*Herennium* III.xxii).[78] This sentiment is shared by Bradwardine who states that images should be "mirabilis et intense" (*Artificiali* 50).[79] However, herein lies one of the many challenges of *memoria*: Jacobus Publicus and Boncompagno da Signa warned of the dangers of over-crowding and a confusion of images and therefore memories, yet this could indeed be a risk if too many striking images were placed within one background. Moreover, Bradwardine also warns "*sciendum est quod magis expedit quod loca sint vera quam tantum ymaginata vel ficta*" (*Artificiali* 18-19) – clearly the criteria that applies to backgrounds does not apply to images which thrive on being unusual and marvellous as long as they remain clearly differentiated.[80] Similarly, the *Herennium* concludes to stress the importance of a subject's willingness to use these artificial means as regularly as possible, later imaged by Bradwardine in almost ritualistic terms (*Artificiali* 19-20, 36-40). If a subject is *un*-willing to perform this ritual, the creation of such a system will become valueless "*nisi industria, studio, labore, diligentia conprobatur*" (*Herennium* III.xxiv).[81] This "studio," or the process of constant revisiting, is the act of memorial journeying and linking which exemplified and also produced Aristotle's various "movements" and discovered Augustine's "answers." As with the classical philosophers before them, great attention is placed on the process of retrieval which must be undertaken consciously (using artificial memory) and unconsciously (employing some form of natural ability). Later fifteenth century

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[78] "[T]he striking and novel stay longer in the mind."
[79] "[W]ondrous and intense."
[80] "[Y]ou need to know that it is very useful if your places are real rather than only imagined or made up."
[81] "[U]nless made good by industry, devotion, toil, and care."

theorists continued to address the dangers of neglecting or under-utilising the faculty such as the *Artificialis memoriae regulae* of Iascopo Ragone da Vicenza and Domenico de Carpani's *De nutrienda memoria*.[82] The latter imagines a gigantic forest on which the intellect must act as it "becomes conscious of the images, then it connects them in a specific order, and thirdly it connects similar things and deposits them in the 'coffers of the memory' (*archa memoriae*)."[83] Returning to a narrative situation of reading or listening to a text, or ordering rhetorical throught, this chaotic "forest" is entered as a tale, or argument, progresses with material (images) encountered which must be stored by an audience for use in future situations later in the tale. The sense of exploration is allied to clearing a path (as the memorial route) through the forest of experience in order to facilitate future development. In this act of apparent devastation there is actually the foundation of memorial creation which continues throughout life as further forests are encountered and tamed by the remembering subject.

Although these theories were known by a few in the Middle Ages, again, care must be taken not to overstate their dissemination. Derek Pearsall and Elizabeth Salter recognise the importance of the *Herennium* as the classical text on memory that was the best known in the Middle Ages.[84] This latter assertion is made in connection with the use of place and landscape in medieval literature, therefore establishing a connection between the order and logic advocated in the treatise and its impact upon the use of space in poetry. In addition to *De Magistro*, Augustine had also been influential in terms of memory through books ten and eleven of his *Confessiones,* which also perpetuated a concept of memory as the "storehouse" along

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[82] See Rossi 13.
[83] See Rossi 24.
[84] Derek Pearsall and Elizabeth Salter, *Landscapes and Seasons of the Medieval World* (London: Elek, 1973) 48.

with a spiritual and philosophical consideration of where we are in time, comparable to the builder of Hugh's ark.[85] This was aligned with theology: God as eternal who sees events simultaneously, in contrast to humans who are governed by mutability and follow an episodic, teleological existence (Chaucer, in particular was to explore this in the romance genre).[86] In addition to physical displays of memorial criteria in art, architecture, and manuscript design, and its dissemination through theology, rhetoric and philosophy, the developing theories were complemented by developments in reading practices and narrative art itself, beginning with the school of *grammatica* at Chartres, which emphasised the development of narrative discourse to imbue it with greater emphasis and meaning.[87] Indeed, a passage from the *Livres des Rois* echoes the concept of the memorial storehouse, now given narrative and religious colouring: "Cist livres est cum armarie des secreiz Deu."[88] Eugène Vinaver explains that this soon became a habit of mind in both religious and secular writings as the concept of ordering, storing, and retrieving of information "[c]eased to be a mere subject of school exercises; they became a vital element of a new form of narrative art."[89]

From this conglomeration of philosophy, teaching and reading emerged a mutually supportive system which, in romance tales, allowed the faculty to travel on a narrative journey in the manner of the rhetoricians, imaginatively transforming and storing experiences in the mind for future applications. Moreover, it is through Boethius that we can transport the memory theories firmly into late medieval

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[85] Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, trans. Kathleen McLaughlin and David Pellauer, vol 1 (Chicago, IL: U of Chicago P, 1984) 5-30.

[86] Paul Strohm, *Social Chaucer* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1989) 110.

[87] The influence of the school is usually dated 1050-1150 and produced the writings of Donatus, Rabanus Maurus and John of Salisbury. It might also be useful to consider the relation of memory to (medieval) Platonism and Scholasticism; the faculty seems to draw on the idealism of the former along with an account of that order employing the logic of the latter.

[88] *Li quatre Livre de Reis*, ed. Ernst R. Curtius (Dresden: Niemeyer, 1911) 5.

[89] Eugène Vinaver, "Introduction," *The Works of Sir Thomas Malory*, rev. P. J. C. Field, 3rd ed., 3 vols (Oxford: Clarendon, 1990) lxxvi-ii.

romance literature, specifically through Chaucer in *Boece*, and the obvious influence that the philosopher has exerted on works such as the "Knight's Tale*"* and *Troilus and Criseyde*. This was not restricted to *The Consolation of Philosophy*, but extended to his other works such as *In Ciceronis Topica* which (along with the original Ciceronian text) was highly influential in the teaching of rhetoric during most of the Middle Ages, and *De topicis differentiis* where "the topics of argument, seen as analogous to the places of recollection, gained full currency in the earlier Middle Ages" as "an elementary text on reasoning and logic."[90]

Of course, in addition to the dissemination of classical treatises through monasteries and the physical manifestation of these theories in inked vellum and carved stone, we cannot exclude the Bible as it too included advice on memory both in terms of explicit didacticism and also through *exempla*.[91] As a storehouse itself, it implied that its sententious tales should be adapted to accord with the situations of one's existence, in order to lead and interpret a life in the light of God's teachings. We might recall that the virtuous man, according to Boethius, could become immune to the workings of fortune, whether the actions of a divine goddess or simply an agent of change (the distinction being unclear in many romances).[92] Chaucer, in particular, preserves the classical concept of Prudence within the Christian context of his audience. In contrast to our contemporary understanding of "wisdom" or "good sense," the term retained its classical etymology, particularly the Latin *prudens* (contracted from *providens*), thereby giving a sense of foresight: the correct way to act as governed by previous, *recollected* experiences. The *MED* supports this

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[90] Carruthers, *Book of Memory* 190, 379. Boethius presents the memorial advice we have come to expect such as clear order and division, particularly in *De topicis differentiis*.

[91] See Carruthers, *Book of Memory* 53-4, 425-6 for biblical advice concerning memory and consumption. See also Dudai and Carruthers 567.

[92] This understanding was perpetuated into the fourteenth century in works such as Guillaume de Machaut's *Confort d'ami*.

argument, providing "foresight" as one of the definitions for "prudence"; indeed, the *OED* still retains this final definition of "prudence": "Foresight; providence. *Obs.*" The term was employed during the Middle Ages in theological and secular writings and Chaucer presented the character of Dame Prudence in "Tale of Melibee."[93] Here the memorial aspects of Prudence are made explicit, including advice on order and division of memory. The individual counsellors serve as memorial images, or past advice, which has not as yet been properly ordered: "ye has maked no division bitwixe youre conseillours" (Mel VII.1252-3). Similarly, we see the adaptability of Prudence to changed situations as "it is no folie to change conseil when the thyng semeth ootherweyes than it was biforn" (Mel VII.1062-5). This is essentially Aristotelian recollection: sifting through to find the appropriate "conseil," or even manipulating memory in order to assimilate it with an (apparently) unprecedented situation.

The virtue of Prudence may still jar against the apparent spontaneity, chance occurrence and individual risks that constitute the rhythms of medieval romance; yet this neglects the importance of foresight and experience which is fostered within such an intertextual genre of characters, episodes, and cultural norms. In this sense, Peter of Blois, in his twelfth-century *Liber de confessione*, aligns the virtue with romance characters in his discussion of the role of God in secular narrative:

> *Saepe in tragoediis et aliis carminibus poetarum, in joculatorum cantilenas describitur aliquis vir prudens, decorus, fortis, amabilis et per omnia gratiosus. Recitantur etiam pressurae vel injuriae eidem crudeliter irrogatae, sicut de Arturo et Gangano et Tristanno, fabulosa quaedam referent histriones, quorum auditu concutiuntur ad compassionem audientium corda, et usque ad lacrymas compunguntur.*[94]

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[93] Chaucer's depiction of the virtue of Prudence in his work is also discussed in Elizabeth Buckmaster, "Meditation and Meaning in Chaucer's *House of Fame*," *Modern Language Notes* 16 (1986): 279-87.

[94] *PL* CCVII.1088-89. "Often in tragedies and in other compositions of the poets or in the songs of the jongleurs you will find descriptions of a man prudent, worthy, strong, amiable, and agreeable in all

The virtue invoked is Prudence which again bears some relation to foresight as it prepares for seemingly random "*pressurae*" and "*injuriae*"; yet it is interesting to note Peter's analogy with actors' repeated performances. Consequently, before moving to compare divine compassion with that of an audience, a parallel is established between prudent expectation and regular ritual or habit – that of reading several romances, the details of which are remembered and recollected for future performances of the same or similar tales. Again, this is fundamental to how we still understand memory to function – although now shorn of its divine associations, we prepare for the unexpected through recalling earlier events which are closely related and "already seen."

Given the universal character of any discussions regarding memory, a connection with the individual, society, and human condition, in any century or culture, it is possible to look beyond direct influence and knowledge to a point where the instructions of the memory theorists is in fact inherent to human existence and nature. Order and disorder are inherently antithetical, the former easier to negotiate than the latter. Certainly it is the perpetuation of human concerns and interests in the memorial faculty over centuries that has led contemporary theorists such as Ricoeur to compare Aristotelian and Augustinian considerations with contemporary writings on memory from Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger, and Jacques Merleau-Ponty. We have always known to be wary of space or the "forest," and intrigued as to why this should be. The theories discussed in this chapter, therefore, should be seen as learned articulations of human memorial attitudes and aptitudes. It is these everyday manifestations and memorial challenges which make their way into romance

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things. You will find also the account of the trials and injuries cruelly inflicted upon him, just as actors repeat certain tales about Arthur and Gangano [Gawain?] and Tristan, at which the hearts of the audience are stirred with compassion and pierced to the point of tears." Trans. Ralph Manheim in Auerbach, *Literary Language* 303-6.

narratives. The illusion throughout romance is the discovery of past treasure to sustain and illuminate the empty, disordered world of today with the pretence that something has been forgotten and needs to be recollected. This provides the spontaneous, disordered, unprecedented space for memorial journeying and creativity within literal and mental levels and landscapes, some of the most challenging of which appear within, and across, the medieval romances.

CHAPTER THREE

Topography, Redaction, and Inheritance: The Physical *catena* of Romance.

And yf that olde bokes were aweye,
Yloren were of remembraunce the keye.   (*LGW* F25-6)

Places to Search and Connections to Make.

Listening to the voices of vernacular romance is to re-connect with recollected "memories" from a preserved place and manufacture a connection between landscapes and literatures. In essence, these locations form very physical materials for successful *memoria*: certain geographical and geological features mentioned in the narratives can still be seen and touched, whilst the manuscripts (or rather the tales they contain) similarly support a connection to the earlier cultures from whom the narratives originated, or with those who similarly enjoyed such tales. Often, the close of romances gestures towards temporal progression, usually in a reference to hereditary patterns following the death of the romance's main protagonist. As Helen Cooper has highlighted, the restoration of a rightful heir is a common motif in medieval romance and drives the narrative towards a welcome reunion of hero (or heroine) with their birth right.[1] An inheritance is created which could, logically, even extend into the present time of reception.[2] This was a prominent concept in medieval histories with "the teleological representation of history from the beginning to the present time, [that] required a temporal succession and at the same time emphasised the inherent links with the present."[3] Inheritance became particularly prominent in the later Middle Ages with "a growing insistence upon the priority of

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[1] Cooper, *Romance in Time* 324-60.
[2] This is perhaps an indication of romance's roots in a chronicle tradition from writers such as Geoffrey of Monmouth.
[3] Goetz 163.

lineage as a definition of nobility…and a jealous guarding of forms of dress, narrative habits and social ritual."[4] Although a figure is now "graven under molde" (*Gamelyn* 900), their subsequent heirs create a memorial chain towards the older blood of chivalric perfection. One of the narrative branches of the popular Constance stories, *Emaré*, from the latter half of the fourteenth century, stresses a relation to earlier narratives within its current tale, looking back to other troubled love affairs. These are designed to inform its own distressed heroine, blighted by incestuous affection from her father and repeatedly cast adrift over the sea. Yet the current narrative also looks forward to additional events awaiting narration as at the close of the tale we learn that, after the death of the current emperor, "Syr [S]egramour, / That aftyr was emperour / A full gode man was he" (*Emaré* 1025-6). This brief step forward takes place immediately after the reunion of Emaré, the emperor, and the king, therefore showing the preservation of an order which the romance has attempted to re-establish. Nevertheless, following the glimpse of the future we then return to the feast of the current celebration "A grette fest ether was holde, / Of erles and barones bolde" (*Emaré* 1027-8). Given the imaginative possibilities of the genre, romances can look ahead whilst remaining rooted in their past situations, just as the audience is urged to assimilate their own situation with the pseudo-historical romance world.[5] A link is established across cultures through recollected or comparable narrative experiences.

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[4] Lee Patterson, *Chaucer and the Subject of History* (Madison, WI: U of Wisconsin P, 1991) 252.

[5] Similarly, at the close of *Sir Degrevant*, the knight "seysed hys eyr with hys hond" before making his final journey "into the Holy Lond." *Sir Degrevant*, *Sentimental and Humorous Romances: "Floris and Blancheflour", "Sir Degrevant", "The Squire of Low Degree", "The Tournament of Tottenham", and "The Feast of Tottenham"*, ed. Eric Kooper, TEAMS (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 2006) 1910-11. All subsequent references to *Degrevant* will be to this edition and cited by line number. Similarly in *Sir Orfeo*, although he "lived long afterward" (*Orfeo* 571), we learn that "sethen was king the steward" (*Orfeo* 572) in recognition of the loyalty he has shown to Orfeo during the present king's time in the wilderness.

A particularly evocative and imaginative example occurs at the close of the fourteenth-century *Sir Launfal*, a redaction by Thomas Chestre of the twelfth-century lai, *Lanval*, by Marie de France. Having been neglected by the court, the knight is instead rewarded through the realm of Fairy under the condition of secrecy which he subsequently fails to uphold. Having been absolved by the court of a charge of rudeness to Guinevere through the arrival of his supernatural lady, Launfal returns to live with her in the world of Fairy. However, Chestre's narrator claims that:

> Every yere upon a certain day
> Me may here Launfales stede nay
> And him se with sight.
>
> He that will ther axsy justus
> To kepe his armes fro the rustus
> In turnement other fight
> Thare he never forther gon:
> Ther he may finde justes anon
> With Sir Launfal the knight.[6]

This unusual detail, which does not appear in the version of the tale as told by Marie in *Lanval*, clearly depicts an image from the past still being seen in the present. Yet this is a real re-appearance from the knight, not simply a memory; we shall actually hear his horse and can engage with Launfal in a tournament, should we wish. In terms of the romance's clear situation in the past (as implied both by Marie and Chestre [*Lais* V.1-4; *Launfal* 1-5]) the detail lends itself to metaphorical interpretations. Although having left "With his lemman away to ride" (*Launfal* 1017), the knight returns as a reminder of the narrative we have just witnessed. Moreover, he re-emerges "To kepe his armes fro the rustus"; this image of chivalric perfection ensures its brightness in the present and, in engaging with this figure in combat, the present continues to accommodate an image both literally and

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[6] *Sir Launfal*, *Verse Romances*, ed. Sands 1024-32. All subsequent references to *Launfal* will be to this edition and cited by line number.

metaphorically. Inheritance forms an important part of late medieval England's process of cultural recollection – just as the romance courts are inherited by the rightful heir, so an audience received the ideals of the historical past. J. R. Lander explains that, in fifteenth-century England, "[n]obles and gentry were passionately interested in genealogy and topography, for an intimate knowledge of family trees and the descent of manors was the basis of landowning as well as the means of gratifying family pride."[7] Keen supports this view and notes that, even as early as the thirteenth century, there was a notable shift away from the actual taking of knighthood towards the importance of nobility of blood. This continued into the later Middle Ages when "the traditional respect for old blood of the knightly world was not so much magnified as clarified and codified, and in some measure justified."[8] Sir Orfeo's return to inherit his lands (*Orfeo* 569-71) or the neglected brother Gamelyn finally receiving what he deserves by birth (*Gamelyn* 891-2) are reflections of cultural inheritance and rightful progression from the old blood of chivalry towards the current, late medieval audience's narrative.

Lander's assessment of contemporary interests in "topography" underpins the "genealogy" fostered by romance. The contemporary theorist Homi Bhabha has written extensively concerning the ways in which cultures establish and preserve their identities, positing landscape and place as fundamental tools in such a process as the "inscape" of national identity.[9] Romances employ this technique within the established medieval tradition of history, memory and place as adopted by Gildas

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[7] J. R. Lander, *Conflict and Stability in Fifteenth-Century England*, 3rd ed. (London: Hutchinson, 1977) 145.
[8] Keen, *Chivalry* 152-61.
[9] Homi Bhabha, "DissemiNation: time, narrative and the margins of the modern nation," *Nation and Narration*, ed. Homi Bhabha (London: Routledge, 1990) 295.

and Bede in their important and influential histories.[10] In essence, landscape forms a literal common ground upon which the later society can engage and participate in narratives of the past. These become physical equivalents of the mental places which Aristotle and, later, Bradwardine and Quintilian, explained would aid our process of recollection through promoting efficient retrieval. This is recognised by contemporary psychology and anthropology: "we share places with the past, and we view the experience of place as a negotiative activity whereby we may extend, develop, or invent our dialogue with the past."[11] The technique has been explored by Robert Allen Rouse as a way in which medieval English romances allowed an audience to re-connect with, specifically, Anglo-Saxon laws and customs; however, it is interesting to compare this technique to the inherent ability and desire to recall from memorial places and the security that comes from revisiting familiar locations, whether literally or mentally.[12]

The increasing importance of this technique is demonstrated by a brief topographical reference in *Beves of Hamtoun* which is more accurately specified in the later versions of the text than in earlier manuscript examples.[13] This very popular redaction of the Anglo-Norman *Boeve d'Haumtone*, dated to c.1324, has a strong and elaborate episodic structure through which it narrates the eponymous hero's adventures across various exotic lands and his circuitous return journey to England

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[10] Gildas, *The Ruin of Britain and Other Works*, ed. and trans. M. Winterbottom, Arthurian Period Sources 7 (Chichester: Phillimore, 1978); Bede, *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum*, ed. B. Colgrave and R. A. B. Mynors Oxford Medieval Texts (Oxford: Clarendon, 1969).

[11] Gillian R. Overy and Marijane Osborne, *Landscape of Desire: Partial Stories of the Medieval Scandinavian World* (Minneapolis, MN: Minnesota UP, 1994) xiv.

[12] Robert Allen Rouse, *The Idea of Anglo-Saxon England in Medieval Romance*, Studies in Medieval Romance 3 (Cambridge: Brewer, 2005) 52-69.

[13] The earlier versions of the romance are contained in the Auchinleck MS (National Library of Scotland Advocates MS 19.2.1); Cambridge, Caius College MS 175; Royal Library of Naples MS 13 B29; and Cambridge, University Library MS Ff 2.38. The later manuscript with the variant discussed here is Manchester, Chetham Library MS 8009, written in the fifteenth century. The variant is also shared with numerous later printed versions of the tale.

to regain his noble station.[14] Early in the tale, having taken Beves away from his mother, Sir Saber explains his desire to send the youth to continue his education under an earl in another land. This is the plan described in the Auchinleck MS:

> And whan þe feste is come to þende,
> In to anoþer londe I schel þe sende
> Fer be souþe,
> To a riche erl, þat schel þe gie
> And teche þe of corteisie
> In þe ʒouþe.[15]

The place is not revealed – simply "anoþer londe" which nevertheless must be close enough to the present action in Southampton. Another manuscript makes the location even more mysterious and vague by giving Saber the words "that ys on-knowen to the"; even if the place were revealed, it may not be of any use to the ignorant Beves.[16] However, in a fifteenth century version of the tale an actual place name *is* offered and with it comes a point of familiar reference for an audience:

> Till the spousage be brought to end;
> Than we wyll to Wales wend:
> There is an Erle sibbe to the;
> Thou shalt there dwell and w*ith* hym be.[17]

Although this plan never actually comes to fruition, the mention of "Wales" fixes the narrative in the present imagination. The country was an established marker which an audience could appreciate more readily than the relative obscurity of "anoþer londe." This enhances the realism of the romance of course, but also develops a topographical frame of reference for the audience. In a narrative that will journey to

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[14] In addition to the introduction in *Sir Beues of Hamtoun*, ed. Eugen Kölbing, EETS E.S. 46, 48, 65 (London: Trübner, 1885-94), further details on the date of *Beves of Hamtoun* can be found in Laura A. Loomis, *Medieval Romance in England: A Study of the Sources and Analogues of the Non-Cyclic Metrical Romances*, Burt Franklin Essays in Literature and Criticism 36, 1924 (New York: Franklin, 1969) 119-23; Mehl 211-3.

[15] *Sir Beues of Hamtoun*, ed. Kölbing 361-66. All subsequent references to *Beves* will be to this edition and cited by line number.

[16] This variant reading is that of Cambridge, University Library MS Ff 2.38, listed in Kölbing's critical apparatus.

[17] Kölbing also prints the parallel text of the later Manchester, Chetham Library MS 8009.

unfamiliar Saracen lands during the course of Beves' exile, any familiar memorial cues would enhance the verisimilitude and cultural recollection taking place. Moreover, in terms of theories concerning the increasing importance of inheritance, as identified by Lander and Keen, it is interesting to note that the reference was inserted in a *later* version of the romance.[18]

In much broader terms than this brief topographical enhancement, romances regularly identify and inhabit known spaces of England still approachable and visible to a later medieval audience in the manner of Bradwardine's rituals (*Artificiali* 19-20, 36-40). Countering the distant spaces of the otherworld or Crusades, a repeated return to familiar, recognisable places draws a memorial connection between past and present as remembered place is posited against unfamiliar space.[19] In *Beves of Hamtoun*, the vagueness of Armenia is eventually countered by the very real London landscape, "Temse flode" (*Beves* 4294), "Chepe" (*Beves* 4328) and the very specific "Godes Lane" (*Beves* 4397), actually more accurately than the topographically indeterminate corresponding sections of *Boeve*.[20] Other romances construct this particular connection more explicitly, such as the fourteenth-century version of the Orpheus and Eurydice myth, *Sir Orfeo*, which identifies "Traciens" with Winchester in the Auchinleck version of the romance:

> This king sojournd in Traciens,
> That was a cite of noble defens;
> For Winchester was cleped tho

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[18] Although it is possible that this variant reading may have emerged (in a different group) at the same time as the earlier manuscripts, the dating of the reading is not the major argument. The issue here is its effects in terms of the recollection of the narrative itself. However, for a discussion of the manuscripts and a possible *stemma* see Kölbing vii-x, xxxvii-xli.

[19] The function and exploitation of this technique is discussed respectively in "Susan Kelly, "Place Names in the *Awntyrs off Arthure*," *Literary Onomastic Studies* 6 (1979): 162-99; Rosamund Allen, "Place Names in the *Awntyrs off Arthure*: Corruption, Conjecture, Coincidence," *Arthurian Studies in honour of P. J. C. Field*, ed. Bonnie Wheeler (Cambridge: Brewer, 2004) 181-98.

[20] The latter is "a narrow winding alley that used to run behind St. Mary le Bow from Cordwainer Street to Cheapside." Judith Weiss, "The Major Interpolation in *Sir Beves of Hamtoun*," *Medium Ævum* 48 (1979): 71-6, at 73.

Thraciens withouten no.   (*Orfeo* 23-6)

Although Thorlac Turville-Petre characterises this as "an extreme example of the lengths to which the reviser will go to underline the theme of Englishness," and indeed it is just as fictional as Orfeo's ancestry from King Pluto and King Juno (*Orfeo* 5-6), it also highlights a desire to forge a strong memorial coincidence between narrative and audience.[21] A change of name in itself crystallises the memorial fictions which the romance must establish in order to be effective: time has changed and with it the name of the location where Orfeo and Herodis "sojournd," but the place itself continues to exist.[22]

In this way, "[p]lace can become the framework and repository for the social and cultural memory of groups as well as individuals."[23] The *Gawain*-poet develops this with "topographical details described in words drawn from the poet's own north-west Midland dialect."[24] During Gawain's journey away from Arthur's court, terms such as "raged" (*Gawain* 745) and "misy" (*Gawain* 749) are specific and dialectal whilst, during the boar hunt, an audience watches as "þe rogh rocher vnrydely watz fallen, / Þay ferden to þe fyndyng, and frekez hem after. / Þay vmbekesten þe knarre and þe knot boþe" (*Gawain* 1432-4).[25] One can imagine the immediacy (linguistically or perhaps geographically) this would create in the West Midlands as an audience can journey in the footsteps of Gawain with the tantalizing possibility of discovering the Green Chapel for themselves. Particularly explicit in the linking of

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[21] Thorlac Turville-Petre, *England the Nation: Language, Literature and National Identity, 1290-1340* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1996) 116.

[22] Cf. *Launfal* 8, 88, 149; *Stanzaic Guy* 19, 23; and the London sequences in *Athelston* 333-56.

[23] Amy G. Remensnyder, "Topographies of memory: Center and Periphery in High Medieval France," *Medieval Concepts* 194.

[24] Ralph Elliot, "Landscape and Geography," *A Companion to the "Gawain"–Poet*, ed. Derek Brewer and Jonathan Gibson, Arthurian Studies 38 (Cambridge: Brewer, 1997) 105.

[25] Additional discussion of specific topographical references during the boar hunt is given in Elliot 109. For a full examination of the topography in *Sir Gawain* see Ralph Elliot, *The Gawain Country: Essays on the Topography of Middle English Alliterative Poetry*, Leeds Texts and Monographs (Leeds: U of Leeds School of English, 1984).

narrative and landscape is *Havelok the Dane*, composed in the latter half of the thirteenth century and derived from the French *Lai d'Havelok*, which tells of a disguised Danish prince in England, his identity only revealed by a birthmark and a fleeting mysterious light.[26] In describing the coastal town of Grimsby (where the prince has settled), the narrative states that the name originates from the historical events which are currently being recounted, referring to the character Grim who settled there from Denmark with his family and Havelok. The narrative claims that "The stede of Grim the name laughte / So that Grimesby calleth alle / That ther-offe speken alle" (*Havelok* 744-6); the place that still exists is not only the same as that evoked by the romance, but owes its very name to the events that took place there in that past. As Turvill-Petre observes, "[t]hrough an implicit contrast with present conditions the poet suggests that the nation *then* both is and yet isn't the nation *now*."[27] The audience is addressed whilst gesturing towards some future preservation: "And so shulen men callen it ay, / Bitwene this and domesday" (*Havelok* 747-8). Having been established, this name *will* endure from the narrative past for ever ("ay"), captured by the enigmatic demonstrative pronoun "this," defining both the time of Grim himself to the present, and from the present reception of this romance towards their future generations.

Redaction, Recollection and Remembrance.

Although the narratives assert that they are unbroken voices from the past, the very existence of their tales in the English vernacular betrays that there may have been additional memorial processes before the tale entered late medieval English literary

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[26] The romance is based on an English legend, the first extant text being the Anglo-Norman version, and dates from the thirteenth century. It survives in two fourteenth century manuscripts. For further details on the dates and manuscripts of *Havelok the Dane* see Loomis, *Medieval Romance* 103-14; Mehl 161-2; Sands 55-6; Cooper, *Romance in Time* 420.

[27] Turville-Petre 126.

culture. Clearly, from the privileged position of the codicologically and palaeographically sophisticated twenty-first century, a literary history can often be arranged and the origins of Middle English romances traced to their Anglo-Norman, Anglo-Saxon, Celtic, or sometimes classical analogues. Middle English romances, like any form of inherited literature, are memorial objects in terms of their own material content. Despite their claims as voices or accounts of episodes from "doughty Artours dawes" (*Launfal* 1), the romances have journeyed along a memorial path across previous cultures and languages to the present redaction. Although "[t]he distinction between original writer, adapter and translator is one not much made before the sixteenth century," the literary recollection process is mapped out fairly comprehensively at the start of the Auchinleck version of *Of Arthour and Of Merlin*:[28]

> Of Freynsch no Latin nil y tel more
> Ac on I[n]glisch ichil tel þerfore:
> Riȝt is þat I[n]glische vnderstond
> Þat was born in Inglond.[29]

This tale will be told in English, which is fitting given that the events took place on English shores – they were "born in Inglond" like those for whom the current narrative has been created. It has been suggested that this introductory passage was inserted by a later, less competent scribe than the writer of the main body of the romance in Auchinleck.[30] O. D. Macrae-Gibson also suggests that "[n]otable at this early date are the references to nobleman who speak no French, as further evidence that the displacement of English by French was less than used to be supposed."[31] We

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[28] Stephen Medcalf, "On reading books from a half-alien culture," *Later Middle Ages* 13.
[29] *Of Arthour and of Merlin: Volume I, Text*, ed. O. D. Macrae-Gibson, EETS O.S. 268 (London: Oxford UP, 1973) 3-5.19-22.
[30] Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, Advocates MS 19.2.1.
[31] O. D. Macrae-Gibson, *Of Arthour and of Merlin: Volume II, Introduction, Notes and Glossary*, Early English Text Society Original Series 279 (London: Oxford UP, 1979) 76. In addition to Macrae-Gibson's introduction, further information on the date of *Of Arthour and of Merlin* can be

now identify the "Freynsch" *Merlin Ordinaire* (also known as the *French Prose Merlin*, *L'estoire de Merlin*, or *Merlin*) of which the Middle English is a redaction.[32] Albert C. Baugh relates the craft of memory to the process of redaction: "while following his source closely in plot and in the sequence of episodes that make up that plot, [the English poet] succeeds in fashioning his materials into something new and fresh."[33] Departing from a source and apparently "throwing the book away" was part of literary recollection: assimilation with the present was to develop the past narrative in line with current tastes and frames of reference.[34] This process was dependent upon the agility of memory *and* an awareness of intervening time.

To use a spatial metaphor appropriate to medieval theories of memory, Patricia Yaeger notes that "[s]pace is a fragmentary field of action, a jurisdiction scattered and deranged, which appears to be negotiable or continuous but is actually peppered with chasms of economic and cultural disjunctions."[35] Part of the skill of recollection is to acknowledge such literary "disjunctions." The romance is preserved, albeit under a slightly new identity, yet it is this change in identity which has allowed it to endure. A romance which is littered with ghosts of the tale's existence within earlier cultural versions is the early fourteenth-century *Sir Orfeo* and, through identifying earlier memories within the Middle English redaction, we see how imaginative recollection has allowed the narrative to be creatively

found in Dieter Mehl, *The Middle English Romances of the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries* (London: Routledge, 1968) 239-40.

[32] For a full discussion of the sources of *Of Arthour and of Merlin* see Macrae-Gibson 3-35. Cf. *William* 165-8, 5523-33; *BD* 52-6.

[33] Albert C. Baugh, "Convention and Individuality in Middle English Romance," *Medieval Literature and Folklore Studies: Essays in Honor of Francis Lee Utley*, ed. Jerome Mandel and Bruce A. Rosenberg (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers UP, 1970) 139. Baugh considers the different versions of the boar incident in the Old French and Anglo Norman redactions of *Sir Beves of Hamton*. The manipulation of the tale's translation to suit current literary tastes compared to *Boeve de Haumtone* is analysed by Ivana Djordjević, "Original and Translation: Bevis' Mother in Anglo-Norman and Middle English," *Cultural Encounters in the Romance of Medieval England,* ed. Corinne Saunders, Studies in Medieval Romance 2 (Cambridge: Brewer, 2005) 11-26.

[34] Baugh, "Convention" 138.

[35] Patricia Yaeger, "Introduction: Narrating Space," *The Geography of Identity*, ed. Patricia Yaeger, Ratio Institute for the Humanities (Ann Arbor, MI: U of Michigan P, 1996) 4.

recollected.[36] Even before an audience encounters the memorial work of the tale itself (centered around the theme of loyalty) the identity of the romance has also been constructed from many past versions, that only we can now see. As archetypal Aristotelian memorial images, Orfeo and his harp move across these memorial places of the Classical, Anglo-Saxon, Breton or Celtic, and finally the Middle English courtly past, re-collecting memories from past cultures and, ultimately, unifying a present narrative. The tale was known from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (Books ten and eleven) and Virgil's *Georgics* (Book Four), whilst the depiction of the mysterious land of the dead may have also been influenced by Aeneas' journey to the underworld in Book Six of the *Aeneid*.[37] Moving into Anglo-Saxon England, the tale was re-narrated briefly in Boethius' *Consolation of Philosophy* (Book 3, *metrum* twelve), from which Alfred made his translation, and developed the tale significantly in the ninth century. From this, it is probable that some Celtic *lai* and Old French *conte* had also emerged, which, in addition, added peculiarly Celtic or Breton flavours seen, for example, in the Fairy material.[38]

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[36] The romance exists in three manuscripts, including the Auchinleck MS, dating until c.1500. For the date of the composition of the *Sir Orfeo* see Loomis, *Medieval Romance* 195-99; *Sir Orfeo*, ed. A. J. Bliss, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1966) ix-xvii; Sands 185-6; Cooper, *Romance in Time* 424.

[37] There has been much work on the versions of the Orpheus myth in the Middle Ages, relating specifically to *Sir Orfeo*. These include J. Burke Severs, "The Antecedents of *Sir Orfeo*," *Studies in Medieval Literature in Honor of Albert Croll Baugh*, ed. MacEdward Leach (Philadelphia, PA: U of Pennsylvania P, 1961) 187-207; Constance Davies, "Classical Threads in *Orfeo*," *Modern Language Review* 56 (1961): 161-6; Patrizia Grimaldi, "Sir Orfeo as Celtic Folk-Hero, Christain Pilgrim, and Medieval King," *Allegory, Myth, and Symbol*, ed. Morton W. Bloomfield, Harvard English Studies 9 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1981) 147-61; Jeff Ryder, "Receiving Orpheus in the Middle Ages: Allegorization, Remythification and *Sir Orfeo*," *Papers on Language and Literature* 24 (1988): 343-66; Roy Michael Liuzza, "*Sir Orfeo*: Sources, Traditions, and the Poetics of Performance," *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 21 (1991): 269-84. A discussion of the possible Celtic analogues of the tale can also be found in Bliss xxvii-xli.

[38] There are references elsewhere to a French original, a *Lai d'Orphée*, which has not survived. The issue of earlier French sources is discussed in Bliss xxxi-xxxiii; xl-xli. In addition, the tale was also re-told in mythological "handbooks," whilst also being interpreted allegorically by Pierre Bersuire in his *Ovidus moralizatus* and also in the *Ovide moralisé*. See Christopher Baswell, "England's Antiquities: English Literature and Classical Past," *A Companion to Middle English Literature and Culture c.1350-c.1500*, ed. Peter Brown, Blackwell Companions to Literature and Culture (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009) 239.

Sir Orfeo: A Narrative of Literary Recollection

The Aristotelian paradigm for successful recollection involved active assimilation of past with present and a redacted tale, in the manipulation that occurs over centuries, reveals that this process is not limited to human mental agility but can find its expression in literary history. In *Sir Orfeo* the present situation is the somewhat fictitious late medieval court of Orfeo, a hero in the knightly attire of the present yet with a musical ability which is embedded deep in the tale's literary heritage. Indeed, there will literally be "A better harper in no plas" (*Orfeo* 16) whether that is a Middle English court, a Celtic or Breton land of Fairy, an Anglo-Saxon wilderness of exile, or even a classical Underworld. This narrative allows Orfeo to carry his harp through historical spaces into remembered, present places, enriching himself and the present narrative. One such space is that of Anglo-Saxon influence - "Into the wilderness" (*Orfeo* 214) which recalls Old English depictions of self-imposed exile, echoing the desolation experienced on the seas in works such as *The Wanderer* and *The Seafarer*. Moreover, at the close of the romance, Orfeo tells a beggar of his earlier wanderings "en exile" (*Orfeo* 469). As A. C. Spearing notes, in late Antiquity and the Middle Ages, the Orpheus myth was read as Christian allegory: either as a figure of Christ descending into the Underworld or one seeking spiritual enlightenment but eventually turns back to previous material concerns, also seen in Alfred's redaction of the tale from Boethius which chooses to focus upon Orpheus' decision to seek exile.[39] Although the spell in the wilderness can also be appreciated in terms of the "Wild Man" *topos* and the tradition of Nebuchadnezzar's madness, both of which were frequently associated with the forest in medieval romances, this space of loss

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[39] A. C. Spearing, "*Sir Orfeo*: Madness and Gender," *The Spirit of Medieval English Popular Romance*, ed. Ad Putter and Jane Gilbert (Harlow: Longman-Pearson Education, 2000) 260. For a full discussion of the Christian allegorization of the tale see Patricia Vicari, "Sparagmos: Orpheus among the Christians," *Orpheus: The Metamorphosis of a Myth*, ed. John Warden (Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1982) 68-83.

and sadness is simultaneously associated with a Christian and, specifically, monastic understanding of penance as a means towards heavenly salvation.[40] The fact that along with his harp, Orfeo takes "a sclavin" (*Orfeo* 204), the traditional attire of a pilgrim, also recalls the space's earlier associations.

The current redaction has not occluded these meanings, but has assimilated them into the present narrative, essentially creating places in the space through a connection with a present medieval literary romance context. An important part of knighthood *was* religion and Orfeo's ultimate Christian penance also offers an ultimate example of the divine service demonstrated in so many romances through crusading missions or the observances of religious ceremony. However, Orfeo and his harp shortly return to an even earlier memorial space as, from the wilderness, the lament for familiar knightly trappings (*Orfeo* 221-5) dissolves into a *classical* forest: "Into alle the wode the soun gan shille / That alle the wilde bestes that ther beth / For joye abouten him they teth" (*Orfeo* 248-50). The space of Christian wilderness has become the original narrative landscape of Ovid:

> *carmine dum tali silvas animosque ferarum*
> *Threicius vates et saxa sequential ducit,*
> *Ecce nurus Ciconum, tectae lymphata ferinis*
> *Pectora velleribus, tumuli de vertice cernunt*
> *Orphea percussis sociantem nervis:*[41]

Although at this point in the classical narrative the music attracted the Maenads who were to bring about Orpheus' death in John Milton's memorable "rout that made the hideous roar," the harp we hear in Ovid similarly permeates "alle the wode" of the

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[40] See Corinne Saunders, *The Forest of Medieval Romance: Avernus, Broceliande, Arden* (Cambridge: Brewer, 1993) 133-8.

[41] P. Ovidius Naso, *Metamorphosen*, ed. Franz Bömer (Heidelberg: Carl Winter Universitätsverlag, 1980) XI.1-4. All subsequent references to the *Metamorphoses* will be to this version and cited by book and line number. "While Orpheus sang his minstrel's songs and charmed / The rocks and woods and creatures of the wild / To follow, suddenly, as he swept his strings / In concord with his song, a frenzied band / Of Thracian women, wearing skins of beasts." Trans. A. D. Melville, *Metamorphoses,* Oxford World's Classics (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1986). All subsequent translations from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* will be from Melville's version.

Middle English, Christian wilderness.[42] Yet, instead of the Maenads, the king of Fairy and his retinue enter, reclassifying classical space with obvious Celtic or Breton conventions of Fairy (they appear "Oft in hot undertides [*Orfeo* 258]) to re-image the narrative material with aspects from the intervening time during which the tale has developed. However, almost immediately after this latest cultural transformation, their activity, coming "to hunt him all about / With dim cry and bloweing, / And houndes also with him berking" (*Orfeo* 260-2), interrupts any mystical Celtic associations with a noisy outburst from the contemporary medieval court. The relief of familiarity is articulated by Orfeo who laughs (*Orfeo* 290) as he recognizes the chivalric trappings with which he, and the romance audience, appreciate as present normality: "'Ich was y-won swiche werk to see'" (*Orfeo* 293). Yet, again, this brief flash of the present is short-lived as we are soon shaken from romance's familiar world of hunting when the king and his party, along with Herodis, vanish "In at a roche" (*Orfeo* 323). This mysterious disappearance looks back to Celtic and Breton influences upon the tale, however this is simultaneously another return to the Underworld of Vergil entered by Aeneas: "…*spelunca alta fuit uastoque immanis hiatu, / scrupea, tuta lacu nigro nemorumque tenebris.*"[43]

The space is not immediately a threatening classical Underworld but a land of lush vitality, "As bright so sonne on somers day, / Smothe and plain and all grene" (*Orfeo* 328-9), and such perfection continues at the castle of the Fairy King:

> All of precious stones.
> The werst piler on to biholde
> Was all of burnist gold.
> All that lond was ever light,
> For when it shuld be therk and night,

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[42] John Milton, *Lycidas*, *"Comus" and other Poems*, ed. F. T. Prince (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1968) 61.
[43] P. Vergili Maronis, *Aeneidos: Liber Sextvs*, ed. R. G. Austin (Oxford: Clarendon, 1977) 237-8. All subsequent references to the *Aeneid VI* will be to this edition and cited by line number. "…a high cavern, opening a monstrous, / Gaping mouth, guarded well by a black lake and woodland's tenacious / Shadows."

> The riche stones light gonne
> As bright as doth at none the sonne.
> No man may telle no thence in thought
> The riche werk that ther was wrought.   (*Orfeo* 342-50)

Aside from the unease and mystery as light emanates from all around, if we now read this alongside the classical Underworld, the land resembles the Elysian Fields, brimming with the light of life, and so also recalling the medieval Bower of Bliss?[44] Initially there is none of the violence of Tartarus' boiling river of lava (*Aeneid* VI.550-2); rather, rocks are polished to gleaming perfection and arranged in artistic splendour. Interestingly, the disturbing qualities recollected from the Underworld does occur later in the Middle English through the bodies of those perpetually dying and suffering, expressed through a memorable run of grisly anaphora – "Sum stode withouten hade / And sum non armes nade, / And sum thurch the body hadde wounde…" (*Orfeo* 368-79). The figures echo those in torment depicted by Vergil: "*non tamen omne malum miseris nec funditus omnes / corporeae excedunt pestes, penitusque necesse est / multa diu concreta modis inolescere miris.*" (*Aeneid* VI.736-8).[45] We see the two lands of the classical underworld, of light and darkness, given a medieval colouring – the deceased are those from romance narratives or battle accounts, thereby allowing the world of chivalry, like Orfeo, to occupy what is a very ancient place of legend. The journey across these centuries of influence and development are of course obscured by the current incarnation, but it is useful to appreciate the layers of memory that exist in a romance narrative at the very level of narrative history, something which will be discussed in relation to Chaucer and Malory later in this study. The development of classical tradition is most obvious in the rewriting of Ovid's depiction of Orpheus' journey out of the Underworld with

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[44] Kenneth R. Gros Louis, "The Significance of Sir Orfeo's Self-Exile," *Review of English Studies* 18 (1967): 245-52.

[45] "Not all traces of evil are gone from these pitiful creatures, / Not all bodily maladies leave. Of necessity, many / Harden and grow, become deeply ingrained in mysterious manners."

Eurydice: *"carpitur adclivis per muta silentia trames, / arduus, obscures, caligne densus / nec procul afuerant telluris margine summae"* (*Metamorphoses* X.53-55).[46] In contrast, the Middle English reverses and develops the classical opposition between light earth and dark Underworld. Although lush greenness *is* encountered by Aeneas as he looks upon the souls awaiting their second bodies and drinking from the river Lethe (*Aeneid* VI.703-15), this is only temporarily evoked in *Sir Orfeo*, later snatched away with images of eternal suffering and pain.

Later, the Middle English redaction again assimilates various spaces of past material into a familiar medieval landscape as classical Underworld and Celtic Fairy merge to become a new, current place in which chivalric oaths and loyalties endure and triumph. This, in essence, performs the creative development which a redaction seeks to accomplish – to normalize the mysterious and unfamiliar as the narrative becomes governed by the laws of chivalry: the Fairy King must fulfill his promise to Orfeo ("Now aske of me what it be" [*Orfeo* 426]) by returning to him his wife. In the current redaction, we are left in no doubt that loyalty both to your lady and to oaths will produce the desired result, and present *can* accommodate past. The way in which the Middle English has recollected this particular section can be appreciated through a comparison with the version by Ovid:

> *talia dicentem nervosque ad verba moventem*
> *exsangues flebant animae: nec Tantalus undam*
> *captavit refugam, stupitque Ixionis orbis,*
> *nec carpsere iecur volucres, urnisque vacarunt*
> *Belides, inque tuo sedisti, Sisyphe, saxo:* (*Metamorphoses* X.53-5)[47]

It is the music, and the music alone, that allows Orpheus to escape the Underworld with Eurydice, whereas in *Sir Orfeo* the music becomes the catalyst for an oath that

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[46] "The track climbed upwards, steep and indistinct, / Through the hushed silence and the murky gloom; / And now they neared the edge of the bright world."

[47] "So to the music of his strings he sang, / And all the bloodless spirits wept to hear; / And Tantalus forgot the fleeing water, / Ixion's wheel was tranced; the Danaids / Laid down their urns; the vultures left their feast, / And Sisyphus sat rapt upon his stone."

is made between the king of Fairy and Orfeo. It is this oath which allows Herodis to return. Through this, the art of recollection has recaptured the same detail but, in order to relate it to the present, a layer of familiar chivalric colouring has enhanced earlier descriptions of beautiful music. Orpheus and Orfeo charm in both versions causing the Fairy King, like Ovid's Sisyphus, to "sit full stille" (*Orfeo* 419); yet, whereas the strength of the music initially defeated the power of death (*Metamorphoses* X.45-52), the Middle English bolsters the instrument's music through the authority of chivalric loyalty. Appropriately, for a romance that reveals so much of the previous uses and cultural adaptations of its material, the subsequent summary of the narrative's events can function equally well as a record of the tale's redacted achievement as unfamiliar spaces are again ordered and recollected into present places:

> And hadde y-suffred full yore
> In wildernisse miche sore,
> And hadde y-won my queen owy
> Out of the lond of fairy,
> And hadde y-brought the levedy hende
> Right here to the tounes ende,   (*Orfeo* 535-40)

The tale has been carried from its classical roots through Christian allegorization, the realm of Breton and Celtic influence in "the lond of fairy," until the current redaction "Right here to the tounes ende." The narrative has implicitly acknowledged its redacted history (the progression of time), and has adapted or moved *through* it, forging a memorial path towards a single "tounes ende" – the Middle English version we are currently reading. Despite details being developed, inserted, or sometimes dropped, Orfeo has continued to play his harp throughout this narrative's history to fulfill ends and expectations but the key aspect has been the constant adaptation of past versions in ways so that they retain a relevance to the new society that can enjoy the tale. The Middle English audience was oblivious to this journey,

but we can see that the human desire to preserve a past in the present was also conducted at a cultural, literary level. Through this the identity of Orfeo's narrative was preserved over the centuries.

Highly Wrought Memories: *Emaré*'s cloth.

The reading of *Sir Orfeo* as a literary ordering of a tale's earlier contexts or "spaces" is facilitated by the wealth of sources and influences available to us; no doubt the same readings could be done of other romances if only their sources had survived or were discovered. However, we, and indeed a Middle English audience, did not have to rely on serendipitous discovery or codicological and palaeographical expertise to appreciate a tale's redacted *memoria*. Other romances promote a memory of past narratives more explicitly, a practice demonstrated materially by the tent of Adrastus in the *Roman de Thèbes*, which Christopher Baswell suggests presents "almost a textual, learned narrative within the broader story of battle, [that] emblematizes the way the clerkly redactors encode their roles in the romances of Antiquity."[48] It seems that the events of the current narrative should be guided and illuminated by earlier experiences recorded in literary history, recognised as (often literal) objects of immense artistic value, crafted into the current tale by skilled artisans: "hem that ben Artificiers, / Whiche usen craftes and mestiers, / Whos Art is cleped Mechanique."[49] Such is the implied effect in Marie de France's *Lanval* when the luxurious pavilion is compared to the wealth of Queen Semiramis and Emperor Octavian:

> La reïne Semiramis,

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[48] Christopher Baswell, "Marvels of translation and crises of transition in the romances of Antiquity," *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Romance*, ed. Roberta L Krueger, Cambridge Companions to Literature (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2000) 34.

[49] John Gower, *Confessio amantis*, *The Complete Works of John Gower*, ed. G. C. Macauley, 4 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1899-1902) 7.1691-3. Cf. Thomas Hoccleve, *Regement of Princes*, *Hoccleve's Works: "The Regement of Princes" and fourteen minor poems*, ed. F. J. Furnivall, EETS E.S. 72 (London: Paul, 1897) I.1009-11.

> Quant ele ot unkes plus aveir
> E plus pussaunce e plus saveir,
> Ne l'emperere Octovïen
> N'esligasent le destre pan.   (*Lais* V.82-6)

This finds its equivalent in Thomas Chestre's version, yet there the classical comparison is with "Alisaundre the conqueroure" (*Launfal* 274) which is followed, interestingly, with "Ne King Artoure in his most honour" (*Launfal* 275), thereby moving the comparison closer to the present time of Arthur. The reasons behind this development may be the perceived increase in distance between the Arthurian ideal and the later Middle Ages, the time of Chestre's late fourteenth-century redaction.[50] One of the most effective recollections of this type appears in the late fourteenth-century *Emaré*.[51] The tale features a magical cloth embroidered with images from past narratives, a detail rooted in other versions of the "Constance" type such as *Mai und Beaflor*, whilst also recalling the cloth in *Galeran de Bretagne*.[52] The cloth is a gift from the King of Sicily to Emaré's father, the Emperor Artyus, who, after receiving it, is to fall in love with his own daughter. Maldwyn Mills, despite his analysis of the different pairs of lovers represented upon the material, is a little dismissive of their relevance to the current romance, believing that "none of the most strikingly individual features of these lovers is allowed to come through; they are essentially decorative motifs, multiplied so that the powers of love among men may be the more heavily stressed."[53] However, it could be that the mere mention of these characters' names was enough to re-create the narrative whence they have emerged,

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[50] For the evidence of the date of the redaction by Chestre see Sands 201-3; Cooper, *Romance in Time* 423.

[51] The romance only exists in the early fifteenth-century London, British Library MS Cotton Caligula A.ii. Evidence for the date of the compostion of *Emaré* is offered by Edith Rickert in *The Romance of Emaré*, ed. Edith Rickert (Chicago, IL: U of Chicago P, 1907) xxviii-xlviii; Loomis, *Medieval Romance* 23; Mehl 135-6.

[52] For a discussion of this see Rickert xxx-xxxii. A full examination of the romance's possible origins and sources is found in Loomis, *Medieval Romance* 23-34.

[53] Mills, *Six Middle English Romances* 198.

thereby establishing a comparison or manufacturing a connection with *Emaré*.[54] The medium itself is particularly appropriate to medieval *memoria*: as was seen in Hugh of St Victor and his contemporaries, images were often grouped together and linked by a chain or *catena*, which Carruthers compares to *texta* and its literal meaning of "something woven."[55] Here, then, associated items (other love narratives) have been literally linked or "woven" together and subsequently connected to the current tale through narrative action.[56]

These woven images recall chronicle vignettes, self-contained in each corner of the cloth: "In that on korner made was" (*Emaré* 121), "In that othur corner was" (*Emaré* 133); yet, in addition to looking backwards, they serve a proleptic function in the current narrative. Each, like the cloth, is "Stuffed with ymagerye" (*Emaré* 168) from the past which bears some relation to the dangers inherent in Emaré's exile and the incestuous narrative which is about to develop. The appearance first of "Ydoyne and Amadas" (*Emaré* 122) recalls the long and painful courtship that was endured by Amadas on account of his socially inferior status; in comparison, the "courtship" in *Emaré* will be painful for altogether more sinister reasons, bereft of the "honour" (*Emaré* 124) and "trewe-love" (*Emaré* 125) of this earlier couple. This is echoed in the description of Floris and Blancheflour (*Emaré* 148, 149). Essentially, such couples form *exempla* of good, true love which, in its contrast with the present and future, will make Emaré's situation even more distressing and poignant. The intervening couple, "Trystram and Isowde so bright" (*Emaré* 134), evoke the prime

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[54] It has been suggested that the entire cloth description along with the arrival of Tergaunte may be a later interpolation, citing as evidence the more extensive history of a cloth in the German analogue *Der König von Ressen*, the redactor's memory of similar tales such as *Apollonius of Tyre*, the defective tail rhymes (*Emaré* 74-83), and overlong rhyme (*Emaré* 188). See Ad Putter, "The Narrative Logic of *Emaré*," *Spirit* 177-8.
[55] Carruthers, *Book of Memory* 78.
[56] For the connection between female weaving and narrative compare Chaucer's Philomela in *The Legend of Good Women*. *LGW* F 2350-82.

medieval *exemplum* of adulterous love and tragedy.[57] Crucially, the couples are linked to *Emaré* through the final image which forges a tangible correspondence in the "fowrthe korner" (*Emaré* 157) of the cloth:

> Of Babylone the sowdan sonne,
> The amerayles dowghtyr hym by.
> For hys sake the cloth was wrowght;
> She loved hym in hert and thowght,
> As testymo[n]yeth thys storye. (*Emaré* 158-62)

This final *vignette* is inserted into *Emaré* through the cloth itself, which bears an image of its own creation: past memories are literally assimilated into the present as the emperor receives the cloth. Moreover, the daughter's depiction as "an unykorn" (*Emaré* 164), a symbol of chastity, exacerbates our unease with Emaré's situation. Her chaste state will be increasingly compromised as the romance progresses and is symbolically occluded when Artyus presents the cloth, laden with three past relationships as a token of his dishonourable love. The seemingly innocuous "As testymo[n]yeth thys storye" is actually highly ambiguous, referring both to the symbolism of the daughter's love for the sultan's son and the fact that the appearance of this cloth *in Emaré* authenticates the memory of this past narrative. As we survey the cloth, the current narrative sifts through past romances to clarify and order the present, something which has led Mortimer Donovan to characterise its description as "somewhat mechanical."[58] In addition, as each memory is recollected, we move gradually closer to the present situation: beginning with archetypal tales from Antiquity before journeying ahead to popular medieval romances whose contemporaneousness is marked by the familiar chivalric figures of "knyghtus and senatowres" (*Emaré* 151). The final memorial place is very recent, looking back to

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[57] Furrow discusses the importance of the Tristram and Isolde material which is referred to in *Amadas et Ydoine* and in Gower's *Confessio Amantis*. Furrow 142-76.

[58] Mortimer J. Donovan, "Middle English *Emaré* and the Cloth Worthily Wrought," *The Learned and the Lewed: Studies in Chaucer and Medieval Literature*, ed. Larry D. Benson, Harvard English Studies 3 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1974) 339.

the creation of the cloth itself, thereby literally collecting the past into the present as the material held is the same as that being woven in its fourth corner.

Jane Bliss notes that "inserting a name from a different tradition may actually try to wrench the story away from its expected direction" and, here, narratives of more appealing and natural love are pulling against the incestuous direction of the present narrative.[59] Yet, in this sense, Amanda Hopkins' observation that "[t]he cloth's dominating presence distracts the reader's focus from the events depicted in the narrative" can be overturned: by guiding the audience towards other narratives, the cloth actually strengthens and distinguishes its own identity. This, in essence, had occurred in the various stages of development of the Orpheus narrative.[60] Of course, this was an important aspect of medieval literary creativity; Douglas Kelly surmises that an audience was "offered the memory of a past alive with the truths it understood or accepted [and that] [l]iterature kept the memory of those past deeds and past loves, adapting them to new audiences and more profound and original understanding."[61] By declaring in *Chevrefoil*, "E jeo l'ai trove en escrit / De Tristram e de la reïne" (*Lais* XI.6-7), Marie de France calls attention to the fact her tale will be a version of the famous and popular Tristan and Iseult legend. As Per Nykrog notes, "[a] rapid allusion is enough, one can count on the reader to know the rest," possibly a reason why Marie does not devote as much time to introducing these characters as she does in her other *lais*.[62] In this sense, the earlier versions of the tale

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[59] Jane Bliss, *Naming and Namelessness in Medieval Romance*, Studies in Medieval Romance 7 (Cambridge: Brewer, 2008) 67.

