

Naming and Namelessness
in English and French
Medieval Romance

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Abstract

This study aims to demonstrate that naming and namelessness are among the major themes of romance. Because the genre is notoriously difficult to define, many scholars consider romance as containing a critical number of themes: chivalry, love, questing, the marvellous, the progress of a hero(ine). Name is linked to many of these, and can be a main theme in its own right even in romances outside the *Matiere de Bretagne*. And name is closely entangled with supporting themes such as honour and *courtoisie*, disguise and incognito, secrecy and recognition.

Romance's relationship with contemporary naming-theory is also explored. As a new genre, it is free to play with naming as other genres, with their relatively stable naming-patterns, are not. A romance may contain a great many names or almost none; it may question names or, taking them as given, focus on their power. Because it is concerned more with *how* name means (that is, what the name can do for the story) than with *what* names mean, it is broadly nominalist. The familiar medieval etymologizing, commoner in other genres, is realist in that it claims to demonstrate the real essence or meaning in a person's name.

The thesis is divided into two main sections. The first analyzes a range of individual romances to show how the naming-theme is treated differently in each. The second begins with naming as a function of genre: most scholars have a good notion of what romance is, and the examples show that to read a text with an eye to its naming-patterns helps confirm one's notion of whether it is a romance or not. Finally a number of sub-themes and stylistic or rhetorical devices are discussed, all of which foreground naming and namelessness.

Because of its playful uses of name, romance offers no naming-theory of its own. It does, however, draw inspiration not only from learned but also from folklore sources, in which name-magic and namelessness are crucial. These factors conspire to make a concern with naming conventional, even in romances whose writers show no concern with philosophy.

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Preface

For convenience of citation, I use romance texts from anthologies (see Bibliography for full details) where possible, listed alphabetically in Table 1.

Citations of Chaucer will be from *Riverside* ed. Benson; of Chrétien, from *Œuvres* ed. Poirion et al.; of Malory, from *Works* ed. Vinaver; of Marie, from *Lais* ed. Ewert; of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, from ed. Burrow. Editions other than those listed above will be cited in footnotes.

Citations throughout will be by author/editor surname, and short title; full references provided in Bibliography.

Additional abbreviations used are listed in Table 2.

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Table 1: Principal anthologies cited: abbreviations and texts.

GR = [Gauvain] *Romances* ed. Johnston & Owen
MEMR = *Middle English Metrical Romances* ed. French & Hale
MEVR = *Middle English Verse Romances* ed. Sands
OLC = *Of Love and Chivalry* ed. Fellows
SMER = *Six Middle English Romances* ed. Mills
YPA = *Ywain, Percyvell, Anturs* ed. Mills

Sir Amadace (*SMER*)
Amis and Amiloun (*OLC*)
The Anturs of Arther (*YPA*)
The Avowing of Arthur (*MEMR*)
Le Chevalier à l'épée (*GR*)
Sir Cleges (*MEMR*)
Sir Degaré (*MEMR*)
Eger and Grime (*MEMR*)
Emaré (*SMER*)
The Erle of Tolous (*OLC*)
Floris and Blancheflour (*MEVR*)
Gamelyn (*MEVR*)
Sir Gawain and the Carl of Carlisle (*MEVR*)
Sir Gowther (*SMER*)
Havelok (*MEVR*)
Sir Isumbras (*SMER*)
King Edward and the Shepherd (*MEMR*)
King Horn (*MEVR*)
Sir Launfal (*MEVR*)
La Mule sans frein (*GR*)
Octavian (*SMER*)
Sir Orfeo (*MEVR*)
Sir Percyvell of Gales (*YPA*)
Robert of Sicily (*MEMR*)
The Sege of Melayne (*SMER*)
The Squire of Low Degree (*MEVR*)
The Tournament of Tottenham (*MEVR*)
Syr Tryamour (*OLC*)
Ywain and Gawain (*YPA*)

Titles in **bold** indicate romances treated as chapter-sections.

Table 2: Abbreviations (in addition to those listed above)

ANTS	= Anglo-Norman Text Society
BBIAS	= <i>Bibliographical Bulletin of the International Arthurian Society</i>
CA	= <i>Confessio Amantis</i>
CT	= <i>Canterbury Tales</i>
DMH	= Gerritsen & van Melle, eds., <i>A Dictionary of Medieval Heroes</i>
EETS	= Early English Text Society
IPN	= Index of Proper Names
MIP	= Medieval Institute Publications
ODS	= Farmer, <i>The Oxford Dictionary of Saints</i>
OED	= Oxford English Dictionary
SATF	= Société des Anciens Textes Français
SGGK	= <i>Sir Gawain and the Green Knight</i>

1. Introduction

This thesis aims to show that naming and namelessness are crucially important to medieval romance, and that an interest in naming — thematic or rhetorical — is one of the defining factors of the romance genre. It is a study of *how*, not *what*, names mean; therefore the thesis is not, or is only incidentally, about the etymological meaning of names. The chapters that follow are structured according to how that *how* can be analyzed. A study such as this requires a sizeable sample and, given the multi-directional traffic between medieval languages, a range of English, French, and Anglo-Norman texts: my chosen romances are spread across three and a half centuries (see Table 3 on p. 13). The analysis uses name-study as an interpretive (even evaluative) tool; it focuses on how naming contributes, differently in each text, to an understanding of the themes and genre of romance.

Naming and namelessness remain a site of considerable fascination in all sorts of literature today; the reasons for this may be sought among the beginnings of fiction in the vernacular: romances are full of it. The importance is widely recognized, even a commonplace, for example: ‘Given our current awareness of the significance of the name in medieval poetry ...’¹ Here Labbie cites no reason for our awareness; my thesis explores the significance (and the power) of name in romance, and suggests that writers were conscious of, if not learned in, theoretical issues. As Bruckner puts it, ‘romance participates in philosophical and theological debates on language and signs that occupy medieval clerical culture’.² I argue that such awareness becomes part of romance convention, so that even the least sophisticated narratives play consciously with naming. The study of names in fiction involves philosophies of language based on logic and on rhetoric; one is ‘caught somewhere between ... say, Otto Jespersen and Jacques Derrida’.³ Names in the rest of life are denotative; names in fiction are at least connotative (because chosen by the writer) if not descriptive. But romance tends to treat names as given, by their legendary source. Medieval writers’ views on fact versus fiction differ from modern ones, but generally history counts as fact, and so does

¹‘Specular Image’, p. 63.

²*Shaping Romance*, p. 221; she invites further research on romances, and on romance as genre (pp. 2–3). Percy, ‘Principles of Fabliau Structure’, suggests that what romance does for realism and nominalism, fabliau does for logic and its fallacies.

³‘Not a very enviable position, but one which is reminiscent of the 12th and 13th century mystics’. Markey (‘Crisis and Cognition’) implies that nominalism v realism exercised the ‘mystics’. See also Nicolaisen’s witty and forceful ‘What Crisis in Onomastics?’, in a later issue.

hagiography. Names such as Arthur and (St) Denis are given, not chosen; one may interrogate their meaning (retrospectively) or insert them into a narrative for the sort of effect to be explored in Chapter 5, but one does not alter (efface, replace) such names without radically altering the type, even the genre, of one's story. 'Mutato nomine de te Fabula narratur'.⁴

To introduce the main issues informing and emerging from my research, I shall first examine *why* romance should be so interested in name. There are several contributing factors, many to do with the themes of romance (outlined below), of which the most important is broadly philosophical: romance reflects or refracts the debate between realism and nominalism, a major issue in the Middle Ages. '[T]he naming plots of fiction take as their broadest setting the philosophical inquiry into names.'⁵ The rise of nominalism is manifested in broad cultural changes across Europe, across centuries: in family structure, literature, economic theory, and in the function of signifiers.⁶ In theology, topics ranged from the true nature of the Eucharist to whether humanity is subject to destiny (divine or otherwise) or has free will.⁷ Colish sets out the arenas of the trivium and traces developments in medieval language theory; she discerns the beginning of the realism-nominalism controversy as early as the eleventh century.⁸ It is likely that these broad philosophical trends affected the way writers and audiences read naming practice in romance, although it is also possible that changes in naming practice, in the rest of life, had some reflex in fiction. However, those changes took place over a very long period, at differing speeds in different parts of Europe.⁹ Changes of this latter kind are not apparent to the people living through them, but to the historian long afterwards; scholars do not on the whole (Bloch is perhaps an exception) attempt to link literary theme and style with *consciousness* of such slow-moving trends.

⁴Horace, *Satires*, 1. i. 69. Maurer warns that one cannot distinguish ultimately between borrowed and invented names ('Another View of Literary Onomastics').

⁵Ragussis, *Acts of Naming*, p. 7. Though he mentions nothing between Plato and the eighteenth century, several of his introductory remarks could be lifted bodily into my text by writing Middle Ages for Enlightenment, romance for novel as new genre, and so on (pp. 4-7). Perhaps he is right, that philosophy cannot cope with proper names, and it is thus fiction's job to do so — a study of medieval fiction in this regard is clearly overdue!

⁶Bloch, *Etymologies and Genealogies*.

⁷See Mertens-Fonck, 'Le Nominalisme de Geoffrey Chaucer', p. 316; Wasserman, 'Both Fixed and Free', pp. 202-3; also Levi, *Renaissance and Reformation* (pp. 32-5, 56-61), for the controversy as it relates to salvation.

⁸*The Mirror of Language*, p. 99. See also Pézard, *Dante sous la pluie du feu*, app. V, for uses of 'Nomina sunt consequentia rerum'.

⁹A selection from the many relevant studies gives an idea of the range of fields and approaches: Bartlett, *The Making of Europe*, esp. pp. 270-80; Clark, *Words, Names and History*, esp. ch. 9, on Middle English Personal-Naming; Lieberman, *A Matter of Taste*, esp. the final chapter; Newman, *The Anglo-Norman Nobility*, esp. on the family; Postles, 'Noms de personnes en langue française'; Skinner, 'And Her Name Was ...?' (more general than its title suggests); Wilson, *The Means of Naming*, pt. II, on the Middle Ages; Yonge, *History of Christian Names*. Finally, Beech et al., eds., *Personal Names Studies*, offers a variety of essays and a wealth of references.

The realism-nominalism controversy as it relates to names is famously set out in Plato's *Cratylus*. I keep the terms realism and nominalism, in spite of their complex technical meanings, because they are conventionally used by scholars not only of medieval philosophy but also of literature. Broadly, the realist¹⁰ view wants the name to be the thing — its real essence (the name is basically descriptive and translucent, if not transparent). Hence the hunt for meaning in name: etymology promises that understanding of name's true meaning leads to understanding of what its bearer is; name (word, language) signifies by nature. The nominalist view divorces the name from the thing; even Isidore of Seville grants that some names are imposed by convention, in order to identify or differentiate, and not by nature.¹¹ Names are thus empty, or opaque, and signify nothing unless attached by convention to their object.¹² The positions of Plato's two speakers correspond to the above broadly as follows: Cratylus wants names to be meaningful in themselves and by nature (the realist), and Hermogenes wants them to signify by convention (the nominalist).¹³ I shall use the terms cratylic and hermogenean, for descriptive (realist) and conventional (nominalist) names respectively. But there was even then a middle ground, as Leonard reminds us.¹⁴ In a sense, medieval etymologizing contains the seeds of its own confusion, instead of leading to a fixed truth: many explications of saints' names, which preface legends, offer not one truth but multiple possibilities (the story then shows, perhaps, that the saint is any or all of these virtues). The Prologue to Chaucer's 'Second Nun's Tale', the story of Cecilia, gives a mass of varying options with no one emerging

¹⁰Sometimes called essentialist, but see Moody, *Truth and Consequence in Mediaeval Logic*, p. 5. Critics use a variety of paired terms, realism v nominalism being on balance the commonest (see eg. Huizinga, *The Waning of the Middle Ages*, pp. 196–7; Bezzola, *Le sens de l'Aventure*, pp. 4–5). Ragussis, who discerns traces of name-magic all over fiction, equates Cratylus with magic and Hermogenes with science (*Acts of Naming*, pp. 215–6).

¹¹See eg. Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, pp. 43–4.

¹²Peirce calls the realist sign 'iconic', and the arbitrary or nominalist sign 'symbolic' (Hawkes, *Structuralism & Semiotics*, pp. 128–9). I avoid the word "arbitrary" in this context, because it can suggest *either* judicious (as pronounced by an arbiter) *or* lacking consensus — a dangerously random use of names/nouns/words. (See, further, Benveniste, *Problèmes de linguistique générale*, vol. I, ch. IV). Medieval literature, however, plays with words and their meanings in a provocative and arbitrary manner; Caveat Lector — who must get what s/he can from multiple possibilities (see eg. Reiss, 'Ambiguous Signs and Authorial Deceptions'). Gervase of Melkley remarks that instability of meaning, so disturbing to the philosopher, is a subject of rejoicing — and exploitation — for the poet (cited in Nims, 'Translatio', p. 216).

¹³My use of Plato, to simplify these polarities as they relate to proper names, is supported by Zabeeh (*What is in a Name?*, pp. 72–3), who maps an area where linguists and logicians overlap. Barton, *The Names of Comedy* (Introduction), aligns Hermogenes broadly with nominalism, and Cratylus with essentialism. Schibanoff links 'naturalist' and 'conventionalist' with Plato's Dialogue, and interprets Chaucer's characters by means of their names — including Criseyde as having *no* denotation ('Argus and Argyve', esp. pp. 652–3). Curtius connects realism, or etymological thinking, with the Cratylic (Excursus XIV, in *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*).

¹⁴*Naming in Paradise*, pp. 3–5: 'that to argue for any natural correspondence between a word and its referent is to argue for a complete correspondence ... [is a] false line of reasoning'; see also Barton, *The Names of Comedy*, pp. 7–10.

as dominant.¹⁵ Chaucer says ‘Now have I yow declared what she highte’ with no hint of irony; this passage, based on Jacobus, can stand as representative of such prefaces, for a large proportion of those found in *The Golden Legend* have just this multiplicity. But hagiography (whose main themes do not include naming) does not provide so fruitful a space as romance does, for disputes about language.¹⁶ Given the importance of etymology as a category of thought, as Curtius famously states, it is surprising there is not more of it in the romances. James-Raoul, in her study ‘Le nom et l’être’, rightly notices the importance of etymology, and the importance of naming in romance. But she points to the speaking names Le Fresne and Soredamors, both untypical of their authors’ work. She goes on to discuss significantly hidden or delayed names, having blithely sailed past the fact that Guinglains, Enide, Lancelot, Perceval, are *not* explicated.¹⁷

Romance is broadly nominalist, or hermogenean, because emphasis is on the performative function of name: what it can do to characters in the story, and what effect it can have on an audience. It is not necessary to know what, for example, ‘Ydoine’ means to understand its power. Gawain seeks his lost name, not its meaning; though ‘Gawain’ means that this knight is famous for being Gawain. In this sense only is romance “realist”: where the name of the knight *is* the knight (Lancelot, Tristram, *without* etymology).¹⁸ It is arguably important that the Green Knight must be green, though the story could work if he were blue or silver, but I do not believe that ‘Bertilak’ *needs* to mean anything;¹⁹ he could be called something else, so long as his name is *released* at the significant moment. Florimont (Flower of the World?) could, conceivably, be called Amadas or Generydes — until his name becomes known intertextually, of course. Names not given by history are treated as though they were (real-life names), according to the medieval convention that writers follow “the book”. In this sense, the romance is profoundly different from the novel, whose characters together with their names are by convention created. History does not, on the whole, attempt to explain personal names; place-names are explained as deriving from personal names (Britain, Cornwall, Grimsby) and not the other way about. Although personal names from places are common in history, one does not generally find

¹⁵CT: VIII, G, 85–119. The explanatory note (p. 944) remarks ‘These etymologies are all wrong’. But it hardly matters — see esp. Collette, ‘Cecile’s Special Vision’; although she does not use the term, hers is a realist (and sympathetic) reading. Many critics are strangely obsessed with establishing “correct” etymologies; see Robinson’s useful article ‘Appropriate Naming’.

¹⁶We would expect to find concern about names scattered among other genres, nevertheless. See eg. Cobby, ‘Jeux d’onomastique’, for a study of fabliaux (and ‘Le Roi d’Angleterre et le Jongleur d’Ely’); Rossi, ‘*Carestia, Tristan*, les troubadours’; articles cited in this chapter on Chaucer’s interest in naming.

¹⁷*La parole empêchée*, pp. 123–43. Ribard, ‘se fondant sur ces précédents médiévaux’, proposes some “missing” meanings: ‘*Lance*-lot ... *Perce*-val ... héros en mouvement’ (‘Le symbolisme du nom’).

¹⁸It is hard to imagine Cecilia musing on her name, as Soredamors does — the etymology is outside the story. Lancelot, however, knows quite well what his name “means” — in terms of fame, that is. This looks more like a second-order signifier, in Barthesian terms: the aptly-named Knight’s Move (see Hawkes, *Structuralism & Semiotics*, pp. 130–4).

¹⁹See, however, Carson, ‘The Green Knight’s Name’; and Brewer, ‘The Colour Green’.

“the King visited his friend Roger, called Roger of Oxford because that’s where he was from” in chronicles. Romance does interrogate pseudonyms, though not all are questioned or mocked, and there is no stylized ritual for it; compare the Introduction-Ritual, which aims to elicit name and not name’s meaning. With few exceptions it is rather pseudonyms or nicknames than true names that arouse comment. Perhaps such interrogation seeks the reality behind the mask: for example, whether Bewmaynes’ fine large hands are apt for stealing in the kitchen, a sign of laziness, or a symptom of his largesse. More likely it is a kind of play, which shows that that is not the way to find reality: the name Gareth has nothing to do with hands. Pseudonyms may be *false* — descriptive names that do *not* signal truth — and so downright misleading, like the Queen’s Drew (because Ipomadon is not her lover). Furthermore, pseudonyms (usually descriptive) tend to drop away; many disappear completely, or remain only in the title. Descriptive true names such as Degaré, meaning “lost”, become opaque as the hero becomes “found”; the pseudonym (Libeus Desconus) of Gawain’s son becomes his true name (Sir Libeus, or “Sir Thefair”): its descriptive force is blotted out, as if Captain Nemo had retired into private life as Mr Nicholas E. Mo. In this sense romance interrogates the meaning of Name by picking up name-meanings and playing with them, only to discard or transform them, and use them for special effects or for identification. “Speaking” names become “calling” names.²⁰

The nominalism-realism issue, at least as regards names (and no doubt other aspects), was so much part of the cultural ambience of the Middle Ages that no direct link between schoolmen and storytellers need be sought. That there are links, however, seems overwhelmingly likely. There is evidence that romance-writers were familiar with philosophical issues of their day; scholars such as Wetherbee and Faral explore the links between, to put it broadly, learned and lay writers.²¹ Though writers able to read Latin are more likely to be familiar with philosophy, written in Latin, than those relying on vernacular material, it must be noted that the latter is concerned with other aspects of name: the power of anonymity, *geis* or name-taboo, name-magic.²² Romance is a combination, or collision, of learned material (courtly, biblical, classical) with folklore. If that traditional material was *already* interested in name, its development as romance was bound to attract to itself the name-questions of philosophy.

Chrétien and other writers were familiar with the twelfth-century Latin Comedies; several satirize, and popularize, scholarly debates: the *Geta* is an interesting example.²³ This is a reworking of Plautus’ *Amphitryo*, and it is clear from a reading even in translation, even from the title alone, that Vitalis alters the story so as to focus on the *sosie*. His name is changed to Geta, and the dialogue in which he

²⁰See p. 71 below.

²¹*Platonism and Poetry; Sources Latines* (Faral’s point is that romance’s roots are to be found rather in Latin literature than in Celtic).

²²See Brown, ‘Odysseus and Polyphemus’ for a striking early example.

²³Vital de Blois; in *La «Comédie» Latine au XII^e Siècle*, ed. Cohen, vol. I. Hunt calls for further study of the relationship between Latin and vernacular culture in the early part of the period I am concerned with (‘Chrestien and the *Comediae*’).

laments the loss of his name to his double, together with its comic but frightening implications, is much extended by comparison with the model. Plautus' works often contain doubles, lookalikes, and so on, which play with identity as distinct from naming. They are mirror-games, powering the comic plot, and neither express nor arouse anxiety about name/absence of name. But *Geta's* Argument, preceding even the Prologue, flags the issue:

Archadis ille [sc. Geta] dolis se putat esse nichil.
Se dolet esse nichil et ab Archade lusus abibat (6–7).

Elliott confirms that Vitalis was 'satirizing the growing craze for philosophical studies' and the question of universals, or what names designate, in particular.²⁴ Furthermore, the work was immensely popular, with many surviving manuscripts. It may have influenced more writers than Chrétien (who in turn influenced others); more particularly, it is a substantial example of an issue being fetched out of the schools and tossed playfully into a wider arena. Another, *Pamphilus*, also deals with prominent issues of the day, and was enormously popular and influential. Of course, the fact that Chrétien knew *Geta* is less significant than the fact that he (and other writers) knew what *Geta* was about.

Vitalis' *Aulularia*,²⁵ though less popular, also alters its model in accordance with contemporary concerns. The most striking feature of this purported adaptation from Plautus is the long opening speech of the miser. In spite of its name and elaborate prologue, it is actually based on the anonymous fourth- or fifth-century *Querolus*,²⁶ and Vitalis retains and exploits the speaking name of the eponymous protagonist, who names himself by his grumbling while at the same time blaming those who named him Querolus ('Ergo necessario Querolus miser', 29–130). A glance at the opening scenes of the "model" shows a major change: *Querolus* begins with the Lar's Introduction, and Scene 2 is a dialogue in which Querolus grumbles, but not about his name. Vitalis' modifications also include displays of ill-digested scholastic erudition, on Platonic doctrine and so on. The discourse incidentally bears upon another aspect of the nominalist-realist issue, that of fate: you cannot change things simply by changing their names. The discourse of Querolus is realist, and the comic anxiety of Geta — that the thing will vanish if its name is lost or stolen — burlesques the nominalist.

Themes and figures in the Comedies are found elsewhere in medieval literature, notably in fabliaux and in Seven Sages collections. The portrait of Alda is very like that of a romance heroine, *Lidia* pre-echoes Chaucer's 'Merchant's Tale'; there is at least one fifteenth-century reworking of *Geta*.²⁷ The complex

²⁴ *Geta* tr. Elliott, pp. xxxiii–vii.

²⁵ In Cohen, vol. I. Whatever Plautus wanted Euclio, in his *Aulularia*, to mean, he gave him no lengthy complaint about his name (in *The Pot of Gold and Other Plays*).

²⁶ ed. & tr. Jaquemard-Le Saos.

²⁷ See Introduction to text, in Cohen. Furthermore, Gower may have known (and reshaped) Vitalis' version — because, as the editor says, the name 'is quite unknown in the classical form of it' (*CA* II:2459–95, and note).

intertextual web of literature constantly recreates figures: human, rhetorical, philosophical — and semiotic figures such as name-puzzles.

The handbooks on how to write poetry provide no model to match in any sense the protean naming-practices of romance. Geoffrey of Vinsauf's phrase, that a word has both a mind and a face (that its full meaning can be gathered only from its context), tantalizes, being applicable also to a name.²⁸ This section of the *Poetria Nova* is about ornament and metaphor; because romance is narrative and biographical, rhetoric for ornament and persuasion is less important than are characters and action. Thus in romance the way names behave comes to the fore. Broadly, the theorists treat names as part of the formula for description. Kelly cites only Matthew of Vendôme in his discussion 'Function and Name of the Achiever'.²⁹ Matthew prescribes Name as a sort of aide-memoire: a special name standing for a class (Judas for traitors would be an example) and also that Name, the first of the Personal Attributes, may be interpreted to indicate qualities of the person (for example, Maximus as Great).³⁰ Kelly discusses the attributes chosen for *descriptio* as identifying types within a given class, or species within genera,³¹ and equates the auctorial search for expression in words with the Isidorean search for meaning by etymology.³² But nothing in all this prepares us for a hero's loss of name (through accident or despair), for delayed naming of characters (for mystery and suspense), nor for a character's quest for name as a poem's main theme, nor indeed for romance's interrogation of *how* names mean.³³ It is notable, nevertheless, that Matthew's sample description cited by Kelly fails to name Helen at all: 'Tindaridis', 'rapina Priamide' ... the description succeeds in being more powerful thus, whatever Matthew's reasons.³⁴ I doubt it would be possible to interrogate writers, at all meaningfully, about their position on the issue. Chrétien says "by his (nick)name you will know the man", as though the name were the man's real essence, and yet Chrétien offers no sort of Isidorean explanation of the name Perceval, for example.³⁵

The question of proper names has been disputed from Socrates to Searle³⁶ and beyond; in fiction the dispute reappears as play, among those writers who like wondering about such things. Romance enjoys the middle ground; its obses-

²⁸Cited in Nims, 'Translatio'; she also stresses the concept of word as power ... and magic (pp. 216-7).

²⁹*The Art of Medieval French Romance*, pp. 191-200.

³⁰*Ars Versificatoria* tr. Parr, p. 40 (60-2); p. 44 (77-8).

³¹For the introduction of concepts of substance and accident, genera and species, into the language debates, see eg. Colish, *The Mirror of Language*, pp. 98-101.

³²*The Art of Medieval French Romance*, pp. 56-7.

³³*Ibid.* pp. 7-9, that the medieval treatises on the arts of poetry have 'been deemed of dubious value for the interpretation of medieval ... romance' (though their authors did also write in other genres).

³⁴ed. Munari, vol. 3, pp. 82-6 (I:56-7).

³⁵The expression was proverbial (see Ménard, *Le Rire et le Sourire*, p. 506), which suggests that medieval thinking was broadly realist, and that Chrétien was subverting it.

³⁶*Speech Acts*, pp. 162-74. Many thinkers insist upon the importance of function: the use to which a writer or speaker puts a name (Barton, *The Names of Comedy*, p. 13; Zabeeh, *What is in a Name?*, pp. 64-5).

sion with naming and namelessness is a refraction of a medieval debate whose beginnings have been detected as early as the beginnings of medieval romance.³⁷ Bruckner's thesis, that romance participates in the debates, implies that influence is not all one way — nor even directly traceable: participation is a two-or-more-way thing.³⁸ It is not necessary to assume that all writers and audiences were familiar with all the debates.³⁹ In our age people at various levels of education fruitfully, if often inaccurately, use and discuss ideas loosely called Freudian, for instance, and many of them will not have read any Freud at all. Romance, an emerging genre, is free to play with the issue as other established genres with comparatively fixed naming-patterns are not. Etymology, of place-names in history and of saints' names in hagiography, remains of crucial importance. But romance throws open questions about, for example, name for identifying, and the difference between fame and identity: "who are you and what is your name?" asks about names that are filled with meaning by the bearer and by the story, not by the etymologist. Getting or finding a name is often simply because the knight wants to become famous; when the romance becomes famous then the name encodes a story, not a person. I stress the importance of identification (who one is *not*, as well as who one is) in order to isolate one of a cluster of ideas tied up in the notion of "identity". Romance does not ask "who am I?", "do I exist?", but "what does it mean to have (or lack) a name?" Being by and large biographical, it is bound to be concerned with identity and the individual, as Hanning has famously shown; his conclusion argues that the chivalric vision after the twelfth century abandons its faith in the primacy and autonomy of individual experience, but his interest in naming, as distinct from "the individual", is always apparent in his writings on medieval romance.⁴⁰ Wolfzettel discusses changes in the view of history that allowed romance to develop, and suggests that the enigma of origin is symbolized by the missing Name.⁴¹ Romance's interest in naming, too, is not

³⁷ According to Waddell, the ubiquitous and mysterious Archpoet was not only familiar with the arguments, he also knew the answers (*The Wandering Scholars*, pp. 177–8). The issue is thrown open later, as it were, by the mass of scholarship relating to whether Chaucer was a nominalist (see several articles in eg. Wasserman & Roney, eds., *Sign, Sentence, Discourse*, together with the references they provide). If it is meaningful to ask about Chaucer's position on this issue, it is certainly meaningful to ask about the position of other and earlier writers. De Looze, for example, links sign theory in the *Queste* with contemporary questions of epistemology ('The *Queste* as Metaliterature').

³⁸ *Shaping Romance*, p. 221. Vance prefers not to attempt a 'genealogy of influences' ('Marvelous Signals', p. 294).

³⁹ See Hunt, 'Abelardian Ethics and Bérout's *Tristan*': 'Bérout wrote ... when Abelardian ideas were being much discussed' (p. 537. He does not mean to imply that Bérout had studied Abelard). What goes for sin-theory goes equally for sign-theory: Hunt says 'It is natural that the elements of questioning ... encountered in the study of logic should be exploited by courtly writers who wished to subject certain ideas and values to critical examination' ('Aristotle, Dialectic, and Courtly Literature', p. 106).

⁴⁰ *The Individual in Twelfth-Century Romance*. Also see eg. Daniel, *Heroes and Saracens*, who talks of the medieval age of anonymity for writers but of individuality among fictional characters (p. 267).

⁴¹ 'Temps et histoire'.

confined to a single century or a single theme.⁴² If that initial boost faded in the thirteenth century, it had still been powerful enough to launch an unstoppable new genre.

Many of the “devices” to be discussed in this study could be analyzed according to the other genres where they occur and whence they may have found their way into romance. Anonymity is commonly found in folktale, for instance, and disguise in historical narrative; both are exploited enthusiastically by romance-writers in various ways. Many comment powerfully on how signs signify: disguise, doubles, name-change, anonymity. The concept of the free-floating sign, and its dangers, recurs in the editorial paratext of *Sign, Sentence, Discourse*:⁴³ the free-floating signified may be a logical impossibility, but some anonymous figures in romance come about as close as you can get (before Beckett’s *Innomable*), and are none the less dangerous. The practice of chivalry is richly illustrated by significant objects such as swords, horses, and the decorated shields that serve as naming-device or name-concealment;⁴⁴ the introduction-ritual is a stylized discourse of power, prowess, and recognition. The marvellous elements in romance, often a legacy of the folktale whence some stories derive, can involve magical objects whose significance must be sought and recognized; name-magic overshadows the question of name-meaning because a Name has power in itself even if (especially if) it is a meaningless cipher. If the name has power irrespective of its meaning, then one may — indeed must — abandon the search for elusive meaning.

Most of the great themes of romance — chivalry, worldly prowess, personal (as distinct from epic) status, quest,⁴⁵ the marvellous, the family — contain within them a cluster of notions relating to name in all its aspects: fame and shame, renown, recognition or incognito, identity or identification, the progress of an individual,⁴⁶ name-magic. Ménard argues that romance enjoys playing name-games, partly because of its comic mode. Incognito and disguise serve, among other things, ‘pour faire durer une *queste*, pour retarder le dénouement’. He also traces the obsession with (hiding) name to Celtic sources, though it is usually rationalized.⁴⁷ Medieval romance writes *around* name-magic — which is left as a space, or shadow, in the midst. It is hardly surprising, in a field so well-furnished,

⁴²The interest may be detected even at scribal level: copyists “improved” what was in front of them by suppressing or adding a name, or otherwise manipulating what they considered to be effects suitable for romance (see Kennedy, ‘The Scribe as Editor’; and Bliss, ‘The Hero’s Name in *Lanval*’, conclusion). Hence the differences among mss — and my justification for preferring one reading over others. Examples (name or *nickname* in the *Conte du Graal*, Amoraunt/Oweynes, Horn’s reappearing name, Hoel/Arthur in Marie, Laudine) will be discussed below.

⁴³Wasserman & Roney, eds., pp. 141, 227, etc.

⁴⁴See Yamamoto’s chapter on the Heraldic Image (in *The Boundaries of the Human*), illustrating contemporary awareness of the unstable relationship between signifier and signified. Saintsbury, however, connects the phrase “speaking names” with the technical ‘armes parlantes’ of heraldry (‘Names in Fiction’; for ‘canting arms’, etc., see Keen, *Chivalry*, Ch. VII).

⁴⁵See eg. Kennedy, ‘The Quest for Identity’.

⁴⁶I avoid the comparatively modern notion of character-development, though some protagonists undoubtedly learn from their experience.

⁴⁷*Le Rire et le Sourire*, esp. pp. 338, 340–2.

that writers (and characters) celebrate naming, question naming, and use naming for special narrative effects in so many ways. Romance as a primarily vernacular genre may also show itself to be concerned with language in a wider sense, as in other genres: language-play, puns, paradox, multiple-meaning, and the avoidance of closure are all over medieval literature. St Paul did not say that all that is written is true, but that all that is written is written for our doctrine. We must get what we can from it; even the famous advice to take the fruit and leave the chaff may be read *à l'envers*: take the entertainment, and leave the moral for those who want it, for example — though the actual moral may be quite different from the pretended moral. Romance does not claim to solve the realism-nominalism debate by adumbrating some Theory of Proper Names, but raises questions by marking names (and their absence), and by playing with them.

* * * * *

The problem of defining romance is outlined in many books, articles, and anthologies; ⁴⁸ this modern *occupatio*, which insists on the difficulty and then goes on (of necessity) to provide a working definition, has become a critical sub-genre and I have no intention of ducking it. Although I admire Mehl's genial common-sense approach, the 'family-resemblance' model best fits the focus of my research: some scholars discuss romance as containing a critical number of themes.⁴⁹ These include love, adventure, quest, chivalry, 'courtoisie', honour, magic, resurrection, identity (identification/identifying), a notion of development and/or biographic narrative, and — I argue — an interest in naming. If enough of them overlap (as also in a Venn diagram or a colour such as green) then the text is a romance, should a definition be needed.⁵⁰ The model allows one to go outside the 'family' and look at traits that might appear within it. If A, B, C, and D are four of the themes listed above, then no one of them is essential — any three would do, and any one (or two) could appear outside the family without marking membership of it. Thus one can discuss texts where naming, say, is important without being forced to classify them as romances — though they might turn out

⁴⁸Some of those not cited below are: Barron, *English Medieval Romance*, pp. 53–62; Beer, *The Romance*, chs. 1 & 2; Everett, *Essays on Middle English Literature*, pp. 1–22; *Of Love and Chivalry* ed. Fellows, p. vii; Field, 'Romance in England, 1066–1400', pp. 152–3; Finlayson, 'Definitions of Middle English Romance'; *Middle English Metrical Romances* ed. French & Hale, passim; Krueger, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Romance*, pp. 1–2; Mehl, *Middle English Romances*, p. vii, p. 252. Burrow (*Medieval Writers*, Ch. 3) and Gaunt ('Romance and other genres') discuss medieval genres and their permeability. As for Middle English generic vocabulary, most scholars have abandoned it, disheartened by its variety of overlapping terms, for a system that accommodates modern perceptions of genre (Strohm, 'Storie, Spelle, Geste, Romaunce, Tragedie', p. 348).

⁴⁹Cooper, *Romance in Time*, (Introduction); Kay, *The Chansons de Geste in the Age of Romance*, (p. 9); Putter & Gilbert, eds., *The Spirit of Medieval English Popular Romance*, (pp. 1–2), use Wittgenstein's model.

⁵⁰Romance tends to challenge our preconceived ideas of what it should and should not contain (Weiss et al., eds., *Insular Romance*, Introduction). See Crane, *Gender and Romance*, pp. 7–10, for genre as tool and not category.

to be borderline. It allows one to talk about the genre without closing down a definition, and (as with the perception of colour) it allows for differing personal perceptions.

The critical history of romance has been dominated by approaches such as the psychoanalytic, the folk-tale, and the new historicist.⁵¹ Though these often provide helpful insights, my focus will be on the dynamics of narrative, and the text-based approach which has the advantage of demonstrating what is unique about each romance in spite of thematic similarities.⁵² Because I wish to argue that name(lessness) is a defining theme of romance, I shall favour a synchronic approach, referring outwards to other medieval genres as well as to analogues and variants of my chosen texts where space allows. A diachronic view of romance would of necessity focus on evolution, literary and non-literary influences, and the historical background to medieval culture; this would persistently lead away from the main thrust of my research, which is about how name(lessness) is used in romances. I have found far less evidence of *development* in naming techniques than I have of their proliferation across the genre. The forms of romance may have changed — they continue to do so — but its themes have not. Disguise, anonymity, dramatic effects, recognition, magic — these are handled differently from one writer to another but not, as far as I can discover, from one century (nor one language) to another.

However, each of the texts examined in Chapters 2-4 will be introduced with a brief indication of date and context,⁵³ with the caveat that we know very little about medieval reception and transmission. Most reception was aural because few people read silently; I shall assume a listening audience throughout my thesis. It seems probable that most transmission was literary, but it is very likely that writers (and readers) supplemented their stories with what they had heard — or, of course, that they had invented. Much was never written down; much more is lost, as we know from references in mss that have survived. Editors are in general very reluctant to suggest what sort of audience any text might have had (the writers' own comments may be ambiguous or downright misleading); the number of surviving mss is a crude indication of popularity in only one sense of the word. Editors of a previous generation were all too ready to label a romance as popular if it was in Middle English and therefore accessible (French romances were equally accessible to French audiences); modern editors are more cautious. A translation may be shortened and tightened up by comparison with its "original"; it may have a different focus, and may often be better described as a different kind of poetry. An example of varying attitudes to just one romance is a comparison of Sands' (1966) introduction to *King Horn* with that of Fellows (1993).⁵⁴ I shall,

⁵¹Eg. Wilson, *The Magical Quest*, Paton, *Studies in the Fairy Mythology of Arthurian Romance*, and Crane, *Insular Romance*, respectively.

⁵²See, for example, my response to Jameson's Marxist characterization of romance (p. 15, n. 4, below); also to the rather totalizing views of eg. Loomis (p. 155, below).

⁵³These will be taken either from the edition used or from Hasenohr & Zink, eds., *Dictionnaire des lettres françaises*.

⁵⁴MEVR: 'the earliest English romance ... other distinctions, especially technical and es-

however, signal sub-generic differences; it will be apparent that romances group themselves broadly into types: Arthurian, pious, pseudo-historical, folktale-like, and so forth. Naturally they overlap, but the distinctions are important because they affect — and are affected by — naming-patterns in the narrative.

The structure of my thesis is designed to show how name(lessness) is crucial to romance. I shall begin with detailed analysis of a number of texts: these extended readings examine name-as-theme right across the genre; they demonstrate that naming-analysis is a valuable interpretive tool and they isolate a number of sub-themes, and writerly “devices” or tricks, which support the main themes of romance. That naming (and the lack of it, and the deliberate manipulation of it) is one of the main, defining, themes will then be tested by analysis of several mixed or borderline texts. Finally, the supporting sub-themes, or devices, will be explored so as to show how they are used, how texts relate to one another, and how romance interacts with its wider cultural environment.

In Part I, ‘Naming as Topic or Theme’, my first chapters analyze naming-patterns in a number of romances, to demonstrate primarily how name-as-theme is developed and how naming-patterns support related themes such as honour, quest, love, and the marvellous. Chapter 2, ‘The Fair Unknown’, explores the actual or virtual namelessness of protagonists, and their unknown quality: often it is others, not the protagonist, in search of name, and the meaning is less important than the finding. Chapter 3, ‘The Power of Name’, investigates a known quality: romances where the name is usually given, unproblematic. Its meaning is of even less importance, but its power is demonstrated as being magical, even miraculous. Many of these romances likewise explore how (not what) names mean; broadly, romance comes down on the side of nominalism — perhaps because the best magic is performed by names whose meanings are irrelevant, even incomprehensible.

In Part II, ‘Naming as Strategy or Tactic’, two chapters analyze the way naming or namelessness works both in and across texts. I argue that naming is one of the themes that help define the notoriously slippery genre of romance, and in Chapter 4, ‘Naming Within and Across Genre’, I examine a number of texts which, by their naming-patterns, demonstrate or contribute to an awareness of genre. Chapter 5, ‘Naming Patterns and Tendencies’, moves away from analysis of individual texts and focuses on a number of devices: sub-themes or ways of writing which relate romances to one another as well as to life, the universe, and everything.

thetic, are hard to come by’ (p. 15); *OLC*: ‘the earliest, and arguably one of the finest ... (p. viii). It is notable that the former takes for granted a ‘rough and naïve’ audience; the latter makes no such assumptions but focuses on the poem’s quality.

Table 3: Principal texts and authors in approximate chronological order.

1130	Geoffrey's <i>Historia</i> Vitalis' <i>Geta</i> Gaimar's <i>Estoire</i>
1150	<i>Romance of Horn</i> Marie de France Crétien de Troyes <i>Amadas et Ydoine</i> <i>Florimont</i>
1200	Robert de Boron <i>King Horn</i> Vulgate Cycle Post-Vulgate Cycle <i>La Manekine</i> <i>L'Atre Périlleux</i>
1250	<i>Silence</i> <i>Amis et Amiloun</i>
1300	<i>Sir Degaré</i> <i>Sir Percyvell</i> <i>Lybeaus Desconus</i>
1350	<i>Sir Gawain and the Green Knight</i> Chaucer's <i>Canterbury Tales</i> <i>Ipomadon</i> <i>Emaré</i>
1400	Gower's <i>Confessio Amantis</i>
1450	<i>Jehan de Saintré</i> Malory's <i>Morte Darthur</i>
1500	<i>The Squire of Low Degree</i>

Part I

Naming as Topic or Theme

2. The Fair Unknown

*Lybeaus Desconus*¹

Many romances are about name, naming, or namelessness. The heading of this chapter refers to the group of stories known collectively as “The Fair Unknown” (*Lybeaus Desconus* and its analogues) and to other groups, or single romances, which also share an interest in naming.² I shall focus on just one aspect of the protagonist: his/her unknown quality. The English phrase, Fair Unknown, is useful because ungendered: La Manekine and Silence are as “unknown” as Gareth, Ipomadon, or Perceval. All hero(in)es are fair, almost by definition; each “unknown” hero(ine) is unknown in a different way. My choice of romances for study reflects these different ways, and presents an equal number of English and French texts. Concern with naming is widespread in medieval culture, romance is the field in which these concerns can play, and however differently literature developed in what were to become two separate nations the concern is common to both English and French romance.

In these stories it is not simply a matter of finding a name or an identity, of moving from unknown to known. Though anagnorisis may be part of the end-game in many of them, they all manifest a central concern, if not obsession, with naming (and unnamings and renaming) as if for its own sake. That naming is about identity is undeniable, yet to analyze naming in romance only as a function of identity tends to limit interpretive possibilities.³ To analyze it for its own sake helps open up unexpected ways of interpreting each text.

It would be a mistake, furthermore, to rely too heavily on such (often useful) generalizations as, for example, the idea that the anonymous knight always wins once he knows his adversary's name because this gives power over him.⁴ When

¹ed. Mills. All line references are from the Cotton ms. This tail-rhyme variant of the Perceval story is dated 1375–1400 by the editor, but c. 1325 by Barron. The author must have known at least its French analogue, and Chrétien's *Erec et Enide*; he adds chivalric gloss to the popular folk romance (six mss survive). Barron notes the close relation between the latter and its chivalric counterpart (*English Medieval Romance*, p. 166). It is to be noted that Cotton, like other major mss containing romances, freely mixes romance with didactic and religious matter.

²‘L'usage des noms propres et des appellatifs ... mériterait une étude très détaillée’, Guerreau, ‘Le Bel Inconnu’, p. 77. See eg. Luttrell, *The Creation of the First Arthurian Romance*, for discussion of the figure.

³See eg. Taylor, ‘Perceval/Perceforest’, pp. 205–6.

⁴Another generalization to be treated with caution is Jameson's characterization of the

this is the case, it is probably signalled in some way by the narrative. But there are other ways in which the power of name may be exploited, and one must pay attention to who names whom, for whom, and why. Naming can be delayed, deleted, repeated, or rhymed. The (French) word for renown means re-named — in what sense does somebody lose their “own” name when they gain renown? Anonymity may be a mark of respect, or of disrespect. In *L'Atre Périlleux* it is arguable that none of the women (but almost every man) is named because the narrator despises women,⁵ but to apply this to, say, *Lybeaus Desconus* is unhelpful: the only major character left nameless is the “best” woman in the story, the lady of Synadoun.

* * * * *

I begin with this English version, an outstanding example of genuine name-change (otherwise rare in romance). Furthermore the transparently descriptive pseudonym, expressing ignorance and lack — it means “we don't know what your name is” — becomes opaque as it hardens into his proper name.

The hero is left nameless at the end, in that resumption of his original name (Geynleyn), together with recognition scene, is omitted. There are interpolations in some mss which rectify this omission,⁶ but the fact of interpolation suggests to me that the author of this version saw no need for such disclosures. This is because he was doing something rather different from, for example, Renaud in *Li Biaus Descouneüs*:⁷ here Libeaus Desconus *becomes* his proper name during the course of the romance.⁸ Further, the French form is kept (instead of an English equivalent).⁹ This raises a question which will crop up more than once: is a French name in an English text going to be heard or understood differently from an English name, by an anglophone audience?¹⁰ Perhaps the lexical meaning of such names would be more readily “forgotten” if they are French, but it is vain really to speculate because each individual in any audience, then as now, has different linguistic skill, literary knowledge, and cultural experience.

King Arthur names the youngster who cannot name himself, but as the story progresses the second part of the nickname is usually dropped, as though his

anonymous antagonist as the Other until, ‘defeated and unmasked, he asks for mercy by *telling his name* ... at which point [he is] reinserted into the unity of the social class’. This ‘distinguishes the romance narrative’. But in *Lybeaus* the antagonist is often named by the hero's guide in advance of the conflict; this complicates the moment ‘in which the antagonist ceases to be a villain’ (‘Magical Narratives’, pp. 177–8).

⁵Walters, ‘Resurrecting Gauvain’, pp. 527ff; see Ch. 3 below.

⁶Mills’ note, pp. 243–4. These mss are less reliable (see *Ywain, Percyvell, Anturs* ed. Mills, p. ix).

⁷See Mills’ Introduction, pp. 42ff for other analogues.

⁸Compare Simpson’s reading of *Sir Degaré*, ‘Violence, Narrative and Proper Name’: Degaré becomes the proper name once it has exhausted its power to drive the narrative.

⁹Translation can be a neat device for producing extras where required: in *Sir Gawain and the Carl of Carlisle*, Syr Lebys Dyskoniis and Syr Ferr Vnkowthe are separate knights.

¹⁰Other examples are Amis (*Amis and Amiloun*) and The Fere (*Ipomadon*). Le Saux suggests that the former might be read as “Amiss”: *l'Autre not le Même* (‘From Ami to Amys’), though this would reverse the syllabic stress.

name were Thefair and, once knighted, he is Sir Thefair. Li Biaus Descouneüs is never called "Sir Libiaus", and the only shortening of his (descriptive) name is 'li Descouneüs'. This is because it is not becoming his proper name; he has already got one (Guinglains) and he regains it, losing his unknown quality, halfway through the romance. The English Libeaus' unknown quality gradually dissipates and fades away, together with the Cratyllic meaningfulness of his name. A study of other patterns of naming in the romance will help to show how this happens. Mills has judged 'the early disclosure of his identity ... clumsy' (p. 206). But by reading it without wanting it to be like its analogue I found that in fact Thomas Chestre gives the story a new shape altogether.

It is clear from the opening lines that the poet-narrator is extremely interested in the naming and un-naming of the hero. Four naming-words (name, called, clepede/clepeþ, hyzt/hatte) are used thirteen times in seventy-two lines, as the narrator names Geynleyn, his mother un-names him and calls him Bewfys (repeated in the boy's speech to Arthur), and Arthur re-names him Libeaus Desconus and the Fair Unknown. In the next few lines Arthur knights him and gives him arms, including the griffin-shield: a pre-echo of the moment when Gawain will arm him with that same shield. The action gets under way very soon, with the arrival of the damsel at l. 106.

Analysis of who names whom in *Lybeaus Desconus* shows notable results. The first is the narrator's reluctance to employ what I term "off-stage" names: except for the opening and closing invocations (1-3, 2128-30) where he names Christ 'And hys modyr', the only off-stage name outside direct or indirect speech¹¹ is a reference to Termagaunt, the giant's "god" (1300-1). The names of God and of saints are invoked by characters directly or indirectly (eg. Lambard 'ponkede ... God and Seynt Edward' 1672-4; Libeaus 'prayde to Marie bryzt', 1981-2). Characters' utterances are coloured by use of these extra names, in a way that the surrounding narrative is not. Off-stage Round Table knights are mentioned by characters in speech; the only time the narrator names any is when four of them come forward, on stage, to arm the hero (217-21); this does not happen until after the damsel Elene has referred to some of them in direct speech (178-80).

It is true, however, that the narrator names Geynleyn, Gawain, and Arthur in his introduction; it is debatable whether off-stage and on-stage can be distinguished at this point, and tempting to argue that Geynleyn does not count as an on-stage name. The second notable result of detailed naming-analysis is that, of the two dozen or so named characters on stage, more than half are first named by one of the characters (the narrator will only then use their names). There are eleven namers, besides the narrator, in the story: Elene is chief namer (giving eight), Violet gives two, Lambard two, and so on. Of the hero's names, the narrator gives Geynleyn (7, 13), his mother gives Bewfys as well as "unnaming" him (19-21), Arthur gives Lybeau Desconus and Pe Fayre Vn-knowe (67-72) and —

¹¹Indirect speech is still speech. The narrator's reluctance to name suggests a world where people can name themselves and one another freely (or not); names not being fixed from outside, by parent or by maker.

because he knights him — is partly responsible for the name first “given” by the narrator, Syr Lybeaus (473 and *passim*). The narrator is responsible for barely two out of these six naming moments. Needless to say such various uncomplimentary epithets as Pef, Cherll, Satan, Lorell, and so on are all uttered by somebody, if only by a sort of *vox pop*, inside the story, rather than by the narrator. Overall, Chestre seems to be taking the story (‘So seyþ þe Frenzsche tale’, 222) and giving it to the characters to write.

My analysis began with off-stage names (figures appearing in characters’ speech but not actors in the story) because the patterns they form help to underline the action on stage in two important ways. First, a number of saints’ names are used as asseveration, often in rhyme-position. Like formulae, they chime again and again; they appear throughout the narrative and culminate in Libeaus’ prayer to Mary which, as will be seen, is promptly and surprisingly answered. Then, Round Table heroes are evoked when Elene protests that she wants a proper knight to come and rescue her lady (169–80); four named knights actually come forward to arm Libeaus. By halfway through the romance such figures have retreated to an off-stage position as proverbial heroes — the list at 934–6 includes Alexander, and they are thinning out: the last off-stage hero apart from Gawain is a single and proverbial Lancelot (1091–2). This significantly reflects the way Libeaus is moving away from his father and making an independent name for himself.

After the arming scene, Gawain reappears only in other people’s speech: Sir Lambard says ‘A thozth Y have . . . Pat þou art com of Gawenys kynne’ (1645–6), and the lady — stepping out of the wormskin — says ‘Tyll Y hadde kyste Gaweyn, Eyþer som oþer knyzt . . . of his kende’ (2029–31). Gawain never reappears in the flesh and, even more important, Libeaus does not — cannot — react to the name of his father. In both situations, he responds to the speaker’s words in a way that ignores and erases the reference to Gawain (1651–9 and 2050–67 respectively). That this is part of a re-writing process will be seen as we turn to some of the other characters.

All the actors in Libeaus’ adventures are, with few exceptions, named: many of them by his guides. Elene the ‘messengere’ and Teandelayn the dwarf explain and introduce each adventure to Libeaus as it comes over the horizon, often naming the adversary he is to meet (eg. 718ff, Gyfroun named at 731; 1005ff, Otes named at 1009; 1238ff, Maugis named at 1246). This predictive function is complemented, once the adventures have got going, by the way the pair recount Libeaus’ deeds cumulatively, to audiences after an encounter (eg. 1207–15, 1663–71). They act as a couple of portative narrators, writing Libeaus’ story as it happens. After each adventure the prisoners, or tokens (gerfalcon, giants’ heads, and the like), are sent back to Arthur’s court as trophies — in one case at least the trophy is a written account (973–9). By the time the hero gets home there will be no need for the traditional recounting of his adventures before the court: they are all already told, complete with names.

The last adventure is one that Libeaus must undertake alone, leaving behind

his guides and even Gyfflet (the squire he poached from la Dame d'Amore's castle). Therefore he must tell his own adventure when he returns to his companions, and the omission of what the lady said about Gawain, leaving only the 'kus', is extremely striking (2050–67). As Libeaus' adventures are anticipated, achieved, and turned into stories on the spot, so Gawain is written out of the resulting text. Even the device he gave his son ('gryffoun', 231) disappears, to be replaced by 'pre lyouns of gold' (1537–9); this would seem to be the new shield given him by Antor (700–5).¹²

The connection between naming and narrative is that together they illustrate a double movement: the story we read shows at the beginning a nameless young man surrounded by named figures, and he moves outward and away from those named figures; at the same time the internal narrative (the "war-reports") begins moving in the opposite direction, inward towards Arthur's court. This narrative contains progressively more and more names, of Libeaus' conquered adversaries, and elicit his name: 'Lybeaus well werry kan!' says Arthur admiringly (981). Only in the very first report does he name and characterize himself as unknown: William Selebraunche is to say '... A knyzt me hyder gan sende, Pat ys y-clepede yn us Lybeaus Desconus, Vn-knowe of kep and kende.' (375–81). He never says this again.

The double movement sets one kind of "identity" against another. But if Chestre wants to show that an unknown knight can make an independent name for himself, then what is the point of giving him noble parentage since he is never to discover what it is? It is important, I think, for him to have something to move away from, a starting-point which is a given in the French tale; a somebody whose mother removes his name (turning him into a nobody?) makes, dramatically, for a very strong beginning. Moreover his relationship to Gawain is necessary, if only just, for another part of the plot: the lady must be freed from the enchanters.

Five women control Libeaus' progress towards liberating the lady who will become his wife: his unnamed mother, Mary mother of God, and three lovers. The first of these (445–50) has a proper name more or less empty of reference (Elene), perhaps because her main role in the action is more important than her role as lover, and the name of the girl-guide figure in romances does not usually matter very much.¹³ The second is the lady of Yle d'or; Chestre does not approve of her at all (1423–34), but he gives her a name of sorts (la Dame d'Amore, 1400) as if to emphasize the fact that the third lady is persistently not named.

This is no mark of disrespect: her status, and her excellence, are revealed in the narrative. She is said to be a queen at 1422; Sir Lambard explains she is 'of knyktes kynne' (1710) and heir to a dukedom (1723–4) as well as being much beloved: 'Sche ys meke and boneyre, Per-fore we bep in despeyre' (1726–7). There is a curious detail in the description of the serpent's body that imprisons her: 'Wyth a wommanes face ...' (1991). It recalls the myth that the serpent of Eden had a woman's face, but here Chestre seems to be allowing the Biblical

¹²And cf. Maddox, 'Les Armoiries de l'*Inconnu*'.

¹³Boy-guide figures too, such as dwarves, often have neutral names or no names.

echo to emphasize the fact that beauty and virtue, however hideously disguised, are about to answer the hero's prayer to 'Marie bryzt' (1982). The lady is set beside Mary again, right at the end of the romance, when the poet tells how 'Lybeaus and þat swete þyng' lived happy ever after, "and may Jesus and his mother 'þat swete flour' grant us good ending." (2127-9). Whatever happens in other versions, it is clear that Chestre is recombining the elements to produce something of his own,¹⁴ in which the hero will of course not go back to la Dame d'Amore. That episode, with his escape (thanks to Elene) from enchantment, parallels the lady's escape from enchantment thanks to Libeaus. But this lady also controls: although he does the necessary donkey-work, the decisive move comes from her when she takes the kiss (2005-7).

At the very beginning of the romance is another decisive move: that of the hero's mother. She takes his name away from him. He knows as well as she does that Bewfys is not a name because, when asked, he says 'J not what ys my name', and that his mother called him 'Beau-fyz ... yn her game' (49-54). She protects him from his name and background 'For douute of wykkede loos' (17), either because of her own shame, which would nevertheless reflect upon the knight who seduced her, or because she does not want him to become an ill-famed knight like all the others (see note p. 207) — or like his father! She is, moreover, successful in that he escapes his original name altogether and becomes a well-famed knight in his own right — and note the echo at 2101-3, that 'he ne hadde no schame.'

His father's name remains as a token attribute, a part of his identity which does not actually identify him. This has been indicated by various clues in the text: the disappearance of the 'gryffoun', his inability to hear or register the name of Gawain, the disappearance of Gawain himself. The great magic moment which seems to declare the power of the name of the father is worded in an very off-hand way: 'Tyll Y hadde kyste Gaweyn, Eyber som oper knyzt, sertayn, Þat wer of hys kende' (2029-31). The name fragments, the moment it appears, into a number of nameless figures who just happen to be related to him, and then vanishes. It is not even entirely clear that the lady knew whom she was kissing; it is possible to imagine her kissing any knight who managed to get to her in the hope that he would be one of the right ones.

Finally, I focus on the famous mock-baptism scene (1333-62) borrowed, apparently, from *Guy of Warwick*: 'some details of the original account have been reshuffled ... certainly the "baptism" has now much less point'.¹⁵ But the exchange is much more light-hearted than the corresponding scene in *Guy*: Libeaus does not make significant declarations about his name: he announces gleefully that, thanks to a second baptism, there are now two of him — his strength is redoubled. He need not shout out his name because he is progressively turning the nameless name Libeaus Desconus into the proper name Sir Libeaus and there is no climactic moment where a switch occurs. The mock-baptism is just one

¹⁴Mills points out that 'Chestre has elsewhere shown himself capable of using related stories in conjunction to produce a new synthesis', p. 50.

¹⁵p. 234, and see Mills, 'Composition and style'.

of the events which gradually build up Libeaus as himself, and that it has more point than merely a joke is borne out by the words of Arthur's blessing before Libeaus set out (211–6). References to God who made the world, and to Christ who died on the cross, are commonplace in medieval English literature, but a reference to Christ 'Pat yn þe flome tok baptyste' is extremely rare;¹⁶ it acts as a hint that the farcical scene by the river is a small but significant motif.

If, as is generally accepted, Chestre is the author of this romance, then he also wrote *Sir Launfal*. Two editors of the latter, Sands and Bliss, are less than enthusiastic about the poet's genius.¹⁷ Whether 'a humble and talented minstrel' or 'a petty tradesman', he is seen as having an outsider's admiration — and incomprehension — of chivalric status. I argue that the way naming is handled in this romance effectively indicates the author's skill and allows a re-evaluation: in *Lybeaus Desconus* Chestre explores the possibility that an unknown youngster could become a famous knight independent of, even in spite of, his father.

* * * * *

Libeaus does not know who he is, nor does it seem to bother him. He acquires a name without consciously seeking it; other characters remark on his unknown quality likewise without apparent anxiety: Arthur dubs him "the Stranger", Lam-bard notes his resemblance to — the lady his kinship to — Gawain with remarkable casualness. But the unknown quality of some Fair Unknowns can be cause for concern.

Emaré

This heroine is forced by her father to unname herself, in contrast to male Unknowns unnamed by their mother. She knows very well who she is, but the narrative betrays a good deal of anxiety about her. Like other such protagonists, she is marked as a stranger, interrogated through the characters (who guess at her identity), and provided with an alias (of her own choosing in this case). Dated c. 1400, it is a Calumniated Wife tale that nevertheless calls itself a lai; it has analogues in many languages and genres — notably Constance stories — some more pious but no less popular than others.

The romance is bare of names compared with the Constance stories.¹⁸ Although there are eight named figures against four or five unnamed (the king of Galys and his mother, Jurdan's wife, the messenger, and — off stage — the girl who made the cloth), some names are given only to vanish again. Syr Artyus is named (27, 37) while his wife is alive at the beginning of the story, but after his daughter's birth it is as if the story refused to name him: he is called 'the emperour'. The king of Cesyle (80, 106, 181) is named only once — Syr Ter-gaunte (85); so is Jurdan (687), the Roman merchant or burgess (685, 839, 886,

¹⁶See Dalrymple, *Language and Piety*, p. 228.

¹⁷See *Middle English Verse Romances* ed. Sands, pp. 201–3, in which he quotes Bliss.

¹⁸See below, Ch. 4.

888, 895). Emaré's name disappears, significantly, as soon as she is born: the narrator introduces her as the subject of the romance (23); she is named at birth (47) but called only maiden, daughter, or lady, until she arrives in Galys and names herself:

They askede her what was her name;
She chaunged hyt ther anone,
And sayde she hette Egaré (358–60).

She is anonymous as unwilling substitute for her dead mother and object of her anonymous father's monstrous desire, she is pseudonymous as stranger and wife of an anonymous husband, she achieves her double name, as Putter points out,¹⁹ when reunited with both of them: their anonymity throws additional emphasis on her naming, self-naming, and re-naming.

There are six off-stage names: three of the four pairs of lovers depicted on Emaré's beautiful cloth (121–68) are Ydoyne and Amadas, Trystram and Isowde, Florys and Blawnechflour. Their stories are not rehearsed; they stand as emblems of true and honourable love. The fourth pair on the cloth are nameless like our heroine and her lover: she whose name is lost, if ever known, and he who is identified only by his title. This cloth looks rather like one of the tapestries or pictures which appear near the beginning of some romances and symbolize that break in consciousness which begins the descent into another world; a love-potion may also be such a symbol.²⁰ In some versions of the Tristan story the effect of the potion wears off, and in *Emaré* the effect of the cloth seems to wear off. Jurdan does not fall in love with the fair lady in 'glysteryng wede' the way her father and husband did: respectably married, he is terrified of her (697–702), and furthermore she is now at the turning-point after which things begin to come right again.

Putter makes two essential points: that the heroine (through Kadore's report, 421–6) suppresses the events of her past because she *will not put her name to them*, and that 'medieval texts treat the name as a motivated sign'.²¹ He remarks that significance of name is a motif found in most versions of the story, but cites only one here: *La Manekine*. He does not mention that 'Emaré' disappears from the text between the baby's christening and the arrival of the king in Rome to find her. The name is repeated here, in a way I have noted in my discussion of *Sir Degaré* below: it ends a line and begins a new one — a reinforcing device (another such device is a significant rhyme: Emaré/Egaré, Degaré/Trinité). The power of this repetition is enhanced because the surrounding verses have been emptied of names (the king, the burgess, her son):

At the burgeys hous hys yn he nome,
Theras woned Emarye.

¹⁹'The Narrative Logic of *Emaré*', p. 173.

²⁰See Frye, *Secular Scripture*, pp. 109; 102.

²¹'The Narrative Logic of *Emaré*', pp. 171–2; 170.

Emaré called he[r] sone,
Hastely to here come (839–42).

The significance of naming, by the narrator or by figures within the story, is greater than the significance of the name: the naming would still be effective if we had no idea what either name meant.

The fact that we do know, however, gives support to another notion about this romance (and its analogues): the heroine is not in search of her identity.²² She knows who she is, and in this version chooses her own pseudonym, as well as the formula by which she will reveal herself: 'Emaré, That changed her name to Egaré' (907–8). The choice of naming moments in this romance is quite different from that of, say, Chrétien in *Erec and Enide*, where the heroine is not named until her marriage. It is the men who are in search of lost (egaré) excellence (emaré).²³ We are perhaps meant to think that she took Kadore at least partly into her confidence; she could have lied about her parentage, but she must have persuaded him to say that he had 'sente aftur her certeynlye To teche my chylderen' (422–6). Perhaps the frequency of his name in the text (named more often than anybody except the heroine, he is twice addressed by name (758, 775) which happens to nobody else) is a clue that he is in some sort a guardian of her identity, even if not very successful as guardian of her person.

Romance versions of the Constance story do not end with the widowed heroine piously returning to her father. In *Emaré*, we are told that Segramour became emperor in due course, but there is nothing to say that the reunited couple did not live happy ever after. It is traditionally entitled *Emaré*, but there is something to be said for renaming it *Egaré* (as *La Manekine* is called by its heroine's pseudonym): she 'changed her name to Egaré, In the londe of Galys' (908–9) and this is the name by which her husband knows and loves her. After all, the poet begins by announcing a story about Emaré (19–24) but ends by naming the story:

Thys ys on of Brytayne layes
That was used by olde dayes,
Men callys 'Playn[t] Egarye' (1030–2).

Poem and heroine both choose this name.

To conclude my reading, with its focus on the heroine's naming in relation to that of other characters, I compare the story with that of Libeaus Desconus: he too is escaping from his father! Unnamed by his mother, he is given a nickname, which he cheerfully proceeds to turn into a proper name. By contrast Emaré, whose name is taken away by the text (symbolically by her father), is anxious

²²See also [La Manekine] ed. & tr. Sargent-Baur: 'her identity is there at the outset, and remains constant', p. 116, n. 101.

²³Castellani suggests that Emaré means "esmarrie = affligée" (*La Manekine de Philippe de Beaumanoir*, p. 14). We cannot fix these unstable meanings, but we can admire the enduring significance of a name whatever its meaning.

to name herself. Romance, in its freedom to interrogate name, here explores the question of whether one is trapped within the meaning of a name imposed from outside. Authority for changing one's own name is found in Augustine's *City of God*:²⁴ '[when] a man makes a change in himself for the better ... he has a right to be called what he has become. The second name hides the first.' Gnarra quotes this in her edition of *La Manekine* (p. 400), but in fact it applies more readily to Emaré, who chooses her second name. Her first name means that she is the victim of something extremely unpleasant. Both are virtuous, and their "unfortunate" new names symbolize spiritual superiority: Egaré is the excellence her father and husband have lost; la Manekine is innocent and her maiming is her father's fault, not hers. I suggest that a name can mean what you want it to mean: having established who you want to be you can (re)possess it or not, as you choose. Libeaus never chooses to, but Emaré-that-was-Egaré does. In this sense, Emaré is in quest of an identity, but it would be less simplistic to say that her adventure is to explore the roles allowed her by society — or by fate: anonymous victim, maker (55–69) as well as wearer of beautiful cloth, career girl as au pair to Kadore's children (the phrase is Putter's), fairy creature or monster (442–7), wife and mother. Her moments of naming and self-naming mark stages in the process of achieving her own family, and also the freedom to be a daughter.

*La Manekine*²⁵

Romances about women are rare enough to deserve extended treatment. Its author, Philippe de Remi (or de Beaumanoir), wrote romance, song, fabliau, prayer, and satire. *La Manekine* (probably 1230–40) follows a trend for realistic and psychological adventure romance; though long, thoughtful, and literary it takes a popular folklore theme. This Calumniated Wife story is different from the others studied — containing yet fewer names it is yet more concerned about naming. It is the most "realist" of the romances I examine, in that it explores meanings of the heroine's names. Her true name is clear enough, but the text plays on 'Joy' and 'joy' so as to underline it strongly. A meaning for her pseudonym is proposed, but not analyzed so explicitly as to close off other possible meanings: these are explored by later readers, as I shall show. However, the naming of la Manekine undermines the realist, because no definitive answer is possible. This central theme is strongly highlighted by the anonymity of others: except for the child Jehan, and the Pope, the heroine is the only character named. Two major examples of the way her naming is marked are, first, the text's insistence on her anonymity, and on the meaning of 'la Manekine', in the long inset narrative where her husband tells her father everything that has happened since she came to Scotland:

²⁴ed. & tr. Levine, vol. 4, Bk. XV: ch. 1, p. 414. 'sed quanto quisque citius mutatur in melius, hoc in se facit nominari quod adprehendit celerius et posteriore cooperit vocabulum prius'.

²⁵Line (and page) references are to Sargent-Baur's edition unless otherwise indicated.

Comment ele s'estoit celee,
 Comment ainc mais ne seut son non,
 Comment il li mist le sournon
 Que 'Manekine' la clamoit
 Pour çou quë une main n'avoit ... (7239–99).

And next, the heroine's insistence that her pseudonym has a meaning (however strange it seems) and that it is not her real name, when she meets the senator at Rome:

"... la Manequine
 M'a on mainte fois apelee
 Ou païs dont je sui tournee."
 "Onques mais tel non n'oi dire
 [Que 'Manekine'," dist li sire].
 "En cest païs nul tel n'en a."
 "Sire, cist qui le me dona
 Vit en moi aucune occoison
 Par coi il me donna tel non" (5181–208).

Although my general focus is the use and placing of names, this text is unusually insistent on the meaning of the heroine's names and has been challenging readers and audiences since its early reception, both explicitly and by more subtle signals. I shall therefore focus more than usual on meanings and whether they help to show what the romance is about.

The baby princess is christened Joïe, and throughout the text is found play on 'joie' and 'Joïe'. There are several places where upper and lower case letters could (inaudibly) be swapped, as the word hovers on the brink of allegory. A line like 'Joïe a les li apelee' (1281) is resonant: the king is about to speak, for the first time, to the woman who will be his happiness — and he does not know her name. When proposing marriage, he says 'Vous estes cele u je m'atens De joie avoir a tout mon tens' (2003–4), reminding us of her name.²⁶ The text is rich in significant rhymes: at her first naming 'La damoisele ot non Jo[i]e Pour mainte gent qui esjoïe ...' (69–70), the king's reaction to the forged letter 'cele que je tant amoïe, Cele dont me venoit ma joie' (3247–8), and in the general jubilation after Joy's healing (7489–90, 7671–2, and *passim*). Early in the story her name fades out as her father starts desiring her: she is named 'sa fille', 'la damoisele', and the like, between lines 416 and 642 (his conversation with himself and the interview where he tells her of his intentions). At the awful moment when he sees her mutilated arm, he 'nomma Joïe par non' — but actually does not: '“Fille,” fait il ...' (783–8); his perception that she is incomplete is connected with the loss of her name. She does not lose it all at once, however: she meditates on

²⁶See also 'toute seule ert Joïe, Deseur tous triste et esbahie' (679–80) and 'Onques mais en si peu de jour Joie en tel dolour ne tourna' (806–7).

its meaning, naming herself Joïe, when she falls in love with the king (1776–9) and after her re-naming as *la Manekine*. The recovery of her name at the dénouement also signals the recovery of joy for everybody else (eg. 7336–8, 7397–8, 7710–11, and *passim*).²⁷ ‘Joïe’ is clearly marked as significant; its meaning is straightforward compared with the meanings of ‘*la Manekine*’.

Unlike Emaré’s self-chosen pseudonym, Joïe’s is bestowed on her because she will not name herself. But she does maim herself, thus initiating the descriptive name given her by the king: “the maimed girl” (1336–42; 7246–50). This meaning underlines one of the themes of the romance: imperfection in search of wholeness, atonement, and unity (especially the uniting of far-flung kingdoms by suitable exogamic marriage). Another name has been bestowed by readers: *Mannequin* (or *Dummy*). Gnarra translates *la Manekine* as *Mannequin*; Sargent-Baur seems to have taken the meaning suggested by Philippe (see p. 113) but she also translates as *Manekine* without article — I shall deal with this point briefly first. In the text she is almost always *la Manekine* (variable spellings), except in the vocative. There is a difference in tone between a name with an article (more descriptive and denotative) and one without: the latter is more familiar and connotative, and more vocative in that it addresses, and distinguishes, a person rather than describing them. The article is one of the signals that the pseudonym does not become her proper name: ‘Libeaus Desconus’ does, but ‘li Descouneüs’ does not, become the hero’s proper name.

More radical is a reading by which Joïe becomes an effigy rather than a cripple: Putter remarks that the derivation from Latin *mancus* = cripple is false.²⁸ It is interesting that an Old French word for the effigy, used on stage in place of an actor for torture scenes, is *mannequin* (not, indeed, derived from *mancus*).²⁹ But the word “mannequin” is never used to mean effigy in the whole of our long romance: Philippe calls the statues sculpted for the fire (3761–9; other images, eg. of the Virgin — 190–5) ‘ymages’ or ‘samblant’. To translate either into English as ‘mannequin’ is probably to over-read.³⁰ Analogy is not identity; it emphasizes, and is rooted in, difference: the existence of a figure which echoes another points to difference, not sameness. *La Manekine* is not a mannequin because she does not get burned. Nor is she a model; although she is a good girl whose story has a moral (8529ff), to say that ‘A *mannequin* is an example’ — adducing line 8545 (‘Prendés garde a la Manequine’)³¹ — seems a little far-fetched given the ubiquity of such moralizing in medieval literature. Furthermore, “mannequin”

²⁷See *La Manekine* ed. & tr. Gnarra, Appendix B, for an outline of the meanings, rhymes, and pairings, of the words ‘joie’ and ‘Joïe’. Whether or not one agrees with her conclusions (eg. that the heroine is in quest of her identity, p. 449), her analysis demonstrates the text’s preoccupation.

²⁸‘The Narrative Logic of *Emaré*’, p. 180, note 20.

²⁹See *La Manekine* tr. Marchello-Nizia, p. 256; and Suchier’s edition, fn. on p. xxxiv. But Castellani points out that the meaning “effigy” is not listed until ‘une date bien plus tardive’ (*La Manekine de Philippe de Beaumanoir*, p. 17). If ‘manikin’ was current in Northern languages at this time, it is possible that Philippe created a feminine form of it to express her diminution.

³⁰See Gnarra’s translation of l. 4236.

³¹See Gnarra’s long note (to l. 1340) on the heroine’s ‘sournon’.

in modern English has a glamorous but rather brainless ring to it quite out of keeping with the presentation of Joïe as clever and accomplished, beautiful but pale from suffering, and mysterious. In modern French, it also means dress-maker's dummy: these have removable limbs — needless to say, you do not turn yourself into a fashion-model by chopping off one of your hands.

One might adduce the lines 'Je cuic que si bele ne fust Faite de pierre ne de fust' (1269–70) to suggest that she is like a statue, but I would argue that the topos "so lovely that no sculptor/painter (not even Pygmalion) could ..." is a commonplace in medieval descriptions of beauty. Uses of the Pygmalion story, known from Ovid, are explicitly marked and well documented in medieval literature; the concept of "image" as a way of embellishing, or advertising, the writer's art is deeply woven into many medieval texts.³²

Suchier comments, in the footnote cited above, 'Philippe rattache sans doute' (sans doute!) 'le nom de *Manekine* au latin *manca*, comme Wauquelin. Mieux vaut pourtant le dériver du mot de *mannequin*.' But, given Philippe's hint, and that a fifteenth-century reader glosses it explicitly to mean maimed,³³ I think it a mistake to insist on the falseness of its derivation or give too much weight to the other meaning, however suggestive.

Still, as the above makes clear, the text challenges an audience to consider the meaning of names, and not only of the heroine's names. A curious example is the name of the fish, 'Qui est apeles esturjons' (734). This is no more, one would think, than a useful rhyme with 'poissons' in the previous line, but later in the story the name is marked very strongly: 'Esturjon a non par son non' (7614). The word 'poisson' would be sufficient to rhyme with 'non' in the previous line, and would give equally well the symbolic sense of fish = Christ, conjectured by Sargent-Baur in her note (p. 639). The idea that Jesus himself has been looking after la Manekine's hand all these years is poetically appropriate, and the people ceremoniously feast on the fish after the 'saintuaire' has been removed. It is possible that the sturgeon was already considered a Royal Fish in France at this time,³⁴ whatever the meaning, it is paired with the 'hautisme non' — the highest Name of all (giving the word 'non' three times in two lines) — by the Voice from heaven.

The speech is remarkable, first, for its dramatic address to the Pope: '“Urban, dist la vois” (7587). Direct address, by name, is rare in this romance: there are some apostrophes in prayers or complaints — to the Virgin,³⁵ to Fortune, and to Love; otherwise nobody is addressed by name except la Manekine (once by the

³²See Dornbush, *Pygmalion's Figure*, esp. pp. 19–27. Pygmalion is rather a signifier than a signified, one symbol among many in discourse about writers' art. In any case, statues are not always "about" Pygmalion.

³³'... puis que vous ne avez que une main ... je vous metteray nom, selonc ce que l'escripture dist que *mancus* c'est a dire homme qui n'a que une main et *manca* c'est une femme qui n'a que une main, et pource je vous mech a non *Manca* qui sera a dire en Ronmant Manequine.' (Wauquelin's prose version, in [La Manekine] ed. Suchier, vol. I, p. 300).

³⁴OED: fish sb.¹, 2.

³⁵And note the way Mary's naming is marked (5611–15) in the king's long prayer.

old queen, 1816; once by the senator, 6441). It may be that the Pope's name was given in advance (6875; 6947), to prepare the maximum effect for this moment. Next comes the name of the sturgeon, as noted. The climax is four lines naming the heroine and linking her name with both joy and love:

Et itant sache bien Joïe
 Que desormais sera joïie,
 Et cil avoeques, por s'amor,
 Qui moustree li ont amour (7617–20).

This picks up the many references to how well the heroine is loved, and to the reactions of other people to her fortunes:

La damoisele ot non Jo[i]e
 Pour mainte gent qui esjoïe
 Fu ... (69–71),

and

Que la sevent par la contree
 Quë on voloit ardoir Joïe;
 S'en fu la gens toute esbahie (862–4).

Early examples signal a trend to be found throughout;³⁶ in addition to the marking of Joïe's name, there is abundant evidence (for example, her meditation: 1776–90 cited above) to link the meaning of 'joie' with love. At 1455ff is a passage discussing the meaning of Love and why s/he is so called. The word-play on "amer" = to love and "amer" = bitterness is not uncommon in Old French;³⁷ here it has extra significance because Love appears as a personification in these lines and elsewhere.

Personifications outnumber named characters: Nature, la Mors, Raison, Sens, Fortune, and more. The helplessness of human actors, in the face of such forces, is accentuated by their anonymity. What power do the few named characters have? The heroine is named and re-named because it is her story and she makes things happen. Her son is named (Jehan) because he initiates the first recognition scene, and he will be the hero of another story stretching forth into the future. The Pope is named because he initiates and presides over the second recognition scene, and he too has power in a world outside the story — even if his name is fictitious (pp. 637, 654). Is reality, then, elsewhere? There is a troop of happy girls and boys (six names in ll. 2171–3) dancing in a pastoral interlude before the wedding celebrations. Representative peasant names (see IPN), they nevertheless afford a glimpse of an ordinary world in which everybody has a name. The tournament, to which the king travels as soon as la Manekine has

³⁶For example 7921–30, 8065–8, and *passim*.

³⁷See Ménard, *Le Rire et le Sourire*, p. 655, for a list.

conceived his baby, is aglow with names ... of places (2661–85); there follows a description of the king's arms (gold, but with the device removed), and the colours worn by other combatants. Tourneying is part of the romance, as it is of many romances, but there is something shadowy about this tourney: nobody is named. The narrator claims not to know the names of guests at the great feast ('Ne du savoir n'est nus mestiers' — 2257–61), and he does not intend to invent them.

There are few off-stage names (mostly Biblical, eg. David, Abrehans, Elysabel); a pattern by which anonymity is emphasized and central names enhanced needs no further references outside the text. One of the few off-stage names is that of St Peter: the clerks come back from their attempt to fill the pail

A la f[on]taine sous Saint Piere.
Se v[o]us disons bien, par Saint Piere,
Ve[ü] i avons grant mervelle ... (7451–3).

There is not much swearing by saints' names; this example serves to underline the importance of the saint and the centrality of his church. Helen is the only off-stage name not taken from biblical or pious legend; she is cited not as a wicked woman but as an example of the way women suffer for the 'folies' and 'outrages' of others (392–410), which suggests the writer's sympathy with the heroine.

The romance challenges an audience, by marking the importance of a few names, to wonder about the meanings of the names. How do the names invite interpretation? There is a sense in which everybody is in search of joy; the heroine, who has mutilated herself for another's sin and is then driven out like a scapegoat, is in search of wholeness. I prefer therefore to read 'la Manekine' as "maimed", rather than as "mannequin" or model, because she regains her other name and her wholeness. There may also be a touch of anxiety about whether disabled people pass on deformity to their children. The theme, by which a wicked mother-in-law pretends the heroine has given birth to a monster, is present in several romances of the Calumniated Wife type, but in *La Manekine* the supposed monster is the child of a really maimed mother.³⁸ The theme appears in a different form in Marie's lai 'Bisclavret': the wicked wife, whose nose was bitten off by the werewolf, gave birth to a series of noseless female descendants (305–14).

La Manekine regains her name the instant she declares herself to her father. The text marks the change by naming her *la Manekine* as she arrives at the church (6919–30); the father names his lost daughter *Joïe* during his confession (6991, 7031, 7105); the text re-names her at the very first word after he stops speaking ('*Joïe son pere entendi*' — 7125). His repentance heals him and begins to heal her, though not without a significant delay. He needs to see the wound in order to recognize her (7161–73). The extraordinary comment '*Femmes s'entressanblent assés*', recalling rather uncomfortably her likeness to her mother, is not quite what we have learned to expect in romances, where often the declaration of a

³⁸This is rare among the analogues: see 'Analyse des Principaux Récits', in Castellani, pp. 37–56.

name (she says 'Je sui vostre fille Joïe,' 7146) leads to instant recognition.³⁹ Here the daughter must perform the other name (which the father has never heard), by showing her handless stump, before he recognizes her. There follows another of Philippe's wonderfully resonant lines, 'Joïe son pere relieve' (7189), which could be heard "Joy brings him to his feet" — as no doubt it did!

The stage is now set for the miracle of the hand restored, thanks to the mysterious fish. The last part of the romance follows the main characters as they travel around the now-united kingdoms of Scotland and Hungary. A fine addition is the kingdom of Armenia, making not just two (the husband's and the father's) but now a third: the mother's. This kingdom has been in the background since the beginning (53), and re-surfaces once Joïe has been found. It is symbolic of the fact that she is whole again and can now safely be like her mother.

Sir Gareth's Tale of Orkeney that was callyd Bewmaynes

Malory's *Morte Darthur*, c. 1470, was chosen for publication by Caxton in 1485, and directed to 'alle noble prynces, lordes and ladyes, gentylmen or gentylwymmen ... to rede or here redde'. It is an excellent text for my purpose: a full-length book could be written on name, anonymity, and Malory's naming strategies throughout.⁴⁰ It contains a number of Handsome Strangers, and at least one Belle Inconnue: Gareth's lady.

Malory's tale exploits naming-games: hiding and revelation of name, lack of name, and a rhetorically effective plenty that underlines other themes of the *Morte Darthur*. Gareth's descriptive pseudonym is presented as false yet turns out to be "true"; his real name is confided to the listener early in the tale and retains, because unquestioned, a hermogenean stability. The heroine's unknown quality reflects that of the hero, as does the delayed naming of other characters. A progressive build-up of names helps to celebrate the Round Table and the young hero's achievements, and yet near the end comes a scene where repeated names foreshadow tragedy in the distant future.

Partly because its immediate source is unknown (Vinaver calls it 'Malory's most puzzling production' — 1427), it has received plenty of attention from critics; its relationship to other Fair Unknown romances has been studied. This hero knows who he is, and his arrival incognito is 'to preve my frendys' (313:8) — who are actually his relations, ie. his brothers. He tells the damsel he wanted 'to shew and preve myselffe ... what I was' (313:5, my emphasis): he is neither

³⁹Cf. *Sir Degaré*, where the father recognizes the hero as he speaks his name, even though he did not know what his son had been christened (see p. 74 below).

⁴⁰'One of the most important general themes in *Le Morte Darthur* ...' Brewer, 'Malory's "Proving"', p. 127. See also Lynch: 'proper names are very prominent in Malory's "existential thematics"' or Barthesian "réseau d'obsessions" (*Malory's Book of Arms*, pp. 3 and xiv). Among other valuable short studies, Mahoney, 'Narrative Treatment of Name' stands out as being very close to the overall focus of my research, as does Drewes, 'Hidden Identity'.

testing himself nor seeking his identity, but showing that he is worthy of his name before revealing what it is. As Benson puts it: 'in the tradition of the "Fair Unknown" the matter of one's name is especially important'.⁴¹

The treatment of this tradition is very variable:⁴² some protagonists do not know who they are (Libeaus, Perceval); Gareth is the most confident and self-assured of the protagonists who (these include the heroines discussed above) do know. There is a nice ambiguity in his answer to Arthur's question 'what is thy name ...?': 'Sir, I can nat tell you' (294:25-7) suggests he does not know it, though actually he means that he has resolved not to tell ("I may not"). I am not convinced that the story is about his education.⁴³ When he grants mercy to three coloured knights at the request of the damsel it is because he has forced her, by threatening to kill them, to beg for their lives — as if he were educating her in proper behaviour towards him — and his speech to her is polite from the outset.

Nor do I concur with Simpson, that 'anonymity generate[s] the significant violence of the narrative'.⁴⁴ Being a knight generates violence, and the question must remain: anonymous to whom? Knights tend to go for each other on sight, whether anonymous (to each other? to an audience inside the romance? to an audience outside?) or not, and heroes tend to win whether they are called anything or nothing; recognition will depend partly on whether they are carrying an identifiable blazon — which may be so hacked as to be unrecognizable, or may in any case be somebody else's! I question two more of his generalizations:⁴⁵ the first is that 'Gareth reveals his name only to those whom he cannot defeat (ie. Lancelot) or to those whom he has already defeated.' But who else is there? This is a hero. And besides, he tells other people: the Duchess de la Rouse (354:10-13) and the ladies of the Dolorous Tower (356:2-3). Another is that 'disclosure of name produces ... reconciliation': this is especially *not* true of the encounter with sir Persaunte of Inde, where reconciliation — to the tune even of furnishing the hero's bed with the host's virgin daughter — *precedes* disclosure of Gareth's name by two pages (314:22-317:6).

Anonymity (and pseudonymity) generates the narrative, to be sure, and the theme is echoed in the anonymity of the lady.⁴⁶ She has more than a touch of the fairy mistress about her, and such ladies are often nameless — especially in Marie's 'Lanval' and, I argue, in *Lybeaus Desconus*. It is significant that Malory uses Lyones as a place-name, as Loomis has pointed out, but more significant that it is the only personal name she gets, *and* that it is withheld until the

⁴¹ 'Le Morte Darthur', p. 115.

⁴² Lyons remarks that, following Chrétien, 'in thirteenth-century prose romance the hero's identity continues to be hidden by a growing complexity of means' ('Malory's *Tale of Sir Gareth*', p. 142).

⁴³ Nolan, 'Tale of Sir Gareth', p. 158 and note.

⁴⁴ 'Violence, Narrative and Proper Name' p. 134.

⁴⁵ Ibid. p. 133.

⁴⁶ It 'corresponds at the latent level to that of the protagonist,' Brewer, *Symbolic Stories*, p. 103.

proper moment.⁴⁷ The Red Knight of the Red Lands is besieging her in order to attract Round Table knights, preferably Lancelot and Gawain, so that he can kill them. Had she given her name, Lancelot himself might have undertaken the adventure and, being Lancelot, he would have won. But there is no reason to suppose that the agendas of besieger and besieged had any connection with each other whatsoever: she wants an unknown knight, and makes sure she gets that particular one by making herself likewise unknown. As Nolan remarks, she plays her own identity-game.⁴⁸

Gareth discovers her name at an important juncture: he has achieved all the 'perelouse passages' and overcome all the coloured knights (and learned their names), and he has at last made friends with Lynet — whose name he discovers at the same time. Sir Persaunte is the first to ask a crucial question, 'whothirwarde ar ye away ledynge this knyght?' (315:24–5), which will unleash a flood of recognition and a list of Round Table names (315:26–317:11) as well as eliciting the names of Gareth himself and his family. But nobody will tell Lyones the name of her champion, so she sends him off *to make his name* '... that thou be called one of the numbir of the worthy knyghtes' (327:7–11). Once she has "made" it for herself, by capturing and questioning the dwarf, she decides to play her trick ('I wolde nat that he wyste what I were' — 330:33–4) by dressing up and *by not introducing herself*. The situation is rather like something that happens among men: a knight in plain arms⁴⁹ (or bearing the most transparent of disguises) will not be recognized. And it parallels the trick played on her: she *was* given a name for her lover, in an earlier conversation with the dwarf, but that name was his pseudonym ('his name I woll nat tell you ... sir Kay named hym Bewmaynes' — 317:21–4). The result of this trick is that Gareth falls in love with somebody he takes to be another woman, until she reveals herself to be the same. Later, her ring appears as the symbol of her unknown quality: not only will it disguise Gareth, it disguises her: she says, rather touchingly, 'that rynge encresyth my beawté mucche more than hit is of myself' (345:17–18). Because heroines are by definition beautiful, I judge that the ring stands for her ability to disguise herself.

Lynet is nameless until the same moment: the conversation with sir Persaunte. Like her sister, she has special powers, but she genuinely does not know who Gareth is.⁵⁰ Her mockery perpetuates his incognito: whenever there is a risk that a stranger will recognize him to be a fine knight, she introduces him as a smelly yob — in spite of the fact that her presence gives the lie to her words and actually signifies his noble status (303:27–9). At the threshold of the last recognition scene, the meeting of Gawain and Gareth, Lynet is given *her* other

⁴⁷'Onomastic Riddles', p. 186. The question "where (are you going)?", discussed below, obliquely reinforces the place-name — the lady in this sense remains anonymous.

⁴⁸'*Tale of Sir Gareth*', p. 161.

⁴⁹In some romances, young untried knights bore plain arms (Lyons, '*Malory's Tale of Sir Gareth*', pp. 140–1).

⁵⁰La Cote's damsel likewise does not know who he is, but her mockery is assumed; she respects him *as a knight* but is trying to discourage him because she thinks he is too young for the quest (471:16–23).

name: 'the damesell Savyage' (357:5-6). She is known by either or both from now until the end of the story (363:13-14). No explanation or question is attached to this extra name, but it echoes the double naming of the hero.

A text's questioning of a name is often the questioning of a pseudonym, not of a true name. It can be mild, as an affectionate joke or a little comment; it may be expressed through scornful mockery, or through downright anxiety. Libeaus' "true" name Geynleyn attracts no comment at all, but his mother calls him 'Beaufyz ... yn her game'; before settling into Libeaus as his true name, he comments on its meaning 'Vn-knowe'. Constance's husband, in Gower's version of that story, smiles as he reflects that Couste is the Saxon form of the Latin name Constance. In *Guy*, the giant will not believe Youn is the hero's true name, because if it were it would be better known: he is such a brilliant fighter.⁵¹ The name Joie arouses much happy word-play in the verse, of *La Manekine*, but the pseudonym arouses real anxiety in the story (and among scholars). This is not surprising, since signalling a name as false automatically raises the question of what the true name might be — as if finding the meaning of the false might help to reveal the true. There is negative mockery in the name Bewmaynes (Kay's — 294:35-295:7), and positive play when Morgause reinterprets it (340:14-21);⁵² Gareth, like *La Manekine* and (the French) Libiaus Descouneüs, leaves the pseudonym behind at the end of the story. Some protagonists keep theirs: Libeaus, Amadas,⁵³ *La Cote Male Tayle* (given by Kay in mockery but worn proudly, for the sake of his father — 459:11-25, 476:16-24), and Degaré — a special case because the baptismal name both sounds and functions like a pseudonym. It means unknown (or lost) and raises anxiety, but by the end of the story it has become a proper name.⁵⁴ If a pseudonym is kept at the end of the story, anxiety about it drains away because it no longer signals "unknown". This explains, too, why I pay attention to the *meanings* of names in some romances: it is because the texts do so. I argue that name or naming is a theme in Fair Unknown romances; I also want to demonstrate that it is a theme, for similar reasons, in romances not conventionally so classed, and that it is handled differently from text to text in ways which underline and emphasize the theme.

In 'Sir Gareth' the anonymous hero is accompanied by two anonymous women, his guide and his lover (the latter's anonymity, like his, necessary to both plot and theme); their names are revealed as the story progresses. With the exception of Round Table knights, known to us before the Tale begins, Gareth's adversaries arrive without names and are identified later: two knights at the ford (301:29-31; 317:29-31), the coloured knights, the Red Knight of the Red Lands (296:30; 337:1-2), Gawain himself at the last combat (incognito until the proper moment: 'he sey an armed knyght on horsebak commynge ... and so withoute any wordis

⁵¹ed. Zupitza, ms A, st. 124; ms C, ll. 8464-7.

⁵²For women's name-mockery as carnivalesque, see Gibson, 'Lyonet, Lunete, and Laudine'.