[60] Amanda Hopkins, "Veiling the Text: The True Role of the Cloth in *Emaré*," *Medieval Insular Romance: Translation and Innovation*, ed. Judith Weiss, Jennifer Fellows and Morgan Dickson (Cambridge: Brewer, 2000) 76.

[61] Douglas Kelly, "Obscurity and Memory: Sources for Invention in Medieval French Literature," *Vernacular Poetics in the Middle Ages*, ed. Lois Ebin, Studies in Medieval Culture 16 (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 1984) 50.

[62] Per Nykrog, "The Rise of Literary Fiction," *Renaissance and Renewal in the Twelfth Century*, ed. Robert L. Benson and Giles Constable (Oxford: Clarendon, 1982) 600. The relation of Marie's narrative technique, particularly her descriptions, to memory is discussed in Logan E. Whalen, *Marie*

inform Marie's work as she retains the name of Tristan, or as *Emaré*'s cloth looks backwards and forwards in much the same way.

Marie's aside highlights the artistry of her work in relation to the earlier crafts of others and the way in which past narratives are rendered in romances is often deliberately artificial, something which Chaucer developed in *The House of Fame* where classical narratives are presented "On a table of bras" (*HF* 142) and in "such noblesse / Of ymages" (*HF* 471-2). The work behind *Emaré*'s cloth is similarly emphasised: it took "Seven wynter" (*Emaré* 118) to complete and the creator's task is highlighted by terms such as "wrowghte" (*Emaré* 111) and "makynge" (*Emaré* 118). In this sense, the scenes and images remain artificial but more dynamic than mnemonics and they are always representations ("made was" [*Emaré* 121], "was dyght" [*Emaré* 133]). Memories of the past have been enhanced through artistic treatment and time has ensured their artistic brilliance and permanence, resembling W. B. Yeats' image of Byzantium as a burnished piece of perfection from Antiquity.[63] This is also achieved through the *cornucopia* of stones and jewels which are described, their exotic names dazzling as much as the jewels themselves: "Kassydonys and onyx" (*Emaré* 128), "Deamondes and rubyes" (*Emaré* 130), "Perydotes and crystal" (*Emaré* 155). In addition to allegorical significances, their exoticism offers an alluring beauty and they jostle for recognition as the intricate detailing is described. Having been dazzled by the "bryght" Carbunkall and safere" (*Emaré* 126-7) we then marvel at the iridescent clarity of the "onyx so clere" (*Emaré* 128), enhanced through burnished settings "in golde new" (*Emaré* 129). A powerful impression of artistic wealth is emblematic of the prudential value of these

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de France and the Poetics of Memory (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2008).
[63] W. B. Yeats, "Sailing to Byzantium," *W. B. Yeats: The Major Works*, ed. Edward Larrissy, rev. ed. Oxford World's Classics (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2001) 94-101.

earlier narratives – of course, why else would such expense and time have been lavished upon them?

Just as the cloth is "Thykke of stones" (*Emaré* 143), *Emaré* must also support these past romances, heavy with meanings, in ways that should inform the current narrative. Unfortunately, the characters may not have had as much time to digest the wisdom as an audience: the latter is alerted to the earlier tales every time the cloth is referred to, or even at any mention of sewing. Each time the object subsequently appears, the memories it carries has some relation to the heroine's later relationships with others and each time the current love is problematised. These are numerous in the tale and comprise the incestuous relationship with her father (*Emaré*: 243) and her subsequent banishment over the sea (*Emaré* 270), her promising relationship with the King of Galys (*Emaré*: 394, 439), and its destruction by the old queen when she is cast-off again (*Emaré* 590, 644) There are also references to sewing at the house of Sir Kadore (*Emaré* 376-7), Emaré teaches her son, Jordan, courtesy whilst she is sewing (*Emaré* 730), and, finally, her son wears a rich tunic to meet his father (the King of Galys) who has travelled to Rome to search for his lost love (*Emaré* 848). In his summary of this, Ad Putter observes that "[s]torytellers relying on memory typically render agency in visualizable form, for the simple reason that a concrete image is more easily remembered and represented than an abstract process of cause and effect. The beautifully symmetrical robe in *Emaré* is memorable in precisely this way: the striking image fills out the voids in the causal chain."[64] This "causal chain" is also one which connects *Emaré* with other narratives of troubled love and, perhaps significantly, the references to the cloth cease once the reunion between Emaré and the King of Galys is imminent. The cloth has served its

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[64] Putter, "Narrative Logic" 176.

memorial function, warning of future dangers, and the heroine can now continue without it. At this point, her father now thinks of his daughter without the garment "That was so bryght of skynne" (*Emaré* 954); in his mind she is now shorn of the material and its associations. Structurally, the present narrative (like an audience) has learned from the cloth and can now discard it.

Objects can therefore influence memory through literally recollecting and subsequently remembering other tales within the current romance through a playful, dynamic use of narrative mnemonics.[65] The relatively early (c.1250) Middle English romance *Floris and Blancheflour*, based on an earlier Old French original, contains another story of enforced separation.[66] On this occasion, two young lovers are deliberately isolated from each other: the king sells Blancheflour to merchants and Floris is informed that she has died. Interestingly, memories of an earlier love narrative is inscribed upon the cup given to the king by the "Marchaundes of Babyloin" in return for Blancheflour and seems designed to warn, through remembered *exempla*, of the potential dangers of the king's actions.[67] Again, the artistic qualities of the engraving are stressed: "Ther was never noon so well grave; / He that it made was no knave" (*Floris* 165-6), indicating the crafted value of the cup's narrative. Indeed, on the "pomel" (*Floris* 171) is set the same jewel from *Emaré*, "a charbuncle" (*Floris* 172). The sides and "covercle" (*Floris* 169) depict different aspects of love: the former bearing the image of "How Parise ledde away the Queene" (*Floris* 168) whilst the latter contains "ther bother love" (*Floris* 170).

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[65] Objects have, of course, a long history as mnemonic devices, particularly connected to monastic devotional practices. See Carruthers, *Craft of Thought* 222-4.

[66] There are four surviving manuscript versions of the tale dating from c.1250 onwards. For the date and manuscript history of *Floris and Blancheflour* see Loomis, *Medieval Romance* 184-94; Sands 279-80.

[67] It should be noted that, characteristic of Middle English redactions, the cup description is more condensed than the French equivalent. *Floris and Blancheflour*, *Verse Romances*, ed. Sands 147. All subsequent references to *Floris* will be to this edition and cited by line number.

The familiarity of the characters, from Homer's *Iliad*, recalls the events that surrounded this couple: having taken Helen from Menelaus, Paris precipitated the Trojan War. The remembrance is then moved to Vergil's *Aeneid* through the reference to "Enneas the King, that nobel man" (*Floris* 177) as the cup initiates a journey into another narrative of love and loss. As Blancheflour is exchanged for the cup, clearly something which an audience is urged to regret, its mnemonic images implicitly criticise the actions of the king. In this respect, the Emir is an abductor figure in contrast to Paris' active pursuit of love which triggers the Trojan War (with which the cup is explicitly associated). An audience would be expected to recognise this portent; however, the king is oblivious to the image's ominous associations. Consequently, he refuses to hear and remember past lessons concerning the value of true young love and the dangers inherent in interfering with its progression. Subsequently, on a very subtle recollected level, Juno's promise to give Helen to Paris is transformed into the merchant's promise to exchange the cup for Blancheflour and the king's acceptance of this transaction.

In the manner of the cloth in *Emaré*, the memorial relevance of the object is facilitated by its roots in history. This is achieved through a complex memorial journey of winning, giving, and stealing:

> Enneas the King, that nobel man,
> At Troye in bataile he it wan
> And brought it into Lumbardy,
> And gaf it his lemman, his amy.
> The coupe was stoole fro King Cesar;
> A theef out of his tresour-hous it bar;
> And seethe that ilke same theef
> For Blaunchefloure he it yeef;   (*Floris* 177-84)

The description of the decoration has ceased: we now remember how the object has come to be in the hands of the merchant – the "theef." When the object finally reaches the current narrative it has acquired additional associations with warfare and

stealing – both of which cast an ominous shadow over the exchange. As for Aristotle, time is just as significant as the object or places joined by the chain. The narrative then works to observe the lesson carried by the object in a medieval romance context: the king and queen eventually realise their error in separating the couple and, eventually, Floris is united with Blancheflour. Despite the ominous warnings inherent both in the cloth and cup, the establishment of a literary connection is reassuring in much the same way as the cultural recollections of orality and the ideal court. Current uncertainty is clarified through evoking familiar, established narrative analogues and emphasising their value. Echoing classical definitions of rhetoric, Stephen Hawes' *The Pastime of Pleasure* (c.1506) defines the memorial value of earlier writings in images which are as opulent as Emaré's cloth:

> Carbuncles in the most derke nyght
> Doth shyne fayre with clere radyant beames
> Exylynge derkenes with his rayes lyght
> And so these poetes with theyr golden streames
> Deuoyde our rudeness with grete fyry lemes
> Theyr centencyous verses are refulgent
> Encensynge out the odour redolent"[68]

For Hawes, writings of previous "poetes" are glittering jewels to illuminate the darkness of the present "odour redolent." It is this synesthetic combination of sight and smell which leads to Hawes' favourable appraisal of the Chaucerian canon: "In all his bokes so swete and prouffytable" (*Pastime* 1323). At the core of romances is a sense of narrative expectation, founded upon past experiences.

A similar sense of the artistic permanence inherent in the cloth and cup, above, appears in *Sir Degrevant*, a composite romance probably composed c.1385-1410, which tells of a rejected knight who slowly works to win the devotion of his

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[68] Stephen Hawes, *The Pastime of Pleasure*, ed. and intro. William Edward Mead, EETS O.S. 173 (London: Oxford UP, 1928) 1128-34. All subsequent references to the *Pastime* will be to this edition and cited by line number.

love, Melidor, and approval of her father by defeating the preferred suitor.[69] Here, the artistic canvas becomes a chamber and bed shared by Degrevant and Melidor where they repeatedly enjoy clandestine meetings, seemingly oblivious to the dangers surrounding them (literally) in the castle of her father. There are similarities with *Emaré*'s cloth as the image of Amadas and Ydoine again appears along with various kings, philosophers and religious teachers who gaze down upon the oblivious couple. Crucially, this is an immensely solid paradigm of memorial places: even the chamber's structural supports become precious artefacts which further enhance the sense of artistic permanence as the roof is described using technical, architectural terminology referring to the rib of the vault and the binding stone. The images upon the ceiling, including "the Pocalyps of Jon" (*Degrevant* 1453), "The Powlus Pystolus" (*Degrevant* 1454) and "Parabolus of Salamon" (*Degrevant* 1455) are "lowynge ful lyghth" (*Degrevant* 1452), and radiate wisdom to those who view them.

A telling phrase, "Ther men myghth se ho that wolde" (*Degrevant* 1449), confirms that these images have been created for men to "see" (of course, a prominent aspect of medieval memory theory) along with the important qualification couched in the subjunctive, or maybe future perfect – "they that would." One needs to "want" to "see," and therefore comprehend, the wisdom, advocating the voluntary intellection and active *ars memorativa* discussed by Aristotle and Aquinas and which the narrative encourages through such elaborate fashioning. Similarly, the address "Hend, herkeneth and herus, / Gyf hyt be youre wyll" (*Degrevant* 1459-60) catches the sense of intention in an instruction directed not only at the lovers, but to an

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[69] The romance survives in two manuscripts: Cambridge, Cambridge University Library MS Ff.1.6 and Lincoln, Cathedral Library MS Cathedral 91. For the date of the compoistion of the tale any and possible sources for *Sir Degrevant* see the introduction in the edition by Kooper and Loomis, *Medieval Romance* 306-09.

audience – the "gentle people" who have also been shown these images in the present context.[70]

These decorative memorial images allow romances to encode a generic identity along with their place within that very tradition. In his famous essay "Tradition and the Individual Talent," T. S. Eliot attempted to define the combination of present individual invention and past literary tradition, and these observations have a relevance to *memoria*. Eliot noted "what happens when a new work of art is created is something that happens simultaneously to all the works of art which preceded it."[71] The Middle English version adapts the previous versions of tales through a dialogue with past "memories" and, as an artistic creation itself, offers a tangible example of the value of this process. However, aside from the process of redaction, we have seen that "old" works of art continually re-appear in the "new," often wrought into deliberately artificial objects themselves. Given the function of these objects *in* the new work, the past tradition literally communicates with the current creation: "the past should be altered by the present as much as the present is directed by the past."[72] As scenes from past narratives are painted into the current picture, the present recognises the value of the past just as the past is made aware of its own place in literary history and cultural memory.

The frequency of this technique suggests that (aestheticized) literary history was a popular feature within romance narratives. Interestingly, contemporary anthropologists and cultural geographers view the past in terms of landscape, inscribed with memories much like the late classical and medieval wax tablets of

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[70] The decoration, like *Emaré's* cloth, also depicts the narrative of *Amadace et Ydoine* in addition to images of wise kings, philosophers and religious teachers all rendered in elaborate detail around the couple.

[71] T. S. Eliot, "Tradition and the individual talent," *Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism: A Reader*, ed. David Lodge (Harlow: Longman-Pearson, 1972) 72.

[72] Ibid.

memory.[73] Although, inevitably, "over time the enduring element is alienated from both the agency and the sense of its creation, and with this displacement it loses the taint of intention," a romance's "enduring elements" remain vital as they interact with, and within, a current narrative.[74] Past narratives can prophesy future events either through expectation or sage caveats, a more elaborate and narratively complex example of which is offered by Chaucer's "Knight's Tale." Reversing the influential dynamic of cloth, cup and bedchamber to the present narrative, the decorated temples of Venus, Mars, and Dyane surround the "lystes" (KnT I.1884) or "noble theatre" (KnT I.1885) where Palamon and Arcite are to fight for Emilye. The artistry of this creation, recalling the roof of *Sir Degrevant*, is emphasised with its elaborate gates "of marbul whit" (KnT I.1893), carved by the expert craftsmen employed by Theseus:

> For in the lond ther was no crafty man
> That geometrie or ars-metrike kan,
> Ne portreyour, ne kervere of ymages,
> That Theseus ne yaf him mete and wages
> The theatre for to maken and devyse.   (KnT I.1897-1901)

This description also appears in Boccaccio's *Teseida* and it is interesting to note the attention upon the ordered places that have been created within the space of the tournament and those of the temple walls. Although Chaucer omits Boccaccio's details of the number of seats and the marble walls, he retains their vast dimensions: "The circuit a myle was aboute" (KnT I.1887) with seats "the heighte of sixty pas" (KnT I.1890).[75] Yet, as soon as an audience is urged to contemplate such an

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[73] A collection of essays which discusses this concept with particular reference to texts is James Duncan and David Ley, eds., *Place/Culture/Representation* (London: Routledge, 1993).

[74] Jonathon Smith, "The Lie That Binds: Destabilizing the Text of Landscape," *Place/Culture/Representation* 81.

[75] It has been suggested that the specific dimensions attempt to rationalise the actions taking place within. See John Halverson, "Aspects of Order in the 'Knight's Tale'," *Studies in Philology* 57 (1960): 606-21, at 615.

enormous edifice, the Knight tells us that there "Was noon in erthe, as in so litel space" (KnT I.1896).

From the vastness of the circumference and area comes an assertion of the space's diminutive measurements in contrast to the array of craftsmanship displayed: from "so litel space" follows the description of the craftsmens' artistic skills. Mathematical measurements ("geometrie or ars-metrike" [KnT I.1898]) are juxtaposed with image-making by a "portreyour" or "kervere of ymages" (KnT I.1899). The greatest skill is the way in which so many images have been carefully situated and ordered within this space, making a series of valuable memorial places to be re-entered and referenced in the future of the narrative. These contain the memorial images, on the walls and ceilings of each temple, created "in memorie" (KnT I.1906). An audience, like Chaucer's figures in the romance, is urged to admire the rich materials "Of alabaster whit and reed coral" (KnT I.1910); again, expensive products depict equally valuable narratives highly "wroght" (KnT I.1913, 1919) in the present tale. These may be scenes of Love's allegorical manifestations in the temple of Venus, the senseless violence depicted in the temple of Mars, or the classical, literary *exempla* offered in the temple of Dyane. Of course, in this highly complex romance, such images recollect the past, but also the divine agency behind these experiences: remembering this, in addition, may also inform the present and future of Palamon, Arcite, and Emilye. The memorial store of narratives must be assimilated with the current narrative: the cloth had literally to be woven into the tale in the same way that Orfeo entered, and left, the classical underworld and Anglo-Saxon wilderness as a decidedly medieval knight. Importantly, however, the cultural and literary acknowledgement of past and present, space and place, or unfamiliarity and familiarity, depends upon "narrative conventions that are remarkably stable

inside each culture [and] are implicitly recognised by everyone."[76] The narrative mechanisms themselves must be able to support such movements and these form a paradigm of structural places which the romance audience, with its sense of expectation, carries into every tale. Existing within narratives themselves, these are the literal, structural, seasonal, cultural, and literary rituals of romance that are remembered across texts and cultures. Importantly, however, these are also frequently strengthened and re-affirmed during periodic challenges to character and narrative.

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[76] James Fentress and Chris Wickham, *Social Memory*, New Perspectives on the Past (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992) 163.

CHAPTER FOUR

Past Rituals and Present "Forests": Negotiating *ductus* and *skopos*.

'Sir Ywain, welkum home!'
(For it was lang sen he thare come).   (*Ywain* 3717-8)

Ritualistic Expectations.

In a recent study of memory and medieval drama, specifically the medieval Corpus Christi plays, Theodore Lerud argues that a town's quotidian backgrounds created a recognisable framework with which to order the images of each play and thereby orientate audiences.[1] Lerud interprets memorial framing very literally, discussing the use of fixed doorways, gateways and other town places in which the images (the players) changed according to each play whilst drawing meaning and emphasis from their respective frames. This created a dramatic model for medieval memory theory: "the arrangement of the localities will preserve the order of the facts, and the images of the facts will designate the facts themselves, and we shall employ the localities and images respectively as a wax writing tablet and the letters written on it."[2] In response to Lerud's analysis, the generic and often predictable paradigm of romances can be seen to establish a similar pattern of order and logic within which an audience can engage in the narrative's memorial challenges. Formulaic stories are inherently predictable in this respect as "[a]udiences find satisfaction and a basic emotional security in a familiar form…a sense of what to expect in new individual examples, thereby increasing its capacity for understanding and enjoying the details of a work."[3] These "expectations," of course, would be formed through memories of

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[1] Theodore K. Lerud, *Memory, Images, and the English Corpus Christi Drama*, The New Middle Ages (New York: Palgrave, 2008).
[2] Lerud 8.
[3] John G. Cawelti, *Adventure, Mystery, and Romance: Formula Stories as Art and Popular Culture* (Chicago, IL: U of Chicago P, 1976) 9.

previous encounters with the genre. Consequently, romances are deliberately designed not only to create logical patterns of time, narrative, and behaviour, but for these rituals to be analogous to the greater romance paradigm which is similarly cyclical and ritualistic.[4] This provides an equivalent to the rhetorical *ductus* or fluid compositional unity of the romance through which a theme or moral can be established on the journey to its conclusion (in memory theory this would be the *skopos* – the target of memorial meditation or a stable, accurate remembrance).[5] Maurice Bloch observed that "evidence for static or cyclical time comes from that special type of communication, which we can label ritual" and in reading romance an audience performs this ritual, the parameters of which are defined by memories of other romances.[6] Gerd Althoff notes the way in which rituals could be varied and adapted in the Middle Ages, citing variations in consecrations and coronations as dynamic modifications to accord with a changing present.[7] Similarly, the inherent variety and variability of romances within a pre-determined narrative pattern allow the rituals to be subtly modified with each new text.

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[4] The usefulness of annual, liturgical feasts is also noted in Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting* 43. See also a useful summary of medieval rituals in John Halverson, "Aspects of Order in the 'Knight's Tale'," *Studies in Philology* 57 (1960): 606-21, at 606-12.

[5] Carruthers, *The Craft of Thought* 116-7. See also Mary Carruthers, "The Concept of *ductus*, or, journeying through a work of art," *Rhetoric Beyond Words: Delight and Persuasion in the Arts of the Middle Ages*, ed. Mary Carruthers, Cambridge Studies in Medieval Literature 78 (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2010) 190-213. In romance, given the circularity of structure, this target can also serve as the starting-point – the desire for the knight to return home or for an audience to return to reality, often marked by stock conclusive remarks or prayer. Cf. *Athelston* 810-12; *Havelok* 2991-3001.

[6] Maurice Bloch, *Ritual, History and Power: Selected Papers in Anthropology*, London School of Economics Monographs on Social Anthropology 58 (London: Athlone, 1989) 11. For more political and social discussion of the way in which rituals are employed to exercise authority see Ingolf U. Dalferth, "Mythos, Ritual, Dogmatik: Strukturen der religiösen Textwelt," *Evangelische Theologie* 47 (1987): 272-91, at 283-4; Eugene G. D'Aquili, Charles D. Laughlin and John McManus, *The Spectrum of Ritual: A Biogenetic Structural Analysis* (New York: Columbia UP, 1979).

[7] Gerd Althoff, "The Variability of Rituals in the Middle Ages," *Historical Concepts* 76-80. Althoff discusses specifically deviation from the *deditio* in the consecration of Bishop Alderich of Asti in 1008, before considering royal deviations from ritual at the election of Conrad II, and the refusal of Henry I to accept anointment in Fritzlar in 919.

We are already critically familiar with romance rituals, and their structural importance has been explained by Morton Bloomfield as a pattern of motivated and juxtaposed episodes.[8] Such discussion often focuses upon romance formulae, divided starkly by Bruce Rosenberg into only three types: "crime punishment (justice)," "separation reunion (love)" and "test reward (chivalry)."[9] However, the ways in which these rituals accord with the organisational and creative principles of medieval *memoria* has been relatively overlooked.[10] Narrative rituals, coupled to episodic structures, offer memorial aids "[ensuring] that an audience, particularly a listening one, grasps the kind of large-scale structural parallelism so characteristic of traditional narrative."[11] Indeed, Derek Brewer saw repetition as something inherently attractive to all cultures, medieval or contemporary: "[s]imply to live is to repeat oneself. Rhythms establish themselves, recognised or only experienced, and one of the major functions of art is to re-create, at imaginative levels, so that they can be doubly experienced and more deeply recognised, the rhythm of life."[12]

Structural "rhythms" order the narrative through the recognisable romance paradigm, the importance of which explains the attempts to close the ritual of Chrétien's unfinished *Le Conte du Graal* with works such as *Perlesvaus*. The rhythm was incomplete, the pattern dissolving into a darkness of unordered or undefined

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[8] Morton W. Bloomfield, *Essays and Explorations: Studies in Ideas, Language, and Literature* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1970) 97-12. See also Jessie Laidlay Weston, *From Ritual to Romance: History of the Holy Grail Legend* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1920); Northrop Frye, "Third Essay, Archetypal Criticism: Theory of Myths," *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1957) 131-239; Axel Olrik, "Epic Laws of Folk Narrative," *The Study of Folklore*, ed. Alan Dundes (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1965) 129-41; Vladimir Propp, *Morphology of the Folktale*, trans. Laurence Scott, American Folklore Society Bibliographical and Special Series 9, Indiana University Research Center in Anthropology, Folklore, and Linguistics 10 (Austin, TX: U of Texas P, 1968); Eugène Vinaver, *The Rise of Romance* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1971); Northrop Frye, *The Secular Scripture: A Study of the Structure of Romance* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1976).

[9] Bruce A. Rosenberg, "The Morphology of the English Metrical Romance," *Journal of Popular Culture* 1 (1967): 63-75.

[10] However, Church ritual in the Middle Ages has been examined recently by Doležalová 473-86.

[11] Bradbury *Writing Aloud* 89.

[12] Derek Brewer, *Symbolic Stories: Traditional Narratives of the Family Drama in English Literature* (London: Longman, 1980) 65.

space. In an anthropological definition of ritual, Yaeger notes the human attraction towards themed space: "Why do people want to visit, to dwell within a space that is extrinsically storied or narrated?"[13] As has been observed in their role as cultural and literary recollections, romances create place from space, a memorial pattern which the audience employs to familiarise and orientate themselves within the events of a narrative – we shall always return to the court, civilisation, and the ordered chivalric ideal as "it is not around these that the novel is structured; rather it is around that which lies…*between* them."[14] Whereas "[r]itual behaviour is behaviour that is fully formed, predictable, in a certain sense *calculable*, and it generates *orientational security*," it is precisely this "security" which allows an audience to endure and conquer the forests of anti-ritual and disorder within the narrative.[15] Romances, of course, frequently exploit "situations in which the traditional grids of order and stratifications lose their value and no longer serve as orientation for the individual."[16] An established ritual, therefore, allows an audience to stray from the narrative pattern, safe in the knowledge that they can (and will) eventually return to the familiar; as noted by John Cawelti, "[f]ormulas enable the audience to explore in fantasy the boundary between the permitted and the forbidden and to experience in a carefully controlled way the possibility of stepping across this boundary."[17] Romances should never be isolated from the practical and social contexts in which they were disseminated and enjoyed, and rituals during the Middle Ages remained an

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[13] Yeager 1-38. Anthropologists differentiate between "place" and "space" - the former defined and ordered, the latter empty and lacking organisation and pattern.

[14] Mikhail M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, ed. Michael Holquist, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist, University of Texas Press Slavic Series 8 (Austin, TX: U of Texas P, 1981) 89.

[15] Hans-Georg Soeffner, *The Order of Rituals: The Interpretation of Everyday Life*, trans. Mara Luckmann (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 1997) viii.

[16] Soeffner 75.

[17] Cawelti 35.

essential feature of communication in a culture only slowly moving from gesture and oral oath to written treaty, particularly in political, clerical, and legal spheres.[18]

One important ritual, incorporating the sacred and secular, dominates *Ywain and Gawain* and an examination of this internal structural ritual can be drawn out to illuminate the memorial importance of romances' narrative rituals as a whole. The Middle English redaction, from the second quarter of the fourteenth century, develops the strange ritual of the basin and thunderstorm from Chrétien de Troyes' *Yvain (Le chevalier au lion).*[19] The repeated performance of certain rites unites events, characters and narrative in ways that reveal the importance of memory's *development* of ritual.[20] Just as romances begin with an expectation of narrative patterning, an audience observes and stores the ritualistic paradigm even before the first performance of the rites. This is achieved through the words of the "lathly creature" (*Ywain* 247) who previously explained the peculiar ritual which takes place at the mysterious well which Colgrevance is now narrating before the queen, Ywain, Gawain, and other knights. Consequently, we learn of the setting and construct memorial places and images before it actually appears in reality:

> 'The well es under the fairest tre,
> That ever was in this cuntré;
> By that well hinges a bacyne
> That es of gold gude and fine,
> With a cheyne, trewly to tell,
> That wil reche into the well.'   (*Ywain* 325-30)

The equipment is presented clearly, described in a logical, chronological sequence beginning with where to locate the well ("under the fairest tre"), followed by the

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[18] Althoff 86.

[19] For the date and manuscript history of the English tale see Mehl 180-2; Keith Busby, "Chrétien de Troyes English'd," *Neophilologus* 71 (1987): 596-613; Cooper, *Romance in Time* 429

[20] The magical well motif may originate from Celtic legend. For a fuller discussion of Chrétien's use of Celtic sources, and the differences between the French and English versions see Shepherd 329-333; David Matthews, "Translation and Ideology: The Case of *Ywain and Gawain,*" *Neophilologus* 76 (1992): 452–63.

mysterious "bacyne" and "cheyne." The tenses here are revealing: a combination of present ("es," "hinges") and future ("That wil") to establish the permanence of the setting and the man's confidence that all will be found as he has described – "trewly to tell." With these materials the ritual can be performed to produce, apparently, the "storme" (*Ywain* 337) and "tempest" (*Ywain* 337) which will swirl about the knight "by est and west" (*Ywain* 338), assaulting the senses with "manir thonor blast" (*Ywain* 339), showers of "slik slete and rayne" (*Ywain* 341), and flashes "Of lightnes" (*Ywain* 343).

However, despite the multiple performances of the same ritual within the narrative, the pattern is far from static. Details from the ritual are changed as, through Colgrevance's narration of his own experience, we learn that the tempest will also summon the arrival of a knight who will fight to defend his lady (*Ywain* 349-438). This knight is then defeated by Ywain who must assume his position, eventually being committed to challenge Arthur and his knights who have arrived at the well (*Ywain* 1268). This also necessitates a change in the ritual when Ywain's identity is revealed at the last moment and the possibly fatal consequences of the confrontation are averted (*Ywain* 1345). Eventually, Ywain is prevented from performing his duty at the well, having been cast out with his lion (*Ywain* 1975) and a plan must be engineered by the lady's servant, Lunet, to devise a way for him to return to her lady (given the absence of any defender), when water has been cast on the stone for a final time (*Ywain* 2106, 3841-920). Although the ritual must be memorised, audience and knight should also appreciate the time between each performance. The places and materials involved remain essentially the same (the well and its surrounding equipment), yet attitudes towards the ritual must be adapted by the figures in accordance with new developments. It is this flexibility which

ensures that the past remains continually relevant to the present and initiates the creative forces of *memoria*. Bloomfield defined this as the "artistic correlative of predestination" and, having established and ordered these patterns of narrative commonplaces, romances can exploit this, returning figures to the "place" quickly at the end of a narrative without question as an audience expects the completion of a ritual.[21] The certainty here was the expected arrival of a knight to defend the lady and was learned by repetition which also, through familiarity, permitted certain adaptations. In the same way, romance rituals, founded upon shared expectations, return hero to court, king to ancestral rights, or maiden to her lover, despite variation between tales and their various narrative encounters. Familiarity and ritual foster dependability and expectation but also allow liberties to be taken within these rites and unexpected spaces or pauses in a ritual to be both accepted and explored.

Spaces in the Remembered Ritual.

'I beseche now with saȝez sene
Þis melly mot be myne.'   (*Gawain* 341-2)

With the above words Gawain offers to accept the Green Knight's challenge on behalf of Arthur, diffusing the narrative tension as the terrifying and relatively mature figure mocks the young court of "berdeleȝ chylder" (*Gawain* 280). This initiates the romance ritual. Any temporary confusion brought about by the cessation of Yuletide festivity and the entrance of the mysterious, Otherworldly being is countered by an introduction of the beheading game. However, the narrative has opened a brief space between audience expectation and Gawain's action; during the

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[21] Morton Bloomfield, "Distance and Predestination in *Troilus and Criseyde*," *PMLA* 72 (1957): 14-26, at 22.

momentary silence literal and narrative time was locked in the present before Gawain, guided by the "memory" of chivalric behaviour, courteously accepted the challenge. Romance frequently exploits the drama and extemporaneousness of the present in this way; despite the confident recollection of romance ritual "suddenly there may come a passage in which things appear in an unexpected light and there is a sense of mystery."[22] These moments lack any relation to past experiences with no correlative existing in memory to enable referentiality or accurate conceptualisation. Martin Heidegger recognised that such difficulties could be encountered, observing that "[s]aying 'now' is the discursive articulation of a *making present* which temporalises itself in a unity with a retentive awaiting."[23] Here, Heidegger captures the Janus-faced aspect of *memoria* inherent to the demands made of medieval memory: the individual looks retrospectively in order to gaze forwards creatively in present moment – the "retentive awaiting." Whereas medieval memory thrived on movement (of which Aristotle's emphatic use of the verb κινεῖν was a prime example), the present, conversely, is a space of stasis and confusion. These are part of the romance rituals but also threaten to disrupt their progression: such narrative landscapes are defined by Langdon Elsbree as between the beginning and end or "the terrain where necessity and choice intersect."[24]

These present spaces contravene the basic rubric of memory such as order and clarity. Conversely, in romances, they are frequently disordered, unfamiliar, too light or too dark, disconnected from temporal referents either literal or narrative, and

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[22] Stevens 153. Here Stevens is paraphrasing Reto Bezzola, *Le sens de l'aventure et de l'amour* (Paris: Jeune Parque, 1947) who notes that, in a similar way to the memorial challenge being discussed here, a medieval reader was accustomed to look for "*la réalité derrière le voile des phénomenes.*" Bezzola 9.

[23] Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson: New York: Harper, 1962) 469.

[24] Langdon Elsbree, *Ritual Passages and Narrative Structures*, American University Studies Series III, Comparative Literature 38 (New York: Long, 1991) 38.

frustrate clear visual conceptualisation. In this sense, their extemporaneous character is particularly appropriate; these are literally *ex tempus* and are frequently associated with Otherness, whether from Fairy, heathenism or some other chance encounter. A space frequently exploited in this respect is the forest. It is now commonly recognised, and discussed in a number of influential studies, that the forest was a complex landscape in medieval romance.[25] Isolated from the familiarity of court and society, the forest challenged mental devotion and stability. Yet, the forest (or *silva*) also had its place in medieval memory theory to conceptualise a mass of disordered material, lacking coherent order within itself and with other moments in time. Carruthers explains in relation to memory theory, "Within his memorial forest, a trained student, like a knowledgeable huntsman, can readily find the places (*loci*) where the rabbits and deer lie."[26] Similarly, Quintilian uses the metaphor of hunting and fishing with the caveat that this must be tempered by a certain amount of selectivity.[27] The metaphor of the forest is appropraite to both theory and narrative – both are used to create a sense of uncertainty. Chaucer's forest in *The Book of the Duchess* exemplifies this sense of latent creative possibility amidst initial disorder "With floures fele, faire under fete, / And litel used; hyt semed thus" (*BD* 400-1). These flowers only provide the semblance of impossibility, as Chaucer's dreamer discovers in the creative riches he encounters: an imaginative manipulation of memory which the romance audiences share with Quintilian's hunt and Hugh of Saint Victor's maritime architecture.

In relation to the memorial *silva*, Domenico de Carpani, in the late fifteenth century, developed the concept of regular repetition, as advocated in Bradwardine's

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[25] Full length studies of the forest motif include Alexander Porteous, *Forest Folklore, Mythology and Romance* (London: Allen, 1928); Robert Pogue Harrison, *Forests: The Shadow of Civilization* (Chicago, IL: Chicago UP, 1992); Saunders, *Forest*.

[26] Carruthers, *Book of Memory* 78.

[27] Quintilian V.x.20-2. Cf. Bradwardine 19-20, 36-40.

De memoria artificiali adquirenda, within the context of discovery and the momentary disorientation of a present situation: "[a]s the huntsman finds game and the fisherman fish, so the student finds his stored material – by knowing its habits and habitats."[28] These "habits and habitats" (the rituals and memorial places respectively) comprise the established expectations of morals, character, and narrative form. Carruthers also notes the word *error* as a related concept "for one who wanders through the *silva* (meaning both forest and disordered material) of his untrained and inattentive memory…who has either lost the footprints (*vestigia*) that should lead him through, or never laid them down properly in the first place."[29] In Gawain's acceptance of the "melly," the memories of courteous lover, questing knight, and travelling combatant were evoked. Gawain, de Carpani's huntsman, must now remember these memories himself: the question "I besech now" (*Gawain* 341) is both an offer to Arthur, and an acknowledgement that Gawain will now remember what is expected of him.

The creation of order from present disorder, the basic human instinct which is so essential to memory, also forms the very foundation of the romance genre and can be traced to Platonic and neo-Platonic origins. In Plato's *Timaeus* "ὕλη" represents the "χώρα," or "chaos," of primordial matter.[30] There was much complex debate concerning the exact form of this forest, along with the agency which could order such material; yet the understanding remained that "chaos is given order with the creation."[31] Interestingly, Corinne Saunders notes that, in addition, "[t]he images of

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[28] Carruthers, *Book of Memory* 78.

[29] Carruthers, *Book of Memory* 324.

[30] Dante used the forest in a similar metaphorical fashion in the *Inferno* which was obstructing one's path along the road of life. Dante Alighieri, *Inferno*, *The Divine Comedy*, ed. and trans. John D. Sinclair, vol. 1 (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1939) I.1-6.

[31] Saunders, *Forest* 22. In response to Plato's *Timaeus* came Chalcidius' commentary, *Platonis Timaeus Interprete Chalcidio*, which was later followed by others such as Bernardus Silvestris. This is discussed in detail in Saunders, *Forest* 19-24.

the tempestuous sea and malleable wax were used as metaphors for *silva*."[32] The wax recalls the places of Aristotle or Hugh's later ark: an empty or disordered space which becomes inscribed with clear images to form a tangible memorial record for future situations. Just as one can relate these early conceptions of the forest with the classical romances of Vergil and the later French narratives of Chrétien, it is perhaps also appropriate to link the memorial challenge raised in such spaces to the way in which these early forests were tamed through an act of creation. The confusing barrage of multiple images encountered in confusing perspectives and evoking multiple emotions in the forest must be ordered and controlled. It is this which allows the narrative ritual to continue on its logical, ordered course as the *vestigia* are re-discovered after their momentary occlusion and this is achieved through remembering how similar moments were overcome in the past.

Bloomfield noted that, in medieval literature, Nature is often the source of the strange "to be encountered and defeated in whatever form it appears. It can bring fulfilment and real success, or it can blight and destroy almost unwittingly."[33] As in the ritual of the magical spring in *Ywain*, it is not necessarily the natural phenomenon itself which is strange, but its timing - each storm must summon a knight whatever the circumstances of the narrative at that point. Unfamiliarity in romances is due to when, and in what form, materials are presented to character and audience within the larger ritual. In such "forests" phenomena compromise Prudence through a lack of immediate precedents with the result that individuals and audience forget important past experiences. Yet in such moments lurk the fertile creative opportunities during which romance *memoria* can flourish.

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[32] Saunders, *Forest* 20.
[33] Bloomfield, *Essays* 111.

Present Confusion and the Art of Creation.

In romance, however, character and audience must recognise such opportunities for creativity and discern something beneath the present moment, a process of gradual cognition which has echoes with medieval symbolism. Johan Huizinga considered the damaging results of symbolic instability, terming it a hypothetical "wild phantasmagoria" of confusion.[34] In this echo of Aristotelian memorial rhetoric we appreciate the effects and affecting nature of romances' moments of referential chaos. Chaucer's "Knight's Tale" contains a description of such disorder in the forest painted within the temple of Mars:

> First on the wal was peynted a forest,
> In which ther dwelleth neither man ne best,
> With knotty, knarry, bareyne trees olde,
> Of stubbes sharpe and hidouse to biholde,
> In which ther ran a rumble in a swough,
> As though a storm sholde bresten every bough.
> And dounward from an hille, under a bente,
> Ther stood the temple of Mars armypotente,   (KnT I.1975-82)

Using the same metaphor as in memory theory to emphasise human unease at disorder, this is a scene of wildness and unpredictability; yet an audience is urged to clearly imagine and image the forest, remembering the endeavours of the original temple artists. However, such attempts are thwarted by the space's conceptual uncertainties. This forest is eerily empty, "ther dwelleth neither man ne best," and, similarly, perspective is frustrated by "knotty, knarry, bareyne trees olde": not a thickness of foliage, but sinewy branches which form fixed barriers to prevent a greater appreciation of the overall scene as, we might recall, was permitted in Hugh's ark or the rooms sketched by Quintilian. "[S]tubbes sharpe" intrude, resulting in the rapid contraction of perspective as reach is confined to the fierce

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[34] Huizinga 235.

points of branches rendered in fine detail. Although more grotesque images prove the most memorable (these are "hidouse to biholde"), the overall image itself remains unstable, unsettled by an ominous rumbling to challenge the integrity of everything tentatively imaged – as though it "sholde bresten every bough." Furthermore, as soon as the "hill" is glimpsed we plunge to the temple standing "under a bente" - the feature is not allowed sufficient time in order to be related to the earlier forest. Moreover, this seemingly parenthetical detail contradicts earlier pain from the "stubbes sharpe"; the space is eluding emotional classification by oscillating between dangerous and benign Nature, visual and acoustic sensory effects, Pagan strangeness and topographical familiarity.

Nevertheless, in the attempt to negotiate this space we have reached the temple, a sense of eventual discovery carried implicitly in the permanence of the rendered building – "Ther stood." Emblematic of the function of the subsequent images depicted on the temple walls, the forest has prepared for the senseless violence which they convey and, importantly, the later pain and distress of the Knight-narrator's tale. Moreover, the lists themselves (of which the temples form a part) are constructed on the site of the earlier battle of Palamon and Arcite, creating a sense of locational memory for the events of the tale itself. Indeed, Carruthers notes that Chaucer, unlike Boccaccio, placed all temples in the single space of the amphitheatre, thereby concentrating the relation of the images inside with the contest which will later take place and even the eventual funeral pyre.[35] As in the picture, a temple has been manufactured in the initially hostile forest space. Consequently, the circularity of the space (we are standing in the picture) confirms the relation that the

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[35] Mary Carruthers, "Seeing Things: Locational Memory in Chaucer's 'Knight's Tale'," *Art and Context in Late Medieval English Narrative: Essays in Honour of Robert Worth Frank, Jr.*, ed. Robert R. Edwards (Cambridge: Brewer, 1994) 105. Carruthers also notes the important emotional memories that become associated with locations in the romance. See also Peter H. Elbow, "How Chaucer Transcends Oppositions in the 'Knight's Tale'," *Chaucer Review* 7 (1972): 97-112, at 98.

forest must be made to have to the present and future, whilst questioning the very position of an audience who orientates itself accordingly in relation to forest, temple, and narrative.

Initial disorder is equally apparent in Chaucer's *Book of the Duchess* with a forest "Thikke of trees, so full of leves" (*BD* 418-9) which prevents a precise number from being established: "So grete trees, so huge of strengthe, /.../ Clene without bowgh or stikke" (*BD* 422-4). Animals obscure the boundaries of the space, occupying the forest floor and canopy until "so ful of bestes":

> Of founes, sowres, bukkes, does
> Was ful the woode, and many roes,
> And many sqwirelles that sete
> Ful high upon the trees and ete,
> And in hir maner made festes.   (*BD* 429-34)

Yet there follows another attempt to order this space, to secure this vital picture in memory through a process analogous to the artificial, mnemonic creativity which was encouraged but challenged in Mars' temple. Here it is Argus, "the noble countour" (*BD* 435), who counts the images yet, due to the bustling multitude, "forth they romed rught wonder faster / Doun the woode" (*BD* 447). Despite numbers being unclear, expressed only in terms of the incalculable abundance ("so ful," "many"), something can always be wrought from the present and stored through the relative security of memorial imaging. Subsequently, the trees also offer such a semblance of order: they are given numerical classifications of height "Of fourty or fifty fadme lengthe" (*BD* 422) and are regularly spaced to avoid the perspectival confusion of Mars' forest – "And every tree stood by hymselve / Fro other wel ten foot or twelve" (*BD* 419-20). Before Argus has begun his collection of the various creatures, the Dreamer (and Chaucer) has initiated the ordering of this space, providing framework

for the various images. Through this we can in some way appreciate the sheer variety of animals in the forest and store this experience for later, should we require it.[36]

Such moments emphasise the importance of an ordered memory and its future application and are often integral to a romance plot such as the paradigm of fraternal loyalty which is clearly established, although not preserved, at the start of *Athelston* (*Athelston* 15-24).[37] Another instance occurs in the combination of a literal forest and the metaphorical "space" of intractable financial straits of *Sir Amadace* through which the knight finds "anothir rede" or "anothir way" by remembering his previous errors (that is, being too frivolous with his money).[38] Similarly, John Ganim praises the *Gawain*-poet's mastery of the technique as he moves from disorder to inconsequential details "so minute that to follow the poet's eye is to lose oneself in the trees, to be lost in a forest to which, until the end of the poem, we have no map."[39] Ganim's observation implies a particularly elusive narrative landscape; yet its aesthetic emerges from a more expansive generic tendency to juxtapose order and chaos, known places and forgotten "spaces." Even the mysterious conversion "space" in *Guy of Warwick* (c.1300) is a similar moment of present confusion.[40] The vastness of the night sky urges the knight to contemplate and compare memories of his past behaviour and construct from this meditation a future of Christian devotion. Through gazing at the sky, Guy remembers God and during these few lines we are to

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[36] A comparable moment is in *Sir Degaré* where a king and his daughter enter "þe þikke of þe forest" before the daughter is separated from her father and becomes disorientated: "So fer in þe launde ȝhe goht, iwis, / Þat ȝhe ne wot neuere whare ȝe is." *Sir Degaré*, *Middle English Metrical Romances*, ed. Walter Hoyt French and Charles Brockway Hale, 2 vols (New York: Russell, 1964) 62, 77-8. She later "discovers" a knight who raises a memorial challenge to order the present confusion and create a future guided by the events in the forest through a memorial object (a sword) which must be given to the son conceived in this space. For the

[37] This particular set of memories will be discussed in detail in Chapter Six 206-11.

[38] *Sir Amadace*, *Six Middle English Romances*, ed. Mills 25-6. All subsequent references to *Amadace* will be to this edition and cited by line number.

[39] John Ganim, "Disorientation, Style and Consciousness in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*," *PMLA* 91 (1976): 376-84, at 383.

[40] There are five manuscript versions of the romance, the earliest dating from c.1300. For the probable date of the composition of *Guy of Warwick* see Loomis, *Medieval Romances* 130-3; Mehl 220-2; Cooper, *Romance in Time* 419.

believe that he has worked the present moment into a pattern of religious clarity, inlaid with his past experiences. The realization wrought from this space will carry us safely to the conclusion of this particular narrative ritual, now subtly redefined by the momentary crisis through a contrast between the human and divine.[41]

The Middle English development of the late 12th century *Robert le Diable*, *Sir Gowther*, found in two late fifteenth century manuscripts, perpetuates the isolation of a present moment.[42] Gowther is unable to refer to his past, through lack of knowledge; yet an audience possesses all information to the extent that our view of the character becomes increasingly unsympathetic. Unlike Guy's sudden realisation and memory of his past actions, an audience longs for *Gowther*'s turbulent present to be ordered in line with memories of the knight's diabolic conception which occurred in an orchard, details of which are remembered only by the knight's mother, an old earl, and audience. Any semblance of order or past reference is frustrated by a greater space of disorder surrounding the growing Gowther.[43] As with the violent forest of Mars, perspective is deliberately confused as the remembered behaviour of a devil appears through the figure of an oblivious knight. The images evoked certainly satisfy the shocking, emotive criteria of Aristotle and Bradwardine such as Gowther's violence towards his mother as "he rofe tho hed fro tho brest."[44] Although testifying to his diabolic origins, this event is not acted upon. A past is glimpsed through the forest of present confusion, the

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[41] *The Romance of Guy of Warwick*, ed. Julius Zupitza, EETS E.S. 42, 49, 59 (London: Oxford UP, 1883-91) 7568-94. All subsequent references to *Guy* will be to this edition and cited by line number. The *Stanzaic Guy* joins the narrative after the conversion, when the space has already been ordered with reference to memory and Guy begins his life of Christian devotion to re-member past deeds of which he is now ashamed.

[42] The romance is found in two late fifteenth-century manuscripts: British Library Royal MS 17.B.43 and the Auchinleck MS (National Library of Scotland MS Advocates 19.3.1.). For the date of the composition of *Sir Gowther* see Loomis, *Medieval Romance* 51-3.

[43] For Gowther's diabolic conception see Corinne Saunders, *Rape and Ravishment in the Literature of Medieval England* (Cambridge: Brewer, 2001) 218-28; 232-3.

[44] *Sir Gowther*, *Six Middle English Romances*, ed. Mills 127. All references to *Gowther* will be to this edition and cited by line number. Cf. *Artificiali* 30-6.

sinewy branches of the mural in Mars' temple, but is soon obliterated by further details of the present that only address the current situation – how the child Gowther should now be fed. Subsequently, rather than discovering why Gowther acts in this way, the incident is corrected and ultimately masked (or forgotten) through a practical solution: "Wemen durst gyffe hym souke no mare" (*Gowther* 131) and as an alternative he is given "ryche fode" (*Gowther* 133). Moreover, his tendency towards violence, or rather why history has made him so, is ignored: he is permitted to make a weapon, "A fachon bothe of styll and yron" (*Gowther* 139), which he uses to terrify those around him – "fell folke con he feyr" (*Gowther* 141). He grows far larger and stronger than the other children, yet despite these diabolic traits, he is initiated into the order of chivalry. At this point, the figure of Gowther appears invincible, his power bolstered by the death of his father (*Gowther* 151) and his mother's retreat to "a castyll of lyme and ston" (*Gowther* 155).

Margaret Robson notes the importance of other characters to a narrative seemingly dominated by Gowther, an observation which implicitly recognises the importance of recollection to this knight's conversion.[45] One of these is his mother – one of only two figures to remember Gowther's true origins - and her absence strengthens the incarceration of an audience within Gowther's increasingly violent rampage. The knight grows to encompass the entire space, "Now is he duke of greyt renown" (*Gowther* 166), with those around him finding it impossible to intervene given his great strength. Conceptually, the figure dominates present reality, "Parke, wodd and wylde forest, / Bothe be weyus and strete" (*Gowther* 176-7), commanding all familiar romance places. The claustrophobia is emphasised through the chaotic

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[45] Margaret Robson, "Animal Magic: Moral Regeneration in *Sir Gowther*," *Yearbook of English Studies* 22 (1992): 140-53.

onslaught of violent events beginning with the rape and burning at the nunnery, followed by a chronicle of his terror throughout the land:

> Meydyns' maryage wolde he spyll
> And take wyffus ageyn hor wyll,
> And sley hor husbondus too.
> And make frerus to leype at kraggus
> And persons forto heng on knaggus,
> And odur prestys sloo.
> To bren armettys was in dyssyre:
> A power widow to seyt on fyre,
> And werke hom mykyll woo.   (*Gowther* 193-201)

The rampage assaults our sensibilities and imaginative capacities: no sooner have we formed a picture of Gowther murdering husbands than this mutates into friars pushed over cliffs with hermits, and also a widow, burned. Mirroring our inability to comprehend and store these images adequately, the extent of this terror obliterates temporal and spatial divisions: Gowther acts "[Erly and] late, lowed and styll" (*Gowther* 172), fostering an instability comparable to the mysterious rumbling in Chaucer's temple of Mars, whilst his reputation spreads to all corners of the land - "Then went his name full wyde" (*Gowther* 189). The only way to re-order this present space is to remember Gowther's origins, and all hope hangs upon the brave "olde erle" who boldly tells the duke "'We howpe thou come never of Cryston stryn, / Bot art sum fendys son, we weyn" (*Gowther* 205-6). Finally, from the confusion of the present, the earl has rediscovered order through references with the past.

These words mark the initiation of *memoria* in *Sir Gowther*. Although Gowther's first response is to imprison the earl, literally blocking memory through halting Aristotelian movement between past and present, he does subsequently journey to his mother's castle where she fully recollects his diabolic conception in the orchard: "A fende gat the thare; / As lyke my lorde as he might be, / Underneyth a cheston tre" (*Gowther* 228-30). *Memoria* now has been given its materials and

Gowther must assimilate a past with the present, in the process of which recognising his true identity, and use this to guide future behaviour and repair recent events. This is immediately articulated as Gowther promises "'Y wyll to Rome or that Y rest, / To lerne anodur lare'" (*Gowther* 233-4); a new memorial challenge has been created, namely that of repentance. This requires retrospective analysis and it is depicted with great precision and order through establishing locational recollections. Aside from Gowther's pilgrimage to Rome and promise to the Pope only to receive food from dogs (*Gowther* 298-09), which is followed by a symbolic forgiveness spoken by an emperor's daughter whose father he has aided in a war (*Gowther* 661-66), he returns to make an abbey for his mother (*Gowther* 697-8). This repairs the atrocities committed at the nunnery [*Gowther* 691-702] whilst the old earl is rewarded for bravery and compensated for his incarceration through being made "duke of that cuntre" (*Gowther* 682). Andrea Hopkins notes accordingly that "[l]ife goes on, and while it has increased in blessings, it is also tinged with more sombre perceptions": Gowther must recollect his earlier violence, along with his diabolic origins, as part of the process of repentance.[46] Consequently, still "his hart full sare" (*Gowther* 693) upon returning to the nunnery where he had wreaked such terror earlier, thereby literally revisting one of his memories. Having re-discovered the correct memorial place through remembering earlier misdeeds, he actually witnesses himself committing atrocious acts, expressed through the past subjunctive: "That ever he schuld so nyll wyrke / To bren tho nunus in hor kyrke" (*Gowther* 694-5). An almost hypothetical sense of disbelief is created which is then confirmed through a more definitive perfect tense to redefine the same past incident (the burning of the nuns) which he "had" done and must now remember in order to correct: "For them unto

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[46] Andrea Hopkins, *The Sinful Knights: A Study of Middle English Penitential Romance* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1990) 157.

tho wordus end, / For hor soulus that he had brend" (*Gowther* 700-1).[47]

Demonstrating the way one should even remember mistakes, the romance is

remarkable for the way in which it simultaneously re-creates an earlier confusion of

the present, before the order of memory was employed, whilst situating Gowther and

the audience in the clarity and security of later logic, knowledge, and recollection.

One must not become distracted by the immediacy of present moments. However,

romance does not limit these moments to horrendous attacks and unpleasant scenes:

equally distracting are the moments of alternative interest which similarly freeze

character and narrative in the present circumstances.

Luxurious Temptation and Temporary Distraction.

In *Sir Gowther*, as in the early fourteenth-century *Sir Degaré*, and also the late

fifteenth-century *The Wedding of Sir Gawain and Dame Ragnell*, the confusion is

brought about through referential unfamiliarity and disorder which subsequently

affects the characters', and audience's, perception of present reality.[48] However,

there are other spaces in which characters and audiences are enveloped by a

beguiling atmosphere of luxurious distraction which proves equally disorientating

through a lack of immediate precedents. In *Sir Beves of Hamtoun*, the hero's arrival

at "the cite of Damas" (*Beves* 1129) is captured in a dazzling array of exotic imagery

and architecture: "That was a ffull ffeyre space" (*Beves* 1130). A superlative

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[47] In *The Wedding of Sir Gawain and Dame Ragnell* the same place (a designated location in a forest, accidentally encountered by Arthur when lost) is revisited by the king to answer the question asked by Somer Joure and appears less unusual than when it is first encountered. *The Wedding of Sir Gawain and Dame Ragnell*, *Verse Romances* 323-47, especially compare lines 31-53 with 440-43. For details of this particular challenge see Karen Hunter Trimnell, "'And shold have been oderwyse understond,": The Disenchanting of Sir Gromer Somer Joure," *Medium Ævum* 71 (2002): 294-301.
[48] The romance itself contains many traditional details but there is no one source that can be discerned. It is contained in four manuscripts dating from c.1500, including the Auchinleck MS. For more information on the date of composition of *Sir Degaré* see Loomis, *Medieval Romance* 301-5; Cooper 416. The date of *The Wedding of Sir Gawain and Dame Ragnell* is discussed in Sands 325; the only copy being dated to c.1500: Oxford, Bodlien Library MS 11951 (formerly Rawlinson C.86).

captures the city's sensuous delights, however beneath lurks the underlying caveat concerning such attractive abundance. A. B. Taylor suggests that, although the Otherworldly descriptions of the exotic East were curtailed in the English romances, they "frequently exaggerated still further those they retained, in frenzied attempts to impress an audience rapidly becoming blasé."[49] This may explain the motivation behind such "spaces" which shimmer as our attention darts between glittering surfaces of windows and walls in the "chamber and hallis" which "With cristall were peynted" (*Beves* 1132) combined with "Pelouris and durris [...] all of brasse, / With laten sett and with glasse" (*Beves* 1133-4).[50] The details are so bright, abundant, and exquisitely crafted that it is difficult to secure them accurately in the imagination, and consequently "Hit was so riche in many wyse, / That it was like to p*ar*adise" (*Beves* 1136). We might compare the dominant practice in late classical art and architecture, *enargeia*, the desire to produce vivid sensuous paintings in order to impart a variety of meanings in the most effective and memorable way. Yet, romances take this to extremes as their *enargeia* proves too excessive for the remembering subject to compare or even store; it does not correlate with experiences captured by memory thus far.[51] As with the description of the heavenly realm entered by the Dreamer in *Pearl* (its crystal cliffs and strange blue trees, for example) unfamiliarity creates conceptual difficulties.[52] This is typified by the "diche" in Damas which "For brodder and depper was none it liche" (*Beves* 1137-8); the size of the gulf cannot be judged or expressed on account of its unprecedented scale and,

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[49] A. B. Taylor, *An Introduction to Medieval Romance* (London: Cranton, 1930) 214. Such descriptions of heathen extravagance and artifice are found other romances such as *Sir Isumbras*, *Six Middle English Romances*, ed. Mills 199-216. All subsequent references to *Isumbras* will be to this edition and cited by line number.