⁵³See my section on *Amadas et Ydoine*, below.

⁵⁴Mustanoja, 'Suggestive Use of Christian Names', shows how in Middle English poetry (though *not* generally in romance) there is a converse tendency for proper names to become generic, even if their precise descriptive meaning remains uncertain.

... they fought two owres' — 356:31–357:4). Sir Persaunte of Inde, exceptionally, is identified in advance: the damsel names him to Bewmaynes before the last of the 'perelouse passages' and just when she is about to relent and apologize for her bad manners (311:28–33). The naming of sir Persaunte is a preliminary to the major naming-scenes that take place after this combat.

The names build up, added at significant encounters or pouring into/out of the text in a way that celebrates the Round Table. It has often been noted that the narrator colludes with Gareth by calling him Bewmaynes until after his lady has discovered his true name (329:17–330:20), even to the extent of calling him *sir* Bewmaynes (Lynet also calls him *sir* Bewmaynes after learning it and being sworn to secrecy — 317:1–3; 324:12). Interestingly, his mother asks after her son *sir* Gareth (339:6), as if taking for granted that he got the knighthood he came for ('I sente hym unto you ryght well armed' — 340:4–6), even though she knows he spent the year in the kitchen.

Most of the naming is done by characters, who name themselves or one another in direct speech. Naming's importance to the writer is thus reinforced by its importance to people in the story. Kay names the stranger Bewmaynes, Gareth names himself to Lancelot — adding only that he is Gawain's brother (299:19–28) because Lancelot, like the audience, knows his parents' and his other brothers' names already.⁵⁵ The narrator then calls him *sir* Gareth, just once (while Lynet is still out of earshot) to remind us what his proper title now is, before turning again 'unto Beawmaynes' (299:33, 300:5). The Green Knight names *sir* Perarde (305:15–18), Lynet names *sir* Persaunte (311:28–33), Persaunte names the other coloured knights, as well as Lynet — who immediately names her sister Lyones (314:16–21, 315:35–6). Lynet does not call her companion *sir* Bewmaynes until after this scene, during which she asks Persaunte to knight him. She was presumably out of earshot during his conversation with the rescued knight,⁵⁶ and ignores the Green Knight's praise of his nobility (307:16–30), but calls him Bewmaynes until she knows he has been knighted ('thou Bewmaynes' — 310:9; 'fayre Bewmaynes' — 313:13; 'sir Bewmaynes!' — 324:12). This fits with what Mahoney says about Malory's narrative treatment of name, about the collusion of narrator and characters, and also the significance of title and prefix.⁵⁷

To return to the way names accumulate, and how they are presented, I note that in the central *sir* Persaunte conversation the lists of Round Table knights (four adversaries desired by the knight of the Red Lands, three Best Knights, seven Other Good Knights — 316:5–7, 316:24–6, 316:26–30) are spoken by Persaunte directly. The naming of other characters continues with Lyones naming *sir* Gararde and *sir* Arnolde (317:29–31); the narrator names *sir* Gryngamoure (328:5–6), but the trend continues with the dwarf naming Gareth to Lyones, the knight of the Red Lands naming himself *sir* Ironsyde to Arthur, and the Queen

⁵⁵Compare 317:6–10, where Gareth names them all to Lynet and *sir* Persaunte, who might not be so familiar with them. And the list adds to the effect, in this scene, of names piling up.

⁵⁶'... this day I was made knyght ...' ... So whan he com nyghe to her she bade hym ryde uttir' (301:7–11).

⁵⁷See her 'Narrative Treatment of Name', pp. 649–51, for Gareth.

of Orkney (named Morgawse by Gareth at 317:7–8) naming her son sir Gareth to the court (339:6).

Before and during the tournament occur long lists of knights' names: they line up on one side and on the other (343:19–344:28), they joust two by two (346:4–348:19), and in the fray rides Gareth, many-coloured and anonymous (though the narrator no longer hides his name: we now know well enough who he is). Galahalte names him 'Knyght with the many coloures ...!' (348:21) and at last (after the dwarf has sneaked the ring off him) the herald, getting close enough to read his helmet, shrieks triumphantly 'This is sir Gareth of Orkenay ...!' (351:16). The quest which follows, as he escapes from the mêlée, keeps the same pattern: only sir Bendaleyne is named by the narrator. The Duchess de la Rouse names her husband (353:24 — he later names himself), and Gareth tells her both his names. A page of the Dolorous Tower tells Gareth the name of the Browne Knyght wythoute Pyté (355:10–13); Gareth sends to Arthur the ladies he has rescued, and the Duke de la Rouse as well, in his own name: 'sey that I, sir Gareth, sente you' (356:2–3 and 25–6). The climax of this adventure is the encounter with his own brother, at which Lynet/Savyage shouts out both their names (357:8–9). The importance of this naming is reinforced by the fact that Gareth does not seem to hear what she said: 'What are ye ... [that] so sodeynly is yelde to me?' Gawain's answer addresses him by name so that the two names are repeated: 'A, sir Gareth, I am your brother, sir Gawayne ...' (357:15–16).

The tailpiece to this comes just before the wedding: a short passage about the love Gareth feels for Lancelot, and his withdrawal from Gawain. It is ominous, in that it foreshadows the tragedy at the end of the *Morte*, and it is pitiful because Gareth does not requite the love his brother shows for him throughout the Tale. In nine lines the three names are hammered out again and again (360:28–36), stressing the relationship Gareth has with each.

After the wedding, there is a final procession of names, as Gareth's adversaries come to take their stations at the feast, and their places at the Round Table. Gareth is not the only stranger to appear, anonymous from who knows where, to be named, to show his prowess, and to take his place among the heroes.

* * * * *

A number of (male) Fair Unknowns are closely connected with Gawain. That they should turn out to be kin to Arthur is hardly surprising: it is an easy way of demonstrating their nobility. But it is odd that they should be so closely related to Gawain, who traditionally never hides his name. Libeaus, and his French analogue, is Gawain's son; Gareth his brother. The latter even fights a knight whose strength, like Gawain's, waxes until 'none' (320:36–321:3).⁵⁸ Gawain him-

⁵⁸Benson ('Gareth', p. 104, n. 18) remarks on it. But Escanors, one of Gawain's adversaries in *L'Atre Périlleux*, also has this power. Does it indicate a special relationship, or is it just that this feature or attribute (perhaps folkloric in origin) has become attached mainly to Gawain and stuck there? (Or, as Tolkien remarked: 'it would be nearer the truth to say that the Archbishop became attached to the banana skin...' 'Tree and Leaf', p. 28). The explanation

self sometimes looks like a Fair Unknown, for example in *De ortu Waluuanii*,⁵⁹ where he is sent away as a baby 'propter regis timorem' and grows up as the 'puer sine nomine'; the 'Male Cinderella' is a related theme.⁶⁰ On the other hand, Gawain figures in some Loathly Lady stories: we met a Loathly Lady in *Lybeaus Desconus* as the worm who, at a kiss, became a Lovely Lady. This links *Lybeaus*, say, with the 'Wife of Bath's Tale', hence some scholars' inclusion of the latter in the Fair Unknown group. Both Chaucer and Gower attempt to detach their Loathly Lady stories from the overloaded persona of Gawain. Gower firmly names his protagonist something else, yet Florent is (significantly) 'Nevoeu to themperour'.⁶¹ Chaucer refuses to name him at all, as if pulling the story towards the exemplary and away from the romance; yet, in naming (only) Arthur so conspicuously as to emphasize the fabulous and thus untrue nature of the tale, he too fails to detach his protagonist entirely from any link with Gawain.

Chrétien's Perceval is no relation to Gawain,⁶² but his story is closely intertwined with Gawain's. This is a puzzling (to say the least) feature of the *Conte du Graal*, especially given that it is incomplete, and another reason why the romance ought *not* to be entitled "Perceval".⁶³ The significance of the naming of Perceval, in Chrétien, has been discussed very thoroughly;⁶⁴ I shall therefore focus on the Middle English *Sir Percyvell of Gales*, whose hero is Gawain's cousin: son of another of Arthur's sisters.

Sir Percyvell

This romance, dated 1300–40, is a lively version of of Chrétien's (less a translation than a dialogue).⁶⁵ As with so many "popular" romances, an audience's familiarity with at least some aspects of the original cannot be doubted. It has a theme and purpose very much its own, it deletes many of the serious elements found in its model (p. xix), and it uses naming in a radically different way. Though

in the *Mort Artu* ([Artu] ed. Frappier, §154), that it is because he was baptized by a hermit (named Gauvain) at 'midi', would seem to be a Christian rationalization. Others with similar power are Chrétien's Mabonograin and Gray-steele in *Eger and Grime*; see Luttrell, *The Creation of the First Arthurian Romance*, p. 212 and n. 64.

⁵⁹[Gawain] *De Ortu* ed. & tr. Day (pp. 4–5; 16–17).

⁶⁰See eg. Benson, 'Gareth', p. 92, and his 'Le Morte Darthur', pp. 117–18.

⁶¹CA I:1407–1861.

⁶²He is related to the Fisher King's family, as he is in the *Perlesvaus* (tr. Bryant); his relationship to Arthur, in Wolfram, is pretty remote (family tree provided in *Parzival* tr. Mustard & Passage). Other Fair Unknowns not related to Gawain are Ipomadon and Balaain.

⁶³See esp. Cooper's review: 'Perceval [sic]; tr. Burton Raffel'.

⁶⁴See esp. Bezzola, *Le sens de l'Aventure*, pp. 47–61, who argues for the symbolic force of the delay in naming, and Ménard, *Études*, ch. 6: 'La Révélation du nom', who argues that it is part of a technical tour de force by Chrétien; both scholars recognize and respect the vital importance of naming in Chrétien's work.

⁶⁵Putter calls it 'an unslavish adaptation' ('The Text of Sir Perceval of Galles', p. 191).

Chrétien rarely offers a meaning for names, there is an urgent sense that names have meaning could we but use them rightly;⁶⁶ the Percyvell-poet recognizes the importance of names to the Arthurian court but undermines that importance by repeatedly pointing away from it. Mockery seems to be directed at the hero but, largely because he is cheerfully deaf to his own name, is finally diverted back towards the court itself.

The narrator reveals the hero's name and lineage (5, 9–23) from the start. His antics are the more amusing because we know that he is really a nobleman; this is underlined by the naming of his father (Percyvell, 15), of King Arthur (21), and of his mother (Arthur's sister Ache flour, 23). Chaucer recognized the humour of the tale, lifting the line in which Percyvell 'dranke water of the welle' (7–8) in such a way that it is unclear whether Thopas is likewise 'worly under wede'.⁶⁷ But it is by no means wall-to-wall comedy. The first part contains an extended account of the elder Percyvell's struggles against the Red Knight, and the father's wish for the son to learn about knightly doings: 'For he wolde his son were gette In the same wonne' (119–20). At his death, when 'the lady' swears to keep her boy away from such doings (161–76), names vanish from the text for six stanzas. In the seventh, named knights appear 'Off Arth[ur]s in': Ewayne, Gawayne, and Kay (260–64), although the boy continues nameless until he asks whether Arthur will knight him (313–6). By this, and by the child's insistent questions — 'what calle yee this wande?' (200); 'Whatkyns a godd may that be ...?' (242); 'Whatkyns thynggez that ye bee ...?' (295); 'Scho will telle the name Off this ilke thyng' (339–40); 'If I solde a knyghte ken, Telles me wharby' (407–8) — the poet shows awareness of naming in this Fair Unknown story. But it is handled differently from its analogue: not least because the mother (whose name reappears but once in Arthur's thoughts — 590) does not die of grief but, having like Lufamour been subjected to the attentions of a monstrous suitor, goes mad in the forest and has to be lugged unceremoniously home by her son.

His relationship to the king having been made plain, it is reiterated from time to time: 'And all were of his kyn' (264); Arthur's near-recognition (585–8); his 'emes twoo' (1050); Gawain twice calls him 'sister sone' (1441, 1457). But because of this, indeed, there seems to be no question of Percyvell searching for his identity. We know who he is, even if he does not: he seems quite content with, even insistent upon, his namelessness — the contrast with his thirst to know the name of everything, but himself, is striking. 'Than saide the fole ... "I ame myn awnn modirs childe" ' (505–6); he will not listen to the king musing on his likeness to his (named) father: 'late be thi jangleynge!' (575). The messenger from Lufamour had no better luck: "What knight?" says Arthur;

... his name es forto layne
 ... I wolde hafe weten fayne
 What the childe highte.

⁶⁶See Taylor, 'Perceval/Perceforest', pp. 203–5.

⁶⁷*CT*, VII:915–7.

...

His dame sonne he said he hight! (1090-4).

Percyvell finally gets his name and his knighthood about three-quarters of the way through the romance. It is a teasing scene, because nobody actually names him in direct speech:

Thay called Percevell the wight;
The kyng doubbed hym to knyghte

...

Sir Percevell the Galayse,
Thay called hym in kythe (1636-43).

He manages to avoid hearing his name spoken, even when everybody knows it. He is addressed by name once only, by the Black Knight (1989). This speech, daring him to fetch back his mother's ring from the stalwart giant who beats up small people with his 'playlome' (2012-31), prefaces Percyvell's last fight. In this truly Pythonesque struggle, he chops off bits of giant one by one — then he gets the ring and his mother back.

There are three rings in the story. Least significant is that with which he weds Lufamour (1754-5, 1762-3); it serves, however, as a reminder of the significance of the other two, which are likewise associated each with a woman. The ring given him by his mother for a 'takynnyng' or proof of identity (425-7) turns out to be nothing of the kind: when she sees it again, in the wrong hands, she supposes it to be a token of her son's death and goes mad (2149-63). The third ring is, we discover, a magic one which protects its wearer from wounds and death (1856-63). Perhaps it is an example of 'Magic that Does Not Work' — but Percyvell acquires it (471-6) before his first major combat (with the Red Knight) and refuses to give it back (to the Black Knight — 1972-83) so that he has still got it during his last major combat, with the giant. We could suspect that here it is Magic that Does Work, were it not for the insistence on Percyvell's noble qualities: 'wighte', 'fre', 'bold', and so on. Cooper's point is that in the best romances 'the supernatural that fails to work [is] used to measure and define the human.'⁶⁸ But here the discovery, that he has got a magic ring which seems to have been protecting him all along, does not detract from our enjoyment of his extravagant prowess.

After Percyvell has married Lufamour and become king, his name disappears again for six and a half stanzas (1760-1864), during which he remembers his mother and goes in search of her. He finds, tied to a tree, the lady with whom he swapped rings long ago — the narrator calls him Sir Percevale as soon as he recognizes that his fault got her into trouble (1864-7). He is then named freely until the moment when he goes into the wood to fetch his mother: the name vanishes between lines 2168 and 2272, when Percyvell takes her, bathed and in her right mind, home to his queen.

⁶⁸'Magic that Does Not Work', p. 134.

If she does not actually un-name him, his mother is associated with his namelessness, and counterpoints it by losing her own once her relationship to Arthur has been established; her name reappears in only one other place: when her brother is thinking about her (590). She also stands in for the absent father. Before the romance can be brought to an end, the young man must find her (and kill the bad witch-mother whose son killed the elder Percyvell); furthermore she replaces the father-figure who, in Chrétien, instructs the young man in the use of weapons. She answers his questions freely, as if encouraging him to ask them (though it never occurs to him to ask his own name). She also tells him quite a lot about knighthood (389–412), and teaches him useful skills (for example: giving him a spear — 195–6, and showing him how to mend it — 749–51). I have remarked how Percyvell does not listen to anybody speaking his name: when the king laments that the ‘fende’ who killed his good knight Percyvell has been stealing his tableware for five years (629–40), the young man dashes off to recover the cup (643, 662, 670) and says nothing about avenging his father (nor is anything further made of it). Perhaps she represents the wild side of his nature which he never really loses; rather, he tames it and brings it home with him, so to speak. The famous well-water, mentioned so early in the text, seems to symbolize this wild state: Percyvell drank it ‘And *yitt* was he wyghte’ (8 — my emphasis); he worries about his mother eating grass (like Nebuchadnezzar) and drinking well-water (1771–9) instead of the goatsmilk of his childhood. At last he finds her: on the ninth day of searching he comes upon a familiar well, and as soon as he has drunk from it she appears beside him (2200–11). The special relationship between them is emphasized by the fact that both their names, but nobody else’s, are problematized.

There is, however, no playing with his name: nobody mocks at it, nor questions it, and he has no pseudonym. But quite a lot of people, always excepting himself, want to know about him. Arthur muses at length on his likeness to his father; Lufamour is very curious about him (1253–60), though she offers him her hand and kingdom (1337–40) before asking Arthur who he is (1561–71). Kay angrily demands to know his identity (293–312), and Lufamour’s messenger is especially keen to discover the name of the mysterious young fool (1089–1108), who clearly wishes to remain unknown (1042–52). Gawain never asks: it is typical of his role in this story that he recognizes the young man as his cousin and introduces himself freely (1433–6, 1497–1510; and typical that Gawain’s naming of himself is repeated).

Besides Gawain’s, the other name marked but not problematized is that of Lufamour’s ‘sowdane’. Not named until the moment of challenge — in free indirect speech: ‘Here sall he fynde Golrotherame!’ (1622) — he was introduced to the story as far back as l. 977. This splendid name appears three more times before he is killed at ll. 1722–3. His brother who woos Percyvell’s mother is nameless. It is significant that an important servant of Lufamour’s, her chamberlain, should be named (‘Hende Hatlayne’, because courteous as Gawain is — 1261–4), and that an important servant of Percyvell’s mother, the porter, should be name-

less. The latter is the giant's servant (2008, 2100), but devoted to the poor lady (2245-59). People associated with the courts of Arthur and of Lufamour tend to be named, but people associated with the wilder space into which Percyvell's mother retreats tend to be nameless.

The narrator generally controls naming. A few characters name one another or themselves; it is rare for one to address another by name. The narrator names Percyvell senior, Arthur, Acheflour, Ewayne, Gawayne, Kay, Hende Hatlayne. Percyvell junior is introduced first by the narrator (5) and then in (very) indirect speech: 'Percyvell thay gan hym calle' (15); 'He made calle it ... Als his ffadir highte ... Yonge Percyvell' (106-8). Lufamour is named by the messenger (973) and twice more in speech: by Hende Hatlayne (1277) and by Golrotherame (1631). The latter and Gawain are the only two characters who name themselves, one in free indirect speech, and the other long after having been introduced by the narrator. The only name to be used in direct address is 'Sir Percevell de Galays', as the Black Knight dares him to go for his last and most spectacular combat. The only other direct address in the text is the occasional prayer or adjuration to off-stage figures;⁶⁹ these do not feature very much, and there are no explicit references to other stories outside the romance.

But the narrator does allow other voices to share in the story-telling. There are a number of mini-narratives throughout the text, as characters refer to past actions or answer questions, and some more substantial inset narratives. These enhance the liveliness and variety in the poem, adding poignancy to the comedy: they underline Percyvell's unknown quality (the messenger's — 1090-96) and his wildness (Arthur's to Lufamour — 1572-83), they move the plot forward (the messenger's — 973-1004; the Black Knight's — 1953-68) as well as filling gaps (the ring-lady's — 1836-63; the porter's — 2116-67); Arthur's musings and Percyvell's memories of his mother (545-60, 585-96, 629-40, 1771-87, 2174-87) underline the contrast between past and present and between royal court and wild forest.

I would not go so far as to suggest (as Mills does, p. xxiii) that mother and son swap roles at the end of the story, though I agree that the 'comic presentation of the hero ... sets this Middle English romance apart' (p. xxiv). But I would go further, and say that *Sir Percyvell* is meant to be unlike its French analogue because the writer wishes to provoke thought about the courtly as well as to poke fun at the naïve. Study of naming-patterns in the romance demonstrates levels of strategic skill in a work sometimes regarded as mediocre and too often valued only for its comedy. Fantasy is for fun rather than for mysticism; the comedy is neither incompetent nor burlesque, but is a way of emphasizing the play of contrasting worlds.⁷⁰ Comedy is used to highlight the writer's enjoyment of less courtly things such as the forest scenes, the mother's madness, lively dialogue including

⁶⁹St John 329; (St) Peter 777, 933; Mary (indirect speech) 1822, 1825; Mahown 2038.

⁷⁰Rockwell concludes that parodic discourse such as this serves 'not simply to demystify the myths inherited from the past, but to clear a rhetorical space in which allegories of the present might be constructed' ('Appellation contrôlée', p. 452).

renarration by various characters, and details such as the 'playlome'; court values are subtly downplayed — the mother does not die of grief, the avenging of the father is never followed through, the hero is indifferent to his own name. The naïve looks at the sophisticated (the court world which defines itself in terms of name, family, vassalage, and so on) in a Far Side sort of way, and, with 'an enduring lack of polish' (p. xxiv) in spite of all he has learned, continues to be at home in the wilderness through to the end of the romance. The namelessness of this other world is marked by the last exchange of direct speech in the whole text: '“Siche a sone had I!” ... “My modir full dere: Wele byde ye me!” ' (2217–23). Percyvell, in spite of his worldly success, is ever reluctant to hear or to use his own name.

*Balaain*⁷¹

This romance has little of comedy and little, at first sight, in common with Fair Unknown stories. I choose it for its interest in naming, and because it contrasts with them in having an unhappy ending. I shall further discuss tragedy, and the fictional device of doubles, in later chapters; here I focus on the way (un) naming drives the narrative. The hero has two names: the first is opaque or hermogenean, and nobody seeks its meaning; the second is ultra-cratylic — being a transparent description nobody questions its meaning. But neither is able to protect him from annihilation as the story strips away his name, and his second sword. I have extracted from *La Suite* the story of the Knight with Two Swords,⁷² and begin with his acquired, not with his baptismal, name.⁷³

Malory's version of the story is better known, but I want to present as wide a range of romances as possible. Furthermore, I find that Malory, although very preoccupied with the importance of name, seems here to be treating the story as if to bring out and emphasize the role of Fate, as opposed to the idea of God's punishment, and focuses less than the French does on naming.⁷⁴ And Malory's protagonist is rather less Unknown than his analogue: 'there was a poore knyght with kynge Arthure that had bene presonere with hym half a yere ...' (62:33–

⁷¹Section and line numbers, and page references, are from [Merlin] ed. Roussineau, sections 91–240. It detaches readily from its surrounding text if one is looking at the naming patterns; it would be a different matter if one were studying it for the sake of the Grail story.

⁷²As Legge has done: [Balain] *Le Roman de Balain. La Suite*, written after 1230 in a Picard dialect, expands and elucidates Robert's *Merlin* (to be discussed in Chapter 4). Religious interpretation and moral discourse were progressively added to stories of the Arthurian cycle which, as it developed, became more complex and more remote from the early chronicles. The resulting enormous corpus was widely read and plundered by other writers (including Malory).

⁷³The similarly-titled *Li chevaliers as deus espees* (ed. Foerster; see Roussineau's note pp. 647–8) is thought to be one of the sources for my text, and is also explicitly concerned with the theme of naming (see esp. Kelly, 'The Name Topos', and Rockwell, 'Appellation contrôlée').

⁷⁴Hibbard believes that Malory, when he makes the old man and the maiden call the hero by name, 'is deliberately suggesting the old superstition of ... "death naming" ' ('Malory's Book of Balin', pp. 183–4). She notes that the French author 'makes a mystery of the hero's name', but considers that it 'serves no plain purpose' (pp. 192–3).

63:2). Compare this: 'Chis avoit esté desiretés de par le roi de Norhumberlande ... et l'avoit mis em prison plus de demi an, si en iert de nouviel issus' (94:27–32).

The story is a tragedy in which fate, the will of God, and the search for honour all conspire to un-name Balaain. He is not described as fair,⁷⁵ but like other Unknowns he appears at court nameless, and the reasons are provided analeptically in the text: as Libeaus is un-named by his mother, and as Gareth decides to hide his name on arrival, we learn that this poor knight has been 'desiretés' (94:28–36), though repeatedly described as one of the best knights in the world. We also learn that he has already lost one brother (99:7–12): this is a shadow of things to come because, instead of revenge and rehabilitation, the story brings disintegration and fratricide. Other elements in common with Fair Unknown romance are, first, that he is scorned by the damsel whose adventure he attempts (96:10–15) as are both Libeaus and Gareth, and next, more significantly, the fact that many (male) Fair Unknown protagonists also meet a close relation in combat, incognito, at the climax of the story.⁷⁶ The figure of his brother Balaan, who does not lose his name, is of crucial significance to the theme of un-naming.

Why a tragedy, when so many chivalric encounters and heroic biographies end with glory? The *Suite* was composed to elucidate later events, especially the Grail story and the tragedy of Arthur, and is shot through with 'une tonalité tragique'.⁷⁷ It is fitting that the man who committed the Dolorous Stroke should come to a terrible end, killing and being killed by a brother whose name is so like his own that it is as if they cancelled each other out.⁷⁸ As well as being the closest in name of all the pairs of combatants just referred to, they are also the closest kin. We know that Gareth is a good deal younger than his brother Gawain; Balaain and Balaan might just possibly be twins.

The story begins and ends with a fateful sword, which appears in the text before its bearer does (93:8–11) and is essayed, unsuccessfully, by another nameless knight after its bearer's death (240:3–10). It is inextricably connected with the tragic movement of the Cycle, being associated with the Lady of the Lake and Excalibur before its appearance at court (98; 106), being reserved explicitly for fratricide (141),⁷⁹ and at last being the sword with which one day in the future Lancelot will kill Gawain, 'le chevalier del siecle qu'il avra plus amé' (240).⁸⁰ The Knight has only one sword when he goes into the Pallés Perilleus: his first one (202:5–7), and it breaks. It is not explained why he does not wear both, as usual, when he insists on entering the hall with his sword-belt upon him (196:23–32); we

⁷⁵In Malory he is 'a lyckly man', ie. good-looking (63:16–17). For Malory's interest in Balin's name, see esp. Lynch, *Malory's Book of Arms*, pp. 15–27.

⁷⁶Other examples are Degaré and Ipomadon. Cuchulain kills his son because of the *geasa*, placed by his mother, that he must not tell his name ('The Deeds of Cuchulain', pp. 291–4).

⁷⁷Intro. p. xiii. Vinaver's Introduction to Legge's edition gives a fuller account of the *Suite*'s composition.

⁷⁸The scribe of Roussineau's base ms frequently confuses the names (see eg. pp. 82 and 87).

⁷⁹In one ms it is made clear that the brothers swap swords during their fight, so that Balaain too is killed with it (see note pp. 648–9).

⁸⁰This echoes the damsel's prediction at 96:35–8, that Balaain will kill 'li hom ou monde que vous plus amés.'

may assume if we please that he left the other behind with the rest of his armour, but the main thing is that he must strike the fateful blow with the Lance and no other weapon (202:34–203:7).

The sword, then, has nothing to do with the Dolorous Stroke. His search for honour is what leads him into the situation: he must avenge the two companions murdered while in his 'conduit' (under his protection) by killing Garlan the invisible knight; furthermore his search for honour is what drives him to keep the sword in the first place: he does not wish to be held 'vilains' in the eyes of the court (96:33–5). Stripped of his lands and possessions, he is disgraced; effectively he has lost his name. King Arthur fails to recognize him (97:7), another sign of his problematic identity, and although the king apologizes he still does not know who this knight is. The narrator, who sets out the names for the audience before anybody in the story discovers them, tells us he lost his first name *before* telling us what it was:

E pur les .II. espeies qu'il porta puis tant
com il vesqut perdi il son primer non, car home le pelloit
devant Baalin le Sauvage, e uns seons freres, qui n'estoit
mie mains bons chevalers de lui, apelloit home Baalan le
Sauvage.

...

Mais cil Baalin perdi puis
son non, si par les .II. espees qu'il porta qu'il ne fu puis
nomez Baalin, ainz l'apelerent tut communement le Che-
valer as .II. Espees ... (104:8–19).

He goes on to remark that, had the knight lived longer, he would have been 'renomez' among all the knights of Logres. Renowned, that is literally re-named (Fair Unknowns such as Guinglains are re-named in both senses). After he has left the court, in disgrace again for killing a lady and hoping to capture King Rions so as to regain his reputation, Arthur asks Merlin who he is. Merlin names him to the audience within the story long after his first appearance, praising his excellence and lamenting his death in the same sentence (108:20–25).

So far it looks as though the writer is very conscious of the naming of Balaain (and of other characters); the un-naming of the hero parallels and underlines the negative progress towards failure and death, which contrasts with the positive progress towards fame and success found in most romances. The naming-moments, associated with those killed by or because of him and his evil fate, are progressively emptied.

The knight of Ireland, anonymous until after his death, is named — with his lady — by King Mark, who has 'Lançor, fuis au roi d'Irlande, et dalés li ... Lione s'amie' engraved upon the tomb. When Merlin arrives, he adds two more names: 'li uns des nons Lanscelot dou Lac et li autres Tristrans' (115:15–17 and 22–30). It is stressed (111) that Balaain did not wish to kill him, and was unable to prevent the damsel killing herself.

The first knight mysteriously killed while in Balaain's company is given a name of sorts by Merlin, who instructs Arthur to have 'li Chevaliers Mesconneus' written on his tomb and promises that one day he will learn the name and then there will be great joy in the court (172:18–26). Roussineau remarks cautiously that this prophecy seems never to have been fulfilled (note, p. 655); nonetheless the name, such as it is, is strongly marked.

His damsel, who accompanies Balaain until the day of the Dolorous Stroke, ought to be mentioned because she also is killed because of him (207:36–40). She is not named, but not much further can be made of this: so many damsels are unnamed as if by convention that the naming of any one is comparatively remarkable. But Merlin's words, 'en che que elle vous compaignie', echo the theme of (failed) protection reflecting (failed) honour. Most of the failures are Balaain's, but the idea is first voiced by Arthur, when Balaain kills a damsel 'en mon conduit' (101:5–12): the king too is dishonoured.

The second knight to be killed in this way is given no name at all. Buried in proper knightly style (182:8–11), his stone remains blank until next day, when the hermit and li Chevalier as .II. Espees (the name Balaain has all but disappeared by now) find letters on it. But they announce, *not* the knight's name, but the fact that Gawain will avenge his father Loth by killing Pellinor in this graveyard (183:18–22). The prophecy about named living people, appearing where a dead knight's name ought to be, draws attention to the absence of that name.

The episode of the pensive knight and his unfaithful lady erases names in an even more bizarre fashion. Balaain is, as always, trying to help; exceptionally, he introduces himself when asked his name (215:1–13), but the other — asked only his 'estre' — gives his story without naming himself. He begins by addressing Balaain by name (215:22–216:1ff), but after discovering the treachery of the lady he addresses him only as 'sire' (221:9; 223:4 — during this episode the narrator calls him Chevalier as .II. Espees, or 'cil as .II. espees', and not Balaain). The latter does nothing about burying the bodies, but hastens away, fearing he will be blamed for their deaths. So there is no tombstone; the writing, if any, is elsewhere: he meets a squire and tells him the story 'Pour che que je voel que elle soit mise en escrit'. There are no names at all in this story — the squire reports that it was told him by 'uns chevaliers' — nevertheless it is much talked of 'par mi le païs' (223:35–224:9).

I have omitted from this sequence two major adversaries because they mark something rather different happening to Balaain. The first is the victory over King Rions (one of the most important named figures in the story), the means by which the Chevalier gains public renown. With the help of Merlin in disguise, he and Balaan attack and capture Rions, and it is Balaan who insists he must surrender to Arthur 'mie de par nous deus, mais de par le Chevalier as .II. Espees' (131:35–40 — it was Balaan who named him thus, as a deliberate incognito, to King Mark at 118). Rions does so, and Merlin explains to Arthur who the knight is, so that the second naming to Arthur overlays the first (133:14–15 and 39–48, compared with 108:20–25). Much is made of the valour of the two brothers in this

and following episodes, but by the time Arthur sees the one brother again (169 — this will be for the last time) the other has vanished. From that temporary high point, the hero can move only downwards, although he does salvage a modicum of private honour (as opposed to public renown).

The other important adversary is Garlan, the knight who rides invisible. It is vital to the hero's honour to avenge those knights killed while under his protection, and he does achieve this, even though he is led inescapably to the Dolorous Stroke by the fight which ensues. The naming of Garlan is carefully prepared: at first nobody has any idea and Merlin will not say (172:14–20), then we learn the attacker can be killed with the 'tronchon' he used (178:2–3). Next, Merlin gives his name 'Gallan ... freres Pellohan'; Balaain remarks that he does not know him, but 'puis que je en sai le non, il ne puet estre que je ne le truisse' (179:12–19). The climax happens in the dining-hall (197–200), where Balaain asks for Garlan to be pointed out to him; he is described, named Gallans li Rous, then he smacks Balaain in the face. Balaain challenges him by name twice before cutting him down, he names him when calling to the 'Hostes' to come and fetch his blood, and the narrator names him again as Balaain stabs his body with the 'tronchon'.

I have used the name Balaain while writing this passage, but in fact the narrator has not called him Balaain since the moment when he challenges Merlin for refusing to name himself: 'Il ne me samble pas que vous soiés preudom, quant vous ne vous osés noumer' (125:3–14; 126:7). There is an exception at 141:28–31, where an aside explains about the swords; otherwise he is named Balaain only, and rarely, by people in the story. This happens in the exchange with the pensive knight described above, and then after the Dolorous Stroke when Merlin shouts his name to wake him from his long swoon (207:21–4). It may well startle the audience, who have not heard the name for pages; it also seems to open up a space in the narrative, as though Balaain could at this instant repossess his name (having achieved the Stroke) and escape from the story just like an ordinary villain. But he is no villain, and must go on to meet his doom. Finally, Merlin writes on the tomb 'Chi gist Balaain ...' (239:2–7). Once, at the very end, the narrator refers to the sword 'que Balaains avoit aporté' (240:1–5). It is as if he gave way, early in the story, to the public name bestowed by Balaan and used by everybody except Merlin and Balaain himself — who seems to be trying in vain to hold onto it.

What of Balaan, in all this? It would be too simple to see him as merely a double of his brother, but I think he (never un-named) is in some sense an alternative to him. This is the man Balaain could have been, had his fate not decreed otherwise. He was not disgraced and disinherited, he has a named heir,⁸¹ and he is named freely in the narrative until the scene of the last battle. Here we are not kept in suspense but told that this was indeed his brother; the narrator

⁸¹Roussineau, p. 649, calls this a 'contradiction' because of his premature death: 'E de celui Baalan issi puis Dodineus li Sauvage' (104:12). One might debate whether he fathered the child during his longish absence from the story (141 to 225), but it is a non-debate: the *text* gives him a named heir.

however colludes with his disguised appearance by calling him not only 'ses freres' but also 'cil de la tour' (229:16–18; 230:13), until the moment when he names himself Balaan, brother of the best knight in the world (233:17–22). He has power that his brother has not, he is equally successful in battle but is determined to give the credit, as well as the name, to the Knight with Two Swords. Balaan never hints that he wants to remain unknown, it is Balaan 'qui ne veult pas que ses freres soit conneus' (118:4–5) in spite of his oft-expressed admiration for his prowess. Perhaps he is trying to hide his brother's disgrace? There can be nothing of jealousy or malice here, and in any case the change/loss of name does not cause Balaan's downfall, it parallels and highlights it. In fact, it is his search for honour, or Name, which kills him. He is reluctant to take on the battle at the tower, and for the first time in his life he is afraid, and yet he would rather die than be a coward (227:1–12). At the beginning he was anxious not to look 'vilains' before the court, but at the end he is concerned about an internal, private honour. The battle to the death is unlike a battle between two aspects of the same man, more like a symbolic death of names — that have been changing and fragmenting throughout this anti-quest, this tragic romance.

*Ipomadon*⁸²

A self-conscious manipulator of identity.⁸³

Ipomadon's name, established for the audience at the outset, is a stable and meaningless point of departure for a potentially endless series of incognito, disguise, and impersonation — showing the writer to be a self-conscious manipulator of point-of-view. Others see the anonymous or merely-described object (him; the strange valet); *Ipomadon*, as subject, acts. Name is used grammatically; even a speaking name, the *Fere* (the proud, or the spouse), is not allowed to describe.

Ipomadon is generally recognized to have elements in common with the classic Fair Unknowns; Hue de Rotelande, whose romance this "translates", took several ideas from *Li Biaus Descouneüs*.⁸⁴ However, it does not immediately sound like a Fair Unknown story — partly because these elements are differently presented, partly because both *Ipomadon* and the narrator are quite clear about who the hero is, but mostly because the point-of-view is completely unexpected.

Instead of being at a king's court (usually Arthur's) and watching a stranger arrive, we travel with *Ipomadon* to a lady's court ... where he is a stranger. He

⁸²That three English versions of the romance were made (in verse and in prose, each spelling the hero's name differently) is proof of the story's popularity. Further, it is cited by sophisticated medieval poets, including Gavin Douglas. I have chosen to study the Middle English tail-rhyme version, known as *Ipomadon A*; line (and page) references are to Purdie's edition. This long, skilful, and elegantly-written version (dated between 1390 and 1450) is an anonymous rendition of Hue de Rotelande's twelfth-century Anglo-Norman *Ipomedon*.

⁸³Snell's study (in 'Thematics of Disguise', pp. 41–56) focuses on a different version, but her insights are useful because disguise, identity, and naming are integral to the "Ipomedon" story.

⁸⁴See eg. Purdie's Introduction, p. lxii, and Benson, in 'Gareth', esp. pp. 94–102. Interest in name is one of them — see Chênerie, 'Dénomination et anthroponymie'.

is not in search of his identity; everybody (but a couple of trusted intimates) wants to know who he is, even to the extent of wondering whether he is from the land of fairy,⁸⁵ if they could only find him in whatever disguise he is using today. His proper designation is Best Knight, but he is modestly reluctant to assume it: he seeks 'pryce and loos', 'loos and worthynes' (1556–91), and 'eft ... more worthynes' (3481–2), but not — as far as I can discover — name, fame, or renown in those words. Deeds, not fame, prove worth (2330–47): 'In fele wordis be reson ys lyes' says the writer, in the hero's speech, and proceeds to play with illusions of hearsay and of appearance, using name as a technique for manipulating point-of-view. Lines such as: "Ipomadon rode into the hall" or "Ipomadon thought ..." and: "they laughed at the queen's drew" or "she looked at the fool" are too frequent to list. Whatever inconsistencies there may be in the plot (for example, that Cabanus must have seen the ring before), and however clumsy scribes may have been with names (p. xii), the skill with which this trick is handled comes through with astonishing clarity; the writer frequently underlines his delight in what he is doing by making little jokes about it. Purdie discusses his humour, which 'goes some way to replacing Hue's more sardonic wit' (p. lxxvi), with its effects of foreshadowing and dramatic irony; the laugh is often with the audience and against characters who do not realise whom they are talking about. Some examples are:

1. Amfyon is grumbling that the lady will not marry — there are plenty who would be glad to have her, from places like Germany and

'... In Poyle, where noble kyngys ar kend.'
 He sayd wel sother then he wend
 ... none so fayne, so God me save,
 As wold Ipomadon! (1911–19).

2. The "fool" has told the court that the queen used to love him (6336–45, 6358–67). She says 'Syn I have louyd hym, nedys I mvste Praye for him' (6415–17) — she thinks she is joking!
3. 'Shoo lokyd on hym [sc. Ipomadon incognito, who has apparently been out hunting all day] þat be her satte; The whyte and the rede boþe she forgatte' (4116–17) — 'boþe' knights were, of course, Ipomadon.
4. What could be a line-filler from the hand of another writer here looks like a reminder that some names are not so stable: Cabanus answers "Lyolyne" (Ipomadon in disguise) with '... my name is Cabanus, And many a day hathe bene!' (8389–93).

For all his good-humoured collusion with the audience, the writer manages to spring one major surprise: the gleeful hint at 43–5 does not give away the fact

⁸⁵3987–92. Some female Fair Unknowns are likewise suspected, esp. Emaré (700–1), and Gower's Constance (*CA* II:964 and 1019).

that Cabanus is Ipomadon's brother. From the first elusive reference to the hero (a possessive pronoun), to the startling final moment when he turns and addresses us directly

Ipomadon hathe sent his sonde . . .
His mensyngere makythe he me (8876-8),

the writer embroiders with ambiguity the naming-theme. Ipomadon's message (instead of the rather stodgy advice to lovers) ought perhaps to be

Ye know [not] that ye here also,
Ye beleve not that ye see (7024-5).

* * * * *

The writer keeps tight control over naming. Almost without exception, characters are named by the narrator before being named in speech — though it is notable that the Fere is named indirectly, as follows (80-99): the King of Calabria and Mellyagere's sister have a 'chylde', a 'doughtter', their 'ayre'. 'The may' grows and a tutor is found for 'this lady', and at fifteen she takes over the kingdom. 'All men callyd her . . . Of Calabere the F[e]re'. She is introduced, and makes her vow that she will marry none but the best knight of the world (112-20), before Ipomadon is introduced by name. But she is never given a name of her own. The by-name, meaning "the Proud One", is more slippery in English than the Anglo-Norman 'la Fiere'. Its first two appearances are "incorrect": the ms has 'fayre' at 99 and 177, and of course she is fair, too. The word is not used to mean pride or proud: when scolding herself for 'pryde' she calls herself 'fers' (941-61). Curiously, Imayne claims to know nothing about it: 'Whate pryde, lady . . . ? That hard I speke neuer or nowe' (1421-7). There are several examples of 'that fre' (meaning "the lady" or "gracious one"): 132, 1315, and especially 566, where 'The fre' could just as easily be 'The Fere'. And 'fere' means fellow, accomplice, or wife; it is used of the heroine, to mean wife, at least twice: 2978 and 4964. Moreover, she repents of her pride very early, even before knowing that the man she loves is Best Knight. There is thus something insubstantial about her, for all her power and strength of character (she is settling disputes among her lords when we first walk into her court — 338-54); her aunt and analogue, Mellyagere's queen, has no name at all, and Imayne seems the most solid of the three central women, partly because she is strongly named (see below). There is an affecting moment near the end of the story, when Cabanus hails the ships off-shore: 'What are ye, thes schepys wythinne . . . ?', and the frightened heroine calls back 'I am a sympull woman, syr, That yesterday owght Calaber . . .' (8286-300), and yet again it is notable that when she and the hero come together at last they do not greet each other by name. They are named together as they approach (8739-40), but they say 'God save you, damysell!' and 'Syr, welcome . . .' (8754-5). Elsewhere in the text, people address one another by name freely, and sometimes

significantly ('Abyde, I[aso]ne, and speke wyth me!' ... "But how do you know my name??" — 4630ff — there are several such scenes); Imayne even addresses herself by name in some of her soliloquies.

The romance begins with Ipomadon's name in the (manuscript – see pp. xviii–xix) title, but he is already in disguise when first mentioned: 'That of his love was lothe to le[f]e Fro tyme that he began' — nothing but pronouns (14–15). He is then 'a stravnge lover' (19): this combines the names 'stravnge valete' (the Fere's) with 'quenes drewe' (at Mellyagere's court). Next, the narrator says 'No whedure a better knyght þan he Was no levand ...' (23–4), then suddenly abandons him, to begin introducing the king of Cessyle, then his nephew Cabanus and his sister the heroine's mother, the heroine, the king of Poyle with his wife and baby son ... even the tutor, Talamewe, is named before we learn the name of the child.

There are two elements in the descriptive setting which work to underline the peculiarities of the central story. First, in the court-scenes where the Fere is facing pressure from her barons, and in the tournament-scenes, participants are named in a more-or-less straightforward fashion as they appear.⁸⁶ Secondly, there are almost no off-stage names: a few asseverations (eg. 'Be God and Sent Myghell! — 3989, and similar), but no saint's name marked as significant; there are no explicit references to other romances. These factors are effective by not distracting attention from the complex naming-games played with and among the main characters.

Besides his three main disguises/pseudonyms, Ipomadon has a variety of other guises and by-names. Once knighted, and beginning to win 'love and los' all over Christendom, nobody knows what to call him but 'the worthy knyghte þat had no name' (1745–53). While pretending to be the queen's special servant he talks as a fool (4119–20), he is scorned as a coward (4872–3, 4898–900), he fights as three different knights one after another, and he comes home dressed as a hunter (3451–2). Having overcome all his adversaries but one, he pretends to be Sir Lyolyne. Here he takes care to wear black armour, like the other's, then possesses himself of the other's tent after beating him, so that none of the watchers will know who has won. It is his last and most dangerous disguise, because his last adversary is his friend and will turn out to be his brother. Nevertheless it allows him, finally, to declare that he has won the Fere and to shout out his name — it is the wrong one, but it is the first proper name he ever gives himself:

... I am Lyolyne!
 I maye ryde here — the londe is myne,
 The Fere, and all bedene;
 I wanne her wyth my hand ... (8385–8).

Later, as Cabanus draws his story out of him (8496–588), he takes off mask after mask and his real name comes like a huge sigh of relief: ' " what is your name?" "Ipomadon" '.

⁸⁶There is, however, quite a build-up to the naming of Sir Lyolyne (6481–500), and some dramatic delay in the naming of his knights (eg. 6853–97) as they appear one by one to claim Imayne.

The main body of the romance comprises three phases. Each includes his role, with or without pseudonym, the woman to whom this role is played, and a third (male) figure whose role complements or comments on his disguise in some way. They are: the Fere and Jason (a brotherly figure who fades out of the story as Cabanus' importance increases); the queen and Cabanus; Imayne and the dwarf (who sees far enough through the fool's disguise to think of him as a knight). Naturally the phases overlap in the story: Imayne is very active in the first phase, Jason in the second, for instance.

The Fere and the 'stravnge valete'

Having fallen in love by hearsay (176–90), he tells his 'maystur' he wants to do a bit of travelling and 'seke my seruys' (214), then admits he wants to see 'The semely Fere of Calabyre' (250).⁸⁷ Once arrived, Talamewe fixes up lodgings for them, and, as the innkeeper surveys his visitors, the narrator avoids naming the hero: 'His oste vpon the chylde gan loke ...' (316). They proceed to the Fere's court, and he makes his entrance. Frequently, when the hero is doing something positive (of and for himself), Ipomadon is the subject of the active verb: 'Into the hall comys Ipomadon' (353). Now he will not be named again for nearly two hundred lines; meanwhile everybody in the court will be getting a good look at the 'chylde' ('younde man'; 'gentyll syr'), and he will be getting a new name.