[50] The Caius MS (Cambridge, Gonville and Caius College MS 175) version of *Beves* makes more of the otherness of Damas than that presented in the Auchinleck MS.

[51] *Enargeia,* or rather its equivalent effects, is particularly praised by Quintilian in the *Instititio oratoria* VIII.iii. See. Carruthers, *Craft of Thought* 130-33.

[52] *Pearl*, *Pearl Manuscript* 73-84.

equally, the present must have a comparable referent in the past in order to be stored itself. There is, therefore, a circularity of unconquerable confusion given the scale of the present, the relative inferiority of earlier memories, and the inability of *memoria* to negotiate between the two planes of experience.

Aquinas, Julius Victor, and Hugh advised that memorial *loci* and *imagines* must be of a sensible, manageable size, yet Damas pushes the limits of spatial visualization through its superlative extravagance and dimensions. The challenge is exacerbated by the allure of such detail, urging Beves and the audience to marvel at the present scene at the expense of establishing a connection with past experiences. Indeed, the attraction stems from the severance of such links: the observation "Of that place than mervelid he, / For sethyn tha*t* Beues borne was, / Sye he never so ffeire a place" (*Beves* 1155-6) attempts, unsuccessfully, to assimilate the present space with a past, even looking-back over his life's journey.[53] At the heart of the distracting detail, on account of its burnished clarity against the already bejewelled backdrop, is an "egull of gold" (*Beves* 1150) sitting at the pinnacle of a tower, a decoration that also tops Tryamour's elaborate pavilion in *Sir Launfal* (*Launfal* 268-9). A distillation of the mesmerising quality of the scene, the eagle drips with symbolic meaning, whilst it similarly offers a display of aesthetic beauty. The avian figure draws the gaze of knights and audiences towards indulgence in artifice, away from reality below and a personal awareness of the situation, thereby mirroring the

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[53] Although it would be misleading to impose anthropological terminology upon romance's use of spatial description, the distinction existed between "place" and "space" in Middle English, the former's additional meaning of "home" supports the sense of a known, familiar location in contrast to the less demarcated abstraction derived from the Old French "espace." For essays discussing the specific concepts of space in medieval thought see Barbara A. Hanawalt and Michael Kubialka, eds. *Medieval Practices of Space*, Medieval Culture 23 (Minneapolis, MN: U of Minnesota P, 2000).

myopic temptation inherent within the walls of Damas and Tryamour's tented luxury.[54]

These moments, as with Chaucer's literal forests, are performative: the distraction occupies a significant portion of the narrative, thereby halting progression of the romance ritual. Robert Hanning's definition of romance *engin* is illuminating in this respect; aside from encompassing intellectual qualities and the marvellous it "self-consciously deflects our attention from the events of the story to the artfulness of the poet telling it, or to larger general questions about the role of art in creating 'reality'."[55] Here, a more attractive "reality" occupies our minds, obliterating those lesser experiences which had come before. One might detect something of the temptation to *luxuria* which Louis Blenkner notes during Gawain's distraction by the lady's jewel in the bedroom, "blusschande bemez as þe bryȝt sunne" (*Gawain* 1819), which is emblematic of the temptation taking place.[56] Green also identified distracting qualities in romance and, appropriately, defined these as new encounters or "novel conditions" which occlude prudent sensibilities "to put us off our guard precisely when our critical faculties should be exercised most carefully." [57]

However, as with the spaces of confusion, in addition to posing the challenge of the present, romances also allow this new space to be ordered through *memoria* with a little work from an individual and audience. For Beves, the distraction is short-lived as the Otherness of the detail leads him to observe the strange heathen practices that are taking place within this landscape. Consequently, we move quickly

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[54] Both spaces also employ the disorientating sense of being inside and outside an area as in the Temple of Mars: Beves passes *through* the city walls and Launfal approaches the pavilion at a distance, guided by the beautiful maidens. Cf. *Launfal* 274-6.

[55] Robert W. Hanning, *The Individual in Twelfth Century Romance* (New Haven, CT: Yale UP, 1977) 105.

[56] Louis Blenker, "Sin, Psychology, and the Structure of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*," *Studies in Philology* 74 (1977): 354-87, at 368.

[57] D. H. Green, "The Pathway to Adventure," *Viator* 8 (1977): 145-88, at 174 and 182. Green examines these in terms of supernatural forces to create a sense of preternatural or divine guidance.

from dazzled brilliance of "a ffull ffeyre space" to the devoted crusading knight who interrupts the ritual: "'What devill do ye? / Why make ye Mahound this p*resent* / And so disspice god om*n*ipotent?'" (*Beves* 1162-4). The Otherness of the present is employed to remind him of his duty as a crusading knight which then leads to the re-emergence of his purpose in this land – to deliver his letter to the king (*Beves* 1210-11). The space has been ordered with reference to a Christian framework, inherent to his past identity and, although the defeat of these heathens does lead to his incarceration, he has not neglected the weight of past responsibility he has carried with him from England. A revelation of more acute consequences of distraction is offered in the space of lavish detail wrought in the bedroom of *Sir Degrevant* (*Degrevant* 1393-520) where the knight and his lady, Melidor, forget all outside interference and consequences, similarly enveloped in their love for one another in the chamber. By ignoring the elaborate mnemonics that surround them in the bedchamber, their manner looks forward to John Donne's famous "This bed thy centre is, these walls, thy sphere."[58] The contraction of spatial and temporal awareness is again figured in elaborate artistic splendour which enfolds the two lovers in the immediate present, occluding past memories to the extent that they forget the danger of their situation altogether.[59] Melidor, it is to be remembered, is the earl's daughter, and Degrevant has recently ravaged her father's lands and defeated her preferred suitor: his presence in the castle is therefore highly perilous.

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[58] John Donne, "The Sun Rising," *The Complete English Poems*, ed. A. J. Smith, Penguin Classics (London: Penguin, 1986) 30. All references to "The Sun Rising" ("Sun") will be to this edition and cited by line number.

[59] The scene is an example of the secret liaison *topos* which is employed in other romances, notably the tower of *Floris and Blancheflour* (*Floris* 568-79). Comparable moments also include Gawain's three visitations from the wife of his host (*Gawain* 1178-1318; 1470-1557; 1742-1869); Troilus' clandestine meeting with Criseyde (*TC* IV.950-1701). For a discussion of the particular love on display in *Sir Degrevant* see Arlyn Diamond, "*Sir Degrevant*: what lovers want," *Pulp Fictions of Medieval England: Essays in Popular Romance*, ed. Nicola McDonald (Manchester: Manchester UP, 2004).

This room is a storehouse of memorial places (the portraits adorning the wall and decorative images surrounding the bed) but it simultaneously reveals the possible slippage from didactic memorial referentiality to a very human abandonment of such wisdom and prudence. "Ther was a ryal rooffe / In the chaumber of loffe" (*Degrevant* 1441-2) emphasises permanence *and* human limitation through the physical barriers above and around in addition to the telling classification – this is, in spite of the surrounding authoritative "memories"- a chamber of love. Ironically, the wealth of the decoration actually harms the wisdom it has been placed there to enhance. We cannot help but be enveloped with the lovers in the present detailing, coming close perhaps to the medieval temptation to *luxuria* commonly associated with the realm of Fairy or perhaps the exotic Orient. Audience and knight are cossetted upon entering with soft "Towelles of Eylyssham" (*Degrevant* 1400-04) before being sensually overwhelmed by the kaleidoscope of colour and indulgence of texture including the most burnished gold gilding, perfectly clear water, and dazzling colours of azure, green Cyprus, white silk, red gold and, at the centre of all this finery, the bed – framed with intricate multiple banners and panelling (*Degrevant* 1489-1520). Delight is not restricted to visual indulgence, but includes literal feasting through sweet "dentethus" and spices, fine wines ("the Roche and the Reyn" [*Degrevant* 1430]), coupled with acoustic enjoyment from the rich notes that Melidor is producing from her harp, wooing the knight into luxurious indulgence (*Degrevant* 1433-6). These details challenge the room's mnemonic function, figured in the very patterning of the poem – each description of religious teachers and wise rulers is framed by their elaborate detail. Ostensibly, like the decorated margins of manuscripts, the detail lifts the images within into even greater focus and a heightened realm of admiration; however, they perhaps cry too loudly,

engulfing the images and obliterating their important advice. Conflicting perspectives are presented: the prudent audience watching from above who observes the couple framed by the mnemonic images discussed in the previous chapter and the lovers themselves who appreciate only delight and sensual abandonment. For them it is an escape from the past, an opportunity to live purely in, and for, the present.

Nevertheless, even the objective audience enjoys the feast: "To tell here metus was ter" (*Degrevant* 1425) is emblematic of the couple's absorption in their present activities - "Swyche murthus they move / In the chaumber of love" (*Degrevant* 1439-40). This euphemistic verb, often reserved for moments of emotional engagement, implicitly recalls a knight's journey and progression throughout a narrative ritual which is now concentrated upon their activities within the chamber decorated (ironically) with the memories and cautious warnings of previous historical lovers and wise teachers. However, it also echoes with an important part of memory - the movement of information across time or the stirring of Aristotelian emotional "movements" (κινεῖν), here cast as a seemingly timeless and "excited" exchange between the two lovers, confined to the place in which they are celebrating – the chamber. They continue blissfully unaware, confirmed by Degrevant's promise to visit her every evening: "'Swet syre, come ylke nyghth / And loke how we fare'" (*Degrevant* 1563-4). Unusually, in this atemporal atmosphere, there exists a timepiece in the room, "an orrelegge on hyghth" (*Degrevant* 1469), to waken Melidor ("rynge the ours at nyghth" [*Degrevant* 1470]) and alert the couple of the imminent morning and a necessary conclusion of their activities.[60] However, this awareness is countered by an apparent obliviousness to the increasing

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[60] Compare Lancelot's relationship with Guinevere, leaving to return to his own chamber at dawn. Thomas Malory, *Le Morte Darthur*, *The Works of Sir Thomas Malory*, ed. Eugène Vinaver, rev. P. J. C. Field, 3rd ed., 3 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1990) XIX.6. All subsequent references to the *Morte* will be to this edition and cited by book or book/section numbers, following those of Vinaver.

precariousness of their position. As each day passes, the likelihood of their discovery only increases but nevertheless Degrevant continues to visit for almost a year: "This han thei dured that yere, / Thre quarterus, and mare" (*Degrevant* 1567-8). The verb assumes a sense of the inevitable to the extent that the deliberately vague "and mare" suggests that the past will soon be upon the couple – a full four years' enjoyment is not possible.[61] Our suspicions are justified with a specific temporal reference to a point in the annual cycle one evening: "At missomere in a nyghth – The mone schone wonder bryght" (*Degrevant* 1569-70). The temporal reference rudely intrudes into a space of atemporal pleasure, prefiguring Donne's dismissal of "hours, days, months, which are the rags of time" ("Sun" 10), whilst invoking ominous lunar associations as the knight rides out.

Another specific time, "aboute mydnyght" (*Degrevant* 1521), had previously permeated the space of the chamber to support the impression that time was always passing, moving each present moment closer to the past, which simultaneously heralded a dangerous future of consequence.[62] During an earlier conversation, Degrevant had asked when they might perhaps marry and concluded with the qualification "'Gyf hyt be thi wyll'" (*Degrevant* 1528). This echoes the narrator's plea to an audience a few lines earlier to *learn* from the chamber, rather than become distracted by the activities therein - "Gyf hyt be youre wyll" (*Degrevant* 1460). A plea to recollect is contrasted with one that invites forgetfulness and unwillingness to learn from the past. The temporal reference alerts an audience to the greater narrative ritual of which this is but a brief diversion and, having been removed from the

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[61] A comparable moment of distraction exists in *Gamelyn* during the hero's spell in the world of the outlaws, seemingly forgetting his duty to return to the court to quell the actions of his evil brother, now the sheriff, his momentary distraction expressed in similarly vague terms: "And walked a while under woode-shawes" (*Gamelyn* 696).

[62] Ironically, the reference to midnight qualifies the knight's discussion of the strength of their love, with no mention made of outside consequences.

dazzling light of the chamber, we are no longer distracted and return to immediate reality as the knight makes his way, as always, to his clandestine liaison. At this point the "prout forester" (*Degrevant* 1575) enters, emblematic of the memory of past events in the narrative.[63] By way of a contrast the knight (as for the last three years) retains the sequestered state of "forgetfulness" outside their chamber:

> A prout forester gan tham se
> Alaund ther thei lende,
> And folowes hom thorw the wode,
> Alle the weyes that thei yode,
> And how thei passed the flode,
> The knughthus so hende.
> So dud the weyt on the wall;
> The Eorlus owne mynstrall,
> Sey tham wende to the hall,
> And wyst nevere what hyt mende.   (*Degrevant* 1575-84)

Memories of the past pursue the knight and his steward through the landscape as they make their way to the chamber of love and Degrevant's blindness is doubled in the minstrel who, despite having seen the pair approach the court, does not appreciate its significance: "And wyst nevere what hyt mende." We are invited to compare the deduction of the forester - he "wyst" exactly what this means - and he promptly informs the earl and his knights (*Degrevant* 1589-92). Although the couple remain distracted by present "movements" and return to their activities that evening, the memory of past events gradually intrudes into their space as Melidor mistakenly re-asserts that they have hidden their activities from everyone: "She wende no man that had bene wroughth / Hade wyten of hor dede" (*Degrevant* 1607-8). Prudence, or caution, is established too late, ironically presented as Degrevant "at evenelyghth" (*Degrevant* 1617) (another significant temporal reference, halting the distraction) takes the precaution of disguise for himself and his squire: "Armede hym and hys

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[63] Cf. the "bonde-men" who arrive to remind Gamelyn of his duty to return to court (*Gamelyn* 699).

knyghth, / And toke on privayly for syghth / Two gownes of grene" (*Degrevant* 1618-20). This is the first indication of an awareness of consequentiality and we wish that he had adopted such precautions three years earlier - there is no mention of this until the final visit. Following the apparent freedom or indulgence in the bedroom, an unexpected ambush from the past inevitably awaits all who remain temporally sequestered and dislocated. Predictably, Degrevant and his steward are soon caught by the earl and his men, the past having caught up with the couple (*Degrevant* 1633-). Degrevant must now work within reality (and its inherent connections to the past) to fully achieve the affections of Melidor and thereby guarantee their reliable memorial store for the foreseeable future. Distraction, by its very definition, is never a finite state in romance *memoria*: it always carries with it the roots of an eventual, creative, remembrance.

Creating the Connections: *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* and *Sir Orfeo*.

Although the present can pose a threat to memory, romances also guide a character through the current moment, construct any necessary connections with the past and, subsequently, advance the narrative. In discussing Wolfram's *Parzival*, Green notes that sometimes a knight's journey can be occluded by natural elements such as the snow which, in the manner of *luxuria*, above, focuses attention on the present moment, literally blocking the route forwards in the ritual and, eventually, "home."[64] Gawain's journey from Arthur's court in search of the Green Chapel, to honour his half of the "gomen," dramatizes this alternation of perspective between present confusion and remembered past as the winter landscape threatens the destruction of

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[64] Green, "Pathway" 167-8.

memory.[65] Gawain's journey had initially benefited from a strong sense of purpose, driven by the memory of his promises to the Green Knight and Arthur: "He made non abode / Bot wyȝtly went hys way. / Mony wylsum way he rode" (*Gawain* 687-9). Gawain's path from the court to the Green Chapel lies ahead, delineated by the words of the Green Knight the previous year which remain prominent in his thoughts. Although Gawain believes himself to be riding towards his death, his memory of the promise is undiminished. However, the indeterminate "wylsum" betrays the unprecedented dangers he is about to encounter even before the Green Chapel – a wild desolation which threatens to overwhelm the reasons behind the journey's very purpose whilst also looking forward to his eventual fateful destination.

In romances there must be constant references to the content and places of promises made to others whether literally or through the agility of memory as was analysed by Aristotle and Jacobus Publicus. It is perilous for an individual to become engrossed with a present situation, dislocated from tangible reminders of familiarity in the manner of the conceptual disorientation in Chaucer's Temple of Mars.[66] Such referential security is wrested from Gawain who rides "alone" (*Gawain* 693, 735) and "Fer floten fro his frendez" (*Gawain* 714), looking forward to the knight's later challenge to remember both his literary and social reputations (*Gawain* 915-22; 1274; 1481-2; 1520), having been challenged by the "*carpe diem* spirit of the castle in the wilderness."[67] This, he hopes, will be strong enough to endure. However, a more physically demanding challenge is encountered during his arduous journey where the essential ritual disappears; without secure and stable referents, images

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[65] The unfamiliarity of this landscape is noted in Ganim 381.
[66] "Home" here is defined in its broadest sense as the target of memorial meditations; the desire to return to the known and familiar, guided by past experiences.
[67] T. McAlindon, "Magic, Fate, and Providence in Medieval Narrative and *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight,*" *Review of English Studies* 16 (1965): 121-39, at 136.

invade the mind of a subject who struggles to recollect on account of some unfamiliar or distracting chaos. We must observe, however, that Gawain is not really alone. He takes with him the romance audience who ensures that the purpose behind the journey remains prominent and that, despite the more immediate challenges he encounters, we can still see Gawain journeying towards his certain fate.

Indeed, initially, the journey proceeds promisingly with a sense of order, established through recognisable locales such as Logres, Wales, Anglesey and Wirral (*Gawain* 691-701). Just as familiar places were effective in allowing an audience to establish a cultural link (*Sir Orfeo*'s Winchester [*Orfeo* 23-5] and the districts of London in *Athelston* [*Athelston* 335-48]) this logical, almost cartographical, delineation creates a similar sense of memorial security for a travelling knight. They also reaffirm the purpose of his journey as, when passing through these locations, he questions the people in terms that reaffirm his own memory: "'If þay hade herde any karp of a knyȝt grene, / In any grounde þeraboute, of þe Grene Chapel'" (*Gawain* 704-5). Any doubtful abstractions are countered by the certainty of destination as his "Grene Chapel" is re-erected in the mind wherever he stops – in essence, he actually needs no outside reassurance at this point. However, dangers of the "grounde þeraboute" soon overwhelm his direction and, appropriately, the topographical references cease as recognisable order is obliterated by harsh elements and landscapes. Sarah Stanbury appreciates that Gawain is "pitiably limited in his knowledge when he wanders forth across the wilderness" and, to emphasise this, his journey loses its clarity of purpose and therefore its connection with the past as "Þe knyȝt tok gates straunge / In mony a bonk vnbene" (*Gawain* 709-10).[68] Although often interpreted as portents of the Otherworld these unfamiliar, winding paths are

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[68] Sarah Stanbury, "Space and Visual Hermeneutics in the *Gawain*-Poet," *Chaucer Review* 21 (1987): 476-89, at 485.

emblematic of the confusing and distracting powers of the present which raise conceptual challenges ("straunge," "vnbene") and offer multiple possibilities through their overwhelming plurality. There was, of course, an established medieval tradition of locating and describing strange topographical and geographical *phenomena* from the ninth century onwards, yet the *Gawain*-poet stresses that this, for the moment, is not possible.[69] Such guides rely upon contextual localisation for their definitions and we, at this point, lack any such reference either to past place or, moreover, time. We learn that "His cher ful oft con change, / Þat chapel er he myȝt sene" (*Gawain* 711-12) which suggests an increasing anxiety concerning personal safety, but also reaffirms the change in Gawain's determination and memory.

This is the final reference to "Þat chapel" on the journey as the reasons for his suffering have now been occluded by pain itself, the chapel now temporally distanced through "might." The verbal construction juxtaposes current uncertainty as to the discovery, or even existence, of the chapel with a latent security that it will eventually be "seen." However, this is dependent upon ("er") the current challenge to remember. Nothing is now familiar: these are "contrayez straunge" (*Gawain* 713) designated only by natural features that appear briefly, such as "Mony klyf" or a "warþe oþer water" (*Gawain* 715), without any sense of specific location or the expectation that ordered the annual ritual and challenge itself.[70] The present, in contrast, is now spontaneous and unpredictable. The water-crossing echoes an earlier point in the knight's journey from Wales to the North West Coast "til he hade eft

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[69] For such writing see Nicholas Orme, "The Commemoration of Places in Medieval England," *Memory and Commemoration in Medieval England: Proceedings of the 2008 Harlaxton Symposium*, ed. Caroline M. Barron, and Clive Burgess, Harlaxton Medieval Studies XX (Donington: Tyas, 2010) 271-2. Orme cites Nennius, Henry of Huntingdon, Alfred of Beverley, Gerald of Wales, Ralph de Diceto, and Alexander Neckham.

[70] The weather and its relation to the supernatural in this poem is discussed in Martin Puhvel, "Snow and Mist in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* – Portents of the Otherworld," *Folklore* 89 (1978): 224-8. See also M. Stokes and J. Scattergood, "Travelling in November: Sir Gawain, Thomas Usk, Charles of Orleans and the *De re militari*," *Medium Ævum* 53 (1984): 78-83.

bonk / In þe wyldrenesse of Wyrale" (*Gawain* 701) and, to counter the previous "wyldrenesse," the North-West location itself remained clear. However, the memory of any referential places has been eroded by time and present pressures. Paramount amongst these are the creatures he encounters:

> Sumwhyle with wormez he werrez and with wolues als,
> Sumwhyle with wodwos þat woned in þe knarrez,
> Boþe with bullez and berez, and borez oþerquyle,
> And etaynez þat hym anelede of þe heʒe felle.   (*Gawain* 720-3)

Again, plurals create Huizinga's "wild phantasmagoria," each one competing with another in the description as the narrator notes "So mony meruayl bi mount þer þe mon fyndez / Hit were to tore for to telle of þe tenþe dole" (*Gawain* 718-9) which recalls the conceptual difficulties encountered in Damas.[71] In as much as the creatures impede his journey, they also encourage a shift in emphasis towards Gawain's personal safety. Whereas a few lines earlier he has enquired as to local knowledge regarding his future with the Green Knight (founded upon the memory of his ability to survive decapitation), he now fears danger in the immediate present: "At vche warþe oþer water þer þe wyʒe passed / He fonde a foo hym byfore, bot ferly hit were, / And þat so foule and so felle þat feʒt hym byhode" (*Gawain* 715-7). Present unfamiliarity dictates that he now rides "fremedly" (*Gawain* 714), a reference to the Otherness of the immediate landscape, but also to the distance between the knight who initially accepted the challenge and set off so confidently and who now fights with wild creatures, fearing for his safety at every unfamiliar water-crossing. The compulsion ("byhode") for self-preservation has occluded his earlier determination stemming from the memory of the Green Knight's "gomen."

Simultaneously, to mirror his changing mood, the weather exacerbates instability, recalling the ominous rumbling emanating from the mural within the

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[71] Huizinga 235.

temple of Mars, to create "a wasteland where isolation, not confrontation, is the horror."[72] Winter elements prevent any orientation, enveloping the knight in "þe slete" (*Gawain* 729) whilst "claterande fro þe crest þe colde borne rennez / And henged heȝe ouer his hede in hard iisseikkles" (*Gawain* 731-2). Any references or echoes to either past or future are now obliterated. In these conditions, forward momentum or retrospective Aristotelian movement is slowed to a crawl, something which is also performed by the text itself as the time taken to read and digest the images of confusion and suffering have displaced the progression of the literal and narrative ritual.[73] Nevertheless, the knight continues to ride "in peril and payne and plytes ful harde" (*Gawain* 734) until "Krystmasse Euen" (*Gawain* 735), a much desired temporal reference which rescues an audience from the suffering and disorientation through stirring a memory of Gawain's challenge. However, as in other romance moments of present confusion, there is a hint that something could and *should* be constructed from the current chaos as, within the imagery of harsh weather, the poet creates an almost symbolic image of the beheading game. John Stevens suggests that "the absence of space-time connections makes other connections more important" on this winter journey, and perhaps the ominous image of the icicles actually ensures that an audience remembers why Gawain is in this untenable position.[74]

In a discussion of mourning, Jacques Derrida observed that "When we say 'in us', when we speak so easily and so painfully of inside and outside, we are naming space, we are speaking of a visibility of the body, a geometry of gazes, an orientation

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[72] Ganim 381.
[73] The *Gawain*-poet is aware of the emphatic result of this technique, as can be seen with the lengthy digression on the pentangle placed between Gawain's acceptance of the challenge and the commencement of his journey (*Gawain* 619-65).
[74] Stevens 149.

of perspectives. *We are speaking of images.*"[75] The spatial metaphors of earlier memory theorists, manely the chaotic forests of disorder, lurk beneath Derrida's assessment; yet, in romances, the sense of memories "in us" is hard to appreciate. Rather, images are re-performed *around* the remembering subject – we entered the compartments of Hugh's ark and viewed the memories inscribed upon wax tablets; indeed, memories are always stirred by an outside stimulus, which is usually detectable (sight, sound, smell), except for the mysterious sensation of déjà vu, perhaps. In this respect, the emotive "slayn," describing the sleet, recalls the Green Knight's challenge in Arthur's court, whereas the icicles that "henged heȝe ouer his hede" (*Gawain* 732) form the challenger's axe that awaits Gawain should he ever escape from the present journey and suffering. The present continues to be shaped and ordered through memory but, as Aristotle observed through the painting of Corsicus, this may involve a certain amount of creativity (*Memoria* I.450b29-451a8). Pictures can evoke memorial images, other than those literally depicted by the brush strokes, and so the harsh winter weather recalls the memorial image of Gawain's blow against the Green Knight and, more importantly, the returned action of the future which is already established through memory and ritual.[76]

Yet, in apparent denial of the creative possibilities of *memoria*, Gawain's prayer to Mary "Þat ho hym red to ryde / And wysse hym to sum wone" (*Gawain* 738-9), offers no indication that this "red" is the original sense of direction that memory dictates he should adopt. The vague "sum wone" – not the Green Chapel – suggests that he merely desires to be rescued from his current suffering and provided

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[75] Jacques Derrida, "By Force of Mourning," *The Work of Mourning*, ed. Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas (Chicago, IL: U of Chicago P, 2001). Derrida continues his piece for Louis Marin with an explanation of the ways in which memory is formed through the *movement* of mourning, an echo of Aristotelian rhetoric which romance maps onto a physical and narrative landscape of experience.

[76] The issue of time has been examined by Ad Putter, "In Search of Lost Time: Missing Days in *Sir Cleges* and *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*," *Time in the Medieval World*, ed. Chris Humphrey and W. M. Ormrod (York: York Medieval P-Brewer, 2001) 119-36.

with an opportunity to attend the Christmas Mass. The challenge itself remains neglected and will be until he remembers his imminent peril with the Green Knight, provoked during the bedroom scenes at Hautdesert, specifically in relation to the additional ritual of Gawain's literary and social reputation. Stanbury also notes similar disorientation through space as Gawain approaches this castle as material details of the building are altered by distance and become unfamiliar.[77] Ostensibly a familiar chivalric place, this is not "home" and owes more to the difficult but attractive Damas: the "chymnées" are "chalk-whyt" (*Gawain* 798) whilst pinnacles "clambred so þik, / Þat pared out of papure purely hit semed" (*Gawain* 801-2). Highlighting such difficulties, Stanbury observes, "[b]y contrasting descriptions of locations as they appear to the vision of a particular narrative eyewitness, the poet can build a complex visual hermeneutic."[78] However, latent meanings are compromised by the experience itself such as elaborate artistic decorations inside the castle and the maze-like passages that link hall and bedroom. Unlike Degrevant (*Degrevant* 1303-698), Gawain does not forget his position in the narrative: whilst negotiating the complex world of Hautdesert he succeeds in recollecting the correct chivalric behaviour to which he should adhere, guided by his great mnemonic aid – the pentangle (*Gawain* 811-927).

The *Gawain*-poet is clearly sensitive to the relation of memory to present reality and a comparable moment occurs at the Green Chapel, Gawain having eventually found the location in defiance of his guide's attempts to make him "forget" his duty. The knight is now driven both by his promise and also the memory of his (apparently) protective girdle. Gawain's reaction to this space is again governed by an ability to conceptualise and reference the scene – "hym þoȝt"

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[77] Stanbury 487.
[78] Stanbury 480.

(*Gawain* 2167). After noting the boiling stream that "blubred þerinne as hit boyled hade" (*Gawain* 2174), his desire to understand this space continues: "aboute hit he walkez, / Debatande with hymself quat hit be my3t" (*Gawain* 2178-9). Part of this "Debatande" is concerned with the geological classification of "þe ber3e" (*Gawain* 2179), perhaps "an olde caue / Or a creuisse of an olde cragge – he couþe hit no3t deme / With spelle" (*Gawain* 2182-4). However he soon relates the strange, ominous space with his earlier experiences of Otherness in the romance – notably the Green Knight - and forms the conclusion that this must indeed be the Green Chapel. Recognition begins with a rhetorical question, "'Wheþer þis be þe Grene Chapelle?'" (*Gawain* 2186), followed by an assumption concerning the diabolic associations of the space that has led him to his hypothesis – "'Here my3t aboute mydny3t / Þe Dele his matynnes telle!'" (*Gawain* 2187-8). Otherness has been ordered through memory and from this final explicit temporal and ritualistic reference: his thought process is now articulated more explicitly than the earlier hanging icicles which were only crafted into a memorial image by the prudent, creative audience.

The present situation is then more obviously assimilated with his memory of the Green Knight: "'Wele bisemez þe wy3e wruxled in grene / Dele here his deuocioun on þe Deuelex wyse'" (*Gawain* 2191-2). Any earlier doubts as to how to classify have now disappeared, replaced with the confident assessment to re-define space as place: "'Þis is a chapel of meschaunce, þat chekke hit bytyde! / Hit is þe corsedest kyrk þat euer I com inne!'" (*Gawain* 2195-6). "[M]eschaunce," although a somewhat uncertain assessment, looks forward to the fate which awaits Gawain in the chapel - "'My lif þa3 I forgo, / Drede dotz me no lote'" (*Gawain* 2210-11). Gawain states that no noise will make him afraid, and an audience might support his courage through remembering the protective girdle which he carries. Gawain's

thoughts on his survival, however, suggest that he has now resigned himself to his fate ("'Let God worche'" [*Gawain* 2208]). In essence, both Gawain and an audience have been misled. Events do not depend on divine will, nor on the magical properties of the girdle. As is to be expected of the *Gawain*-poet, we have created a falsification from this chaos which is as confusing as any present distraction. In remembering that the girdle is magical and in the process referencing our stored (but separate) images of the host Bertilak and the Green Knight we have, through no fault of our own, misremembered.[79]

Although lacking the explicit memory games of *Sir Gawain*, *Sir Orfeo* presents a similar desire to unite past and present in the face of an impossible challenge. There have been many attempts to unite the spaces of this varied narrative landscape; yet the performance of *memoria* within the tale reveals why memory is so crucial in maintaining a stable moral – that of loyalty (essential to the tale's identity in Middle English and literary history, as was discussed in Chapter Three).[80] The first real moment of disorder comes as Orfeo is confronted with the distressed image of his wife, her features disfigured through a terrifying act of self-mutilation. Nothing has prepared Orfeo for this sight, and his confusion is voiced through disjointed contrasts between his memory's past images and the present vision:[81]

> 'O lef lif, what is te
> That ever yete hast ben so stillle
> And now gredest wonder shille?

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[79] McAlindon notes the pointed us of "weird" and "destine" at key points in the narrative, yet such security is questioned by the apparently magical girdle and, later, undermined by the revelation that Gawain's Fate was sealed by accepting and failing to declare the girdle, or even receiving the challenge at the start. McAlindon 135. *Gawain* 1846-1869; 341-2.

[80] Bruce Mitchell, "The Faery World of *Sir Orfeo*," *Neophilologus* 48 (1964): 155-9; Knapp, J. K. "The Meaning of *Sir Orfeo*," *Modern Language Quarterly* 29 (1968): 263-73; Lucas, P. J. "An Interpretation of *Sir Orfeo*," *Leeds Studies in English* 6 (1972): 1-9; A. H. Olsen, "Loss and Recovery: A Morphological Reconsideration of *Sir Orfeo*," *Fabula* 23 (1982): 198-206. The discussion in Chapter Three of this study is at 73-9.

[81] A comparable scene occurs in Malory in Lancelot's grief at the tomb of Guinevere at Glastonbury, the root of his pain being the memory of the lady's beauty. *Morte* XXI.11.

> Thy body, that was so white y-core,
> With thine nailes is all to-tore!
> Alas, thy rode, that was so red,
> Is all wan as thou were ded!
> And also thine fingers smale
> Beth all blody and all pale!'   (*Orfeo* 78-86)

Emphasis is clearly upon the unexpected, "ever yete," whilst the distressing sight is made more horrific through its failure to accord with any stored image: the past tenses "was" and "were" posit the mutilated form, blood stained skin, and ghostly "pale" fingers against previous vital beauty of his pure, white love. The attempt to accommodate the vision within memory collapses into the equally conceptually difficult – death – yet even this is an unsatisfactory assessment: "Is all wan as thou were ded!" Moreover, the terrible stasis of this moment is exacerbated by her retrospective mutilation which takes place through Orfeo's own words: Herodis has already been harmed, but is disfigured again as her husband describes the sight, with the implication that every view of his once beautiful bride will have the same effect, thereby incarcerating the husband within a perpetual present of spousal self-harm. The romance ritual has become closer to a Lacanian repetition compulsion (*Wiederholungszwang*); yet, in defiance of the much later psychologists, there is no therapeutic or chemical escape from the present *trauma*.[82] For Orfeo, these literal "wounds" will never heal, rendered always through *perepeteia*, a technique of change and inconsistency antithetical to adequate recollection. The king is motionless, "'tell me what thee is and hou / And what thing may thee help now!'" (*Orfeo* 91-2), and looks for guidance from Herodis who describes her impending

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[82] The term is first described in Sigmund Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, trans. John Reddick, New Penguin Freud (London: Penguin, 2003) 33-42. It was adopted by Jacques Lacan as one of his four concepts in *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, ed. Jacques Alain Miller and A Sheriden. Penguin Psychology (London: Penguin, 1991). See also, for a dialogue with Lacan, Jean Laplanche, *Problématiques II: Castration, Symbolisations* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1980).

abduction. However, within this present distress and confusion, the words of the queen begin to construct something from the static present as she recalls their past devotion to each other:[83]

> 'Sethen we first togedir were,
> Ones wroth never we nere;
> Bot ever ich have y-loved thee
> As my lif, and so thou me.
> Ac now we mot delen atwo.
> Do thy best, for I mot go!' (*Orfeo* 97-102)

The closing imperative initiates Orfeo's memorial challenge for which her words have provided the raw materials: memories of their previous marital devotion, perfectly reciprocated by Orfeo - "and so thou me." Present horrors are juxtaposed with past devotion and from this Orfeo wrests a familiar promise from the confusion: "'Whider thou gost, ichill with thee, / And whider I go, thou shalt with me'" (*Orfeo* 105-6), later reaffirmed by "'Lever me were to lete my lif / Than thus to lese the Quen, my wif!'" (*Orfeo* 153-4). Likewise, Herodis' words offer comfort with "Sethen we first togedir were" and "ever ich have y-loved thee" which unite past and present in defiance of previous atemporal *perepeteia*. Significantly, this is followed by confirmation of their imminent separation: "Ac now we mot delen atwo"; however, given the strength of the marital bond which has been re-affirmed, Orfeo counters this with the confident determination never to lose his wife and, through this, he is able to support himself through parallel *perepeteia* in the wilderness.

The motivations behind Orfeo's exile were discussed in the previous chapter with reference to redactions as creative recollections and have also been discussed by R. R. Kenneth, yet it is possible to appreciate this particular challenge before it has

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[83] For the theme of marital loyalty see H.Bergner, "*Sir Orfeo* and the Sacred Bonds of Matrimony," *Review of English Studies* 30 (1979): 432-4.

even begun, such is the strength of Orfeo's assertion of loyalty.[84] His willingness to forsake his life ("Lever me were to lete my lif") remains prominent, whilst recalling the earlier simile to Herodis "as thou were ded" with the implication that every hardship encountered in the wilderness will only reaffirm his remembered devotion. Although the narrative has departed from the traditional courtly romance scenery, devotion to Herodis imposes a template onto Orfeo's suffering, adding meaning to his decision to enter the wilderness as a way in which to connect with the memory of his wife and *her* suffering. For an audience, alongside the Christian allusions, there is little doubt that this remains Orfeo's purpose. Consequently, although Felicity Riddy highlights that images from the past recall the king's previous courtly identity such as "The King o fairy with his rout" (*Orfeo* 259), this becomes subordinated to the return of "His owhen queen, Dam Herodis" (*Orfeo* 298).[85] Through his suffering, and therefore loyalty to his wife and memory, he has "found" the image of Herodis in the wilderness even before he follows the "Sexty levedis" (*Orfeo* 280) "In at at roche" (*Orfeo* 323). The wilderness has been tamed through memory. Much like the ritualization of elements in *Ywain and Gawain* (*Ywain* 320-; 620-; etc.), or the creative presentation of icicles in *Sir Gawain* (*Gawain* 732), initially disorienting elements of life in the forest have been shaped into a memorial paradigm of marital loyalty, chivalric familiarity, and therefore past referents. It is for this reason that we experience none of the isolation so common to other moments of present chaos: Orfeo is visited by the creatures of the forest who gather in order ("on ich a brere" [*Orfeo* 252]), the correct way to hear a king, thereby remembering courtly reality in the forest, and, eventually, he himself is somewhat "found" by the king of Fairy,

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[84] R. R. Kenneth, "The Significance of *Sir Orfeo*'s Self-Exile," *Review of English Studies* 18 (1967): 245-52.

[85] Felicity Riddy, "The Uses of the Past in *Sir Orfeo*," *Yearbook of English Studies* 6 (1976): 5-15, at 13.

Herodis, and the past which, by laughing with recognition and relief (*Orfeo* 290-3),

he acknowledges has not been eroded or lost.

However, this is not to suggest that every challenge can be met with such

relative ease as the subsequent space remains one of the most confusing and

disorientating in the tale, perhaps of all medieval romance. The sheer opulence of the

Land of Fairy (which is also the Land of the Dead) establishes the criteria of present

distraction, details shimmering and seeming to elude stable conceptualisation (an

effect so important in the classical analogues of the Elysian Fields and

Underworld).[86] The effect is blinding:

> All that lond was ever light,
> For when it shuld be therk and night,
> The riche stones light gonne
> As bright as doth at none the sonne.
> No man may telle no thenche in thought
> The riche werk that ther was wrought.
> By all thing, hym think that it is
> The proude court of paradis.   (*Orfeo* 345-52)

Memorial disorder is apparent here and, moreover, temporal stasis is exacerbated by

the erasure of any diurnal cycle on account of the light emanating from the stones

which bathes the landscape. The space compromises conceptualisation either in

speech ("may telle") or mind ("thenche") and there remains an artistic dimension,

recalling the temple of Mars, as an audience ponders the "riche werk" "wrought."

Again, there is an attempt to understand the physical construction of the landscape

within one's own frame of reference. Neil Cartlidge notes "the continual and

deliberate cultivation of the fairies' Otherworld as an embodiment of chaotic

signification" and, likewise, the role played by *memoria* in ordering the scene is the

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[86] Seth Lerer believes that this artificial craft displayed here deliberately contrasts with Orfeo's musical skill which similarly dazzles but also moves the spirit. Seth Lerer, "Artifice and Artistry in *Sir Orfeo*," *Speculum* 60 (1985): 92-109, at 93.

attempted discovery of signification.[87] In the manner of Gawain's attempt to classify the Green Chapel with reference to previous diabolic preconceptions, it is assumed that this is "The proude court of paradis." Memorial images, the space's catalogue of suffering bodies, is similarly difficult to comprehend - their number remain indeterminable as they overcrowd the land and surround Orfeo: "Than he gan behold about all / And seighe liggeand within the wall" (*Orfeo* 363-4). These images of perpetual suffering are vivid, and certainly memorable, but remain conceptually difficult:

> Sum stode withouten hade
> And sum non armes nade,
> And sum thurch the body hadde wounde,
> And sum lay wode, y-bounde,
> And sum armed on hors sete,
> And sum astrangled as they ete,
> And sum were in water adreint,
> And sum with fire all forshreint.   (*Orfeo* 367-74)

Although some are fairly easy to imagine, it is considerably more challenging to visualise those continually "astrangled as they ete" or drowned or burned, the latter two posing the question if whether they remain surrounded by water and fire respectively, or simply bear the bodily disfigurements of each demise. The anaphora, characteristic of lengthy romance descriptions, creates a sense of exhaustion as layers of suffering are built up, whilst retaining the claustrophobic impression of a perpetual present. Not only does each body continue to suffer, but a pattern of never ending *trauma* is fostered as each new group eclipses the previous. As with Orfeo's circular appraisal of Herodis, past injuries live on in the present moment whilst the nature of the injuries themselves emphasise the danger of an immediate present: these are, we believe, unexpected deaths for which no amount of prudence could

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[87] Neil Cartlidge, "Sir Orfeo in the Otherworld: Courting Chaos?" *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* 26 (2004): 195-226, at 200.

prepare.[88] Bodies have been suddenly run "thurch" with a wound, others remain sitting on their horses, whilst some have been "astrangled" as they were eating. Indeed, their very journey remains ambiguous: although "Eche was thus in this warld y-nome / With fairy thider y-come" (*Orfeo* 379-80) this explanation actually reveals little context, the reasons absorbed in the mysterious entity of Fairy and restricted to the suspiciously simple "y-come." Their unpredictability looks back to the blissful unawareness exemplified by Degrevant and Melidor who were absorbed in a present moment (*Degrevant* 1439-40), whilst also calling attention to Orfeo's predicament: this is an unfamiliar space, filled with unprecedented figures who, appropriately, also testify to the threat of an unexpected future, especially when divorced from past referents. We can never remember seeing anything like this before and in stark contrast to the predictability of Herodis' abduction (which was prophesised and therefore remembered when it actually occurred), the scene stands outside time in paradoxical "infinite turbulence and utter torpor": an atemporal state of previous and current *trauma*.[89]

Nevertheless, something must be, and is, created from the present confusion, recollecting earlier experiences and, ultimately, the reason for Orfeo's entrance into this space – his loyalty to Herodis. This is achieved ingeniously through the final image of suffering, that of "Wives" lying "on child bedde, / Sum ded and sum awedde" (*Orfeo* 375-6). Often overlooked by critics, this final familial tragedy implicitly recalls Orfeo's marriage, signified a few lines later with a welcome possessive pronoun which relieves the anxiety of the space: "Ther he seighe his owhen wif, / Dame Herodis, his lef lif, / Slepe under an ympe-tree" (*Orfeo* 381). Indeed, "Ther" carries a double function: describing the position of Herodis

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[88] This is noted in Dorena Allen, "Orpheus and Orfeo: The Dead and The Taken," *Medium Ævum* 33 (1964): 102-11, at 105.
[89] Cartlidge 226.

discovered literally in this land whilst marking the working of Orfeo's – "Ther," in the scenes of pain, particularly the final image of wives, he sees (and simultaneously "remembers") his loyalty to Herodis just as she, in the wilderness, appeared before him, welcomed along with the courtly, if supernatural, retinue (*Orfeo* 259-93). The coincidence of location "under an ympe-tree" with the initial site of her disfigurement ("Under a fair ympe-tree" [*Orfeo* 46]), and abduction ("Right unto that ympe tree" [*Orfeo* 162]), also supports the work of *memoria* here.

Indeed, the moral of loyalty is remembered on two further occasions. Firstly, the king of Fairy must remain loyal to his word in promising to reward Orfeo with anything he wishes on account of his excellent musical ability.[90] Secondly, having left the Underworld, the steward entrusted with Orfeo's kingdom is found to be "a trewe man" (*Orfeo* 530) due to his continued loyalty to the king even after being duped into thinking that his master had perished.[91] A rhythm is established in the spaces between the familiar and unfamiliar, order and disorder, as the storehouse of memory is continually interrogated and imaginatively manipulated to exemplify the magical, ethereal, and strangely logical creativity inherent in romance *memoria*. In his dedication to Roland Barthes, Derrida defined Time as "the metonymy of the instantaneous, the possibility of the narrative magnetized by its own limit," an observation which throws together the two mutually dependant aspects of *memoria*. A present moment is ordered through the "limits" of generic expectation and the promised direction "home" through ritualistic memories of the places of the narrative.[92] In romance tales memory is continually challenged and its power or accuracy questioned, only to be rediscovered and reinvigorated by prudent characters

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[90] Eyvind Ronquist, "The Powers of Poetry in *Sir Orfeo*," *Philological Quarterly* 64 (1985): 170-4.
[91] See Andrea Pisani Babich, "The Power of Kingdom and the Ties that Bind in *Sir Orfeo*," *Neophilologus* 82 (1998): 477-86.
[92] Jacques Derrida, "The Deaths of Roland Barthes," *Work of Mourning* 61.

and audiences who ensure that reliable memories will be justly and morally rewarded.

CHAPTER FIVE

Trusting Memory in Romance.

Hys golde also ther he gan fynde.   (*Isumbras 624*)

Sir Isumbras **and** *King Horn***: The Long Journey for Memorial Objects.**

The seasoned and eager audience is expected to assess, store, and recollect experiences in a romance. Moreover, an audience must be confident in their endeavours. To promote the essential memorial work required across a narrative, devices or mechanisms such as literal and symbolic objects, or more abstract literary inventions including dreams and emotive scenes, reassure an audience and cue a remembrance, literally bringing an image into the mind in changed temporal circumstances. A chivalric redaction of the legend of Saint Eustace, *Sir Isumbras*, dating from the early fourteenth century, offers an interesting example.[1] The important remembrance for this individual is his Christianity, which he should assimilate with continued success as a secular knight.[2] To accomplish the transition between material and spiritual wealth, past forgetfulness and future promise, the collected, stored, and remembered image of gold forms a malleable memorial object. Such objects are not simply symbols or mnemonic devices offering an "intellectual shortcut."[3] Instead, the memorial image is manipulated and adapted throughout a romance. Rhiannon Purdie appreciates "a tight, logically plotted romance which manages to retain the attractive romance of Guillaume alongside the piety and

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[1] Some believe the date of the poem to be mid to late fourteenth century. It survives in eight manuscripts written before c.1500. For a discussion of the date of *Sir Isumbras* see Loomis, *Medieval Romance* 3-11; Mehl 128-9; Cooper, *Romance in Time* 421.

[2] There are interesting developments from the hagiographical work as the romance emphasises the importance of the knight's past activities in shaping events. In the earlier version his involvent is more passive: his wealth is stolen, his servants die of plague, and the family embark on a sea voyage together when his wife is abducted, not traded. Also in the legend Isumbras is ultimately condemned to death by the Emperor Hadrian for refusing to administer a pagan sacrifice – something which is also out of his control.

[3] Huizinga 236.

instantly recognisable narrative structure of St. Eustace."[4] Through the memorial

object of gold, the narrative modulates between two genres as memorial riches are

"worked" into almost hagiographic devotion. Huizinga defined late medieval

symbolism as when "[t]hought attempts to find the connection between things, not

by tracing the hidden turns of their causal ties, but rather by suddenly jumping over

these causal connections. The connection is not a link between cause and effect, but

one of meaning and purpose."[5] Memory journeys along these "hidden turns" - the

links between the memorial images, or their present encounter with an analogous

experience, is as important as an identification or collection of the motif itself.

During *Sir Isumbras* the regularity and correspondence of these images is

quite stable at the level of semantic signification: they differ little in their fifteen

textual occurrences and functions, unlike other more ambiguous romance "signs"

(the hanging icicles in *Sir Gawain*, for example [*Gawain* 732]) which may be

variously "actions, words, visual images and sounds, letters and oral repeats, bodily

reactions and objects exchanged."[6] However, during *Sir Isumbras*, an audience must

be aware of the specific circumstances surrounding every mention of gold as "each

image requires an individual approach, as, at the same time, it is studied in the entire

pictorial sequence in which it appears."[7] Consequently, a new appearance must be

understood in relation to an earlier, stored experience. Initially, Isumbras is accused

by a bird in a forest of having forgotten his religious duties where gold occupies a

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[4] Rhiannon Purdie, "Generic Identity and the Origins of *Sir Isumbras*," *The Matter of Identity in Medieval Romance*, ed. Phillipa Hardman (Cambridge: Brewer, 2002) 123.

[5] Huizinga 236.

[6] Matilda Tomaryn Bruckner, *Shaping Romance: Interpretation, Truth, and Closure in Twelfth-Century French Fictions*, U of Pennsylvania P Middle Ages (Pennsylvania, PA: U of Pennsylvania P, 1993) 220.

[7] Anne Wilson, *Traditional Romance and Tale: How Stories Mean* (Ipswich: Brewer, 1976) 72-3. Wilson also notes that symbols *can* give expression to an inner experience, which may well be analogous to the effect of memorial images; yet such symbols are static and governed by external factors. Of course, Gawain's pentangle is famously re-evaluated in the final portion of the romance and compared retrospectively to its unbroken appearance earlier. *Gawain* 2487-8; 2516-8.

central position in the fowl's speech: "Thow haste foryete what thou was, / For pryde of golde and fee" (*Isumbras* 50-1). This flash of gold and possessions shines brightly against the forest background and "derne sty" (*Isumbras* 46), yet simultaneously establishes a welcome link with the familiar – our first encounter with gold in the knight's hall: "Menstralles he hadde in his halle, / And yafe hem robes of ryche palle, / Sylver, golde and fee" (*Isumbras* 25-7). The wealth becomes cold and sterile when set against the glory of "The kynge of hevenn" (*Isumbras* 52), the mention of whom shines a glorious light into the secluded path. This forms the memorial starting-point in the romance, ordering the space: Isumbras' "pryde" in such possessions has led the knight to forget God - "Into his herte a pryde was browghte / That of God yafe he ryghte nowghte" (*Isumbras* 37-8). He must remember the past to rectify this and develop his identity in a more complete form, learning from past errors: "In yowthe sense me poverté / and welthe in myne elde" (*Isumbras* 65-6).

The subsequent appearance of gold is expressed only in its absence as knight, lady, and children depart on their journey: "For thay bare with hem nothynge / That longed to here spendynge / Nother golden ore fee" (*Isumbras* 151-3). An audience is urged to connect its absence with Isumbras' growing spiritual awareness as the one so rich that "Every man was his frende" (*Isumbras* 17) now actively shuns any material wealth - "thay bare" absolutely "nothynge." The absence of gold recalls his previous wealth as Isumbras' family assumes the roles of their dependants at court who must now also "begge here mete" (*Isumbras* 154) and rely upon the "love of seynt charyté" (*Isumbras* 156). The image of gold in memory has altered the present experience of the material to the extent that it is now actually avoided as the family embarks upon their journey.

Such is the extent of Isumbras' trust in the bird's words, God, and his memory of that experience, that he even endures the loss of two children without pausing to search for them. Soon, heightening the pressure to cease their spiritual pilgrimage, some ships are glimpsed:

> In that foreste forth thenne wente he
> Tyll they come to the Grekys see;
> Forther they myghte not go.
> On the londe as they stode,
> They sey kome selynge on the flode
> Thre hondreth shyppes and mo.
> And on the londe as the[y] seete
> They loked down into the deepe:
> The shypes they sey glyde so.
> The topcastell drawen on hyghe:
> All the[m] thowght rede golde they syghe,
> So it glistered as they gan glyde.
> An hethen kynge was therinne,
> Come Cristendome forto wynne,
> To walke so ferre and wyde.
> The kynge thought he wolde londe
> By that forest at the havenne ende,
> A lytyll ther bysyde.   (*Isumbras* 196-213)

Gold radiates from the ships towards the wandering, bereft parents and the light demands their attention, appearing in burnished splendour.[8] Recalling the temptation towards *luxuria* in *Sir Beves of Hamtoun* (*Beves* 1129-30) and *Sir Launfal* (*Launfal* 265-82), the sight is far from static: not only is it sailing towards Isumbras, but it shimmers ("glistered") as the dazzling colour of "reed golde" vies for prominence during the experience. Moreover, light radiates from the vessel itself to create an eerie, Otherworldly dimension emphasised by its silent approach, "gliding" towards the shore. Alerted by the ease and simple manner in which this "golde" has sailed into their lives, the prudent audience is suspicious. Gold is now associated with sinfulness and its absence, for the moment, is a barrier to spiritual wealth. To insert

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[8] This motif touches upon the Constance story such as *Emaré* (individuals put at the mercy of the sea [*Emaré* 275-9]) whilst the ship itself resembles similar magical vessels such as the boat in Marie's *Guigemar* (*Lais* I.187-202), and the ship of Solomon (*Morte* XVII).

the promise of imminent reward contradicts memory and expectation as the storehouse is opened to ensure that this dazzling display of wealth is laden with ominous associations from the past, a suspicion that is corroborated when we learn that "An hethen kynge was therinne / Come Cristendome forto wynne." Prudence dictates that all avoid this ship.

Yet part of the memorial challenge emanates from the image's appeal given its contrast with Isumbras' miserable state. As in *Sir Launfal* there is temptation both through the inherent attraction of the ship, but also the obstruction of memory through preoccupation with present misfortune.[9] There is a danger that the knight becomes blind to his previous experiences, forming a myopic vision of the present which ignores the past to such an extent that Isumbras believes that this ship will provide their salvation, ironically distracted by the very substance that he must recognise and remember. The knight's wish, "Go we to hym and aske somme mete, / If we may any gete, / For Cristes love of hevenn" (*Isumbras* 226-8), reveals the ridiculous disparity as he trusts in "Cristes love" in order to gain help from a heathen king. To repair such misconceptions, the previously remembered association of gold with spiritual poverty is implicitly suggested through the heathen king's challenge of "knight service":

> He seyde to hem, 'Leveth on my laye
> And lete your fals goddes awaye,
> And be with me in fyghte;
> Of golde schalt thou nevur have nede:
> If thou be dowghty manne in dede,
> Thow shalt be dobbed knyghte.'   (*Isumbras* 259-264)

This is packed with dramatic ironies that depend upon an audience's memory. Not only is the Christian faith re-classified as faith in "fals goddes," but the reward for

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[9] In addition to thirst and hunger, two children have been abducted by a leopard and a lion (*Isumbras* 169-92).

Isumbras' heathen conversion would be more gold.[10] Fortunately, and with the will

of the prudent audience urging him on, his response after standing "Stylle"

(*Isumbras* 265) is to refuse the offer with the assurance "Schall I nevur more /

Ayeyns Cristen were, / Nor forsake my laye" (*Isumbras* 268-70). *Memoria*, at least

for now, has been adequately performed. However, the challenge emerges again with

the king's second offer: "Wylt thou thy wyfe sell me? / I wyll yefe for here golde

and fe, / And ryche robes sevenne" (*Isumbras* 277-9). Isumbras refuses with an

explicit reference to the religious significance of his marriage (*Isumbras* 286-7); yet,

despite the knight's protestations, an exchange or *raptus* occurs, payment is made,

"Reed gold in a mantell they tolde / And aftur togedur the mantel they folde"

(*Isumbras* 289-90), and Isumbras is forced to receive payment for his wife.[11]

Alarmingly, this contradicts what Isumbras has previously experienced: although

cast out "On the londe" (*Isumbras* 292) without his wife (an echo of the loss of his

two children [*Isumbras* 179-86]), he has now regained some material wealth.

The power of memory creates a sense of dissatisfaction and unease at this

sudden gain, articulated by the knight as he prays for guidance: "'Dere God, wo is

me, / That evur I shall this daye se: / What is me beste to do?" (*Isumbras* 298-300).

Isumbras previously prayed to God when he saw the heathen ship approaching

("'Lord God, what may al this be" [*Isumbras* 221]) which led him to relate the image

of the golden ship to spiritual poverty in his past; however, this second prayer delves

into memory even more explicitly. Present turmoil, "this daye," is set against an

uncertain future: the only answer can be discovered by turning to experiences of the

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[10] The offer of gold as an allegorical temptation is discussed by Günther Blaicher, "Zur Interpretation der Mittelenglischen Romance *Sir Ysumbras*," *Germanische Romanische Monatschrift* 21 (1971): 135- 44.