He kneels and offers the lady his service, and she answers by calling him, first, 'belamyne' (428) and then asking 'What ys thy name, pou stravnge valete?' (431). His answer is evasive, and initially ambiguous: 'I was callyd at home by the same name' (433). What more natural than that his friends, at home, should call him 'belamyne'? But this name quickly evaporates as he goes on '... And borne I was in ferre contre' (434). However absurd it is, that he was called Stranger at home, this is the name that sticks — whatever he meant (and he will not say: 'Forther wotte ye not', 435).

He is not called Ipomadon again for some time. He stays at court for three years, and is universally beloved except, I am sorry to say, for his cowardice. 'Of dedes of armus when they spake, Ipomadon wolde turne his bake ...' (521–2). Here again, he is acting for himself, but he gets another "name" at the same time: they '“Cowarde” gan hym call' (526). Meanwhile, the lady 'monys the stravnge valete' (551); she is thinking about him, and the narrator colludes by using her name for him. During the hunting scene which follows, Ipomadon (590, 612, etc.) does wonders, all dressed in green as a hunter (657–8).

At this point she falls in love with him, but she is torn because 'he louyd no hardenes': he is not interested in fighting. It is surprising to hear the line 'She thynkys to haue Ipomadon' (699) when thus far the narrator has been so careful about point-of-view. But a turning-point approaches: she is repenting of her vow already (708–9), and were it not for what people might think (that she was wasting herself on 'a febyll freke' — 720–2), this is the moment when

⁸⁷Here the name Fere appears "correctly" for the first time — see above p. 48.

she would get him. But she 'thought agayne, "Thynke not the[re]on" ... Att the laste, of love drewry Dystwres defawte of chevallrye' (700-3). The moment has passed, although she still looks at him with longing. 'I hope here lokynge dyd here goode', chuckles the narrator (750), and everybody at court gives the (hunting) prize to 'that straunge valet' (755-60).

Next, we are told of the lady's cousin Jason, who has become close friends with Ipomadon. They call each other 'brother', and go around in matching clothes. That evening, the hero gives the lady many a loving look (he even drops a hint at 782-4), and she realises that he loves her, but she is anxious about secrecy, in case of slander. It seems clear that the hero's endless predilection for disguise stems more from modesty than from desire for secrecy — which is what she is far more worried about. She pretends to scold Jason for making sheep's eyes at Imayne, indicating that beauty, courtesy, and largesse will get a man nowhere with the ladies: 'Gyff the to Iustys or to turnaynge ...' (840-62). Ipomadon (we get his thoughts here) knows the tirade is meant for him; he soothes Jason and makes up his mind to leave. Bidding the lady goodnight ('Before hyr knelyd Ypomadon' — 888), he is not named again until l. 1271, when he is well on his way.

He has still not confessed to Talamewe,⁸⁸ but pretends to be ill, saying he has had a dream about his parents and must go to visit them. This invented dream (which comes true even though he never had it) is his excuse to Jason, who meets him on the road and tries to persuade him to return. Jason has acted as best friend, he took the scolding directed at the hero, and he knows that in her heart his cousin thinks so highly of Ipomadon that the words pre-echo Best Knight: 'pou holdyn a pryce Moste of anny man' (1302-3). He asks Ipomadon to tell him his name (1319-21) and is deeply hurt when he refuses. Meanwhile, the lady is looking for 'the straunge valet' (1348-9) and questions Jason feverishly on his return. ' "Your valette ... ys agoone" ... "Whiche?" sche sayd. "Pe valet straunge"' (1355-63). She too knows it is not his real name: ' "spyrd thou not his name?" "Ye, but he wold not me tell" ' (1390-1). In the next scene, she unburdens herself to Imayne: "I'm in love!" "Who with?" "I don't know!" she wails. The stammering trick works to emphasize the absurdity of her situation (1436-71 and note). By contrast, Ipomadon's confession to Talamewe is quite straightforward, although he does not name her ('She dothe me all this payne' — 1546-53); Talamewe promptly advises him to get on with becoming Best Knight as fast as may be, so that she will hear of him (hearsay again, 1574-9). But words meaning name, renown, or reputation are surprisingly absent from this passage and elsewhere.

While Ipomadon is at home, receiving a ring — and the knowledge that he has a half-brother somewhere — from his dying mother, and receiving knighthood from his father, the Fere is pestered by her lords to get married. Elements of the second phase of Ipomadon's disguisings begin to take their place: when

⁸⁸There is an earlier hint that he can guess his dear boy's thoughts: 'That sawe his maystur Talamewe, And he [sc. Ipomadon] parsayuyd yt not' (197-8 and note).

she arranges for her uncle Mellyagere to come and advise her, she is pleased to welcome Cabanus, who arrives with him (2037–41); we have not met him before. The narrator reminds us of the absent Ipomadon, by remarking on her stunning beauty ('Had Ipomadone þan here sene' — 2055–66), and adds casually that the hero had left a spy in the camp. We knew that he and Talamewe had brought a couple of men with them 'That chyldys currere for to be' (295–7): here is one of them, named Egyon, who will dash off to Poyle with the whole story and the plans for the tournament (2067–72, 2288–308). Ipomadon wants to go incognito so that he can prove himself worthy of her, because deeds speak louder than words (2327–59). His plan is to hide at Mellyagere's court ('I wotte welle he wil be at hit' [sc. the tournament] 2354–7), and he borrows a young girl-cousin (never named) to take along as a pretext: she is to be a companion for Mellyagere's queen (2604–7).

The queen and 'Drew-le-Rayne'

Ipomadon is well prepared: he was called a coward, even a fool (indirectly, in Jason's scolding — 840–2) at the Fere's court, and he won praise for his hunting skills. Now he will act as a sort of fool (p. xii) who thinks of nothing but the chase and his beloved dogs (2809–10, 2818–20). When Cabanus goes to meet the stranger ('Younder semythe a knyghte' — 2513–18) he asks to talk to the king, then explains that he wants a place for his cousin, and a special place for himself, with the queen. He does not say what it is to be, nor does the king ask his name ('The kyng lokythe on the knyght' — 2615–18). Before his arrival at court, there is an elaborate bonding scene between him and Cabanus, where they swear friendship (though not, oddly enough, brotherhood) and peace: 'Betwene vs too shall neuer be stryffe' (2666–86).⁸⁹

Next, he makes his entrance to the king's hall and asks a 'comnavnte' — a favour to which the king must agree before knowing what it is. He has a name, of sorts, prepared — 'I wille be callyd þe quenes drewe (2735–55) — and his privilege will be to accompany the queen as far as her bed-chamber for a goodnight kiss. He will serve her well 'Wyth huntynge and haukyng bothe', and the king need not worry about his intentions (whatever we may discover later about hers). Although Ipomadon is named freely in this scene, the following shows him from the court's point of view: '... The knyght and the lady gente. To the quene is he sente ... The quene lokyd on hym and þoughte ...' (2780ff). He is next named when talking of hunting and going to the forest; the pattern is becoming familiar.

When the time for the tournament arrives, all the men start getting their gear ready and 'louzhen at Drew-le-rayne. He did but as he was wonte ... went to hunte' (2858–62); in spite of Cabanus' urging, he says his job is to stay with the queen. The tournament scenes are studded with names of the participants; we see

⁸⁹They will in fact fight three battles — two during the tournament and the last at the climax of the romance.

them arriving, then the narrator turns to 'the knyght ... That dwellys wyth the quene' (2991–5). The absence of name is striking, after the list of kings, dukes, and so on in the preceding passage. But Ipomadon is the subject of verbs when he begins to put his plan into action. He gets his white horse and gear ready, sends Talamewe off to hunt for him, and rides to the tournament with Egyon by his side (3039–90). The queen's ladies had been shouting "Look at your lover-boy going to the tourney with horn and hound!"; now the watcher on the castle wall sees a white knight and calls the Fere to look (3096–103).

During the action, she sends Jason to hand spears to the best man. Ipomadon pretends not to know him ("Who are you, then?" Jason says simply that he is the lady's cousin — 3142–53), but at the end of the day he calls him by name, to his surprise (3345–54), and reveals that he is the 'strange valett'. Next, Ipomadon changes into hunter's clothes (3450–2), the maidens watch 'Madam ... your derlyng' coming home (3460–3), and the 'knyghte' goes into the hall to present her with trophies of the chase (3474–5). Thoas the chamberlain recounts the day's events, and that the white knight did best (3523–30). Ipomadon then begins babbling cheerfully about his day out,⁹⁰ and how his white hound has done best of all (3549–56). He is amusing himself and us, the audience, as well as the audience in the story; they laugh at his foolishness (3557–80). Events unfold in much the same way next day (red knight, red dog) and on the third day (black knight, black dog).

Only Cabanus does not laugh at the 'noble folle' (3580–6); he is very disappointed in his 'felow', who nevertheless gets the better of him two days running. Over at the Fere's court, Imayne tries to comfort her 'systur', never doubting that the lovers will come together at last; this contrasts with Jason's despair that every time he finds his brother he loses him again: 'We shall hym neuer see' (3399–428). The conversations between the heroine and each of her companions serve to build a sense of their emotional depth.⁹¹ Imayne will assume an even greater importance in the third phase of Ipomadon's disguise-game; Jason will virtually disappear at the end of this phase, finally losing his brother when he receives the horse that the unknown knight won from his other brother Cabanus (he reappears briefly at the end, to get the King of Lorraine's daughter in marriage — 8811–13).

There remain a few interesting points about naming-patterns in this section. The narrator's trick, of making Ipomadon the subject of his actions but making "him" the object of other people's gaze, and thoughts, produces a remarkable effect during the conversations that take place after each day's jousting. We watch, through Thoas' eyes, the unknown knight winning all the prizes, and 'Her leff' (eg. 4036) sits by the queen. When Ipomadon speaks up (eg. 4120), the

⁹⁰What happens during the gap in the ms here (note to 3543ff) may be reconstructed from the Anglo-Norman poem and deduced from the events of the next two days, when the pattern is repeated.

⁹¹Mehl (*Middle English Romances*, pp. 58–68) remarks that *Ipomadon*, among Middle English tail-rhyme romances, contains unusually extended, and introspective, discussion of emotion and of courtly love.

sudden sound of his name effects a sudden and startling change in point-of-view: here he is, right beside us. The repeated naming of his dogs, on each of the three days (3549–78, 4141–54, 4828–33), echoes the fact that the participants in the tournament are named. Although more dogs have names than do women in this romance, the writer is not thereby showing disrespect for women: rather he is poking fun at the war-games of the men. The queen, it must be said however, does not come out completely unscathed: the writer drops several not-so-subtle hints about improper feelings for her toy-boy (the first at 2789–94), and one of these is an example of the narrator suddenly giving us the hero's point of view. Each evening, as we know, he leads her to her chamber and kisses her; on the second night of the tournament the usual pattern (first 'Hyr loue' — 3587–90; third 'he' — 4882–7) is varied: 'Ipomadon ... To chambyr ledde þe quene' (4161–4). This is a little surprising, until we hear the hint of his thought in the next lines: 'Full well he wyst þe quenes will — To reste she went, I wene' (4165–6). It would not be her first such weakness, we gather: Cananeus refers to her feelings for him at 5346–50, and Ipomadon taunts him on the subject after thrashing him later (5514–16). He leaves Cananeus a sadder and wiser man (who even speaks well of him, though of nobody else, ever after — 5585–6).

When the burgess, on Ipomadon's instructions, presents the horses, Cabanus gets the black one from the third day's tournament. If there is any symbolism in this (note that Jason gets Cabanus' horse), it is perhaps a proleptic reference to the day when Cabanus will again fight a knight in black. Now Cabanus asks the burgess "But didn't you ask his name?" (5188–90). Hearing — not his name but — that he was his 'felow' at court, Cabanus chides himself for a fool (a lot of people call one another, or themselves, fool in this romance) in quite strong language: 'Alas, foule ... His dedys why parsevyd thou nought? ... I myght haue wyst yf I wold' (5200–11). Cabanus' role at this point is to be the hero's 'felow' (not yet brother), to be the one who does not laugh at him, to ask about his identity and to question his own judgement about it; it is a neat touch of irony that in the next phase, when Imayne comes to Mellyagere's court in search of a champion, Cabanus should just happen to be away ... 'an-huntyng'! (6394–6, 8204–10).

Imayne and the fool

The most strongly-drawn of the female characters, Imayne appears, complete with name, early in the romance as the Fere's confidante. We are not given much information at first, but the bare essentials of her name and role are progressively filled with detail as the story unfolds: she has a good deal of dialogue and, especially in the third phase, soliloquy. We later discover that she is a princess in her own right; she does not develop even in the sense that the hero and heroine do (in that they grow towards each other), but her character, such as it is, is revealed quite strikingly. She contrasts with the shadowy queen, so that the Fere stands between two women: one very substantial and the other not at all. She is introduced in a very dramatic manner when she arrives in search of a champion

to fight Lyolyne: Ipomadon has already turned up and is sitting on the floor in his fool's garb, munching heartily, when a fabulous vision of beauty comes riding into the hall (6452–77). The conversation is far advanced — she has already given up hope of getting any help here — before she is identified, from floor-level: 'Full well Ipomadon knew Imayne' (6521) and the fool jumps up to volunteer. She does not recognize him: 'Hym beholdys Imayne. "Do away, foole ..." ' she says (6533–7), but he follows her nevertheless.

As before, his role has been well prepared. Everybody has been laughing at him up to now, and this time he does not bother with a pseudonym, nor does he pretend to be any sort of servant. It is no tournament he is to fight, but single combat in deadly earnest, so he sets out to be a fool in earnest. But Imayne's dwarf spots something about the absurd figure even now approaching. At first he thinks merely that folly may be capable of overcoming chivalry (6623–4) — which is what the writer keeps trying to tell us, of course. He also wants to be courteous; he is a figure of some dignity, in fact: Imayne calls him 'ser' and he addresses her confidently by name (6604, 6620–1). When he has set up her pavilion, he asks her 'That she wold to her calle the knyght' (6691–6); already, in spite of appearances and Imayne's instant refusal ('Yf I a fole shuld to me calle' — it happens again at 6835–41), he thinks of him as a knight. As do the knights encountered by Gareth, the dwarf attempts to persuade the damsel that here is a worthy man. She eventually comes round (6954–91), calling him 'knyght' at last, but unlike Lynet she reluctantly and painfully falls in love with her companion (7150–75). Although not realizing that he is the 'strange valet', she sets herself against, by aligning herself with, her rival: 'I am ... As grette a lady as the Fere ... I shall you make ... As grett a lord as euer myghte she' (7194–211). Her anguish parallels the other's: both women struggle with love for a man who looks worthless to the outside world, but they believe, even know, him to be worthy. The dwarf's role fades out as Imayne has increasingly sensible conversations with Ipomadon; at last he addresses her by name (7440–57, instead of pretending to bite her — 7188–95), and they agree to be friends (7470–2), which is what the dwarf has been trying to bring about (7097–114).

Her pact with Ipomadon means that she keeps the Fere in the dark about the tremendous champion she has brought ('It was told me ... A knyght come wyth you ... That was off grett powere'. She denies this — 7503–14); the lady thus despairs, and prepares for flight. Meanwhile Ipomadon too is arranging to mislead her (from the best of motives — 7692–700) and Imayne colludes, in spite of the dwarf's urging and the narrator's disapproval (7661–7, 7701–3). This collusion helps to extend the hero's disguises into the last act of the drama.

To conclude, I shall examine why Ipomadon does not reveal himself when he sees Cabanus coming to fight him.⁹² Perhaps modesty, suggested as the best

⁹²Hanning compares this ending to the close of the scherzo of Beethoven's seventh symphony — *The Individual in Twelfth-Century Romance*, p. 135, n. 50 (on p. 269). See also Stanesco, 'Le Secret de l'*estrange* chevalier', on contradictory motivation in medieval romance: the Stranger's 'secret' is his name because of the *geasa*, or name-taboo, which survive into such romances. Burrow's conclusion ('The Uses of Incognito') is quite similar to mine.

reason for his disguises, still holds him back (8400–5). After all, Cabanus is himself a worthy candidate for the Fere's hand, and Ipomadon cannot be best knight until he has beaten all challengers (Cabanus has definitely challenged him — 8394–9); it is too late to draw back. In any case, the story requires him to fight his brother, and the revelation of his name goes with his re-positioning in a family: as Ménard says of Perceval '[il] sait maintenant qu'il s'insère dans un lignage'.⁹³ Ipomadon knows who his parents were, but they are dead; now he discovers himself to be part of a living family. The ring is an odd detail — why are we suddenly told of its virtue to staunch blood? It disappears from the text between the moment he receives it from his mother and the moment he uses it on the wound inflicted by Lyolyne (8015–20). We are meant to have forgotten about it, as Ipomadon has forgotten about the lost brother; it reappears here to remind us of its existence and prepare for the revelation in the next scene.

The re-narration of Ipomadon's disguises, culminating in his name (8508–84), is overheard by one Prynsyus (8613). It is fitting that this knight should be named, for he has a small but important role: to repeat the story to the Fere, who learns the hero's name from his account (8641–700). Imayne gives up with good grace at this point (8701–17); in her "aside" she addresses herself by name and admits that 'She' (the Fere) is far more worthy to have him — she too comments on his disguise and how she had been incapable of seeing through it. A third re-narration is telescoped into Cabanus' letters to King Mellyagere (8763–8).

* * * * *

How should we read the theme of naming in *Ipomadon*, interwoven as it is with themes of disguise and discovery? It is notable that, where the Fere's name is descriptive, Ipomadon's is not. The first has a meaning (the Proud) which we are allowed to forget, though it ought to condemn its bearer to being proud for ever. The second has no particular meaning in itself, and is hidden from nearly everybody in the story. But the Fere is able to change in spite of her name; Ipomadon is able to erase himself as king's son and rebuild himself from scratch — also, as it were, in spite of his name. The changes and disguises in the romance work to show that a person need not be trapped inside a name, whether that name is descriptive or not.

In addition, the writer uses naming as a tool to heighten the effects of disguise and deception, and to manipulate shifts in point-of-view. People are very disconcerted by not knowing a name; even when at the centre of the action they cannot see what is in front of them. Despite the unusually diegetic viewpoints, only the audience (and the hero) can actually see what is happening. The result is not only to enhance the comedy (the writer's sly manner is quite charming) but also to increase a sense of sympathy with the characters, by creating the illusion that we can hear what they are thinking and see through their eyes.

⁹³ *Études*, p. 70.

Silence

My last Fair Unknown study is *Le Roman de Silence*. Written in a mixture of Francien and Picard, perhaps 1270–80, the unique manuscript survives in an anthology which could have belonged to a professional entertainer. It may have been copied for a Lady Beatrice de Gavre on the occasion of her marriage. We do not know whether the romance was to be recited by the entertainer or read by the lady, or both; the (probably not English) author, Heldris de Cornuälle, is otherwise unknown.⁹⁴ Because the protagonist is not silent, the name (*Silence*) is effectively non-existent: it indicates a silence or space where name ought to be, and allows both poet and protagonist to explore notions of gender and power. S/he may become masculine or feminine by means of a Latin suffix; s/he can take on disguises and have adventures and get married just as a named character can. The poem also features a debate between Nature and Nurture. The passage explaining why Nature needs so many different moulds (for otherwise ‘c’on ne savroit Quoi, ne quel non, cascuns avroit’ — 1887–92) contains a hint that name must be linked to real essence. But in a sense Nurture wins, because without her intervention there would have been no story. The protagonist is beautiful, unknown in a way unlike any other so far examined, and a very likeable young man.

None but his closest familiars, who retreat to the background once *Silence*’s adventures begin, know that he is a woman. The romance is therefore of particular interest to critics, and much has been written about it. I focus on the hero’s identity as discovered and explored by way of her variable name. Identity is more central in this romance than in other Fair Unknown stories: it is a complex of man and woman, minstrel and knight, known and unknown, tricker and tricked, lettré(e), heir (or not). I do not neglect her role as a woman, but because the poet is careful to use a grammatical masculine for her throughout (with very few exceptions)⁹⁵ I want my own narrative to respect that. But in order to avoid confusing the issue even further, I take Heldris at his word (he calls himself ‘Maistre’), in spite of any suspicion that the poet might be female.⁹⁶ Psaki warns that every summary is in fact a reading;⁹⁷ the following is merely to indicate that I am going to switch pronouns frequently.

The baby girl is brought up as a boy. One day he runs away with some minstrels, learns their art, and changes his name. When he comes home, the queen falls in love with him. *Silence* is in a quandary, for to denounce the queen will be to denounce herself. The king responds to the queen’s accusations, first, by sending *Silence* to France, where he is knighted and later comes home to fight

⁹⁴Page and line references are to ed. & tr. Roche-Mahdi unless otherwise indicated.

⁹⁵Nature makes her feminine before she is born, Nurture refers to her briefly as female (2593–5); the narrator usually uses masculine forms, *Silence* refers to himself as male (eg. 3634–5 and passim), and the poet reminds us of ‘his’ dual nature by saying ‘li vallés qui est mescine’ (3785 and passim) and not the reverse.

⁹⁶p. xi, n. 2; Brahney, ‘*Silence* was Golden’, p. 61.

⁹⁷[*Silence*] tr. Psaki, pp. x–xii.

for the king; second, Silence is sent to catch Merlin (who can be caught only by a woman) and with Merlin's own connivance she is successful. Merlin then unmask the young man, and at the same time unmask a nun in the queen's entourage, who turns out to be a man under her robes. In the Nature/Nurture debate,⁹⁸ the question of who wins is nicely balanced: Nature sees to it that Merlin is caught, and thus that the hero will revert to her natural gender; but the aim of the main plot (that is, the reinstatement of women's rights) must be achieved by Silence as a man, so his success is due to Nurture.

Like other Fair Unknowns, Silence has adventures in disguise; he chooses his own pseudonym (Malduit, 'sil refait par coverture', 3180) and earns fame ... as a minstrel (his only quest, for he is in search of no lady). His identity is not questioned when he arrives home, but one old man knows who he is, asks his name, and comments on his pseudonym in a way that makes us suspect he knows who *she* is. The ensuing recognition scene between father and son does not, however, disturb the wider unknown quality of the boy who was a girl.

* * * * *

I shall begin with the central theme of Silence's name and personae, and then discuss how other elements of the romance contribute to it. She is in search of an identity, and — remarkably — she discovers one rather early in life: she has choice. There are two important turning-points. The first occurs as Nature tries to persuade the boy to give up his disguise and learn to sew: 'Tu nen es pas Scilentius!' (2528–30). He panics, because he thinks his name is who he is.

... qui sui jo donques?
 Silencius ai non, jo cui,
 U jo sui altres que ne fui.
 ... u jo sui nus (2532–8).

Then Nurture helps him to decide that a man's life is better and more fun than a woman's (2632–56), and stiffens his resolve to go on as he is. During the king's "interdict", by which women are not allowed to inherit (I see this as emblematic of women's position in general, not just in property-holding), nobody thinks about a possible future when the interdict might be lifted. The second turning-point comes when Silence meets the minstrels: he suddenly thinks about what might happen 'S'il avenoit del roi Ebayn Que il morust hui u demain' (2831ff). He needs to learn something that will prevent him getting bored 'Es cambres ...', and this something — music and story-telling — is a positive, creative, and ungendered art. He can be man or, in a society that respects women, woman.

He already has a gender-neutral accomplishment: 'letres' (2367), and he learns superlatively well, but literacy is not an issue in the romance. I question Labbie's assertion (she quotes Ong)⁹⁹ that literacy masculinizes Silence, because the

⁹⁸There is also a good deal of "advice to princes" material (for a reading of this, see Lloyd, 'Triumph of Pragmatism'), and Silence is twice called "mirror of the world" (3063, 3116).

⁹⁹'Specular Image', p. 73.

child's teacher — necessarily a literate woman — is a through-and-through feminine type: wife, widow, (bereaved) mother, midwife, housekeeper, nursemaid, and nameless: defined exclusively in relation to other figures around her, she can hardly be called masculinized.¹⁰⁰ We cannot deduce anything special from the kings' habit of making their chancellors write letters for them (they could probably do it for themselves if they needed to), nor, conversely, from the queen's ability to write a letter: the plot needs her to write it by herself so that nobody else shall know about it. However, the ability to be a musician is an issue, because of the way it enables Silence; the count pardoning all minstrels for Silence's sake also prefigures the king re-enabling women, because of Silence, at the end of the story.

Silence disguises himself in order to escape and join the minstrels in Brittany, where he allows them to recognize him as the young vassal of the household ... but he had never told them his name (2795–820. 'Qui est tes pere?' they ask). Thus he is able to take a false name, *Malduit*, so that no news of him may reach the ears of his family. The poet explains that the pseudonym is not only 'par coverture' but also because he considers himself 'mal duit, Moult mal apris lonc sa nature': it is for internal as well as for external reasons (3172–80). There is a constant tension among the different figures of Silence, not least because as far as we can see he is very well brought up.

The narrator never uses the pseudonym, and nor does anybody else; the old man comments on it, however. In reply to a straight question about his name ('son non enterve' 3574) Silence replies with a revealing form of words 'Je me fac *Malduit* apieler.' He sees through this, expresses disapproval of 'si fait usage', and addresses the boy as Silence. His heart must have lurched at the old man's hint that he knows who she really is, but the speech continues using the masculine, so that the secret remains safe (3578–92).

The poet prefers the ungendered name Silence (this is what Silence calls himself at eg. 2826), using the Latin forms *Silentius* and *Silentia* only to signal major role-shifts.¹⁰¹ I have quoted one instance, where the boy insists that *Silentius* is his name; this never happens again. The child is christened, and remains, Silence — the narrator marks him as masculine: 'Quel gret qu'aient nature et li us S'est apielés *Scilentius*' (2125–6), echoing the father's decision that the -us could be replaced with -a at any time, ie. that he could change roles, (2074–82). This happens near the end: 'Ostés est -us, mis i est -a Si [he] est només *Scilentiä*' (6665ff). Silence, not *Silentia*, marries the king and becomes grammatically feminine only in the last lines: 'Jo ai Silence plus loëe' (6698). Insistence on this neutral name emphasizes the protagonist's freedom.

Silence is a likeable person because he has the better masculine virtues (and the better feminine ones). The name Silence is explicitly equated with Patience:

¹⁰⁰Lasry must be mistaken, that the child is taught by his mother ('Ideal Heroine', p. 228); 'la dame' in the text is never the countess.

¹⁰¹See McCracken, 'The Boy Who Was a Girl', pp. 525–6; 'a name that denies its own power to name ...'.

'Por cho que silensce tolt ance' (2067-9). He worries about being greedy for the inheritance, and yet does not wish to expose his parents as liars (2583-6, 2651-3); he admits to a frank enjoyment of boys' things. Ipomadon's modesty was mainly focused on not being good enough for his lady; Silence's modesty is not only a thought-through awareness of "bad" upbringing, hence the name Malduit, but also a concomitant of his nice manners. He never loses his temper, he tries to treat his minstrel-companions well, he is patient with the queen and wants to protect her reputation (6617-8): his language to and about her is always moderate — all the abuse is in the narrator's comments. Shown to be a thinking person (see esp. 2657-81), he is clever without being malicious — there is no 'engin' in his escape from the minstrels' plot, for example (3447-76). Patience is here an active and muscular virtue, and Silence is anything but silent: witness the minstrelsy, and l. 6627.¹⁰² Roche-Mahdi's translation obscures the fact that keeping quiet, keeping silent, is expressed as 'taisir' in the French (2070-2 and passim, esp. 6398). As far as I can discover the *word* silence is not used except as the name of the protagonist (and once as a play on it — 2069). I would therefore qualify Roche-Mahdi's remarks (p. xxii): Silence does not enact silence, she speaks aloud both literally and figuratively, and the poet colludes by isolating the paradoxically speaking name from other uses of the word.

Although I concur in finding some of King Ebayn's remarks distasteful (p. xxii), I must point out that his presentation throughout is shaped to complement Silence's role and to provide the movement of the plot. He is introduced and named as the equal of Arthur (107-11), and behaves quite well most of the time; he loses his temper twice. The first time is when he becomes angry at unnecessary killing caused by avarice,¹⁰³ and bans women from inheriting; this initiates the action of the story. The second fit of temper is when (after resisting the queen's accusations very equably, see eg. 4193-5) he comes to believe Silence guilty and sends her off to catch Merlin, thinking he cannot be caught except 'par engien de feme' (5797-803). Without this, there would be no dénouement. I have mentioned the pronounced "advice to princes" cast of the poem: besides the Nature/Nurture debate (these two come on stage and harangue human characters, as well as each other) and the extended council scenes (deciding on the marriage of Cadur and Eufemie, for example, and the debate about what the king of France should do with Silence), there is a large cast of vices and virtues personified, off stage, in the narrator's asides (eg. in the Prologue, and at 1546-76). Silence is a mirror for the king in that her role as Patience is set against his role as Anger — perhaps the wedding symbolizes his reformed role as worthy successor to Arthur.

The romance connects with the Arthurian world, by the inclusion of Merlin

¹⁰²'Ne jo n'ai soig mais de taisir'. Roche-Mahdi translates 'nor do I care to keep silent any longer'; Bloch ('Silence and Holes', p. 93) 'Nor have I cared ever to remain silent'. I like Gaunt's 'I only care to be silent' less, if it means that she thus silences herself ('The significance of Silence', p. 213).

¹⁰³Sermonizing on the subject of avarice and generosity is another major concern of the poem, even linked to the theme of "name" (134-6). Ebayn is specially commended for generosity, among other virtues (107-40).

and by the implied comparison of Ebayn with Arthur. Anybody familiar with the 'Grisandole' episode in the Vulgate cycle would note too the implied comparison with Julius Caesar. Probably one of the sources for *Silence*, the shorter narrative also shows itself interested in naming.¹⁰⁴ Thorpe goes so far as to argue that *Silence* was written as an 'Enfances Grisandoles';¹⁰⁵ this appealing theory would open up, even undermine, the 'apparently regressive ending' which does not, in fact, close off speculative space.¹⁰⁶ Audiences reading the romance as an 'enfances' are amused to know what Avenable was about (in both senses) and can focus on her Merlin-catcher role as a counterbalance to the 'heavy weighting of the final episode'.¹⁰⁷

But it is hard not to feel disappointed at Silence's 'dwindling' into matrimony.¹⁰⁸ I have suggested, however, that there are two very different worlds for women: in the first, under the "interdict", women cannot inherit; they can only do sewing and get bored. In the second, reformed, world — which Silence has achieved — women's status is restored and they can enjoy themselves, play music, go hunting, and administer their estates. Probably her life will not be so boring, after all. Cooper says the romance here 'opens onto silence'; the heroine not reduced to but opened to silence as she restates the quest for the absent female.¹⁰⁹ I would add that had the hero remained a man the story would end in silence, forced to a halt by his inability to engender children. As it is, the space is open for history to continue, heirs to be produced, and more stories to be written; many romances end with a mention of the next generation, the name of the next romance, or even a section of the next story.

Off-stage names are placed and grouped to enhance the exemplary bias, as well as the naming-theme, of the romance. At the beginning, we are given Arthur's name, which sets a historical context and a standard against which Ebayn's society is to be measured. The proliferation of vices and virtues sets a tone which allows us to read *Silence* as a super-personification — as one of his/her varying personae. As the dénouement approaches, however, inset narratives bring Arthur's world into focus and remind everybody of Merlin's power: that a bit of 'engin', in fact, can work for good. They contain names,¹¹⁰ as snatches of history must, and their vividness signals that our exemplary story (in which names are rather sparse) is about to emerge into a historical reality of its own.

It has been noted that the inset story of Adam and Eve blames the man for the Fall (6035–84, and p. xix); generally Heldris reserves the anti-women language for Eufeme only (eg. 5233–41), almost as if he were taking to heart a lesson enacted at 6371–3: Eufeme accuses Merlin of slandering women, but Merlin is —

¹⁰⁴[Arthur] ed. Sommer, vol. II, 281–92.

¹⁰⁵[Silence] ed. Thorpe, p. 32.

¹⁰⁶[Silence] tr. Psaki, p. xxxvi.

¹⁰⁷Ibid.

¹⁰⁸Roche-Mahdi's word, p. xiv.

¹⁰⁹'Elle and *L'*, pp. 343, 360.

¹¹⁰Vortigern and Merlin (fil al diable) 5784–96, echoed at 5905–11; Gorlains, Uterpandragon, and Arthur 6144–54.

unfortunately — right, in the terms of the story (and so, of course, is the poet). He demonstrates sympathy for women in unusual ways: a good example is the sensitive portrayal of childbirth (1775–92), which even shows the count sharing his wife's pain.

Other off-stage Arthurian figures are more remote: Tristran and Yseult are types for those who suffer for (illicit) love, like Eufeme (called Sathanas in this passage! 3698–704). Gueron and Mabon are evoked only through the eponymous *lais* sung of them by the nameless minstrels (2759–69; note also that Silence is not named much during this episode, because they do not know his name). The placing of names such as these (another example is the baby Galtier — 1734–44) draws attention to the anonymity of the figures around them and the remarkable dearth of names in the episodes where they appear.¹¹¹ The poem begins with the love-story of Cador and Eufemie; like a small romance in its own right it comes with dragon-slaying, lots of amatory soul-searching, and an ordinary number of named characters. But once the baby is conceived, the parents' names vanish from the text (they become the count and countess),¹¹² and new unnamed figures are introduced:¹¹³ a seneschal (and his sons), child-servant and porter, minstrels, and the lady who is identified by such metrical acrobatics as

Cele qui fu o la contesse
Cui li cuens ot fait la promesse,
Et fu sa cozine germaine (1965–7).

The naming of her baby, who lived only eight days, seems emblematic of the family problems besetting Ebayn's régime: a dead, male, but straightforwardly-named infant is contrasted with a living, female, and ambiguously-named heir (see eg. 2209–10).

Other off-stage names are meaningfully used,¹¹⁴ or decidedly thought-provoking. The Count of Chester is respected, powerful, successful, and named only once. In the rebel war 'Il contrefait roi Alixandre' (5518), but he is soon to be vanquished by one who knows his name: 'Silences dist: "Trop s'i amort Li cuens Conans a moi ferir"' (5618–9).¹¹⁵ As if now unmasked, he is wounded, taken, and handed

¹¹¹Heldris even seems to be making a joke about this, in the scene where the minstrels hail the house in the woods: "Who's in there?" "Us in here, of course!" (2733–6).

¹¹²Cador is named only once more (4419–22); Eufemie's name reappears at rare intervals, perhaps to remind us how she contrasts with Eufeme.

¹¹³Even our hero's name is eclipsed for long stretches, eg. between 2126 and 2350, 2681 and 2782, 3087 and 3163, etc.

¹¹⁴St Amans is evoked as if patron of lovers (1330, 1368); St Julien finds good lodging for the minstrels (2718); mention of Joseph (3705–9) warns of the trick Eufeme is going to pull; Longinus (6165–9), cured of blindness by Jesus' blood, is in a prayer that Merlin will reveal the truth. And there is Ris, who shakes Merlin; is the name merely for rhyme, as the editor suggests, or is the poet having another little joke? ("laughter shakes Merlin", 6198–201).

¹¹⁵Thorpe does not read 'conans' as a name: 'Trop s'i amort Li cuens, conans a moi ferir' (5618–9; nor does Psaki's translation). Roche-Mahdi is perhaps more conscious of name, as I am. It is not clear how much is to be made of this "name", which others besides Silence must have known.

over to the king (5629–38), and the war is over. A name which might have been placed only for the rhyme (Aimon, 5892) actually sets up resonances: the story to which Silence refers is about a man torn between loyalty to his king and loyalty to his family, as Silence is, so I would give Heldris the benefit of the doubt.

After the early parts of Silence's life-story, in which anonymity is stressed, naming-patterns revert to something more like normality as Silence sheds his pseudonym¹¹⁶ and becomes part of Ebayn's court. Characters address one another by name occasionally, but not so rarely as to be remarkable; three of Silence's French knights (the ones who specially distinguish themselves) are named. The introduction of Merlin changes the pattern. Not only does he bring chronicle-names into the story with him, but he balances the earlier old man by showing special interest in Silence's name: first he (in disguise) shows that he knows rather a lot about him (5890; 5913–24), then he demands to know his name even though he knows exactly what is going to happen (6138–41; 6159–60). He is called 'dant Merlin' by the narrator and 'dant fol' by the king (6303); his name is repeated freely throughout the Merlin-episodes, and several people address him by name. The king even repeats it ('Merlin, Merlin, li rois a dit' — 6341), at the beginning of the speech which allows Silence at last to realise what a fix he has got into. He knew more about Merlin than everybody else did,¹¹⁷ but this is the first he has heard about Merlin's being captured by a woman.¹¹⁸ It is also notable that the Nature/Nurture squabble was revived during the Merlin-hunt — to help, as earlier, in the development of the plot and to remind the audience of the continuing debate. Merlin and Silence are the only two figures with whom Nature and Nurture communicate directly (the kings have councils with their barons instead), and they are the two ambivalent figures in the story, each with his variable disguises. Although Silence loses the game with Merlin, her role as minstrel/entertainer positions her a step closer to the fool/jester/prophet, and in one sense she has more power: he can see the future but not change it, she has been able to achieve it.

By the end of the story the name (like Libeaus and Degaré) has become the true name. But Silence's name and nature are at once variable and fixed. The names — Patience, Malduit, Silencia, Silentius — reflect the many aspects of the hero(ine)'s freedom; but the name Silence does not change because the poem presents it *semper eadem*.

* * * * *

¹¹⁶I am not convinced that the count 'relies *instead* on ... the birthmark' (Labbie, 'Specular Image', p. 72, my emphasis; see also Cooper, 'Elle and L', p. 355) even when he knows the name. The text does not allow him time to disbelieve, and Silence's gesture reads like an impulse entirely fitting to the emotional mood of the moment (3629–50).

¹¹⁷It was said that Merlin had vanished after building Vortigern's tower (5909–11); Silence knew about the part he later played in Arthur's birth (6144–54).

¹¹⁸The wording changes here: 'n'estoit par feme' (6347) — previous references to Merlin's prediction said 'Se ne fust par engien de feme' (5801–3, 6177–9). The implication is that a clever woman might have helped a man to catch Merlin at any time; as it is, a wise old man helped a woman to do so.

The protagonists of these stories know who they are, and the few who do not show little anxiety about it. They are not in search of their identity, though some of them are in search of fame. Fair Unknown romances, of various kinds, are numerous; this must be because the unknown figure is such a wonderfully dramatic plot-device: if nobody knows who that person is then possibilities are almost limitless. Fear of a tragic outcome provides suspense: the stories of Ædipus, of Sohrab and Rustum, and of Cuchullain's son are examples that show how old and widespread the theme is. Furthermore, the name-taboo seems to be one of the *geasa* inherited by romance from the Celtic (the stranger in the Irish story must not reveal his name, and this is why he is killed by his father Cuchullain).

My analysis of these texts has focused on the unknown quality of each protagonist. The study of name-as-theme, and how it is handled by each writer, allows new readings of each text and demonstrates its uniqueness rather than its conformity to a Fair Unknown story-type. In particular, the romances about women prove to be more interesting when viewed in terms of naming — these protagonists are also Unknown — than in terms of gender. The naming-theme is accompanied, and varied, by a number of topoi (devices such as disguise or incognito, off-stage names, intertextual references); these will be gathered and examined in Chapter 5.

There are other figures, and plot-devices, besides the Unknown which can provide a focus for name-theme: the next chapter will explore some of them.

3. The Power of Name

Introduction

This chapter offers further exploration of name as topic, in romances where the unknown quality of the hero(ine) is less problematic but other aspects of their name or namelessness are marked as significant. I have again chosen texts in both English and French, both Arthurian and non-Arthurian. Although there seem to be rather more romances explicitly about naming (and/or about Fair Unknowns) in French than in English, it is because, given the sheer volume of French (Arthurian) material, there are statistically bound to be a lot of them.¹

Many romances, which cannot conveniently be grouped, treat name-theme in a variety of ways. They are concerned with the power or magic of name, with the business of finding a name or the consequences of losing one, with the perennially useful plot-device of disguise by pseudonym. These concerns are shared by the romances discussed above; similarly, as I have shown, naming-business is not always confined to the central character or couple, but is further illustrated and underlined by other elements in the text which together demonstrate the writers' interest in naming.

The Story of Horn

I shall examine both the English *King Horn*, which has the power of Rymenhild's name as an extra motif, and the Anglo-Norman *Romance of Horn*. In spite of their differences they share a fascination with the name of the hero. In some romances, where the hero(ine) has a pseudonym, the text or the characters question it in some way; here the pseudonym passes without comment but the name Horn is foregrounded by various tricks . . . mostly puns, which the Anglo-Norman poet has laboriously to explain. Perhaps for him it was more important as a Name than as a description, and therefore he did not translate it. In both texts the narrator colludes with the hero by using his pseudonym, and in both the mask is allowed to slip at dramatic (though different) moments: the name Horn suddenly

¹Because naming is about language, not languages, a comparative study would be out of place here. But it would be interesting to explore why, for example, Old Norse takes names out of Perceval stories whereas Wolfram adds them (see Kratz, 'Names in Parcevals saga and Valvers þátttr').

reappears. It could be argued that the *King Horn* scribe had made a mistake, but the earlier Anglo-Norman does the same thing. Since neither is a translation of the other, it seems probable that at least one other version of the story (the hypothetical Horn(s) on which both poets drew) shows an awareness of name, pseudonym, point-of-view, and their combination to dramatic effect. The reappearance of the true name while its bearer is incognito, and the appearance of the drinking-horn while the hero is disguised, both serve as reassurance that he does not change with his name.

The Anglo-Norman, Mestre Thomas, shows his interest in naming by unusually elaborate introduction-rituals, as well as by providing an enormous cast of named characters. Introductions are very frequent in romance, several (even scores) per story, and many are relatively insignificant. But a great many are marked by complex discourse, with concealment, boasting, flyting, prevarication, or name-play — together with a good deal of ritual (not unlike the naming-ceremonies that introduce a new person into our life of the world). I shall look at this in more detail later; I begin with *King Horn* because the very bareness of its narrative makes the naming-theme stand out clearly.

*King Horn*²

The text is rather bare of names, although most major characters are named. Perhaps this is owing to a lack of named enemy-figures; there are masses of shadowy pagans, who initiate the action by killing Murry (31–62) and provide the field for Horn's prowess. Not even their leaders are named, but they know who he is. Only the young man's beauty saves him and his companions from death (85–114), and when he attacks them in after years they declare that nobody since Murry ('He was of Hornes kunne') has been so strong in battle against them (855–92).

Not everybody knows who Horn is. He is named by the narrator at the start of the poem (and by the 'admirad' at 95), but his disguises begin at the meeting with King Aylmar of Westernesse: when asked his name he gives it 'Horn ich am y-hote Y-comen ut of the bote' (201–7). The following joyful name-play, about the horn that shall blast his name/fame into every land, obscures the fact that Horn has not actually said who he is. He explained earlier where he and his friends came from and why, and that they are 'of gode kenne', even of royal blood, but not that he is Murry's son (179–90). Later he will pretend to Rymenhild that he is low-born (411–28); he wants to be knighted, do some fighting, and avenge his father before getting married.

Exiled from Westernesse, he arrives in Ireland and takes the pseudonym Cutberd, and the narrator calls him Cutberd almost consistently, except at the battle with his father's killer, when his real name reappears. The Irish king even calls

²Dated around 1225, this is the earliest English romance. The bare structure and folktale quality of the story is no evidence for an exclusively popular audience, especially given the underlying exemplary theme of making a good king.

him Horn as he offers him his daughter (901–12); this underlines his newly-won worthiness to marry a princess, but the narrator reminds us that he is still under alias for the next seven years (925–6). Hearing that Rymenhild is to be married to Mody, he reveals himself fully to the Irish king (989–96), then goes to Westernesse and changes clothes with a palmer. His words, as he prepares to go to the feast, anticipate the name-game he will play when he reaches Rymenhild: ‘Today I shall ther drinke That some hit shulle ofthinke’ (1063–4) — the drinking-horn contains something dangerous!³ He pretends to be a beggar, announces that he is a fisher (a reference to Rymenhild’s dream), and declares ‘Drink to Horn of horne’ (1153, repeated by the narrator 1167).⁴

Having repeated his name, and confirmed his royal status, to Aylmar, he returns to Suddene to claim his kingdom and find his mother. There is a reminder of his growing fame as he summons his men (‘Horn gan his horn to blowe’ — 1383), and he defeats all the Saracens, but a dream warns him that Rymenhild is again in danger. This time he arrives in Westernesse disguised as a harper, and the recognition scene is again self-referential: he sings the lay of Rymenhild to make himself known to her.

The scene has been prepared by the passage in which Aylmar tells Athelbrus to teach his foundling ‘of harpe and songe’ (229–44), and by the succession of disguises that Horn has taken in his adventures.⁵ The lay appears rather late in the romance (because the story is almost over, the lay is very nearly complete), and rounds off a motif which runs parallel to that of Horn’s name: the power of Rymenhild’s name. It is engraved on the ring she gave him, and when he looks at it and thinks of her he is invincible, though the magic will not work without the name. The poetry emphasizes it by the incorrect rhyme: ‘He lokede on the ringe And thoghte on Rymenhilde’ (617–8 and *passim*); it can be seen from the other mss that ‘yinge’ would be the rhyme-word (‘And thoghte on Rymenhilde the yinge’) were this not hypermetric. The writer of the Cambridge ms (generally considered the oldest and best) has chosen to sacrifice the rhyme, creating a fine incantatory effect.⁶ Although the name is given no meaning, it is given power by the verse, and the hidden parallel story — the lay — is named not for Horn but for Rymenhild.

³See Hall, [Horn], pp. 154–5, for a note about drink meaning chastisement.

⁴See Spearing, ‘Early medieval narrative style’, which focuses on name-play as metaphor, esp. pp. 29–30.

⁵Hall notes (p. 154) that beggars and minstrels had considerable freedom of movement, and therefore these were favourite disguises. One ought not to read too much into the fact that Tristran, for example, also disguises himself as minstrel, beggar, etc.

⁶A similar effect climaxes Horn’s splendid set-piece, where he declares himself to Aylmar and the court: ‘Thanne shall Rymenhild Ligge by the king’ (1271–98). For defence of scribes’ literary competence, see esp. Kennedy, ‘The Scribe as Editor’: somebody, not necessarily the original poet, preferred it this way. Meecham-Jones (‘Questioning Romance’, p. 43 n. 14) recognizes methods by which poets throw emphasis onto name.

*The Romance of Horn*⁷

The romance is dated to the second half of the twelfth century, and is fictively located in the Celtic south-west. It is the middle book of a trilogy (the stories of Horn's father and son have not survived). Some have argued that Thomas is identical with the author of *Tristan*, but his style — epic, sanguine, and historically aware — seems to cater for different tastes. I shall focus on some similarities between the two *Horn* texts, which appear when a cluster of motifs, to do with naming, recognition, and disguise, is studied. I shall then look at the way Thomas' handling of naming and introduction betrays an interest in wider patterns of language and culture.

In spite of differences in detail, parallel motifs resonate within and across the two romances. In *King Horn*, the hero sings a lay so as to make himself known to the heroine, while disguised as a minstrel; it is among other things a recognition-motif. In the *Romance*, Rigmel's lai (characterized as 'bretun' at 2840-1) appears much earlier in the story, and it is Lenburc, not the heroine, who recognizes Horn as "Gudmod" sings it (2852).⁸

The audience has just been reminded of the hero's true name; in this scene of reported action the characters play a story to each other. It is a remarkable piece of reportage: the story in the lai is the same as part of the story which contains it,⁹ and Gudmod's performance reveals him to Lenburc. After a short section of overlap (the narrator warns us what Horn's alias is to be at 2160 and uses either name until after 2299), the hero is called Gudmod throughout the Irish adventure, until Jocerand arrives in search of him, *except* at the moment when he hears Lenburc singing the incomplete lai: 'Ore ot Horn sun pleisir ...' (2808) and 'Çoe iert Horn, k'en sun quoe l'aveit bien remembrée' (2817). But as soon as he takes the harp, the alias returns like a visor shutting down ('Venuz [ert] a Gudmod le dedut del harper' — 2826), and in spite of Lenburc's pleading he refuses to teach her the music, or to love her: 'dit Gudmod, "ne vaut rien cest sermon" ' (2863). The pathos of Lenburc's situation (she is perhaps the more interesting of the two princesses) is balanced and heightened by the momentary glimpse we are given of Horn's face, as he muses on his absent lover. There is a curious echo of this moment in the scene where Horn prepares to disguise himself as a minstrel in order to rescue Rigmel: 'Certes j'i serrai ja, si je pus, sun jugler; Un lai bretun li frai od m'espee de asier' (5161-5161a). This corresponds strangely to the grim joke in *King Horn* about the drinking-horn containing something dangerous.¹⁰

⁷[Horn] ed. Pope. Laisse and line numbers refer to the text in vol. I (Introduction and Glossary are in vol. II). For a more detailed comparison, see Pope, 'The *Romance of Horn* and *King Horn*', and notes to *King Horn* in *Of Love and Chivalry* ed. Fellows.

⁸Lais 132-8. Lenburc falls in love with Gudmod and wants him to teach her the lai which she has heard but cannot play all the way through.

⁹Another example is Dinadan's "villanous" lay about King Mark (Malory, *Works*, 618:6-19 and 626:17-627:18). Lais in romances (eg. in Thomas' *Tristan*, *Silence*, and Chaucer's 'Sir Thopas') do not always have a specular function.

¹⁰See above p. 67, n. 3.

It has been argued that both romances must originally have drawn on a story in English, because of the play on Horn's name. Thomas does not give the heroine's father speeches about horn and fame (nor does Horn hide his true identity here, but delays giving his name — King Hunlaf has to ask twice: 240 and 327). The sound of a horn is associated with the hero: without special comment from the narrator the 'corn' is known — 'conue' — by his followers in battle (see esp. 3421-2 and 4478-9). One of Thomas' several references to translation accompanies the recognition-scene where Horn asks Rigmel to give the 'corn', not the 'hanap', filled with wine to him 'ki si se fait nomer' (laisse 199).

Here Horn is disguised as a palmer. The palmer-motif is linked with naming in a previous recognition-scene: at laisse 177 a palmer arrives looking for Horn. This is where "Gudmod" disappears from the text, once Horn has given over pretending he is the wrong man; the palmer's name is delayed so as to add force to his protest 'si ai nun Jocerand. Conoistre me devez ...' (3742-5). No sooner has Horn set off to rescue Rigmel from marriage than he meets another palmer (who tells him the bridegroom's name); this one is never named, but Horn asks for his 'esclavine' in exchange for his own rich garments, invoking St Martin — known for being generous with clothes — as he does so (3965-77).

On his way to the wedding he meets Wikele and Modin, and announces that his 'mestier' is that of a fisher (4045-57, whereupon they take him for a fool). In *King Horn* this was a reference to Rymenhild's dream, which does not occur in the *Romance*. But another dream-motif (the falcon given to Rigmel in Herselot's dream, laisse 37) is echoed in Horn's words to Rigmel just before she definitively recognizes that the palmer is her lover: he says that he has come to see how his goshawk is getting along. She bursts out laughing — the goshawk is fine, thanks — 'Amis Horn, c'estes vus!' (4269-75). Lai and minstrel, horn and palmer, fisher and bird of prey — recognition-symbols mingle with alter-images — images which invoke alternatives and transformations.

The power of name is deployed less rhetorically than thematically by Thomas. Names and identities are revealed, delayed, or hidden, especially in the scenes discussed. Furthermore, the romance is plentifully furnished with names; the editor remarks 'Like all good narrators, Thomas avoids introducing anonymous actors' (vol. II, p. 18), and she goes on to discuss the reason for so many names (a late twelfth-century craze for genealogies) and also their origins. Thomas' interest in 'latimiers', and his lavish profusion of names, evidences his obsession with spoken language and acts of communication, and how these express and contribute to the culture of his society.

Not only is it difficult to find unnamed characters, but Thomas goes out of his way to introduce people: instead of saying just that Egfer took Gudmod home with him, he explains "To Malgis' place — that's his host's name — he was born in Paris, you know" (2284-5). One of Lenburc's messengers is provided with name, lineage, and status as a suitor, but (like Malgis and others) he vanishes from the story never to be seen again. Relatives of principal characters are named, whether

active in the story or not, and so are members of a household and servants, right down to the mason who built Rigmel's chamber. It is not surprising that one who knows as much about music as Thomas seems to, should name the composer of Rigmel's lai, especially as he is a prince, but he too has no other part in the story.

But there are no great roll-calls of knights, as in Malory, and the poet neglects the opportunity to list Horn's companions by name. His best friend Haderof is named early in the story, but his worst (cf. *King Horn*, 21–30) is not singled out until, a villain suddenly becoming necessary, his introduction at dinner one day; Thomas slips in a brief and very characteristic explanation for his evil nature:

Wikeles i esteit, ki fud niefs Denerez
 Ki encusa Aalof a Silaf l'onorez,
 E cist encusa Horn ki fu sis avoez (1832–4).

Like Malory's, Thomas' story is set in a pre-Norman Britain where Saracens (and Turks) are properly speaking anachronistic, but Crusades are a fact of contemporary political reality for both writers despite the centuries that separate them. Yet Malory's narrative style (and using many names is part of his strategy) suggests both chronicle history and the remoteness of romance by the yearning tone of '... in tho dayes ...'. Thomas, as far as I can discover, never says (the Anglo-Norman equivalent of) 'in tho dayes'. His use of names is one of the tools for setting up a historical and geographical grid which supports the here and now of the story; glittering, idealized, yet intensely societal. Although drawing material from tradition and distant history, this (and other insular romances) has none of Malory's nostalgia: 'more importantly visionary than reactionary ... [they] offer the barony nothing less than its future.'¹¹

Naming practices, across romances, are far from consistent; to put it another way, romance-writers use any number of different patterns and strategies of naming. Some have been explored in the foregoing pages: Mestre Thomas' fascination with naming is reflected in his handling of the introduction-ritual — the moment where typically the knight or hero meets a stranger.¹² Given that characters may well have been named already by the narrator, it is curious how elaborate, repetitious, and stylized this kind of dialogue can be. The exchange provides a space for names to be given, withheld, or disguised. I have mentioned one such exchange (Horn's meeting with King Hunlaf); his meeting with Gudreche's sons provides one of the most complex examples to be found in any romance. Thomas is quite capable of avoiding repetition (for example, he says that the messenger repeats Lenburc's words 'mot pur mot' without actually writing them twice — 2493–5), but here he sets out a three- and four-fold question pattern three times in order to stress the importance of such discourse. First, as the brothers see the stranger approach, Guffer proposes asking him 'Ki il est? dunt il vient? sun nun

¹¹Crane, *Insular Romance*, p. 223.

¹²Montaigne complains that this 'vice' persists into his own time: 'Des Coutumes Anciennes', in *Essais: Livre 1*.

...’ (2239). Egfer puts the questions, adding another: ‘Ki estes, chevaler? ... Dunt venez? ke querez? cum vus dei joe numer?’ (2245–6). Horn repeats the four questions (2253–4) before replying to each in turn. Note that not only are “who are you?” and “what is your name?” two different questions, but they are separated by one or more other questions; moreover, “what is your name?” comes last. This sort of inversion is not uncommon in the introduction-ritual, which is itself found in a wide range of romances.

Writers seem to be very aware of *how* a name means. Mestre Thomas suggests that the question “who are you?” is likely to be about whether a stranger is friend or foe, pagan or Christian, good family or not. It can also mean “what is your Name?” (that is, “what are you famous for?”). But “what is your name?” is probably “what is the moniker people use when they want to attract your attention or distinguish you from Dick or Harry?” This may be termed a “calling” name; its function is performative, unlike the “speaking” name which describes. By no means trivial, it carries another set of uses, for example: this moniker is what people use when they want to put a spell on you or take away your power. In the *Romance of Horn*, the wording of Egfer’s question provides a small but suggestive insight: ‘cum vus dei joe numer?’ (2246). He means, and Guffer’s ‘sun nun, nel deint celer’ (2239) bears this out, “tell us your name as well as who you are”. But Horn prevaricates by answering the question “what should I call you?” literally. He gives the false name Gudmod, although he pretends to respond to Egfer’s meaning by adding ‘a mun baptesmement’ (2266).

Thomas plays on the theme elsewhere: when Lenburc becomes interested in the handsome newcomer she sends him a splendid present and the message ‘Si me mand cum ad nun e quei il vient querant, E quel est sun païs, qui sunt si partenant’ (2406–7). The questions are in a different order: name first. This detail underlines the fact that she is being too forward, and she gets a snub: ‘Trop se hastë, amis, d’enveier mei tel dun ... N’el ne siet ki joe sui’ (2432–5) — she ought not to send presents to somebody she does not know. The irony is that even when she learns his name she does not, because it is his pseudonym, learn who he is. His reserve here echoes an earlier scene, where he rebuffs the advances of Rigmel: ‘... ne me conoissiez. Joe ne sai ke joe sui’ (1166–7). He knows his name and lineage perfectly well, and has given a highly articulate account of himself at least twice already (168–72, 250–328). But he wants to stress that he is not yet ‘espruvez’; he must be knighted, and distinguish himself in feats of arms, before he can be worthy to accept her. Thomas’ interest is in naming as act of language — and as identity-gaming.

*Sir Degaré*¹³

In this romance, the "lost" son is the only character named; his unknown quality, packed into the question "where?", is transferred to the lost father. The text raises questions about name, and it contains an interesting variation on the introduction-ritual I have just been discussing. I shall draw (as I did in my study of 'Gareth') on Simpson's essay, without feeling bound to agree with his every detail.

One such point is that Degaré's 'identity' is not strictly unknown.¹⁴ He does not hide his name; it (and its meaning) are known from the moment of his baptism (250–2). He never gives a false name, and neither is he given a nickname. Significance therefore clusters around his true name (as, for different reasons, around Horn's). The famous words of Perceval's mother vary from one ms to another:¹⁵ Bezzola (like Simpson) quotes 'par le non conoist/conuist an l'ome', and Dragonetti 'Par le sornon connoist on l'ome', in their discussions of the passage.¹⁶ Her changeable speech reflects the fact that, in romances, sometimes the true name is descriptive and sometimes the false or added name. In point of fact the nickname is more likely to be descriptive because it reflects attributes acquired or perceived now in the story, instead of something fastened onto a relatively nondescript baby. Significantly, when Perceval's name is "changed" by the damsel it is the sornon 'li Galois' that changes, to 'li cheitis': Perceval/Perceval remains (3575–82). Critics take the line 'par le (sor)non conuist an l'ome' to mean what they want it to mean: my own feeling is that it means something different in each romance.

Like other descriptive names, or aptronyms,¹⁷ Degaré raises questions among readers if not among actors in the text: Simpson quotes Jacobs on the meaning of the name and yet, by suggesting that Degaré comes home to a 'gare', neatly skates round Jacobs' assertion that no (medieval) positive form 'garé' is recorded.¹⁸ But nobody — not even Degaré himself — knows where he is from, as we are reminded frequently: 'No man wot wer ich was bore' (462), 'Ac no man wiste whennes was he' (506), and passim; the damsel is 'sori' and 'carful' because she does not want to marry a non-entity (583–90). Yet 'Wher were þou boren ...?' is the first

¹³Dated 1300–25, the romance features in the large Auchinleck collection. Its editors describe it as 'a moralized Breton lay'; it is also related to Fair Unknown stories, which appear in many languages and genres and thus must have appealed to a wide range of tastes.

¹⁴'Violence, Narrative and Proper Name', p. 124.

¹⁵Chrétien's *Conte du Graal*, 560–2; variants given p. 1330.

¹⁶*Le sens de l'Aventure*, p. 58; 'Noms et surnoms', p. 23–4. They do not mention the alternative readings, though Dragonetti complains that translators make no distinction between 'nom' and 'surnom'.

¹⁷See Dalrymple, 'Amoryus and Cleopes', p. 158.

¹⁸'Violence, Narrative and Proper Name', p. 131, and Jacobs, 'Old French "Dégaré"', p. 165; and see p. 23 (and n. 23) above, on conflicting meanings for 'emaré'. The power of such names seems to be that they are enigmas that cannot finally be solved. '[S]uch etymologies are likely to be equatings of unintelligible Celtic names with some familiar name or term' (French & Hale's note to l. 254).

question his father asks, before “what is your name?”, and he answers readily ‘In Litel Bretaigne . . . Kingges doughter sone’ (1050–2). This exchange is intriguing in other ways too, as I shall show later.

Degaré’s progress back, in Simpson’s terms, to his proper place in the world can be divided into four adventures. The first proves him (he needs somebody to knight him, 407–14, but his arms are not described yet); it also proves that the gloves will fit no lady but the one he is (not) to marry. In the second adventure he finds his mother; in the third, his wife-to-be;¹⁹ in the fourth, his father.

The ‘fairi’ father is not named, nor is his blazon described (because he is not wearing arms, 98–102); the sword is the only token of recognition (129). The mother hints that he is not human, and fears that people will think she committed incest with her father (165–8). She does not say what name the child is to be christened, nor instruct him to find his father.

The name Degaré first appears at the christening, specially emphasized by repetition and explanation:

And cristned þe child wiz gret honour:
In þe name of þe Trinité,
He hit nemnede Degarré.
Degarré nowt elles ne is
But þing þat not neuer whar hit is,
Oþe[r] þing þat is neg3 forlorn also;
Forþi þe schild he nemnede þous þo (250–6).

The name and rhyme of ‘Trinité’ are echoed in Degaré’s prayer later, and the repetition of ‘Degarré’ reappears in the recognition scene near the end. The riddle of the name, as I have noted, is neither “what” nor “who” but “whence”. He thinks, and calls, the hermit his uncle, and like Perceval he begins his fighting career armed only with a stick.

During fight-scenes (and the supper-scene) his name appears on the page more frequently than necessary; this happens at every encounter, whether ‘near-transgression’ (as when he risks killing his grandfather and his father) or not,²⁰ and sounds much more like a charm to help the hero win — or perhaps like a sports commentary, where repeated naming of the favourite helps the visual effect.

Before fighting his grandfather the king, he wonders about his own renown (present), birth (past), and ‘Wheþer dez oper lif me bitide’ (future); he prays and gives alms to the Trinity, rather than to any named saint (455–64, 485–9). There is a notable lack of even off-stage names, and the Trinity is the nearest to a patron saint that Degaré has got. Before and during this fight he is named six times (501–38). The narrator, not interested in suspense, gives the game away

¹⁹The text breaks off as he proposes going to find his mother, as in Perceval stories, before marriage. The lost part evidently dealt with ‘the usual matrimonial adjustments’ (see p. 320 of this edition, and Jacobs, *Later Versions*).

²⁰Simpson, ‘Violence, Narrative and Proper Name’, p. 129.

in a long aside before the king's daughter discovers that her bridegroom is her son. Degaré then asks how he may find his father, and remarks admiringly that whoever owned the sword 'he was a man!' (710). This is a step towards finding the identity of the father (not of the son), who is now characterized as a human champion; compare 'Ich am ... a fairi kny3te' (98) and 'i ne was neuere acquieint wiz man!' (168).

Another encounter where Degaré's name appears frequently (four times between 793 and 824) is the supper-scene in his third adventure; he meets and greets the damsel but nobody will speak to him. Encounters are often sites of recognition, not always of challenge or violence, even when no introduction-ritual takes place. His next adversary is 'iknawe ful wide' (879) though not named; Degaré is named five times during the fight (923-61) in which he kills his rival. This is no 'near-transgression', but routine chivalric slaughter.

In the last encounter he meets a 'dou3ti knigt', no longer in any sense fairy, whose arms are described as if to identify an ordinary human: 'asur And þre bor-heuedes þerin, Wel ipainted wiz gold fin (992-7). This is paralleled by a timely description of Degaré's own arms: 'þre maidenen heuedes of siluer brigt, Wiz crounes of gold ...' (1018-21). Here are the trappings of recognition, but neither can know the other's meaning. The narrator, however, is anxious for us to savour the situation to the full: 'Pe sone a3ein þe fader gan ride ...' (1026-8). After the first skirmish they are unhorsed and draw their swords; now is where the father ought to recognize his son, he 'amerueiled wes Whi his swerd was pointles' (1045-7), but the sign is not enough and the ritual must be spoken.

The first question is 'Wher were þou boren ...?' (1050), and until now nobody has had the answer. It looks like an artificial mystery since we know the story started 'In Litel Bretaygne' (7), but Degaré could not know because he was "lost". Now that he can answer the first question, the second, 'Ac i not wo mi fader wes' (1053), begins to dissolve. The father is asking about the son's identity, but the process reveals his own. The next question seems as pointless as the sword: 'What is þi name?' (1054). He has all the information he needs ('Be mi swerd i mai him kenne' — 129) and he cannot know what the child was going to be christened. The next lines answer and echo the name in a way that recalls that christening: '“men clepez me Degarré.” “O Degarré, sone mine!”' (1055-6). The repetition hammers home the importance of the name that is empty and contentless for the one person to whom it matters (everybody else, inside and outside the text, knows what it means), and it emphasizes the performative value of the speech-act without which recognition cannot take place.

The father can speak his recognition once the name has been given, because the question has shifted meaning from "what are you called?" to "what do I call you?" Thus the meaning of the name suddenly becomes irrelevant: any name would have done the trick. Simpson remarks that now Degaré is "found" the meaning is fulfilled and the narrative, driven by the name, must come to an end. But Degaré does the finding — another hint that his father is the Unknown. It is, however, not necessary for him to be re-named, because Degaré has become an

'inert' proper name now that he has taken his proper place in the social order.²¹ Instead of the unknown son discovering (his name as symbol for) his living family, in *Sir Degaré* the father discovers his place in a living family: he will be reunited with the woman, daughter of the King of Brittany, who gave him his named son.

*Amadas et Ydoine*²²

In this romance, the power of name is thematized in a manner strikingly different from that of any other so far examined: how names mean (nominalist or realist) gives way to what name (magic) can do. In the *Romance of Horn*, it was suggested that the name of God on the hero's sword may have been as effective in battle as the sight of his lady's ring;²³ here the lady's name is explicitly and self-consciously compared with the name of God as medicine to cure the hero of his madness. I discuss this extraordinary passage in more detail below.

There are only three named characters (plus the warhorse Blancart). Everybody but the lovers and the faithful Garinés is identified by title: the Duke and his seneschal, Ydoine's husband (count of Nevers) and his second wife (daughter of the count of Poitiers), the helpful host at Luque, the strange knight ('maufé' or angel) who steals the heroine, and so on.

There is a considerable company of named auxiliary figures, off stage. First, personifications control much of the plot: Amors, Nature, Fortune, and Pitiés with her gang (1102–6) who open Ydoine's heart to love. Then there are saints such as Marie, whom Ydoine invokes at moments of crisis (282, 4765, 6555), and Pierre, active in the vision she invents as part of her plot to get free of her husband; other supernaturals are Cloto, Lachesis, and Atropos — stage-names of three real but un-named women who help her set up that plot (2007ff). There are named figures from other stories, put in for comparison: Amadas is as fine as Roland or Gawain (3764–74), Amadas suffered as much as Tristan did for Yseut (340–3); there is a long and outrageous list of heroes betrayed by women, many of whom are proverbially "good": Penelope, Lavinia, Lucretia (5833–64). The fact that Amadas, who blurts out these names in a moment of despair, recants and apologizes almost immediately, is rather undermined by the narrator's humorous and patronizing admiration for Ydoine's deceitful cleverness.²⁴

Except for the figure of Amors, the first name in the text is that of Amadas. But there is a strong hint that it is not, at first, his true name. He is introduced

²¹Ibid., pp. 130–1.

²²ed. Reinhard. This version, 1190–1220, is in a Picard dialect. Because the other two (incomplete) versions are Anglo-Norman, it has been claimed as an insular romance. The unknown author, with his taste for psychology and long monologues, was probably a cleric with wide knowledge of contemporary literature.

²³[Horn] ed. Pope, laisses 128 and 152.

²⁴I think it unlikely that the poet intends to undermine anti-women discourse by writing this nonsense; medieval misogyny is often blatantly unreasonable, and in any case this poet is fond of insulting woman in general in order to praise Ydoine in particular — see 3568–626 and 7037–100.

(53) and described (unlike many romance protagonists, he is not born noble), and then named 'par gas' by his companions at 95–103. Amadas is a mocking nickname for one who is so gallant but who 'N'avoit cure de drüerie' (88); they make fun of him 'mais ne savoient Com il verai prophete estoient'. His future is thus encoded in the name (he is never given any other), which becomes his proper name at the end of the romance. The development is signalled, firstly, at the tournament after his recovery from madness: people recognize him and say to one another that there 'sans gas ... c'est meïsmes Amadas' (4424–6) — the mockery has fallen away. Then, towards the end, the duke addresses him by name and title (characters rarely address one another by name): 'Oés, sire cuens Amadas ...' (7726). The seneschal's son is given Ydoine to wife and made heir to the Duchy of Bourgogne. The meaning of Amadas' name is thus thematized. Legge may be right in her suggestion that its true meaning is 'diamond', but I consider its joke-meaning — 'lover-boy' — to be more important *in the story* (Meecham-Jones confidently asserts its meaning as 'beloved of God').²⁵ Similarly, Ydoine's name means 'idonea persona',²⁶ but this is neither explicated in the text nor thematized; its miraculous power as a healing spell is what matters.

The faithful vallet is introduced at 1676–7 (he brings the news of Ydoine's forthcoming marriage), but not named until given the task of finding Amadas — 'Il estoit noumés Garinés'. Because of him and his news, the hero 'esgara' (2584–8); he becomes mad and lost. In spite of the difficulty of guessing the intended meaning of a name, I note that 'guérir' (heal) is spelt 'garir' in this text (2595 and passim); Garinés is named at a significant moment: the start of his quest. This journey (he will find and endeavour to *guard* or protect Amadas) leads to the hero's healing and recovery, and ultimately to his safe return.

The namelessness of most characters throws emphasis on the names of the central figures. Ydoine's name has power comparable to the power of the name of God: a 'sainte chose' (3414) able to heal Amadas' madness. This is the more striking because of the narrator's explicit reluctance to make the comparison:

Li nons d'Ydoine et d'amie
Com uns des nons Nostre Signour
Que nous tenons a creatour,
Se pour ce non qu'a tort n'a droit
Des nons Damediu nus ne doit
Faire nul comparison (3398–403).

Her kiss is not enough — he wakes up and attacks her (3297–306) — but her name, repeated lovingly (3329, 3338, 3341, 3347, 3355, 3360, 3367 ...) is the 'miudre medecine' (3395). As well as naming herself, she calls him by name in two speeches during this scene (3336, 3370), while the narrator repeats 'non' ... 'nomme' seventeen times in the passage 3341–3414. Here name neither describes

²⁵ 'Questioning Romance', p. 43.

²⁶ Legge, *Anglo-Norman Literature*, p. 109.

nor labels: 'en répétant doucement son nom elle réitère la nomination primordiale et créatrice'.²⁷

Elsewhere in the text they call each other 'Amis', 'Ma douce dame', and so forth, and the narrator refers to them by name here and there. That is to say, names appear less than one would expect in a modern narrative, because Ydoine is often 'la pucele' or 'la contesse' and Amadas may be 'li damoisiaux', simply 'il' in long passages centred upon him, or 'le fol' — although he does not lose his name entirely, because 'Amadas' does not vanish from the page entirely, during his madness.

The power of name as medicine is re-echoed in the scene where Ydoine wakes from the "fausse mort" — a replay of her waking Amadas from madness. Although he calls her 'Dame' here, he then speaks his own name '... en ses bras vous tient Amadas' to bring her back to life (6564–76). Among the few places where a character addresses another by name are in Amadas' complaint against his dead lady, and his retraction (5918–19, 5957–60).

The 'maufé' addresses him as 'sire Amadas' (6399) after surrendering to him. The fact that this anonymous and ambiguous knight knows Amadas' name does not give him the power to conquer him — quite the reverse, for Amadas wins and obtains the secret of Ydoine's release. Anonymity means power, and learning an adversary's name means victory, in some but not all romance situations; I argue that there are many ways in which the power of name is wielded, by writer or narrator or by characters. In this remarkable episode (reminiscent of both *L'Atré* and *Sir Orfeo*) the combatants explicitly state their ignorance of each other's identity. Amadas admits politely 'Ne sai qui estes, biaux amis' (5725), but the 'chevaliers, qui la plainte ot ...' (that is, he has just heard Amadas name himself!) pretends not to know who Amadas is: 'Vassal ... ne sai qui es' (5967–9). He is effectively saying "Who the hell are you to sit on this corpse when I'm trying to drag it away?" The word 'Vassal' and the derisive 'tu' are intended to insult Amadas and demoralize him by denying his identity. However, there is more to the encounter. First, the ring re-emerges as a prop in the knight's staging of Ydoine's death. It is recognizable by the names Amadas put when he made it for her long ago (1267–70), and is supposed to be proof that she never really loved him because she gave it to this other man (5754–67). After recovering (by his own good thoughts) from despair, he overcomes the stranger and is praised not only for his prowess as a knight but also for his loyalty as a lover: 'Et si avés tous les amans ... Vaincu, sire, de loiauté' (6353–62) — the speaker switches to the respectful "vous" form. Here is another moment in the development of his name; instead of pretending to deny his identity the 'maufé' now confirms it. Before going back to God ('a Diu m'en vois', 6435) the spirit gives Amadas back the ring, explains how he may fetch away his lady — bewitched by means of another ring — and leaves with a blessing. His role was to test Amadas' name and virtue.

This is not the end of the story, for the romance is very much a double-bill.

²⁷Dubost, 'Récit initiatique', p. 383.

Ydoine's role is as active as her lover's, in spite of Fortune's efforts to turn her into a victim.²⁸ It is a 'roman initiatique' no less for the heroine,²⁹ who has already manipulated her husband into staying out of her bed, and into letting her go off on pilgrimage so that she can find and cure Amadas. She has also, by her own false death, been able to trick Amadas out of committing suicide. She will now arrange for her marriage to be annulled, and to be given Amadas for her husband, without appearing to have any will of her own in the matter. It is not surprising that her creator admires (however grudgingly) her powers, nor that Perot de Neele's summary of the romance (pp. 284–7) has the title: '*... de Ydone et d'Amadas*'.

*The Squire of Low Degree*³⁰

Gone is the naïve infatuation with names ...

If this poem is a 'swan song' of the romance, as the editor suggests (p. 250), then it gathers up and distils romance's infatuation with names into a narrative that both invokes and manipulates the power of name. Name is used neither to identify nor to describe inside the romance, but exploits an audience's knowledge of other romances and their name-play to create a paradoxical narrative about chivalry and status, recognition and name, in which the hero achieves everything — even name — without a name. Two remarkable features are: firstly, the insistent anonymity of all the characters (but one)³¹ and the fact that the word "name" is used only once (and significantly) in the whole text — this is further emphasized by a recurring motif of bewilderment or non-recognition. Secondly, there are lists of named heroes of other stories which prove to be very different from the formulaic lists of birds, wines, entertainments, and so on; also from the sort of list a writer might use to label a romance as "Arthurian".³²

My reading makes no attempt to elucidate the plot: because of the way this text tries to explain itself I hesitate to put its inconsistencies down to authorial incompetence. Matters are resolved with a logic satisfying but impenetrable, like fairy-tale, and yet fairy-tale princesses do not usually interrogate events in quite the way this one does: her questions, together with answers that are no answers, must stand for all attempts to interrogate the motivation of the story. Much of

²⁸See Crane, *Insular Romance*, on how name in this romance inverts the negative value of name in the Tristan story, and how in spite of Fortune's power Amadas and Ydoine are presented as effective agents of their own destiny (pp. 185–6).

²⁹See *Amadas et Ydoine* tr. Aubailly, whose Préface also stresses 'la vertu magique' of name.

³⁰There is no ms of *Squire*; its date (1450–1500) is deduced from a printed version and some fragments. Many early references suggest its wide popularity; audiences had a nostalgic taste for its romantic sentiment.

³¹The Grimms' tale of 'The Frog-Prince' also contains (and needs) no names. But a servant is unaccountably named Henry at the end; Bettelheim considers that this adds nothing to the story (*Contes de fées*, p. 413).

³²See, for example, Bruce's comment that well-known Arthurian names were 'utilized to give *éclat* to a story which originally had no connection' ([Meriadoc] *Vita Meriadoci*, p. 330).

the focus is on her and her actions (the squire's adventures overseas, for example, are narrated in only a few lines: 884–900); Fewster argues that she is attempting to create a story for herself.³³ She asks her father why he caused the dead body of her enemy, the steward, to be disguised so that she would believe it to be her lover's. 'For he wrought you all this wo' (988), says the king, and tells how he had set up the whole business, as if that explained anything. She asks again "But why? If I had only known — I thought my lover was dead!" "But he isn't dead," says the king, "here he is" (1043–52). There is no answer to questions about what the king is doing, except that he is making space for the story. Knowing that he knows everything does not, for example, explain how the steward (who knew the squire was leaving that night) knew the squire would come back, having *forgotten* to say goodbye to the lady, and so could confidently set a trap for him.

"He" ... "Him" ... which he is which? Namelessness underpins the action. When the squire calls to the lady through the door, she recognizes neither his voice nor his manner (though it is unlikely that any but her lover would call her 'my frely flour', 'my worthy wife' — 534–46) and tells him to go away ('Wende forth, squier, on your waye' — 563) as if she thinks he might be the steward.³⁴ Her next words, 'I ne wote what ye should be That thus besecheth love of me' (565–6), anticipate the disguising of the steward's body 'That she should not knowe what he ware' (656), and the nice irony of her later prayers for him: 'There shall none knowe but Heaven-kinge For whome that I make mine offringe' (705–6). Had they been able to call each other, or themselves, by name, the scene at the lady's door would be much less striking. As it is, the hero can say only 'I am your owne squir' (567). His inability to name himself is as absurd as her inability to recognize the dead steward. The passage is most effective: 'in her armes she toke *him* there', 'She sered *that body*', 'every day she kist *that dead*' (683–706, my emphasis) — the poet insists, without actually saying so, that she is kissing the wrong man.

Even the king, responsible for the whole plot, has his moment of bewilderment. He has known the squire for many years (358) and yet he suddenly sees him anew, 'he wist not wherfore nor why', on the day the main action begins (329–38): it is because the squire has a new role as lover.³⁵ There follows an important speech about how low-born men may rise to higher rank (373–80); it is clear from the first lines that the romance is about upward mobility. This is especially marked by the king greeting him as "son" both at the beginning and at the end of his seven years' exile (666–8 and 899–910).

The text draws attention to the characters' anonymity in several ways, not only the (non)recognition scene at the lady's door. The squire is exhorted to go and do deeds of arms in order to 'winne your shone' and 'gette your name' (171–82). He achieves all this (the text is full of the vocabulary of prowess, as

³³ *Traditionality and Genre*, Ch. V.

³⁴ Steward, like marshall (the squire is the king's marshall, 5–8), denotes a job; squire denotes status. We know she has her suspicions about the steward (161–4), who is also in love with her (297–8).

³⁵ See Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde* (III:1716–29); the hero's changed state of mind is obvious to all.

may be seen in this passage and others) even to the extent of becoming a king, but we never discover what he is called. This exemplifies the way romance seems not to care what the name is, just so long as it is found or achieved; it is not necessary for us to know it. There is a hint, of what the lady's name might be, in the specifications she sets out for his armour. The design for the shield is all wrong because letters would never appear as part of the device.³⁶ Thanks to their incorrect position, they stand out — but they do not spell her name: O and R, A and M, 'A reason for the love of me' (211-6). All the names, even the word "name", are in characters' speech (even an invocation of St John is given indirectly as the squire's thought — 522-4); the narrator will give no names at all. It is as if the king, not the narrator, is creating the story: he names the steward — Sir Maradose — at the beginning of his long explanatory renarration towards the end (981-1060), and this in turn opens the possibility that the king is shifting responsibility for the story onto him.³⁷

A set of names crucial to my reading is given in two speeches — one by the squire and the other, later, by the lady. These are names of legendary heroes and they echo the two main themes of the romance: the squire's rise to glory and his namelessness. When the squire is lamenting under the lady's window that he is neither rich nor royal, he wishes that he were as bold as Sir Libius, Sir Gawaine, or Sir Guy — or as doughty as the giant Sir Colbrande (68-86). Three heroes are mentioned, but the addition of Colbrande here focuses attention on the story of Guy (who killed Colbrande): he began as a squire of low degree and had to serve for seven years to win his lady. Guy is mentioned again in the other of these key speeches, the lady's words to him just before he goes out of her room to fight the steward (611-36), but this time the focus is on 'Sir Libius'. She tells a part of his story, including names (Arthur, the maid Ely, the lady of Synadoun) and even the dwarf's speech protesting that the hero is still too young for battles. Everybody knows that the Fair Unknown achieves his name in one way or another; here focus is on the hero who becomes 'Sir Thefair' in his own right without finding any other name.

The poem thus tells the squire's story by means of other stories told in characters' speech, and largely through viewpoints other than his own. This writer uses name in unusual ways, and places an unspoken question (whose story is it anyway?) by shifting suggestions about who controls the narrative. Perhaps he set out to prove that it was possible to produce a romance with no names at all; the naming of Sir Maradose then looks like a triumphant smirk (as well as a powerful way of re-allocating responsibility), coming as it does so near the end and as part of the king's authoritative renarration — which opens the way to a happy ending.

³⁶See Kiernan, '*Undo Your Door*', for a study of this 'mock investiture'; though not all scholars agree that the romance is a parody (see eg. Tigges, 'Romance and Parody' and Spearing, 'Secrecy, listening, and telling').

³⁷Spearing suggests that the steward wants to become 'champion storyteller', and that the king's disappearance at the end preserves the secret of his motivation (Ibid).

*Florimont*³⁸

Aimon de Varennes' romance is the only text in this study to foreground the name of the author, and — like *La Manekine* — it tends towards the realist in its attempts to interrogate name by etymology. The self-naming of authors is a topic to be studied in the context not only of romance but across all genres of medieval literature, and raises issues of 'auctoritas' — the status of the writer.³⁹ It is less philosophical (or poetic) than political and extra-textual; for example, Chaucer inscribes his book among those of 'auctors' at the end of *Troilus and Criseyde*, and himself among 'auctors' in *The House of Fame*.⁴⁰ Author-naming (to do with power) overlaps with character-naming (which explores problems of identification by means of fiction) in romances such as *Li Biaus Descouneüs*, *Mélusine*,⁴¹ and *Florimont*. A Cratyllic tendency to explicate name in this romance is undermined by the fact that explicitly-assumed pseudonyms arouse even more comment than true names. The most striking example recalls the moment in Plato's dialogue where Hermogenes is assured that his name is not Hermogenes.⁴² But Hermogenes is not intended to be a pseudonym: *Cacopedie* is. Delfis refuses to believe that Floquart is a 'mavais garson', and trusts him even though he is unable to elicit his true name.

Like Mestre Thomas, Aimon is fascinated by translation and language, disguise and name; he enjoys both genealogy — the romance spans four generations — and etymology:⁴³ *Florimont* and Benoît's *Chronique* are the first texts in French to use the word,⁴⁴ although Aimon's 'ethymologie' (9212) is hardly a study of derivation in any modern sense, nor even 'interpretacio' (exploration of name) in the manner of medieval hagiography. What Seymour has termed 'the fashionable medieval habit of name-questing'⁴⁵ is not so much an exploration of names' meaning (though some "explanation" may be given) as a game by which the writer reveals and/or hides a name in order to celebrate its owner. Outside

³⁸Line and page references are to ed. Hilka (I should like to thank Helen Cooper for help with the editor's German). The author, who gives the date 1188, composed probably in the region of Lyons. The romance is based on the *Matiere de Rome* (Alexander's fictive grandfather) and includes adventure, fantasy, and linguistic philosophizing. It exists in fourteen mss, as well as several late redactions.

³⁹See, inter al: Bruckner, 'Strategies of Naming'; Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages* (pp. 515–8); de Looze, 'Signing Off in the Middle Ages'; Foucault, 'What is an Author?'; Kay, 'Who was Chrétien?'; Middleton, 'Langland's "Kynde Name"'; Minnis, *Medieval Theory of Authorship*; Oliver, *Poems Without Names*; Scase, 'John But's *Piers Plowman*'; Zink, 'L'Anonymité dans la poésie lyrique'; and *Anonymity*, (special issue) *New Literary History*.

⁴⁰l. 1470. See Cooper, 'Chaucer's Self-Fashioning', pp. 66–8.

⁴¹See eg. Boutet, 'Le Comique Arthurien' and de Looze, '*Bel Inconnu*'; Müller, 'La dénomination dans *Mélusine*'.

⁴²Cited in Barton, *The Names of Comedy*, pp. 7–9.

⁴³See p. 69 above; Thomas plays with the meaning of the name Horn only.

⁴⁴Zumthor, 'Étymologies', pp. 150–2.

⁴⁵[Hoccleve] *Selections*, p. 137. Seymour is referring to 'A Tribute to Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester'. Comparable name-play occurs in several more poems by Hoccleve.

romance (where name-questing may take the form of mockery or comment among characters in the story) it also turns up in, for example, the Harley 'Annot and Johon'.⁴⁶ An author's self-naming play is often riddling, whether pretending to hide name or not.

Aimon gives his name abundantly at the beginning and at the end of *Florimont* (1–42, 13677–80); he also provides an extended play upon his name in an authorial aside in the middle of the action (9195–240), shortly before the hero emerges from his long incognito (at 9477). In this passage Aimon demonstrates that he must be a lover because, if you move the letters around, that is the meaning of his name, and he restates the disguised name of the lady for whom he has translated the romance. '[S]iaus qui sevent de clergie' will appreciate his book, and will have worked out who Vialine really is because the clue was given in the prologue: 'Aymes por amour *anulli*'.⁴⁷ A third mention of the lady appears as part of the writer's epilogue (13637–40); the two names, one elaborately revealed and the other elaborately concealed, frame the text as if the whole romance were an extended etymology of love.⁴⁸

He explains the heroine's name, Romadanaple, as meaning 'Plena d'amors': the extra 'a' is to be accounted for by a sigh (7761–86). By means of these laborious, not to say childish, games,⁴⁹ a pattern of love-naming emerges: Aimon is forced by love (because of his name) to write his romance, to reveal/hide his lady's name, and to explain his own; the lady in the story is forced by love to rewrite herself, also "etymologically", by revealing the hidden meaning of her name.

The third lady in the text, la pucele de l'Ile Selee, has no name — strangely, in a romance where anybody of importance has at least one name — but she is responsible for the crisis which sets off a series of events and disguises whose naming-patterns are not unlike those in romances I have examined already. This mysterious creature does not, as Vialine does, frame the story, but she is associated with key elements in the plot from the moment when she gives the hero magic protective gifts (2635–56) to the moment when her son, Netanebus, will take his place in the legend of Alexander (3859–93, narrated proleptically). A fairy mistress may sometimes be given a name,⁵⁰ but the sense of marvel or glamour that she brings to a story is rather enhanced if she has not got one. Like other secret mistresses (including human ones), she must not be seen nor talked about; when somebody (Partonope's mother, for example) breaks the spell she will go away: in this case *Florimont*'s mother follows him and steals a look at her (3747–58), and as a result the lovers must part for ever.

⁴⁶*English Lyrics of the XIIIth Century*, no. 76, ll. 28–30.

⁴⁷l. 8 (my emphasis). The letters make 'Iuliane', as 'Vialine' does. See IPN, note to line 8, and p. xcvi.

⁴⁸'Aimon a cultivé avec une ferveur spéciale dans toute son œuvre les *figuræ etymologicae*', Zumthor, 'Étymologies', pp. 151–2.

⁴⁹Ménard, *Le Rire et le Sourire*, p. 654.

⁵⁰In eg. *Sir Launfal* and *Mélusine*. See eg. Westoby, 'The Role of the Fée', and Harf-Lancner, *Les Fées au Moyen Âge*, for these figures (and 'Anonymous Women', below).

But she is not forgotten: events towards the end of the story evoke her, if they do not bring her back. Two passages remind us of what might have been. Camdiobras, the conquered enemy, curses the day Florimont was born and wishes that he (Florimont) had become king 'A la dame d'Ile Celee' (10298–312). And before Florimont's marriage and coronation the King of Crete objects that because he broke faith with 'la dame d'Ile Celee' he is fit for neither (11252–72); the others at the council shout him down, but the ideas have been placed. The romance continues after the hero's marriage, with the account of his expedition to Clavegris to free his father. The island of Magalon is not to be confused with Avalon;⁵¹ it is highly visible and described in detail, although it contains its share of marvels: guardian lions and doors of magnet-stone that will snatch you, if you are wearing sword and armour, as you pass through (12609–16). By means of trickery, Florimont and his men gain entry to the fortress, and he chats up (there is no other phrase for it) the resident 'dame'. She gives him a magic ointment that will open all the locks and make the lions lie down (13065–93); Florimont then hands her over to Camdiobras (13197–204), the same who invoked the 'dame d'Ile Celee' a while ago and who will marry this other island-lady after her husband dies (13483–92). She is named only twice, and during the passage where she is actually present and active she is designated only by title (as the fairy is). These events, including Florimont's trickery (hinted in advance by the accusation that he had broken faith with the fairy), mean that the fairy remains 'selee' but never absent.⁵²

Florimont's alter-images (disguises, names) are of considerable interest. We are told several times that his name in Greek is Eleneos,⁵³ although this has little importance to the plot. A major renaming is when, devastated at losing his fairy, he reduces himself to poverty: '... de povres dras vestus, Toz jors aloit de[s]cha[u]s et nus' (4007–8). He insists that henceforth he will be known only as Povre Perdu (3995–4026). This name chimes strangely with that of the fairy — she and her island are 'perdu', and so is he; he says he is *a different person*: 'De Florimont nen i a mie; Il s'en ala avec s'amie' (4017–8). This is a striking example of a hero going naked, mad, and/or anonymous for love, and a startling idea — "I am not Florimont because Florimont has gone away" — showing a real concern for what "name" might be about. This narrative (not psychological) device is dramatic because the audience is being invited to pretend it is a different hero. The pseudonym is chosen not because Florimont wants to disguise himself for chivalric reasons but, as Ménard points out, because his whole life has been shattered.⁵⁴ The first element, Povre, has two meanings: he is pitiable and

⁵¹See eg. pp. cxii and cxlii. References to 'Ile Celee' as 'Ile Perdue' resonate with the second element of the hero's pseudonym.

⁵²Harf-Lancner sees her as a 'nouvel avatar de la fée de l'Île Celée'; 'Le *Florimont* d'Aimon', p. 244.

⁵³Ibid. p. 242, n. 6, for several suggestions as to the meaning of Eleneos, as well as of Philippe's by-name 'Macernus' (although Aimon says the latter is from 'Madian' — 845–60).

⁵⁴'Désespéré d'avoir été abandonné ... Florimont prend un nom d'emprunt humiliant et part à l'aventure'. Compare some of the heroes discussed earlier — even the Fair Unknown heroines

unhappy; he is also poor in a material sense, having given away his goods.⁵⁵ He will keep the name for some five thousand lines, and so will the narrator, until he has won the love of Romadanaple and is well on the way to winning the war against Camdiobras.

Several of Florimont's tricks involve disguises not of the most romantic. The merchant disguise, assumed by him and his men as part of the assault on Clavegris (they also dress up in the clothes of their dead enemies — 11855–62 and 12235–40), is rarer and less picturesque than some of those — minstrel, leper, pilgrim, fool — familiar from other stories. Romance-writers 'ne s'arrêtent pas longuement sur ce type de travestissement'.⁵⁶ However, Florimont's other disguise, as tailor's apprentice, is well-developed, funny, and unique.⁵⁷ If not exactly humiliating, this disguise is at best undignified — though it does succeed in getting the hero into the heroine's bed (8780–844, 8933–44, 9127–42). Taken with the unusual circumstances of Florimont's choice of pseudonym, this unusual disguise adds to the impression of a persona very far removed from that of the typical young hero.