[11] A discussion of the *raptus* element in the romance is discussed by Elizabeth Fowler, "The Romance Hypothetical: Lordship and the Saracens in *Sir Isumbras*," *Spirit* 108-11. For definitions of *raptus* see Saunders, *Rape* 18, 20.

past that, as we have seen, have become synonymous with his gradual, spiritual education. Such trust in memory and its association with future salvation explains Isumbras' curious actions with the newly acquired gold. Following his wife's departure on the ship "In here mantell of skarlette rede / Amonge her gold they putte her brede" (*Isumbras* 358-9). This unusual decision to wrap their bread in with the gold, in retrospect, seems to be a deliberate attempt to lose the wealth and maximise the misfortunes of the father and remaining son – a fate which soon occurs as "A gryffyn bare the golde awaye" (*Isumbras* 365) apparently "for the rede cloth that he syghe" (*Isumbras* 366). Every attempt is made to ensure that the gold is taken – indeed, Isumbras and his son climb "an hyll an hyghe" (*Isumbras* 361), therefore finding a prominent position for the griffin to swoop down upon the package.

The knight's reaction, and the following event, is telling:

The knyghte was both hende and fre
And folowed hym to the Grekes See,
Therovur the gryffyn he flyghe.
Therwhyles ther come an unykorne;
His yonge sone away hath borne,
Sich sorowe the knyghte gan dryghe.   (*Isumbras* 367-372)

By pursuing the griffin Isumbras is actually searching, with an audience, through images of his memorial past whilst, ironically, moving forward in the present narrative. The gold has been remembered yet again: whereas before it was avoided, Isumbras now pursues the loss of gold (his initial journey from the court), rather than the material itself. Although in his prayers the knight appears confused, an audience knows exactly what is to be done: Isumbras must continue to build his faith in God as a means to regain his wealth and (hopefully) his family as his final son is subsequently abducted by a unicorn (*Isumbras* 370-2). Hopkins identifies a saint-like passivity from Isumbras; yet this echo of the narrative's hagiographical origins also identifies the knight's trust in memory – he pursues this route to gain something

greater, a development of his initial journey with his family.[12] Subsequently, in contrast with the earlier impasse when approaching the Greek Sea, "Forther they myghte not go" (*Isumbras* 198), the exact course of action has been revealed. As the griffin soars over the sea, carrying the gold, he is leading the way for Isumbras' progression in the narrative; to impose order on this action must be to retrace experiences from his past. He soon takes up the role of a "palmere" and embarks on a short Crusading mission, defeating Saracens and subsequently repairing the earlier enforced *raptus* (*Isumbras* 409).[13] Crucially, during his spiritual devotion, he crosses the "Grekes See" (*Isumbras* 500), thereby revisiting the precise location from where his wife was taken, and its associated memories.[14]

The knight's trust in the value of memory here is combined, predictably, with the discovery of more gold. Having left the Christian king with whom he has served he is taken in, poor and hungry, by a generous queen, his lost wife. In contrast to Isumbras, the "pore palmere" (*Isumbras* 560), she is presented against a background of gold: "The ryche qwene in golde seete" (*Isumbras* 562). Although an audience has been alerted to the identity of the queen as Isumbras' lost wife, Isumbras himself fails to make the final, crucial recollection – appropriately, however, this is clarified by additional gold:

> And in a gryffen neste on hyghe,
> A rede clothe therin he seghe,
> Wavynge with the wynde;
> And to the neste he ganne wynne;
> His skarlette mantel he fonde therinne,

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[12] Hopkins 121. See also L. Braswell, "*Sir Isumbras* and *The Legend of Saint Eustace*," *Medieval Studies* 27 (1965): 121-51; Diana T. Childress, "Between Romance and Legend: 'Secular Hagiography' in Middle English Literature," *Philological Quarterly* 57 (1978): 317-18.

[13] For the crusading mission in the romance see Lee Manion, "The Loss of the Holy Land and *Sir Isumbras*: Literary Contributions to Fourteenth-Century Crusade Discourse," *Speculum* 85 (2010): 65-90.

[14] Similar moments often occur towards the end of a narrative as memories are revisited, in *Emaré* when the "kyng of Galys" returns, almost unconsciously, to the land in which the heroine now resides (*Emaré* 679) and in *Sir Beves of Hamtoun* as the hero returns to his lands to regain hereditary "riȝt" (*Beves* 4570).

> Hys golde also ther he gan fynde.
> And whenne he syghe ther that golde,
> He thowghte his wyfe therefore was solde;
> His sorowe he hadde in mynde.
> To his chamber he gan hit bere,
> Unthur his bedde he putte hit there,
> He wente awey wepynge.   (*Isumbras* 619-30)

When he spies the "gryffen neste on hyghe" and sees "A rede clothe therin," "His skarlette mantel," and "Hys golde," he feels great pain, associating the sight with images of loss and remembers his wife - "His sorowe he hadde in mynde." The third person possessive is indicative of his memory: the indefinite article for the cloth collapses into more personal recollections of possessions, wealth, and finally an emotional memory which remains "in mynde" as a stored image. Yet the image is recaptured through the present – the gold in the tree – stored until a point when Isumbras was ready to receive it. The gold, like the heathen ship, is deliberately attracting his attention: the red cloth is "Wavynge with the wynde," recalling the shimmering vessel on the sea, and the verbs emphasise an (ironic) sense of discovery - he is eventually able to "fynde" the "past" which he has been pursuing and remembering throughout the narrative.

Soon memories themselves clarify the scene: "I have lorne my wife and children thre; / My scarlet mantell was born fro me, / And in a neste I hit fette" (*Isumbras* 676-8). Having then hidden the gold under his bed for the queen to also "discover" and remember as emblematic of her lost husband (*Isumbras* 646-51), "For that syghte that she hadde seene" (*Isumbras* 651), a final recollection is beautifully presented as his wife "kissed the golde" (*Isumbras* 652) and, subsequently, reconnects with her lost husband and children who quickly enter

riding their respective animal abductors.[15] In *Sir Isumbras*, gold functions not only as the thematic contrast between material and spiritual wealth, nor as a conduit between loss and gain, but as an emblem of the way in which an agile memory develops and re-interprets experiences in order to reconcile apparent oppositions, providing "a symbolic link throughout the poem of the sin, the punishment, and the reward of [Isumbras]."[16] Hopkins notes that "the unexpressed meaning of images and events is there to be explored by the reader": as a motif, gold unifies the narrative and must be trusted to do so.[17]

The effect is crystallised by an altogether diminished (at least in symbolic dominance), but more poignant, example of the same process: a ring that is broken between husband and wife when they were separated and is re-united at the end, thereby returning the jewellery to the moment of its fracture earlier in the narrative. It is not only the start and endpoints that are important, a paradigm of linear time and also circular reunification symbolised by the ring, but the spaces of interpretation and creation between such points or experiences – a break between the halves of jewellery and the time during which the couple are separated. As discussed earlier, space, in classical and medieval memory theory, is the *silva*, the forest, to be ordered and tamed through work, experience, and even the reading of this romance. It is the atmosphere of wealth surrounding the gold, the thought process of those who identify and remember it, which forms a complete whole or the finished ring. Perhaps romances' greatest memorial image, "the structural blueprint of the entire

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[15] The loss of husband and children forms a parallel memorial chain, alongside the gold, which employs emotion as a way for Isumbras to continue his spiritual development through the memory of loss during the narrative.

[16] Hopkins 139.

[17] Hopkins 124. Hopkins compares the audience's participation in the romance to the *moralite* to the legend of St. Eustace as it appears in the *Gesta Romanorum*.

adventure," is the pentangle in *Sir Gawain*.[18] Its description delays the narrative

ritual for forty-six lines (*Gawain* 619-45) and is "unique in its combination of rarity,

elaboration, and focal position in the work as a whole."[19] This is the crucial reminder

of Gawain's past, much like the shield in *William of Palerne*, "wel and faire wiþinne

a werwolf depeynted" (*William* 3217), which recognises past experiences involving

a wolf. Yet Gawain's heraldic emblem, despite being carried throughout the

narrative to recollect chivalric responsibilities and reputation, ultimately cannot

accommodate inherent human fallibility – the desire for self-preservation. The

memorial image is therefore changed by the failings of the remembering subject who

neglects his loyalty to the host in accepting and deliberately forgetting to declare the

girdle. The memorial image must be altered through the addition of the girdle which

symbolically breaks "þe endeles knot" (*Gawain* 630).[20]

　　More typically, romances are littered with memorial objects that, although

remaining physically unchanged throughout, these gloves, cups, swords, rings and

birthmarks unite disparate locations, experiences, and times (which are also mapped

onto places). They call attention to the periods *between* their various appearances.[21]

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[18] Blenkner 380. Like other memorial objects, it also recalls its own history: associated with Solomon (the figure of Christ-like perfection in the Middle Ages), whilst echoing discussions of excellence in Aristotle's *De Anima*, ed. W. D. Ross (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1956) II.iii.279-98 and Thomas Aquinas's *Sentencia libri De anima*, ed. R.-A Gautier. Sancti Thomae de Aquino Opera Omnia 45.1 (Paris: Vrin, 1984) 5.279-98. Bede also associated the pentangle with the five senses in *De Templo Salomonis* XV, *PL* XCI.770. See Ross G. Arthur, *Medieval Sign Theory and "Sir Gawain and the Green Knight"* (Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1987).

[19] Richard Hamilton Green, "Gawain's Shield and the Quest for Perfection," *Gawain and Pearl* 181.

[20] Barron notes that "bende" was also a specific heraldic term, therefore supporting the idea of physically altering the memorial image upon Gawain's shield. Barron, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight: Text and Translation*, rev. ed. (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1998) 181.

[21] Even in such crucial thematic details, they are not always treated in the same way in Anglo-Norman and Middle English versions, such as *Amis and Amiloun* where the cups that are exchanged between the two brothers are treated more naturally in the latter and kept firmly the mind of an audience, unlike the Anglo-Norman which breaks to explain their origin and significance. *Amis and Amiloun*, ed. MacEdward Leach, EETS O.S. 203 (London: Oxford UP, 1937) 240-51. All subsequent references to *Amis* will be to this edition and cited by line number. Kathryn Hume, "*Amis and Amiloun* and the Aesthetics of Middle English Romance," *Studies in Philology* 70 (1973): 19-41, at 24.

In Marie's *Yonec*, a ring given by the dying hawk-knight becomes a memorial object

of, ironically, forgetfulness:

> Un anelet li ad baillé,
> Si li ad dit e enseigné:
> Ja, tant cum el le gardera,
> A sun seignur n'en membera
> De nule rien que fete seit,
> Ne ne l'en tendrat en destreit. (*Lais* VII.416-20)

However, this is soon replaced by a more conventional object – the knight's sword

which will be given to their son to remember his father's instructions when he is

mature enough (*Lais* VII.421-42). We might also think of the brooch in *Troilus and*

Criseyde, synonymous with the lovers' bond and their loyalty so painfully

"forgotten": "clene out of youre mynde / Ye han me cast'" (*TC* V.1695-6).[22]

Likewise, in the early thirteenth-century *King Horn*, the ring given by Rymenhild to

Horn serves as a visual, material reminder of the latter's promise to return home

within seven years.[23] If he fails to do so, Rymenhild is then free to accept the hand of

another.[24] Beyond the strong structural ritual noted by G. Ziegler, the ring as a

memorial cue is figured in the text as a repeated formula, even a ritual.[25] It is

prominent in four of the five battle scenes and its recollective purpose is

foregrounded at points of heightened emotion and possible distraction for Horn: each

time "He loked on the ringe / And thoghte on Rymenhilde" (*Horn* 617-8).[26]

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[22] In this romance, the memorial object is duplicated to symbolise an new memorial attachment, that of Criseyde to Diomede, which is confirmed at the latter's death. *TC* V.1653-67.

[23] As with *Havelok the Dane* the original source is most probably English but the first extant text is the Anglo-Norman versrion. It survives in three manuscripts all dated before c.1300. For the date of the composition of *King Horn* see Loomis, *Medieval Romance* 89-94; Mehl 48-9; Sands 15-16; Cooper, *Romance in Time* 420.

[24] The situation appears also in the Anglo-Norman *Romance of Horn by Thomas* though, typically, expressed in an expanded style which compromises a little the sense of temporal compression by the ring (the Anglo-Norman runs to 5240 lines compared to the 1542 lines of the Middle English).

[25] G. Ziegler, "Structural Repetition in *King Horn*," *Neophilologische Mitteilungen* 81 (1980): 403-8.

[26] Mary Hynes-Berry, "Cohesion in *King Horn* and *Sir Orfeo*," *Speculum* 50 (1975): 652-70, at 660. The phrase, essentially a formula, also appears at 569-74, 881-2, and 1495-6.

Cooper's analysis of the action, "[i]f he remembers to look at the ring" is telling: he must "look" but, in the sense of medieval *memoria*, also want to "see" the image in memory.[27] Although Horn does not explicitly forget, there is a curious feeling that the past is neglected and object (at least in significance) lost as we learn that Horn, under the identity of Cutberd, "wonede there / Fulle seve yere" (*Horn* 925-6). This equals and, by implication, exceeds the timespan of his promise (a sense of temporal dislocation experienced by the lovers in *Sir Degrevant* [*Degrevant* 1439-40]) during which period "to Rymenhild he ne sente / Ne him self ne wente" (*Horn* 927-8). As in *Sir Isumbras*, memories are figured in the topography and narrative journey as Rymenhild sends a messenger or "knave" (*Horn* 948), a frequent agent of memory in romance, to search for Horn.[28] The news of Rymehild's imminent marriage to "King Mody of Reynes" (*Horn* 959), coupled with the recollection of the promise made in Westernesse ("'I seche fram biweste / Horn of Westernesse'" [*Horn* 953-4]) stirs Horn's memory and, by returning the messenger, he sends an agent into his past to recollect, at least for an audience, his promise to Rymenhild and prove his loyalty to memory itself: "'I shall be other bitime / A Soneday by prime'" (*Horn* 973-4). The woman is prepared to receive this information, standing "To loke with hire ighe" (*Horn* 983). Unfortunately, this journey into Horn's past is interrupted by the knave's drowning, meaning that the news of Horn's impending arrival does not reach Rymenhild. She is merely confronted with the distressing image of the drowned body, emblematic of her dashed hopes of Horn's return: "Tho fond heo the knave adrent / That heo hadde for Horn y-sent / And that sholde Horn bringe" (*Horn* 985-7). For Rymenhild, the ring has failed and memory, it seems, cannot be relied upon. This gives even greater dramatic impetus to Horn's return journey. It recalls

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[27] Cooper, *Romance in Time* 150.
[28] Cf. the messengers used in *Emaré* (524) and *Athelston* (181-201). This is discussed in Chapter Six 204-17.

Isumbras' almost unconscious journey across the Greek Sea, indirectly guided towards his wife (*Isumbras* 500) just as Horn enjoys a favourable wind ("The wind him gan to blowe" [*Horn* 1017]) as he speeds towards the location which recalls his earlier departure, "Right into Westernesse" (*Horn* 1020).

It is intriguing and indicative of Horn's brief forgetfulness that there is no obvious mention of the ring on this journey as a memorial object guiding Horn home. However, there is a subtle image of the ring in memory, created by a verbal pun as Rymenhild surveys the dead knave: "Tho fond heo the knave adrent /…Hire fingres heo gan wringe" (*Horn* 985, 988). Captured in the woman's distress at Horn's apparent neglect is, symbolically, an absent ring: our attention is drawn to the bare "fingres," grasped tightly in sorrow, whilst the action itself creates the missing object acoustically through a remarkable combination of emotion and recollection. It is appropriate that this subtle memory is then followed by another of Horn's reactions to the memorial object: the audience this time has also "thoghte on Rymenhild" through a ring conspicuous by its absence and now approves of Horn's attempt to gain leave from King Thurston in order to return to his past. Puns are essentially verbal disguises, allowing implicit connections to be established beneath the surface, even transgressing temporal divisions. This is given a dramatic performance in the subsequent reunion scene between Horn (disguised as a beggar) and Rymenhild. The word "horn" appears nineteen times, both as a drinking vessel and hero's name, to form a highly imaginative process of gradual recollection. Recalling Horn's neglect of the ring, the literal "horn" is initially dismissed by Rymenhild and replaced with a cup, a more fitting vessel for a beggar rather than the elaborate drinking horn with which she has served "Knightes and squire" (*Horn* 1119). However, this replacement contains the woman's struggle to remember: "'Ne

sawe ich nevre, co ich wene, / Beggere that were so kene'" (*Horn* 135-6). Couched within her disbelief is an emphasis upon sight and, importantly, prior experience stored imagistically.

This cues an attempt to repair the temporal divide overstretched and forgotten by Horn and that, now, the queen is challenged to overcome. Consequently, verbal disguises are employed even more prominently in Horn's toast: "'Drink null I of dishe- / Drink to Horn of horne. / Feor ich am y-orne'" (*Horn* 1152-4). The (apparently) absent man Horn is now explicitly connected with the beggar before her through his words and, ironically, the object he now lifts to his lips. Moreover, the answering rhyme "y-orne" reinforces the pun whilst still suggesting the space and time which Rymenhild's recollection is attempting to recognise, control, and close. Although the chill she experiences (*Horn* 1156) is attributed to the mere mention of her lover's name and the strange knowledge that this beggar seems to have concerning him, it marks the beginning of the woman's *anagnorisis*, figured again in visual terms: "…thu me telle / If thu ever y-sighe / Horn under wude lighe" (*Horn* 1164-6). Through probing the beggar for details, there is a gradual acceptance of the temporal gap between past and present, the intervening details of which she believes might be offered by the figure standing before her.

It is the ring that serves as the final recollection which Horn, rather dramatically, flings into the horn before inviting Rymenhild to peer inside:

> Horn dronk of horn a stunde
> And threw the ring to grunde.
> He seyde, 'Quen, now seche
> What is in thy drenche.'   (*Horn* 1167-70)

The situation parallels that at the close of *Sir Isumbras*, including the terminology of "finding" the past: "Tho fond heo what heo wolde, / A ring y-graven of golde" (*Horn* 1173-4). However, this in itself only confirms that the beggar has come into contact

with Horn.[29] Although his actions after throwing the ring are not stated, the fact that Rymenhild sends "a damesele / After the palmere" (*Horn* 1179-80) suggests that Horn has left and is, symbolically, called back by the queen. The lands and seas far away from Westernesse have now been condensed and localised. Finally, in response to Rymenhild's plan to kill the "king lothe" and herself, Horn reveals himself in terms that address the queen's inability to recognise him: "'Ne canstu me noght knowe? / Ich am Horn of Westernesse'" (*Horn* 1216-7). The question is laden with irony, directed to an audience who has not only known his identity but has trusted in the memory of events throughout the narrative, clues of which Rymenhild has been oblivious. Appropriately, at this point, verbal disguises are abandoned with "that blake of his swere" (*Horn* 1213) and confirmed by "Ich am Horn of Westernesse," a phrase which combines present ("Ich am") with past ("of") in a drama of recollection and recognition of the kind widespread in romance, but of which *King Horn* offers a particularly imaginative example. There must be a dialogue between past experience and memorial image, facilitated here through an object which initiates the creative work of those receiving it, holding it, and finding its place in the memorial store.

Dreams and the Future Perfect.

Romances urge their characters and audiences to perform *memoria* continuously during a narrative and to *trust* the value of that performance or craft: Horn needed to leave, forget, remember his promise and subsequently return – "'Mid spere I shall furst ride / And my knighthod proue'" (*Horn* 548-9). In our post-Freudian culture, from the emergence of the psychoanalyst's seminal *Die Traumdeutung*, we have been accustomed to the concept of the relationship between dreams and memory:

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[29] For comparable questions regarding an individual assumed dead see Sir Orfeo's questions concerning himself. *Orfeo* 485-34.

they offer distorted or exaggerated aspects of our past which, if unlocked, can provide direction for the present and future. However, it would be misleading to imply that medieval understanding of dreaming was divorced from similarly psychological interpretations, just as the trustworthy, prophetic aspects of dreaming were not excluded from Freud's observations.[30] The dream vision *topos* was prominent in late medieval England and closely aligned with religious insight or vision: *Pearl*, Langland's ambitious allegory, and Chaucer's development of the form portray individuals granted access to previously unknown realms and experiences, frequently transgressing temporal planes for greater moral understanding of the self within an earthly and heavenly scheme.[31] Yet romance dreams also look across time itself in the manner of memorial objects, "'That dremes ben the revelations / Of goddes'" (*TC* V.366-7), whilst similarly manufacturing a relevance to immediate reality which audience and character are later invited to recognise and remember when that reality, in some form, is realised.[32]

Merlin is the archetypal interpreter of such dreams, looking forward to Henry James' "sudden dull gleams of memory, of expectation," and through him dreams become malleable memories.[33] In his absence, others such as *Troilus*' Cassandra

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[30] Sigmund Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, ed. and trans. James Strachey (New York: Avon, 1965) 659-60. Freud observes "By picturing our wishes as fulfilled, dreams are after all leading us into the future. But this future, which the dreamer pictures as the present, has been moulded by his indestructible wish into a perfect likeness of the past." This is developed in Carl Jung, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, ed. Aniela Jaffé, trans. Richard and Clara Winston, rev. ed. (New York: Vintage, 1965). This could be seen as analogous to the processes of medieval prophecy. See Helen Cooper, "Thomas of Erceldoune: Romance as Prophecy," *Cultural Encounters* 184.

[31] See Steven F. Kruger, *Dreaming in the Middle Ages*, Cambridge Studies in Medieval Literature 14 (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1992). For the peculiarities of medieval dreams and differences in interpretation compared to contemporary psychology see Hans-Jürgen Bachorski and Pamela E. Selwyn, "Dreams That Have Never Been Dreamt at All: Interpreting Dreams in Medieval Literature," *History Workshop Journal* 49 (2000): 95-127.

[32] In works such as *The Book of the Duchess* there seems to be some connection between hearing a text and interpreting a dream.

[33] Henry James, *Portrait of a Lady*, ed. Nicola Bradbury, Oxford World's Classics (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1998) 595. This ability is crucial to Merlin's role as advisor in the attempts to recollect the history of Arthurian myth and legend as was attempted by Laȝamon, Wace and, later, Malory. See *Morte* I.20; I.24-6.

assume this role which is also shared by an audience as the dream mediates "between plot and person, the lofty authorial view and the character or reader still immersed in the process of time."[34] Pandarus is mistaken to declare "A strawe for alle swevenes signifiaunce! / … / ther woot no man aright what dremes mene" (*TC* V.362-4): Troilus' dream about the boar comes true and, importantly, Chaucer urges his audience to correlate dream and reality, past visions or memories with future actions. In *King Horn*, Rymenhild's fishing dream is a prime example of a premonition where, despite the clearly defined images, there is a freedom of interpretation, liberated by the effect of time upon the eventual recollection. The scene is rooted in real experience: one day "To the see my net I caste" (*Horn* 663), which is soon broken by the "gret fish" (*Horn* 665) with the result that she loses the creature that is most desired: "Ich wene that ich shall leose / The fish that ich wolde cheose" (*Horn* 667-8). The vision recalls the world of allegory and fable with animals used to carry some deeper meaning, depicting human behaviour; yet with greater vibrancy and meaningful effect. In essence, animals provide the striking or shocking images which are the most memorable, whilst the pattern of action remains constant and will re-appear, the bestial characters replaced by human counterparts given the creative space of time. In dreams, the frames for future events have been erected and are relied upon by memory. Within these the animals can be replaced by present reality, facilitated through a coincidence of action that is directly comparable, exaggerated, or re-classified during the intervening time. Appropriately, Horn interprets the dream, lifting it from the realm of fable, and applies it to the current situation as the "gret fish" is identified as a human ("Other sum man shall us shende. / The fish that brak the line" [*Horn* 684-5]).

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[34] Patricia Parker, *Inescapable Romance: Studies in the Poetics of a Mode* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1979) 36.

The future has already been committed to the memorial store, expressed by Horn as he asserts the veracity of his interpretation: "That shall don us tene / And wurth wel sone y-sene" (*Horn* 687-8). "[Y]-sene" is particularly appropriate, the "certainty" of events to come derives from the fact that they have in fact already been "seen," albeit in this abstract form. "Thy sweven shall wende" (*Horn* 683), an enigmatic phrase glossed by Donald Sands as "Your dream shall turn [to good]," is perhaps better understood in terms of the wide semantic range of the verb: the dream has shown the way in which events will "turn," allowing for any future change to be approached with reference to the memory of that very event in the dreamed past.[35] The only information lacking is the precise timing of this occasion, the space between dream and reality but characters and audience are nonetheless prepared for something to happen soon.

King Horn actually extends the memorial function of its dream. The remembered experience plays a crucial role in the recognition scene, becoming a memorial object much like the drinking-horn and ring as Horn tells of his hardship as a fisherman, calling attention to a particular detail from Rymenhild's earlier dream - the net ("My net lith her by hand" [*Horn* 1145]). Past and present are thrown together as Horn, presently in disguise, becomes a character in Rymenhild's past dream which he correctly interpreted and of which the adoption of the current disguise of a beggar is the result. The dream was initially proleptic and yet now serves an analeptic function, albeit one that paradoxically looks back to journey forward into the intervening space between the dream and current arrival of the beggar. Robert Harbison explicitly connects dreaming and memory: "[d]reaming the fantastic is not enough; it must be lived. Everything is objectified to be fixed in the

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[35] Sands 34.

memory, and the objects are memory devices, automatic history as characters are not. Intense fear of loss or forgetting makes the fixing itself a central act."[36] This assessment could be equally applicable to the above discussion of memorial objects, yet it is particularly relevant to the function of "fantastic" dream experiences which are "fixed" in memory to be revisited as the events themselves unfold, thereby aligning a dream experience with the very physical building of memory in Hugh of Saint Victor's ship and the advice from Aristotle *et al* that memorial images should be sufficiently striking or vivid. It is as frightening to forget the dream, or for one to forget to store it, as the liminal experience itself.

William of Palerne, written c.1355, features several dreams which serve an equally important function "bearing directly upon the story and influencing its development."[37] In one, William is visited by Melior and, given the vibrancy of the experience, he is moved to shower his pillow with kisses: "Þat pulvere clept he curteisly and kust it ful ofte, / and made þerwiþ þe most merþe þat ani man schold" (*William* 675-6).[38] Having awoken, distraught to find that Melior is not in his bedroom, he begins to search for her in the conventional emotional state of the tortured lover.[39] However this dream, as in *King Horn*, implicitly looks forward to a real meeting with his love, the circumstances of which have been stored in memory

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[36] Robert Harbison, *Eccentric Spaces* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2000) 77.

[37] The romances is based on an early thirteenth-century French version (but there is also fifteenth-century prose version) and the English only survives in one manuscript: Cambridge, Kings College Cambridge MS 13. Further discussion of the date of *William of Palerne* see the introduction by Bunt, especially xii-xix; Loomis, *Medieval Romances* 214-22; Cooper 429. Kate Watkins Tibbals, "Elements of Magic in the Romance of *William of Palerne*," *Modern Philology* 1 (1904): 355-71, at 357. Given their structural integrity to the narrative, these prophetic dreams function in the same way in the Anglo-Norman analogue, *Guillaume de Palerne*.

[38] Uniquely, in this romance, dreams are sometimes manufactured and sent by a human figure, Melior's hand maiden Alisaundrine, an unusual detail that removes the crafting of a future perfect from an author's omniscience to a figure enmeshed within the romance world. *William* 650-7. For this and other examples of magic "humans" see Corinne Saunders, *Magic and the Supernatural in Medieval Romance*, Studies in Medieval Romance 12 (Cambridge: Brewer, 2010).

[39] A similar dream occurs in *Troilus and Criseyde* (*TC* V.1233-1241), a more sedate version of the dream in *Il Filostrato* VII.23-5. See N. R. Havely, *Chaucer's Boccaccio: Sources for "Troilus" and the "Knight's" and "Franklin's" Tales*, Chaucer Studies V (Cambridge: Brewer, 1990) 88-9

through the dream. Consequently, his search for the lady is coupled with a dramatic irony, perceptible by an audience, and captured in his rhetorical questions "'Nas mi menskful ladi Meliors h[er]einne'" (*William* 694) and "'For soþe, ich am a mad man, now wel ich may knowe, / forto wene in þis wise þis wrong metyng soþe'" (*William* 705-6). Alerted by the convention of romance's prophetic dreams, an audience is similarly searching for a meeting between William and Melior to absolve William from the charge of madness emanating from the disparity between dream and reality. Appropriately, the circumstances of their meeting recreate the dreamscape as William, with the memorial images still prominent in his thoughts ("of þat metyng of Melior þat schene, / þat heng hevi in his hert and so hard cleved" [*William* 733-4]), falls asleep and dreams that Melior brings him a rose. Interestingly, there is a coincidence of terminology between William's sorrow "in his hert" and the phrase as it occurs elsewhere, specifically in Chaucer, to denote the impressed memory of a lover in one's heart, carried across geographical and temporal distance.[40] He awakes to discover that the past experiences (both of the first and second dream) have come true in the present as Melior joins him: "'Mi lovely swete lemman, oure Lord ʒif þe joye!'" (*William* 876). It is not only the rose that cures him of "alle his sor greves" (*William* 868) but the meeting with his love and, ultimately, the assimilation of present reality with memorial promises from a dreamed past.

Elsewhere Melior, like Rymenhild, dreams in easily remembered, animal images - particularly appropriate given the bear skins worn by William and herself following their escape (*William* 1705).[41] Her dream depicts bears, apes, bulls, and badgers attacking their cave, led by a lion and accompanied by a lion cub (*William*

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[40] In Chaucer, the place in which the memory is stored is sometimes changed to the mind, but with much the same implications. Cf. *TC* IV.18 and also *Isumbras* 627.

[41] We might also think of Theseus' descriptions of Palamon and Arcite (KnT I.1598, I.1656-60, I.1699-70). See Elbow 107.

2293). However, the werewolf, who has been their protector until this point, enters the cave, catches the cub and runs away, distracting "alle þe breme bestes" (*William* 2310) who neglect the two bears "for þe ȝong lyouns sake" (*William* 2311). There is no interpretation of this dream; it is dismissed by William as "but fanteme" (*William* 2315); however this is immediately followed by the sound of horsemen who re-enact the dream, albeit with a different cast: "Ac soþli, as che had seide, riȝt wiþ þat ilke, / þei herd an huge route of horse þat hel al aboute, / and herd þat quarrere umbecast and al þe cuntre wide" (*William* 2317-9). An audience no doubt expected it, and the speed with which the prophecy comes true, punctuated only by William's misguided dismissal, emphasises the importance of dreams as preparation for the future, provided they are interpreted and remembered correctly. Here, the interpretation occurs along with the real events themselves: the various beasts were armed men, the lion was the provost, and the cub his son.

However, William continues to dismiss the dream. Upon seeing the ferocious company he resigns the pair to death with "'Alas, my loveliche lemman, þat ever y lif hadde, / to be for al our bale brouȝt to swiche an hende!'" (*William* 2332-3) and urges Melior to remove her bearskin. An audience, however, with the dream still fresh in memory, is following events through the lens of recollected prophecy and so fears little for the lives of the protagonists. Conversely, we await the arrival of the werewolf who, as predicted, snatches the provost's son, "be þe middel in his mouþe, þat muche was and large" (*William* 2374), and runs off roaring loudly followed by the provost and his company. The process expected and explored by the characters and audience looks forward to the imaginative theories of dream recollection and interpretation with which we are familiar today; however, the effect in terms of the

narrative and episodic experience of romance is to provide a sense of trust, familiarity, even satisfaction.

Perhaps the most elaborate dream in *William of Palerne* is that of the queen, William's mother, besieged by the King of Spain at Palermo. In the dream, places are contracted with the queen and her daughter in "þe park þat to þe paleis longed" (*William* 2872). An audience is urged to recall the city of Palerno, the untenable situation of which we have just learned: surrounded by the army of the King of Spain now metaphorically transformed into "an hundered þousand.../ of lebardes and beres and alle bestes boute number" (*William* 2873-4). As they "grimli gapande to greve hire and hire douȝter" (*William* 2875), the danger faced by the pair is greater than the reality suggested earlier – "Williams moder in meschef wiþ moche folk þere legend" (*William* 2842). As with the previous dream, the use of animalistic metaphor is highly appropriate given the animal disguises worn by William and Melior, along with the werewolf, Alphonse, transformed for the majority of the tale.[42] An additional certainty is introduced as the dream recollects previous disguises and transforms them into the current costume: "and whanne þo two white beres were com hem nere, / þei semde to hire siȝt tvo semli hertes" (*William* 2879-80). The phrase "semde to hire siȝt" is revealing, capturing the visionary, metaphorical aspect of the dream along with the notion of "siȝt" and appearance. The animals themselves are then located even deeper in the memorial store as attention falls upon the forehead of each beast:

> Þe huger hert in his hed had, as hire semede,
> þe fasoun and þe forme of a fair kniȝt in feld,
> and semde hire owne sone þat sche long hade missed;
> þat oþer hert, as hire þouȝt, þe schap hade of a mayde,
> …
> and eiþer hert on his hed hadde, as hire þout,

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[42] For a explicit references to disguise in this tale see *William* 1677; 1705; 1729; 1744; 2420; 2564.

> a gret kroune of gold ful of gode stones,   (*William* 2882-5, 2888-9)

Again, the notion of "seeming" and "thinking" continues, developing the conceptual ambiguity which this romance exploits so well with temporal challenges exacerbated by changes in appearance. The uncertainty of "forme" and "schap" suggests that these are only shapely representations, creating an ironic contrast with the true identity of those carrying the marks. The shape of William and Melior is sketched out: for the queen, the image returns to her pain earlier in the narrative whilst an audience, in addition to recollecting these earlier events, appreciates imagistic outlines filled by present reality – the lovers beneath the deerskins. The effect of collapsing a past which has already been performed and is known *within* a vision of events to come urges an audience to respect and acknowledge all aspects of the dream. Indeed, Carruthers believes that all tenses in romance derive from the present tense (the tense of composing and thinking), even when the past tense is employed; the dreams, therefore, would seem to draw upon the assuredness of past experience, mediated through the present, to create an equally stable future.[43] The past it re-presents is validated by audience memory and, similarly, the future predictions become assimilated through an ingenious, if paradoxical, "future-perfect."[44]

However, in the second portion of the queen's dream, memory's metaphorical opportunities are developed beyond stored imagery to encompass the entire dream landscape. Again, the intersection of the temporal and spatial is mapped

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[43] Mary Carruthers, "Meditations on the 'Historical Present' and 'Collective Memory' in Chaucer and *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*," *Time in the Medieval World* 137-55.

[44] The grammatical term is used to capture the sense of a future defined by a past, the later point essentially already established and remembered as it is experienced in the present moment with a certain degree of creative manipulation and interpretation. Today the term has associations with Derrida's theory: the notion of "a-venir," the "democracy to-come," and the future-perfect as utopian aspiration. Here, perfection retains its grammatical sense of completion and future assurance. For medieval prophetic visions and memory see Carruthers, *Craft of Thought* 66-9.

onto the romance's narrative past and present. Having witnessed the hart taking the largest prisoners whilst the others fled, the queen returns to her castle:

> and turned up to þe heiȝest tour to bihold aboute;
> þan þout hire þat hire riȝt arm last ouer Rome,
> and lelli hire left arm lai al ouer Spayne,
> and boþe þo komly kingdomes komen to hire wille,
> forto herken al hire hest and hire wille worche.   (*William* 2907-11)

The scene begins in the present and with the known and familiar as she enters the tower of her castle which is, at the moment, under threat. Moreover, the topography surveyed from her vantage point could equally be that of the narrative which she embraces with both arms and an audience is alerted to the possible symbolism of this action.[45] Clearly the gesture seems to be one of rule over individual lands, whilst deliberate differentiation between right and left implies that it is not the present queen who will rule all from her tower, but perhaps two individuals symbolised by the arms of the queen's embrace. A highly memorable image is therefore created yet, despite its vividness, there is an openness and flexibility of interpretation, looking towards the future rule of Rome and Spain. The queen approaches the wise priest, Moyses, to interpret these dreams although, significantly, this is perhaps after an audience has already extracted the meaning for itself (*William* 2917). Moyses, therefore, serves to inform the queen: to clarify, revise, but moreover to reassure an audience of its own superior memorial and interpretative abilities. However, it is not until the final lines of the romance that the queen makes this explicit: "þan com here in mynde at þat mene while, / þat here sweuen was soþ þat sum-time hire mette" (*William* 5496-7). The tone suggests a final, almost delayed, realisation. An audience was already aware of the "soþ" when the dream was first articulated, whilst the queen seems much slower to recollect the experience or bring it "in mynde." For an

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[45] There is a comparable moment in *Havelok the Dane* as Havelok dreams of one arm reaching over Denmark and the other stretching over England (*Havelok* 1283-312).

audience, however, the experience remains much more immediate and the explanation (*William* 5501-03) merely recalls what an audience has, hopefully, already interpreted around two thousand lines earlier.

In this narrative, dreams become future memories to give an interpretative assurance which comes some way to counter the tale's disguises and metamorphoses. Crucial to this is an audience's trust of the dreams, demonstrated by a brief and somewhat ambiguous dream of Melior, shortly after the queen's experience has been interpreted by Moyses. She explains: "'me þouȝt erþen a[n e]rn, er euer I was ware, / hade vs up take into þat heiȝe toure; / wheþer it geyne to gode or grame, wot I neuer.'" (*William* 3105-7). The "heiȝe toure" has been transported from the queen's previous dream to the vision of one of the liminal protagonists – Melior. The question concerning the meaning of the dream and whether it is ominous or promising is answered by William with reference to faith in God: "'þat it gayneþ but god, / for God may us help.'" (*William* 3109). The specific meaning of the eagle is unclear (there is no direct parallel as with the animals of previous dreams); however, the bird had strong associations with birth and Christ, perhaps explaining William's subsequent evocation of divine will in future events. Moreover, the eagle was viewed as a symbol of spiritual contemplation, a meaning derived from Aristotle's belief that the bird looks directly into the sun upon its ascent, in addition to its prominent position in decoration either heraldic or artistic such as on top of Tryamour's pavilion in *Sir Launfal* (*Launfal* 268-9). The dream prompts William and Melior to search for an answer which comes not across the sea (led by Isumbras' griffin) but out of a bush from behind which the Queen, also disguised as a hind, emerges (*William*: 3110-2). At this moment both dreams are recollected and validated by the present, yet through a coincidence of location (the tower) they are

only available to those with the most greatly stocked and ordered memorial storehouse – the omniscient and prudent audience.[46] The willingness to accept and remember such dreams in romance becomes an assertion of one's faith in memory often, as here, advocated with religious colouring. However we might consider Herodis' pseudo-dream in *Sir Orfeo* in which she is assured of her impending abduction and after which she is driven to self-mutilation, the dream and force of its premonition entering the psyche and resulting in a bodily experience.[47] Her wounds cannot be concealed, the visual reminders of a future occurrence, and equally the memory she imparts cannot be overpowered by Orfeo and his men: despite surrounding her with "ten hundred knightes" (*Orfeo* 159) "ammides hem full right / The Quen was oway y-twight" (*Orfeo* 167-8). Even the mysterious force of Fairy ("With fairy forth y-nome" [*Orfeo* 169]), is countered by the certainty of her abduction, remembered within a constant place – beneath the "ympe-tree" (*Orfeo* 46, 162, 383). In this way, a romance asserts that its episodes are worth collecting in order to be remembered later, supported by trusted expectations and assurances which are embedded in the narratives.

The Trials of *Sir Launfal*, *Athelston,* and *Amis and Amiloun*: Narrative (Re)assurances

Through romance *memoria* an audience is alerted to what is about to occur through a process of memorial recall operating at an aesthetic, pseudo-structural level through a technique analogous to the romance ritual's interplay between places and spaces,

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[46] Dreams with similar prophetic yet memorial functions appear in *Ipomadon* during the dream of Tholamewe (*Ipomadon* 1226). Elsewhere in *Beves* there is Saber's dream (*Beves* 3841) and the strange dream-like reappearance of a boar in *Beves,* recollecting his father's earlier journey into the forest to obtain a boar's head for his lady (*Beves* 620). Cf. the dream of wolves and bears in *Guy of Warwick* (*Guy* 4016). Another dream also occurs in *Guy of Warwick* as Tirri sleeps and Guy watches an "ermine" journey out of Tirri's mouth and, seemingly, into the future, before returning inside his host's body as past and future stored knowledge (*Guy* 9360).

[47] See Saunders, *Rape* 228-33. Cf. *Orfeo* 53-9; 79-89.

order and the forest, yet still connected to the moral and thematic unity (and therefore stable identity) of the narrative itself. However, the process retains a certain spontaneity, or at least the appearance of such, prompted by unpredictable events. This is exemplified by the final court scene in *Sir Launfal* which is heavy with tension as Launfal continues to deny that any of the arriving maidens is his own, Tryamour, despite the fact that this would almost certainly absolve him of the accusations of un-chivalric behaviour towards Guinevere.[48] A large part of the tension stems from an audience: as Launfal replies "'Non of ham my leman nis'" (*Launfal* 857) or "'Alas, I knowe hem no*u*ght" (*Launfal* 896) there is a momentary ripple of panic. To lie and claim that one of the ladies is Tryamour would have even more severe consequences for the knight should his love subsequently appear. The prudent audience urges Launfal to wait, almost railing against Gawain's temptation to answer in the affirmative (*Launfal* 854-5, 893-4). Yet what has created the audience's certainty that Tryamour will eventually re-appear to save her knight from the legal proceedings, reaffirming our belief in the power of loyalty? This depends upon the importance of bonds between lovers, but is also supported by the memory of an earlier situation in the romance, subsequently stored, and now recollected and remembered. The process is illuminated by a comparison with Marie's earlier and briefer *Lanval*. Although Earl Anderson believes that both romances test the strength of Launfal's manhood, during the final scene what is simultaneously challenged is the knight's willingness to *remember* such qualities and their location within previous, comparable experiences.[49]

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[48] In order to defend against Guinevere's advances, Launfal has revealed the existence of Tryamour, but also the fact that his love's ugliest maid is more beautiful than the king's wife (*Launfal* 694-99).
[49] Earl. R. Anderson, "The Structure of *Sir Launfal*," *Papers on Language and Literature* 13 (1977): 115-24.

The remembered experience is the knight's first encounter with the realm of Fairy, interpreted originally as "pandering to the materialistic yearnings of [the] audience," which is also a carefully patterned movement through tertiary developments of increasing satisfaction.[50] This is the order or *divisio* (recalling the mnemonic advice of C. Julius Victor in the memory theories) that aids *memoria*: all humans learn from repetitive structures – an aspect which we have seeen already in romance rituals.[51] However, Marie depicts the knight doubting these experiences as they become buried in the recesses of his memory, even verging on incredulity as he returns to familiar reality: "Esbaïz est, ne seit que crier[e], / Il ne la quide mie a veir[e]" (*Lais* V.199-200). The first challenge was to store the experience, and now it is to keep those memories fresh and easily accessible. Ordered experience becomes juxtaposed with the threat of distraction. Against a hazy atmosphere of midday sun Launfal first sees "Gentil maidenes two," their features matched by luxurious attire of "Inde-sandel," "felvett," fur, and bejewelled coronets (*Launfal* 231-40). Yet this is soon surpassed by the beauty and opulence of the pavilion which, significantly, Launfal walks *forward* to encounter, thereby following a trail of ever increasing luxury towards "pomelles of crystal," "golde riche" and "riche amall" (*Launfal* 267-70), marking the appearance of the pavilion as more impressive than the previous "gentil maidens." However, Launfal's journey continues as he enters this sensuous place and discovers an individual embodying such luxury whilst surpassing the beauty surrounding her. Light emanates from Tryamour: no longer reflected, it is now radiated – we have, conceptually, reached the source. This is the climax of the procession of luxury and beauty along which an audience journeys with the knight; however, this has also been subtly enacted within each stage, driving forward the

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[50] Stevens 84.
[51] See the discussion of rituals in Chapter Five 94-100.

sense of increasing expectation and, in terms of mnemonics, *divisio* ensures that the order of the experience is correctly maintained.

The technique has its parallel in Marie's lai which, as in Thomas Chestre's version, also uses smaller climaxes within each level of increasing luxury.[52] The first, during the description of the maidens, occurs in their faces: "Mut par aveient bel le vis" (*Lais* V.60) in Marie, which becomes a more explicit acknowledgement of unprecedented beauty by Chestre – "I sawe nevir non swiche!" (*Launfal* 243). The description of the pavilion is even more effective in this respect, employing *effictio* to guide us towards and through the pavilion to its glittering golden eagle: "Un aigle d'or ot desus mis" (*Lais* V.87) and "Upon the toppe an ern ther stod*e* / Of bournede golde riche and goode" (*Launfal* 268-9). The final climax, in the description of Tryamour, arrives as we learn that she lies semi-covered to reveal her flawless white body, "Tut ot descovert le costé, / Le vis, le col e la peitrine; / Plus ert blanche que flur d'espine" (*Lais* V.104-6), which is retained in the English ("Almest to here gerdilstede; Than lay she uncovert" [*Launfal* 290-1]) and followed with another exclamation ("He seigh nevere non so pert" [*Launfal* 294]). At the level of literal and narrative experience a paradigm has been established and stored in the mind of an audience: that of increasing expectation and staged progression. It is this which is recollected as the first flash of beauty, which has remained so memorable for an audience, intrudes into the dreariness of the legalistic context, effectively reconstructing the pavilion scene, from memory and across time.

As is expected, the recollection involves some conceptual manipulation and this occurs at the level of experience: compared to earlier, an audience is invited to shift perspective – no longer are we approaching various levels of beauty, but we

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[52] Mehl notes, however, that *Sir Launfal* communicates more of the knight's sense of amazement rather than the more formal description of Marie and that of *Sir Landevale*. Mehl 46.

wait with the knight as a luxurious procession approaches us. Guided by the powerful pseudo-mnemonic structure of the earlier scene we are not only assured of Tryamour's arrival, but returned to her promise of loyalty to the knight and Launfal's complementary oath which, of course, has been broken by revealing her existence along with his offensive remark to Guinevere (*Launfal* 361-66). During the intervening time of the narrative, when Launfal has jousted successfully with the aid of the invisible Gyfre, this final scene, although echoing a tertiary structure, inflates the numbers we might have been expecting. The initial two maidens of Marie and Chestre are increased to ten in the final scene, whilst the pavilion which is replaced by another ten maidens and Tryamour remains the solitary, climatic end-point. Expectation is foregrounded by explicit comparisons between the second and first groups, "Fairire than the other ten of sight" (*Launfal* 884), and through subtle increases in luxury and wealth: the initial group arrive "upon joly moiles of Spaine" (*Launfal* 886) whilst the English makes no mention of the mounts of their earlier counterparts (they merely "come ridinge" [*Launfal* 848]) and Marie adds the detail that this was upon "dues beaus palefreiz amblaz" (*Lais* V.473). In addition, the maidens themselves explain, in answer to Arthur's question "'Ho is your lady?'" (*Launfal* 865), that he should prepare suitable lodgings for their mistress (*Launfal* 904-6).

However, the temptation to reveal that one of these ladies is in fact Tryamour remains, exacerbated by the somewhat ambiguous observation of one of the barons, which has no equivalent in Marie's version: "'Have we sein the ma*i*denes bright, / We shull not longe abide'" (*Launfal* 875-6). This indirectly addresses an audience as, despite claims to understand what will eventually occur, the barons fail to intervene and we simultaneously recall an earlier appearance of "maidenes bright." An

audience, especially in its first time of encountering the tale, perhaps begins to doubt that Tryamour will appear, especially as Guinevere calls for the matter to be dealt with quickly. In the English she "supposed gile" (*Launfal* 913) whilst in the French we learn that she grows angry. However, it is at this critical point that memory is validated as Tryamour rides into court "Upon a white comely palfrey" (*Launfal* 928) with characteristics that recall her earlier appearance such as radiating light, hair like gold, and, in the spirit of creative recollection, details that even surpass that previous encounter such as images painted on "The sambus" (*Launfal* 950), "A gerfaucon" (*Launfal* 961), and "Twey white grehoundis" (*Launfal* 965). The length of this description far surpasses those of the other tertiary stages in the romance, occupying almost fifty lines, thereby marking this, at a structural and performative level, as the definitive climax. "A softe pas here palfray fond / That men here shuld beholde" (*Launfal* 962-3) not only affords all an opportunity to luxuriate in her beauty but creates an air of calm to dissolve all tensions. There was no need to fear as, ultimately, the past had dictated that she would re-appear to save her knight. This re-builds the glorious pavilion and with it the bond of loyalty upon which the moral and thematic authority of this romance rests.[53] Unlike *déjà vu*, the metaphorical pavilion has not been seen in this form or indeed in this particular place and time (the court), but certain key details are designed to resonate with the past. As with the dreams, the space across which memory can work is vital and in romances it is the audience who provides the greater memory to enable these processes to take place.

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[53] In addition to the Anglo-Norman and Middle English versions, the additional Middle English *Sir Landevale* relies upon a similar technique of creative recollection, the maidens at the pavilion numbering two which swells to include another two at the trial, followed by an unspecified number surpassing these in beauty, and then the lady herself. *Launfal [Landevale]*, ed. George Lyman Kittredge, *American Journal of Philology* 10 (1889): 1-33, lines 51-6, 346-50, 382-5.

A particularly dramatic and extreme example of this memorial aptitude occurs during the fire trials in the mid-fourteenth-century *Athelston*.[54] Again, there is another legalistic context in which fears and tensions are alleviated by an audience's trust in the veracity of their recollections.[55] Unlike the creative freedom of *Sir Launfal* and *William of Palerne*'s dreamed memories, there is a strong sense of inflexible ritual in this scene, but which, as we have seen in terms of romance structure as a whole, can be used to foster an atmosphere of reassuring familiarity.[56] This may explain the curious, darkly comic moments as an audience places its faith in what has been *seen* in the past and these stored images are layered over the present.[57] The "gret fir" (*Athelston* 569) is laid out "Nine plough-lengthe on rawe" (*Athelston* 571) whilst "Nine sithe the Bishop halewid the way" (*Athelston* 585), a combination of Christian and Pagan rituals to discover who has been treacherous and threatened to overturn Athelston's rule, details deliberately evoking aspects of Anglo-Saxon law.[58] Yet in terms of the current crisis, the trials themselves revisit the events of the past for an audience and confirm these for the characters: those whom we know to be innocent will survive and the guilty will not, a belief that adds an almost hagiographic certainty to the scene.[59] Supporting the religious colouring of the trial, God is thanked as knight, children and Countess survive the fire: "And thankid God that harewede helle / And His Modir so bright" (*Athelston* 595-6), "And

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[54] The romance survives in only one manuscript: Cambridge, Gonville and Caius College MS 175. For the date of the composition of *Athelston* see Laura Hibbard (Loomis), "*Athelston*, a Westminster Legend," *PMLA* 36 (1921): 223-44; Albert C. Baugh, "A Source for the Middle English Romance, *Athelston*," *PMLA* 44 (1929): 377-82; Loomis, *Medieval Romance* 143-4; Mehl 146-7; Sands 131.

[55] Elizabeth Ashman Rowe, "The Female Body Politic and the Miscarriage of Justice in *Athelston*," *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* 17 (1995): 79-98.

[56] For these dreamed memories see the earlier discussion in this chapter 155-66.

[57] Moreover, it is often suggested that the scene recalls the situation of Emma, mother of Edward the Confessor, who was falsely accused of crimes and proved her innocence through similar trials.

[58] For the use of Anglo-Saxon law in Middle English Romance see Rouse. See also F. L. Attenborough, ed. and trans., *The Laws of the Earliest English Kings* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1922) 130.

[59] Elaine Treharne, "Romanticizing the Past in the Middle English *Athelston*," *Review of English Studies*. 50 (1999): 1-21, at 16.

thankid God of his grace" (*Athelston* 614), "And thankid God on rode" (*Athelston* 644), which continues the association of memory, trust and divine faith seen in *Sir Isumbras*.[60] The identical repetition of the ritual beginning with knight, followed by children, and concluded by the wife establishes an increasing sense of reassurance that, unlike the treacherous actions of the evil brother Wymounde, the past will not be rewritten but faithfully recollected and justly performed as the Bishop assured us: "'Sere, of gilt and they be clene, / This doom hem thar nought drede'" (*Athelston* 574-5). The mnemonic aspects of *Sir Launfal*'s procession at the pavilion and trial are comparable here.

The children's laughter and cry of "'Sere, the fir is cold y-nough'" (*Athelston* 610), a rather strange and somewhat macabre statement, is in fact a hyperbolic expression of a trust in memory. In addition, an even more curious detail is that of the Countess' pregnancy ("She was full gret y-gon with child" [*Athelston* 622]) which fails to excuse her from taking the same trial and, even more strangely, she gives birth after the experience to "Saint Edemound" (*Athelston* 649).[61] Again, the distressing image of a pregnant woman struggling across hot coals whilst suffering extreme labour pains which cause her nose to bleed is another exaggerated example of the trust placed in memory. She will, undoubtedly, emerge unharmed and, not only that, she has also produced a new life who is rewarded with half of the king's land and the promise of the throne of England upon his death. This forms an appropriate echo of the events at the start of the romance as promises between the brothers were first made "With a cross, stood in a street" (*Athelston* 17), a detail which re-appears just before the trials begin: "Unto the Brokene-Cross of ston"

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[60] Cf. *Isumbras* 298-300; 376-84.

[61] The birth of Edemound repairs the infamous "kick" from Athelston earlier in the narrative, misled by a false "memory" of the past, that killed the unborn child (*Athelston* 282-4). See Nancy Mason Bradbury, "Beyond the Kick: Women's Agency in *Athelston*," *Cultural Encounters* 149-58.

(*Athelston* 546).[62] The connection between memory and sight is forged in the reaction of the lords after each trial: "That saugh the lords of the land" (*Athelston* 589, 613, 643). The flames of the fire allow them to "see" into this past; what has been shown is, in effect, a recollection of earlier scenes now cast, through the metaphorical abstractions of *memoria*, into a simple binary opposition between good and bad, heaven and hell, the saved and the damned. From assurances that they *will* survive follows a reassurance that the present miracle, paradoxically, is a remembrance of a past reality.[63]

The fire trials depend upon the past to guarantee their outcomes, thereby calling into question the extent to which the force of memory can affect our perception of reality in romance, where individuals *must* achieve what they have earned in order for the tale to retain its moral authority and identity. We might consider the survival or "resurrection" of the children in *Amis and Amiloun*, a a popular folktale depicting brotherly loyalty which is dated to the early fourteenth century as a redaction of the French *Amis e Amilun*.[64] The infants' survival appears as miraculous as the Green Knight's ability to survive decapitation (*Gawain* 443), but is shrouded in mystery between the point of death and survival. This romance is concerned with brotherly loyalty and it is the memory of that bond that an audience is urged to recollect as a way to rescue the romance from its moment of murderous disaster.[65] The final test comes during a dream in which Amis is informed by an angel that he must kill his own children in order to restore Amiloun to health, a

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[62] We might think of the reoccurring "ympe-tre" in *Sir Orfeo* in this respect. *Orfeo* 46, 162, 383, 432.

[63] In contrast, the traitor Wymound fails to survive the fire: a punishment, but also a remembrance, of his past treacherous actions in the tale - notably his attempt to frame Egelan and his family. *Athelston* 775-788.

[64] For details of the date of *Amis and Amiloun* as a redaction see Loomis, *Medieval Romance* 71-3; Mehl 105-6.

[65] The final episode also draws upon the biblical analogue of Abraham and Isaac along with broader ideas concerning Christ's sacrifice and redemption.

challenge of fraternal loyalty compounded by the fact that Amiloun has experienced the same dream.

This dream combines the prophetic visions in *William of Palerne*, the proleptic (and eventually analeptic) dream in *King Horn*, and the creative interpretation encouraged by *Sir Launfal*.[66] It looks to the present (Amiloun's condition) and towards the promise of future healing but, simultaneously, reaches into the past of the narrative – the many examples of fraternal loyalty throughout the romance. In the logic of the tale, it is this greater storehouse of memory that informs his decision to commit the unthinkable by murdering his own children. This he does, on Christmas Eve, despite the protestations of his brother, and admits his actions to his wife in a moving scene of disbelief and painful repentance:[67]

> 'Boþe mi childe ich haue slan,
> Þat were so hende & gode;
> For me þou3t in mi sweuen
> Þat an angel com fram heuen...'   (*Amis* 2381-4)

The revelation of past actions is juxtaposed with poignant references to present and future: the children that "were" so lovely and good no longer "are," whilst with the phrase "me þou3t" he appears now to doubt the veracity of his dream, his subsequent actions, and with it even his own memory.[68] The only certainty is that he has killed the children, as we see ourselves: "No lenger stint he no stode" (*Amis* 2305) but cuts their throats, collects their blood, covers them as if they were sleeping, before bathing his brother (*Amis* 2305-52). Yet in the conversation with his wife there is a disbelief in his own actions and their very motivation – the words of the angel. In contrast to the dreams we have previously encountered, the "future perfect" is problematized. He, like an audience, must trust in earlier memories of Amis' loyalty

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[66] See the discussion of these romances earlier in this chapter 155-66; 167-71.
[67] This detail is unique to the Middle English version.
[68] Cf. Orfeo's reaction to Herodis' mutilation. *Orfeo* 80-94.

to his brother of which this is the greatest expression, defined by D. R. Baldwin as "treuthe."[69] This is the conclusion of multiple veracities which memory must validate, even eclipsing the memory of the dream itself – that Amiloun will be healed in return for the infants' deaths: "[e]verything is now resolved, except of course Amis has slaughtered his children."[70] Not only is the truth of the dream soon proved when Amiloun is found fully recovered (after the wife's support of Amis' actions [*Amis* 2389-400]), but also the *children* are discovered alive and well "With-out we*m*me and wound / Hool and sound þe children found, / And layen to-geder and play" (*Amis* 2419-21).[71] Joyous relief in the unharmed children recalls the laughter as Athelston's children enter the fire trials and Isumbras' confidence after the loss of his family: attitudes to life and death somehow connected to, and trusted through, memory. It could be argued that this miraculous survival is partly due to Amis' prayer in the chapel after the murders, a detail which has a thematic connection to the angel in a romance that emphasises the role of God in the lives of people.[72] However, in terms of the romance's overwhelming emphasis on fraternal loyalty, the memory of its success throughout the narrative provides some explanation, and even justification, for the recovery of Amiloun and the children. Their murder is a remembered version of that loyalty.

Indeed, rather than having a prolonged discussion of their survival, Amis and Amiloun soon return to rescue the latter's wife. The memory of the murders is obliterated – a single moment recast by memories of loyalty which, given their power, have even repaired horrific events of present reality. It is this which allowed

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[69] D. R. Baldwin, "*Amis and Amiloun*: The Testing of Treuthe," *Papers on Language and Literature* 16 (1980): 353-65. See also D. Kramer, "Structural Artistry in *Amis and Amiloun*," *Annuale Médiévale* 9 (1968): 103-22.

[70] Edward G. Foster, "Simplicity, Complexity, and Morality in Four Medieval Romances," *Chaucer Review* 31 (1997): 407-19, at 415.

[71] Foster suggests the roots of the "resurrection" of the children in hagiography. Foster 415-6.

[72] Richmond 95.

Orfeo to rescue Herodis in contravention of the traditional classical ending of the tale and which, later, would permit Shakespeare to reward Leontes' final recollection of his errors with the (pseudo) resurrection of Hermione. To trust in memory is also to appreciate and confirm the morals of a romance, whilst by remembering the moral code in each spontaneous experience we also recognise the importance of memory itself. However, this could be dangerous if exploited: if memory can have such an effect upon present reality (both in terms of what is happening in the tale and the effect that the tale can subsequently have on its audience), should we be sensitive to the possible falsification of past events in a romance? Unlike an uncontrollable, temporary forgetfulness which the memory theories were written to reduce, such deliberate lies falsify the past and limit the interpretative space and freedom for *memoria*.

CHAPTER SIX

Failed Memories: Forgetting, Lying, Obstructing.

'And, sires, for the love of God, deleth hem nat amiss,
And forgetith nat Gamelin, my yonge sone that is.'   (*Gamelyn* 37-8)

Deliberate forgetfulness?: Sir Launfal and the Mayor.

In *De libero arbitrio* and *De mendacio* Saint Augustine concluded that an act was made sinful not by the action itself, but the intention underlying it, an assertion echoed by Hugh of Saint Victor who explained that the archetypal hero will not *intend* to sin.[1] Aristotelian or rhetorical "intellection," in this sense, forms part of the sinful intention when allied to the voluntary act of forgetfulness or manipulation; moreover, forgetfulness itself incorporates personal amnesia and a more public re-writing of past events. The first is concerned with a knight errant, the latter with aspects set to undermine the authority of the hero, morals, and identity of the romance narrative itself. Heroes often forget, seemingly unintentionally, yet are protected by the prudent audience who can identify precisely what has been forgotten or misremembered, the consequences of this, and how it can be repaired through the reconstruction of correct memories. As Augustine explained in Book 10 of the *Confessiones*, using the metaphor of sound, if an original impulse has been forgotten, its meaning when it reappears later will also be compromised; this "sound" now echoes in the present for the audience, shorn of its familiarity and orientation within the past.[2] When Sir Launfal forgets his promise to Tryamour he loses his current identity. To highlight the particular moment that should have been

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[1] Aurelius Augustinus, *PL* XXXII.1221-22; *De mendacio*, ed. Josef Zycha, CSEL 41 (Vienna: Tempsky, 1900) 413-66. Hugh of Saint Victor, *On the Sacraments of the Christian Faith*, trans. Roy J. Defarrari (Cambridge, MA: Medieval Academy of America, 1951) 373. See Corinne Saunders, "Desire, Will and Intention in *Sir Beves of Hamtoun*," *Matter of Identity* 30.

[2] Aurelius Augustinus, *Confessions*, ed. James J. O'Donnell, vol. 1 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1992) 10.16.222.

recalled at this point, he loses the identity that he was granted upon making his promise never to speak of Tryamour. An audience had already remembered this oath and therefore its memory is simultaneously corroborated as Launfal is punished for his error:

> All that he hadde before y-wonne,
> Hit malt as snow agens the sunne,
> In romance as we rede;
> His armur, that was whit as floure,
> Hit becom of blak coloure.   (*Launfal* 739-43)

At this point all that Launfal had been granted fades, a gradual erasure captured in the natural but relentless image of snow melting in the hazy winter sunshine and his armour which "becom" black, gradually stained with the darkness of his error.[3] Romance looks back in time to exactly when a memory should have been discovered or, rather, whence the original "sound" was heard. As Launfal's armour darkens and Gyfre rides away into the distance ("Up Blaunchard, his stede" [*Launfal* 738]) we are returned to the knight's original state in the romance and, by extension, reminded of the promise he made to Tryamour in return for the gifts and status he has now lost so dramatically. Launfal, now on the ground (recalling his earlier clumsy descent from his horse [*Launfal* 216]), is bound and presented before Arthur who chastises him with "File atainte traitoure, / Why madest thou swiche yelping" (*Launfal* 761-2) and "That was a foul lesinge" (*Launfal* 765). The irony is that this is no lie – Tryamour's "lothlokste maide" (*Launfal* 697) *is* more beautiful than the queen; the real "lie" that has been uttered is Launfal's disloyalty to a past word – his promise not to reveal the existence of Tryamour.

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[3] The snow simile is common in romance: it also appears in the final book of *Troilus and Criseyde* in a section of (primarily) Chaucer's own invention to emphasise the advancement of time and workings of Fortune which individuals seek to comprehend and accept in Chaucer's self-consciously redacted work (*TC* V.10).

"[T]raitoure" is significant as the language of treachery often accompanies moments where some manipulation of memory has occurred.[4] Of course, the term (as in this context) has political implications which Ojars Kratins has noted is a particularly striking *topos* in Middle English romances - Launfal has been discourteous to the Queen and, by extension, Arthur and the chivalric code itself have been forgotten.[5] Yet its prevalence in less politically charged moments reveals the term's additional etymological associations of "tricherie" or "trickery": the conscious crafting of a scheme to deceive others who believe only what they see presented or "re-presented." Chaucer refers to "Colle tregetour" (*HF* 1277), an obscure English magician whose occupation is aligned with other sleight-of hand artists: "jugelours, / Magiciens, and tregetours" (*HF* 1259-60).[6] These are invisible manipulators who secretly erase the wax tablet and re-inscribe images as false memories through a treacherous craft of dismembered chronology. Similarly, in *The Romaunt of the Rose*, treachery depends upon visual deception: "treget nevere aperceyved," echoed later with "aperceyve" (*Rom* C6312, C6825). Ricoeur explains that "[m]edieval society relied upon the (fiction of the) pledge of allegiance for political continuity and upon the (fiction of the) pledge of betrothal for both political alliance and genealogical continuity"; treachery implied not only a breaking of the oath but the ways in which this had been broken – the past conveniently "forgotten."[7] Any discrepancies, made visible to the audience, reveal what has been genuinely forgotten or, more seriously, the way in which memory has been "tricked"

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[4] For an exception to this rule compare *Isumbras* 640: "This palmere hath don somme traytourné." Here the language actually reveals the truth – the palmere (Isumbras) has not stolen the gold but, as we have seen, has remained loyal to his memory of it as it has been collected and recollected during the journey and narrative.

[5] Ojars Kratins, "Treason in the Middle English Metrical Romances," *Philological Quarterly* 45 (1966): 668-688.

[6] Benson 987.

[7] J. Douglas Canfield, *Word as Bond in English Literature from the Middle Ages to the Restoration* (Philadelphia, PA: U of Pennsylvania P, 1989) xii.

into writing a new past for the present: "[f]orgetting indeed remains the disturbing threat that lurks in the background of the phenomenology of memory and of the epistemology of history."[8] The repercussions of this fear within a genre that claims to be an accurately remembered version of events ("Herkeneth") are potentially serious, but also offer additional opportunities for *memoria* to triumph as false versions of the truth are embedded within a true story and must be located, extracted, corrected, and reinstated. Derrida's discussion of the history of lying reveals the treacherous ground occupied by romance to include such falsifications of narrative pasts: "although the lie supposes, or so it seems, the deliberate invention of a fiction, nevertheless not all fiction or fable amounts to lying – and neither does literature."[9] Romances must detach themselves from the former whilst utilising its power to challenge true memory to support, paradoxically, the veracity and identity of the current narrative.

The relative seriousness of each "treachery" must be compared to any Augustinian or immoral intent and assessed with reference to the moral and thematic unity of a tale. In Chestre's romance, Launfal *has* indeed already manipulated memory: in a detail absent from Marie's version, the knight claims to have received a letter informing him of the death of his father (*Launfal* 76-8) and subsequently leaves the court with Arthur's two nephews, details that add a human dimension to the tale to create a sense of *pathos*. However, despite this insight into human concern for appearances, the veracity of his claim is dubious and the speed with which Launfal leaves "the bredale" (*Launfal* 73), having been ignored by Guinevere, and "tok his leve to wende / At Artoure the king" (*Launfal* 76-7) suggests that he has manufactured this story as an excuse to leave the court, possibly out of anger or,

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[8] Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting* 412.
[9] Jacques Derrida, "History of the Lie," *Futures: Of Jacques Derrida*, ed. Richard Rand, Cultural Memory in the Present (Stanford, CA: Stanford UP, 2001) 67.

more likely, social embarrassment. The latter concern results in another manufactured past as the knight instructs the king's nephews to return to the court with news of Launfal's good fortune: "'Tellith no man of my poverté, / For the love of God Almight!'" (*Launfal* 143-4). Knights can therefore give false accounts of the past and this is, here, concerned with preserving one's reputation, of which this narrative is the ultimate memorial embodiment. If we wish to apportion blame for a poor memory in this romance we must look to Guinevere: it is she who has forgotten the loyalty of Launfal, a lapse which in the French is credited to Arthur and poignantly expressed by "ne l'en sovient, / Ne nul de[s] soens bien ne li tient" (*Lais* V.19-20). There has been forgotten loyalty and also, in the unwillingness of others to remember that knight's past and put in a good word, an insight into how others can be affected, or afflicted, by similarly poor memories.

Nevertheless, Chestre's narrative introduces a character who lies between intentional and unintentional forgetfulness - the mayor at Karlyoun.[10] Echoing the situation at Carlisle, the mayor clearly remembers Launfal but chooses to forget that he has been the knight's servant: "His servant that hadde y-be" (*Launfal* 90). The bond of loyalty should have prompted the mayor to offer Launfal and his companions proper hospitality instead of the "chamber by my orchard side" (*Launfal* 124) where he could hardly be expected to "dwelle" with the promised "joye and pride" (*Launfal* 125). The mayor scrabbles around for excuses to ignore his memory, replacing it with a claim that he is expecting other visitors. His desperation is clear as he actually overreaches himself, manufacturing two somewhat contradictory false memories which recall the apparent "death" of Launfal's father: "'Sir, seven knightes han here in y-nom*e* / And ever I waite whan they wil come, / That arn

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[10] The mayor episode is an insertion by Chestre, probably deriving from incidents in the anonymous Old French romance, *Graelent*: it does not appear in *Lanval* or *Landevale*. See Sands 201.

of Litill Bretaine''' (*Launfal* 112-4). Not only does neither situation materialise, the mayor is sifting to choose a plausible excuse. Launfal recognises this and "turned him self and lough" (*Launfal* 115), scoffing at the feeble excuses but also perhaps the remarkable selectivity of the mayor's memory which is thrown into sharp relief.

The mayor's memory becomes increasingly selective when Launfal later returns dressed in his finery, surrounded by a lavish retinue. The time that has passed is merely one day ("Yesterday" [*Launfal* 405]) which makes the mayor's stumbling attempts even more stark:

> 'Yesterday I hadde y-ment
> At the feste we wold han be in same
> And y-hadde solas and game,
> And erst thou were y-went.'   (*Launfal* 405-8)

The past subjunctives point to the manipulation of memory, the mayor attempting to re-write the past with what he "would" have done if Launfal had not left. His confidence is particularly surprising: by welcoming the wealthy knight into his home he appears to assume that the memory of others is equally unstable. It is for Launfal to demonstrate that this is not the case as he imposes the past onto the present: '"Whiles I was in my poverté, / Thou bede me never dine"' (*Launfal* 410-11). Through a skilful circularity of master and dependent, Launfal contrasts today with yesterday and, ultimately, the present situation with the memory of previous years.

The temporal interval was so brief that an audience is invited to laugh with Launfal at the sheer incredulity of the mayor's *memoria* through ironies – the same location and knight, coupled with the brief temporal interlude. However the mayor shuns such creative movement and fluidity manufacturing, at least for himself, a barrier between past and present. The ironic correspondence of memorial place and image and a present experience of reality is even more pronounced in the late

fourteenth-century *Sir Amadace* as the hero, in effect, listens to a tale of his own life, yet fails to recollect through ignoring auto-biographical references.[11] The biography is narrated in a mysterious chapel where a widow is watching over the decomposing body of her husband who has died penniless on account of his extravagant generosity and lack of financial care. His life parallels that of Amadace who is similarly generous. Like Amadace, the deceased had spent all his money on "giftus gay" (*Amadace* 150), "Riche festus" (*Amadace* 151), feeding the poor (*Amadace* 152-3), and various Christmas celebrations and kindnesses (*Amadace* 157-62). Initially, Amadace *does* appear to assimilate this tale with his own past, revealing that "'He myghte full wele be of my kynne, / For ryghte so have I wroghte'" (*Amadace* 209-10); yet this identification is more an alignment of social "kynne" than of analogous past behaviour. He recognises that the man is the same as himself but fails to make that final connection between this man's consequences and his current state of impending penury.

The lack of complete recollection is ironically emphasised as he subsequently pays thirty pounds (*Amadace* 265-76) and arranges for the man's burial – again a circularity of cause and effect, or past and present, is established. An audience would no doubt identify with the prudent steward who "thoghte hit was agaynus skille, / Butte he most nede do his maistur wille" (*Amadace* 271-2); the idiom "agaynus skille" implying a certain lack of common sense or adequate recollection. This latter interpretation is corroborated by "wille," reinforcing the importance of voluntary intellection resisted by Amadace who retains instead a myopic if understandable and somewhat praiseworthy vision of chivalric brotherhood without remembering why

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[11] The romance survives in the Auchinleck MS and Princeton Univerity,Ireland Blackburn, Robert H. Taylor Collection (Taylor MS 9) which is dated 1450-60. For the date of the composition of *Sir Amadace* see Loomis, *Medieval Romance* 73-9.

he and the knight have come together in this place.[12] We have seen already that, in romances, we must want to remember and that this process involves recollection and cognition of information. As Amadace leaves "Unsemand with full glad chere" (*Amadace* 324) an audience feels disappointment and frustration. Yet the issue is problematic: in the context of great generosity Amadace has recollected the greater duty of a knight; however, this is contrary to his own life experiences. Moreover, Amadace, upon realising his error, later laments in terms of vision: "'For I hade thre hundrythe pownnde of rente, / I spendut two in that entente: / Of suche forloke was I'" (*Amadace* 388-90). The current situation has been made more acute by his inability to recollect the reasons for his initial financial distress. An earlier "forest" of the present, characterised here by financial turmoil and the overwhelming demands of those who would deprive him of his lands, has become the literal space within which a man, having lost everything, is wandering alone, attempting to remember who he was and therefore what he has become: "Now thro the forest as he ferd, / He wende that no man hade him herd, / For he seghe non in sighte" (*Amadace* 421-3).[13] There is none of the trusted faith of *Sir Orfeo* or *Sir Isumbras*, despite their similar moments of loss; rather Amadace remains locked in the retrospective present, in the manner of Launfal's blackening armour, on account of the barrier erected between present and past, obstacles that are also repeatedly constructed quite physically between characters and their memories in *Gamelyn* and *Floris and Blancheflour*.

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[12] For explorations of Amadace's actions and generosity see Ad Putter, "Gifts and Commodities in *Sir Amadace*," *Review of English Studies* 51 (2000): 371-94; Michael Johnston, "Knights and Merchants Unite: *Sir Amadace*, the Grateful Dead, and the Moral Exemplum Tradition," *Neophilologus* 92 (2008): 735-44.

[13] The narrative requires another memorial challenge to re-awaken *memoria* and this does occur in the arrival of a new character in the narrative, the white knight (seemingly the previous dead knight) who suggests a way for Amadace to recover his wealth and status. *Amadace* 426-92. See Foster 407-8.

Floris and Blancheflour **and** *Gamelyn***: Treacherous Obstructions.**

The technique of blocking in *Gamelyn* and *Floris and Blancheflour* is best contextualised when compared with Chaucer's later romance of *Troilus and Criseyde* which displays a similar technique on a greater historical level, but also one which emphasises the more intimate psychological effects of enforced forgetfulness. In Book Four, Troilus, distraught at the imminent loss of Criseyde, is likened to "a ded ymage, / pale and wan" (*TC* IV.235) and retreats to his quarters where he shuts himself away: "He rist hym up, and every dore he shette, / And window ek, and tho this sorwful man / Upon his beddes side adown hym sette" (*TC* IV.232-4). In our time of popular psychological awareness we might identify this as deep depression brought on by love-sickness, a common symptom in medieval poetry and the source of many poignant and beautiful laments, of which some fine examples occur in this very romance.[14] N. R. Havely explains the scene, with close reference to *Il Filostrato*, in practical terms ("[p]resumably to enable Troiolo to sleep") – but it is also an important aspect of the character's psychological condition.[15] In addition to Troilus' depression and its symptomatic isolation, the state also compromises any movement in the narrative. The scene echoes other uses of doors and windows as openings into, and also barriers against, memory and the past which form a motif in certain texts, interrupting the transformation of space into a remembered place. Such obstructions are antithetical to *memoria*, but also to romance ritual, as "enclosures which determine and limit the spatial environment limit as well the hero's possibilities for free and full interaction with the world of human experience."[16]

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[14] Freud's *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life* deals particularly with forgetting. Sigmund Freud, *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life*, trans. Anthea Bell, New Penguin Freud (London: Penguin, 2002).
[15] Havely 201.
[16] Robert W. Hanning, *The Individual in the Twelfth-Century Romance* (New Haven, CT: Yale UP, 1977) 169.

Allied to this is the Christian association of gates to salvation, the replacement of a classical portal into death.[17] Again, today, we are more familiar with terms such as repression and its psychological aims; yet romance often makes use of literal, physical barriers to bring about much the same effects.

Arrested movement limits a romance's progress and with it the process of recollection, thwarting an audience and individual in their attempts to reach the conclude their narrative or journey. In this sense we might think of Lancelot's inability to enter the Grail Chamber and how, instead, he is lead to a forest, his progression thwarted as he attempts to discover the object he holds so vividly in memory, despite not actually having seen it, The Sankgreal.[18] In the manner of Lancelot's martial prowess at the Grail Castle, characters work to traverse geographical, temporal, even conceptual barriers to satisfy the demands of memory: the sea separates, for example in *King Horn* and *Emaré*, but also allows the distance to be conquered through sailing and, subsequently, past lovers are reunited.[19] At her first sight of Troilus, Criseyde, in the manner of many romance protagonists, is looking out *for* something. We might think of The Fere gazing out of her tower for the arrival of the coloured competitors each morning in *Ipomadon* (*Ipomadon* 3099-112), Palamon and Arcite looking down upon Emilye (KnT I.1075-6), and even Guy of Warwick gazing towards the stars to recollect his past behaviour before dedicating himself to a religious future (*Guy* 7560-94).[20] When Criseyde eventually sees Troilus

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[17] Stanbury 478-9. See Britt Haarløv, *The Half-Open Door: A Common Symbolic Motif within Roman Sepulchral Sculpture* (Odense: Odense UP, 1977) 55-7; 72-85.

[18] Cf. *Morte* XV. It could be argued that, in both tales, individuals are "blocked" by some greater controlling "memory": either the Arthurian legend or the historically and literarily pre-determined Trojan narrative.

[19] Cf. *Horn* 755-62; *Emaré* 316-24.

[20] The situation is part of the conventional architecture of romance with similar moments in *Floris and Blancheflour* and the mid-fourteenth-century, Northern English work *Eger and Grime*. *Floris* 657-; *Eger and Grime*, ed. James Ralston Caldwell, Harvard Studies in Comparative Literature 9, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1933) 379-80, 647-8. The tale has no known direct source and is

ride past (*TC* II.603-52), a detail inserted by Chaucer, the moment is presented as one of chance, yet in a way that suggests some premeditated design, a technique which pervades *Troilus*.[21]

By responding to a cry from the gates below, "'Se, Troilus / Hath right now put to flighte the Grekes route!'" (*TC* II.612-3), Criseyde demonstrates a willingness to welcome the past, ironically disguised by Chaucer as a moment of chance. This is a way to relate past, present, and future: to pursue the memory of the man of whom she (and we) have heard much. In contrast, later, Pandarus attempts to close such avenues in order to allow Troilus to forget his love, to "putte it out of remembraunce" (*TC* IV.420), in imagery of erasure and division allied somewhat uncomfortably with the earth's diurnal movements: "'For also seur as day comth after nyght, / The newe love, labour, or oother wo, /…/ Don olde affecciouns alle over go'" (*TC* IV.421-4). The assumption is that simply to sequester "olde affecciouns," metaphorically barring the windows and shutting the door, will erase memory, thereby alleviating Troilus' "bitter peynes smerte" (*TC* IV.426). In reality, the absence of Criseyde only increases Troilus' desire to remember her which we see as he reads her old letters (*TC* V.470-1) that recollect her image ("Refiguryng hire shap, hire wommanhede" [*TC* V.473]). Eventually, he revisits Criseyde's house, literally a place of old memories, but which now, appropriately, has its windows firmly closed: "How shet was every window of the place, / As frost, hym thought, his herte gan to colde" (*TC* V.534-4). The comparison is not accurate. Whereas the house blocks Troilus from entering, the memories of Criseyde are safely locked in his heart, and he carries these with him everywhere.

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preserved in five manuscripts dated until the early sixteenth century. For the date of the composition of *Eger and Grime* see Caldwell's introduction; Cooper, *Romance in Time* 416.

[21] Jill Mann, "Chance and Destiny in *Troilus and Criseyde* and the '*Knight's Tale*'," *Cambridge Companion to Chaucer*, ed. Piero Boitani and Jill Mann, 2nd ed., Cambridge Companions to Literature (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2003) 93-4.

Troilus cannot forget Criseyde, and neither can an audience. The coldness of his heart is by no means a cooling of his memory of, and desire for, Criseyde - rather the contrary is more accurate. His emotions are stirred, as in Boccaccio: "As he rode by himself through Troy he would speak to himself about each of the places that stirred his memory."[22] An audience is urged to disapprove of Pandarus' advice. It challenges the powerful force of love with the violent metaphor that ravages the memorial emotional store in this romance, the heart: "'Absence of hire shal dryve hire out of herte'" (*TC* IV.426). According to Pandarus, the heart should be emptied, much like Criseyde's house, to leave the dangerous space so antithetical to memory. In terms of physical metaphors and their historical contexts, Nicholas Orme notes that "[m]edieval towns celebrated themselves with gates and walls, often erected as much for prestige as for defence," a duality of purpose that can be extended as far as literal and metaphorical appearances in romance texts.[23] The action depends upon a defined place – Glastonbury, Grimsby, Carlisle, the Green Chapel – in order to define the narrative, but there must also be fluidity as we, in the present, are permitted to re-enter these places with the narrative action. The threat of being refused would represent a failure to recollect, an obstruction of memory, and the limitation of our progress in the tale.

Pandarus' attempt is paralleled, but with more immediate dramatic effect, in *Floris and Blancheflour*. This tale, its non extant original English composed around 1250, is based upon an Old French original written seventy five to one hundred years earlier and both contain forced amnesia with, as in *Troilus and Criseyde*, very immediate, painful consequences.[24] Here, the forced separation of two lovers forms

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[22] Havely 80.
[23] Orme 286.
[24] Four manuscripts of the romance survice (London, British Museum, Egerton MS 2863; Cambridge, Cambridge University Library MS Gg.4.27.2; London, British Museum, Cotton Vitellius Diii;

the memorial paradigm for the entire romance. It reaches a climax when the physical obstacle placed between them is finally overcome by Floris who ascends to Blancheflour in a tower, hidden in a basket, thereby attaining his love and, with it, finally recollecting his forgotten past. However, it is the initial tactics employed by the king that offer a prime example of memorial manipulation in an attempt to empty the "heart" of Floris. He separates his son from Blancheflour which will, he hopes, also erase the memory of her. Death appears the easiest and quickest option:

> 'When that maide is y-slawe
> And brought of her lif-dawe,
> As sone as Floris may it underyete
> Rathe he wille hur foryete.
> Than may he wife after reed.' (*Floris* 47-51)

We are alerted to the speed of the imagined forgetfulness. "As sone as" and "Rathe" rush forward to obliterate Floris' memory before the temporal adverb "Than" heralds a new juncture in his life: a new memory of the woman his father wishes him to marry. This is simply too fast, comparable to the sudden reversal of the mayor in *Sir Launfal* during the interval of a single day (*Launfal* 409-20). The queen shares the same misconceptions of the power of love and, ultimately, memory; having urged the king to spare the maiden, she believes that fictional death coupled with geographical distance will have the same amnesic effect: Blancheflour's death will be faked ("'Who so might reve that maide clene / That she were brought to deth bidene'" (*Floris* 59-60) whilst Floris is away with her sister in "the londe of Mountargis" (*Floris* 66). This sister, coupled with the location far away from Blancheflour, will, it is hoped, erase the memory of their love, given a little time:

> 'will do all hur might,
> Both by day and by night,

Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, Advocates MS 19.2.1.). The Cotton MS has the closest readings to the French original though none of the four MSS contain the original English poem. See Sands 279-80.

> To make hur love so undo
> As it had never been so'   (*Floris* 71-4)[25]

The diurnal imagery, also employed in *Troilus and Criseyde*, combines a sense of the passing of time, seen here as detrimental to memory, with an impression of changeability and replacement to satisfy the king's wish for a different wife for his son. The sister will "undo" the knot of love or bond between the pair as it exists in Floris' mind and heart to correspond with the distance that has been imposed.

The plan is countered by the indomitable power of Floris' memory for his love: he cannot stop thinking of her when away, supposedly studying under the king's chamberlain, Duke Orgas: variations on "But ever he thought on Blancheflour[e]" occur three times (*Floris* 104, 114, 122). The phrase is poignant, creating a sense of endlessness and mutual dependency that re-ties the knot of love in Floris' memory each time, recalling the ways in which Horn repeatedly thought on the ring and, subsequently, Rymenhilde.[26] Time strengthens memory, as explained by Aristotle, and is demonstrated by romances that narrate intervening experiences which, in themselves, demarcate and conceptualise temporal intervals. Indeed, Floris' final assertion includes a temporal reference: "So much he thenketh on Blancheflour, / Of oon day him thinketh three / For he ne may his love see" (*Floris* 122-4), which not only emphasises the slowing of time for Floris but increases the duration of the present moment to be filled with memories of the past. The present is obliterated by these memories so that "If eny man to him speke, / Love is on his hert steke" (*Floris* 115-6) and "noght he lernes" (*Floris* 113). The impression of memorial permanence, emphasised further by the following "Love is at his hert

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[25] Blancheflour, correspondingly, will be removed via a ruse that her mother is ill (*Floris* 75-9), recalling a similar false claim made in *Sir Launfal* as the knight absented himself from Arthur's court (*Launfal* 76-8).

[26] See *Horn* 569-74, 617-8, 881-2, 1495-6.

roote, / That no thing is so soote" (*Floris* 117-8), employs a synesthetic metaphor to emphasise the emotional power of these memories that surpass even the sweetness of "Galingale" and "licoris" (*Floris* 119).[27] The power of emotional memory has thwarted the attempts of king, queen, the queen's sister, and now chamberlain, to erase the image of Blancheflour for Floris, a realisation that the king begins to articulate having been informed of his son's lovesick state: "He beginneth to change his moode, / And well sone he understode" (*Floris* 135-6). However, his new equally misguided "understanding" is that he needs to provide a more definitive barrier between Floris and Blancheflour – the finality of an actual death which was first considered. Yet the metaphor chosen to explain this to the queen is significant: "'Let do bring forth that maide! / Fro the body the heved shall go'" (*Floris* 140-1). Ostensibly, this underlines their definitive separation, along with the erasure or blocking of his son's memory; however, the corporeal imagery stresses the inseparability of the lovers, existing as one organism - each sustains the other. Moreover, the macabre undertones of decapitation emphasise, through a contrast, that this remains a falsified death. The only separation will be a financial arrangement as the maiden is exchanged with Babylonian merchants for a cup engraved with a Trojan narrative – a mnemonic memorial object heavy with significant recollections of classical *exempla* (*Floris* 163-86).[28] From falsified loss, a permanent memorial has been created.

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[27] This chimes with with the imagistic workings of memory discussed by Thomas Aquinas in his commentary on Aristotle, *De memoria et reminiscentia commentarium*, and with Jacobus Publicus' *Ars memoratiua Iacobi publicii florentini*. The latter discussed memory's ability to interpret various signs and, in addition, the link between memory and emotion established by Aristotle. See Carruthers, *Book of Memory* 190.

[28] This is discussed in Chapter Three 86-88.

The cup becomes a symbol of the living Blancheflour and is juxtaposed with the departure of the maiden as the king creates a false grave and we are reminded of its acquisition:

> And hath take the King to wolde
> The selver and the coupe of golde.
> They lete make in a chirche
> A swithe faire grave wirche   (*Floris* 207-10)

The "coupe of golde" is the true memory, in contrast to the letters inscribed on the gravestone, providing a dramatic example of Clanchy's hypothesis regarding the persistent suspicion of textual evidence. An audience should look for the truth that they have *seen* over what has been written (symbolised by the gravestone).[29] Upon Floris' return his love is still prominent in his thoughts ("But unnethes might he that do / That he ne asked where his leman be" [*Floris* 224-5]), a question to which the queen responds with an apparent moment of forgetfulness regarding the very deception:

> 'Sir,' she saide, 'forsothe y-wis,
> I ne woot where she is.'
> She bethought hur on that lesing
> That was ordained bifoore the King.   (*Floris* 231-4)

It is only then that she, having "bethought" the plan, replies "deede" (*Floris* 239), a moment of indecision possibly looking forward to her eventual weakness as she reveals the deception to Floris. However, the juxtaposition of truth ("forsothe") and falsity ("that lesing") is almost correct – she has no knowledge of the exact location of Blancheflour at this time and, indeed, the king's plan is a "lie." Although Floris accuses her, "'Thou gabbest me'" (*Floris* 235), an audience corroborates with what has been *seen*. In this respect, the manipulation and creation of false memories, paradoxically, reaffirms the true version of events, "'Here lith swete Blauncheflour, /

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[29] See Clanchy 318-27.

That Floris lovid par amoure"" (*Floris* 265-7). The inscription re-enacts the obstruction of memory against the force of the monument and words; however, the definitive "here" betrays the falsification and the tender memorial image of "swete Blauncheflour" swells to dominate all the space in Floris' heart, mind, and an audience's memory through his still passionate affection. These cannot be blocked by such hewn words. Consequently, reading the grave's inscription with Floris (*Floris* 265-6) we peer beyond the letters to the true facts – "here lith" can now be dismissed with confidence, despite its power to convince Floris who swoons three times with grief (*Floris* 267).

Floris' later suicide attempt is a wish to re-join his love in death, but is thwarted by the queen who wrests the knife from her son and begins to reveal the plot. Her son's earlier rage and despair at the loss ironically emphasise the term frequently associated with a falsification of memory, "And of alle trechories, / Refte thou haste me my leman" (*Floris* 283-3), echoed in another allusion to trickery by the queen – "through enginne" (*Floris* 313). Moreover, the revelation that finally rewrites the correct past makes a direct reference to memory:

> 'This grave let we make,
> Leve sone, for thy sake,
> Yif thou that maide forgete woldest,
> After oure reed wif thou sholdest.'   (*Floris* 315-8)

The queen, in a tender gesture, ushers her son away from the empty grave, symbolically breaking the barrier to memory, and, appropriately, follows this with a guilty and regretful admission of their plan. The future subjunctive appears as merely hypothetical, effectively baseless against the awesome power of memory and love that the king and queen now recognise. They justly reward the hero through equipping Floris with the material wealth he will require on his journey to "re-

collect" Blancheflour and, predictably, this is the very object for which she was exchanged - the cup. His determined mandate "'Ne shall I rest night ne day- / Night ne day ne no stounde- / Till I have my leman founde" (*Floris* 326-8) recalls the diurnal metaphors from earlier, now re-shaped into an image of the unstoppable pursuit of love in the manner of Sir Orfeo or, somewhat indirectly, Sir Isumbras.[30] We are informed later that "Mete and drinke he foryetes" (*Floris* 400), a fitting example of the dominance of Blancheflour in his thoughts and the extent to which nothing can erase this particular image or sever and block a specific memorial chain.

Characters are therefore prudent to recognise that memory cannot be actively manipulated through blocking or erasure and an audience's memory is prompted to work to support this. Regarding forgetfulness, the response from Launfal is somewhat involuntary given his intractable situation, although, in essence, it results from a failure of adequate recollection and corresponding voluntary intellection – his promise to Tryamour (*Launfal* 361-5). An intriguing development of involuntary intellection, or its distinct counterpart - voluntary forgetfulness, occurs in the folkloric *Gamelyn*, a mid-fourteenth century piece of unknown origin but which contains an aspect of the Robin Hood legend in its final episodes.[31] In this tale the heroic and evil characters are compared through their mutual manipulations of the past. These comprise both latent forgetfulness on the part of the hero, Gamelyn, and more active erasure and separation tactics. The eldest brother (who remains unnamed but eventually becomes the sheriff) initially appears to possess a poor memory, but his behaviour does not afford him the excuse of involuntary forgetfulness.[32] When

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[30] Cf. *Orfeo* 103-6; *Isumbras* 355-65 (the unusual griffin episode).

[31] The romance also survives as the "Cook's Tale" in twenty-five manuscripts of the *Canterbury Tales*. For the date of the composition of *Gamelyn* see Loomis, *Medieval Romance* 156-62; Sands 155-6; Cooper, *Romance in Time* 417.

[32] The use of geography to distance memory also appears in romances which employ the topos of "sending away over the sea," notably *Havelok the Dane*, *Sir Isumbras*, *Guy of Warwick*, and *Emaré*.

the father of the three brothers, Sir John of Boundis, lies on his deathbed, any promises made to him are immediately forgotten. Although he specifically instructs "And forgetith nat Gamelin, my yonge sone that is" (*Gamelyn* 38), in the space of only ten lines, having left their father to rest, the older brothers move to divide his lands in contravention of these very words: "And for Gamelyn was youngest, he should have nought. / All the lond that ther was, they dalten it in two, / And leeten Gamelyn the yonge without lond go" (*Gamelyn* 44-6). We might defend this lapse on account of the emotionally charged moment – the imminent death of a parent – but the elder brother's subsequent identical forgetfulness even after this point, the rehabilitation of his memorial store, makes us doubt such excuses. Having learned of Gamelyn's neglect, Sir John decides to divide the inheritance himself, giving the two older brothers five ploughs of land each and bequeathing his youngest "all min other purchas of londes and leedes, / …and all my goode steeds" (*Gamelyn* 61-2). However, following the father's passing, there is another neglect of these instructions in a pattern of identical errors. The older brother feigns to care for Gamelyn, but in reality "He clothed him and fed him ivel and eek wrothe / And leet his londes forfare and his houses bothe, / His parks and his woodes, and dede nothing well" (*Gamelyn*: 73-5). Yet, strangely, in the face of such neglect and apparent malnutrition, Gamelyn thrives, growing so strong that no-one dared anger him (*Gamelyn* 77-80). This curious development has an important function in terms of the brother's memory: the strength of the younger brother who, at the instruction of their father, should have received the most is gradually intruding into present consciousness and place.

Yet, as has been seen, this also provides a way "back" into memory within the greater romance ritual – an audience, like a character, is always eager to rediscover what has been left in the past. See Cooper, *Romance in Time* 106-36.

Gamelyn's increasing strength is emblematic of the power of memory which the older brother continues to ignore. As the character surveys the destruction and waste in his own lands an audience is reminded of its past perfection and with this the father's words "And forgetith nat Gamelin" (*Gamelyn* 38). The man is now synonymous with his lands – both have been willingly neglected or "forgotten." However, against the images of waste and decline (lands "unsawe" [*Gamelyn* 83], "doun were y-drawe [*Gamelyn* 84], "y-broken" [*Gamelyn* 85], "bireeved" [*Gamelyn* 85], "bileved" [*Gamelyn* 86] and "unhiled" [*Gamelyn* 87]) is set the increasing strength of the youngest sibling. We stand with Gamelyn as he "bigan with his hond to handlen his berde" (*Gamelyn* 82), suggestive of thought and, perhaps, recollection as past and present are compared. By highlighting the information that has been forgotten the romance simultaneously recalls, as with Blancheflour's tomb, what should be remembered – they are in fact one and the same.[33]

From this moment of pause and consideration past memories begin to pursue the older brother through the person of Gamelyn who brings with him their father's dying words, "All that my fader me biquath, all goth to shame" (*Gamelyn* 99), along with the constant reminder that they have been willingly forgotten. In the manner of Blancheflour's falsified tomb and the words it bears, there is great emphasis upon speech. Recalling the romance's fictional provenance, grounded in oral culture, these have been heard and so are indisputable as they are stored, intact and untouched in memory. To disrupt this voice of the past, the brother's response is to physically block Gamelyn's advance, retreating into a building pursued by his younger brother who wields a pestle: "Tho his brother say that, he bigan to goon. / He fley up intill a loft and shette the dore fast" (*Gamelyn* 126-7). This barrier is both literal and

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[33] Cf. *Floris* 265-6.

metaphorical, blocking Gamelyn and with it any memory of the promise to their father. However, this memory proves too strong and, in the manner of Criseyde, he looks out of a window: "Gamelyn sough his brother whider he was flowe / And saugh wher he loked out at a windowe" (*Gamelyn* 133-4). As the brothers' eyes meet, Gamelyn becomes synonymous with the indomitable force of memory which cannot be shut out – consequences must be faced in the mocking, but also menacing, invitation "'I will teche thee a play atte bokeler'" (*Gamelyn* 136). Yet, at this point, the romance suddenly shifts its accusations of forgetfulness to the hero, Gamelyn. In contrast to the violent pursuit of the older brother, not to mention the injuries inflicted on his men, the situation diffuses remarkably speedily as the brother claims that he has behaved in this way to test his younger sibling (*Gamelyn* 145-8). It is a feeble and somewhat desperate excuse (in the manner of the mayor in *Sir Launfal* [*Launfal* 112-4]) but one that Gamelyn readily accepts with the condition that he receives all that their father had originally promised. The youngster's naivety is underlined, a different failure of memory compared to that of his manipulating, treacherous sibling:

> The knight thought on tresoun and Gamelyn on noon
> And went and kisst his brother and whan they were at oon,
> Allas, yonge Gamelyn, nothing he wiste
> With which a false tresoun his brother him kisste.   (*Gamelyn* 165-8)

This is another moment in a romance where the audience sees the more prudent course of action, yet Gamelyn is seemingly unable to judge his brother's actions in light of past behaviour, a failure of glaring forgetfulness under the guise of honourable forgiveness. The kiss, emblematic of a new start and bond between the brothers, is tainted by its juxtaposition with the language of treason. It is gradually degraded as the lines progress whilst being devalued by its answering rhyme "wiste,"

indicative of Gamelyn's lack of knowledge and the scheming machinations of one re-writing the past. The moment is in fact narrated twice: as an audience we see the kiss from two perspectives, inviting us to re-evaluate the situation and consider who should accept the greater charge of treason – the manipulating older brother or Gamelyn who has forgotten the past treachery itself.

Predictably, in this narrative of echoes and repetitions, the older brother then repeats his earlier psychological and literal blocking of Gamelyn who has left to take part in a local "wrastling": "Tho Gamelin the yonge was ride out at the gate, / The fals knight his brother locked it after thate" (*Gamelyn* 191-2). Gamelyn has again been shut out of sight and mind, a way in which his brother can now "forget" both the promise to his father and, more recently, to Gamelyn.[34] The young knight's triumphant return, having won the contest, is significant as he approaches the locked gate:

> His brother seih wher he cam with the grete route
> And bad shitte the gate and holde him without.
> The porter of his lord was full sore agast
> And stert anon to the gate and locked it fast.   (*Gamelyn* 285-8)

"[H]olde" is particularly effective. It reinforces the exclusion which is important literally and symbolically whilst also perhaps evoking the unshakeable construction of memories so important in medieval memory theory. The earlier advance of a powerful Gamelyn with the pestle has become a "grete route," revisiting the importance of voice over silent understanding (and therefore forgetfulness) in this tale, as the memory of Gamelyn's father, first re-voiced by the younger son (*Gamelyn* 99), has now increased to proclaim the importance of remembering the

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[34] There is another porter and gate incident at *Gowther* 319-333.

neglected son.[35] Interestingly, the pattern of looking out of the window is somewhat changed: the older brother looks and then orders the gate to be shut, unlike earlier when he gazed out in recognition of the power of his younger sibling.[36] However, Gamelyn breaks the gate, thereby re-entering a place in his brother's memory (and literally the lands which by right are his), disabling the porter through breaking his neck and throwing him into a well. His brother, recalling the previous retreat into a loft, hides away in a "litel toret" (*Gamelyn* 329) and watches Gamelyn feasting lavishly with his company for eight days. Eventually, the older brother emerges, apparently now no longer in the tower but hiding in "the seller," to confront Gamelyn (*Gamelyn* 351). There follows another remarkable diffusion of the situation as the brothers converse and the elder promises to make Gamelyn heir upon his death to which his naïve sibling blindly agrees, the error of which is highlighted through a direct echo of the previous foolish acceptance: "Nothing wiste Gamelyn of his brothers gile; / Therefore he him bigiled in a litel while" (*Gamelyn* 369-70). The temporal reference here emphasises the speed in which Gamelyn consents and therefore the lack of recollection of earlier events, but also calls attention to time itself and the earlier betrayal that this moment should have recollected.

At this point *memoria* deepens in complexity through an ironic twist as the older brother holds Gamelyn to account for the murder of the porter in the well. This is not done as a matter of avenging the death, but on account of a promise that the older brother apparently made upon learning that porter's fate. He explains that "I swor in that wrathe and in that grete moot / That thou shuldest be bounde bothe hand

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[35] It is worth noting that "gate" (*MED* "ȝeat") is closely related to "gate" meaning a road, street or way of going as in *Sir Gawain*: "And gotȝt away sum oþer gate" (*Gawain* 2119). The noun was therefore etymologically connected to its antithetical abstraction, as what is disrupted by the physical boundary.

[36] Earlier, of course, Gamelyn was wielding a pestle in order to reassert his importance in the narrative. *Gamelyn* 121-44.

and foot" (*Gamelyn* 373-4). In a dramatic and cunning reversal of attitude towards memory, the older brother now presents himself as duty-bound by his word. Predictably, Gamelyn continues to neglect his brother's earlier treachery and consents to this: "'Thou shalt not be forsworen for the love of me'" (*Gamelyn* 380), a present gullibility which simultaneously looks back to the brother's earlier willingness to be "forsworen." This makes Gamelyn's "for the love of me" heavy with retrospective irony, even inevitability. The subsequent incarceration of Gamelyn in the hall is another example of memorial blocking: again, he is shut away and his movement restricted so that he can no longer enter the places occupied by his sibling. At this point, the third such manipulation, Gamelyn *finally* recollects the earlier examples of treachery, which he aligns with the present situation: "'Now I have aspied thou art a party fals; / Had I wist that tresoun that thou haddest y-found, / I wolde have yeve thee stokes or I had be bounde'" (*Gamelyn* 392-4). The phrase is significant: a realisation, expressed in terms of vision, which has only been revealed "now" as Gamelyn recalls his brother's past "tresoun." He wishes that he had realised this sooner, "or I had be bounde," and the past subjunctive calls attention to the moments that he should have remembered – the previous ways in which he was blocked by his brother and that he, in turn, appeared to have forgotten until "now." The romance then turns to present individuals who contrast with the poor memories we have seen so far: the loyal servant Adam who frees Gamelyn from the hall (*Gamelyn* 416-7) and the third brother, Sir Ote, who returns to confront the "false knight" and eventually becomes fettered in the hall in the same situation as Gamelyn.[37]

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[37] Sir Ote could be interpreted as the final re-imagination of the memory of Gamelyn, thereby joining the noisy group (*Gamelyn* 285-8), the pestle wielded by Gamelyn (*Gamelyn* 126-7), the re-voicing of his father's dying words (*Gamelyn* 99), and the initial instructions of the father (*Gamelyn* 38).

Gamelyn's memory from this instance improves dramatically, depicted through more gateway imagery in the less constricted world of the forest of outlaws. As during the pursuit of Sir Degrevant, the sheriff's men follow Gamelyn and Adam to a gate locked and guarded by another porter.[38] The pair does not remain hidden but escapes "Atte postern gate" (*Gamelyn* 589) to continue their activities. This event marks a turning-point in the narrative: gates are now opened as Sir Ote returns, bringing with him memories of brotherly loyalty, whilst the freedom and strength of communication between past and present is also embodied in the almost fraternal loyalty of the outlaws. Such is Gamelyn's dedication to this band that he leaves Sir Ote in the hall ready to face the false brother, now the sheriff, in front of a court. Yet he swears to return, a memory which is recollected, appropriately, through the medium of narrative in the forest. Having ascertained that all is well for the outlaws he begins to tell of his past incarceration, being declared an outlaw, and of his false brother, the sheriff, a recapitulation of narrative history which takes him seamlessly into the present and the memory of his promise to Sir Ote:

> He thought on his brother how he him beheet
> That he wolde be redy whan the justice seet.
> He thought well that he wolde without delay
> Come afore the justice to kepen his day.   (*Gamelyn* 789-92)

His agile memory, working creatively through narrative art in the forest, recollects the promise made – a fitting conclusion to a romance in which poor or bad memories have constituted much of the narrative action as sheriff and judge are brought to justice by the figure who was forgotten and did himself forget throughout much of the romance. He can now trace exactly where he erred, linking the episodes of his past (just as the audience has already done), and articulating what is only expressed by action elsewhere, in the same way that Amadace eventually redresses his own

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[38] Cf. *Degrevant* 1575-84.

mistakes and Launfal implicitly trusts in the arrival of Tryamour to counter *his* forgetfulness. Gamelyn's final position as ruler of the outlaws, director of the court ("Gamelyn was y-set in the justices stede" [*Gamelyn* 857]), and, finally, "Chef justice of all [the king's] free forest" (*Gamelyn* 892) allows narrative and audience to recollect. The hero is now elevated into the most prominent place in the narrative and cannot be ignored; metaphorically, all gates are open, Gamelyn can travel anywhere, and now we cannot forget him.

The moral of this romance is most definitely "And forgetith nat Gamelin" (*Gamelyn* 38); yet this serves as much as a warning to the older brother as an offer of advice to Gamelyn himself - to remember all that he encounters (and suffers). Poor memory in this romance does not discriminate between hero and villain but, predictably, the former is ultimately protected by the memory of the prudent audience. Perhaps a way to avoid such forgetfulness is to record one's memories in the manner of romance narratives, but in *Floris and Blancheflour* even letters or text form and reaffirm false memories. This produces an additional aspect of the manipulation of memory in a narrative context, most typically in the form of correspondence. In romances, false letters often seek to dismantle and then re-write memory, inserting themselves into the surroundings and places, and are equated with accurate narrative events. The physical objects themselves call attention to how easily false memories are accepted by others as they are handled, exchanged, and replied to in the romance. As much as the past informs the present and future through memory, so too can false memories radically alter and destroy by establishing the present and future on unstable, treacherous foundations of false testimony.

Athelston and *Emaré*: Treachery and Testimony.

The motivation behind the classical and medieval memory theories was, of course, the art of rhetoric: memory was essential in ensuring that material was created accurately and easily retrieved. If the faculty were to fail then the efforts of the rhetorician would be compromised on account of erroneous material being recounted or, perhaps, no speech at all. Romance audiences, it would appear, were expected to be similarly attuned to the dangers of memory failing in this way. Letters are a physical representation of the importance of an accurate record of past events (resembling the romance text itself, one might argue), but, interestingly, they are also used to highlight the possibilities for manipulation. Often embodying the continual distrust of written testimony which persisted even into the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, letters in romances are frequently used by individuals to re-write the past in order to manipulate future events. Clanchy observes, "[w]riting has the power to change the way words are perceived by the senses, because it shifts the emphasis in communicating language from hearing to seeing."[39] The difficulty in distinguishing truth from fiction was certainly a very real issue as "dubious legends…smears, slanders, false accusations, the unstinted exaggerations of criminal indictments [and] deliberate fabrications" were common, calling into question whether the visual evidence of writing was as valid as actually witnessing the scenes described by words themselves.[40] However, in several romance episodes, writing is not synonymous with the truth, but offers an opportunity to depart from it with the assurance that, in the manner of the fire trials of *Athelston*, the truth will eventually prevail (*Athelston* 608-29).

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[39] Clanchy 278.
[40] Lander 14. See also Clanchy 295-9.

The structure and freedom of romance allows the consequences of false memories to be revealed as letters are sent across geographical and temporal divides, literally refashioning history and with it the memories of the narrative up to this point. Whatever their claims of veracity, letters can often be falsified. The trait is discernable as early as Marie de France's *Lais* and carried through to Criseyde's much later "botmeles bihestes" (*TC* V.1431) from which an audience, poised between sender and addressee, must extract the truth with reference to what they have previously seen and now remember.[41] In *Sir Launfal* the knight's invented letter (notifying him of the death of his father) was to preserve his reputation, having been snubbed at the court (*Launfal* 76-8); however, in that instance, there was no material correspondence – only an imagined summons. Elsewhere, the more devious characters both write and re-write letters in another example of (often) political, but always memorial, "treachery": the truthful memories are erased, occluded or blocked and new histories inserted into the epistolary and narrative security of the parchment.[42] The way in which these feature in romance *memoria* prefigures much contemporary psychological and philosophical theory regarding willing forgetfulness and false words.[43] Indeed, Ricoeur observes that "testimony constitutes the fundamental transitional structure between memory and history," and whilst romances re-present traditional tales as truthful testimony, this fragile claim is supported by a simultaneous exposure of the possibility of abuse through an equivalent craft – writing narratives.[44]

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[41] An example occurs in Marie's *Yonec* as the old man invents a letter from the king. *Lais* VII.257-60.

[42] For religious writing on blocking, overlaying, and remapping of memory see Carruthers, *Craft of Thought* 54-5.

[43] See Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, trans. Nancy M. Paul and W. Scott Palmer (London: Allen, 1950); Edward Casey, *Remembering: A Phenomenological Study* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana UP, 1987); Edmund Husserl, *On the Phenomenology of the Consciousness of Internal Time (1898-1917)*, *Collected Works*, trans. John Barnett Brough, vol. 4 (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1991).

[44] Ricoeur, *Memory History Forgetting* 21.

In the mid-fourteenth-century *Athelston* this craft or trickery is aligned with political treachery on three counts: the treason against King Athelston by Wymound (the Earl of Dover), the accusation made against Egelond (the Earl of Stane), and the threat of more treason by Alryke (the fourth brother, a bishop). In essence, a ritual of dismembering the past is established comprising the collection, erasure, and manufacture of new, false memories. The memory of brotherly loyalty is compromised by the jealous Wymound, the narrative's epistolary traitor: "False lesingis on hem to make, / To don hem brenne and slo" (*Athelston* 84). His plan is to frame Egelond in a plot to depose Athelston and the memorial treachery, its sophisticated manipulation of memory and reality, is revealed in his initial conversation with the king. In reply to Athelston's enquiry as to the state of Alryke and Egelond, Wymound replies: "'Right weel gretes thee that noble clerk'" (*Athelston* 112) and (regarding Egelond and his family) "'They fare weel, is nought to laine'" (*Atheslton* 118). This is curious. An audience has seen that Wymound left Dover and travelled directly to London, so eager was he to put his treacherous plan into action. Consequently, his claims to have visited Alryke at Canterbury and Egelond in Stane establish the pattern of false history cast as reliable testimony at the centre of his plot, subtly implied by "withouten les" (*Athelston* 109) and "nought to laine" (*Athelston* 131) which form an ironic parallel to the "False lesingis" he subsequently tells. This lie nevertheless relies upon a certain amount of believability – Athelston has no reason to doubt this information – and the freedom for falsification when the account is built upon the possibility of reality (namely the relationship between the four brothers) deepens in severity and cunning as Wymound's oral testimony shifts to become a readable truth with, ostensibly, even less possibility for mistrust.

Letters, like the fraternal paradigm of loyalty, are apparently immovable and incorruptible and should remain intact across places and times. The messenger figure is particularly prominent in this romance, providing an important structural function; however, although A. Inskip Dickerson constructs parallels between his fortunes and events of the main narrative, the figure's actions also unwittingly validate different, erroneous narratives of the past.[45] The subsequent false accusation of Egelond's treachery becomes inscribed in the king's mind and transcribed in the letter which Athelston sends with the messenger, Athelstane, to Egelond. Yet Wymound's treachery has been developed by the king, another layer of falseness added to the situation as, in the letter, it is stated that the Athelston requests the company of the family as he intends to knight Egelond's two sons. The arrival of Athelstane and the letter at Stane is significant as it throws into sharp relief a manufactured past. The situation in Stane is that of reality, until now untouched by Wymound's treachery; yet, through an ironic circularity, the letter's *false* words are readily accepted by Egelond. This subtle irony is articulated by the messenger's use of the subjunctive: "'This letter oughte to make thee blithe'" (*Athelston* 206). Behind this lurks an acknowledgement of the letter's apparent veracity along with its own treacherous function, designed to assimilate with Wymound's treachery. The mother's future sight, "'That sighte that she may see'" (*Athelston* 216), looks towards the joy of seeing her two sons made knights but, in the process, ominously denies any such eventuality.

There is a strong emphasis throughout the scene on speed. Athelstane "hies a full good spede" (*Athelston*: 201) and by the following line he has already arrived in Egelond's hall with no sense of arrival, simply a "finding" of the Earl. Similarly,

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[45] A. Inskip Dickerson, "The Subplot of the Messenger in *Athelston*," *Papers on Language and Literature* 12 (1976): 115-24.