Much of the plot and most of the trickery is engineered by Floquart, Florimont's 'maistres' — described as a necromancer on his first appearance (1861–900). It is he who tips off Florimont's mother to go and look at the fairy, and who advises Florimont at the assault on Clavegris and other ventures. He is responsible for one of the most interesting passages, on the subject of naming, to be found in any romance. He resolves to take a pseudonym when Florimont does, and Delfis, their host in Philipople, questions this pseudonym. The episode begins with Cacopedie going ahead to book lodgings, and he asks Delfis to stock up with everything his lord and companions will need. Delfis does all this before asking any names. '« Coment vos iestes apalez. » « Quacopedie sui nomez »'. Delfis stares; '« Et vostre sires ...? » « Povre Perdu l'apelet on »'. Delfis is devastated, and laments at length that he will lose everything (5153–78). When Cacopedie tries to reassure him, he protests 'je ne sai ancor son estre ...'; their names tell him that poverty goes with bad company (5188–96). Then he capitulates (addressing him by name) because Cacopedie's discourse is so wise and persuasive:

Quacopedie, biaux amis,
Sertes, vos n'iestes pas vilains;
De vostre nom ne sui certains;
Il ne peirt pas a la raison
Qu'aiés nom de mavais garson.

are trying to escape shame, not seek it. Florimont and the hero of *Ille et Galeron*, exceptionally, hide their name and condition because they have been 'profondément ébranlés': *Le Rire et le Sourire*, p. 341.

⁵⁵Hence, perhaps, Hilka's translation of Cacopedie as 'armer Wicht' (IPN). Floquart says he will change his name to a poor one "like you", but glosses it to mean 'mavais garsons' (4731–9).

⁵⁶Ménard, *Le Rire et le Sourire*, p. 349; he also cites Kaherdin in Thomas' *Tristan*.

⁵⁷Ibid, and p. 560. Aimon may have travelled as a merchant when picking up some of the geographical details to be found in his romance; see Willard, 'A Fifteenth-Century Version', pp. 26–7.

N'ait gaires que cist nons fut pris
 Ou sai ou en vostre païs.
 Li nons ne puet celer le voir;
 Li parlens mostre le savoir,
 La parole le nom desment;
 Car vos parlez si sutilment.
 Bien sai que atre nom avez.
 Se por povreté le selez,
 Sire, por Deu dites le moi ... (5210-23).

A name cannot hide the truth, he says, and words give the lie to the name; you are not a bad boy, therefore that name must be false — what is your true name? This is a very different concept from that uttered by Perceval's mother:⁵⁸ by the (nick)name you emphatically do not know the man, according to Aimon. I have argued that the concept, knowing by means of name, is used differently in almost any romance one cares to examine; here it is turned on its head. Why? Is Delfis the bourgeois, an outsider, able to see through the elaborate pretences set up by romance incognito? He is nonetheless shocked at the sight of the poorly-dressed 'sire' and has to be reassured (5300-28); not really an outsider, he is described as 'prou et cortois'. What is more, he is well-bred enough to play *Cacopedie*'s game: the latter refuses to give his real name 'Seu que ne sai ne vos puis dire; Ne puis dire seu que ne sai' (5236-7) and Delfis, seeing he will get no more out of him, decides to leave him in peace (5241-3). Not only that, but he becomes an ally later, leading the disguised hero into the royal apartments with a pile of fine stuffs to show the princess.

The point at issue may be the difference between a (nick)name and a pseudonym, when they are signalled as descriptive. A nickname bestowed by somebody else is likely to be descriptive, but in a different way from a pseudonym chosen by oneself. A name acquired from one's companions as one goes through life may be more or less suitable, even cruelly so, but if one is fool enough to choose a transparently unsuitable pseudonym one may get found out.

Aimon is clearly fascinated by names and naming, and the passages cited show that he must be aware of the theoretical issues involved. For example: one can change a name if it becomes "wrong" (*Florimont* becomes *Povre Perdu*), but giving a wrong name does not make it "right" (*Floquart* cannot be *Cacopedie*). He wants even the hidden names to be revealed and the disguised names to be transparent — the hiding and disguising give extra emphasis to the naming-themes of the romance. *Floquart* is an author-figure in that he engineers much of the plot, and in that he *writes down* the duke's dream about his son's future (1711-878). It is fitting that his own pseudonym is what elicits this remarkable commentary on the (negative?) power of name.

⁵⁸See above p. 72.

*L'Atre Périlleux*⁵⁹

This romance makes an appropriate conclusion for my extended analysis of texts: the first was about Gawain's son, the last is about the Fair Unknown's father. It is a puzzling romance, and it deals in both great and small detail with many of the naming themes and topoi discovered and explored in the foregoing pages. Echoes of other texts (especially those of Chrétien) show that the author is familiar with many romances and their conventions — especially naming-conventions; I shall deal with these as I come to them. Not least important is the way characters question or comment upon the meanings of 'sournons'; most romance writers do not comment on or etymologize the real names of their characters, but false names are often the object of concern or anxiety within the story.⁶⁰ Combes' important article covers some of the ground that I shall cover, and what she says about sournons in this romance supports my own view.⁶¹ My focus, however, is that interest in (nick)names is overshadowed by concern about power, or magic, and about who wields it. I cite Walters, who discusses Gawain as a 'hardworking but flawed marriage broker' and states that most of the female characters 'have nothing to say',⁶² I argue that the romance is about naming, not marriage-brokering. The first speech in the text, setting off the first naming-game, is given to a female. Most of them have plenty to say, and they drive most of the plot. Finally, I argue that much of the plot is driven by supernatural power: magic surrounds the tomb-damsel, conjures away the hero's name, and brings the dismembered dead to life.

The romance is puzzling partly because it deals with illusion and forgetting, partly because it evokes so many recognized conventions and underlines — or undermines — them. Gawain, who is known never to hide his name,⁶³ one day unaccountably loses it. This is nothing to do with love-madness, but a case of mistaken identity: Gawain's double has been murdered and chopped up — name and all, it would seem. His adventures, complicated by the fact that he is in mid-quest for something else when this happens,⁶⁴ lead at length to a resolution in which the victim is magically brought back to life. The naming of other characters is managed in such a way that we are made to grope about in the story trying to keep track of who is who.⁶⁵ Typically, a newcomer arrives and there follows a long passage in which he (the knight) and he (who has no name) exchange blows, journey together, and/or have long conversations. The narrative presents a bewildering world in which nameless (male) figures are largely indistinguishable

⁵⁹Line references are to text, and appendix, ed. Woledge. Nothing is known of the circumstances of this mid-thirteenth-century composition, except that both author and audience must have been very well-read in Arthurian adventure romance.

⁶⁰See esp. p. 33 above.

⁶¹'Cénotaphe d'un héros', esp. pp. 153–7.

⁶²'Resurrecting Gauvain', pp. 537; 527.

⁶³On the contrary, he boasts of his readiness to reveal it; see eg. Woledge, p. vii.

⁶⁴Thus namelessness cannot be equated with wandering, nor name with the security of home.

⁶⁵Arthur (*Three Arthurian Romances*, p. xv) remarks on the close attention required of readers.

until the moment when each, with few exceptions, is named with much ceremony and dramatic impact. The game of chivalric power is played out in an atmosphere of uncertainty, even anxiety: with Gawain 'le Bon Chevalier' dead, the identity and status of all other knights is made problematic or fragile.

The namelessness of the women is not a sign that they lack importance. On one level the story is about male rivalry — a-feminist rather than "anti-feminist". Women, 'presented as poor weak creatures in need of Gawain's assistance',⁶⁶ prove on closer examination to be well characterized and remarkably vocal, making powerful contributions to the plot and to the overall theme of naming while eluding the (male) need for names altogether.

My study will analyze naming-patterns along the lines suggested, and explore some further questions. First, does Gawain forget his name, or is he merely hiding it until the shame of having been butchered can be wiped out by revenge on the bodies of the butchers? Then, why the delay before he loses his name, and another before the narrator "loses" it? Finally, does Gawain lose his honour, by failing to start *at once* after Escanors,⁶⁷ as well as his name?

* * * * *

Gawain's name is variously stated and hidden, displaced or forgotten. When he meets three damsels mourning his death, he promises them and their companion 'ja ne sarés qui je sui Devant la que je revenrai ...' (656-60); this suggests deliberate concealment. But he gives his name freely to the young man who helps him in the chase after Escanors (785-7) — it is neither hidden nor forgotten yet. Until the end of this episode, which contains the linked episode of the graveyard, everybody knows who he is: the butler-damsel⁶⁸ because Escanors sent her to court specifically to get Gawain, the tomb-damsel by supernatural means, and the helpful young man (with his relations) because Gawain told him — *after*, that is, the discovery that he is apparently dead. If he did resolve to conceal his name, why delay doing so? Looking back from a much later point, we might conclude that it is because the adventures involving Escanors and the graveyard are not yet achieved, and the hunt for the name-killers not yet begun. But at this point we cannot be certain; I believe the writer is slyly preparing the possibility that the name will vanish, magically, of its own accord.

In the next episode, the hawk-damsel tells her jealous *ami* that the man up the tree is the best knight in the world ('Fors vous seul', she adds diplomatically), as if she knew who he was (2668-79). When the next newcomer, the one who gives the horses, asks 'Ki vous estes ...' we have absolutely no reason to believe that Gawain is not saying who he is, because '... li a ensi raconté Com je vous ai ici conté' (2874-87). It is the other whose incognito is underlined: murmuring

⁶⁶Ibid.

⁶⁷Here and there I shall give names of knights, even if nameless in the passage under discussion, for clarity.

⁶⁸'Je veul ... boutelliere estre' (49-56). Many of the damsels can be identified without reference to the names of their men; I do so where possible.

darkly that Gawain shall not know who *he* is until the day he can return the favour, he trots away into the forest (2956–66). Ménard argues that because he no longer calls himself Gawain, and because the author calls him 'cil sans non' immediately, then Gawain must be deliberately hiding his name.⁶⁹ But there is a delay during which he does give the name Gawain and is still apparently himself; the episode where he says 'Je sui le chevalier sans non' (app. 548–9) fits into the story after the two encounters I have just described. Furthermore, the narrator continues to call him Gawain until line 4064, several episodes later; this delay is also puzzling.

It eludes him very suddenly, as if he really had, to his surprise, forgotten it.⁷⁰ He sends the vanquished king of la Rouge Chité to Arthur 'de par moi', but cannot say more than 'Que chil sans non vous y envoie' and that he will return to court once he has found it (app. 527–57). The king, while his damsel was talking to Gawain, has already asked the hawk-damsel who this might be, and she says she does not know (app. 215–29). So he did not tell her after all — unless, that is, she is colluding with him. This is one of several places where a woman's words have considerable weight; she is the first person *not to know* who Gawain is, and the exchange is an additional indication that the writer wants to keep us guessing.

In the next episode he asks Espinogres' name but cannot give his own:

Je ne vous puis le mien non dire,
 ... que je l'ai perdu,
 Si ne sai qui le m'a tolu.
 Or le me couvient aler querre (3450–7).

There are no narratorial asides to signal that Gawain wished to hide his name, and the repeated emphasis — that somebody has taken it, that he must go and hunt for it — does give the impression that he really has not got it.

Meanwhile, the name lives on as Gawain continues his adventures and as others talk about him (by name) in the third person. Then, equally suddenly, the narrator forgets his name for no apparent reason. But perhaps the hawk-damsel is the key. From the moment he arrived in response to her cries of distress (2572), throughout the Rouge Chité episode, to the moment when she complained of hunger, he has never left her side. Even if she does not know his name, she knows a lot about him, and his name vanishes from the text as he leaves her at the proud damsel's gate. 'La pucele ... bien counisçoit le país' (we discover why later) but 'cil ... Ne nul honme n'i counisçoit' (4054–7): the hero is suddenly quite

⁶⁹ *Le Rire et le Sourire*, pp. 507–8.

⁷⁰ Or, having decided to conceal it, he finds it actually gone — as if the wind had changed and a pretended grimace become fixed. As there is a delay between the arrival of a person and the arrival of his name, there may be a delay between cause and effect (before the wind changes or the magic begins to work), between the vanishing of the cat and the vanishing of its grin.

alone. '[C]il qui sans non estoit lors' (4064) remains nameless in the narration,⁷¹ although the name does not vanish altogether; people continue to talk about him — notably the proud damsel invokes his name soon after the narrator has deleted it (4204–20). It does not reappear until the moment of Gawain's speech ('Par foi ... je sui Gavains' — 5731–7), as he overcomes the knight who killed his 'sosie'.

In this context, Ménard refers to the *Geta*, in which the protagonist laments, on seeing his double, 'On m'appelait Geta! Quel sera désormais mon nom? Je n'aurai pas de nom puisque je ne suis rien.'⁷² It is ironic that in French the *name* Sosia (that is, the victim's name in *Amphitryo*) becomes the *word* for the other one: le sosie = the not-Sosia.⁷³ Although Gawain does not become 'nemo' ('cil sans non' means 'somebody' rather than 'nobody'), there is still a risk that he may disappear: he is missing, presumed dead. At last the unfortunate double, who was carrying a shield like Gawain's (5234–9), is provided with a name within moments of his resuscitation (6378–81; 6400–4), so that he is safely re-labelled as somebody who is not Gawain.

Magic power is at work, notably in the early episode of the graveyard, and later when the blind is cured and the dead brought to life. Not only has Gawain's name an almost magical power (I discuss the invocations later) but also several of the women have apparently magical power over Gawain's name; when Gawain restates his name on vanquishing li Faé it is as if a spell, of forgetfulness, had been broken. Not until after this does Gawain say that he really was concealing it: 'Tornai m'en ... Que je n'i fui pas coneüs' (5818–9). The magic — if magic it was — refuses to declare itself.

The writer exploits the convention of the knight incognito to an unparalleled degree of complexity (and audience bewilderment). The story opens with a court scene in which known knights (Tors, Erec, Caradoc, Kay) are named in fairly straightforward fashion. The naming of other male characters,⁷⁴ including Gawain himself, is deliberately and variously delayed, as may be seen by this table:

1. Gawain. The romance is about 'le Bon Chevalier' (3) and the butler-damsel comes in search of him and none other, but she refuses to say which knight she wants and makes Arthur name him (90–3).⁷⁵

⁷¹The few exceptions are mistakes or rhetorical markers. At 4369 the text refers back to when Gawain had his name; at 4866–8 'Gavains ... va querre son non'. Combes, who thinks very much as I do, concludes regretfully that it must be an error (see her pp. 170–1). But the oxymoron has considerable impact; like a well-placed sound-effect it reminds us of a paradox of this romance: the nameless [name] goes in search of name. The arm 'de Gavain' (5206) is not, of course, his.

⁷²*Le Rire et le Sourire*, p. 508, n. 74.

⁷³See Barton, that the unhappy slave 'never thinks to explore etymological equivalents' (*The Names of Comedy*, pp. 160–2). As in romance, the name's meaning is less important than its presence or absence.

⁷⁴A few are never named, notably the helpful damoiseil encountered in the graveyard. He and Martin get knighthood and lands at the end of the romance (6620–4).

⁷⁵Other romances like to stress his quality before naming him: see eg. the opening of *Le Chevalier à l'épée*.

2. Escanors arrives (146), is named by the tomb-damsel (1598), and killed (2462).
3. Martin. The blinded vallet is introduced (481), cured (6510–13), and named by the narrator (6533).
4. Cortois de Huberlant. Gawain's double is first mentioned in the mourning damsels' narrative (534–71); he is brought back to life (6378–81) and names himself (6400–4).
5. The murderers. The third is never named (5022–47). They are first mentioned by the damsels (544); le Faé Orgellox and Goumeres sans Mesure are named by Tristan (5255–63).
6. Codrovain. Introduced in the hawk-damsel's speech (2602), he arrives (2669); though named by his sister (4285), he is not identified as the former's *ami* until later in the episode (4358–71).
7. Ragidel. The horse-giver arrives (2850) and withholds his name (2956–66). He reappears as *ami* of the proud damsel (Codrovain's sister) and names himself to her (4308–9).
8. Brun sans pité. Mentioned by the charcoal-burner as king of la Rouge Chité (app. 20), he is encountered (app. 100), yields (app. 518) — and unsuccessfully asks Gawain's name, then names himself (app. 558–9).
9. Espinogres. He arrives (2992) but does not give his name until soon before the exchange where Gawain “forgets” his own (3432–9).
10. Cadres. Similarly, he arrives and his arms are described (3590ff) but he is not named until later (4580–6).
11. Tristan. We meet the host (4903–5), who tells long and doubly-embedded stories, but he is not named until Espinogres remembers to ask him (5372–92).⁷⁶
12. Li Lais Hardis. He arrives (5863–5), he asks the name of his adversary as he was taught to do by his master (6172–7: another naming-convention), and names himself (6215).

All are named very late in the active portions of their episodes. If, like Espinogres, a knight remains in company with the hero, his naming is nevertheless delayed until some crucial moment. For much of the time Gawain, like a detective in a murder-hunt,⁷⁷ is playing hide-and-seek with nameless figures. Codrovain is eventually named by his sister, but only his damsel (presumably) knows that it

⁷⁶This is one of several references to naming-convention. They serve to keep the main theme, of naming, uppermost in the audience's mind.

⁷⁷Combes puts forward this appealing notion at the conclusion of her ‘Cénotaphe d'un héros’.

was the proud damsel's brother who took away le Gringalet — until he reappears, riding him. Tristran, whose own narrative contains several comments about naming,⁷⁸ is named in an exchange where the discourtesy of forgetting to ask somebody's name is commented on (5372–92). The encounter with the king of la Rouge Chité raises a little *méprise*: because Gawain has not yet lost his name we think that the king is the anonymous one, but after the fight we discover that it is the other way about. These are also examples of the way naming is stressed and namelessness shown to be confusing.

Combes' reading gives a coherent account of how Gawain must regain his honour, lost because of his delayed start after Escanors, and how no sooner has he regained it than his identity (shield, horse, name) then vanishes piece by piece. This account bridges, as it were, the rather awkward gap between the graveyard episode, from which the romance incontrovertibly takes its name, and the rest of the story. However, I am not convinced that he does lose honour. To my mind, the romance as a whole is held together by the continuing power of women over Gawain's destiny (symbolized by their manipulation of his name) and over the narrative process.⁷⁹

To deal with his supposed loss of honour first, I point to the highly conventional opening: arrival of damsel asking boon, feast which must not be disturbed without permission, arrival of aggressor, Gawain's courtesy, and Kay's discourtesy — he typically rushes off *first*, without asking leave, and typically takes a severe tumble.⁸⁰ As soon as the interloper's hoofbeats have died away, we are shown Gawain's thoughts (he is the first to react) as he debates whether to rush off or remain politely at table; he reflects that his horse will be fast enough, in any event (208–21). Kay, not the king, first accuses Gawain (222–41), and the audience will know that Kay is always motivated by jealousy and presumption. Arthur is angry, but Gawain explains aloud why he did not move, flattering the king by referring to his greatness — such that even if the Emperor of Rome should arrive Arthur would make him wait until after dinner before bestirring himself to attack (347–59). Furthermore, Gawain's delay allows a space during which Kay can dash forth and get beaten up, as usual; when Gawain meets him on the road (having very properly worried about him) Kay abuses him again and refuses the courteous offer of help to get back on his horse (408–47). Restraining an unkind chuckle here, I would say that Kay and even Arthur come out of the

⁷⁸One is that he wishes he had asked his visitor's name and business before giving him hospitality (5038–47). This recalls Map's remark about the good manners of the Welsh (*De Nugis Curialium*, pp. 182–3), who perhaps did not wish to know too much — in troubled times — about visitors' identity.

⁷⁹Walters cites the author's failure to name his lady as proof that he despises women ('Resurrecting Gauvain', p. 527) — but he does not bother to name himself either! The opening lines indicate her as responsible for the writing of the romance, and she teases by withholding Gawain's name: she says she wants 'une aventure ... Qu'il avint au Bon Chevalier' (1–3).

⁸⁰We must assume both writer and audience were familiar with Chrétien, where Kay is already noted for discourteous behaviour and Gawain, though susceptible to women, is still a model of chivalry (see eg. Notes to Owen's translation (*Chrétien Romances*), and the Répertoire in *Œuvres*). These are among the conventions invoked at the start of *L'Atre*.

episode looking rather silly.

None of this would signify if, as Combes believes, Gawain loses his honour and if, as Walters believes, the romance is intended to be anti-chivalric. I suggest that the writer does not use the conventions subsequently to undermine Gawain's character in either way. He uses several conventions, notably naming-games of various kinds, to create a puzzle-romance — a rather frightening comedy full of marvels and rumours that nevertheless ends happily.

The "anti-women" passages do not add up to a serious attack: one is in the furious speech of the knight who finds a stranger helping his damsel retrieve the hawk. The narrator wearies of this 'barate' (2681–95). Next is a more extended passage, citing Solomon, as the hungry damsel begs Gawain to get her some food. Though claiming that few would disagree, the narrator dismisses the subject: 'A autre ouvre li cuers me tire' (4009–30). A third is undermined by being the words of the king of la Rouge Chité (citing Samson): his damsel reports his rage because she pointed out that he is not the best knight in the world (app. 148–206), and he condemns her to a thoroughly nasty punishment. Overall, the men are made to look discourteous.

More important is that women have a very high share of directly-spoken lines, considering that men perform most of the physical action and that much of their dialogue is the introduction-ritual and/or flyting that accompanies each encounter. It is difficult to arrive at an exact allocation, because a lot of direct speech is embedded in other direct speech, and I had to exclude indirect speech from my calculation. Gawain has approximately one thousand lines; there are twenty-four other male speaking parts (twenty with more than five lines) whose voices, including embedded speech of others, average a hundred lines each. There are ten female speaking parts (I count the mourning damsels as one) sharing over eight hundred lines: their voices average at least eighty lines each. The poor weak creatures have strong voices; some of them even have more lines to say than the men they belong to.

The author's lady is supposed to be responsible for the writing of the romance; this is arguably a convention. But female characters are responsible for more than half of the mainsprings of the plot. The butler-damsel is being used as a tool by Escanors, true, but we meet her first. She is vocal, and powerful in the way she forces Arthur to name Gawain; later she explains why Escanors wanted to fight Gawain, and regrets his rash pride (2385–405). The other and greater half of the plot is set in motion by two women whom we barely meet, but their voices are strong enough to be heard through several nested sets of quotation marks: Tristran is telling our nameless hero how his nameless visitors had explained the dismembered bits of Gawain they were carrying about, and they quoted what their young ladies had said to them. One had said she loved only Gawain (5082–102), and this is what sent li Faé off with his henchmen to kill Gawain (or so he thought).

The other maiden said something less important for the plot but fascinating for the scholar: she too has given her love, but she cannot name the knight. She

tells enough about him, though, to reveal that it must be Perceval — *before* he knew his own name! 'Le Chevalier Vermel' came to Arthur to be made a knight, and won the arms — bare-handed — of the knight who had stolen the King's golden cup (5103–35). Here a text-specific literary idea is in process of being transformed into a convention: the audience is expected to recognize Perceval without knowing his name precisely because he did not know his name.⁸¹ This reference, and the way it is presented, is central to my reading: fascination with name and namelessness is largely mediated through women's voices.

Throughout the romance people refer to Gawain in the third person, often by name, and even when he is present — usually but not always because he is thought to be dead. Many of these references or invocations are made by women. The butler-damsel asks for the best knight and makes Arthur say his name. The mourning damsels are obviously among those who invoke Gawain; they first tell the story of his death. Not everybody has heard the story: Espinogres' damsel invokes Gawain, whereupon her man takes advantage of her ignorance (3230–9, 3284–5); Cadres does not seem aware that this one among his role-models is dead (3812–15). The proud damsel, however, has heard it, and wishes he were alive to help her (4217–20, 4286–91). Gawain's dragging her off in this episode could be considered as showing him in a bad light, but in fact because he *is* alive he *is* doing the right thing; this is fairy-tale logic. The damsel is delighted to be given to Ragidel, she explains to Gawain (4319–46). Tristran the host speaks of him who was le Bon Chevalier (4994–5011), but his name is not invoked in this passage until the embedded speeches of the two damsels: the first names him as her beloved (5090–9), the second names him while failing to name hers (5108–17). Later Gawain, when renarrating to li Faé, reports directly and indirectly yet more of the mourning damsels' account, in which the victim is named as Gawain and even challenged directly by name (5775–811).

Further variations on this peculiar theme range from the mention of exemplary knights (the hawk-damsel at 2672, the damsel in the fountain at app. 155–6; these suggest Gawain's name without stating it) to Gawain's references to himself. He tells the mourning damsels he saw Gawain alive and well at court recently (601–5); he reproaches Espinogres because he (Gawain) loved Gawain (3370–6); he asks Tristran whether he knew Gawain well ("I can show you his arm" is the reply!), and swears he knows Gawain is not dead because he saw him not four days ago (5191–224). All this adds to the hide-and-seek effect: the bewildered listener hears the name echoed, shouted, whispered, from divers unexpected directions, while the central figure for much of the time has not got it at all.

To see the female characters as victims of the men who exploit them is to take their situations at face value. They are rather well characterized, many tell their own stories or comment upon their men, several contribute by filling gaps in the narrative, and some speak directly (not only by invoking Gawain) in the naming-games.

⁸¹See esp. Sargent-Bauer, 'Noms de personnes dans le *Graal*', on Chrétien's last romance as even more concerned with name-questions than his others are.

The butler-damsel has the first direct speech in the poem. Forcing Arthur to name the knight she wants — thus eliciting the name's first appearance — she is confident and clever (74–93). Though lamenting her lover's death, she tells of his pride and regrets it (2385–405); thus Gawain's promise, that she shall have another when she gets to the court (2480–7), is less patronizing than helpful.

The mourning damsels are not characterized, but have a vital role as narrators (456ff, and their speech is reported by Gawain later: 5775ff), with altogether a hundred and five lines of direct speech.

The tomb-damsel is no mute victim: she tells her own story and has supernatural power — though not, unfortunately, sufficient to free herself from the demon who enslaves her. She addresses Gawain immediately by name (1164), and tells the demon she does not at all like being his 'putain' (1274–80). She is acquainted with Gawain's mother (who had supernatural power, and gave Gawain his name — 1577–93), she tells Gawain the name of his adversary and how to overcome him.

The hawk-damsel has been mentioned because of the way she is associated with Gawain's name. She explains her situation to him when they meet, worrying that her good courteous knight will be angry with her for losing the bird (2601–41; this speech contains a vivid little picture of the lady feeding the hawk on her fist). We do not always see her at her best; the attack of hunger that sends Gawain off to the proud damsel's castle is shockingly unromantic, but necessary to the plot. She knew the castle well, but presumably did not want to risk encountering her lover until Gawain had done the necessary (4419–21).

The damsel in the fountain has more direct speech than her *ami*; she explains her situation to Gawain (while the king of la Rouge Chité tries to find out from the hawk-damsel who her companion is). It turns out that she had reproached him for boasting of his prowess (app. 148–64).

Espinogres' damsel has direct speech embedded in his long story: she read him a lecture about proper knightly behaviour (3086–133). When we meet her, she addresses Gawain directly as 'Vous qui n'avez pas vostre non ...', then praises him by name as though he were not standing right in front of her (3502–22).

The proud damsel's behaviour is discourteous, but she apologizes cordially. I have noted how she invokes Gawain; it is also interesting that her lover does not name himself until the moment when he can speak to her directly (4306–20).

The sisters of the helpful young man have small but definite roles: they have castles as dowry, and on successive nights are responsible for keeping Escanors' damsel safe from his clutches. Tristan's daughter is an expert doctor, and speaks her diagnosis (6320–30). Arthur's queen has neither voice nor name, but she is explicitly the one to whom the accounts of Gawain's adventures are sent (2558–67; app. 527–37). In this she is like the writer's *dame*, for whom the romance is told.⁸² Women's importance in and for the story is written all over it.

I want finally to suggest how the graveyard episode relates to the rest of the

⁸²When we first meet Tristan, he has met a damsel and is, perhaps typically, telling her a 'nouveau' (4918–21).

romance — because I doubt that Gawain really lost his honour. The theme is that of the *fausse mort*: Gawain rescues a very-much-alive damsel from a tomb while at the same time undergoing a kind of false death of his own.⁸³ It would be stretching a point to suggest that she is his real *amie*, although she is the only damsel not promised (or promised to) anybody else: she is in some sense his analogue. He too is very much alive (in *Amadas et Ydoine* both in turn appear to be dead and must be revived), and it is interesting that soon after rescuing her from “death” and dishonour he tells her he would rather be dead than dishonoured (1603–15). The power of name is not used as a healing charm in this romance, but name plays around illusions of death (there are few real deaths) and forgetfulness, recognition and identity. It is as if the writer were exploring how far the courtly can be combined with the marvellous: the tomb-damsel’s troubles begin when she is bewitched by a jealous step-mother (1189–97), and Gawain’s troubles end when, thanks to li Faé’s suddenly-revealed magic power, his double comes to life and names himself (6394–404). It is not only the rescue of the damsel, but also the return of Gawain, that is associated with the end and annihilation of the graveyard in the final lines of the romance⁸⁴

Si sacent bien tuit bas et haut
 Car li Aitres Perilleus faut
 Des que Gavains a tant erré
 Qu’il est a cort a sauveté (6669–72).

* * * * *

The extended readings, in these two chapters, show that naming (and namelessness) is an essential theme in a wide range of romances. Analysis of naming proves to be a valuable hermeneutic tool that opens up new ways of interpreting texts. *Ipomadon*, for example, is not only about discovering the identity of a hero but also about differing personal perspectives: close reading lays bare the writer’s sensitive handling of characters’ points of view. In *Amadas et Ydoine* the love-story is enriched by the use of naming as a magic with power over life and death. My second group of texts has, like the first, yielded a number of topoi or devices which are combined and re-combined with naming-themes: introduction and recognition, persistent and significant anonymity, incantation and special dramatic effects. These will be further examined in Chapter 5.

Naming is a defining theme of romance, and it is also profoundly interwoven with other defining themes such as quest, adventure, the self-fulfilment of a hero(ine), and the magical or marvellous. It is not so essentially interwoven in other genres; moreover, writers may use naming as a way of converting or manipulating other genres into a romance mode — this will be the subject of my next chapter.

⁸³‘La magie rétablit l’identité première’, that sorcery had destroyed (Atanassov, ‘Le Corps mis en morceaux’, p. 17).

⁸⁴It “loses its name” with the demon’s death (1440–3).

Part II

Naming as Strategy or Tactic

4. Naming Within and Across Genre

Introduction

Having demonstrated the importance of name and namelessness as theme in romance, I want to show that naming is not used like this in other genres. Certain naming-topoi do appear, but their use is more predictable than in romance. In this chapter I shall discuss naming as a function of genre, beginning with romance in its literary context (neighbouring genres influencing or influenced by romance) and continuing with an examination of mixed or variable texts in which naming signals, even effects, a shift of genre. The following brief overview, of the medieval genres that form the context of romance, is to indicate the naming-patterns one would typically expect to find in them.

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Chronicle provides a historical framework (fact or fiction) in which names are crucial, because history cannot be written without names.¹ In addition to their function as markers on a time-line, names are recorded, sometimes in clusters, for didactic reasons: as a tally of prowess (victors or vanquished), as examples to be emulated or avoided,² as a reminder of mortality. A large proportion of early romance material (including the “raw” material of chronicles) is tragic, either because of protagonists’ perceived imperfections or simply in the medieval sense of happiness turning to misery. In history, to put it bluntly, people die;³ many of the “tragic” romances (with the exception of Tristan’s) are rooted in legendary history: stories about Troy,⁴ Roland, Arthur (Bodel’s three ‘materes’)

¹The context of Frazer’s famous remark is a discussion of cultures where historical records, written or not, cannot exist because of certain sorts of name-taboo (*The Golden Bough*, p. 255).

²The deeds of the great must be recorded, to their renown, but traitors and the like must also be ‘sette out by name, To their endelese infamy, reproche, and shame.’ Thus Richard Grafton, to the Reader, prefacing Hardyng’s *Chronicle*. (Cp. *Paradise Lost*, Bk. I: Milton names the dark powers, although their names had been razed from the books of life and they had not yet their new ones).

³Geoffrey’s *Historia* is famously concerned with cyclical history, where civilizations fall, rather than with salvation history (see esp. Hanning, *Vision of History*).

⁴Benoît’s romance is an ‘oratorio pour une ville morte’ ([Troie] ed. & tr. Baumgartner & Viellard, p. 22). Other tragic stories are of Thebes and of Alexander.

are going to be difficult to theorize according to the 'comic' mode — if classed as romances they are characterized as 'heroic' or 'epic'. I would not exclude them from the genre (many contain romance themes), but no romances of this sort are among my core-texts because naming is not their main theme. Their naming-patterns are more typical of history (keeping track of heroes in war) than of romance, and naming-play is rarer than in the more "romantic" romances. Many are less concerned with personal name because they are about *place* — cities or empires, building or destruction. Alexander, Arthur, Æneas are building empires or travelling in order to do so. These figures are less biographical than imperial/geographical. A naming-topos typical of chronicles is the explication of *place*-names rather than of personal names, and very often the places are called after the persons: Albion, Britain, Cornwall.⁵ People and places are knotted into the spatio-temporal grid that supports memory of the past.

Tragedy, although its status as a medieval genre is debatable,⁶ must be mentioned here in connection with a wider point: fictionality. Because rooted in history, it does not play with names, nor invent "speaking" names, as comedy does.⁷ Romance plays with names, however, by concealing them, interrogating them, using them for special effects or main themes. It is difficult to disentangle tragedy from (legendary) history:⁸ historical and tragic romances contain comparatively little name-theme or play, partly because they are based on purportedly true stories — the names are thus real-life names given by real parents (not authors) long ago.⁹ Although writers of comic, or happy-ending, romances claim they are following true stories, there is nevertheless comparatively more name-theme and play in them. Both Barton¹⁰ and Frye, however, discuss the tragic tendencies of the double or doubled figure — because of the loss of name associated with it. The most significant doubles¹¹ are found in stories of Balin and of Tristan, romance-tragedies, and not in history-tragedies such as the death of Arthur and the battle of Roncevaux. That unhappy endings are rare in Fair Unknown romances, despite combats between close kin, may be because of Christian influence; hagiographic stories being generically so close to romance. Hero(in)es are specially protected, though the hand of Providence is more obviously at work in exemplary romances than in chivalric adventure.

Epic, or *chanson de geste*, provides the figure of a hero in social or national context. Like chronicles, such texts contain plenty of names, but unlike chronicles they are often biographical. Epic and romance are paired (and divided) in

⁵See eg. Mathey-Maille, 'La Pratique de l'étymologie'.

⁶See eg. Auerbach, *Mimesis*, pp. 311, 314–8.

⁷See Barton, *The Names of Comedy*, passim.

⁸'Tragedy arose as a means of interpreting the saga stories in the light of a later morality' (Aristotle, *Poetics*, Introduction pp. xiv–v).

⁹James judges that 'in tragedy ... such names [sc. "allegorical"] have never been adopted' ('Names in Novels', p. 235). See also Kelly, *The Art of Medieval French Romance*, p. 192, on the tragic tendencies of Roman and historical *matiere*.

¹⁰*The Names of Comedy*, esp. Ch. 7.

¹¹'Amis and Amiloun' stories are perhaps tragedy-come-right, to paraphrase Frye (for whom some tragedy is like comedy gone wrong — see *Secular Scripture*, p. 92).

medieval scholarship,¹² and stories overlap having versions in both genres. The chanson de geste version of *Ami et Amile* is less interested in naming than the Middle English romance version; Kay regards the first part of *Aiol* as a 'family romance' because of the hero's incognito and quest for identity;¹³ Marnette judges the prose *Prise d'Orange* to be a romance largely because of an altered focalization.¹⁴ Variable focalization, which characterizes romance and allows switch of point-of-view, may be effected by the use of an incognito character's name;¹⁵ the 'focalisation externe de témoignage' is more typical of chansons and cannot exploit naming as a tool in this way.

Both chronicle and epic provide, in their different ways, socio-political setting for heroes.¹⁶ It is tempting to suggest that chronicle is the more fruitful birthing-site for romance — that inserting a story into chronicle fertilized it and caused it to grow, forcing the space wider as it burst forth and spawned hundreds of romance offspring.¹⁷ The obvious and monumental example is Geoffrey's *Historia* and its Arthurian offspring, another is the 'Aveloc' found in Gaimar's *Estoire* (here regularity of naming drops off, and name-play sets in, once story takes over from history).¹⁸ But one cannot pinpoint an originary moment in this way; it is likely that the stories would have circulated and developed even had they not been used by chroniclers: Tristan is a case in point, and Trivet's chronicle is source for only two (albeit very famous) Constance stories which are actually less like romances than many of their analogues.¹⁹

Hagiography, like epic, influences and overlaps with romance.²⁰ The saint's life or legend typically contains at least one name: that of the protagonist — which may then be used for expletive, invocation, or prayer. This name has miraculous if not magic power; in some lives, and in some pious romances (not always the shortest), there is only the one named figure, all others being anonymous.²¹ Flaubert's legend of St Julien (in *Trois Contes*) works partly because it follows this convention, as well as giving only the vaguest indications of time and place; there are no other names but Adam and Noah, off stage. In any saint's life the focus is on a single named figure, usually aristocratic, like the romance hero(ine); the name is often "interpreted".²² Emphasis thus sits heavily on the

¹² Among the classic studies are Kay, *The Chansons de Geste in the Age of Romance*; Ker, *Epic and Romance*; Southern, *The Making of the Middle Ages* (Ch. 5).

¹³ 'Chansons de Geste', pp. 105–7.

¹⁴ *Narrateur et points de vue*, Ch. 6.

¹⁵ See Part 1, above, for examples in 'Gareth', in the Horn romances, and in *Ipomadon*.

¹⁶ See Auerbach, *Mimesis*, p. 122: epic was history.

¹⁷ For an account of this process, see Putter, 'Finding Time for Romance'.

¹⁸ 'Every novel is an ideal plane inserted into the realm of reality'; Borges, *Labyrinths*, p. 229. Something similar may (not) have happened to Roland; see Gerritsen & van Melle, eds., *DMH*, p. 234, and [Roland] tr. Sayers, pp. 7–8.

¹⁹ See eg. *Six Middle English Romances* ed. Mills, pp. xiii–xv.

²⁰ See eg. Hopkins, *The Sinful Knights*; Barron, *English Medieval Romance* pp. 199–207.

²¹ Many are historicized, with lots of names. The addition of, say, a named ruler places a narrative in history and incidentally claims veracity for it.

²² Especially in the *Golden Legend* tradition; items in collections such as *The South English Legendary* are generally not prefaced with onomastic etymologies.

name, but hagiography's interest in naming is not the same as romance's. Even the apparently short step, from the explanation of a name like St Cecilia's to the naming of a romance character 'the Fere', Felice, or Estult l'Orgillus, is no such thing. The bestowal of a quasi-allegorical name is very different from allegorizing a name which, whether it originally "meant" something or not, a character has already got.

The meaning of name is important in certain genres; etymologizing is found also in bestiaries and in academic prologues. Minnis notes how commentators would expound each element of an author's name;²³ one such contribution goes further, explaining that name 'puttes substaunce in a man', listing kinds of names (proper, of ancestry, of virtue), and instancing the rich young man in the Gospels (Matt. 19:16–22, Mark 10:17–22) of whom Christ 'rehersede . . . no name' because he was unworthy.²⁴ The explanation of a saint's name, as with an author's name, is a means of establishing his/her authority; it is also a means, as in bestiaries, of describing the virtues and properties embodied by the named figure. Of these didactic genres, saints' legends have most in common with romance, being narrative and hugely popular; many are biographical, including enfances, agon, apotheosis. Adventures of a hero(ine) parallel the career of a saint, the marvellous parallels the mystical or miraculous, the love-story parallels the saint's avoiding, converting, or repudiating the spouse — as well as his/her love-affair with God. The saint's quest (martyr or not) is for God and for recognition by heaven, not by the world: there is no name-quest and little name-question.

Many shorter narrative genres contain few or no names; longer and more paratactic narratives require names as story-markers, but the short story (then as now) typically relies on a strong and relatively syntactic plot driving towards a moral or some other final twist which forces an audience to think. The typical anonymity of exemplum figures allows naming to be applied in a very general way.²⁵ Named figures may appear, from history or legend, to illustrate the moral point at issue;²⁶ names are often generic (Alisoun or Margery = a pretty woman, John or Jankyn = a clerical figure, Paddy and Mick = a pair of Irish labourers).²⁷ Names like this are interchangeable, and mark a text that is for *use*: Oliver points to the anonymity of Middle English lyric writers, but many characters in the poems are also in this sense anonymous: both subject and object (unless divine) are transferable.²⁸ The anonymity of short-story characters allows, even requires, the audience to identify with them. Anonymity forces a subjective truth, whereas a name urges objective truth. The timelessness of the exemplary is also linked to

²³ *Medieval Theory of Authorship*, pp. 19–20.

²⁴ [Boethius] 'Boke of Coumfort', pp 60–1. The text is exceptional in its discussion of name as a *measure* of substance; I am indebted to Elizabeth Hook for bringing it to my attention.

²⁵ See Huizinga, *The Waning of the Middle Ages*, pp. 206–7, for the impersonality (hence anonymity) of the ideal. See also Owst, *Literature and Pulpit*, Ch. 4, for exempla and their variety.

²⁶ Burrow, *Medieval Writers*, p. 83.

²⁷ Mustanoja, 'Suggestive Use of Christian Names'.

²⁸ *Poems Without Names*, Ch. 2 (esp. p. 37).

namelessness (as opposed to the nameful historical narrative); our sense of time is dislocated when central characters are anonymous, and our identification with them is put under tension if the name is not unknown but withheld.

The fabliau is notoriously difficult of definition;²⁹ similar to exemplum but not always moralized, it has a strong plot and anonymous characters and is very often comic (in the modern sense: it does not always end happily). Courtly and chivalric elements are frequently found outside romance; however, longer fabliau-like narratives with comic or bizarre plot-elements may be classed as romances when they contain named (even Arthurian) kings and nobles. Another short narrative genre, fable, is more likely to be moralized than fabliau and also features strong plot and scarcity of names. Of the genres mentioned so far, it is the least likely to share elements with romance (because most likely to be about animals) and is thus not really a neighbouring genre. But it is interesting that stories found as fables reappear in the beast-epic, which branches like a romance-cycle and contains the adventures of named characters. A fable is about a fox — any fox — but the *Roman* is about the fox Renart.³⁰ If the name of a beast-epic creature found its way “back” into a fable about that creature, an audience might read the figure differently: following his adventures and praising or blaming him, rather than thinking about the moral and how to apply it to themselves.

Folk tales, especially fairy stories, likewise contain few names; magical and marvellous elements in romance are evidence of its relationship with them.³¹ Many *lais* (some are classified as short romances) resemble folk-tales; it has been argued that the stories ought to be called ‘contes’ because they are the “lyrics” of a *lai* to be sung. The least problematic definition of a (Breton) *lai* is that it calls itself one, although some so designated are very unlike Marie’s.³² *Lais* typically contain few names; many are courtly in tone and contain love-stories, though as with romances a significant number have unhappy or at least dark endings. Romance’s tragic stories are rooted not only in legendary history but also in *lai* or folk-tale.³³

Discourses such as the ‘demande d’amour’ (and similar debates) are found in romance as in other genres. Some are framed in dream-vision poems, others

²⁹See eg. *Eighteen Fabliaux* ed. Short & Percy, Introduction; Hines, *The Fabliau in English*, Ch. 1.

³⁰‘Renard’ has become the French common noun, superseding ‘goupil’ — as robin has the redbreast.

³¹Carter’s modern fairy stories contain few or no names (see eg. *The Bloody Chamber and Other Stories*). It is notable how often such re-creations adopt naming-patterns from their ancient models: I have cited Flaubert’s St Julien; Hawthorne, ‘The Celestial Railroad’, follows the pattern for yet another genre. Kitson argues that names such as Gawain were *invented* as folk-tale was rewritten as romance (‘Gawain/Gwalchmai and his Peers’, p. 157).

³²For example, the *Lai du Cor*, Chaucer’s ‘Franklin’s Tale’, *SGGK*; for the inclusion of *Sir Cleges* see Hopkins, ‘*Sir Cleges*’. For a definition see inter al. Archibald, ‘The Breton Lay in Middle English’.

³³Bloch (*Medieval Misogyny*, p. 114) remarks on the difficulty of classifying *La Chastelaine de Vergi*. Name owes as much to other-world magic as it does to psychologically-charged power games between jousting men. See below, p. 123, for naming in Marie’s *lais*.

embedded in narratives such as Thomas' *Tristan* and several of Chaucer's Tales.³⁴ A familiar courtly topos is the elaborate secrecy surrounding the name of a lady. Other discourses (as opposed to genres) are flyting — linked to the Introduction-Ritual and very interested in Naming — and riddles which (like fabliaux) are interested in word-play. One of the best examples of naming-play to be found outside romance is the riddling encounter between 'Le Roi d'Angleterre et le Jongleur d'Ely':³⁵ the latter equivocally ducks questions about his name and status, complaining that whatever he says, or does, he will be typecast and mocked. At length the king admits he is speaking truth and even asks advice about how best to safeguard his reputation.

I have not attempted to define the types of narrative listed above, nor to define romance in relation to them; I have sketched some of their themes and concerns, and indicated what sort of naming-patterns they typically contain. The density of naming in each is roughly predictable compared to romance; although some may vary quite widely (saints' legends are perhaps the most variable), only in romance is found the full range: from texts with nobody to texts with everybody named. Clearly *frequency* of naming cannot be a genre-indicator: in romance it is wildly unpredictable. But naming as a theme or motif is more common in romance than in any other genre, and so is the obsession with naming that underlies many of the "devices" to be explored in Chapter 5. A story containing many names is going to feel different from a story containing only one or none (romances are a mixed lot for this as for other reasons) but it is hard to think of a romance so full of names that name-consciousness (in the form of disguise, temporary anonymity, nicknaming, or other) does not find a way of appearing. It is thus not enough to say that romance is between chronicle and exemplum in terms of naming. It is between and among other genres in that it can exploit their naming-patterns as well as creating its own.