"anon he bad him rede" (*Athelston* 204), he speaks "swathe," and the letter itself (which is paraphrased by the messenger, it seems) pushes for an immediate response, urging "'To London I rede thee spede'" (*Athelston* 215) and "'And ther be right no letting'" (*Athelston* 215).[46] This is echoed by the Countess who, although pregnant, vows "'I will nought lette till I there be / To morwen or it be noone'" (*Athelston* 227-8) and this is acted upon: "He and his wif forth gunne they fare; / To London faste thy wente" (*Athelston* 236-7). The speed has two effects: firstly, it adds to our discomfort at their eagerness to attend something which an audience knows will not actually occur – their two sons being made knights. Secondly, it creates a powerful impression of events spiralling out of control, having been initiated by Wymound. Athelston's great haste in sending the letter, coupled with the urgent tone of its bearer, depicts a present rushing to accommodate a false past and the people also attempting to fit within a treacherous paradigm. Furthermore, the subsequent incarceration of the family adds to the discomfort of the audience which reaches its height as the Countess is forced to endure the fire trials, discussed in the previous chapter, and is equalled by Athelston's killing of his unborn child in anger at his wife's protestations concerning the innocence of Egelond and his family (*Athelston* 259-92).

It is significant that the queen composes her own letter which becomes an attempt to write a veracious narrative of the present to counter that of the falsified and dangerously remembered past. The audience wills this letter to be delivered to Alryke as quickly as possible, approving of her bribing the messenger with land in Spain and wealth (*Athelston* 309-20); yet our eagerness is frustrated by the messenger's delay in leaving – we have to wait for him to dine before he eventually

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[46] The emphasis on speed recalls the frantic manipulations of the past by the king and queen in *Floris and Blancheflour* and the readiness with which they believe Floris will follow this new history. *Floris* 43-51.

rides "faste as that he may" (*Athelston* 334) through the streets of London to Canterbury. Speed is again important and the rushing messenger is established as a contrast with Wymound's earlier urgency in imparting the treachery to the king. The false memories are now being pursued; however, interestingly, we do not learn this letter's specific contents – details can only be surmised through the bishop's tearful reaction:

> Or he the letter hadde half y-redde,
> For dool him thought his herte bledde;
> The teeres fill ovir his chin.
>
> The Bishop bad sadele his palfrey:
> 'Also faste as they may,
> Bidde my men make hem yare,
> And wendes before,' the Bishop dede say,   (*Athelston* 366-72)

We wonder what the letter contains, but an audience is invited to supply (from memory) details of Wymound's treachery (which the queen appears to have suspected) and the subsequent incarceration of Egelond and his family. Only "half" of the letter is read, a further indication perhaps that an audience is to recount their accurate memory of past events. Although in contrast to the exposition of Wymound's false narrative and the detailed analysis of the letter sent to Egelond this scene appears less powerful, it is precisely *for* that reason that the moment is so brief. Material letters cannot be trusted in this romance and so it is left to the greater veracity of collective memory and emotion to metaphorically "write" the letter from the queen to her brother-in-law. There is a sense, moreover, that the king's prayer in church, observed by the Bishop watching him from the choir, reinforces why the Bishop has been summoned to London: "'Of the gilt and they be clene, / Leve it moot on hem be sene / That garte hem there to dwelle'" (*Athelston* 426-8). Gesture, or reality, is more reliable than the written word and the king's words not only reveal

his inner thoughts, but an accurate history of events up to this point. There is a strange development as Athelston listens to the Bishop's protestations and orders him out of his lands ("'faste out of my sight!'" [*Athelston* 462]), stripping him of his ecclesiastical possessions, at which point the Bishop briefly considers a plan of treason which never comes to fruition. An unusual sub-plot, which is quickly dismissed, but one which does illustrate the extent to which a falsification of memory (Wymound's plan) could have affected the future of the kingdom and even the morality of the Church.[47]

There, however, remains a final letter which is sent to bring the treacherous Wymound to justice carried, ironically, by the messenger Athelstane. Although this detail is never explicitly revealed (we are merely told that the Bishop "called a messaungere" [*Athelston* 701]), the man later reveals that "yistirday deide my nobil stede / On youre arende as I yede" (*Athelston* 732-3). This is undoubtedly a reference to the man's previous journey from London to Stane to summon Egelond with the news that his sons were to be knighted, a celebratory promise also employed here as the letter reads: "'Sere Egelond and his sones be slawe, / Bothe y-hangid and to drawe; / Thou getist that erldome'" (*Athelston* 717-9). That is another false account of the past along with a fictional vision of the future; yet now this is to re-write an earlier false account, re-placing the correct memorial images in their respective remembered locations: Egelond as the true man whilst Wymound becomes jealous traitor. Although having realised his fate in London and "denied faste the King / That he made nevere that lesing" (*Athelston* 765-6) the existence of the letters will, ironically, testify against him. Although throughout they were mechanisms and

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[47] For details of this plan see *Athelston* 453-542.

places of false memories, these are re-drafted by the new context to provide a true account – a narrative and evidence of treachery itself.

Letters are therefore ambiguous: they can be falsified and also designed to recollect events to fit with such falseness as with Athelston's letter to Egelond. In addition, they are also important agents in restoring the correct past. In *Emaré* the letter plays an even more prominent role as a manipulator of memory, a development compounded by each epistolary communication.[48] Having fallen in love with the King of Galys, Emaré gives birth to a son named Segramour (*Emaré* 502-4). The king is absent, aiding the King of France in fighting the Saracens, and so must be notified of the birth by a letter from his steward, Sir Kadore: "A nobull lettur made he thore / And wrowghte hyt all with gode. / He wrowghte hyt yn hyghynge" (*Emaré* 509-11). Here the emphasis upon "wrowghte" carries the sense of making or inscribing which has been so important to *memoria*, whether upon objects, landscapes, narratives or, here (to return to the rhetorical world of the original memory theorists) vellum or parchment. The child, moreover, is an embodiment of truthful memories – he "Hadde a dowbyll kyngus marke" (*Emaré* 504), duplicated on account of his genealogy as both a king's son and of Emaré, daughter of the Emperor Artyus (although currently under the new identity of the lowly Egaré). This makes the actions of the old queen even more harmful to memory as she intercepts the messenger bearing the "nobull lettur" and destroys it in a fire, effectively clearing the past and writing a new narrative: "Of werkes she was unhende. / Another lettur she made with evyll / And sayde the qwene had born a devyll" (*Emaré* 534-6). "[U]nhende" is revealing – it both establishes a contrast between graciousness or kindness and her "evyll" intent and actions, yet also retains its secondary meaning of

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[48] The sources of *Emaré*, namely the Constance legends, also make use of several forged letters. See Loomis 29.

"skilful" to form an ironic comment on her behaviour. This is a treacherous skill or "werkes." More so than in *Athelston*, the narrative emphasises the physical making and manufacturing of memory in letters before the messenger awakes from a drunken stupor and continues on his journey with the false letter, thereby authenticating the account which, ostensibly, has journeyed uninterrupted from Kadore to the king.[49] The king's reaction recalls that of Alryke in *Athelston*, "The teres downe gan he lete. / As he stode yn redyng, / Downe he fell yn sowenyng" (*Emaré* 549-51), such is the pain upon learning that his son has been born a devil with the heads of "A lyon, a dragon and a beere" (*Emaré* 539). We might note that, according to memorial theory, the more ferocious images (stored at this point in the letter) would be the most memorable; however, the king attempts to counter these imagined monstrosities, as discussed, through his own response. What is significant is the trust that all the characters place in each letter, regardless of its real veracity – there is no reason to doubt any account as the (reported) evidence exists for all to "see," read, and hear.

Nevertheless, the king's kindly reaction does temporarily counter the falseness as he instructs his court to care for Emaré (still disguised as Egaré) until his return. Despite the treacherous work of the old queen, the devotion of the king to his love has accepted, but also disarmed, the false account. However, inevitably, the messenger returns by the same route where he again stays with the old queen, something which the text emphasises ("And rode thorow the same londe, / By the kyngus modur castell" [*Emaré* 575-6]).[50] The romance stresses the messenger's

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[49] It is tempting to compare the letters in this tale with the cloth, the latter as an object of accurate testimony grounded upon reliable past narratives, as was discussed in the chapter three, above.

[50] This recalls, albeit from a different perspective, the route taken by Isumbras as he unconsciously follows the route of his lost wife whilst following the loss of gold until he reaches the same Greek Sea (*Isumbras* 500) and, during his religious mission, he travels to the castle where she now resides (*Isumbras* 538-40).

innocence in these matters – he "wyste of no treson" (*Emaré* 579) and "knewe no gyle" (*Emaré* 598) – yet we may question the character's weakness for food, drink, and hospitality.[51] A minor point perhaps, and romances tend not to develop the character of messengers in the same way as, for example, loyal stewards; however, his role (as in *Athelston*) is crucial in validating the authenticity of the letters, analogous to the importance of seals upon public documents, often much larger than the testimony itself such were the problems of authentication.[52] Through the importance of immediacy and locality ("as I in toun herde" [*Sir Gawain* 31]) his presence maintains the façade of truth: his journey establishes the memorial route along which the letter travels to its addressee as an instrument of recollection. The "false qwene" deals with the second letter more violently. Earlier she "brente hyt do" whereas here "Into the fyre she kaste hyt downe" (*Emaré* 585), conveying a sense of exasperation perhaps. The following morning the messenger continues to Kadore, now bearing the instruction to cast mother and child out to sea which the steward reads and causes him, like the king earlier, to swoon: "Sore he syght and sayde, 'Alas, / Sertes thy sys a fowle case, / And a de[l]full dede!'" (*Emaré* 604-6). The reaction is one of disbelief at what he reads but "sight" calls attention to the fact that he *must* believe – this letter has come directly from the king, carried by his steward and in response to his own, earlier letter. Such is the chain of causality initiated by false memories that individuals are duty bound to manipulate the present in the same way.[53] It is upon the king's return that the manipulations of memory through letters,

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[51] Cf. *Athelston* 109, 131.

[52] Sheryl L. Forste-Grupp, "'For-thi a lettre has he dyght': Paradigms for Fifteenth-Century Literacy in *Sir Degrevant*," *Studies in Philology* 101 (2004): 113-135, at 125. For examples of such seals see P. D. A. Harvey and Andrew McGuinness, *A Guide to British Medieval Seals* (Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1996).

[53] Cf. *Emaré* 631-3.

as in *Athelston*, provide indelible testimonies against the instigator of the treachery itself.

The appearance of the King still stirs something of the initial sorrow and disbelief provoked by the letter, yet this is surpassed by realisation of the treachery – "Then was the stewardes herte wo" (*Emaré* 763):

> 'Lorde, why sayst thou so?
> Art not thou a trewe kynge?
> Lo her, the lettur ye sente me,
> Yowr owene self the soothe may se;
> I have don your byddynge.'   (*Emaré* 764-8)

Kadore's response is almost chiastic in structure, the repeated first and second person pronouns not only emphasise a frantic panic of realisation, but also weave a bond of correspondence between the two characters that never actually existed: "ye" and "me," "Your owene self," "I" and "your." Embedded within are references to truth ("trewe" and "soothe"), and sight which has proved so critical in the effectiveness of the old queen's manipulations. The situation is now reversed as the king surveys the letter, "'Thys lettur come nevur fro me'" (*Emaré* 776), and reacts with similar words to his response to the first correspondence: "'Alas, / That evur born Y was, / Or evur was made manne!'" (*Emaré* 772-4). The first letter changes in character as "The kyng toke hym the letter ther / Of the heddys thre" (*Emaré* 785-6); the words inscribed are now objectified, held apart from the king's own memory, and referred to as a fictional account ("of") much like a fabulous tale with no connection to the present or past.

Moreover, it appears that the king has retained this letter and returned it to the steward. Through this the king performs the function of these letters in romance: they allow different versions of the past to be deployed throughout the narrative and contrasted. Yet, previously, this was only visible to an audience – now, however,

they are placed side by side for comparison to reveal a memorial disjunction. Kadore's "'I sawe nevur thys lettur in place'" (*Emaré* 788) calls attention to the fact that the letter must have emanated from elsewhere. The document has never existed here just as the events it contains did not occur. The "place" is the constant and also, here, the letter (or wax tablet) which should be fixed, much like the court, as a distillation of authority and stability. However, contents of this letter have broken away from reality whilst maintaining an illusion of memorial power. Following the deduction that the king's mother is responsible, the adjective "unhende" (*Emaré* 794) reappears as the king attempts to understand his mother's motivations. The treacherous manipulation of memory has been performed skilfully ("hende") but the true account has eventually been re-written through consulting the correspondence, defining her false letters most definitely as an "unhende" plan. Appropriately, the king declares "'By my krowne she shall be brent, / Wythowten any othur jugement'" (*Emaré* 796-7), echoing the fate of the earlier letters which she destroyed in flames. Moreover, through this symbolic gesture, the king limits any further falsification. Legal documents of a court judgement are implicitly dismissed in place of true, authoritative decision and symbolic gesture – "'That thenketh me best reson!'" (*Emaré* 798).[54]

The treacherous manipulations of memory are concluded and it is for the romance to begin to repair the damage that has been caused, to bridge additional gulfs between Egaré and King, daughter and father and, in the process, Egaré and Emaré (*Emaré* 841-1020). The relationship between writing and memory, even within romance tales, is complex and sometimes contradictory with some narratives privileging gesture and objects, or the spoken word, over written testimony;

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[54] Other notable romances which place treacherous letters at the centre of their memorial work and plot are *Sir Degrevant*, discussed by Forste-Grupp in relation to female agency (*Degrevant* 152-6), and in Chaucer's "Man of Law's Tale" (MLT II.736-56).

however, the latter can often be used as an indefatigable record of previous *false* memories. This would be a record of what did not occur. The paradoxical relationship seems to be related to the transitional period between orality and the written word and it is to be remembered that although written and copied at the far end of these developments, the tales themselves reflect a much earlier culture and society in the eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth centuries. However, this must be placed in a context of other commemorative writings, as David Griffith notes, "[i]nscriptions are texts employed in distinctively non-manuscript forms, formal or informal, engraved, carved, painted, woven or sewn, hammered, incised, cut or scratched."[55] These are presented as more reliable memories, recalling *Emaré*'s cloth (*Emaré* 85-168), the Temple murals in the "Knight's Tale" (KnT I.1918-2050), and numerous inscriptions reported by Malory (for example, upon the Siege Perilous [*Morte* XIII.2]).[56] However, the distinction between manuscript and non-manuscript forms in romance is unclear, at least with regard to veracity; a romance itself guides and guarantees what is accurate as the ultimate piece of correspondence, untouched by treachery and treason. The problematic relation is brought out by an observation within the thirteenth-century legal writings attributed to Henry de Bracton. Henry explains that "[i]f a charter is made the gift will be more secure, for a gift may be proved more easily and effectively by a writing and instruments than by witnesses or suit."[57] A romance audience can immediately identify discrepancies between their own memory of events and those that have been recorded. However, can memory always remain static in this respect, separated from the changes of time, and what of

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[55] David Griffith, "English Commemorative Inscriptions: Some Literary Dimensions*," Memory and Commemoration* 253.

[56] This is discussed later in Chapter Eight 282-3.

[57] Henry de Bracton, *De Legibus et Consuetudinibus Angliæ [On the Laws and Customs of England]*, ed. George E. Woodbine, trans. Samuel E. Thorne, 4 vols. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1968) II.62. *Item si scriptura intervenerit validir erit donation, quia probari poterit donation facilius et melius per scripturam et instrumenta quam per testes vel per sectam.*

tales that deliberately engage with the possibility of memory's change over time? A romance must also be able to accommodate change, thereby constructing a more accurate impression of an individual's relation to temporality and the changes in identity that this might create for a character or for the narrative structure itself.

CHAPTER SEVEN

The Memory of Change: "he that had hadde."

Thanked be Fortune and hire false wheel,
That noon estaat assureth to be weel.   (KnT I.925-6)

Futures of Change and Uncertainty.

As advocated by Aristotle in *De memoria et reminiscentia*, time itself should be used

to aid recollection and in romances an acceptance of continual temporal progression

is imaged in spatial metaphors of landscape and even narrative. Recently, however,

temporality has been examined by psychologists in relation to the problems faced *by*

memory: time, as was explained by Saint Augustine, can never be stopped and

appears as an agent of change.[1] Aristotle also observed the inter-relation of

temporality and change, concluding that time orders rather than measures in the

mind.[2] As we might deduce from a cursory examination of medieval love lyrics such

as Troilus' longing, "'O sterre, of which I lost have al the light'" (*TC* V.639), one of

the greatest tasks for the remembering subject is one of autobiography or the ability

to assimilate a present self with earlier versions now distant from, and even alien to,

the older individual. In essence, the issue is one of "the pastness of the past,

inseparable from the notion of temporal distance," with which memory must

somehow engage and conceptualise.[3] Helpfully, romance narratives frequently

exploit and depend upon the interaction of narrative and change. Consequently, the

unpredictable is made predictable through a set of pre-established narrative patterns

visible only to artist, audience, and (sometimes) gods. Memory is often likened to a

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[1] Aurelius Augustinus, *Confessionem libri XIII*, ed. L. Verheijen, CCSL 27 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1981) xxix.44.
[2] See the full-length study by Ursula Coope, *Time for Aristotle: Physics IV.10-14*. Oxford Aristotle Studies 9 (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2005).
[3] Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting* 102.

narrative, as Michael Oakeshott observes, "[w]hat memory supplies is not an itemized past but a continuity of consciousness in which I recognize myself as a continuing identity and my present experiences and engagements as my own."[4] Romances allow us to ride such undulations, creating a coherent sense of identity over time. This is the paradigm of Fortune, chance (or change), divine grace, or predestination which allows the genre to approach the panicked confusion of Proustian or Beckettian subjects, whilst prompting an audience to "remember" that all this has, somehow, happened before: change over time becomes normalised by a narrative of time itself. In an apparent challenge to *memoria*, "Fortune, allegorically, was made to explain all ups and downs of the violent times in which the people of the Middle Ages lived."[5] The following two chapters will examine this contradiction between Fortune and memory, along with the contextual reasons for a change in attitude to history and the romance world in the later writings of Chaucer and Malory, reflected in the former's readings of Boethius.[6] In this discussion, the agent of change will be defined less as the goddess Fortuna and more the forces of destiny, fate, or chance, and the various "happenings" of time in its broadest and seemingly unpredictable sense.[7]

The workings of Fortune, although the driving force of most romance episodes, are made conspicuous by an absence of any explicit references in many of the popular romances: it is perhaps silently understood that all these events are part of a greater scheme revealed or appreciated at the close of a narrative. Yet the experience of romance is one of interaction and envelopment, so how is memory to

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[4] Michael Oakeshott, *On History and Other Essays* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983) 15.

[5] Bernard L. Jefferson, *Chaucer and the Consolation of Philosophy of Boethius* (New York: Gordian, 1968) 49.

[6] There appears to be more explicit reference to Fortune in those writers following the French school such as Chaucer, Gower and Lydgate. Jefferson 53.

[7] We might think of terms that attempt to conceptualise unpredictable events in time such as the Old English "wyrd," and Middle English "cas" or "hap."

cope with changes as they occur such as when a character suffers a misfortune which alters the direction or identity of that individual? Indeed, we have already examined the established rituals which will return all characters "home" with a stable identity within a narrative that also has a clear moral identity. Every event in a romance should work towards this endpoint, subtly aided by Fortune, whose workings an audience must recognise.[8] Although not frequently alluded to in the romances featured in this study, an exceptional reference to Fortune appears in the prologue to the twelfth-century, French, *Guillaume de Palerne*, the direct source of the mid-fourteenth-century English redaction already of which the equivalent prologue has not survived: "'Qui cuidast que beste ne leus / Vos devorast? Dix, quell eur! / Lasse, por coi vif tant ne dur?'"[9] A sense of disbelief is apparent from the chance work of divine grace ("Qui cuidast"), qualified by the lack of foreknowledge or comparable events throughout the mother's life – how, indeed, could she prepare for such a tragedy (the abduction of an infant), or know what would constitute an appropriate response? The appeal to God is common enough in romance at such points of loss or hardship, yet here it is interesting to note the alliance of divine authority with change, an association which looks forward to the complex theological debates of Chaucer's "Knight's Tale."[10] This is echoed with "'Ne cuit que ja dame dieu place, / Ne que tel cruante en face!'" (*Guillaume* 156-7) which liberates God from the charge of life's unpredictability. In removing the possibility of divine authority the repeated verb, of sheer disbelief, is all that remains. In order to answer the seemingly unanswerable we must look to the narrative itself. This performative circularity of

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[8] Fortune does, however, appear prominently in Chaucer's *The Romaunt of the Rose*. Rom C5403-.

[9] *Guillaume de Palerne*, ed. H. Michelant, Société des Anciens Textes Français (Paris: Librairie Firmin-Didot, 1876) 5.132-4. All subsequent references to *Guillaume* will be to this edition and cited by line number. The prologue is missing from the single extant Middle English *William of Palerne* (King's College, Cambridge MS 13), yet it could reasonably be assumed that these lines, or at the very least a close translation, were originally copied into English.

[10] Cf. KnT I.2987-. For less complex divine appeals see *Isumbras* 375-84.

composition is corroborated by lines which correspond to such disbelief in the epilogue to the poem of which the English equivalent also survives:

> Þus þis worþi will*ia*m was emp*er*our of Rome,
> þat hadde many hard happe hade þerebifore,
> and be in gret baret and bale sum-time.
> Of alle bales was he brouȝt blessed be goddes miȝt;
> and so schal euerich seg þat secheþ to þe gode,
> and giues him in Goddes grace & godliche ay wircheþ.
>
> (*William* 5515-20)

The effect is comparable to Troilus' privileged view from the eighth sphere (*TC* V.1814). Time is now mapped out ("þerebifore," "sum-time"), yoking chance events that earlier were figured only in terms of disbelief. The "many hard happe," meaning bad fortune, have been corralled into a pattern by the narrative to prepare us should we ever hear of, or experience, a sudden wolf abduction ever again. Significantly, at this moment, divine agency returns, "be goddes miȝt," thereby finally revealing a pattern. Crucially, dominant past tenses ("hadde") are tamed by the confidence of the future perfect "so schal." In romance, reversals of Fortune are often experienced as moments of disbelief stemming from the contrast between past and present, fortune and misfortune, happiness and pain. It is not from the events themselves that the horror emerges, but through the memories of earlier, better times.

Although memory is urged to repair such divisions, driving the night away for Chaucer's Dreamer in *The Book of the Duchess* (*BD* 49), romances frequently allude to the inherent difficulty of this process and its effect upon individual psychological stability in moments of "subjective crisis." This is a little discussed but prominent *topos* in romance: a survey of the narratives featured in this study reveals its widespread use throughout the genre.[11] This is somewhat surprising, given

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[11] Examples of these moments appear in *Ipomadon* 905; 1187; *Floris* 249; *Amadace* 376; *Orfeo* 80, 210; KnT 1369; *Amis* 1618; *Emaré* 335, 360; *Guy* 7840, 10200, 10935. There are other, broader

the importance of progression through a narrative ritual which establishes the template for *memoria* and also the possible destabilising effect that such moments could have upon the faculty – remembering what is no longer applicable. A particularly acute lament in the *ubi sunt* tradition occurs during Sir Orfeo's spell in the wilderness:[12]

> He that hadde y-werd the fowe and gris
> And on bed the purper bis,
> Now on hard hethe he lith;
> With leves and gresse he him writh.
> He that hadde had castels and tours,
> River, forest, frith with flours,
> Now, they it comency to snewe and frese
> This King mote make his bed in mese.
> He that had y-had knightes of pris
> Bifor him kneland and levedis,
> Now seth he nothing that him liketh,
> Bot wilde wormes by him striketh.
> He that had y-had plenté
> Of mete and drink, of ich deynté,
> Now may he all day digge and wrote
> Er he finde his fille of rote.
> In somer he liveth by wild frut
> And berien bot gode lite;
> In winter may he nothing finde
> Bot rote, grases, and the rinde.
> All his body was oway dwine
> For missais, and all to-chine.
>
> Lord! who may telle the sore
> This King sufferd ten yere and more!
> His here of his berd, black and rowe,
> To his girdle-stede was growe.   (*Orfeo* 217-42)

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changes in terms of disguise such as the lowly jobs performed by Havelok as he travels in disguise, identifiable only by the mysterious light emanating from him which, crucially, can never be "disguised" (*Havelok* 588-90, 1251-4).

[12] The scene recalls musings on the transience of things, seen powerfully in the words of Theseus at the end of the "Knight's Tale," and also in many lyrics. See Felicity Riddy, "The Uses of the Past in *Sir Orfeo*," *Yearbook of English Studies* 6 (1976): 5-15, at 13.

We are invited to take the exterior changes in his habitation and general situation as a change in his identity, and the poignant contrasts bring with them a sense of disbelief or "malaise" shared by narrator and audience.[13] "Purper bis" has become "hard hethe" whilst the "castels and tours" lie distanced literally and biographically as he now lives amongst "River, forest, frith with flours," previously viewed only from the windows of his court. Perspective has changed with the temporal change itself. Although seasonal rituals continue, suggesting the literal time spent in this condition ("ten yere and more"), they also emphasise the permanence of his changed state: this is not merely a winter spell to be replaced by summer upon his return to court and his previous identity. The narrative ritual is disrupted: any process of recollection has ground to a halt as movement ceases in the wilderness. "Now seth he nothing that him liketh" is powerful, suggesting his dismay at the worms (now his courtiers), but also change – there is nothing that he formerly recognised. Indeed, change is figured in his appearance, his face obscured by a long beard in the manner of a romance disguise or transformation. Mary Hynes-Berry writes of the scene: "[o]ur position is not inside Orfeo's head (first person) as much as it is exactly congruent with the narrator's, an invisible sympathiser looking over Orfeo's shoulder, sharing his situation and his every word as he talks to himself in his lonely self-exile."[14] Indeed, the gaze of the audience upon the figure is comparable to Orfeo's view *of* himself.[15] We must detach ourselves from knowing the outcome of the tale and ask whether, at this point, there is any indication that Orfeo will return to his previous wealth or whether he is doomed to remain in this changed state indefinitely.

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[13] See Riddy, "Uses of the Past" 9-10.

[14] Mary Hynes-Berry, "Cohesion in *King Horn* and *Sir Orfeo*," *Speculum* 50 (1975): 652-70, at 655.

[15] The argument here develops in terms of *memoria* and (auto)biography the general arguments of A.C. Spearing, *The Medieval Poet as Voyeur: Looking and Listening in Medieval Love-Narratives* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1993).

However, significantly, the description of his beard is followed immediately by a mention of his harp, "whereon was all his glee" (*Orfeo* 243), a link with the figure we met in the opening of the tale. This is crucial as "[m]emory is a vehicle by which the embodied self situates itself in the present by reference to its unique past."[16] Indeed, throughout the *peripeteia*, it has remained that this *is* still Orfeo: the perfect and pluperfect tenses yoke past with present, demarcating the journey of change that has occurred over time, and uniting this under one personal label – it is "*He* that hadde had." The construction satisfies the criteria for successful autobiography as outlined by Norman Malcolm: "a feature corresponding to the past event, but also a feature corresponding to its being a *past* event, and also a feature corresponding to its being an event 'in *my* past'."[17] Consequently, although we are unsure how long he will remain in this state, the possibility of change over time has been raised along with its embodiment in a single figure. Disguise, in this respect, offers great possibilities for memory to be both challenged and re-affirmed, or "[disguise as] a deep and complex arrangement, with a great deal hiding behind it."[18] There is no division of subjectivity due to contradictory or competing memories, but a layering of experience; each assertion of change brings with it the qualification of a new state – the past identity which has been altered but which, through subtle indications in the image before us, still lurks beneath the present figure. Romances establish their balance between change and continuity within a narrative in the same manner as the texts themselves are designed to encompass the cultural past, turbulent present, and aspirational future. Again, this process ultimately strengthens the authority of the memorial faculty through selectivity.

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[16] Jeffrey Prager, *Presenting the Past: Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of Misremembering* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1998) 81-2.

[17] Norman Malcolm, *Memory and Mind* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1977) 121.

[18] Wilson 20.

Three days in *Ipomadon*: Remembering Change.

In their episodic characteristics and anticipation of the later *Bildungsroman*, romances foster an expectation of change over time, subsequently recorded by memory, and the techniques employed during this process are distilled into the three-day tournament sequence of the fourteenth-century *Ipomadon*. This is a complicated yet integral part of the narrative found in broadly similar form in the late twelfth-century Anglo-Norman *Ipomedon*.[19] Literal places and the landscapes interact with changes in identity as time progresses over the three days to juxtapose change and continuity: various characters believe they can understand the present in light of the past, yet the past itself is made questionable, moved, and then re-established in another place. Indeed, Robert Hanning saw this as a defining characteristic of romance as a whole, the use of time and space asserting that a protagonist never returns as the same person; however, this assessment makes certain suppositions concerning the malleability of memory.[20] Romance overlays memories upon memories to create a prismatic effect of a character's multifaceted identity, in this instance ordered by the memory of ceremonial and narrative ritual which throws temporal development against recollection, expectation, and predictability.[21]

The three-day tournament has been arranged to attract the Fere's "straunge valett," the hunting enthusiast Ipomadon, who has returned to Apulia ashamed of his earlier lack of interest in combat. Already the narrative has established the

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[19] There are three Middle English manuscript versions, all written down in the fifteenth-century: this fourteenth century tail-rhyme version, a fifteenth-century couplet version, and a prose version composed in the mid fifteenth-century. For the date of the composition of the Middle English *Ipomadon* and its manuscript history see the introduction by Purdie, especially liv-lv; Loomis, *Medieval Romance* 225-8; Mehl 58-9; Cooper 420-1.

[20] Hanning 201.

[21] For a discussion of disguise in the narrative see J. A. Burrow, "The Uses of Incognito: *Ipomadon A*," *Readings in Medieval Romance*, ed. Carol M. Meale (Cambridge: Brewer, 1994) 25-34.

parameters of a change in identity over time and the tournament therefore attracts the knight in a situation antithetical to his previous identity. This has been improved through his various triumphs in contests throughout the world which has also dramatized the possibility of change, localised in the image of one character. This raises challenges for memory, voiced poignantly at the end of the third day's contest after Ipomadon has jousted as the black knight:

> Ipomadon saw oute of the castell
> A child come he knew full well
> A littell þer be weste,
> But he knewe not Ipomadon　　　　　(*Ipomadon* 4328-31)[22]

A number of important issues arise from this observation: first, an alliance of place and time. The child emerges from the castle and sees the present moment, yet any reaction to the current figure is limited by previous experience, or his lack of referents. Although "knowing" a little, "He knewe not Ipomadon" despite having seen the knight in his previous armours of white and red. A certain memorial discontinuation pervades the sequence as Ipomadon changes between six identities during the course of the three days.[23] Similarly, the places (synonymous with time and, now, identity) are, ironically, all in close proximity: the tournament is being held in Canders (Cantanzaro) in Calabrye (Calabria) whilst the King and Queen of Sicily elect to stay "in a castell a myle þerfro /.../ Whiles they were at the turnament" (*Ipomadon* 2846). It is to be assumed that the secret hermitage where Ipomadon changes into his various costumes lies between these two locations, the latter in a forest ("That holde stode in the forest" [*Ipomadon* 2849]), thereby looking back to the knight's previous identity as the "straunge valett." The romance accommodates time and change, allowing a contrast of past with present but also a layering of

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[22] The moment recalls less complicated moments of *incognito* already discussed in relation to *Isumbras* (613-54), *Havelok* (58890; 1251-4), and *Emaré* (985-1020).
[23] These comprise the strange valet, Drew-le-reine, the white, red and black knights, and Ipomadon.

various "pasts." Ipomadon occupies the same places but in changed costumes, each one interpreted by those around in terms of a previous figure and experience which, like the landscape, forms part of the same memorial paradigm.

Events over the three days follow a similar pattern and although the details are complicated by subtle differences they are largely repetitious.[24] Each day Ipomadon leaves the Queen of Sicily in the forest castle ostensibly to go hunting as the new hunting enthusiast Drew-le-reine, meets with his "mayster" Egyon at the designated hermitage, changes into coloured armour, arrives at the tournament, and defeats all assembled opponents. The knight reveals to his friend, Jason, that he is lurking beneath each disguise and his confidant then reports to the "Fere," the object of the combatants' martial efforts. Meanwhile, Ipomadon returns to the hermitage, changes into the huntsman costume, returns to the Queen of Sicily and is mocked. The Chamberlain then arrives and reports that day's events from the tournament. The hunting trophies (given to Ipomadon by the "mayster") are then presented to the Chamberlain who returns to Canders and presents the gifts to the King of Calabrye.[25] The ritual is complicated enough as it stands, much more so than the relatively simple performance at the well in *Ywain and Gawain* (*Ywain* 319-438); yet it is clouded even further by the various recollections and misconceptions which underpin the ritualistic structure through exploiting the rubric of romance *memoria*. *Ipomadon* is more of a challenge. The details to be remembered are circular, occurring in the course of a single day and then in almost identical form on subsequent days.

The first day sees Ipomadon fight as a white knight. He leaves the queen, his identity already confused as the ladies mock "'Lo, madame, your drewe / Wyth

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[24] The three day tournament is a popular *topos*. See Jessie L. Weston, *The Three Days' Tournament: A Study in Romance and Folk-lore* (London: Nutt, 1902).
[25] The cycle of events begin at *Ipomadon* 3039, 3593, 4167.

horne and hound se ye may now; / He hyes to turnayeng" (*Ipomadon* 3048-50). The "sight" is complex. Ipomadon, as Drew-le-reine, is journeying to a real tournament; however, in his hunting guise, he simultaneously calls attention to the change that has occurred since his initial time as the "straunge valett" in the first portion of the romance. The queen's disappointment, "That he ne was man of prowes" (*Ipomadon* 3054), recalls the Fere's earlier criticism of Ipomadon which prompted his return to Apulia. The difficulties of change are communicated through the voices of mocking ladies and the depressed queen who, nevertheless, hides her sadness: "Whedur she loved hym, neuer the lesse / In hertt she it hyde" (*Ipomadon* 3055-6). Two identities are sketched here - cowardly hunter and hypothetical courageous champion - in a manner that recalls the contradiction between the genre's ritualised expectation and the actuality of a present character; yet this ironically reveals the possibility that these could be entertained simultaneously in memory.[26] Consequently, Ipomadon meets with Egyon and, in assuming each coloured armour, re-enacts the change that has occurred since leaving Calabrye.

The (possibly treacherous) blocking of memory is momentarily figured in the location of the secret hermitage. Set "In the thykest place of all þat woode" (*Ipomadon* 3057) it is importantly secluded so that no-one can glimpse the literal change of costume that takes place whilst, in terms of *memoria*, the wood provides an important barrier between two, now temporally differentiated places and identities.[27] Such is the impression of a gulf created by "A full de[p]e dale" (*Ipomadon* 3070) through which the knight rides, so deep that "No man might se hym on no syde / Yf it were lyghte of day" (*Ipomadon* 3073-4). Consequently,

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[26] The technique dramatizes the threat inherent in Gawain's temptation scenes where it is suggested that he has departed from his literary and social reputation. *Gawain* 1297-1301; 1481-91.

[27] The wood recalls the walls, loft and tower/cellar in *Gamelyn* as a means to obscure memory; yet here the attention is upon the temporal locations either side of the barrier which exist literally, and in the memories of the characters and structure of the narrative. Cf. *Gamelyn* 127, 286, 329-51.

Ipomadon's locational source remains a mystery until he emerges from the ditch as a fully formed figure with no sense of a past – he is simply "the" white knight. The costume adopted, his white armour and horse, is crucial at this point. Memorial objects themselves, typified by Gawain's pentangle and heraldic emblems, established an identity and if worn by different individuals would lead to great confusion. However, the practical purposes of armour enhance its possibilities *for* change: the knight's face remains obscured by this "identity," thereby allowing multiple memorial images to be stored over the three days of the contest. The colour defines Ipomadon, glimpsed "ouer the walle" (*Ipomadon* 3093) of the castle as "The wynd wavyd his whyght pensell" (*Ipomadon* 3091) and the Fere is woken with the following news:

'His stede and he is all in whyȝte;
That sight to se is grette delyȝte,
Fro bale as I be brought!'
The lady weyndis to a wyndowe
And saw hym hove as white as snowe;
In greete care is she brought,
So ne she wyst at that day
On whome she shuld her love laye,
For in hur h[e]rtte she thought
She wold not the valet [str]aunge
For emperoure nor for [k]yng [chau]nge,
Gette hym and she movghte.   (*Ipomadon* 3099-110)

The arrival of a knight and the awakening of a lady who subsequently gazes from her bedroom window recalls many moments in romances; yet here she is apparently woken by a stranger whose appearance only exacerbates her uncertainty regarding the tournament - "ne she wyst at that day." This is soon resolved, ironically, with the determination to remain loyal to her memory of "the valet [str]aunge" whose remembered image fails to accord with the figure beneath her window: "She beholdys the knight in whyte, / But what he was she wot but lite" (*Ipomadon* 3111-

2). Her reaction implicitly communicates with that of the huntsman at the Queen of Sicily's castle in the woods: like the Fere, the queen had been driven to her bed by Ipomadon and both ladies are keeping certain memories of the figure hidden in their hearts - the queen "In hertt she it hyde" (*Ipomadon* 3056) whilst the Fere "in hur h[e]rtte she thought" (*Ipomadon* 3107).[28] To hide or conceal is to frustrate memory, and the audience is urged to extract the feelings and unite the disappointment at a hunter a mile from the contest with a longing for that huntsman at the contest itself.[29] The change in Ipomadon over time has therefore left identities which he must maintain in two separate places, emblematic of two points in his life's story.

Indeed, two identities are employed during the depiction of the knight's successes in the contest. Brief asides give insight into the identity of the figure: with "That knew not Ipomadon" (*Ipomadon* 3249) the name incorporates all aspects of his temporally and spatially dependant character whilst the present action, by definition, can only be performed by his current identity as Jason "To the whyȝte knyȝt he hym hyde / Wyth shaftys IIII or five" (*Ipomadon* 3253-4). However, as if to clarify any confusion at the close of each day, Ipomadon reveals his various identities *to* Jason, beginning after the first day:

> 'Yes I[aso]ne, I the kenne
> Thynkyth þou not off the strange valett,
> Att the super be the was sette?
> Thou wotte wele where and whanne.
> That tyme I went of this contre,
> I sayd I shuld come speke wyth the;
> Now I hold that I hight thane.'   (*Ipomadon* 3353-9)

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[28] The language of keeping memories "in heart" also features in *TC* V.255.

[29] In terms of the link between disappointment and memory we might think of Horn and Ywain failing to return to their love within the allotted time (*Horn* 926-8; *Ywain* 1583-90), or even an audience's reaction when Gawain seemingly "forgets" his beheading challenge in the wilderness and fears only for his safety at that given moment (*Gawain* 713-39).

A promise is evoked to impose a memorial paradigm onto the situation and Ipomadon's words articulate Jason's difficulties of recollection. There are no verbal puns or physical objects as in the reunion in *King Horn*: here, the stark contrast between past and present is explicitly presented.[30] The typical romance construction of Ipomadon's hypothetical question highlights Jason's difficulty whilst drawing a comparison between the situation at supper and their present correspondence. "Thou wotte wele where and whanne" is expressed in the present, asserting Jason's recollection of that occasion; however, "where and whanne" implicitly suggests the temporal and spatial gulf that has opened between past and present which is somewhat repaired by the sketch of a journey away ("I went"), the confirmation of future return ("I shuld"), and the final proof of that occasion – the present moment "Now I hold that I hight thane."

However, beneath Ipomadon's assured voice, we note that the connection to his past self cannot be severed as "the strange valett" recalls the almost identical character of "Drew-le-reine," established with the queen a mile away. His past, in essence, is waiting for him, having been deferred to another location and, consequently, he must depart. "I mvste to my contre, / I maye ne lengur abyde" (*Ipomadon* 3364-5) employs an intriguing use of the possessive to create a sense of separate selves coupled with an impression of compulsion, and therefore allegiance, to the memory of his earlier identity. Jason then informs the Fere of the coincidence between the white knight and the "straunge valett" through another recollection of previous proximity to one who now appears so different ("In þe foreste before you at suppere / Togeddur were we sett" [*Ipomadon* 3391-2]); however, the current absence of the figure foregrounds the intractability of memory to such sudden changes in

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[30] Cf. *Horn* 1174-1200.

identity. His disappearance is expressed in overly dramatic and abrupt terms – "That is he þat Iuste so well þ[i]s day / In whyte, but he is goon for aye - / Me rewes that euer we met!" (*Ipomadon* 3396-8). These are still the words of Jason and his wistful regret echoes the sentiments of abandoned ladies elsewhere in romance, later articulated by the Fere in "'But he is gone – wo ys me!'" (*Ipomadon* 3423). Again, a sense of self-pity juxtaposes constants (the lady who still misses her "straunge valette" or Jason who was promised that upon his return Ipomadon would speak with him) with a figure that has changed over time. Even the present white knight, the memory of his excellent jousting still fresh, has now disappeared as in Jason's speech the present moment is engulfed by an abyss of obliteration ("þis day" overpowered by "for aye"). Such is the pain and difficulty of memory, ironically twisted as Ipomadon returns to the hermitage and reassumes the character of Drew-le-reine. In *Ipomedon* the knight later celebrates this skill, "'Jo ai purpensé l'engin mut bon'," a return of memory or perhaps *engin* which proved a powerful form of recollection in order to remember one's past promises, now figured as a means by which to remember one's own identity.[31]

Following the transformation as knight again becomes hunter, figured in a change of costume, specifically of colour, "Off he kyst his armore bright, / And as an hunter he hym dyght / In a gowne off grene" (*Ipomadon* 3450-2), his white horse is replaced and led away by Egyon. The different directions taken by the two figures are important and emphasised: they have convened at the hermitage and, following their exchange, Ipomadon "To the cite by anoþer way / Wyth lowed blowing and grette bay / He rydythe home to the quene" (*Ipomadon* 3456-8). Again, the changes over time are mapped onto the landscape quite explicitly as the alternative "way"

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[31] Hue de Rotelande, *Ipomedon: poème de Hue de Rotelande (fin du XIIe siècle)*, ed. A. J. Holden, Bibliothèque Francaise et Romane (Paris: Klincksieck, 1979) 7756. All subsequent references to *Ipomedon* will be to this edition and cited by line number.

both takes him from the identity of jousting knight whilst the familiar "home" also implicitly notes the similarity between this location and time and that of his earlier incarnation as the "straunge valett."[32] There is a sense of dependability and strength of purpose as he re-enters as Drew-le-reine, equalling the confidence of the white knight at the tournament, boldly sounding his horn and carrying the hunting trophies caught and delivered by Egyon. Much like this secretive transaction, all business at the hermitage should remain hidden, a metaphor for the changing effects of time, despite an implicit awareness of what inevitably occurs within.

Having been mocked again by those at the queen's dwelling, the king's Chamberlain arrives from the tournament to report the day's events, speaking of the white knight, "But a knight in white þer was / That welle couth weld geyre" (*Ipomadon* 3523-4), and subsequently describes those defeated at the hands of this mysterious figure (*Ipomadon* 3531-47). We noted the use of previously witnessed action re-narrated for an audience to validate through memory and such is the case here but with an added level of ironic recapitulation as news of a figure is reported in front of that very figure himself.[33] Consequently, the audience corroborates but also silently corrects the report, substituting white knight for Drew-le-reine and, ultimately, Ipomadon. The layering of multiple images is invited by the Chamberlain's speech; however, the irony is developed even further when the account of the tournament is replaced by that of Drew-le-reine's hunting exploits that day: "Today the white hath borne hym best, / As I haue happe or selle" (*Ipomadon* 3555-6). In *Sir Gawain*, the structural effectiveness of the hunting scenes lies in their

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[32] "Home" has shifted in this romance, divided between two locations, on account of the memories of multiple identities which are explored simultaneously. Compare the work of Matthew Paris in the thirteenth century who arranged maps in strips to create a daily itinerary of a journey. See Evelyn Edson, *Mapping Time and Space: How Medieval Mapmakers Viewed Their World* (London: British Library, 1997) 121-2.

[33] Compare the multiple re-narration of events in order to close the ritual of *William of Palerne*. *William* 3494-; 4069-; 4620.

self-contained daily units, designed to parallel the events with Gawain in the bedroom scenes along with other tri-partite structures in the tale. Bertilak sets out at daybreak, the noise of the hunt shattering the still morning air: "Þer ros for blasteȝ gode / Gret rurd in þat forest" (*Gawain* 1148-9), and returns at nightfall, thereby providing controlled, equally divided and ordered memories. The same is true in *Ipomadon*: a sense of daily achievement is created as the trophy of venison (*Ipomadon* 3564-5) is presented and a carved portion is sent to the king. This closes the unit of time during which the hunting expedition has taken place; however, again, the tale allows us to peer beyond this unit to entertain the possibility of a change in memory, implicitly suggested by the identity of the best hound each day – on the first occasion, appropriately, a white animal.[34] The king's laughter, upon hearing the hunting news, "The kyng lewȝ and held hym nyce, / And sayd, 'A noble folle he is!'" (*Ipomadon* 3579-80), is thereby rendered ironically self-referential as well as, in its apparent paradox, unintentionally insightful. The combination of nobility and foolish hunting obsessiveness is also that of temporally and psychologically distinct identities of the past, present, and (given that there are two more days of the tournament to come) future.

The pattern continues largely unchanged over the following two days of the tournament with Ipomadon adopting identities of red and black knights. This is supported by red and black hounds being praised for the subsequent successful hunts. As ever, effects upon individual subjectivity, rather than articulation through emotion or thought, are performed through the reactions of others. Consequently, the Fere, quite understandably, expects the white knight to return the second day and upon being woken again she voices this desire: "for Goddys myght, / Sees ye oughte

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[34] The hounds always correlate with the colour worn by Ipomadon on that particular day. *Ipomadon* 3578; 4144; 4842.

the white knight / That yesterday Iustyd here?" (*Ipomadon* 3665-7).[35] However, the persistent memory of the previous day begins to be obliterated by the present sight as she rushes to the wall and sees a red knight. Following a few verses of lament, her concluding cry, "'For why my leman is not here!'" (*Ipomadon* 3710), also demonstrates the persistence of her memory of white knight and "straunge valett" whom she has, we should recognise, now learned are the same person. There is something poignant about the qualification of her exclamation "To the wallys she yede" (*Ipomadon* 3712) as the Fere looks out and sends her voice across the landscape and over the head of the red knight in the direction whence the white knight had previously emerged, never to come again in that form.[36] However, memories are unstable in this romance. She never sees exactly what she remembers. The same occurs again the following day, this time with reference only to the red knight, as a black figure rides into view: "'for mannys dede, / Sees thou auȝte the knight in rede / That yesterday Iustyd here?'" (*Ipomadon* 4245-7).

For the lady, in the manner recognised by modern memory theory, "episodic memory is not now apprehension of a past episode, but rather the retention of a past apprehension of that episode": she remembers only the red knight, not her expectation the previous day to see the white knight, nor that of the day before that to see her "straunge valett."[37] She appreciates the changes once they have occurred, but not the possibility of change or, rather, the possible revision of memory over time. Ostensibly the white knight has now been forgotten, the Fere settling upon the final "apprehension" as the image she most readily remembers and expects to see –

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[35] Her original request from her bed was to see the "straunge valett" from the first part of the romance. *Ipomadon* 3108.

[36] We might notice an opposite effect to the blocking observed in *Gamelyn* of the younger brother by the treacherous older sibling as he shuts the gate. *Gamelyn* 286.

[37] M. G. F. Martin, "Out of the Past: Episodic Recall as Retained Acquaintance," *Time and Memory: Issues in Philosophy and Psychology*, ed. Christoph Hoerl and Teresa McCormack, Consciousness and Self-Consciousness 1 (Oxford: Clarendon, 2001) 267.

this was his form "yesterday." However, confusingly, on the third day, the black knight fights *another* red knight, a possible complication expressed in the Chamberlain's daily report. In answer to the queen's question, "'Syr, where is þe white knight / And the rede, so mekyll of myghte?'" (*Ipomadon* 4771-2), he replies: "'The white wolle not be founde; / [A] [r]ede þer was today at morne" (*Ipomadon* 4773-4), before continuing to explain how a black knight defeated all, including Cabanus, the preferred suitor, and the King of Sicily. In editing the text, Rhiannon Purdie has followed the Anglo-Norman equivalent, "Uns vermeilz I fut veirement" (*Ipomedon* 6452), and amended "Mede" to the more likely reading "rede." However, perhaps the most crucial aspect of this correction is the indefinite article: this is "a" red knight, not "the" red knight previously encountered, despite this being a logical supposition and the fact that it follows details of "The white," corroborated by "veirement" as a mark of veracity. The line is inconsistent, yet it demonstrates the way in which the romance pushes for distinction alongside identification, generating a space for confusion whilst simultaneously clarifying the situation for its prudent audience.

The Queen of Sicily is established as less able to comprehend change than the Fere (who has at least been informed of the developments by Jason). After the second day, when the chamberlain has spoken of the absent white knight and successful red knight, the queen's gaze falls upon Drew-le-reine: "Shoo lokyd on hym þat be her satte; / The whyte and the rede boþe she forgatte / The comelye vnder palle" (*Ipomadon* 4116-8). The lines recall Ipomadon's explanation to Jason that cited their previous proximity at the start of the narrative and, subsequently, Jason's words to the Fere (*Ipomadon* 3353-9). Here the effect is of occlusion rather than assimilation. The white and red knights are soon "forgotten," replaced instead by her

"brave" hunter who stands before her in the present moment, apparently a stable memory that has remained constant throughout the day's hunting in contrast to the inconstancies which have been occurring at the tournament. To explain these ironies further we must return to the mocking of Drew-la-reine which is repeated as he returns from his apparent hunting trip at the end of each day, bearing increasingly severe and somewhat mysterious injuries. After the first day's "hunting" Ipomadon is mocked by the ladies at court who again cast his forest exploits in terms of a day's "turnaynge" (*Ipomadon* 3463): "Off noble stedys þat he you bryngys, / That he hathe wonne off riche kyngys" (*Ipomadon* 3465-6). Ironically they have now perfectly defined Ipomadon's newly developed power in combat. The queen remains understandably resolute in her view of the good huntsman and dismisses the ladies' jeering – "She let them say what þe[m] lyst" (*Ipomadon* 3471) – before another element of disguise is introduced: "Thowe she wold þat no man wyst, / She louythe hym neuer þe lesse" (*Ipomadon*: 3472-3).[38] She loves him despite his apparent aversion to tournaments, yet hides this from others, the irony of which is captured in the contrast of imagined trophies from battle and those from the hunt: "noble stedys" compared with the "Thre hedys" (*Ipomadon* 3475) of deer.

Following the second day, after Ipomadon has encountered more resistance in the tournament, he returns to the queen "pale off hewe" (*Ipomadon* 4040). She blames his condition on an excess of early hunting expeditions, urging him to "Put your hunting to respite" (*Ipomadon* 4044). Despite changes of costume and behaviour, emblematic of the changes in an individual over time (whether that be years, days, or hours), memory can be aided in its biographical work by the results or remnants of past experiences and therefore earlier identities. When urging the king to

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[38] Compare the frustration as Rymenhilde fails to recognise Horn (*Horn* 1129-1200), Isumbras being accused of stealing the gold dressed as a "palmere" (*Isumbras* 661-75), or the court's inability to remember and comprehend Gawain's experiences at the Green Chapel (*Gawain* 2514-8).

remain at home on the third day, Ipomadon makes reference to himself in the third person, "'I trow the red knight shuld have sparyd / To haue ledde away Lyard!' / Then lowȝ the maydons all'" (*Ipomadon* 4128-30). Again, the jeering laughter frustrates an audience on behalf of the knight as we hear in Ipomadon's plea the desire not to harm the king on the third day or deprive him of his horse, Lyard. Inevitably, the two do meet in combat and the final day's tourneying takes a severe toll on the exhausted Ipomadon as an actual wound is sustained. Initially, after the same mocking from the queen's ladies, Ipomadon blushes, "And lyghttly he waxe red þanne" (*Ipomadon* 4888) "For he trowed that the quene / Wyste that he was hurte sore" (*Ipomadon* 4856-7), and at that very moment his wound bursts open and he attempts to conceal it: "Thus wounde strayned, þe blode out rane / Downe evyn by his gore. / He hyde hit be his mantel noke" (*Ipomadon* 4859-61).[39] Employing the language of memorial concealment or occlusion he attempts to disguise a mark which he knows would actually please the queen but, on account of his identity in this particular place and time, he must remain as the cowardly and seemingly accident-prone hunter, Drew-le-reine. This recalls Gawain's wound which also cannot be disguised: it too is a mark of experience, in that instance one of failure, which also indicates a change in identity or personal awareness. Gawain cannot and will not conceal the fact that he has sinned since leaving the court and, equally, Ipomadon cannot pretend that he is Drew-le-reine or the earlier "straunge valett" – he is now a courageous knight.[40] Indeed, the queen notices the wound which is, in an echo of the previous day, blamed on hunting – "a full spetuous fall / On a sharpe stoke of a thorne" (*Ipomadon* 4869-70). The prominence of this injury, and its

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[39] There are striking parallels with *Sir Gawain* such as the combination of a wound and blushing as the knight returns, ashamed, to Camelot. *Gawain* 2503-4.

[40] Cf. *Gawain* 2501-4.

somewhat dubious explanation, suggest that the dual life witnessed over the last few days cannot be sustained and is drawing to a close.

Appropriately, given the tale's use of geography to conceptualise time and identity, the final revelation of Ipomadon's multiple selves is made as all other figures convene at Cantanzaro to hear the explanation from a messenger, instructed by Ipomadon. Recalling the use of memorial objects such as rings in *Sir Isumbras* and *King Horn*, the various horses awarded to Ipomadon on each successive day of the tournament are summoned into this place and distributed. The laughter that pervades this scene is different from that previously encountered, owing more to the joyous recognition of Sir Orfeo in the wilderness, but still with the lack of proper understanding that lies beneath the final laughter in *Sir Gawain*.[41] Cabanus, the preferred but defeated suitor of the Fere, asks:

> 'But dere ser, speryd þou ovght þat,
> Where he was borne and what he hatte,
> Or whenne he comythe agayne?'
> 'Ya ser, and more myghte I gette,
> But he that was the straunge valet
> That was the Drew-le-rayne.   (*Ipomadon* 5188-93)

The opponent Cabanus wishes to face will not return, just as each coloured knight would not return for a second day. The king's laughter upon seeing his horse given to the Fere (*Ipomadon* 5215-23) is a combination of incomprehension and admiration that the figure so mocked as huntsman could have also defeated him – "'I may not gaynsaye that!'" (*Ipomadon* 5223). The tense expresses disbelief both at the present revelation and the retrospective analysis of his memories that he now realises are inaccurate. As at the end of *William of Palerne*, the articulation is to amuse and

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[41] The moment in Sir Orfeo, discussed elsewhere in relation to spaces of confusion and distraction, was countered by relief as a recognisable context or sight appeared (the king of Fairy's retinue) to rescue him from his subjective crisis in the wilderness. *Orfeo* 259-78.

flatter an audience who have been instructed, over the course of the three days, in the ways of change and memory's power over chance (*William* 5515-20).