Medieval texts mix or juxtapose genres, some are host-text to generically different inset material, many others recast their source-material in a different medium (language, form, genre) for a different audience. The following examples, from a range of cultural traditions, demonstrate the way naming is used partly to effect such changes and partly to advertise them. They include two texts to show how a story with many analogues may be more, or less, romance-like depending on the way naming is handled. Another is a short narrative, set into a longer one, that exploits romance-motifs including name-motifs. Two further texts have generically different material juxtaposed: naming-patterns emphasize the shift while yet providing a link that integrates the narrative.

³⁴Knight's, Wife of Bath's, Franklin's — interesting that these are among his "romances".

³⁵ed. de Montaignon & Raynaud.

Merlin

Qui est cist hon
 Qui ha teu vertu et tel non? ³⁶

This romance uses blocks of differing generic material, notably exemplum and chronicle, to power the narrative. Naming-patterns enhance the shift from mysterious past to violent present in the early episodes; that this is not accidentally due to the juxtaposition of name-free with nameful material, is clear from Robert's skilful handling of name and namelessness throughout later episodes as well. He could have named the people of Merlin's birthplace: instead he chooses to exploit the conventional anonymity of such figures.

The first part of the story (more than ten per cent) contains no named characters. The action takes place in a world without geographical or chronological location: some time after the Harrowing of Hell and somewhere which might be thirteenth-century rural France but, because exemplary, could be almost anywhere. The prodom with his 'grant planté de bestes' (2:8) and his family are village figures from a world of fable or parable. The son and the animals die mysteriously, the wife hangs herself in the cellar. There is a local procuress, a gossiping neighbourhood, and a good priest (3:28–31) who tries to comfort the daughters — who quarrel. After the quarrel one of them goes to bed, in a locked room, so upset she forgets to cross herself. This is what the devil has been waiting for, and he "tricks" her in her sleep. Because she realises immediately on waking (6:52–3) and goes to confession, and leads a henceforth blameless life, the child will not be the planned anti-Jesus but a figure of 'teu vertu et tel non' that he will inspire poets for centuries into the future.

In this story baptism is crucial, because it "converts" the baby:³⁷

Et elles demandent: « Coment voudroiz vos que il
 ait non? » Et ele respont: « Ansis comme mes peres
 ot. » ... et cil prodom ot
 a non Mellins. Einsis fu cist enfes baptoiez et apelez
 Mellins por son aiol ... (10:49–55).

Thus Robert names the wonderful child, and his grandfather at the same time. The latter disappears at the moment of his naming; there is a sense of closure as

³⁶Robert de Boron, ed. Micha, ll. 13–14 of the verse fragment: the devils are asking who has broken into Hell. Quotations hereafter are from the prose version, indicating chapter and line numbers. Robert conceived the first *cycle* of Arthurian tales, and connected them with (fictive) origins in the Biblical past. *Merlin* is part of a trilogy by an anonymous compiler (we do not know how much of what survives was actually written by Robert), to be read — or, more likely, performed and heard — by an early thirteenth-century audience. Part of the appeal and motivation of the (Grail) stories may be a preoccupation with holy relics in the twelfth century; it would seem that consumers of adventure romance had a taste for theology.

³⁷He gets an extra baptism in the womb: the priest makes his mother drink holy water, in the name of the Trinity (7:71–80).

the narrative changes gear, preparing to go forward into another world. Merlin's name also drops away until Chapter 15, during which time the two-year-old takes on the defence of his mother against the charge of fornication. This section climaxes with two new names, one explicitly dramatic and the other more subtly so. The first is heard when the judge admits that Merlin was right: the boy says

« Or puez
savoir que je te dis voir et je te pri qu'ensi com je
te dis, que tu le dies a Blaises. » Et cil Blaises estoit
le prodome qui confessoit sa mere ... (15:68–71).

At this moment the priest, who entered the story twelve chapters earlier, becomes the recorder of Merlin's words: Chapter 16 follows immediately with the plans for Blaise's book: 'Si en fai un livre' (16:39).

The second new name is another kind of closure: Enquibedes. The child names his father, who disappears as his mother is cleared of blame. Merlin speaks, as if disowning his father, and his statement

je sui filz d'un ennemi ...
qui me conçut [qui] a non
enquibedes et *sont* et repairent en l'air (15:18–20, my emphasis)

recalls another plural demon who was/were named at the moment of casting out. The garbling of the Latin masculine noun — incubus/incubi — I believe to be deliberate, to evoke the equivocal Legion (Mark V: 9): 'Quod tibi nomen est? ... Legio *mihi* nomen *est*, quia multi *sumus*' [my emphasis].

Other writers treat the story, of the finding of Merlin and the explanation of his birth, very differently — being chroniclers, they use name differently. Mannyng³⁸ (following Wace) tells of a search 'in oþer landes seeres' (7871), but Merlin is found in Wales, and first named with his playmate Dynabus (7888). The king's messengers in Mannyng (unlike in Robert) have not far to bring him; the sense of distance and remoteness in time is further lessened by the fact that his mother accompanies him to Vortigern's court. She was the daughter of King Demetie of Wales (7913), so although nameless she has her *place* in a secular world of kings.³⁹ Merlin's conception is reported in her speech like a flashback, and the devil's conspiracy (of Robert's version) is not mentioned even by Magaunt the King's 'maister' who (not Merlin) explains:

Pise spirites do women schame;
incubi demones is called þer name.
ffendes in bedde
On þis maner myght Merlyn
be geten & born ... (7973–8).

³⁸ *The Chronicle* ed. Sullens, Part I.

³⁹ Wulf's article, 'Merlin's Mother in the Chronicles', urges more study of such nameless figures.

Lazamon's version⁴⁰ is very similar: he too was working from Wace. The King's clerk Magan is if anything more definite: the 'feole cunne wihte' (7872) attack 'monienne hende wimmon' (7879) and 'þus wes Marlin biȝeten' (7881). In Geoffrey,⁴¹ whom Wace and Lazamon follow, the boys are found and named together (380:9); the explanation by Maugantius is substantially the same: the 'incubos demones' (381:21) can lie with women and 'unus ex eis' did the deed (382:3). By all accounts, there ought to be quite a lot of Merlins running about.⁴²

These versions have Merlin's birth narrated in flashback, an interlude or conversation-piece slotted into the historical narrative. In the later Middle English romance *Of Arthour and of Merlin* it is likewise framed, but the poet explains that he is going back in time to give the account:

Ȝef Ȝe wolon a stounde dwelle
Of þat child y wol ȝow telle.⁴³

This version is much closer to Robert's (because using it as source), but the placing of Merlin's birth is a significant difference. Kölbing's explanation is that 'Boron ... placed it first because for him Merlin was the principal character of his work, while in the earlier form of the story he was merely one character among many in the long history of the British Kings'.⁴⁴ My comparison confirms Kölbing's conclusion and shows in more detail just how the shape of Robert's work, in particular his use of naming, contributes to its special effectiveness: the powerful contrast of two worlds.

So far every act of naming has taken place within direct speech or significantly resulting from it; the writer has made characters name one another. Now the tone changes. At the end of Chapter 16, he names 'mes sires Roberz de Borron qui cest conte retraits' (16:115-16) just before pitchforking the reader out of a timeless, fable world into the turbulent history of fifth-century England.

'Je serai envoiez querre de vers occidant' (16:88-9). The line is wonderfully suggestive; we know that 'vers occidant' is Britain and a king will send for Merlin,⁴⁵ yet the passive voice and imprecise location increase the mystery of who and where Merlin himself is. Two worlds intersect, and in Chapter 17 the writer begins explaining the situation 'en Engleterre'. Events unfold towards the building of the fateful tower, and names, as usual in chronicle history, cluster thickly on the page: Costanz, Moines, Pandragon, Uitiers, Vertigiers are named by the narrator and not in speech. But once the scene has been set, the frequency

⁴⁰ *Brut* ed. Brook & Leslie, vol. I, Caligula ms.

⁴¹ Page and line references are from *Historia* ed. Griscom.

⁴² Sir Gowther (fathered by the same fiend), and the mysterious child (Merlin, or Jesse) in *The Seven Sages* (ed. Brunner, pp. 109, 207; [Sept Sages] ed. Speer, K:3345). It is not proved that he was Merlin in the earliest versions (see Speer, pp. 319-20); there may be a tendency among writers, and readers, to collect anonymous wizards and call them Merlin.

⁴³ [Arthour] ed. Macrae-Gibson, vol. I, Lincoln's Inn ms, 581-2 (Auchinleck ms, 625-30).

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, vol. II, p. 27.

⁴⁵ Somebody hearing the story for the first time cannot know this; Robert is careful not to place his other world until the right moment.

of naming drops off: for example Vortigern in consultation with his 'clergie' is almost always 'li rois'. Robert prefers to use names sparingly, for special effect.

Vortigern sends for the fatherless child whose blood will prevent his tower falling down. The messengers hunt through many lands until the day they see two boys playing (the other is unnamed). Merlin knows who the men are and what they want, and surprises them by naming Vortigern in his greeting (21:19–24). Following events — conversation with Merlin's mother and Blaise, strange encounters on the journey towards Vortigern's land — give the messengers plenty of evidence for his special powers. As they approach, Merlin hangs back and sends them to announce his arrival. 'De quel Merlin me parlez vos dont?' demands the King (26:27–8). Robert's manipulation of names is as effective inside the narrative as it is outside, to readers: Vortigern *does not know the boy's name*. He is expecting his messengers to arrive with oozing bottles of blood, and the placing of the name here heightens the shock effect: they arrive with a living child.

Merlin has told Blaise quite a lot about the book he is to write — notably in Chapters 16 and 23. Among the marvels, the name of Arthur is mentioned once, only to vanish again for many chapters. We follow Merlin to Vortigern's court, and with the help of magic the events unfold in the realm: Vortigern dies and the house of Pendragon is restored, Stonehenge and the Round Table are established, and Uther falls in love. Then another woman is 'engingniee', this time by Merlin's trickery:

Einsi et par itel maniere jut Uitierpandragon a Egerne
et cele nuit engendra le bon roi qui puis ot a non
Artus (65:38–40).

For the moment Arthur's name is a secret told only to the reader. Merlin tells Uther he has begotten 'un oir malle' (66:21), whom he has already sworn to give up to him. Nobody, including Uther, must know who the child is. On the instructions of Merlin, who tells him of a 'prodome' whose wife has just borne a son, Uther sends for the man and arranges for him to take 'un enfant qui vos seroit aportez' (74:20–21) for his wife to nurse in place of her own. The foster-brother is Kay, but he is not named until knighted by his father sixteen years later: 'A la Touz Sainz ... fist Antor de Qex son fil chevalier' (81:20–21). Arthur is not named in this passage, thus pointing up the importance of the new knight and also the importance of their brotherhood:

Et Antor qui l'enfant gardoit ...
ne savoit pas lequel il amoit plus, ne
il ne l'avoit onques apelé se son fil non, et il le
cuidoît bien estre sanz faille (81:14; 18–20).

"He never called him anything but son." The 'non' is negative, but its echo in this sentence (coming after 'apelé') is of the meaning "name". Antor became his father symbolically in Chapter 75; the writer delayed naming him until just before he received the baby, and the name was in Merlin's speech "Go and tell Antor ...".

In the next chapter three voices tell Arthur's name: Merlin in disguise tells Antor what to call him (direct speech); Antor baptizes him (narrated); Antor tells his wife what he has been christened (indirect speech). The name is repeated thrice (76:44–57).

The power of Arthur's name is demonstrated at the end of Uther's life. Crippled by 'goute' (77:3), the king plans to be carried on a litter into battle against his enemies; having no heir to take over his land he must do his best, advises Merlin, by making a good end. He asks after 'l'enfant qu'il [Merlin] emporta' in words that avoid saying he is his son and heir; Merlin assures him that he is fine and well-grown. Then he promises that Uther will see him (Merlin) again — only once. Just before his death, Uther is so sick and feeble that he has not spoken for three days; the people think he is already dead. Merlin arrives and promises to make him speak. 'Donc seroit ce la graindre merveille dou monde' (79:35–6), says everybody. So that none but the king may hear, Merlin goes round to the other side of the bed and speaks 'molt bas en l'orille':

... et je te di que tes filz Artus sera chiés de
ton roiaume après toi (79:47–8).

Uther speaks, 'Por Dieu, prie li que il prie Jhesu Crist por moi' (79:50–1), and dies. Characteristically, Robert places the name in somebody's speech, and again the name is effective inside (as well as outside) the narrative, having marvellous power to rouse the dying Uther.

The romance juxtaposes biblical time with chronicle time, exemplary with epic. The frequency of naming alters as one collides with the other; further, the placing of names (and characters' manipulation of them) announces the switch, as well as underlining the power of name throughout the text — especially Merlin's and Arthur's.

Arthur too is a figure whose 'vertu' (virtue, power) and 'non' (name, reputation) extend beyond this story and echo down the ages. Poets used the name to signal the kind of story they were going to tell: fashionable Round Table romance, fantastic fairy tale, or true history. The last two of these seem rather contradictory: it depended on whether the poet (or audience) believed Arthur to be a real historical figure. Chaucer's Wife of Bath seems to think not; on the other hand, when Gaimar wants to tell the story of Aveloc as part of his history-book, he uses the name of Arthur and juggles with chronology in order to fit Aveloc into the line of English kings.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ *L'Estoire des Engleis* ed. Bell, ll. 33, 37, 43; see Legge, *Anglo-Norman Literature*, p. 32.

Aveloc⁴⁷

The tradition of Geoffrey's *Historia* is one of the strands — historical, courtly, and mystical — which lead into the Arthurian romances and the so-called Matter of Britain. Gaimar (whose *Brut* is lost) was working from the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, and his use of the name Arthur creates a link with another multi-sourced tradition: the Matter of England and the ancestral or insular romances. I examine a story, inserted into the chronicle, which looks like a romance because of the way style and naming-patterns change. Names, especially the hero's, are withheld for dramatic effect; the heroine's name (though not her power) is lost as the hero's is found; anonymous figures enhance given names.

Gaimar's version is remarkable in that we do not at first know who the young man is. The name, Cuaran, masks the fact that he is not who he thinks he is; it does not appear in all versions, and Gaimar never says it *means* scullion — he needed an alias and took one he considered suitable. The English Havelok, by contrast, knows (and never hides) who he is. Were it not certain that stories about this hero were already in circulation, for Gaimar to exploit, we could point to this first appearance in literature of a familiar figure and theorize about his incognito.⁴⁸ This kind of suspense is rare; a (modern) reader new to Gaimar will be genuinely surprised when, nearly halfway through the story, Grim's daughter Kelloc and her husband begin their explanation. The audience is told when he says 'discoverom A Haveloc le fiz le rei' (338–9), and at last the hero is told when she says 'Ço este[s] vus ... Danz Avelocs le fiz le rei' (419–20). Whether or not a medieval audience would have guessed before this, clearly he had no idea of his name or status. He is still bemused later when Sigar asks his name: '[Sire], ne sai' (609–10). The Fair Unknown, handsome, strong, and generous (103ff), is given Argentille to wife (99–100). The shock value is considerable: a princess with a scullion — and the mysterious flame is the more impressive, issuing from a non-entity.⁴⁹

This version, like most of the others extant, is contained in a chronicle,⁵⁰ but it is romance-like in its handling of name. There is no jolting contrast of two worlds, historical and fabulous, as in Robert's *Merlin*; there is nevertheless a noticeable (as if deliberate) reduction in naming as Gaimar moves into his tale. There are far fewer names than in the Middle English *Havelok*; this effectively contrasts with the surrounding "historical" material. Before and during the beginning of the tale, there are dozens of names of people (and places), and then they thin out, giving way to such phrases as 'La niece [al] rei' and 'sun uncle' (185–6), and 'sun

⁴⁷ed. Bell, 39–816. Other episodes in Gaimar provide the basis for later epic and romance texts (see pp. lii–lxxvii). A cleric, he wrote his *Estoire* (1135–50) for a cultivated lay patroness in Lincolnshire. Though containing much fiction, it is the earliest history written in (Anglo-Norman) French; if not born English, he knew the language well enough to translate Anglo-Saxon (as well as other sources).

⁴⁸The same goes for Chrétien's introduction of Unknown heroes.

⁴⁹Argentille is also shocked (at the 'mesmariage') and impressed: 'Sire ... vus ardez' (249).

⁵⁰See *Havelok* ed. Smithers, p. xxx.

marid' (243) or 'sun barun' (260) for Cuaran. Names become more numerous during the explanation scenes with Grim's family, and at Sigar Estalre's house (503ff) — these are where Aveloc's earlier history, and that of the kingdoms, are patched in — but they do not return to full volume until Gaimar returns to his chronicle after the end of the story.

As in many romances, a low frequency of naming makes the few chosen names — here, the hero's two (and his uncertainty about them) — stand out as thematically important. The boy's doubts ('quel que voldrez De ces dous nuns m'apel[er]ez' — 609–18) perhaps affect Sigar's own certainty: not content with the face, the name, and even the flame (which Cuaran did not himself understand), he must perform yet another recognition-test. The long and very lively horn episode, containing a magic ring that nobody claims, is strictly unnecessary to the plot but intensifies the sense of difficulties encountered and overcome by the protagonist.

A flashback device enables Gaimar to hide telltale details and release them at proper stages of Aveloc's story. We hear of Grim indirectly, but never meet him because he dies before the story begins (367–9); Kelloc learned through her mother and Aveloc's (401–5) the 'secrei' related in her narrative. Cuaran's 'dous vadlez' are never named, and he thinks they are his brothers: that they are Grim's sons is not revealed until the foursome arrive at the house of Kelloc (328–35). This woman's importance stands out because her husband is not named until later: Aveloc refers to the 'prodom, nun ad Algier' (603).

As the story progresses, Argentille's name is abandoned, appearing for the last time when she is rescued from the 'bacheliers' who are trying to drag her off (540); this scene is followed by one in which Sigar notices the young man's likeness to King Guntier, and the recognition of Aveloc begins. From now on she is 'ceste dame' or 'sa muillier'. Some brides in romance are not named until their marriage: this one's name seems to fade as her husband's becomes established. She has a stronger role than her counterpart in *Havelok* (and so does Grim's daughter)⁵¹ — as with other disappearing names, there is no diminution in Argentille's importance. It is her idea to prop up dead men, before the battle, to make Aveloc's troops seem more numerous (777–81). The effect of this gruesome trick is heightened by Gaimar's switch of focus: the spies come to look at *Cuaran's* troops (790) — because King Edelsi, Argentille's wicked uncle, does not yet know who he is. The scullion's troops are enough to terrify the spies, who rush back to Edelsi with their hair standing on end. Their cry, '[Rende] a la dame sun dreit ...' (797), is witness to her power, and the story ends with homage and feasting.

⁵¹Weiss notes that the women's roles are reduced by the Middle English poet, who 'firmly restores [Havelok] as the active centre of the romance' ('Structure and Characterisation', pp. 252–5).

Constance⁵²

Romance and hagiography are close neighbours: pious romance and pious legend are even closer. However, the riddle of name is given less prominence in the latter. The "Fair Unknown" tale of Constance, as told by Gower and Chaucer,⁵³ is similar in broad outline to the romances of *Emaré* and of *La Manekine*: double exile, disguised heroine, wicked mother-in-law, double dénouement in which the heroine finds first her husband and then her father. Yet the Constance story is less romance than pious legend — the handling of name as theme is one of the elements that distinguishes the two groups.⁵⁴

Of the many analogues of the four texts mentioned,⁵⁵ the early fourteenth-century Anglo-Norman version helps to explain why Constance in Gower and Chaucer is so different from the other two heroines. Her tale appears in Trivet's *Chroniques*, written for Marie d'Angleterre after she had become a nun at Almesbury.⁵⁶ According to Schlauch, Trivet (who talks vaguely of 'les aunciene cronikes de Sessouns' — p. 165) seems nevertheless to have invented and rearranged rather freely, and 'chose to deviate' from versions of the story in which the heroine's flight is from an incestuous father.⁵⁷ Making her the victim of a vicious infidel sultaness suppresses the shocking theme of incest in favour of something more suited to an audience of pious nuns, and removes much of the justification for the heroine's refusal to disclose her identity. In fact Constance does not refuse to disclose her name; Chaucer tells us 'But *what* she was she wolde no man seye' (524, my emphasis).

It is clear, from the discourse of her companions, that Constance does not hide her name when she arrives in England. In Trivet, the blind man addresses 'Hermynigild . . . la deciple Counstaunce' (p. 169), and the first forged letter names her in direct speech '... taunque il plesse a ta seigurie remaunder que nous estoit fere a toun honur de Constaunce e de sa hidouse engendrure' (p. 173). Gower's blind man knows Constance's name, and so does his wicked knight, who declares dramatically 'Constance is gultif . . .' (II:873).⁵⁸ Chaucer delays letting this particular cat out of the bag until the second forged letter: 'The king comandeth his constable anon . . . That he ne sholde suffren in no wyse Custance in-with his reawme for t'abyde' (794–7). She answers the question "what is your name?"

⁵²I shall use the name Constance although it varies among the texts to be studied; Chaucer changed it to Custance.

⁵³Gower, *CA* II:587–1612 (ed. Macaulay); Chaucer, 'Man of Law's Tale' (II: B¹).

⁵⁴For an account of Gower's treatment, see eg. Esch, 'John Gower's Narrative Art', pp. 96–108; for Chaucer's, Strohm, 'Some Generic Distinctions in the *Canterbury Tales*'.

⁵⁵Outlined in *La Manekine* tr. Marchello-Nizia (pp. 10–14).

⁵⁶'Trivet's Life of Constance' ed. Bryan & Dempster.

⁵⁷Schlauch, 'The Man of Law's Tale', p. 160.

⁵⁸Gower's Book II is about Invidia; the Tale illustrates the sin of backbiting. Backbiters take away their victims' good name; see eg. Owst, *Literature and Pulpit*, pp. 450–8. (The wicked knight names Constance; the mother (the other backbiter) names her in her letter — II:1019 — as Chaucer's does).

(that is to say “what are we to call you?”) but not the question “who are you?”⁵⁹ because her motives for secrecy are less personal than political, see eg. Trivet: ‘... riens ne voleit reconustre de Tyberie lempereur, soun pere, ne del soudan; quar laaventure del mourdre del soudan e de les Cristient estoit ia conue par totes terres’ (p. 168).

Her motives for giving a pseudonym, on her arrival in Rome, are rendered less explicable by Trivet’s modification of the story: her father is right here in Rome but she has no reason to fear him. Poetically, the story needs her to remain unknown to him until after she has been reunited with her husband. Gower resituates the detail, found in Trivet, that she gives her name as Couste on arrival in Rome (because ‘issint lapelerent lez Sessoneys’, p. 177): he builds it into Allee’s reaction, thereby adding a nice detail to the portrait of this king:

‘His Moder hatte Couste, and this
I not what maner name it is.’
But Allee wiste wel ynowh,
Whereof somdiel smylende he lowh;
For Couste in Saxoun is to sein
Constance upon the word Romein (II:1401–6).

Gower’s Allee is not fooled by the pseudonym, though in romance a change of name tends to stand for an impenetrable disguise. Details of this sort make the Constance story unlike a romance: Chaucer suppresses the disguised name altogether, so that Custance, arriving in Rome, is for the second time ‘in swich array, ne she nyl seye Of hire estaat’ (972–3).

Besides the removal of the incest theme from the beginning, the Constance story has an ending rather different from the romances it resembles. In all three versions she is widowed soon after being reunited with her husband, and returns to Rome to be a pious daughter: in Trivet it is to be with her dying father (p. 181), in Gower (where he dies in her arms, II:1572–90), and in Chaucer to live with him ‘In vertu and in hooly almus-dede’ (1156). It is the reduced importance of the heroine’s name, as much as these plot elements, which makes the story unlike a romance.

I argued in Chapter 2 that some of the Calumniated Wife stories are as interesting, for their unknown quality, as any of the male Fair Unknowns. They are not very frequent among Arthurian romances, perhaps because their inspiration is less from folklore than from pseudo-history and exemplum. However, romance versions of the latter, with mysterious protagonists, tend to include elements from the former: Emaré (like Ipomadon) is suspected to be of fairy origin, rather as though fairies did not need names. Another factor is that stories do need names: Hoccleve’s *fabula* about Jereslaus’ wife⁶⁰ (from the *Gesta Romanorum*) is a self-styled praise-of-good-women exemplum in which the heroine incidentally refuses to give her name when asked. This is odd, because she has not got one, and

⁵⁹Margaret, in *Syr Tryamour*, answers just the one out of four questions (ll. 430–5).

⁶⁰*Works* ed. Furnivall, vol. I, pp. 140–73.

nor has anybody else in the story. Her husband is named Jereslaus just once, at the beginning, and thereafter called nothing but Emperor. The name identifies the story and not the man: a story known only as 'The Emperor's Wife' would be rather more difficult for tale-mongers to file and retrieve properly. Another possibility is that a version of the story, complete with names, once belonged to a historical character, but the names fell away as it developed into/conflated with/circulated as a moralizing tale. *Sir Isumbras* and *Sir Amadace* are also stories that contain only one name each; Isumbras actually loses his name until his penance is complete. In some sense the Calumniated Wife must lose her name until she is vindicated.

Writers treat the unknown quality in a variety of ways: Constance is as unknown as Emaré and La Manekine. However, it is her lineage (who she is), rather than her name, that is unknown. Does this render her name less or more meaningful? "Constance" is empty of significance in one sense, in that nobody knows what princess she is; perhaps it throws more emphasis on the allegorical or descriptive sense, since nobody knows that she is named after her father the emperor. It may be that Chaucer is also intending to "empty" the name, by changing it to Custance, in order to refill it with the piety she acquires by her own efforts.⁶¹

Most saints happen to be of noble blood,⁶² and nobility is also an essential issue in romance. A few romance heroes are born to a lower status,⁶³ nobility is something to be achieved rather than, as in saints' lives, to be sacrificed. Take away the medieval obsession with noble lineage, and a simpler fact reminiscent of folk-tale remains: there is something special about the hero (which noble birth symbolizes). This is why in spite of convention some non-nobles can be romance heroes: romance writes that special something. The equivalent quality in saints is already evident in the hagiographic narrative: they are *already* chosen, and their trials are of a different nature — testing rather than questing, so to speak. Even if Emaré and La Manekine cannot quest (being women) in the chivalric sense, and even if they are both good virtuous girls, their travels prove their secular honour and value as courtly princesses, not as 'seinte pucele', 'beneite dame', and the like (Trivet pp. 169, 174, and passim).

As well as being a kind of secular hagiography, Trivet's account is stamped with the marks of another genre: chronicle. Whether or not there is a change in the density of naming, from the surrounding material, it is notable that there are abundantly more names in Trivet (both Gower and Chaucer reflect this) than in the two romances — as befits a history. Not only that, but Trivet does not want us to forget what we are reading, he refers to his "sources" (p. 165) and repeatedly to his own earlier material: 'com auant est dist al comencement del quarauntme sisme estoire' (passim).

⁶¹See Cooper, *The Structure of the Canterbury Tales*, p. 122.

⁶²In Chaucer's 'Second Nun's Tale', Cecilie is said to be 'of noble kynde' (VIII (G) 120-6), but much more is made of the *meaning* of her name.

⁶³See eg. Hudson, 'Class, Family, and Gender'.

Names are important in history, but not as naming is important in romance. The point about history is not to chart the adventures of a hero(ine) — and naming is part of the adventures — but to draw a “vertical”⁶⁴ map of the world, in time rather than in space. Names and lineages are referents on that map. The only referent that the dukes of Croÿ could find in their effort to rewrite *La Manekine* (in which only the heroine and her son are named) as an ancestral romance (as *Guy* became for the earls of Warwick) was their ‘improbable ancêtre’, daughter of a king of Hungary!⁶⁵ Chaucer and Gower take Constance out of history and rewrite her as something ‘between romance and saint’s life’.⁶⁶ Here, the riddle of the heroine’s *name* is less important than in the romance versions.

Amis and Amiloun

The Middle English version of this tale, unlike some of its analogues, is generally considered to be a romance in spite of its pious tone.⁶⁷ This is largely due to its concern with name and namelessness. As with the Constance story, hagiographic versions are distinguished partly by a conclusion that turns its back on the world. Even among the secular versions, *Amis and Amiloun* shows name to be especially important; it gives power to the narrative. Name-change as role-change is illustrated by the devoted nephew who becomes Amoraunt as he becomes the helper, and by the disappearance of Belisaunt’s name as she becomes exemplary wife. The romance is about integrity and friendship, and name (together with concern about identification) symbolizes these themes. There are few names in this version:⁶⁸ fewer (of human actants) than the *Chanson de Geste*, than Radulfus Tortarius’ version, and even than the closely-related *Amys e Amillyoun*,⁶⁹ thus what names there are stand out strongly.

The names of the heroes are important to the audience, for keeping track of which is which,⁷⁰ but they do not serve as identifiers within the story: the only way the two can be distinguished is by clothes, so that dress substitutes for name. We are not told how the clothes differ; we are not even given (for example) distinguishing shield-devices. The question is immaterial, and it is notable that although in most versions the heroes’ two names are similar they need not be. The *Chanson* “reverses” the two young men, ‘Ami’ corresponding

⁶⁴Bloch’s terminology (*Etymologies and Genealogies*, esp. pp. 66–70).

⁶⁵tr. Marchello-Nizia, p. 267.

⁶⁶Burrow, *Medieval Writers*, p. 82. He is referring to Chaucer’s tale; Gower’s version also is not classified as a romance.

⁶⁷*Of Love and Chivalry* ed. Fellows, p. xiv. Late thirteenth century, this is a secular version of a much-loved tale. However, given that mss often contain both pious texts and romances as though for the same audience, we cannot conclude that this text and hagiographic versions were aimed at different audiences.

⁶⁸See ed. Leach, Introduction, for list of versions.

⁶⁹ed. Dembowski, Leach’s Appendix A, and ed. Fukui, respectively.

⁷⁰The analogous tale of ‘The Two Brothers’ distinguishes them, where necessary, by specifying the elder or the younger.

to Amiloun and 'Amile' to Amis. It is tempting, however, to see the two names — when so closely paired as to sound alike — as resembling subject and oblique cases of the *same* name.⁷¹ While I would not argue that they are two aspects of the same person,⁷² it is fundamental to the story that the two are constantly in grammatical relation to each other: they love each other, they think about, talk to, act with, and substitute for each other.⁷³ The writers are conscious of the significance of name at least to the extent of having the heroes' names echo each other.

The Anglo-Norman *Amys e Amillyoun* has an interesting detail in common with the English: an extra name for the substitute son/brother who looks after the leper during his exile. But the writer fails to exploit it, and compounds this failure by giving the heroine, too, an extra name of no particular significance. The young man is called Amorant, apparently, but his right name is Uwein (880–2) and he is then simply called Uwein; the lady's right name is Mirabele, but she is called Florie, and the latter is used for her in the rest of the story (249–52).⁷⁴ It is as if the writer were aware of the importance of name but in this case was not quite sure what to do with it. There are signs elsewhere of his awareness: Amillyoun hears the heavenly voice just at the moment when he must give his *name* at the marriage with Florie (710–18); the two heroes are so alike that the most perceptive — on hearing their *names* — could tell them apart only by their dress (533–8); when the unrecognized leper hears his *name* spoken, his heart almost breaks for anguish (1008–17). Clearly name is a latent or underlying theme.

The Middle English writer exploits naming in a variety of quite subtle ways. First, the saints' names: only four characters in the story are named, but there are seven saints plus Judas, God, and Jesus Christ. These are repeatedly invoked, usually in characters' speech: St John alone is mentioned nine times. They enliven the dialogue, they serve to accentuate the namelessness of most of the characters (even named figures are nameless for long stretches), and they become a sort of heavenly audience, watching the action and answering prayers; the voice warning Amiloun not to fight on his friend's behalf (1249–72) exemplifies the fact that the holy figures are not merely names but potential actors in the story. The romance is closer than the hagiographic versions to the folk-tale(s) from which it derives,⁷⁵ and in which name-magic is likely to be important, but the saints add a pious flavour to the story and ensure that it is Christian miracle and not pagan magic that contrives the happy ending.⁷⁶

The romance's latter part resembles exemplum; but earlier it has motifs in

⁷¹The Old French noun 'ber, baroun' is an example; also Aymes, Aymon (*Florimont's* author); Guy and Guiun (de Warewic).

⁷²Ramsey calls it 'character-splitting' (*Chivalric Romances*, pp. 148; 118–22).

⁷³Leach's footnote to p. xxxviii mentions that in folk-tale analogues the adventures are 'concerned with but one twin. The other is his rescuer and protector.'

⁷⁴She has no extra name in the English.

⁷⁵Leach, p. xxxi.

⁷⁶See Crane, *Insular Romance*, ch. 3, for discussion of the religious in romance.

common with both *Tristan* and *Horn* romances, in which disguise, doubling, and recognition are also crucial themes (note that *Horn*'s favourite companion is so like him as to fool the heroine). *Amis*' wife is named until her marriage (1511), but never again. She reappears nameless later in the story, a reformed character who supports her husband, unlike the nameless wife of *Amiloun*, who always behaves unsympathetically. *Belisaunt*, like *Horn*'s princess, falls in love by hearsay and does the first wooing; later she completes the pair of exemplary and contrasted wives. Another parallel is the steward, or worst companion, who wants to take the place of the hero's best friend and betrays him out of spite. In *Amis and Amiloun* a golden cup, like rings in other stories, is symbol and reminder of the absent beloved — but it fails. When *Amis* sees it in the leper's hand he reacts with violence (2077–100). The (substitute) friend must intervene, and recognition is not fully achieved until *Amis* sees the wound *Amiloun* got while fighting in his place long ago (2107–33).

Amiloun knows *Amis* would help him in return (1444–52, 1495–500), so why not go straight to him? In *Radulfus Tortarius*, the leper's wife throws him out, and he goes (with one servant) to his friend's house. But this *Amiloun* wanders for several years, and when he does arrive at *Amis*' dwelling he insists on concealing his name and identity (1864–78). The extra suffering he endures helps to balance and motivate the extremely gruesome murder of *Amis*' children. It also allows the friendship theme to be developed by the addition of *Amoraunt*. It is significant that the young *Owaines* was renamed *Amoraunt* 'When he was of tvelve yere old' (1633–8) — when, that is, he took up with his uncle. He is not called *Owaines* again:⁷⁷ the changed name signifies his special role as devoted friend, who will not be tempted away for any worldly good, and whose love disobediently betrays his lord's identity⁷⁸ to save his life. *Amiloun*'s name all but disappears during his leprosy: he is named as the disease takes him (1540–5), then the narrator calls him knight, 'lazer', and so on. Only twice is he named (with *Amoraunt*, as a devoted couple — 1813, 1861) until the scene before the duke's court: a knight looks at Sir *Amiloun* 'Hou laith he was' (1909–16), then *Amiloun*'s name reappears in *Amis*' speech (2060, 2081). That *Amis*' name too becomes rare in this episode makes the tone rather biblical (one recalls the story of the rich man and the 'lazer'), setting the mood for the sacrifice to follow. Compare *Ami et Amile*, in which a pair of faithful servants do not change name — the leper does not hide his identity, and the "good" wife does not lose her name in the latter part of the story. These features differentiate the *chanson* from the romance.

The romance contains other passages where name(lessness) is used to heighten an effect or enhance a scene. The narrator's preamble says what he is going to tell about: the two barons, how they became friends, where they were born, 'And what the childres name worn' (1–24). The names actually appear a little later,

⁷⁷The return of his old name later is an illusion: the end of the romance, missing from the base ms, has been supplied from another in which the name never changed (see notes to 1634–7; 2416).

⁷⁸In one ms *Amoraunt* says his name too — see note to ll. 2107–12.

when he starts the story proper (43–6). Belisaunt's name disappears while she and her mother are consulting with Amis in the orchard, so it is not clear which lady is promising to fit him out for battle or encouraging him to go to his friend for help (925–72). The knight who arrives for the battle is not named, and it is 'everichon', not the narrator, who says 'Yonder cometh prikeand Sir Amis!' (1219–23). Later the duke addresses him naturally enough as 'Sir Amis', offering his daughter; 'that hendi knight' thanks him heartily, as the narrator remarks that nobody knew what his name was but the two ladies (1382–98).

That name is bound up with the ideas of truth and loyalty is signalled in a central scene where Amiloun is tested by the voice from heaven. As he hesitates, his thoughts are worded in terms of his identity: not "if I decide not to fight", nor "if I refuse to swear", but 'Yif y beknowe mi name ...' (1273–84).

Jehan de Saintré

des amours de une dame des Belles Cousines ...
et du tresvaillant chevalier le sire de Saintré.⁷⁹

This text, like Robert de Boron's, juxtaposes blocks of differing generic material — but here the surprise is near the end. La Sale uses naming conventions as part of his narrative strategy: the notorious disparity, between the courtly/chivalric account of the hero's development and the naughty story of Madame and the Abbé (and their come-uppance), is heightened if not positively flagged by the disparity in naming patterns between the two main sections. The blatant contrast of genres challenges criticism and invites a variety of readings: in my view Madame (the only character who belongs in both worlds) attempts to escape from Romance into Fabliau. She is pursued by a succession of named characters; at last forced to return, she is publicly humiliated. In spite of several anti-women passages, I am not convinced that La Sale is totally unsympathetic to her plight.

La Sale — herald, soldier, author — was active at the courts of Anjou and Luxembourg. His considerable literary output includes *Saintré* (1456), with three companion pieces, dedicated to Jean d'Anjou. A mixture of love-story and chronicle, the collection tells us, perhaps, how he thought his 'roman' was situated. Its status — chivalric biography? novel? — has been widely debated; it is curious that this late "romance" has none of the nostalgic feel of, say, Malory's. This may be because its major selling point was a triumph of chivalry (neither *quondam* nor *futurus*), as Taylor suggests in her study of the work's reception.

* * * * *

One of four 'beaux traittiez' (there are two more "love-stories" and a chronicle), it is entitled by the writer as it appears in my heading — with the lady's name

⁷⁹References are to sections (and pages) in de La Sale, ed. Blanchard.

first,⁸⁰ although in the valediction he calls it 'cest livre, dit «Saintré»' (178). Insisting on her namelessness ('sans aultre nom ne surnom' (1); 'de son nom et seigneurie l'ystoire s'en taist, a cause de ce que après pourrez veoir' (3)), he begins preparing another space for her: his introduction to her 'païs' echoes these words: 'Or nous fault il icy laissier le nom ... de la terre et de son hostel ... car le histoire s'en tait, et, pour aucunes ... choses qui après vendront' (138). The sneering tone suggests that Belle Cousine is not her real name, that she has a name (or had until she "lost" it), and that he cannot or will not tell us. To argue that her name is Belle Cousine, because it identifies her, would be misleading; Enguerrand's wife Alienor is addressed as Belle Cousine by *her* queen (74). It is no more her name than "Dear Son" is Perceval's.

It is not surprising to find long lists of named knights,⁸¹ complete with blazons and warcries, in a text whose author is, according to this editor, more 'heraut' than 'lettré' (p. 14), but La Sale seems anxious to name everybody in the court narrative: Madame's ladies, the craftsmen employed to provide Saintré's outfits, the virtuous widows to be emulated by Madame, heroes of other romances to be emulated by Saintré, heralds, enemy leaders, and Madame's doctor. However, the Abbé (son of a rich, unnamed, local bourgeois) is not named and nor is any one of his entourage, although quite a few nameable figures are mentioned: chamberlain, prior, various monks and servants (I except those ladies, and young Perrin, who follow Madame), the Abbé's 'braconniers', and his 'maistre d'ostel'.

La Sale frequently uses the trick of placing "So-and-so" in direct speech.⁸² When Madame asks to see the relics, the Abbé shows them saying 'ces os ... de messeigneurs saint tel et tel, et sainte telle' (139). This could be part of his ostentatious ploy for concealing the Abbey's identity; named saints are invoked freely elsewhere in the text, especially George, Michael, and Denis; Saintré aptly swears by St Jacques when arranging for a suit of armour with the bourgeois Jacques (167)⁸³ — there is even a Saint Lancelot. But the trick, a discourse neither free nor indirect, appears again. The first example is when Madame and her ladies are trying to tease the name of his nonexistent lady out of the unhappy thirteen-year-old: 'Est ce point telle, telle ne telle?' Ysabel then tells Madame 'ce n'est nulle de celles que avez nommees' (27) — but she has not. This emphasizes the underlying rule of the love-game: 'cuidiez vous que ung vray amant doit ainssy publier le nom de sa dame?' (9). Another example, however, is where Saintré is listing the witnesses to his first chivalric vow: 'presens mes tresredoubtez seigneurs ... telz, telz et telz' (48). Given the huge cast of named knights in the text, it is strange that these are withheld; La Sale seems to be

⁸⁰See Kelly ('Problems of a Title') — who, moreover, argues for the lady's centrality to the work: her anonymity provides interest and suspense. Blanchard (p. 11) suggests that she takes on flesh - from ideal becomes real - and that perhaps the chivalric biography (written first) was influenced or contaminated by the 'nouvelle' (such as those in the *Decameron*).

⁸¹See Jeay, 'Une Théorie du Roman', for a discussion of rubrication in the ms.

⁸²See p. 179 below.

⁸³Jacques is a rare example of a name in Madame's domain. But his name appears only as he is enlisted to help the court faction, and the matching asseveration underlines the fact.

drawing attention to the fact that he may name or not as he pleases, irrespective of whether the 'ystoire' he claims to be following provides names or not. This in turn underlines his expressed liberty ('fainderay' he says — 138) to invent a story of a very different kind, weaving it into the historical reality of Saintré and his friend Bourcicault and their exploits in the days of King Jean (son of Philippe de Valois) and his queen Bonne de Bohême.⁸⁴

Madame is the only nameless figure at the court, and there are other things about her that do not "fit": she has a sense of humour, but of the cruellest; she wants to train up a young knight (her lessons are impeccable), but has to trap him emotionally and financially; she is devout, but her most fervent prayers are to Notre Dame de Leesse; she falls in love with Saintré, but is devastated at his first independent action. After this, she tells the doctor she is homesick (137); her desire to escape, from the company of happy lovers, is genuine — she does not leave the court intending to deceive Saintré with another man.

Critics (including Blanchard) debating whether the book is an anti-romance, or critique of the chivalric, have remarked that nevertheless Saintré comes out on top. Taylor argues that Saintré cannot develop fully as a knight while still tied to Madame's apronstrings, and only a very terrible crime on her part could free him, because of his loyalty.⁸⁵ However, he is *not* without fault: the king is none too pleased with the hotheaded young man and his chums, who have planned their 'entreprise' without first asking permission (135); La Sale makes it plain that Saintré has broken an important rule. Critics unsympathetic to the lady have overlooked this point; it is in fact possible to excuse her behaviour.

At the showdown with the Abbé, La Sale describes Saintré's fury: he stops just short of smacking Madame in the face (170), and just short of killing his adversary (171). It is hard to read this as a demonstration of Saintré's nobility.⁸⁶ What is more, the lesson he preaches to himself about the sin of murder recalls the lessons she gave him years ago, as well as her generosity to him. The reader is forced to remember that she made the triumphant knight what he is. The interpolated verse about Fortune, a few pages later at the start of Saintré's recital to the court (175), is supposed to be about the suffering male lover, but it recalls the narrator's prediction (33) about Fortune turning her back on 'ceste amour' (that is, on Madame too).

The whole court is gathered to hear Saintré's version of the story. The (probably authorial) section-heading draws attention to the namelessness in the account to follow: 'sans riens nommer ...' (175). Saintré naturally omits his own fault in the matter: although telling 'mot a mot', he says the knight went away 'par la voullenté de Fortune' (175-6). He rounds off the bogus letter with a 'demande

⁸⁴Jeay argues that La Sale 'a cherché a rompre avec la linéarité ...' (ibid, p. 299), quoting Kristeva's phrase 'une mosaïque de discours' (p. 297) — though I note that many medieval texts are neither linear nor unmixed. For a discussion of signifiers in this text, see Kristeva, 'From Symbol to Sign'.

⁸⁵See 'Pattern of Perfection'.

⁸⁶Taylor points out that his brutality has been prepared earlier in the action; see 'Image as Reception', pp. 275-7.

d'amour'. Madame has been forced to return; she sits speechless while the ladies, named one after another, pass judgement on the lady described. Not one of them has the least sympathy with her; the men, it must be noted, are silent, 'Car aux hommes il ne appartenoit riens en dire'. At last, finding her voice, she calls him 'tresmal gracieux' for taking the lady's girdle. Replying that he no longer wishes to be that man, he neatly identifies her, and himself, by placing it in her lap. This effectively wipes her out of La Sale's story (I have noted that at the end he calls his book 'Saintré'), as if she had disappeared into Saintré's narrative, while he re-inscribes himself as a noble knight in the narrative of King Jean's court: 'je ne vueil *plus* estre ce tresmal gracieux' (177, my emphasis). This almost amounts to an admission that he had behaved badly.

Naming and namelessness in *Jehan de Saintré* emphasize the way La Sale mixes genres in order to explore the world of the chivalric hero. The namelessness of the central female character throws the woman's role into question. Responsible for the hero's education, for everything in his career, she becomes no more than a symbol the moment he achieves his autonomy. This woman — a named heroine would not, I suggest, be able to make the effort — tries to escape into another kind of story. But the fabliau, in which characters are traditionally unnamed, is another place where women are typecast; she has freedom only to behave lewdly and shamefully, as all women apparently do.