In addition to providing an example of the way *memoria* works *with* change in romance, change itself has become ritualised during the three days and made predictable – the only uncertainty has been the next colour Ipomadon would choose to adopt. The Fere, in an attempt to find Ipomadon, offers a commentary on the three days' events in this respect:

> 'Now here you who moste worthily hathe wrought,
> But where is he yet wott ye novghte,
> Thowȝe he his happe hath hadde:
> Fynde you hym, yff that ye may,
> And I shall shure you be my faye-
> There ys no lenger bode-
> That I shall take hym wyth good will.'   (*Ipomadon* 5295-301)

Ipomadon's location is now unknown, "where is he," and again assumes temporal significances – we also do not know *when* he will be found. The only certainty is that he continues to exist, possibly in another changed identity; however, we have now been prepared for the possibility of this. In this respect, "Thowȝe he his happe hath hadde" crystallises the depiction of change and memory in romance with Fortune or chance ordered by the perfect tense of a completed narrative. A character will experience change and, if an audience has followed the narrative carefully, this should allow memory to accommodate change in an image, or identity, of a single individual. Although it may seem strange to impose such a strong psychological interpretation on what is essentially a way to choose a suitor and for a knight to prove his newly acquired prowess, we can see that this mechanism informs many romance narratives which depend upon the acceptance of change over time. Indeed, "[t]he idea of change is a holding together of two apparently opposed but in fact complementary ideas: that of alteration and that of sameness; that of difference and

that of identity."[42] Romance often posits dramatic change against implied sameness as with Guy of Warwick's conversion into the Christian knight (*Guy* 7560-94) or the final transformation of the wolf back into Alphouns in *William of Palerne* (*William* 4723).[43]

The change displayed at the end of *Sir Gawain* is framed by the laughter of the final scene where an audience is invited to smile knowingly at the uninitiated court which not only has failed to change in itself, but seems unable to accept the possibility of change over time. Whilst "Gawain must…face himself in a way which forces upon him the recognition of a new, and to him unpleasant, dimension to his character," the memories of those around him are less adaptable, remaining fixed with the image of Gawain as he left the court and therefore with the expectation of the form in which he will (hopefully) return.[44] It has already been shown that, following the fundamental change in Gawain's understanding of himself, the recognition of his failure and fallibility can be assimilated with his previous identity of eager questing knight through a revised memorial object – the symbolically broken pentangle. Indeed, the "Wylde wayeʒ in þe worlde" (*Gawain* 2479) through which Gawain subsequently travels recall the "Wylde wayeʒ" of the narrative just witnessed with "mony aventure in vale, and venquyst ofte" (*Gawain* 2482) which Gawain faces with his new sense of identity. Initially the change is inscribed upon his body with the scar in his neck, although this disappears and the poet juxtaposes concealment and display, looking forward to the purely retrospective appreciation of Gawain at court: "Þe hurt watʒ hole þat he hade hent in his nek" (*Gawain* 2484). The nick leaves a scar (*Gawain* 2506), concealed by "þe blykkande belt" (*Gawain* 2845)

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[42] Oakeshott 98.

[43] See Bynum 79-85. The issue is also raised by Morgan Dickson, "Verbal and Visual Disguise: Society and Identity in Some Twelfth-Century Texts," *Medieval Insular Romance* 41-6.

[44] Dean Loganbill, "The Medieval Mind in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*," *Bulletin of the Rocky Mountain Modern Language Association* 26 (1974): 119-26, at 125.

but betrayed by "þe lace" (*Gawain* 2487) which has literally altered the memorial image of the pentangle.[45] The sign is "not abandoned, merely occluded."[46] Caroline Walker Bynum laments the absence of such temporal concessions in contemporary literature and culture: "we seem at the present moment to lack images, metaphors and stories that imagine a self possessing both individuality and identity position, a self that really changes while really remaining the same thing."[47] Gawain returning changed to court offers such an image, as does Ipomadon, having left on his journey, as his various identities are revealed and discussed (*Ipomadon* 4921-).

Recalling the conversations at the end of the three days in *Ipomadon*, the emphasis at Camelot is upon what can be seen and the perspectives of those at court is revealed by the seemingly functional "And þus he comes to court, kny3t al in sounde" (*Gawain* 2489). "In sounde" indicates the reaction of the court – they see only the safe return of the "gode Gawayn" they knew before: "Þer wakned wele in þat wone when wyst þe grete / Þat gode Gawayn wat3 commen; gayn hit hym þo3t" (*Gawain* 2490-1). However, to clarify the significance of his return, the knight begins with "gode Gawayn" before taking the court through his narrative of experience and change:

> ... and ferlyly he tells,
> Biknowe3 alle þe costes of care þat he hade,
> Þe chaunce of þe chapel, þe chere of þe kny3t,
> Þe luf of þe ladi, þe lace at þe last.
> Þe nirt in þe nek he naked hem schewed,
> Þat he la3t for his vnleuté at þe leudes hondes for blame.
>
> (*Gawain* 2494-500)[48]

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[45] Lancelot is also identified by a scar on his cheek. *Morte* XVIII.13. Also compare the way in which he disguises the wound on his hand with a glove, Lancelot having injured himself on the bars of Guinevere's chamber window. *Morte* XIX.6.

[46] W. R. J. Barron, *Trawthe and Treason: The Sin of Gawain Reconsidered* (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1980) 144.

[47] Bynum 166.

[48] This differs from the re-narration of events at the close of other romances: it emphasises the change that has occurred in the narrative, despite all appearing to have reached the target of the memorial work.

Gawain remains a capable autobiographer, sketching the course of his journey along with the changes upon himself that have occurred, inscribed upon body and memory.[49] However, there is never any doubt that he is, essentially, the same figure that they remember if only the court could *see* the changes with reference to the past. Subsequently "'Lo! lorde,' quoþ þe leude, and þe lace hondeled" (*Gawain* 2505) creates a very tactile sense of memory recalling a handling of objects witnessed with the cup and ring in *King Horn* (*Horn* 1165-70) and *Emaré*'s (*Emaré* 97-168) cloth. Moreover, Gawain's definition of the inescapable grip of his mistake is also one of the strength of memory and its effect upon identity, expressed in sentiments which would be equally acceptable to modern psychologists: "'For mon may hyden his harme, bot vnhap ne may hit, / For þer hit oneȝ is tached twynne wil hit neuer'" (*Gawain* 2511-2). It is anachronistic to force concepts of repression and the unconscious onto Gawain's words, but there seems to be an acute awareness of the power of experience and why it cannot, and indeed should not, be "concealed." Interestingly, "vnhap," with its etymological relationship to "hap" or chance, re-affirms the irreversible power of Fortune or the changes experienced during one's lifetime and which are subsequently accommodated by memory to maintian an accurate impression of an identity.

The court, however, cannot adapt their memories in this way to assimilate the one who bravely accepted the challenge with the more prudent figure who stands blushing before them (*Gawain* 2503-4). Rather, they resurrect their earlier memories and corroborate these with joy and laughter, "Laȝen loude þerat, and lufly acorden"

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[49] This returns us to Chaucer's use of memories locked within the heart, but also looks forward to our contemporary notion of emotional scarring, or even the use of tattooing as a means to mourn the departed through inscribing their memory on one's physical body. Cf. the scar after the third day at the tournament in *Ipomadon* and the self-mutilation upon Herodis' pure, white form in *Sir Orfeo* – the evidence of past changes which cannot be disguised. *Ipomadon* 4859-61; *Orfeo* 78-92.

(*Gawain* 2514) in celebrating the return of the familiar.[50] Their subsequent action actually reinforces the truth of Gawain's wisdom and validates the importance of memory: "Vche burne of broþerhede, a bauderyk schulde haue, / A bende abelef hym aboute of a bryȝt grene, / And þat, for sake of þat segge, in swete to were" (*Gawain* 2516-8). The court too, in adopting the girdle, becomes a symbol of change over time. Initial memories, the chivalric code, are now altered by a more recent experience; yet they retain the identity of the Round Table - the memory of which itself is recollected "euermore after" (*Gawain* 2520) in "þe best boke of romaunce" (*Gawain* 2522). This, symbolically, is the human experience of changeability, challenge, and craft which is to acquire theological, philosophical, and literary weight through Chaucer's Boethian doctrine in the "Knight's Tale." The narrative remains teleologically secure, but also unpredictable and changeable, whether read in isolation or against the background of popular romance *memoria* and its accommodation of such changes.

Narrating and Remembering Change: The "Knight's Tale."

Developing the ideas voiced in the Prologue to *Guillaume de Palerne* and the notion of "unhap" at the close of *Sir Gawain* discussed above, Chaucer's "Knight's Tale" posits the memory of change over time in a literary context increasingly bound-up with more explicit questions of Fortune (whether as an agent of change or a more specific, divine force), predestination, and even divine grace. Specifically, the work urges its audiences to appreciate the narration of change as an aesthetic and literary extension of ritualised mutability witnessed, to an extent, during the three days in

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[50] Laughter can differ wildly when connected with memory in romance. Compare the laughter in *Ipomadon* as the King of Sicily sees his horse given to the Fere (*Ipomadon* 5215-23), Orfeo's laughter when he sees the courtly procession and Herodis in the wilderness (*Orfeo* 290), and as Troilus laughs from the eighth sphere (*TC* V.1821).

Ipomadon. Chaucer's work occupies the ground already tilled by Boethius as a narrative of human and social desire is exemplified by predestined actions and narratives provided by Boccaccio and Statius.[51] Chaucer's interaction with the existing material, in this sense, becomes analogous to that of the characters' unbreakable envelopment within the machinations of Fortune, exemplified by their performance in earlier versions or "memories" of these same events. Consequently, Chaucer's partnership is as much with his source and philosophical inspiration as with the genre of romance itself, or the role of an author in "remembering" predestined time and ritual under the guise of spontaneous change within a narrative or divinely ordered universe. It is not the aim here to discuss Fortune in opposition to Nature in the text, but rather to examine character and audience reaction to the memory of change and question whether Chaucer's powerful and pre-established romance narrative can accommodate potentially erosive forces of time which are, paradoxically, contained within it.[52] In the "Knight's Tale" an audience is urged to recognise, accept and, remember the possibility of change within the Chaucerian narrative and the memory of experience itself.

The sheer force of change is particularly apparent in the temple of Mars. The images recall the suffering figures in *Sir Orfeo*'s Land of the Dead (*Orfeo* 367-79): an impression of senseless and unpredictable violence and destruction ranges from "A thousand slayn" (KnT I.2014) to more specific occasions from history such as "the slaughter of Julius, / Of grete Nero, and of Antonius" (KnT 2031). We are invited to peer beyond these moments to discern some pattern for the events, each one dependent upon the workings of a controlling agency – in this instance, Mars.

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[51] Havely notes that Boccaccio makes frequent reference to Fortune in his early works, also drawing upon scholastic and Dantean aspects of Providence. See Havely 201.

[52] For a detailed comparison see Barbara Bartholomew, *Fortuna and Natura: A Reading of Three Chaucer Narratives*, Studies in English Literature 26 (London: Mouton, 1966) 73-107.

This is not the stasis of untouched, protected memories witnessed through the vignettes of suffering in the Land of the Dead. In contrast, the painting in Mars should be read as a vital, emerging narrative. Consequently, without warning, "The cartere overryden with his carte" (KnT I.2022), lying "Under the wheel ful lowe" (KnT I.2023), an image that invokes Fortune's Wheel with the unfortunate "cartere" suddenly flung to the lower region and the wheel arching above. In addition, as Cooper notes, more explicit allusions to Fortune appear elsewhere on the temple walls, such as Conquest "sittynge in greet honour, / With the sharpe swerd over his heed / Hangynge by a soutil twynes threed" (KnT I.2028-30).[53] This recalls the ominous axe hanging over the court in *Sir Gawain*, an echo which illuminates the expectation of Fortune's narrative within a romance (*Gawain* 477-80). Furthermore, the violent associations of sword and axe, swinging perilously above human action in the tale, reinforces the sudden, unexpected reversals, or sharpened blades of Atropos' shears, which are *expected* to cleave the thread at various points.[54] Indeed, the fact that these images have been painted by human hand upon the temple walls, and are subsequently viewed (and described) in the form of a continuous narrative, points towards a predictability or memory of change itself. When Fortune turns her wheel, the thread breaks, and the sword comes crashing down. Romance can, in some ways, manufacture a memory of a path or ritual of seemingly instantaneous events, presided over by some divine force, and subsequently remembered by the prudent audience.[55]

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[53] Helen Cooper, *The Canterbury Tales*, 2nd ed., Oxford Guides to Chaucer (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1996) 78.

[54] The allusion is to the Sword of Damocles, from Cicero's Tusculan Disputations, known through Chaucer's reading of Boethius' *Consolation of Philosophy*. Subsequent references to Boethius' work will be to Chaucer's own translation, *Boece* in the *Riverside* and cited by book, prosa and line number.

[55] See William F. Woods, "Chivalry and Nature in 'The Knight's Tale'," *Philological Quarterly* 66 (1987): 287-301, at 296. A particular discussion of Fortune's Wheel in Boethius is at *Boece* II.2.51-7. Cf. TC I.138-40.

We need look no further than the opening of the tale to discern just such awareness. As upon the temple walls, any narrative of the past is synonymous with that of Fortune. This is narrated to Theseus by the "compaignye of ladyes" (KnT I.898) who tell of how "We losten alle oure housbondes at that toun, / Whil that the seege theraboute lay" (KnT I.936-7) and of the current injustices of Creon - "That lord is now of Thebes the citee" (KnT I.939). In addition to providing the historical context for the romance to come, the ladies' tales are surrounded by references to Fortune as a divine force, offering a crucial philosophical and theological context for events in the tale. Theseus is addressed as "'Lord, to whom Fortune hath yiven / Victorie'" (KnT I.915-6) and it is the ladies' current station, at the lower region of Fortune's Wheel, that has driven them to the temple of Clemence:

> Now be we caytyves, as it is wel seene,
> Thanked be Fortune and hire false wheel,
> That noon estaat assureth to be weel.
> And certes, lord, to abyden youre presence,
> Heere in this temple of the goddesse Clemence
> We han ben waitynge al this fourtenyght.
> Now help us, lord, sith it is in thy myght.   (KnT I.924-30)

The ladies acknowledge the power of Fortune's greater narrative which they are bound to follow; yet it is their response and awareness as various "caytyves" which establishes a paradigm for the future action of Chaucer's romance.[56] Their action has been to retreat to the "temple of the goddesse Clemence" and pray, something which Palamon, Arcite, and Emilye are to repeat. To communicate with the gods in this tale is to "remember" change, and therefore predict (un)Fortunate events of the future.[57] The pattern is easily discernible in the temple of Venus, tamed by human hand, and time, to give narrative and historical distance and objectivity: "So was it shewed in

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[56] It has been suggested that Chaucer has taken the term from the *Roman de Thèbes* "chaitives."
[57] The events are unfortunate in the sense of being undesirable and also not the unpredictable workings of fortune *per se*, but actually the will of the gods.

that portreiture, / As is depeynted in the sterres above / Who shal be slayn or elles deed for love" (KnT I.2036-8). The portrait is a means of interpretation, standing again as a record of change. The portrait connects the "stars" with everyday existence and events, but how are the memories of change over time received *in reality* itself? This is an issue with which Chaucer's narrative attempts to grapple, his philosophical and psychological issues mapped onto the romance narrative itself and, importantly, onto an audience's experience of real events. Beneath the ostensible certainty, the subject of the interrogative is unclear as human, artificial "portraiture" is enveloped in the vastness of a night sky, synonymous with a greater divine force or the distance of Troilus' eighth sphere where Providence and divine order are enacted in the cosmos (*TC* V.1809).[58]

Unforeseeable change abounds in the tale. For example, Arcite is released from the tower, Palamon escapes, and they both meet again by chance. Each instance is explained by references to divine agency, yet human reactions to this, what was apparently overcome by the temple artists, is succinctly voiced by one of the narrator's characteristic asides – "Allas, ybroght is to confusion" (KnT I.1545). It will become increasingly significant that this remark is made by the narrator, he with a memory of all the narrative events who, like the gods, can also elevate himself above the "confusion." The way in which the past can be destabilised by a change in the present is represented by characters' attempts to re-order that present and guarantee their future with reference to custom, order, and ritual (symbolic of stable, unchanging memories). The knights attempt to order chance through their combat which is to occur "in the grove, at tyme and place yset" (KnT I.1635) much as Theseus, later, strives to order the future through the tournament and its ritualised

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[58] We might also think of Guy of Warwick's famous conversion moment as he gazes at the stars (*Guy* 2500). The difference in human and divine understanding is also communicated by stellar imagery in *Pearl*: "As stremande sternez, quen stroþe-men slepe." *Pearl* 116.

action and architecture.[59] However, the prayers made in the temples before the tournament emphasise their difficulty in controlling destiny in this way, mirrored in the burden upon an audience who must attempt to order three differing "memories" of future events. The three prayers in the temples essentially are more challenging and acute aspects of change over time, comparable to the complicated three day tournament of *Ipomadon*. As Palamon, Arcite and Emilye pray in the temples of Venus, Mars, and Dyane respectively, the issue of competing desires and, as a result, contradictory memories of the future is raised, moderated through the agency of Fortune and the gods. The certainty sought and apparently delivered in the temples recalls the ritualistic fire trials of *Athelston* (*Athelston* 609-38), yet in that romance these were to recollect a past that had *already* occurred and that an audience had witnseed first hand. The situation in Chaucer's work is less certain.

The portents here, although the rituals are seemingly successful as the statue shakes before Palamon (KnT I.2265) and fires "brenden upon the auter brighte" (KnT I.2425) as a sign for Arcite, they cannot be accepted in quite the same way as in *Athelston*. All three individuals make their own specific requests for future assurances: Palamon asks to have Emily and in return "Thy temple wol I worshipe evermo" (KnT I.2251), whilst Arcite demands "Yif me victorie" (KnT I.2420), and Emilye implores "sende me hym that moost desireth me" (KnT I.2325). They are assured that they will receive what has been requested. The knights should also be *re*assured when they revisit the shaking statue of Venus and burning fire of Mars in their respective memories. However, the prudent audience has witnessed all three scenes and so appreciates the conflicting prophecies – memory here is unsettled by change, temporal contradiction, or "confusion." Apparently, the only certainty is that

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[59] See Halverson.

of chance. The only way memory can prepare for this, as was suggested by the murals on the temple walls, is through attempting to prepare a variety of responses, or a *florilegium* of memories to remember as appropriate, as Dyane explains:[60]

> 'Among the goddes hye it is affermed,
> And by eterne word writen and confermed,
> Thou shalt ben wedded unto oon of tho
> That han for thee so muchel care and wo,
> But unto which of hem I may nat telle.'   (KnT I.2349-54)

Emilye is unable to comprehend the words ('"What amounteth this, allas?"' [KnT I.2362]), yet an audience understands that all has been predestined by the "eterne word" – she will marry one of the knights, but even Dyane is unsure which one that will be. Not only will this prophecy come true, but so will those of the knights: Arcite will have victory, but so will Palamon, as engineered by Saturn "That knew so manye of aventures olde, / Foond in his olde experience an art, / That he ful soone hath pleased every part" (KnT I.2444-6). Interestingly, Saturn is depicted delving into his memorial store of "aventures olde" to discover a way to satisfy each prophecy and with it the memories of characters and audience.[61] Essentially, these are the same motivations and actions as those of the temple architects and artists, Theseus, Palamon, Arcite, and Emilye. All are seeking to narrate and order future change or chance through past knowledge, whether that is of old adventures or more recent divine assurances in the temples.

In the manner of its Christmas games, *Sir Gawain* played with the assurances of memory, yet his earlier error was only revealed at the close of the narrative. In contrast, Chaucer's audience is all too aware that the memories "heard" in the temple compete against each other for prominence in memory. At this point, the future is only that of the tournament – it is here that we believe Emilye's lover will be chosen

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[60] For a discussion of these "memory books" see Carruthers, *Book of Memory* 217-22.
[61] Saturn was identified with wisdom and prudence, virtues created by experience and, importantly in this context, time.

and, in assuming this, audience and characters neglect the possibility of change *after*
this time. Change, like time, can never be stopped. This is no doubt troubling on
account of the deliberate attention placed upon ostensible predictability for the
characters and in the paradoxical unpredictability created for an audience. Such
conflict could not have emerged in the more conventional romances: characters were
already assured that all would be well for them as that was to be expected and
morally required. In essence, they would return home to the court or emerge
triumphant in a reinvigorated chivalric identity. The expectations of romance would
be satisfied. Here, however, we are removed from the familiarity of Arthurian
material and placed in an unfamiliar pagan world where destiny is controlled not by
Arthurian romance tradition but by the gods and their knowledge of other "aventures
olde."[62]

Although Arcite is rewarded with Emilye, ironically decreed by Theseus with
a reference to Fortune ("'That by his fortune hath hire faire ywonne'" [KnT I.2659]),
an audience hears Saturn assuring Venus that her knight will also achieve what he
desired. A competing memory is awoken, that of Palamon's experience in the
Temple of Venus. Famously, in response, Pluto (at Saturn's request) sends "a furie
infernal" (KnT I.2684) to startle Arcite's horse which throws him to the ground
causing a fatal injury which, eventually, allows Palamon to take Emilye after his
competitor's death. Ostensibly, there is nothing that could have prepared for the
"furie infernal"; it carries all the violent characteristics of unpredictability shared by
the sword hanging over Conquest, earlier. Yet, if we remember the words of Saturn,
it was explained that, somehow, both knights *would* be given to Emilye. The process
of narrative also, like the temple portraits, mediates between a memory of change

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[62] Compare the forest painted in Mars' temple (KnT I.1975-82) or Gawain's journey in the winter
wilderness (*Gawain* 713-39).

and actual reality as, finally, the first memory is recollected and Palamon receives Emilye whilst also remaining loyal to the intervening memories of events within the temples of Mars and Dyane. The contradictions which memory strives to alleviate are explained by Arcite who muses on the machinations of Fortune:[63]

> 'Som man desireth for to han richesse,
> That cause is of his mordre or greet siknesse;
> And som man wolde out of his prisoun fayn,
> That in his hous is of his meynee slayn.'   (KnT I.1255-8)

This forms an echo of the subjective crisis. Beneath the disintegrated lives of unpredictability, memory of one state does not preclude the arrival of its contrary. By inlaying the details we may imagine a similar decree or prediction, also recorded in memory: one man was to become ill and another to be killed in his house.[64] All desires (memories) came to fruition, all were validated, but within a narrative of change which the faculty must be able to appreciate and order over time. Theseus observes "'That speces of thynges and progressiouns / Shullen enduren by successiouns'" (KnT I.3013-4), a worthwhile definition of the effect of romance rituals, but also one which highlights the difficulty of change for memory. This stems from its unpredictability but also the teasing juxtaposition of difference and similarity which is at the root of its destabilising effect. Times, locations and fortunes change, but characters remain essentially constant.

Recalling Frye's seasonal evaluation of the genre, Theseus continues, using his famous metaphor of "the ook": "'From tyme that it first bigyneth to sprynge, / And hath so long a lif, as we may see, / Yet at the laste wasted is the tree'" (KnT 3017-20). There is a sense of completion, the end of a ritual, but this comes at the end of "so long a lif": although witnessed throughout its journey ("we may see"), the

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[63] Arcite's lament is developed from *Boece* III.2 with the sense of true happiness as a result of one's possession of Supreme Good. In addition, unlike Boethius' explanations, Arcite fails to distinguish between providence and Fortune. Cf. *Boece* I.6.75-6.

[64] Theseus final speeches are derived from Boethius. Cf. *Boece* III.10.25-30 and IV.6.149-53.

final pattern of how all is drawn together only becomes visible "at the laste" – the endpoint of these highly sophisticated recollections and cognitions.[65] For the oak, it will be the growth of the sapling, its maturation, and the many years of lush summers and barren winters. This, again, forms a paradigm of Fortune which parallels that experienced by romance characters during their literal and narrative journeys: "'Thanne may ye se that and this thing hath ende'" (KnT I.3026). As Barbara Bartholomew observes, although able to define, Theseus is "not in command of the Boethian destiny which operates in the tale."[66] No character has such power and, as we have seen, such memorial authority is not possessed by the audience and perhaps not even by Chaucer – the real command is enjoyed by the gods, or rather what they represent: the authorial influence of Boccaccio's *Il Filostrato* from which the "Knight's Tale" is itself a remembrance, embodying the changes in Fortune that may well occur (again). The final sight is not easy to achieve, it depends on a careful and methodical recollection of change along with an implicit awareness of time. Its power is likened appropriately to divine wisdom and vision: "The purveiaunce that God hath seyn biforn" (KnT I. 1665) and "Al is this reuled by the sighte above" (KnT I.1672).[67] The difficulty to appreciate this "sight" is on account of time itself:

> So strong it is that, though the world had sworn
> The contraries of a thing by ye or nay,
> Yet somtyme it shal fallen on a day
> That falleth nat eft withinne a thousand yeer.   (KnT I.1666-9)

The changes or "contraries" are challenging enough, but the relation to time is even more difficult as a vague "somtyme" is located "on a day" which is then lost within the pattern of "a thousand yeer." We must remember when this change occurred,

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[65] Cf. *Ipomadon* 5297; *William* 5516.

[66] Bartholomew 79. For Theseus' ordering principles see also Halverson.

[67] Chaucer develops the Boethian distinction between Destiny and Providence: the former as a sense of order over mutability in the mind of God and the latter the plan imposed upon change over time. Cf. *Boece* IV.6 and also Dante's *Inferno*, *The Divine Comedy*, ed. G. Petrocchi, 4 vols (Milan: Mondadori, 1966) VII.73-96.

compare it to a present state, and assimilate both within a final pattern to create, hopefully, a sense of place and stability from apparent unpredictable changeability. This offers a moving definition of mutability, but also a description of ordered time using definition and specification ("Certeyne"), or the memory of individual events in history which gives meaning and stability to the unpredictable and inconsistent. Characteristically, Chaucer has inherited and departed from the tradition of the memorial prophecy, exposing its limitations; however, these "limitations" can be exploited to great imaginative effect, allowing the authority of memory to triumph at almost supernatural levels. Chaucer ostensibly questions the reliability of individual memory and in doing this he subordinates human memorial ability to that of a greater storehouse, analogous to the temple decorations of "dayes and duracioun" into which his audience is invited to peer.

In the medieval conception "Fortune was really a figure of blind chance – from man's point of view random, unpredictable, meaningless, but from God's point of view part of a master plan that He sees as in a timeless moment."[68] An audience is not hubristic in their sharing of God's view but, through memory, can impose some form of order on "blind chance." Indeed, it is recognised that during the medieval period, "through a dialogue with their past, contemporaries were able to negotiate their way through change," something which romance encourages through manufacturing a "past" (and future) which can accommodate the memory of change itself.[69] Although "Fortune meant that man could not count on any outcome in the corrupted currents of this world, but that every chance occurrence, when it happened, was *meant to be*," romance corroborates what was "meant to be" through memory of

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[68] Donald R. Howard, *Chaucer and the Medieval World* (London: Weidenfeld, 1987) 60.
[69] Yitzhak Hen and Matthew Innes, "Introduction," *The Uses of the Past in The Early Middle Ages*, ed. Yitzhak Hen and Matthew Innes (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2000) 7.

the events even before they have occurred.[70] Another form of confusion (or "corruption"), that of changeability, is therefore creatively ordered through *memoria*.

However, given the strong and unshakeable paradigm of form which romances must employ, is there a sense in which a narrative's pre-established "dayes and duracioun" could be detrimental to memorial creativity? The phrase itself juxtaposes human principles of ordering time (the way in which change is tamed for memory) with a sense of a greater controlling influence establishing the parameters of a space ordered or "endured." Later writers of romances seem to recognise this, perhaps indicating the role of the genre at the close of the Middle Ages, and the overtly literary-historical material handled by Chaucer and Malory. *Memoria* must be creatively employed and yet, in the work of these two authors, individual creativity can be threatened by the memories of past events, whether of the Trojan War or the life (and death) of Arthurian legend. The relation of an author to his material becomes aligned with a character's relation to their own story as neither is permitted to escape the clutches of narrative memory. As the boundaries of a memorial, literary storehouse are revealed the characters join an audience and author in recognising memories *of* memories. Subsequently, at the conclusion of these later, more "subtle" memorial crafts, the only reaction is to remove oneself completely from the "duracioun," or memories, of individual life and creation. As a result, Troilus journeys into the eighth sphere, Chaucer dismisses *Troilus* after its completion, and Malory has no option but to conclude his remembered chronicle.

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[70] Howard 60.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Unforgettable or (Un)fortunate Romance.

And so he rode tyll aftir evynsonge, and than he herde a clock smyte.

(*Morte* XIV.3.)

The "subtyle crauftes" of Merlin and Malory.

In Malory's redaction of the episode extracted above, as Sir Percival rides from his aunt to the Castle of Carbonek to see the Maimed King, Cooper notes the insertion of a mechanical clock where in the *Queste del Saint Graal* there sounds a chapel bell, thereby reflecting the invention of new horological technology.[1] However, as an object for measuring time, without obvious reference to seasonal ritual or liturgical cycle, the clock has wider significance in terms of the lifespan of the Round Table itself which has been remembered and in some respect "timed" by Malory.[2] Malory's task was to recollect the past, in the manner of popular and courtly romances, and this was now an explicitly literary, as well as historical, past. Its episodes, by definition, are pre-established and widely disseminated to create a curious juxtaposition of predestination and the remembrance of chance occurrences which was dramatized through divine agency in the "Knight's Tale." As Terence McCarthy explains, "Malory sees the beginnings in the light of a continuation" and it could be argued that, for Malory's audience, part of the memorial engagement with

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[1] Helen Cooper, ed., *Le Morte Darthur: The Winchester Manuscript*, Oxford World's Classics (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1998) 552. Cooper notes that "[e]arly clocks struck the hour but had no dial or hands."

[2] Another romance, *Sir Degrevant*, also contained a brief mention of a timepiece which, for an audience, indicated the importance of time for the oblivious couple within their chamber of love. *Degrevant* 1469.

the romance world was dominated by the memorial images themselves and their confinement within predetermined events.[3]

Percival's timely arrival at Carbonek can be compared to Caxton's Preface which employs terms reminiscent of *memoria*: "And in dyvers places of Englond many remembraunces be Yet of hym and shall remayne perpetually, and also of his knyghtes."[4] Within the "places" of memory the clock is to chime "perpetually" at this hour, a sense of continuity and stasis which might recall the unbearable suffering of *Sir Orfeo*'s Land of the Dead (*Orfeo* 366-76). Malory's work could indeed be seen as one set of legendary or historical memories which is as inescapable for an audience as it is for Malory and his characters.[5] Mark Lambert extracts two certainties from Malory: that he "loves the heroes whose deeds he is recording; and… that a great expanse of time separates those heroes from ourselves."[6] In contrast, Sir Launfal could still be heard jousting this very day, not only through the words of the poem, but as a supposed actuality (*Launfal* 1024-32). For Malory there cannot be any comparable confusion of past and present. Although "memorial sites…where the past is not only preserved as fetish but also transmitted as signification, is inevitably a focus for struggle for meaning," this danger is avoided by the self-reflexive *memoria* at work in Malory's (and Chaucer's) more historically performative remembrances.[7] As soon as these "dyvers places" are entered, whether geographical, literal, or the metaphorical, the recollection is already complete. The journey is one for which the clock has already struck for a final time and we can only

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[3] Terence McCarthy, *An Introduction to Malory* (Cambridge: Brewer, 1991) 12. We might compare the earlier use of dreams, remembered in the future in *Horn*, although without the certainty of when or where that would be. *Horn* 683-8.

[4] William Caxton, "Caxton's Preface," *Works of Malory* cxliv.

[5] See Joerg Fichte, "Caxton's Concept of 'Historical Romance' within the Context of the Crusades: Conviction, Rhetoric and Sales Strategy," *Tradition and Transformation in Medieval Romance*, ed. Rosalind Field (Cambridge: Brewer, 1999) 101-13.

[6] Mark Lambert, *Malory: Style and Vision in "Le Morte Darthur"*, Yale Studies in English 186 (New Haven, CT: Yale UP, 1975) 125.

[7] Hodgkin and Radstone 11.

inhabit the places up to their spatial-temporal limits. Episodes, although steeped in literary tradition, are given new dimensions in this atmosphere as the past is made familiar and predictable, yet also inescapable. Upon hearing the clock, Percival, who is riding at night, realises that Carbonek is nearby; however, he has also arrived punctually for his predestined appointment or performance. Out of the darkness, chance has decreed that he finds the castle, but this journey was designed to be so fortuitous – indeed, there was no other destination available.[8]

Similarly Lancelot, at the close of Malory's work, is able to predict the very hour of his death, emblematic of the use of prophecy in romances (*Morte* XXI.12). This was, in the works examined so far, an engagement with the metaphorical, imagistic workings of memory, but in Malory is established within the confines of temporal order.[9] In considering prophecy in terms of trusting *memoria*, Patricia Parker's definition was noted, the skill mediating "between plot and person, the lofty authorial view and the character or reader still immersed in the process of time."[10] Malory's Arthur is particularly interesting in this respect, "a cultural figure of shadowy origins" recorded in Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britannie*, whose function in the legend was secure and known.[11] Although appearing in many of the popular romances, his biography was well established and, despite the energy and immediacy in which the events of his life were narrated, his fate was already sealed.[12] Malory was aware of the parameters within which he could work. Arthur's

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[8] In addition to the literary implications and exploitations, this is in conjunction with the prominent debate throughout the medieval period concerning the power of God over his creations, seen in works such as Thomas Bradwardine's *De causa Dei*. For the prevalence of this interest in medieval Europe see Paul Vignaux, *Justification et Prédestination au XIVᵉ siècle: Duns Scot, Pierre d'Auriole, Guillaume d'Occam, Gregoire de Rimini* (Paris: Leroux, 1934).

[9] This is discussed in C. David Benson, "The Ending of the *Morte Darthur*," *A Companion to Malory*, ed. Elizabeth Archibald and A. S. G. Edwards (Cambridge: Brewer, 1996) 237.

[10] Parker 36.

[11] Heng 42-3.

[12] Vida Scudder notes, rather poetically, that Malory's narrative "seems to move to some unheard music from secret places." Vida Scudder, *"Le Morte Darthur" of Sir Thomas Malory & Its Sources*

death was pre-established and, through the character of Merlin, author and sorcerer remember the past itself.[13]

These are Merlin's "subtyle crauftes" (*Morte* IV.1), an enigmatic yet powerful phrase which, in addition to capturing his magical powers, also illuminates the sorcerer's great memorial ability.[14] Merlin is able to "remember" the future and employ his vision to shape present events, whilst ensuring that these correlate with predetermined outcomes.[15] Merlin's role is always subtle, beneath the surface, and his role as Arthur's highest counsel is as much to protect the king's future and reputation, as it is to appreciate that this reputation is already secured, albeit temporally distanced in the future. Merlin cites his memory as the authority for his counsel, temporal awareness often framing his speeches as in the early episode of Arthur's fight alongside Ban and Bors who are slaughtering all before them (*Morte* I.17). Eventually Merlin appears on a black horse and declares:

> 'Thou hast never done. Hast thou nat done inow? Of three score thousand thys day hast thou leffte on lyve but fyftene thousand! Therefore hit ys tyme to sey "Who!" for God ys wroth with the for thou woll never have done. For yondir a eleven kynges at thy tyme woll nat be over-throwyn, but and thou tary on them ony lenger thy fortune woll turne and they shall encres.'
>
> <div align="right">(Morte I.17)</div>

Powerful images are formed of future events which Merlin sees "yondir." He urges Arthur to spare the slaughter as he knows that Fortune's wheel will soon turn. Yet

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(New York: Dutton, 1917) 399. Bloomfield believes that this sense of predetermination becomes increasingly dominant in medieval romance, culminating with Malory who hints at an "under-rhythm" in the events with omens and prophecies driving the narrative through a pre-determined sequence. Bloomfield, *Essays* 111.

[13] The only detailed study of the actual mechanisms of memory in Malory is Elisabeth Edwards, "Amnesia and Remembrance in Malory's *Morte Darthur*," *Paragraph* 13 (1990): 132-46. For a discussion of the author's overall task see Terence McCarthy, "The Sequence of Malory's Tales," *Aspects of Malory*, ed. Toshiyuki Takamiya and Derek Brewer, Arthurian Studies 1 (Cambridge: Brewer, 1981) 107-24.

[14] The adjective appears again a few lines later in the lady of the Lake's "subtyle worchyng" (*Morte* 127.24).

[15] Interestingly, Malory has developed the ability from his sources where Merlin appealed to the divine for information and interpretations of divine will. Thomas L. Wright, "'The Tale of King Arthur': Beginnings and Foreshadowings," *Malory's Originality: A Critical Study of "Le Morte Darthur"*, ed. R. M. Lumiansky (Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins UP, 1964) 26.

the wheel is not halted in its movement; rather, Arthur simply evades the consequences temporarily, captured in the striking emphasis upon a present moment ("thys day") under threat from time itself ("hit ys tyme," "at thy tyme," "ony lenger").[16] There is a complex imaginative craft here. Merlin has saved Arthur for now; however, this very salvation has only come about through knowledge, or memory, of *all* future events. As Malory, Merlin, and audience knows all too well, Arthur will eventually fall, the wheel will turn, and this memory haunts Merlin's advice throughout the early books of the work.[17]

Vinaver concluded that, unlike the prominence of the Fortune motif in the *Morte Artu*, "[o]f this elaborate attempt to give the story of Arthur's death a spiritual background nothing of importance remains in Malory's version."[18] However, this is to miss the silence with which it is implicitly understood. The first book in particular sets the wheel in motion, starts the clock, and tellingly ends with a description of Fortune's inescapability for king and author:

> And so by fortune the shyppe drove unto a castelle, and was all to-ryven and destroyed the moste party, save that Mordred was cast up, and a good man founde hym, and fostird hym tylle he was fourtene yere of age, and than brought hym to the courte, as hit rehersith aftirward and towarde the ende of the MORTE ARTHURE. (*Morte* I.27)[19]

In the manner of the earlier comparisons between reading and recollecting or searching such as were characteristic of the school of *grammatica* at Chartres, and

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[16] Arthur, later, is to have a dream in which there is a powerful image of Fortune's wheel created in a highly imagistic way, in the manner of the memorial images revealed through dreams (*Morte* XXI.3); yet for the moment the memory is of Fortune, or time itself, rather than any specific events of the future.

[17] There are other, more intimate, examples of memory at work elsewhere in Malory such as Gawain's recollections of his father's death which inform the present action in the murders of King Pellinore, Morgause, and Lamerok (*Morte* X.24-28). In this are figured many of the aspects of *memoria* discussed in relation to the earlier popular and courtly romances. See Muriel Whitaker, *Arthur's Kingdom of Adventure: The World of Malory's Morte Darthur*, Arthurian Studies 9 (Cambridge: Brewer, 1984) 107.

[18] Vinaver, *Works* xciv.

[19] Vinaver notes that the only text that mentions that Mordred spent his early youth at Arthur's court is the *Alliterative Morte Arthure*. Vinaver, *Works* 1303.

the importance of fixing memories advocated in Hugh's architectural doctrine, the important image is found for us, placed safely in the memorial store, and its later importance clearly explained. In Malory, recollections are in themselves memorial images of previous literature and myth: any linear appreciation of time becomes circular, disguised as Fortune, and dependent upon temporary forgetfulness on the part of audience and the apparent obliviousness of (most) of Malory's characters. In connection with this latter point, Malory's "memories," or his source materials, are not infallible.[20] Very early in the work, as the future of the kingdom is in great danger, the narration of these events is lacking in specifics. Malory explains that he is unsure as to the identity of the church into which all the nobles assembled at the instruction of the archbishops - "whether it were Powlis or not the Frensshe booke maketh no mencyon" (*Morte* I.5). One feels that such honesty would be impossible in the earlier romances which prided themselves on accuracy and detail which contributed so much to their claims of relevance and immediacy.[21] Now, memory has been eroded by time, and, significantly, the events of Malory's tale appear similarly bereft of specificity, only to be clarified through the immense memory of Merlin who rescues the realm from its "grete jeopardy" (*Morte* I.5). This is clear in the dubious defence of Arthur against accusations of bastardy:

> 'Nay,' said Merlyn, 'after the deth of the duke more than thre houres was Arthur begotten, and thirteen dayes after kyng Uther wedded Igrayne, and therfor I preve hym he is no bastard. And, who saith nay, he shal be kyng and overcome alle his enemyes, and or he deye he shalle be long kynge of all Englond and have under his obeyssaunce Walys, Yrland, and Scotland, and moo reames than I will now reherce.'   (*Morte* I.8)

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[20] Broadly speaking, Malory's sources are likely to have comprised a *Suite de Merlin* or *Livre d'Artus*, a *Lancelot*, a *Gareth* (possibly), a *Tristan*, a *Queste del Saint Graal*, and a *Mort Artu* into which parts of a *Lancelot* were likely to have been interpolated. See E. K. Chambers, *English Literature at the Close of the Middle Ages*, Oxford History of English Literature (Oxford: Clarendon, 1945) 189.
[21] Cf. the beginning of *King Horn* (*Horn* 1-10); *Gawain*'s local relevance (*Gawain* 30-2); Sir Launfal's reappearance at certain times in jousts even to this day (*Launfal* 1024-32).

We see the power and confidence of memory to inform Malory's narrative, mediated through Merlin who remembers Arthur's conception and its important temporal specifics. It is this that, in combination with a subtle memory or "foresight," can predict future fortunes.[22]

Consequently, Merlin's memory is not always an ominous warning of an eventual fall but, as in this instance, a guarantee of future longevity and power. This craft rescues Arthur's kingdom, and indeed chivalry, in a process analogous to Malory's literary and pseudo-historical promotion of the Cycle.[23] There are mixed responses to his words: some "had merveyl of Merlyns words" (*Morte* I.8) and accepted his sequence of past and future events. However, "som of hem lough hym to scorne, as kyng Lot, and mo other called hym a wytche" (*Morte* I.8). Laughter and memory have appeared as both relief and recognition (in *Sir Orfeo*, *Troilus and Criseyde*), but also misunderstanding (as in *Sir Gawain*, *Ipomadon*), and laughter's appearance here encompasses both aspects, again establishing the familiar divide between characters unaware of their legendary destiny and the prudent audience who can remember their fates.[24] We know that Merlin's words are accepted, hence the wealth of Arthurian lore lying before Malory, yet Lot and some of the others laugh at the absurdity of the sorcerer's claims. The real "scorne" is directed not at the circumstances of Arthur's birth, but at Merlin's ability – he is branded a "wytche," an accusation which now eclipses that of Arthur a few lines earlier: "'Thenne is he a bastard,' they said al" (*Morte* I.8). They laugh at the man's certainty, his memory of

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[22] As Vinaver notes, there are no later tales detailing Arthur's victory over other kings of the British Isles (Vinaver, *Works* 1288). However this could be another indication of Malory's awareness of his task – establishing the places which he expects to be filled with tales of Arthur's past adventures; it is certainly something which Malory, through Merlin, seems to recall.

[23] The exacting temporal detail of days and years offered by Merlin appears to be of Malory's invention, another example of the author's mastery over his materials – he can create, or remember, the circumstances surrounding Arthur's birth which are crucial for the established legend to progress and now be remembered by Malory.

[24] Cf. *Orfeo* 290; *TC* V.1820; *Gawain* 2514; *Ipomadon* 5215-23.

the future, but their amusement echoes hollowly against the vastness of time Merlin,

the audience, and Malory can see until the final strike of the legend's clock: "and

moo reames than I will now reherce."[25]

It is also intriguing to examine, through Merlin's role, other romance

mechanisms for remembering as differences emerge in their functions within the

narrative and context of Malory's authorial endeavours. The use of disguise in

Malory's first book is indicative of this, as Merlin's changed appearance is

intrinsically connected to his memorial function in the entire work. The first disguise

is that "lyke a chylde of fourtene yere of ayge" (*Morte* I.20). Already there is some

play with time and memory and this is exacerbated by the infant's interpretation of

this "mervalylist syght" (*Morte* I.20) witnessed by Arthur a few lines earlier (*Morte*

I.19). This includes a strange dream of griffins and serpentsand the appearance of the

Questing Beast at a fountain during a hunting expedition. Merlin reveals knowledge

of the "merveylist syght": "'That know I well,' seyde Merlyon, 'as welle as thyselff,

and of all thy thoughtes'" (*Morte* I.20), which includes knowledge of Arthur's

identity and, as it emerges, future.[26] This is then proved as the child reveals that

Arthur's father was King Uther and his mother Igrayne, the facts of which Arthur

refutes angrily: "'That ys false!' seyde kynge Arthure. 'How sholdist thou know hit?

For thou arte nat so olde of yerys to know my fadir'" (*Morte* I.20). His denial recalls

the invitation to an audience to identify false accounts of previously witnessed events

and there is deliberate emphasis on the inability of one so young to possess this

particular memorial craft. Change over, or between, different times is now

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[25] Merlin's knowledge of the tales that Malory is about to relate, woven into some coherent, chronological structure is apparent in the first book in particular, notably the "prediction" made of Sir Griflet's future prowess (*Morte* I.22), Pellinore's future sons, Sir Percival and Sir Lamorak (*Morte* I.24), and the mysterious sword and Lady of the Lake both of which, we are assured, will reappear later (*Morte* I.25).

[26] The explanation offered is much compressed by Malory, creating a curious juxtaposition of specificity and enigma that adds to the memorial certainty voiced through Merlin.

symbolised by Merlin's disguise as the child who remembers all: "'I know hit bettir than ye or ony man lyvynge'" (*Morte* I.20). Malory's present is always informed by prior knowledge from the past; Arthur, however, will not accept that everybody might remember so much, especially one so young, and so dismisses the child with an echo of the King of Galys upon learning of his son's birth as a devil by Emaré (*Emaré* 539) - "'I woll nat believe the'" (*Morte* I.20).[27] Interestingly, oral testimony from Merlin is still providing the most veracious memory in contrast to the treacherous letter sent to the King of Galys or any physical documents that might pertain to Arthur's birth.

The immediate return of Merlin, this time disguised "in the lyknesse of an olde man of four score yere of ayge'" (*Morte* I.20) accords more readily with Arthur's conception of knowledge: it is quite understandable that this wise figure might know his parentage compared to the previous figure who "was nat of ayge to know my fadir'" (*Morte* I.20). Merlin now reveals knowledge about Arthur's incestuous relations with his sister and its consequences – the future actions of Mordred – "'a childe that shall destroy you and all the knyghtes of youre realme'" (*Morte* I.20). The older figure knows more, he is the one with a better memory, but this assurance collapses with the removal of the current disguise along with the correspondence of old man and earlier child: "'Sir, I am Merlion, and I was he in the chyldis lycknes'" (*Morte* I.20). All, whether old men or children, remember Arthur's past and future (the child would have continued, "'and more he wolde a tolde you'" [*Morte* I.20], had it not been for Arthur's interruption) and the disguises adopted reveal a change over time, but also the embodiment of that change in the figure of Merlin. Moreover, we can note that these emerged from another familiar memorial

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[27] Cf. *Horn* 1145-60.

topos, the dream, in which Arthur fought griffins and serpents and eventually slaughtered all. It resembles the animal dreams of *William of Palerne* (*William* 2293). The hunting expedition upon which Arthur embarked was to put "[the dream] oute of thought" (*Morte* I.19), but ironically led him, via his riding accident and encounter with the Questing Beast, to hear his correct prophecy from Merlin. This occurred on a journey to forget his dream which worked with reality to construct memories of future, but also legendary and historical, events.

The revelation of his death is, interestingly, expressed in conjunction with that of the memory master, Merlin:

> 'Mervayle nat,' seyde Merlion, 'for hit ys Goddis wylle that youre body sholde be punyss[h]ed for your fowle dedis. But I ought ever to be hevy,' seyde Merlion, 'for I shall dye a shamefull dethe, to be putte in the erthe quycke; and ye shall dey a worshipfull dethe.'   (*Morte* I.20)

This throws together two deaths with important ramifications for Merlin's function in the work. He has established that Arthur will die, but compares this to his own demise which is to occur much earlier (in Book Four). Merlin is imprisoned by Nenive, one of the damsels of the Lady of the Lake, under a great rock where "she wrought so there for hym that he come never oute for all the craufte he coude do" (*Morte* IV.3). So appears another reference to Merlin's "craufte"; however, in the expression of its failure to allow him to escape, we perhaps recall that Merlin already had foreknowledge of this very eventuality. Merlin flows in and out of the early books, appearing on his black horse and defying physical boundaries ("vanysshed aweye" [*Morte* I.9]) with the same ease in which he can access past and future events through memory. However, soon, in essence, his function is complete: as Raluca Radulescu observes, "Merlin disappears from the scene, and Arthur starts taking

decisions on his own."[28] Merlin had remembered that he was "to be putte in the erthe quycke," a sense of still living and moving which is juxtaposed with the finality of burial.[29] Not only does the image look forward (and backwards) to his imminent imprisonment under a rock (*Morte* IV.1), but creates an impression of the pressure of his craft which includes knowledge of his fate in history – the speed with which he must return to his present state beneath the earth where his muffled voice can be heard by knights who ride by. As with Caxton's Preface, the legend is identified as a remembrance locked in the past, and it is now necessary for audience and Malory to work their way through the ritual to reaffirm the memory of the legendary events themselves.

Past *Trauma* in the Case Histories of Troilus.

The above analysis of Malory's task has touched on contemporary notions of the metafictional and it is important to appreciate that this work, like almost all romances and, to an extent medieval literature as a whole, is also somewhat "metahistorical." It foregrounds its own historical status within a narrative of chance and spontaneity, a characteristic that has a profound effect upon the presentation of memory explored within the work and, inherently, an audience's engagement as each episode unfolds. Although Merlin appears conscious of his role within a remembered tale, the other characters are less sure, perhaps even distrustful of this assertion despite their acceptance of Fortune or divine providence. Characters cannot escape

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[28] Raluca L. Radulescu, *The Gentry Context for Malory's "Morte Darthur"*, Arthurian Studies 55 (Cambridge: Brewer, 2003) 125. Malory takes Merlin's death from later in his source at this point (Huth MS ff.204r, col. 2-207r, col.1) and makes it much briefer: there is no elaborate explanation, simply a statement that Merlin cannot emerge on account of the powers of Nivene whom he himself has taught. *Morte* IV.3.

[29] See Carruthers' discussion of the present tense in medieval thought, "Meditations on the 'Historical Present' and 'Collective Memory' in Chaucer and *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*," *Time in Medieval World* 137-56.

the memories of the tale, an aspect that could intensify the current narration. It is particularly acute in Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*. The situation in which the lovers find themselves is as much one of their experience of *that* time as the remembered historical narrative of these very events.[30] Indeed, Lee Patterson explains that Chaucer combines his Trojan material with "a rich texture of private motivation and psychological depth without ignoring their significance as history."[31]

Of course, the relationship between memory and narrative is inescapable when one encounters medieval redactions. The role of memory in the redaction of this particular tale has already been discussed: Chaucer credited his apparent "auctor" Lollius and, later, Robert Henryson enlarged the Chaucerian narrative with extra "memories" in a process which continues beyond the medieval period to Shakespeare's famous dramatization, *Troilus and Cressida*.[32] Memories of the story itself are immovable in historical and literary traditions, despite Chaucer's medieval colouring.[33] Resembling Merlin's prophetic words to Arthur, the protagonists sometimes engage with their situation in a future beyond the reality of Troy. Charles Owen suggests this in his analysis of Chaucer's technique and endeavour: "[t]he setting up of the main formal pattern as the interaction between character and tale

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[30] Mary Carruthers has examined in terms of the "collected past" of the Trojan War related to the personal past of Chaucer's narrator. Carruthers, "Meditations on the 'Historical Present'" 137-55.
[31] Patterson 106.
[32] Cf. *TC* I.394, V.1653; Henryson 57, 64. Moments in Shakespeare are often more subtle with words from the Middle Ages chosen to recall the poem's previous redacted ancestry such as in the Prologue's "The princes orgulous, their high blood chafed." William Shakespeare, *Troilus and Cressida*, *The Complete Works*, ed. Stanley Wells, Gary Taylor, John Jowett and William Montgomery, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon, 2005) Pr.2. For a discussion of sources of the tale known to Shakespeare after the work of Chaucer see David Bevington, ed. *Troilus and Cressida*, Arden Shakespeare (London: Nelson, 1998) 375-97.
[33] The two works are briefly compared in Thomas H. Crofts, *Malory's Contemporary Audience: The Social Reading of Romance in Late Medieval England*, Arthurian Studies 66 (Cambridge: Brewer, 2006) 122-3.

made the literary and philosophical dimensions one."[34] At one point in Book Four, Criseyde's words are particularly moving in this respect:

> Criseyde, with a sik, right in this wise
> Answerde, 'Ywys, my deere herte trewe,
> We may wel stele awey, as ye devyse,
> And fynden swich unthrifty weyes newe,
> But afterward ful soore it wol us rewe.   (*TC* IV.1527-31)

The situation from which they wish to escape is, of course, the trading of Criseyde. An impression of individuals pulling against the mechanisms of government appears throughout the narrative and is exaggerated and performed in Pandarus' intervention to bring the lovers together initially. However, Criseyde's "devyse" implies a means to make but also to *see*, thereby drawing parallels with the process of recollection which is also, in this context, literary creativity.[35] The language of discovery ("fynden") is similar, in terms of the memorial process, to the discovery of future gold in *Sir Isumbras* (*Isumbras* 624); however their journey will be markedly "unthrifty" and finally "ful soore it wol us rewe." To escape this situation would lead to bitter misery, both in the context of the tale and in literary tradition as they would have metaphorically manufactured a new memory and treacherously blocked the process of recollection. Jill Mann explains that "necessitee" "exists only when the predestined chain is seen as a whole from the perspective of providence, since that which God sees must necessarily exist to be seen."[36] Yet can the couple escape their historical fate to which they are "chained" whilst also forming a very real and immediate part of that narrative which is, to all purposes, pre-determined? "Ywys, my deere herte trewe" focuses on the present moment and emotions, revealing the

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[34] Charles A. Owen, "The Problem of Free Will in Chaucer's Narratives," *Philological Quarterly* 46 (1967): 433-56, at 455.
[35] The use of Middle English "devisen" in the tale is discussed by Matthew Giancarlo, "The Structure of Fate and the Devising of History in Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*," *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* 26 (2004): 227-66, at 234. Cf. *TC* II.31.
[36] Mann 97.

tantalising possibility of an escape from their predetermined fate along "weyes newe." The suggestion is expressed in a manner that resembles the tempting words of the guide in *Sir Gawain* (*Gawain* 2091-159), but Chaucer exploits the very impossibility of the escape. In addition to the society's political, governmental and military forces, the characters are trapped in a Boethian pattern of Fortune, predestination, or Fate, and in the memory of paradigmatic literary traditions.[37] Consequently, "they live through the situations that the philosopher complains about in *Boece*; and they do not have Lady Philosophy there to correct them."[38] There are no temple walls to read as in the "Knight's Tale," nor any objects or dream visions to remember their future. The narrative is that of now, rendered more painful through being governed by the memory of "then."

The prologues, features of the narrative that Chaucer has developed greatly from Boccaccio's, establish set places that control the narrative. As psychological units of memory, they return an audience within the paradigm of Fortune (increasingly so in the latter two books) and the tale in literary tradition. As Walter Curry observes "an absolutely inescapable necessity governs the progress of story" and therefore even if Criseyde's "weyes newe" may have been entertained in a preceding book a prologue intrudes, recollecting the pattern of events that should, and will, occur.[39] The prediction of Troilus' "double sorwe[s]" (*TC* I.1,54) is now

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[37] Book length discussions of the Boethian aspects of Chaucer's *Troilus* include Bernard Jefferson, *Chaucer and the Consolation of Philosophy of Boethius* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1917); Howard Patch, *The Goddess Fortuna in Medieval Literature* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1927); Howard Patch, *The Tradition of Boethius: A Study of His Importance in Medieval Culture* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1935; A. J. Minnis, ed. *Chaucer's Boece and the Medieval Tradition of Boethius*, Chaucer Studies XVIII (Cambridge: Brewer, 1993). There are also many articles, summarised and collected in Giancarlo 228.

[38] Pasquale di Pasquale, "'Sikernesse' and Fortune in *Troilus and Criseyde*," *Philological Quarterly* 49 (1970): 152-63, at 160.

[39] Walter Clyde Curry, "Destiny in Chaucer's *Troilus*," *PMLA* 45 (1930): 129-68, at 158. See also Howard Patch, "Troilus on Predestination," *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 17 (1918): 399-422; Charles Berryman "The Ironic Design of Fortune in *Troilus and Criseyde*," *Chaucer Review* 2 (1967): 1-7.

famous; however, it gains force and emotional inevitability through the narrator's clarification of his task and the warning for lovers "that bathen in gladnesse" (*TC* I.22), urging them to recall the possibility of change (*TC* I.24-8) in the manner of the "Knight's Tale." Subsequently, an audience is summoned to engage with the sequence of events: "Now herkneth with a good entencioun, / For now wil I gon streght to my matere" (*TC* I.52-3). This seemingly functional aside has important implications for the shared understanding of narrator and audience. The imperative recalls the desire for memorial engagement encountered elsewhere in romance - whether to hear the voices of the past living on in the present or to listen to the voices of experience calling from inscribed objects and carefully rendered temple walls. An audience wishes to hear something with which they are already familiar, mirrored in the narrator's confidence as he moves "streght" to his subject, discovered easily within the memorial store. "Matere" is echoed in the prologue to Book Two, the "tempestuous matere / Of disespeir that Troilus was inne" (*TC* II.5-6), but beneath this tempestuous sea our narrator remains in full control – Troilus sails in a boat "Of my connyng, that unneth I steere" (*TC* II.4). However, we then regard the dominance of the narrative over its narrator, again through memory. His duty, "To ryme wel this book til I have do" (*TC* II.10), carries the compulsion to continue until all has been recollected, as dictated by his source, Lollius, "out of Latyn in my tonge it write" (*TC* II.14).

Romances such as *Guy of Warwick* remember earlier analogues in other languages, often crediting a patron who had funded the present redaction, yet here the sense of linguistic change jars against the narrator's emphasis upon a timelessness of his subject. Although "that in forme of speche is change / Withinne a thousand yeer" (*TC* II.22-3), this moves to the constancy of what is expressed

beyond the individual lexical units: "And spedde as wel in love as men now do" (*TC* II.26). In this we might recall the attempts of characters to relate the unfamiliar and unprecedented within the realm of previous experience, but in a way that only exacerbates the present strangeness by way of contrast. The effect is broadly similar: time has been made too prominent ("Withinne a thousand yeer") and, although lovers may still have similar problems, this pair is *from* history; times (like languages) have changed with the only connection being the narration of this very story. We have as much to learn and remember from how lovers are separated at any point in past, present, or future as *why* this continues to occur and is remembered.[40] Consequently, the assertion "That here be any lovere in this place" (*TC* II.30) is undermined by historical context, or the inescapable restrictions of a remembered narrative, maintained only by memory just as we are urged to remember that "'Ecch contree hath his lawes'." These are immovable, galvanised by Lollius whom "shal I folwen, if I konne" (*TC* II.49). For Gawain there was no other route but the road to the Green Chapel, despite the guide's tempting alternative, which is as fixed in an audience's memory as was implied by the analogy of Quintilian's rooms and the cubits of Hugh's ark. When tales like this are so well known, and an author has reminded an audience continually of the events to come, we are all waiting for our memories to be corroborated.

Within the final three prologues the tale's inevitability becomes increasingly prominent, comparable to the concluding books of Malory as the affair between Lancelot and Guinevere overwhelms court, narrative, and legend (*Morte* XVIII). The role of Fortune serves only to reinforce and rescore the boundaries of memory, the narrator's pen quaking as it readies itself to inscribe such places with inescapable

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[40] There is a variation on this theme in Malory where love is said to have been more honest in previous days. *Morte* XVIII.25.

images of loss and sadness (*TC* IV.14-17): "pressures of history" are set against their "local enclave of love."[41] Seasonal imagery (*TC* III.10-11, V.10-11) re-establishes a temporal paradigm of expectation from "thousand yeer" that underpins the teleology of the events to create a rushing sense of the inevitable.[42] Likewise, a circularity of ritual contradicts linear finality, introducing the duty of each narrator, governed by memory, to follow the pattern *ad infinitum*. There is no escape and the sight of Criseyde riding out of Troy is acknowledged with a passivity stemming as much from the force of political machinery as, given the metafictional atmosphere, the inevitable progression and direction of the historical narrative:

> But at the yate ther she sholde out ride,
> With certeyn folk he hoved hire t'abide,
> So wo-bigon, al wolde he naught hym pleyne,
> That on his hors unnethe he sat for peyne.   (*TC* V.32-5)

Criseyde has not yet ridden out, this is a proleptic stanza, but it crystallises the expectation felt within and outside the narrative. It reveals a brief possibility of escape ("he hoved") which is corralled by the earlier subjunctive ("she sholde") to render the man powerless as he sits upon his horse, readying himself for the inevitable.[43] In *Gamelyn* gates were used to block false memories (the fact that the father had not provided for his youngest son in his will [*Gamelyn* 288]) and here the gate is opened and then quickly closed as a false account of the legend, the union of the lovers, is denied. The moment is preserved and protected by narrative, in the manner of the secure walls finally erected around Gamelyn as "Chef justice" of all

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[41] Patterson 107.

[42] In *Athelston* and *Emaré* this is comparable to events spiralling out of control in response to false, but seemingly immovable, memories deployed through the letters (*Athelston* 193-8; *Emaré* 577-88); however in Chaucer there is no such untruth – the loss and sadness governed by the past events are identical to the narrative endeavour of the poet or what is expected and remembered by an audience.

[43] There was a similar shift from the past memory of a future occurrence in Gawain's journey with the guide as an audience was alerted to the current moment of stasis through seeing the knight poised in his saddle (*Gawain* 2110). Strohm notes that at one point Troilus even seeks to deny time (*TC* IV.485), in a manner that recalls the myopia enjoyed by the lovers in *Sir Degrevant* (*Degrevant* 1439-40). Paul Strohm, *Social Chaucer* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1989) 120.

the free forest (*Gamelyn* 892). The romance guarantees his reputation in history as untouchable, and yet memorable, with his body still "graven under molde" (*Gamelyn* 900).

As with the "Knight's Tale," *Troilus and Criseyde* also suggests a divine architect for the action, a figure who transcends time at a level even beyond that of the omniscient, temporally separated, Chaucerian narrator. However, such digressions, as with those of Fortune, are perhaps less relevant than the narrator's own engagement with his remembered material.[44] These concerns permeate the words of characters, as in Troilus' lament "'O fatal sustren which, er any cloth / Me shapen was, my destine me sponne, / So helpeth to this werk that is bygonne!'" (*TC* III.733-5).[45] The allusions to Lachesis' weaving of the thread are obvious, but less explicit are the temporal qualifications surrounding Troilus' words.[46] The "cloth" made of, we are to imagine, many threads, is the narrative itself in which his life and fortunes play an integral role. The impression of artistic creation recalls many similar artificial memories of narratives, including those crafted in the same medium, but Chaucer's sense of immersion is more powerful. These words are spoken by a character within the "cloth," smothered by, and trapped within, its threads. The ritual, "this work," continues until the events have run their course and in the exasperated "bygonne" an audience recalls the narrator's own predicament in following his source – "shal I folwen, if I konne" (*TC* II.49). Against this background, when the inevitable does occur, Troilus' expectation of Criseyde's return as promised has a powerfully poignant effect when compared to his role in the

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[44] Examples of divine authority or Fortune's paradigm behind the episodes in the tale appear at *TC* I.850, III.617-20, IV.974-1078, IV.961-2, IV.963-6.

[45] Comparable moments include *TC* I.568-9, I.837-8, II.621-3, III.1667-87, IV.260-87, IV.1192-1211, V.1457-63.

[46] For discussions of Fortune in the tale see James I. Wimsatt, "Medieval and Modern in Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*," *PMLA* 92 (1977): 203-16, at 204; Gerald Morgan, "The Ending of *Troilus and Criseyde*," *Modern Language Review* 77 (1982): 257-72, at 268.

greater "cloth." He appears in a space reminiscent of the forest when the familiar narrative ritual is disrupted and one loses one's place. Troilus initially questions his own awareness of time, almost recasting himself as the counter Argus from *The Book of the Duchess*: "He thought he misacounted hadde his day" (*TC* V.1185). This recalls the manner of lovers "forgetting" to return as in *Ywain and Gawain* (*Ywain* 2801) or *King Horn* (*Horn* 926-7), but for the first time there is doubt as to whether the other party has indeed forgotten. The remembering subject, Troilus, now questions his own recollections and, through counting, the relation of past to present. However, an audience is also made all too aware of the impossibility of any miscounting.

Troilus has assumed the position of remembering subject – occupying a place of openness that is defined by order, familiarity and great visibility: "And on the morwe unto the yate he wente, / And up and down, by west and ek by este, / Upon the walles made he many a wente" (*TC* V.1192-4). However, his search is in vain. Criseyde will never return and in looking into the past of the narrative Chaucer's figure looks to his earlier speeches on Fortune and necessity, the inescapable memories brought by each prologue, and, indirectly, the "memory" of this moment so many times before. Even after the "thridde, ferthe, fifte, sexte day," still "Bitwixen hope and drede his herte lay" (*TC* V.1205,7), emblematic of painful remembrances including the memory of Criseyde and a *memory* of this memory of Criseyde. Such would seem to be the *trauma* that Troilus is doomed to suffer, feeling the loss anew at every moment, a common feature of the loss of love in medieval lamentation, but which in Chaucer's hands is given additional relevance in terms of literary memory. The loss is experienced perpetually, a state resembling *Sir Orfeo*'s description of the wounding of Herodis (*Orfeo* 77-89). When asleep he dreams that

"he was amonges alle / His enemys, and in hire hondes fall" (*TC* V.251-2) before waking with a jolt, experiencing a brief sensation in his heart, "And swich a tremour fele aboute his herte" [*TC* V.255].[47] This is a momentary presence, the stirring of an emotional memory which is overwhelmed by the remembrance of loss itself, again characterised by a falling sensation "as though he sholde falle depe / From heighe o-lofte; and thanne he wolde wepe" (*TC* V.259). Chaucer's variation on the memorial dream *topos* is no longer a proleptic memory; instead, it reimages that which has already been stored in the mind and, in disguising the memory as an image of enemies' hands or a plunge into the depths, it increases the pain of the real memory itself which he can never stop revisiting:

> Another tyme he sholde myghtyly
> Conforte hymself, and sein it was folie
> So causeless swich drede for to drye;
> And eft bygynne his aspre sorwes newe,
> That every man myght on his sorwes rewe.   (*TC* V.262-6)

For Troilus, loss itself has become ritualised and, as with all rituals, this serves as a way to continually remember.

We might compare a different perspective when the couple first occupied the same place: "Right as his happy day was, sooth to seyne, / For which, men seyn, may nought destourbed be / That shal bityden of necessitee" (*TC* II.621-3). Not only are the roles initially reversed (Criseyde sees Troilus from above, parading through the city walls), but so are the expressions. Here a seemingly chance sight ("happy" referring to this moment and Troilus' earlier victory) is explained through design and, later, Criseyde's absence is characterised in the same way. Each character waits for the correct moment to play their role. We might recall the movement towards the pavilion in *Sir Launfal* and its memorial recapitulation at the court (*Launfal* 230-300;

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[47] Compare William's dream in *William of Palerne*. *William* 876.

849-970); these are two temporally separate episodes that are recollected and remembered by literal and psychological movements and manipulations. In *Troilus and Criseyde* their movement is asymmetrical, completing part of the whole, the "cloth," and the attention placed on specific days is emblematic of the strength of memory throughout this narrative, an awareness shared by Troilus towards the end of the tale as he appeals to Cupid: "Whan I the proces have in my memorie / How thow me hast wereyed on every syde, / Men myght a book make of it, lik a storie" (*TC* V.583-4). From his words emerge the memorial images of competing Greeks and Trojans "on every syde," and this incarceration becomes that of the narrative, stored in memory, within which he can discern the indomitable course of events. This is not the crowding of a disordered memorial forest, nor the dislocating emptiness of "space," but a narrative paradigm of physically restrictive memories perpetually strengthened with every subsequent "making."

Memories are expressed as self-conscious images of absence, highly wrought, with a sense that even the emotional loss is itself a memory. This is figured in images of emptiness, both literal and metaphorical, the shape remaining but with the sense that a function is now complete.[48] Susan Schibanoff notes the emphasis upon memorial places as Troilus re-visits familiar places and associates them with images of Criseyde, whilst an audience is "invited to travel again figuratively to these same *loci* or physical settings which the poem has so assiduously been impressing on its mind."[49] These locations are ostensibly empty; yet, given the permanence of their situation, the overwhelming impression is that of places used and now discarded, empty only because their function is complete. The letters he

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[48] In contrast to Sir Isumbras' pursuit of the loss of gold in order to remember what he had initially forgotten, "loss" continually "finds" or "discovers" Troilus. Cf. *Isumbras* 358-72; 500-10.

[49] Susan Schibanoff, "Prudence and Artificial Memory in Chaucer's *Troilus*," *English Literary History* 42 (1975): 507-17, at 511.

reads are emblematic of this, examined after observing the inscrutability of Fortune –
"his howve entended bet to glaze!" (*TC* V.469). Interestingly, this is a development
of Boccaccio, perhaps an added layer of memory appropriate to the task of the later
author:

> The lettres ek that she of olde tyme
> Hadde hym ysent, he wolde alone rede
> An hundred sithe atwixen noon and prime,
> Refiguryng hire shap, hire wommanhede,
> Withinne his herte, and every word or dede
> That passed was; and thus he drof t'an ende
> The ferthe day, and seyde he wolde wende. (*TC* V.470-6)

Criseyde exists only through the letters. What Troilus is remembering is an earlier
absence "of olde tyme," or a doubling of memory as the recollection of absence
structures the present and even becomes ritualised.[50] The memories stirred by the
letters are again not concrete, owing more to the prophetic memory of dreams, and
do not spur Troilus to act as in other romances such as *Athelston* or *Emaré*.[51] Rather
their images remain ethereal ("hire shap, hire wommanhede / Withinne his herte"),
remembrances of memory itself that reinforce the inescapabilty of his recollections.[52]

The final letter from Criseyde articulates the sense that, governed by
memory, she will never return and the lady acknowledges "how that ye requeren me
/ To come ayeyn, which yet ne may be" (*TC* V.1600-1). The letter has been sent
from the past and looks towards the future and the current moment of reading.
However, implicitly, this moment is inscribed within her lines – the reading stems
from Troilus' desire that she might "come again." Similarly, the moving "Nor other
thing nys in youre remembraunce, / As thynketh me, but only youre pleasaunce" (*TC*
V.1607-8) develops a true record of Troilus' memory of Criseyde into written

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[50] Later her letters are described as "but botmeles bihestes" (*TC* V.1431).
[51] See the discussion in Chapter Six 204-17.
[52] The powerful sense of images impressed on the mind or heart, coupled with the earlier definition of recollection as process, seem to reflect a more sophisticated conception of memory, developing in more psychological terms the learning that the popular and courtly romances performed and expected.

testimony: the contents are rendered immovable with none of the fluidity of a dream or memorial object on a long journey across a narrative. What is contained in the letter cannot be remembered beyond its confines or its function as an untouchable memory. This was also Criseyde's memory of Troilus which in his subsequent reading becomes *his* memory of her, both separated by geographical place, narrative and literal time, and the lines of her letter – "Th'entente is al, and nat the lettres space" (*TC* V.1630). His reaction to the letter, "Hym thought it lik a kalendes of chaunge" (*TC* V.1634), is rendered deeply ironic: the letter actually refers him to the past and any change is governed by the events that have already occurred, even before Chaucer's narrative had begun. The narrative has run its course: his love lost, her house empty, and only letter(s) remaining – "al is lost that he hath bene aboute" (*TC* V.1645). The brooch, a return of the familiar memorial object, is again laden with the weight of the past and "[i]n Troilus' recognition of the brooch…the reader may detect the directing hand of Providence."[53] Although not developed by either Boccaccio or Chaucer at the parting of the lovers, its current sight establishes a memory and another recollection of a memory – the earlier absence exchanged "In remembraunce of hym and of his sorwe" (*TC* V.1663). Troilus is amazed that Criseyde could have seemingly forgotten him so easily and, not only that, that she has replaced his memory with that of Diomede through the brooch – "'was ther non other broch'" (*TC* V.1689).

The answer to his rhetorical question is, of course, a denial. There could never have been another brooch. Much like the narrative of his double sorrow, this was the only possibility, as unavoidable as the fact that he stumbles across it so shortly after reading Criseyde's final letter. Unlike other objects which unite, this

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[53] John M. Steadman, *Disembodied Laughter: Troilus and the Apotheosis Tradition, A Re-examination of Narrative and Thematic Contexts* (Berkeley, CA: U of California P, 1972) 77.

brooch is emblematic of the distance of the past: the space (and time) between Troilus and Criseyde that allowed her to bestow the object upon Diomede, the gulf between the original parting and the present moment, and the fact that all this is governed by a pre-existing narrative of Fortune and change. Indeed, Troilus' bewilderment, "That ye, Criseyde, koude han changed so" (*TC* V.1683), begins to establish the narrative of change, gathering the earlier "kalendes of chaunge" into which Troilus places himself as undeserving victim: "'But trewely, Criseyde, swete may, / Whom I have ay with al my myght yserved, / That ye thus doon, I have it nat deserved'" (*TC* V.1721-2). Chaucer's authorial undertones cannot be coincidental as Troilus looks back over his behaviour during the entire five books ("ay"), whilst Criseyde's actions, "thus doon," are established as contradictory rather than consequential – not of Troilus' devotion to her, but as a result of his part in the narrative at all. His final evaluation is therefore undercut: he *does* deserve, not in this specific case of infidelity, but on account of his own and Chaucer's fidelity to the literary-historical narrative. Bloomfield believes that we "get our future and present at the same time" on account of the tale's inevitability; however, on account of the role of memory in this process, we also can add the past to this assessment.[54]

The character's final escape and vision from above in the eighth sphere is predicted by Criseyde's letter as he views not only the transitory human affairs below, but also an impression of his own completed narrative laid out before him.[55] Troilus laughs (*TC* V.1821), "simply inadmissible in courtly matters," as he recollects his own part within his own narrative but also, in line with laughter and memory elsewhere in the romances, with a sense of slight relief and obvious

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[54] Bloomfield, "Distance" 22.
[55] Behind this scene lies a literary tradition from Cicero, Macrobius and, of course, Boccaccio.

recognition.[56] Although seen as deliberately reductive by John Steadman, the emotional outburst temporarily heals some of the trauma of the tale.[57] He can, at least until the story is narrated again, escape the memories of his literary past, and this task will certainly not be taken up by Chaucer who also divorces himself from the dictating force of memory. This memory informs the romance narrative as it would in any folkloric, traditional or inherited literature but in this case also recognises the dangers and limitations of metafiction, or literary expectation for characters in a situation of this poignancy. As such, the poet seems eager to erase the memory of his work, "Go, litel bok, go, litel myn tragedye" (*TC* V.1786), forgetting "forever the unhappy and importunate Troilus, the unbearable grief of Criseyde's betrayal, the perplexities of time and space, and the tyranny of history and predestination."[58] Ironically, through creating a work analogous to Criseyde's letters, Chaucer protects and protracts the traumatic memories themselves which will exist until a later writer chooses to remember their plight once more.

A "Hanging Scabbard": Timing the Movements of Memory.

Robert Weinmann and Jacqueline Cerquiglini-Toulet would characterise Chaucer's narrative technique as typical of medieval attitudes towards literary appropriation and a later fourteenth-century concern with, in the latter's words, "the sadness that all had been said."[59] However, Chaucer has in fact built on the dominance of memory as a self-conscious and historically-bound narrative whilst illuminating the

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[56] Peter Christmas, "*Troilus and Criseyde*: The Problems of Love and Necessity," *Chaucer Review* 9 (1975): 285-96, at 292.

[57] Steadman 83.

[58] Bloomfield, "Distance" 26.

[59] Robert Weinmann, *Authority and Representation in Early Modern Discourse*, ed. David Hillman (Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins UP, 1996); Jacqueline Cerquiglini-Toulet, *The Colour of Melancholy: The Uses of Books in the Fourteenth Century*, trans. Lydia G. Cochrane (Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins UP, 1997).

implications for characters and narrators to produce a highly original piece of memorial creativity. These feelings of literary crisis could therefore be as productive as the earlier cultural crisis that produced feats of creative recollection exemplified by, and performed within, earlier popular and courtly romances. In this respect we can return to Malory's endeavour and one set of movements in particular: the entrance of Galahad and the initiation of the Grail Quest. The Grail Quest is central to the Arthurian legend, prominent in Malory's source material (most obviously *La Queste del saint Graal* in the Vulgate Cycle), and therefore should form the heart of the author's work. At the arrival of Galahad there is a distillation of the analeptic and proleptic effect of memory upon the status of the legend at this point.

The instructions of Hugh of Saint Victor to order and build one's memorial *loci* underpin the author's task as Malory manipulates his source material to offer an impression of a narrative past alongside a future which is tentatively re-discovered through the present moment of narration and action. Despite the legendary weight, Malory retains a very effective sense of spontaneity. Galahad had replaced Perceval as the Grail Knight in the Vulgate Cycle and Malory preserves this, introducing the young knight to offer a new, more spiritual direction to the court and narrative. In addition, memorial places are temporarily occluded and hidden from court, Malory and audience, only to be re-discovered as a complex process of recollection is performed. The demarcation of the Round Table, prior to Galahad's entrance, forms a powerful metaphor for memory in itself. In this way, each knight can remember his own place at the court and simultaneously re-affirms his own role in the legendary history that is being written. The Siege Perilous, however, is troubling:

> where they founde lettirs newly wrytten of golde, which seyde: 'FOUR HONDRED WYNTIR AND FOUR AND FYFTY ACOMPLYVYSSHED AFTIR THE PASSION OF OURE LORDE JESU CRYST OUGHTE THYS SYEGE TO BE FULFYLLED.'   (*Morte* XIII.2)

The letters are new, and form a memorial connection between past, present, and future in the manner of the epistolary links and messengers' journeys. This testimony cannot be doubted, validated by the sheer expectation (wrought in memory) that this will indeed occur, something that is recognised by court and audience: "Than all they seyde, 'Thys ys a mervylous thynge and an adventures!'" (*Morte* XIII.2). The place has been set for Galahad, although at this point we do not know his name; it is not yet his time and consequently Lancelot wishes that "'none of thes lettirs were sene thys day tyll that he be that ought to enchyve thys adventure'" (*Morte* XIII.2). A narrative has been written, but is occluded, in contrast to other romances' use of memories where letters were read, messengers heard, and artefacts examined to learn their respective past wisdoms. The covering of the Siege is therefore symbolic ("Than made they to ordayne a cloth of sylke for to cover thes lettirs in the Syege Perelous" [*Morte* XIII.2]) which blocks in the manner of the treacherous manipulators of memory. However, this does not erase the letters – rather, they are temporarily occluded. It is not yet time for the name to be revealed, but all has been prepared and expectation is mounting before the planned moment of its unveiling.

One could adopt a similar reading of the marvellous sword set in stone, likened to red marble, and floating in a river (*Morte* XIII.2). This bears yet more letters explaining that he who should draw the sword shall be the best knight in the world. An attempt to remove it is made by Gawain and Percival before it too fades from view as King and retinue return to the castle and the sword remains in the river to be revisited when the time is right (*Morte* XIII.2), in the manner of the ritualistic basin of *Ywain and Gawain*.[60] Following Lancelot's connection between this sword

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[60] Cf. *Ywain* 319-450. This episode in Malory, of course, also recalls the means by which Arthur achieved the throne of England, set in the same stone but in a churchyard rather than a lake at Christmas (*Morte* XIII.3), at Candelmas (*Morte* I.6), and finally at Pentecost (*Morte* I.7).

and the initiation of the Grail Quest ("'thys same day shall the adventure of the Sankgreall begynne'" [*Morte* XIII.2]), the Siege Perilous is revisited and the memory that was temporarily discarded gains prominence through a coincidence of a phrase from earlier: "anone there befelle a mervaylous adventure" (*Morte* XIII.3).[61] There follows the somewhat disquieting detail "that all the doorys and wyndowes of the paleyse shutte by themselff" (*Morte* XIII.3). Romances have frequently employed physical architecture or landscapes to facilitate the fluid movement of thought and time: windows, doors, gates, and minds, remained open for creative *memoria* and, here, defying the closed door, an old man enters the room:[62]

> ...and there was no knyght knew from whens he com. And with hym he brought a yonge knyght, and bothe on foote, in rede armys, withoute swerde other shylde sauff a scawberd hangynge by hys syde.
>
> (*Morte* XIII.3)

Upon his entrance the darkness seems to lift as the places of the Round Table come into focus yet again and the cloth is lifted to reveal new letters which have been clarified from those before: "'THYS YS THE SYEGE OF SIR GALAHAD THE HAWTE PRYNCE'" (*Morte* XIII.4).[63] The individual is then connected to the empty Siege with an appropriate confirmation "'weyt you well that place ys youres'" (*Morte* XIII.4) before the old man is dismissed and his function observed ("'for well have ye done in that that ye were commaunded'"). This casts him in the manner of the memorial messenger recollecting material between distanced lands, times and, in the case of Malory and his sources, legends. The memorial places from the legendary

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[61] The phrase is also repeated by Sir Kay after seeing the stone, "'for a mervalous adventure have ye sene'" (*Morte*: I.6), as if we have already seen the Grail Quest itself through the words of Lancelot and the sword. Cf. the description of the ritual in *Ywain*, witnessed through Colgrevance's words before it is seen at first-hand (*Ywain* 325). The narrative technique is characteristic of Malory – focusing on one word in a short passage. See P. J. C. Field, "Description and Narration in Malory," *Speculum* 43 (1968): 476-86, at 481.

[62] The function of the old man bears a marked resemblance to Merlin's memorial performance and disguise when Arthur was hunting (*Morte* I.20).

[63] Ironically, however, Vinaver suggests that the description is actually confusion on the part of Malory between "Galahad and Galehoult li Haut Prince." Vinaver, *Works* 1546.

history then become even more clearly visible as Guinevere sketches Galahad's biographical information (*Morte* XIII.4), prefaced by the seemingly casual "'I may well suppose'" (*Morte* XIII.4), before explaining the reasons for her supposition: Galahad is the son of Lancelot and King Pelles' daughter on account of the young knight being such "a noble man" (*Morte* XIII.4).

Given the certainty carried by the gold letters, subsequently viewed by Arthur who lifts the cloth, Guinevere's analysis can go unquestioned and, moreover, links past (the lineage) with present (the figure standing before the Round Table – "'I reporte me unto all the Table Rounde'" [*Morte* XIII.4]) which leads to Arthur's assurance of the future: "'ye shall meve many good knyghtes to the queste of the Sankgreall, and ye shall enchyve that many other knyghtes myght never brynge to an ende'" (*Morte* XIII.4).[64] These words look forwards but also carry the force of an imperative, thereby relating Galahad's imminent quest with a prophecy or that which has already been glimpsed in the words of the Siege. Although before this we are informed that Lancelot "behylde hys sonne and had grete joy of hym" (*Morte* XIII.4), there is no such recognition in Malory's French sources and the verb is perhaps meant to imply merely description. We could maybe develop Vinaver's explanation by appreciating that the verb looks forward to Guinevere's speech and, of course, back into the literary history of the legend.[65]

Galahad is then led to the river containing the sword at which point his speech clarifies the coincidence between legendary plot and retrospective narration:

> 'Sir,' seyde sir Galahad, 'hit ys no mervayle, for thys adventure ys nat theyres but myne. And for the sureté of thys swerde I brought none with me, but here by my syde hangith the scawberte.'   (*Morte* XIII.5)

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[64] Cf. other examples of false letters inscribed on stone such as *Floris* 217-8.
[65] Vinaver, *Works* 1547.

Galahad immediately claims possession of the sword and narrative to come and the empty scabbard hanging by his side is highly significant. It is a memorial object not in itself, but in what is conspicuous by its absence – the sword – which recalls the empty Siege Perilous. We might think of Rymenhild, in *King Horn*, clasping her fingers into a ring to create the memorial object acoustically (through the half-rhyme) and symbolically (*Horn* 988). Here, the scabbard recalls a past which is actually the future – imaged powerfully as the sword waits patiently in the marble in the manner of Isumbras' gold and red cloth waving in a tree (*Isumbras* 619-25). "Hangith" captures this sense of confident passivity, along with the idea of apparent space governed by a fixed boundary of past/future narrative, developing the earlier depiction of the scabbard as Galahad was first led into the court. Interestingly this first instance of "a scawberd hangynge" (*Morte* XIII.3) is an insertion by Malory. Vinaver notes that this has been added "in anticipation of the next episode" and here we see again the coincidence of redactor and his legendary material – Malory uses the image of empty space to look forward to the same image that, in itself, is emblematic of the predetermined Grail Quest.[66] In addition, the sword's own history is narrated in a manner which resembles the Trojan cup of *Floris and Blancheflour* through its material link with inscribed events.[67] Yet, given the interlaced nature of the tale, the detail is grounded in part of Malory's earlier work – the battle between Balin and Balan and the wounding of King Pellam whom Galahad is destined to heal (*Morte* XIII.5).[68] Significantly, the reference to the sword's heritage is another insertion by Malory and if we journey to the designated place in Book Two we find a direct reference to the present events, expressed in terms of the distant future, resembling the dreamed "future-perfect" seen elsewhere. Consequently, "the

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[66] Vinaver, *Works* 1546.
[67] Cf. *Floris* 163-84.
[68] See Robert L. Kelly, "Malory's 'Tale of Balin' Reconsidered," *Speculum* 54 (1979): 85-99.

scawberd" is left on the island "that Galaad sholde fynde hit" (*Morte* II.19) and the sword itself is buried in marble "and hoved allwayes above the water, and dud many yeres" (*Morte* II.19).[69] This future has now been recollected and a new set of memories, the eventual healing of King Pellam, introduced.

At this point the lying or treachery motif is implicitly invoked along with the theme of memory, change and identity as Guinevere calls for Lancelot and somewhat insensitively states "'How youre grete doynge ys changed sytthyn thys day in the morne'" (*Morte* XIII.5). Lancelot's identity has been changed in an instant by the arrival of Galahad and the suddenness of the transformation is foregrounded – "thys day" that has seen a change from "grete doynge" (his past reputation and achievements) which he still possessed "in the morne." Again, as in the "Knight's Tale," change is normalised by narrative. In this instance it is the recapitulation of the sword (*Morte* XIII.5) and an assertion that the change cannot be denied: "'But who sholde sey so now, he sholde be a lyer'" (*Morte* XIII.5). Lying is synonymous with manufactured memories, now developed to encompass both the past but also the possibility that these memories *can* be changed by more recent developments. Lancelot's memorial image has in effect changed even though it was always destined to be so, implicitly explained by the lady: "'Wherefore I make unto you a remembraunce that ye shall nat wene fromehensforthe that ye be the best knyght of the worlde'" (*Morte* XIII.5). This, like its temporal adverbs, has a curiously circular referentiality in the context of Malory's work or greater "remembraunce."

Following the mention of Nacien, of whom Galahad is a descendant, Guinevere clarifies that which has occurred within the scene in terms of quest, narrative, and legend: "'for thys day the Sankgreall appered in thy house and fedde

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[69] For the language of "finding" the past compare *Isumbras* 623-4.

the and all thy felyship of the Rounde Table'" (*Morte* XIII.5). It is tempting to relate

the unusual choice of verb to the well-established concept in memorial and rhetorical

theories of consumption and savouring of information in the mouth, and Vinaver

notes that the phrase only appears in another, related another group of manuscripts,

not in the main source for this portion of his work.[70] The verb is powerful. This is a

"feeding" or nourishing of the Round Table with a narrative in the same way as the

promise of adventure feeds the imagination of an audience. Like the silent, darkened

room penetrated by the "memory" of adventure, it resonates with monastic memorial

practice: "reading during meals is described in some texts as an explicit literalizing

of the metaphor of consuming a book as one consumes food."[71] Consuming and

internalizing the space before him also established Hugh of Saint Victor's centre-

point and re-discovered, or rather re-scored, outlying places in the manner of the

recapitulating prologues of *Troilus and Criseyde*.[72] This is how we learn – through

the constant revisitation of our memories and, throughout Malory's work, in every

assertion of the power of chivalry and the Round Table there would be, for an

audience familiar with the Arthurian legend, a simultaneous echo of its eventual fall.

Arthur notes the position in the narrative and historical legend, '"nevyr shall I se you

agayne hole togydirs'" (*Morte* XIII.6) and, to celebrate the final moment of unity,

proposes jousting and a tournament. He concludes with a final, now characteristic,

blend of prolepsis leading cyclically to analepsis: '"that aftir youre dethe men may

speke of hit that such good knyghtes were here, such a day, hole togydirs'" (*Morte*

XIII.6). With his emphasis upon the present moment in its temporal and spatial

immediacy Arthur looks towards the death of knights validated by the words of

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[70] Vinaver, *Works* 1547.
[71] Carruthers, *Book of Memory* 53-4, 208, 209. *Craft of Thought* 108-9.
[72] Cf. *Arche* I.1-4.

"men," protectors of the memory of the Round Table, who are, by implication, Malory and his audience.

Consequently, this moment is framed by the Sankgreall legend, but also the greater history of the Round Table itself, including the memory of its fall or "death" and the inescapable past tense of Malory's narrative.[73] Again, there is the sense of confined *memoria* taking place under the guise of Fortune or chance. Places have emerged from space complete with the images that were waiting to be revealed beneath the cloth. Journeying forward to the final battle, the space becomes the battlefield, seemingly caught in a present moment of the unexpected as the unpredictable adder initiates the action. This is all framed by the delineated place of the battlefield, surrounded by the competing armies that are emblematic of the historical and literary contexts that govern, define, and compose the memories for us. We remember that this *had* to happen; again, we are recollecting a remembered image, not simply manufacturing an image from memory for the first time. What emerges from this is the question posed by Barry Windeatt in relation to *Troilus and Criseyde*: "whether the author's, or reader's, or onlooker's knowing a thing to be true – whether present, past, or future – necessitates its happening."[74] This manages, through the medium of romance, to be both obvious and oblique, the present moment of reading becomes performative as the extemporaneous "presents" or chance happenings of the tale are nevertheless already ordered. The Round Table will fall just as the book will end and memory will be satisfied. In the words of Mark Twain's later consideration of Arthurian romance, familiar recollection is again juxtaposed with the momentarily unprecedented - "[t]hey come together with great random[ness]." In Malory, the seemingly chance events are woven together by

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[73] Muriel Whitaker notes that in the later books "the individual's ability to recall the past is a poignant device in the chronicle of the Round Table's disintegration and destruction." See Whitaker 107.

[74] Barry Windeatt, *Troilus and Criseyde*, Oxford Guides to Chaucer (Oxford: Clarendon, 1992) 264.

author and audience to revisit the ritual of Arthurian legend which Malory has

explored to remember, for future application, *latentium rerum causas*.[75]

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[75] Mark Twain, *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*, ed. M. Thomas Inge, Oxford World's Classics (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2008) 117-8. For discussion of the Latin see Giancarlo 261.

CHAPTER NINE

Conclusions: Necessary Possibilities for Romance *memoria*.

…the awakening of consciousness as a series of *spaced* flashes.[1]

Whatever period of development or cultural example of the genre is examined, whether courtly and complex, metrical and local, or Arthurian and legendary, the process of *memoria* is essential to a romance's success as moral, satisfying, entertaining, and challenging, literature. It allows a character to reaffirm and develop their identity, in addition to maintaining the moral identity and unity of a particular tale as every episode is explained and contributes to a romance's thematic purpose. This, of course, allows the audience to perpetuate their identity as a group that can appreciate, understand, and maybe even emulate the correct chivalric behaviour that has been continually tested through the successes (and mistakes) of characters. However, during these episodes, the romances also reveal much about the abilities of *memoria* and mechanisms of memory historically and universally. Jeffrey Prager observes that although "[r]emembering the past is now widely understood as a valuable activity in and of itself…how and why we remember in the present is a topic of relatively little popular interest."[2] Bertrand Russell emphasised the importance of the memorial faculty to all human knowledge, past, present and future: "immediate knowledge by memory is the source of all our knowledge concerning the past: without it, there could be no knowledge of the past by inference, since we should never know that there was anything past to be inferred."[3] In such an historically-conscious genre as romance, this assertion acquires additional force,

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[1] Vladimir Nabokov, *Speak Memory: An Autobiography Revisited*, Penguin Modern Classics, 1967 (London: Penguin, 2000) 18. Emphasis mine.
[2] Jeffrey Prager, *Presenting the Past: Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of Misremembering* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1998) 67.
[3] Bertrand Russell, *The Problem of Philosophy*, 9th ed. (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1912) 46.

uniting past and present through the social and cultural *Wir-Gefühl* which was so desirable throughout the Middle Ages.[4] Memory, or more accurately, *memoria*, informs, permeates, and enhances the romance experience at every level employing and exploiting medieval principles of order, experience and creativity which are strikingly similar to our twenty-first century understanding of the faculty, namely that "the past is not preserved, but is reconstructed on the basis of the present" through recollection and reinterpretation.[5] From the initiation of a narrative, present spaces of emptiness and disorder are continuously tamed through an act of multi-layered, dynamic remembering. Vladimir Nabokov calls attention to flashes of recollection, but also the surrounding frames of their brilliance: the spaces, the night of late medieval England, the disorder of the forest, and the transmission of legendary literature over the centuries. It is *how* these spaces are overcome that is crucial to romance *memoria*: the ordering of material with reference to the past, the active assimilation of past, present, and future, and, most importantly, the creative act of interpretation and manipulation inherent in these processes. "Social memory [the catalyst for romance preservation and dissemination] is not as stable as information; it is stable, rather at the level of shared meanings and remembered images."[6] Romances exploit this opportunity.

By the mid-fourteenth century, also a mid-point for many of the narratives discussed in this study, "memories are not direct signature-traces that past experiences leave in the brain. Their function is not to provide an accurate trace of

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[4] Yitzhak Hen and Matthew Innes, "Introduction," *Past in The Early Middle* 1. The term is used in W. Eggert and B. Pätzold, *Wir-Gefühl und regnum Saxonum bei frühmittelalter lichen Geschichtsschreibein* (Berlin: Boehlau, 1984).
[5] Maurice Halbwachs, "The Social Frameworks of Memory," *On Collective Memory*, ed. and trans. Lewis Coser (Chicago, IL: U of Chicago P, 1992) 38.
[6] Fentress and Wickham 59.

things past, but to provide materials for creative thinking."[7] Nabokov's "spaced flashes" summon the great contemporary facilitator of memory today – photography. Through this medium, temporally distanced episodes are aligned to create a chronology, even a biographical paradigm. Yet does this process avoid the challenges of *memoria*, or employ the creative work of memory experienced through medieval romance narratives? Henry James, describing the peculiar workings of memory in his *Portrait of a Lady* anticipated Nabokov with the phrase "disconnected visions."[8] It is this movement, ritual, or journey that provides the challenge, anticipation, and eventual satisfaction. Romance, in this sense, serves almost a mnemonic function by teaching us how to remember and urging us to *remember* how and why this is important.

However, such a definition perhaps anaesthetises the emotional effects within, and created through, romances. These are also connected to *memoria*. Echoing the classical and medieval emphasis upon emotional memory, moments of loss, dislocation, and elation are aligned with other points across temporal divides and memorial backgrounds to allow a communication between past and present within the immediacy of forgetful panic, painful trauma, and the frustration of falseness. An audience, although invited to share the omniscient position of Troilus in the eighth sphere and employ the virtue of Prudence, is still part of the drama of *memoria* (*TC* V.1814). This study has deployed medieval and modern psychological studies and theories of memory in ways that look to their demonstration within the romance genre but also the human longing for an ordered, adaptable and episodic use of memory. Psychology and emotion are part of the memory work of a romance and the medieval display of interiority through exterior actions and events *is* appropriate

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[7] Dudai and Carruthers 567.
[8] James 595.

as individuals interact with the ultimate memorial paradigm or store – the chivalric ideal in its literary and historical traditions. However, perhaps the most dominant emotion that has emerged is that of enjoyment, the ability to "drive the night away" through memory, by entering and engaging in the various levels of a memorial challenge. A late twelfth-century *regula* aimed at women, based on St. Jerome, stresses the importance of emotion to thought and especially creative composition.[9] Carruthers explains, "[t]his Rule admonishes against laughter because, like applause, derision is associated by the writer with detachment and disengagement from the material, tears with the opposite."[10] However, as we have seen, laughter is also the hallmark of engagement with a memorial challenge, often appearing at the conclusion of various recollections in a combination of relief at familiarity and a celebration of making the required mental connections. Laughter, also, is emblematic of the shared nature of *memoria* in romance: an audience and the romance author (who has successfully redacted and retained the authority of his material) laugh along with the court in *Sir Gawain*, shares Orfeo's relief in the wilderness, corroborates the Duke's laughter in *Ipomadon* at the return of his steed, and, eventually, appreciates Troilus's disconnected observances of his past from the eighth sphere.[11]

Drawing such conclusions about literature from a strict use of exterior theory and analysis, in this case the pseudo-scientific view and conceptualisation of memory in classical and medieval thought, can sometimes occlude the literature itself and its many highly idiosyncratic subtleties. Indeed, Derek Pearsall warned that "reading driven by a pre-existing theory of interpretation is often likely to mistake its

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[9] *PL* XXX.435. See Carruthers, *Book of Memory* 208.

[10] Carruthers, *Book of Memory* 208-9.

[11] *Gawain* 2514; *Orfeo* 290; *Ipomadon* 5215-23; *TC* V.1820.

subject. This happens when there is a failure to *read* closely, when the experience of reading the text is overcome by the excitement of finding or finding out how exactly everything fits with the chosen theory."[12] The coincidences between memorial terminology or the essentials of *memoria* and the conventional mechanisms of romance such as forest, place, treachery, sight, and prophecy are more than felicitous correspondences. On the contrary, they appear when these narratives are read closely *enough*, when one employs the workings of memory that are required for the tales to be so effective and enjoyable. "*Memoria*" is not a theory but rather the essence of how a romance works. As the importance of memory in the texts is borne out by the necessity to remember in order for each narrative to be thematically and morally unified, we have not encountered any that showcase bad memories, at literal or narrative levels, that remain unchecked. This would be too much, and the romance itself would become disconnected through being structurally and morally inaccurate, corrupting the very act with which the audience is engaging.

We might look to two texts in which laughter and memory is taken to the extreme, pointing-up the dependency upon memory in romance literature: Chaucer's "Tale of Sir Thopas" and the much earlier, *fabliaux*-inspired (but still with a romance atmosphere), late thirteenth-century, *Dame Sirith*. They both offer their own hyperbolic treatment of romance *memoria*.[13] Initially, the tales emphasise a heavy reliance on the remembered episodes from earlier narratives, used constantly to qualify the present tale. Chaucer cites other "romances of prys" (Th VII.897) such as *Horn*, *Ypotis*, *Beves of Hampton*, *Guy of Warwick*, Chestre's *Lybeaus Desconus* and

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[12] Derek Pearsall, "Developments in the Study of Middle English Literature since 1983," *Memory and Commemoration* 331.

[13] For a discussion of the date of *Dame Sirith* see *Early Middle English Verse and Prose*, ed. J. A. W. Bennett and G. V. Smithers, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1968) 77-80.

the somewhat obscure "Pleyndamour" (Th VII.897-900).[14] Names of figures from

past tales also appear such as Perceval, in order to establish similarity – "As dide the

knight sire Percyvell" (Th VII.916). Another phrase highlights Thopas' differences,

"But of sir Thopas" (Th VII.901), establishing a gulf between the aspirations of the

past and a present narration (despite its reliance upon memories of these for its

current expression), an effect mirrored in the crude chivalric tale we are reading and

those subsequently cited: "romances that been roiales, / Of popes and of cardinals, /

And eek of love-likynge" (Th VII.848-50). Urs Dürmüller suggests that Chaucer is

"poking fun at a degenerate or misunderstood kind of chivalry"; yet perhaps it is the

cause of this very misunderstanding that is exposed here – the gulf in time that any

romance attempts to cross through coincidence, referentiality, and invented

familiarity.[15] In *Dame Sirith* the remembered tradition is more subtle and embodied

in Sirith herself who appears to have a great memory of the various tricks and

magical effects that romances have employed in the past and is able to draw upon

this store ("þine crafftes and þine dedes" [*Sirith*: 190]) in order to help Wilekin, in

the manner of Merlin's "subtyle crauftes" at the start of Malory's work.[16] Again, a

space is opened between past generic or chivalric tradition and present recollections

of that fiction, as Furrow explains, "the characters' language distances them from the

world that they are aspiring to join."[17]

In addition, we can identify many of the techniques employed elsewhere in

the tradition to establish continuity between past and present and to challenge

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[14] In Malory a knight named as Sir Playne de Fors appears; however, Chaucer may simply have invented a name as he does with Oliphant, which bears some resemblance to established figures such as Prynsamour and Eglamour. Cf. *Morte* XIX.11.

[15] Urs Dürmüller, *Narrative Possibilities of the Tail-Rime Romance*, Swiss Studies in English 83 (Berne: Francke, 1975) 216.

[16] *Dame Sirith*, Bennett and Smithers 190. All subsequent references to *Sirith* will be to this edition and cited by line number.

[17] Furrow 125.

memoria within the narrative itself. These include the use of "written" orality which in Chaucer is realised as his tale is performed before the ("Listeth, lords, in good entent" (Th VII.712).[18] Topography is also employed in both works, "To þe feire of Botolfston / In Lincolneschire" (*Sirith* 77-8), whilst seasonal rituals order the *memoria* within: "Sir Thopas" begins with a typical spring opening (Th 760-5) and *Sirith* uses Christmas (*Sirith* 116) and the diurnal cycle ("boþe niȝt and dai") to emphasise the long period of Wilekin's unhappiness.[19] Again the ritual has been interrupted: in the earlier piece, on account of Wilekin's predicament, there is a familiar sense of stasis as he explains to Sirith, "For serewe mon Ich wakese wod / Oþer miselue quelle. / Ich heuede iþout miself to slo" (*Sirith* 182-4). In "Sir Thopas" a literal forest appears at the beginning and any space of confusion is immediately countered by the knight's words to Oliphaunt who creates the familiar paradigm of future expectation, secured through a remembered oath, time, and location:

> 'Tomorwe wol I meete with thee,
> Whan I have myn armoure;
> And yet I hope, *par ma fay*,
> That thou shalt with this launcegay
> Abeyn it ful sorwe.
>   Thy mawe
> Shal I percen, if I may,
> Er it be fully pryme of day,
> For heere thow shalt be slawe.'   (Th VII.817-26)

The future tenses dominate ("moote I," "wol I," "Whan I have," "thou shalt," "Shal I" and "thow shalt"), looking forward not only to a meeting but the contest itself and its outcome. This is undercut by the asides "And yet I hope, *par me fay*" and "if I may"; Chaucer is playing with the confidence of Thopas' words and, as a result, actually increases the exposure of romance's adherence to memory. Despite any doubts which we have seen romance raise in order to increase suspense and drama of

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[18] Cf. Th VII.894, 888-90.
[19] For a study of the structure of "Sir Thopas" see E. A. Jones, "'Loo, lords myne, here is a fit!': The Structure of Chaucer's *Sir Thopas*," *Review of English Studies* 51 (2000): 248-52.

memoria, ultimately Thopas will triumph – "thow shalt be slawe" – it is this, rather than the time or location, which we must remember. In examining the tale, John Finlayson notes that "it is the non-functional display of rituals which generates the parodic humour, not simply the rituals themselves" and in this we might see neither seasonal nor diurnal ritual, but a ritual of romance action with which the future corresponds too readily and perfectly.[20] In essence, making memory excessively exact and accurate compromises the creative possibilities for *memoria* and is one of the reasons why Chaucer's tale is so obviously parodic.

Although Dürmüller identifies an "absence of logic" in "Sir Thopas," paradoxically, the tale could be seen as suffering from an excess of cause and effect.[21] Thopas' dream is a prime example, the location and its engagement with *memoria* through fertile spaces for imaginative thought are closed and such creative possibilities blocked by the direct relation of past dream to present and future reality. Consequently, no sooner than the knight has dreamed that "An elf-queene shal my lemman be" (Th VII.788) then he, after a brief reaffirmation of his dream (Th VII.790-6), jumps into his saddle and rides into the land of Fairy "An elf-queene for t'espye" (Th VII.799). The dream is taken completely literally, memories of it remain defiantly unchanged in the narrative's reality but, ironically, the figure does not actually appear as Chaucer's criticised narrative is arrested by the other pilgrims. This is related to the importance of memory and Fortune which has also been highlighted in this study as a way in which romances can create a memory of events before they have occurred. This is neatly, if rather clumsily, depicted in *Sirith* as the lady welcomes Wilekin with "To goder-hele euer come þou hider" (*Sirith* 261). Of course, it is not really good fortune and we are reminded twice that he has been

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[20] John Finlayson, "Definitions of Middle English Romance," *Chaucer Review* 15 (1980): 44-62, at 47.
[21] Dürmüller 221.

advised to go to her by a friend ("A frend him radde forto fare" [*Sirith* 152], "Forþ þen radde a frend me go" [*Sirith* 185]). Romances' manipulation of memory in this way is then foregrounded in Sirith's plan as she visits Margery with a "sick" dog. Sirith advises what to do if any clerk asks for Margery's affection, learning from the example of her daughter who has apparently been changed into a dog on account of the fact that she refused a clerk's previous advances:

> 'Leue dame, if eni clerc
> Bedeþ þe þat loue-werc,
> Ich rede þat þou grante his bone
> And bicom his lefmon sone.'   (*Sirith* 373-6)

Of course, we know that another clerk will arrive – in fact it is he, Wilekin, who has initiated Sirith's journey to Margery. A seemingly chance encounter (between Margery and Sirith) is actually rooted in the memory of the past, as is the apparently hypothetical future scenario sketched by Sirith. Memory is inescapable in this tale and exploits the genre's messenger/epistolary *topos* as, upon returning to Wilekin, Sirith summons the clerk "'For of þin hernde Ich haue wel sped. / Swiþe com forþ þider wiþ me, / For hoe haueþ send after þe'" (*Sirith* 410-2). Margery has indeed sent after Wilekin (*Sirith* 400), yet everything has been engineered with nothing as chance occurrence and an audience appreciates Sirith's function as messenger between locations and time.

One final feature of *Sirith* that resonates with the discussions of memory in other, more conventional tales is that of disguise – namely the "sick" dog. Disguise has been crucial in depicting change over time and its effects upon memory, yet here there is no such change. This is not in fact Sirith's transformed daughter but a real dog and the animal's illness has been artificially produced purely to create an appearance of sadness, appropriate to the fictional metamorphosed girl. Conversely, rather than an assimilation of changed appearances over time (Gawain's girdle, the

various costumes of *Ipomadon*, or the competing prophecies of the "Knight's Tale"),
an audience should remember that no change has actually occurred – an assertion
deeply antithetical to *memoria* in the genre. The only change at all in this romance is
Margery's opinion of Wilekin engineered, ironically, through this "false" disguise.
In recounting the story of her daughter's false transformation, Sirith becomes the
treacherous manipulator of the past exemplified in *Emaré* and *Athelston*, but this is
presented *as* past advice in an attempt to guide Margery's future. A memory (the
transformation narrative) produces a future reaction (Margery's acceptance of
Wilekin), but this memory did not really exist – the only thing certain is that which
an audience has seen – the reality of a love-sick clerk, a nauseous dog, and a cunning
woman. Both of these tales employ aspects of the performance of memory that have
been discussed during the course of this study, albeit through more sophisticated and
less crude examples. *Dame Sirith* and "Sir Thopas," however, also demonstrate that
this performance of memory cannot be too easy in a romance and must involve some
creative manipulation of early events and images in the minds of characters and
audiences. This ensures that the tales retain a vibrancy and energy whilst also
making the developing identities of character, tale and audience all the more
memorable in the future. It is for this reason perhaps that the Host voices his
frustration at the time the pilgrims have wasted in listening to "Sir Thopas": "Thou
doost noght ells but despendest tyme" (Th VII.931) as, when aligned to the parody
of *memoria* also witnessed, the criticism highlights the possible limitations of
romance memory over the fruitful possibilities of creative *memoria*. Romances occur
over a period of time and a variety of landscapes and this creates an inherent
connection to human life with its memories of various episodes and characters which
are recollected at points along the journey. The universal ways in which we achieve

this, through the inherent human aptitude for memory, is what unites medieval and modern memory theory and can be performed and expected by a romance tale.

Aristotle explained that in order to remember we must first forget and romance exploits the possibilities inherent in the constructive, destructive, and reconstructive workings of the faculty along the genre's various journeys or "movements." Peter Brooks' famous phrase, the "anticipation of retrospection," is useful, positioning the reader in a place of familiarity and completion before the act of reading has been concluded.[22] Correspondingly, psychologists would recognise that "information from the past is useful only to the extent that it allows us to anticipate what may happen in the future," an analysis that could be applied to various points in this study such as familiar narratives, known characters, memorial objects, dreams, ritual, and Fortune.[23] A romance audience is always looking towards the conclusion of the tale when they can then survey its experiences, now secured within the memorial storehouse, and can be prepared to approach another narrative which in itself will anticipate the same process of retrospection. When writing an autobiography using photographs, films, and remembered events, the contemporary theorist Annette Kuhn recalled "I set out on my adventure under the guidance of earlier travellers along the way, but soon found myself turning off in new directions, onto unfamiliar pathways whose destinations lay beyond my sight."[24] By exploring such "unfamiliar pathways" romances share the similar routes of "earlier travellers" whilst, within that particular narrative, the unfamiliar is also tamed through similarities of experience which have been altered by time and

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[22] Peter Brooks, *Reading for the Plot: Design and Intention in Narrative* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1984) 23.

[23] Schacter and Addis 27. Interestingly, to consider the converse, the authors note that amnesia patients, who lack access to their past, are also unable to envisage events in their personal future.

[24] Annette Kuhn, "A Journey Through Memory," *Memory and Methodology*, ed. Susannah Radstone (Oxford: Berg, 2000) 179.

distance, both literal and conceptual. The romance traveller must recognise and learn to exploit the creative possibilities afforded by change over time, as is advocated within the tales themselves, whilst also appreciating and returning to a ritualistic and generic continuum, comparable to Brooks' "retrospection." Bynum defines metamorphosis and change as "a constantly new thing that is nonetheless the same," and this could be said of each romance narrative when compared to another.[25] We know that "[t]he medieval reader…enjoyed the same situations indefinitely repeated, but if he were at all sophisticated, he must have noted with delight ingenious variation in the treatment of stock motives."[26] "Resemblances and differences, not identities, lead to discussion" but one must *remember* to compare and contrast in this way, thereby generating the discourses which, in themselves, constitute an integral part of *memoria*.[27] Romances have often been read in terms of their aspirational or didactic qualities, but this study has argued for the memorial mechanisms behind these processes.

Again, however, a space has emerged between each experience of reading, whether in terms of different temporal occasions, played out between folia of manuscripts, across different manuscripts altogether, or emerging from Chaucer and Malory whose work self-consciously recollect the already remembered places of literary and legendary history. In Aristotelian fashion, we forget and then remember in the same way as the mature adult delights in a favourite place forgotten in recent times, the name and mischiefs of a childhood friend temporarily neglected, or perhaps even the literal discovery of a lost photograph. However, after the initial delight, it is the recollection into the present which produces the greatest enjoyment

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[25] Bynum 189.

[26] Irene Pettit McKeehan, "*Guillaume de Palerne*: A Medieval 'Best Seller'," *PMLA* 41 (1926): 785-809, at 807.

[27] McKeehan 808.

as we, creatively, re-image and re-imagine, possibly through manufacturing a few details such as the present condition of that place, the current whereabouts of this old friend, or a context of the photograph. We need this relevance in order to remember the past in the present, otherwise the process becomes distant, cold, and emotionally detached – certainly not a charge that can be levelled against medieval romance. In his collection of short stories from 1925, the novelist John Buchan, when defining romance, described "a little plot of a great province, the efforts of men to cover a certain space within a certain limited time under an urgent compulsion."[28] David Lodge's novel, *Small World*, attempts a similar definition of the genre: "It's full of adventure and coincidence and surprises and marvels, and has lots of characters who are lost or enchanted or wandering about looking for each other, or the Grail, or something like that."[29]

Discussing the understanding of phrases such as "a day's journey" in romances, Cooper notes that "[d]istance itself was hard to measure, and the conversion of space into time provided a functional and accessible approximation."[30] The romances convert time into distance in this way, but in a manner that such indiscriminate or immeasurable space can become definite places in memory – in essence, re-establishing an awareness of time itself. We might return to a romance that has embodied many of the aspects of *memoria* discussed in this study, *Sir Gawain*, as the Green Knight's words resonate with an audience's remembered experience of all romances: "'Iwysse þou art welcome, wyȝe, to my place, / And þou hatȝ tymed þi trauayl as true mon schulde, / And þou knoweȝ þe couenaunteȝ kest vus bytwene'" (*Gawain* 2240-2). Timing is key. We require an awareness of the

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[28] John Buchan, "Preface," *A Book of Escapes and Hurried Journeys*, The Teaching of English 14 (London: Nelson, 1925) v.
[29] David Lodge, *Small World* (London: Palgrave, 1985) 258. This is also quoted in McCarthy, *Introduction to Malory* 49.
[30] Cooper, *Romance in Time* 68.

space between past and present and it is this that allows for *memoria* to function correctly – the focus is very much on the journey whether literal or more creative, even metaphorical. Through this emerges the loyalty between audience and romance, analogous to the oath between Gawain and challenger which has ensured that they meet at this place and time. Romances, somewhere, hold all the clues or answers to face their episodes and learn from them. An audience knows this, and accepts the challenge to recollect past wisdom in order to clarify a present place, or as a way to remember forgotten paths, imagine different destinations, and prepare for similar journeys of the future.

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