* * * * *

La Sale, like romance-writers, uses naming and namelessness actively to shape his narrative. However, I would not therefore argue that the text is a romance; the family-resemblance model allows for differing personal perceptions. *Saintré* contains many of the themes of romance: love, chivalry, courtly preoccupations, the 'enfances' of a hero, and a powerful awareness of name. Yet the love-theme is aborted, and there is no hint of the marvellous: Madame's namelessness and her tutelary function would suggest the fairy mistress if La Sale had not explicitly stifled any such expectation from the outset. In my view it remains borderline. Scholars use the family-resemblance model as a tool for thinking about romances (not for categorizing them), as I have argued in this chapter. Medieval writers as early as Gaimar and as late as La Sale are aware of naming, its themes and its patterns, and use it as a tool for story-telling. The texts studied above all use naming in ways which suggest awareness and manipulation of genre. The next chapter will isolate and examine some of these "devices": patterns or tendencies.

5. Naming Patterns and Tendencies

Introduction

Romance signals its interest in name and namelessness not only thematically but in other ways too. Some have already appeared, in a different dimension, in discussion of romances where naming is also a main theme. The following review of naming-devices, techniques, topoi, effects, seeks further insight into what writers are doing, what romance is about: these devices may draw attention to name, and name may draw attention to something else, for example a related theme. The devices work at different levels (thematic, episodic, topical, rhetorical) and they underline themes of identity, magic, honour, and so on. Naming is a tactic used by a writer, and as if by the characters. Though naming often appears as a major theme in romances, name-questions are more likely to be rhetorical than theoretical (for example, etymologizing as a decorative and rhetorical flourish rather than a serious attempt to unlock the secrets of language). This chapter provides the opportunity to summarize some of the observations, about how naming is used, that are necessarily scattered throughout the discussion of texts above.

Many Fair Unknown stories, and other fruitful story-types, have become attached to Arthur's court, but by no means all — witness what has been treated so far. It is not only Arthurian romances that use naming and anonymity as devices both narrative and stylistic. *Generydes*¹ is interesting in that more than half of the headings listed for this chapter appear there in one way or another; some are developed, but few support the main themes of the romance. The disguises are mostly pointless, if entertaining; the impact given by the delayed naming of a heroine (the fairy-mistress motif had potential to inject magical power into the hero's prowess) evaporates as she turns into an ordinary queen, and even the anonymous old man disappears. Like the writer of the Anglo-Norman *Amye e Amillyoun*, the writer is aware that naming-games are conventional for romance, but is not sure how to make them work.²

The headings are set out in a linear fashion of necessity. It is neither easy nor indeed desirable to categorize the material strictly, since many interesting motifs, moments, devices, can and should be discussed under more than one

¹References will be from ed. Wright.

²See above, p. 114.

heading. It would be possible, also, to provide a separate section on Pseudonyms — but I analyze different kinds of pseudonyms according to where and how they are used. Some have been studied above, in the texts where they appear. Some (alias, incognito) are taken by characters themselves; namelessness imposed within the text (by self or by others) tends to attract a pseudonym or nickname very quickly, unlike the Anonymity imposed as if directly by the writer. Pseudonyms may be adopted for Disguise (or impersonation), or declared in the course of an Introduction-Ritual; they are often marked for special comment. Nor have I attempted a separate section on Name-Magic, because it is a difficult subject to isolate.³ It overlaps with Power of Name (where power may be broadly psychological rather than magical), and it features in discussion of the Introduction-Ritual, as well as of Anonymity. It will be seen, however, that the various kinds of Anonymity group themselves as central, below. It will not be possible to provide a full list of examples, but I focus on a limited selection of texts in sufficient detail to illustrate each heading.

Meaning of name, and of Name

Names ... so often surviving things, we have no right to turn an etymology into an argument.⁴

Romance contains few names *treated* as meaningful. A pseudonym, likely to be descriptive, represents a temporary flirting with the “realist”, and is usually dropped, or aligned with the “nominalist” as the descriptive name either fades away (Li Biaus Descouneüs, Bewmaynes) or becomes opaque (Degaré, Libeaux). Explication, or what Curtius terms ‘Etymology as a Category of Thought’,⁵ is rare, given the importance of naming throughout the range of texts I have studied. Also rare is comment or play on a true name by other characters; Horn is among the few examples, and Amadas only if one does not count it as a pseudonym. Characters do not, on the whole, go around saying “what does Lancelot *mean*?”, or “*why* are you called Guy?” In *Generydes*, a comment on the name of the hero’s brother, Ismael the Savage, is offered but never developed: ‘For he was wild in all his demening’ (1343–8), remarks the narrator blandly. But we do not see him being wild (nor being anything very much), and other characters have little to say about him. Sometimes there is extended discussion of a character’s real name by its owner: Romadanaple, Silence, Joïe, Soredamors⁶ — it is noticeable that these musings tend to hold up the action. More common is the flagging of a pseudonym; this tends to happen at an appropriate point in the narrative, typically when the pseudonym is introduced. Because more descriptive than real

³Often rationalized, as Ménard has pointed out (*Le Rire et le Sourire*, pp. 340–2); or see Auerbach, *Mimesis*: ‘mystery ... inaccessible to rational explanation’ (pp. 130–1).

⁴Trench, cited in Crystal & Crystal, *Words on Words*, 5:73.

⁵*European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, pp. 495–500.

⁶Chrétien’s *Cligès*, 960–85; the others have been discussed, with references, in Part I.

names, pseudonyms and the circumstances of their bestowal are more closely bound (as are comparable ploys such as disguise and incognito) into the action of a story than are most true names;⁷ moreover the search for name (never mind its meaning) may actually be a mainspring of the action.

In saints' lives, an explication of the name is often given as prologue, where incidentally it does not hold up the action but fixes the name and focuses attention on it before the narrative begins. However, there is *not* more name-etymologizing to be found in the more pious of the romances: another indicator of romance's difference. Etymologizing, as the occasion for significant narrative pauses, is artfully used by Wace in his *Roman de Brut*, notably to explain place-names 'comme de véritables légendes étymologiques'.⁸

Discussion of the functions (*amplificatio, interpretatio*) of etymology tend to lead into discussion of genre. For Dragonetti the search, irrespective of genre, is always for a perfect 'edenic' language. I agree that 'toute la littérature courtoise, depuis les troubadours ... [fut] travaillée par le désir d'un nom et d'un renom à conquérir',⁹ but I am not convinced that the desire for a name is the same as a desire for its meaning — especially since Dragonetti's argument is troubled by fear that the whole exercise, of etymologizing, breaks down as it approaches the name of God; that the search for meaning leads inexorably to the unnameable.¹⁰

Meaning of name in a wider sense, however, does permeate chivalric romances especially. Names without (or which have lost) any descriptive meaning may be re-encoded with a different sort of meaning. Mahoney discusses the search for Name in Malory's world as primary motivation for action and as meaning glory, worship, identity, rank, lineage, and past exploits — these are among the themes that recur in the romances I have analyzed. Here is meaning of name rather different from the kind explicated in the text: this is less explicated than understood, by readers and by characters in the story. Mahoney, discussing the death of Arthur and the rejection by Guinevere that cause Lancelot to cut ties with his old life, points out that there is 'no longer any necessity to maintain his "name" — indeed, once the world in which he had a name is gone, there is no longer any meaning to that name.'¹¹ Nobody, least of all Mahoney, attempts to explicate the *word* "Lancelot".

There may be a positive danger in such attempts, and I cite three examples. The first is, what the name of Gawain's horse might mean. Breeze summarizes

⁷Compare Quintilian's suggestion that etymologizing should be restricted to names bestowed as honorific (as are by-names or surnames); Curtius, p. 495. Such names are given for a narrative reason.

⁸Mathey-Maille, 'La Pratique de l'étymologie', p. 581. Rockwell argues that if Wace feels compelled to justify a name this implies that 'the "fit" between names and that which they designate could be subject to debate'; 'Appellation contrôlée', p. 451, n. 35.

⁹'Propos sur l'étymologie', p. 72.

¹⁰Ibid., pp. 82–3. Ineffable means, of course, unspeakable. See also Barton, *The Names of Comedy*, p. 9; and Genette, 'L'éponymie du nom', p. 26, on the search leading inexorably round in circles.

¹¹'The Truest and Holiest Tale', p. 122. See also her important article 'Narrative Treatment of Name'.

the discussion to date on the meaning of 'Gryngolet';¹² it seems likely that the name comes from Welsh rather than from French and thus means (meant) white and/or hard-backed rather than weak, skinny.¹³ But the question of which meaning, if either, was understood by a medieval audience must remain open, because the horse's name is not explained in any text I have examined. Another example is taken from Bernheimer's study of wild men (and women): because *Sir Orfeo's* queen is named Heurodas (sic), he reads the story to be about the killing of Herodias, 'one of the darkest and most sinister figures in the medieval vocabulary'.¹⁴ Leaving aside the fact that Heurodas/Herodis is probably a corruption of 'Eurydice', Bernheimer discounts not only the happy ending but also the portrayal, entirely free from irony, of devoted married love. Granted, other versions of the Orpheus myth have the lady unrescued, but in those her name is Eurydice (not Herodias). Thirdly, there is one of Hereward's band who got the *nickname* Mowe because he killed marauders with a sickle; unless we had this information, we would take him for a mower or a toolmaker by trade.¹⁵ These perfectly proper lines of enquiry are, of course, danger-areas only in respect of what I am pursuing: that is, the way names mean within a text.

Marie de France, in spite of her well-known concern with naming (and with the way names mean), is not interested in name either as etymology or as 'renown'. It is significant that although there are quite a few journeys into forests in her *lais*, none could properly be called a quest.¹⁶ Nobody is searching for a name, nor trying to win one; moreover none of the stories is about the power of name — the power of a plant, of a potion, or of love; these, by contrast, yes. Marie, who is unusually clear about what she is trying to achieve, is interested in the meanings of words (not of names), and in the naming of things (not of people). The names of the *lais*, not of their protagonists, are important to her,¹⁷ and this kind of naming, like prologues to saints' lives, appears outside the narrative — even though in 'Quatre Dols' (or 'Chaitivel') the discussion actually takes place inside it (201–30).¹⁸ Her concern is to get the names *right*; she does not etymologize, she translates. Names such as Equitan, Eliduc, and so on, are meaningless, and she makes no attempt to explain them. Titles in different languages are meanings of

¹²'Sir Gawain's Horse'.

¹³The latter is adduced by Walters, who argues that the hero of *L'Atre* is portrayed negatively: 'Resurrecting Gauvain', p. 534. The matter is complicated by the fact that it was a name in Welsh, it became an epithet in Chrétien, and a name again in, for example, *SGGK* (see eg. [Gauvain] *Romances* ed. Johnston & Owen, p. 94).

¹⁴*Wild Men* pp. 133–4; 78–9.

¹⁵See Jones, 'Names Given to Ships', p. 31.

¹⁶Quests are unusual in Breton *lais*, as Hopkins points out; 'Anonymous *versus* Arthurian'. Several *lais* may also be characterized as romances, partly *because* quest, or even name, is more nearly central to their story: *Emaré*, *Sir Degaré*, *Sir Orfeo*. Bruckner stresses the close relationship of lai and romance ('Strategies of Naming', esp. p. 39, n. 2); see also *Lais*, pp. xxxii–iv.

¹⁷Minor characters may be named where major ones are not, showing that for Marie name is not a measure of a character's importance. See eg. Bruckner, 'Strategies of Naming', p. 34.

¹⁸*Ibid.*, p. 36, for Marie as 'master of the fluid boundary'.

words (nightingale, honeysuckle), not of people's names. There is a rare comment, made by characters in the story, on the meanings of le Fresne and la Codre;¹⁹ but it can be no accident that these women's names are (explicitly) words for trees. Many *lais*, not only Marie's, contain a central object²⁰ — which sometimes supplies the name of the *lai*. It may also supply the means of remembrance: the mountain is named for 'Les Deus Amanz' (241–2), although one could argue that the potion is central. Perhaps such reasoning ought not to be pushed too far; what, after all, is the central object in 'Bisclavret'? If not the knight's clothing, it must surely be the missing nose of the lady, whose noseless descendants provide endless reminders of the story of the werewolf (305–14).

If not the meaning of people's names, what is this interest in naming that Marie seems to share with writers of romance? Her careful not/naming of characters is part of her careful ploy of naming her *lais* — in order for them (and herself) to be remembered.²¹ Returning to the question of genre, I acknowledge that it is not only scholars of romance who have difficulty defining or characterizing their chosen genre. Arguments abound on what a Breton *lai* is; my contribution to the debate reappraises Marie's naming strategy (which examines the question of name-meaning) and suggests that while romance wants to remember the hero(ine) the *lai* wants to remember the story.²² But romance does not, on the whole, want to know what the name means.

Introduction-Ritual

The ritual, almost a sub-genre within romance, is able to set up a distinction between how one is differentiated from others (what one is known as, or name as hermogenean label) and what one is famous for (how one is known: by parentage, place, or prowess — this is not fully expressed by the term "cratylic").

The meeting, typically, of two knights sets off a dialogue where naming is foregrounded.²³ Such meetings are frequent partly because they mark vital stages in a quest: knights can expect to gain information, about the object of the quest, and/or prowess (itself one of the objects of the quest, probably). Here is the opportunity for name-play: to present a pseudonym, to declare anonymity, to develop (as in *Florimont*) a long meditation on the suitability of (in that romance, false) names.

The dialogue often foregrounds the difference between "who are you?" and "what is your name?"; these are matters of fame and renown as well as of iden-

¹⁹'Le Fresne', 331–42.

²⁰Introduction pp. xxxi–ii, and Donovan, 'The Cloth Worthily Wrought'.

²¹For the *lais*' preoccupation with memory and forgetting, see Introduction p. xvii and passim, Callahan, 'En remembrance', and *Sir Launfal* ed. Bliss, p. 16.

²²Bliss points out that, in many, 'the *name* of the lay is mentioned with some emphasis'; *Sir Launfal*, p. 83.

²³In *The Romance of Horn* the ritual is so elaborate as to invite special attention. For 'the archetypal chivalric encounter', where the construction of knightly identity takes precedence over narrative expedience, see Hardman, ed., *The Matter of Identity*, Introduction, esp. p. 4.

tification — of prime importance to a knight and, for romance, thematically central.²⁴ Questions such as “what do you want?” or “where are you going?” may also trigger a naming-scene, such as recognition or comments on name. More rhetorical than thematic, these are points where a lot of names, clustered, create an effect of recognition and familiarity or finding: an example is the moment in ‘Gareth’ where a large number of names, including the hero’s, are released following long uncertainty. The question “where?” turns out to be about “who?”²⁵ “What do you seek?” or even “who are you?” are more open than, for example, “what is your name?” (which could force an evasion), and may thus elicit information about identity.

Exchanges may take the form of flyting or name-calling, another sort of ritual with a long history,²⁶ or the power-game may be connected with, or developed from, encounters between heroes with magical powers. Wimberly is among collectors of such examples, nevertheless acknowledging the objection that incidents involving the refusal to tell a name ‘may have nothing to do with name magic; that, indeed, it is a commonplace in the romances’.²⁷ But so many folklore motifs have survived in both ballads and romances, it would be strange if name-magic were not among them.²⁸ What is certain is that the introduction-ritual insistently and variously foregrounds name.

In *Sir Degaré* the question “where were you born?” cues the recognition-scene; in *L’Atre Périlleux* the dialogues between knights as they demand names include not only Gawain’s admission of anonymity but also a good deal of comment on the meanings of ‘sournons’. King Mark’s question about Balaain’s name elicits an interruption from his brother, who hastily provides a pseudonym for him;²⁹ in the corresponding “valediction-ritual” in the *Morte Darthur* Malory typically omits the explanation, that Balan did not want him to be known, leaving an effect somewhat of mystery (73:4–11).

In *Guy of Warwick*³⁰ there is a mock-baptism scene analogous to that in *Lybeaus Desconus*. Guy’s giant asks first ‘Where were thou borne? in what londe ...’ (8291), then ‘Arte thou Englysshe?’ (8301). He says he was christened in England; later the giant, who knows he is using a pseudonym, wants to know his right name (8461–7). Once he has learned it he breaks his promise to let Guy pause for a drink and, Guy having made a dash for it anyway, he pitches him

²⁴For the difference between name and Name (the gap between ‘non’ and ‘renon’), see esp. Rockwell, ‘Appelation contrôlée’; Atanassov, ‘Le Corps mis en morceaux’.

²⁵See above, p. 32.

²⁶See eg. Lupack, ‘*Sir Tristrem*’, p. 55.

²⁷‘The Name-Soul’, in *Folklore*, p. 86, n. 1.

²⁸See eg. Child, ed., *Ballads*, ‘Index of Matters and Literature’, for a number of motifs that also appear in romances. Though rarely explicit, (name)magic leaves its trace in certain passages which remain significantly charged because inexplicable. See Brown for the ‘unrecognized vestiges’, in sophisticated literature, of belief in the power of the name (‘Odysseus and Polyphemus’, p. 199).

²⁹See above, p. 44.

³⁰ed. Zupitza. Quotations are from the Caius ms; a similar pattern appears in Auchinleck (in this scene the narrator does not use the pseudonym “Ion” but calls the hero Guy).

into the river. Guy's quip, before chopping the giant to pieces — 'In cold water hast thou bathed me, But name had I none for the' (8516-17), could mean several things: "Learning my name didn't get you very far", "I'm not the 'Guy' of worldly reputation (he is disguised, here, doing penance for his worldly past) but I shall kill you because you're evil", or "I am still Guy — you can't change who I am and you shan't rename me as a heathen like you." A long introduction-ritual, where the audience is nevertheless tipped off by the narrator,³¹ occurs in the latter part of *Guy*.³² The five-page episode crowns Heraud's hunt for Guy's stolen son: the young knight introduces himself, telling his story and his identity without his name — which is not spoken until Heraud names himself

'Heraud,' a seide, 'me name is:
'Ich norscede þe, Reinbroun, y-wis;
In my nory þow were.'

In *Partonope of Blois*,³³ where motifs of naming and incognito occur frequently, the ritual questions appear in the hero's meeting with Gaudyns, who asks 'Whens ye come, and whedir wole ye, What man ye be, and what is your name?' (9431-2). Partonope hesitates: 'Therof . . . myght rise grame, My name to discouer now so hastely' (9433-4). An experienced audience would expect an alias here, but instead, after evasive answers to the first three questions, he gives his real name — because 'right lōpe were me To make a lesynge' (9436-7). As in *The Romance of Horn*, some of the intentions behind the words are shown. If, as I suspect, this was a familiar topos, audiences would be interested as to why there is no pseudonym here. In this case it seems to be important for Partonope to keep his name: although he has been through a period of madness, and he fights the tournament incognito, he never loses his name in the text: the narrator calls him Partonope throughout. What is more, he and Gaudyns (whose name 'le Bloys' echoes his own) are the only combatants on "our" side given names, as opposed to titles: during the battles and jousts enemies appear one by one from the *mêlée* and each is named at the moment of his death.

In *Sir Gowther*, the Pope asks the wicked hero first 'Whethon art thou and of what cuntre?' (268); the answer is 'Duke of Estryke . . . Ther was Y geyton with a feynde' (269-73). He gives his name in response to the next question 'Art thou crystond?' (275); this stresses his identity as an enemy of the Church, and there follows the Pope's anger, and the penance which leads to his saintly end.

Examples of the introduction-ritual are found throughout romance (not only in English or French). In the Latin *Meriadoc* there is a quite protracted ritual: the Black Knight, who is defending his title to the Black Forest,³⁴ begs a truce so

³¹'The mystery voice for listeners at home' — who can thus enjoy the fact that the players 'haven't a clue'.

³²*Ibid.*, part III, pp. 648-53 (Auchinleck).

³³ed. Bödtker.

³⁴On the grounds that his name derives from it: 'Niger Miles de Nigro Saltu ex ipsius Nigri Saltus mihi nomen dirivetur nomine' (ed. & tr. Day, pp. 70-1).

as to ask who the hero is, but he will reveal only what is proper to the moment ('me, militem regis Arturi'). Once the Black Knight has offered his sword 'in signum victorie' he consents to reel off all the forebears of his lineage. It is not stated whether he gives his name at this point, but enough has been said: the Black Knight surrenders himself yet further, and they go off together as friends (pp. 84-9).

Play on the introduction-ritual is found in *Diu Crône*:³⁵ just one short episode includes exchanges between a stranger and three of Arthur's knights who are trying to find out who he is: 'Soon after ... two meet on the field, Dame Rumor tells their names, and their concern about this controls their behavior' (p. 45, 3858-3901); 'I'll tell you this: I am a man in search of adventure ... I don't know what else to say' (p. 47, 4098-4117); 'I'm getting tired of this. My name is what my friends and kinsmen have always called me' (p. 52, 4537-4574). His encounter with the king culminates in the exchange of names, but only after the stranger has felt Arthur's forehead, in the dark, for an identifying scar; he then accuses Arthur of having kept somebody of his (Gasozein's) prisoner for seven years. The king protests: 'I would think you had made a mistake except that I do not know anybody else named Arthur, so I must be the lord you mean' (p. 55, 4803-4832). The writer clearly enjoys exploring a well-known and significant set of conventions.

The difference between "who are you?" and "what is your name?" is elliptically highlighted by the way Constance does not hide her name when she arrives in England.³⁶ She does not give it in direct, nor even in reported, speech; she refuses to say *who* she is, but it emerges later that she must have named herself. This delay obliquely clarifies the fact that to say "I am Constance" is *not* the same as to say "I am the emperor's daughter". In the complex intertextual world of romance there is a real danger that if one says "I am Lancelot" one is in effect saying *who* one is as well, both to the audience and to interlocutors in the story. Burrow is among those who have pointed out that the greatest knights, in order to get more renown, must quest or tourney incognito so that lesser knights (knowing their enormous prowess) will not refuse to fight them.³⁷ I have mentioned, especially with regard to Libeaus and Degaré, the way a descriptive name can grow into a proper name; conversely the proper name of a hero, once it has become famous, grows into a one-word description — as if a common noun became a proper noun and vice versa. This important two-way traffic reinforces the truth that characters are not 'novelistic' but as it were types. The name of a famous hero encodes as much as the audience (or the characters in the story) can remember about *who* that person is.

Bertilak, in *SGGK*, delays giving even his pseudonym, let alone his true name. This undoubtedly magical figure demonstrates how the problematized introduction can work at two levels, narrative and rhetorical. As with the question "where

³⁵ *The Crown* tr. Thomas.

³⁶ See above, p. 110.

³⁷ 'The Uses of Incognito'.

are you going?" in 'Gareth', such dialogue illustrates the play of 'matere' and 'sen': questions to do with the plot (action, motivation) are answered according to underlying theme (integrity, recognition). Gawain's, and our, ignorance of the Host's name is necessary for the plot;³⁸ the elaborate verbal shenanigans between Gawain and 'the knight in the grene' add considerable liveliness to the bizarre scene in Arthur's court (377–454). Gawain, having given his name readily when asked, tries to find out how he is to fulfil his side of the bargain in a year from now; his questions ask "Where?" three times — he knows neither name nor address. "Come and chop my head off," is the only reply, "I'll tell you after". And so he does: 'To the Grene Chapel thou chose . . . The Knight of the Grene Chapel men knowen me mony.' Then he leaves, head in hand, with the mystery still unsolved — 'Never more then thay wyste from whethen he was wonnen' (457–61); Gawain still does not know what route to take.

In Bérout's *Tristan*, Marc has no idea he is talking to a hero when he questions the leper about his status.³⁹ Tristan gives equivocal answers, boasting of his 'cor-toise amie . . . plus bele ne fu que une.' Marc is tricked into asking an ambiguous question 'Qui est ele?' to which the answer is the truth: 'La bele Yseut'. The king departs, chuckling, unaware of the riddle that has been played upon him.

Like crossword clues, the answers to "where are you from?" or "who is your father?" could be used to solve a withheld name. In the sixteenth-century play *Clyomon and Clamydes* (based on episodes from *Le Roman de Perceforest*) this is what happens. The incognito knight has resisted, because of a vow, all attempts to discover his name.⁴⁰ At last, still defending his vow, he allows Alexander and the Queen to ask him about his country and his 'stocke by birth'; he is quite willing to say *who* he is. "Why then sir *Clyomon* hight your name . . . ?" "It doth indeed so" (1808–45).

That asking a stranger's name is *not* ordinary etiquette (like washing before meals or hearing mass before endeavours) seems clear from Map's remark about the good manners of those who do not ask such questions, and from advice given in the *Boke of Curtasye*;⁴¹ the latter's injunction (p. 308) to ask name and destination of somebody you propose to travel with, however, is no more than ordinary prudence. Special as it is to romance, there is enormous dramatic potential in the naming or introduction dialogue, as there is in many other devices examined here.

³⁸It is possible that Arthur would know of one Sir Bertilak and his court. 'This is a fine rhetorical device' (Brewer, 'Some Names', pp. 194–5).

³⁹ed. Ewert, ll. 3757–77.

⁴⁰ed. Littleton: ll. 802–11, 1016–19, 1089–92. See also *The Names of Comedy*, pp. 144–5. If Barton is aware of the play's source, she does not cite it; she is surprised and impressed by 'the importance given to names throughout: an importance unrelated to their meanings . . .' The comment is especially telling as it comes from a name-scholar.

⁴¹*De Nugis Curialium*, pp. 182–3; in *The Babees Book* ed. Furnivall, p. 306.

Baptism

Baptism is where a new person is given its name and in a sense introduced. It is sometimes marked in fiction, but unless it is a piece of plot-machinery (for example, a family party where the good fairy is godmother and/or the bad fairy is not invited), or perhaps a paradox (a child is named but we are not told what the name is), then it is of no more importance than any other introduction.⁴² The naming-ceremony of a real baby⁴³ corresponds to the point in a story when a new character is introduced and named, or when a character meets others and introductions take place: "baptism" to audience and within story respectively (rather than to the world and for God). Thus a character's baptism is often outside the interest of the story, and stated without special marking. However, there are significant baptism-moments in romance; obviously it can be very important — to characters.

When Horn is earnestly producing his pseudonym Gudmod, he adds 'a mun baptesmement' to lend it extra credibility.⁴⁴ In *Silence*, the persistent and puzzling anonymity of active central figures is underlined by the naming of a baby who died eight days after baptism; he plays no other part in the story, except perhaps to suggest that Galtier is the boy Silence ought to have been.⁴⁵

Baptism deferred allows naming to be deferred, even avoided. In *Octavian*, a mother is condemned to death for treason and begs that her two little boys 'may crystenyd bee, To dethe or that they goo' (263-4). The emperor is moved to pity and banishes all three of them instead, but without the christening. Others name the children: the king of Jerusalem later baptizes one Octavyon (512-13), and the burgess Clement baptizes the other Florent (625-30). In the case of the latter especially, the power of the foster-parent to name and nurture is set against the emerging chivalric nature of the foster-son. In a French version of the *Seven Sages of Rome* (story-collection and romance)⁴⁶ the young prince is blessed at the beginning of the frame-story but, according to custom, he will not be baptized until he is thirteen (167-74 and note). In this way, deferring the christening and then "forgetting" about it (nobody thinks about christenings once the main action has begun), the poet is able to avoid naming him altogether.

The moment of baptism can add extra resonance to the name and nature of a child. In *Athelston*, the name of the baby born from his mother's ordeal is repeated at his christening, as if to underline his future sainthood;⁴⁷ in this romance the few given names are hardly used, being replaced by noun titles. In

⁴²In a central section of his book, on Christian names in the Middle Ages, Wilson tells us that baptism was not originally a naming-ritual (*The Means of Naming*, p. 99). This may explain why baptism is not always a strongly-marked device in medieval romance.

⁴³The analogy is approximate: a real person exists before baptism, and probably shares their name with others (rare, or specially marked, in fiction).

⁴⁴[Horn] ed. Pope, l. 2266.

⁴⁵ed. & tr. Roche-Mahdi, ll. 1739-42, and see p. 62 above.

⁴⁶[Sept Sages] ed. Speer, *K* redaction.

⁴⁷ed. Trounce, ll. 630-62.

Sir Gowther, on the other hand, an account of the child's christening is followed by a description of his disgusting behaviour (103ff): this dramatic opposition sets the tone for his later adventures and penance. Sometimes heroes are christened by hermits, and are named according to the circumstances: Sir Degaré is one, and Gawain another. The latter is named after his hermit, and his baptism at 'none' explains his miraculously waxing and waning strength. Merlin's baptism marks a turning-point, releasing the first names in Robert de Boron's hitherto name-free narrative. He is named after his grandfather, who was nameless during his own story. The unfortunate 'prodom' then disappears, as the story prepares to go forward into another world.⁴⁸

The joke-baptisms already mentioned suggest startling changes of identity: in *Lybeaus Desconus* the dunking symbolically confirms the hero's new name, Sir Thefair.⁴⁹ Because he had already been baptized with another name, there are now two of him, and he downs the giant with ease. The corresponding scene in *Guy of Warwick* raises the question of whether baptism changes a person: can immersion add or subtract name, or turn Christian to pagan? Not in this case, at any rate! A third mock-baptism is the scene in *Beues* where the giant Ascopard never gets christened at all: he jumps out of his specially-built bath shouting 'Icham to meche te be cristine!' (and he subsequently turns traitor).⁵⁰

Iosian is successfully baptized in this passage, but she does not get a new name. Adult baptism is likely to occur in the context of conversion to Christianity, and one might expect a name-change to reflect the role-change. But such changes are quite rare. Sir Palomydes, christened at the end of Malory's book of Sir Tristram, is not given a new name.⁵¹ The two examples I give next are of name-changes that do not stick.

The first is because the character himself does not "stick". In *Partonope*, baptism is part of a trick played by the hero, to get rid of a loyal and helpful young man who already had two names: Fursynne, and Gileamoure — which Partonope called him because he found the other 'right straunge'. The poet explains who the young man is and that hitherto he had refused conversion. Now he offers to undergo baptism if only his lord (who is in the throes of love-madness) will not send him away. Together they seek out a 'provoste', who christens him Anselote, and then Partonope sneaks off while he is asleep. Waking, he laments his lost god (Apollyne) and his lost master, and searches the forest until nightfall — when we lose him. The poet promises to tell of his adventures 'here-after', but we never see him again.⁵² It is hard to know what to make of this figure — carefully drawn and named, then obliterated. The hero does not "lose" his name

⁴⁸ *Merlin* ed. Micha, 10:49–55. Other figures named after relatives include John, in *Gamelyn*, and Lancelot/Galahad.

⁴⁹ See above, p. 20.

⁵⁰ ed. Kölbing, pp. 121–2.

⁵¹ Nor has his role changed, in one important respect: he gallops out of the Book still in pursuit of the Questing Beast, although he had sworn he would not be christened until he had achieved it (717:11–19 and 845:12–26).

⁵² ed. Bödtker, ll. 6799–7069.

during his madness, but the boy may nevertheless symbolize the hero's shifting identity, and underline a theme of love in conflict with family loyalty.

The baptism of the green knight, in *Valentine and Orson*,⁵³ illustrates how names are not automatically identifiers. He is always called the green knight, except when he is christened Pepyn after the king of France — 'the whiche name he bare frome that houre vnto the laste ende of his dayes' (121:21-2). But the name does not stick: it is only (once) when he introduces himself to the king that we hear it again (127:4-6). Some kind of symbolic doubling may be intended — the green knight is described as a giant (114:20) and later we are (rather surprised) to learn that King Pepyn is a very small man (276:28-277:2) — but the romance employs a cast of thousands and these two do not stand in significant relation to each other. Nor is there much risk of confusion, since they usually appear in different scenes; even after Pepyn's death the green knight does not take up his name. Towards the end of the book there is an introduction-scene in which the king of Sury asks the *names* of the two knights: 'Syr sayde Orson I am called Orson, and thys is the Grene knyght' (317:26-7). The naming of the green knight is a local effect and a small part of the plot, but it seems to have nothing to do with who he is.

There is a very clear name-change at Bramimunde's conversion, in the *Chanson de Roland*,⁵⁴ although her pagan name reappears almost immediately as if to hammer the point home: 'En Bramidonie ad chrestintet mise ...' (3990). Godmothers are found for her, and 'Truvé li unt le num de Juliane' (3978-87). Because this is the end of the story, neither Juliane nor anybody else has any further role to play, but there is no sense that the name (or the person) is going to fade away; the conversion was prepared earlier in the poem, and the baptism marks a strong and triumphant closure. If the general motto of romance knights were 'Païen unt tort e chrestiens unt dreit' (1015), then perhaps there would be more emphasis placed on this divide — crucial to the *Roland* and other chansons. In romances, 'Saracens' may or may not be there to be fought, or converted; those romances where the pagan/christian divide is central are Matter of France romances or those closest generically to the epic.⁵⁵

Prowess is a main theme of romance, conversion is not; in romances where naming is a main theme, we are likely to find naming associated with the adventures of the hero(ine) rather than with the baptism of (even adult) characters.

⁵³ed. Dickson.

⁵⁴[*Roland*] ed. & tr. Bédier.

⁵⁵See Metlitzki, *The Matter of Araby*, pp. 160ff, for Saracens in romance and their conversion. Bodel takes it for granted that Matter of France material is historical, whereas Matter of Britain stories are but amusing fables; he is, of course, about to present a 'conte ... de France' (*La Chanson des Saisnes*, redaction AR, ll. 6-12).

Change of Name

Genuine role-change, and name-change, is rare in romance; the stories want names to be stable and recognizable, and this is more important than their meaning. I have just given two examples of baptismal name-changes that do not stick. The famous example of Perceval's name-change is no such thing. First, it is his sournon and not "Perceval" that is changed.⁵⁶ And then, he is never called 'li cheitis' again. He names himself Perceval to Gawain (796:4482-3), and to the hermit — who recognizes the name (842:6387-843:6391). He names himself Perceval li Galois to the king, and the narrator repeats this a little later (798:4558-62, 799:4603-4). The ugly damsel calls him simply Perceval; here, if anywhere, is the place for 'li cheitis' to reappear. But she says 'tu, li maleüreus', which is not the same thing (800:4646-65). The *local* effect, when his cousin reproached him, was none the less striking for all that.

In *Amis and Amiloun* Owaines becomes Amoraunt, his sick uncle's friend. The damsel Maledysaunte, in Malory's 'La Cote Male Tayle', becomes the lady Byeaue-Vyvante, as well as damsel Byeau-Pansaunte (476:14-16; 471:24-26). This minor character, with her transparently descriptive names, is almost the only other instance (apart from the Middle English Libcaus) of genuine name-change in the romances I have examined. Even if one argues that Libcaus' real name is Geynleyn one cannot ignore the fact that he loses it so thoroughly that he is referred to as Libcaus in other romances. Chaucer the pilgrim lists him among 'romances of prys ... Of sir Lybeux',⁵⁷ and in *The Squire of Low Degree* the reference is to himself (that is, not merely to his story): 'Sir Libius, that gentell knight' (75-82).

Some pseudonyms or sournons persist in the paratext, usually in the title: Gareth (that was called Bewmaynes), La Cote Male Tayle; Joie's pseudonym is the title of her romance (*La Manekine*), so is Guinglains' of his (*Li Biaus Descouneüs*); Emaré-who-was-Egaré keeps hers as an "extra" at the end of her story ('on of Brytayne layes ... Men callys "Playn[t] Egarye" '). Perhaps in such cases the alias stands for alternative qualities, not simply as a mask, which is why it remains attached to the true name instead of dropping away altogether. Mostly, however, pseudonyms drop away from the characters (Guy, Horn, Tristram, Balin, Ipomadon, the young Gawain in *De Ortu*, Aveloc in Gaimar's *Estoire*) as their stories progress and/or culminate, as disguise is dropped and/or true name revealed.

It is possible that Amadas changes name — but we are never told explicitly that Amadas is a pseudonym, nor what his previous name might have been. Lancelot's name-change is, however, explicit and permanent; it is a curious example because his "real" baptismal name was added later (than Chrétien), but it is nonetheless an important part of his story in the French prose romances.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ *Le Conte du Graal*, 773:3572-774:3583.

⁵⁷ 'Sir Thopas', *CT* VII, 897-902.

⁵⁸ See Kennedy, 'The Evolution of the *Prose Lancelot*', and Sommer's IPN ([Arthur] *Vulgate*), for several mentions. Malory's single mention omits any suggestion that Lancelot lost the name

A hypothetical 'enfances' of, say, Amadas might give us a baptismal name for him; there are doubtless name-changes in romances that I have not been able to include.⁵⁹ The fact remains that in a wide selection from the better-known romances name-change is very unusual.

It is less rare in other genres,⁶⁰ and there is a Biblical precedent: Abraham, Sarah, Peter, and Paul are the best-known examples. Lerner remarks that God renames after/as important events occur, to signify a new and powerful role for the person renamed.⁶¹ A new role is played by Owaines when he becomes Amoraunt; the same is true of Lancelot: for literary posterity, across many texts and centuries, it is a new and powerful role indeed — although the prose romancer (rather more pious than Chrétien) doubtless intended the name-change as a reproach for Lancelot's sins. In pious or penitential romances, which have strong links with hagiography, one might expect name-changes as signals for changes of identity (as with conversion or consecration), but they are rare here too. Hopkins remarks that Guy wants to change his identity (not to destroy it, as St Alexis does) by hiding his name; neither ultimately changes his name. She also says that a moment of revelation can entail loss of identity.⁶² There is as much (or as little) temporary loss of *name* in other romances for a less pious reason: love-madness, also about sin (against love) and penance, which will be discussed later.

But romances, even pious ones, do not in spite of their apparently biographical mode plot *development* of character. The true (that is the noble, honourable, virtuous, and successful) hero or heroine is potentially there from the outset. They may discover their true name but they rarely change it, and they do not become a genuinely new person. Disguise, delayed naming, and temporary pseudonyms are far more common as romance motifs; these bear out the argument that characters in romance do not change or develop (as they do in the later novel) but are progressively revealed — by their adventures and also by the name-play inherent in such motifs.

Even descriptive names, such as the Fere, Degaré, and Felice, do not change even if their owners appear to: the Fere is proud only once (at the beginning), Degaré is "found", and Felice stops being Guy's happiness. The descriptive (cratylic) name, which refers to events or motives in the story and not to intrinsic personal qualities, indeed changes by becoming a proper (hermogean) name which labels or tags instead of describing. These examples, and Libeaus is another, are intratextual; Vortigern and other names whose original meanings are lost or obscure may have changed in this way across several texts or "translations". In later versions of the *Guy* story Felice is called Phyllis;⁶³ as the descriptive meaning

Galahad because of his imperfection (126:3-14).

⁵⁹See eg. Taylor, 'Perceval/Perceforest', pp. 209-11.

⁶⁰Notably chansons de geste (see esp. Daniel, *Heroes and Saracens*), hagiography, and historical writing (popes and sometimes monarchs). Cuchulain was called Setanta until he won his hero-name ('The Deeds of Cuchulain', pp. 258-63).

⁶¹*The Creation of Patriarchy*, pp. 181-2.

⁶²*The Sinful Knights*, pp. 105 and 21.

⁶³See Richmond, *The Legend of Guy*, passim.

becomes obscure it is updated and replaced by a name with a similar sound but with vaguely pastoral or classical connotations. Here an *existing* name replaces a funny-sounding old one.

Names, a focus of interest for so many writers, may be subject to deliberate manipulation, but are surprisingly resistant to change.

Disguise or Incognito

If somebody assumes a disguise or alias, then one figure has as it were two names. Does the use of another name, or both names, mean that they become in any sense a different person? If the incognito takes the form of namelessness, it quickly attracts a nickname; pseudonyms often express some negative or lack. But if they describe, they do not hamper or constrain. They are more susceptible to (lucid) etymology than true names,⁶⁴ but they often drop away — as though Hermogenes became Cratylus for a while, then escaped him.

The topic of disguise⁶⁵ is associated with naming in that a pseudonym may be added to disguise or metonymically substituted for it. There are a number of disguises in the romances studied so far; some involve aliases and sometimes an alias does duty as a disguise, though the latter not generally in situations where people might recognize a face.⁶⁶ Sometimes the reason for disguise seems as arbitrary as for a false name, though either can be effective in producing plot-complications: *Ipomadon* is a case in point. In all cases, the “alter-image” (whether onomastic and aural, or visual) is a signal to the audience that something important is happening: the character is in danger, or is setting out on a new path. Disguise is part of an overall theme of incognito and recognition; I also examine whether disguise as a socially inferior figure of negligible identity could in any sense, because “faceless”, correspond to anonymity.⁶⁷ Disguise as a higher-status figure is likely to be accompanied by a false name, especially if the hero is impersonating somebody.

Most of the examples encountered so far are where a protagonist desires to be unknown (compare the more active/aggressive desire to impersonate). One ought not to read too much into the pretended appearance or form the disguise takes; focus ought to be on who is being disguised, and why. Pilgrims like merchants have both mobility and respectability, in spite of their different social functions; beggars and minstrels are likewise mobile, and of lower status. Pilgrims and

⁶⁴See eg. Ménard, *Le Rire et le Sourire*, pp. 576–80.

⁶⁵Transformations (which include a beheadable green knight, the werewolf, and Loathly forms of the Lady) are also forms of disguise; I focus only on instances that relate closely to naming.

⁶⁶Tristram’s transparent alias was more than adequate because nobody at the Irish court had ever seen him, and Malory makes no suggestion that Marhalt had told his killer’s name (381:4–392:12).

⁶⁷Dickson argues that low-status disguise is effective because identity is defined by position in society: neither Rigmel nor Iseut can believe her lover could be poor, coarse, and ugly (“Verbal and Visual Disguise”).

minstrels once had a place in society,⁶⁸ but unless they are heroes in disguise they will resume it only outside the story; beggars and lepers probably will not, even if they once had such a place. Their facelessness is unsurprising given that the focus is on knights and ladies. Messengers (often anonymous) and heralds are mobile, but are supposed to be going somewhere identifiable in more of a hurry than the average pilgrim; they are too visible to be suitable as disguise-figures. The key quality, in a society where those who stay put are sooner or later known, is mobility: these figures are unknown and can turn up from somewhere else.

One can disguise oneself only as what one is not: a knight is incognito (not disguised) in plain arms — or he deliberately borrows those of another. Malory's Lancelot, when he takes armour and shield from the sleeping Kay, achieves two ends: as "Kay" he allows his fellow to 'ryde in pease' because nobody will attack "Lancelot". But the impersonation also disguises the best knight in the world as not-Lancelot, for a short time. His adversaries quickly realise that he cannot be Kay, and then those he encounters in the following adventures know instantly who he is, although it is clear when he gets home that he has been wearing Kay's armour throughout. He has achieved considerable extra prowess, as well as honour both for himself and Kay by sending some of his conquests home to 'sey that sir Kay sente you' (274:32–286:27). The only knightly disguises that last are those where somebody who is not a knight, because not male, acts as one: Grisandoles, and Silence (who changes name only when escaping into another class as a minstrel).

Disguise tends to be more functional than name-change in romance, though one is added to the other where necessary. The name, rather than the face, of Horn is presumed to be known when he goes to Ireland, hence the alias in both versions examined for this study. But in order to rescue his beloved, he must appear as something other than a fighting man. Had anybody asked the beggar his name as he pressed forward into the hall, he would doubtless have given a pseudonym — but who ever asks a beggar his name? Silence, however, has got to be called something during "his" career as a minstrel; likewise the disguised king must introduce himself (Ioly Robyn) to his host.⁶⁹ As for Guy, it is doubtful whether he actively disguises himself, at least initially. After leaving his wife, he is sought in vain, but whether pseudonym or pilgrim's cloak is the effective agent is not clear. Only in the Auchinleck version is he a pilgrim when we see him again (stanza 44); in Caius he is simply travelling about.⁷⁰ Like Ionas, his appearance is changed by time, dirt, and hardship. We may imagine the hero being questioned by messengers during that time ("What's your name? Have you seen Guy anywhere?"), but the pseudonym does not appear until after the disguise has done its job: he offers himself as champion (that is, he reverts to being a knight) and gives the name Iohn because, as we are going to discover, his

⁶⁸A minstrel is or was once supposed to be a servant — etymologically — attached to an identifiable household. In *Beues*, Josiane becomes a minstrel primarily to get money.

⁶⁹In *King Edward and the Shepherd*.

⁷⁰ed. Zupitza; texts on facing pages.

gigantic adversary must not know who he (Guy, and not just any great knight) really is.

Florimont's disguise as merchant, when he must not be seen as a knight, is independent of his name-change to Povre Perdu. The former is functional, the latter existential — he is still a knight, but feels that his whole being is devastated. Orfeo loses his name, and this is symbolic of his distress, when he goes into the wilderness; he does not appear disguised until after his name has reappeared: he pretends to be only a harper in order to get his wife, and later his kingdom, back. Dickson cites the Oxford *Folie Tristan* where the hero, disguised as a fool,⁷¹ yet gives a pseudonym that Iseut will recognize from his previous use of it; here the pseudonym does no hiding, but torments her still further. The boundary between disguise and incognito is being pushed hard here: the whole court hears his stories and his transparent false name, yet nobody draws the obvious conclusion. He uses a *false* name as a recognition-signal; Iseut will not — the court cannot — hear it.

Ipomadon takes no false name while acting the fool. His aliases are barely more than noun+adjective, yet there is only one Strange Valet, only one Queen's Drew, and potentially any number of fools. In a way, he achieves more as "himself" while a fool, but all three poses are to hide himself rather than pretend to be somebody else (as when he impersonates Lyolyne). Disguise, with or without alias, is overall more common than impersonation — although some well-known examples (the magicking of Uther to look like the Duke of Cornwall so that he can beget Arthur on his wife, and the dressing-up of a dead steward so that a heroine may mourn him as her own Squire) are, each in its way, crucial to a whole romance plot.⁷²

Disguise achieves (visual) anonymity for a special purpose such as reaching the beloved — or spying on your subjects, if you are a king; a hero undisguised is known as himself because heroes are known. A false name may be added, also for practical reasons. One might argue that King Edward is impersonating Robin the Merchant, and Guy the great Sir Youn; their interlocutors do not at first know that they are fictions, even if we do. And yet the slipperiness of the notion becomes apparent if one suggests that Silence is impersonating Malduit the Minstrel: she *is* the minstrel, and a very successful one. Guy is not Youn, but he is a pilgrim and a (successful) penitent. The fact that disguise is more common than impersonation reinforces the point that the person is more important than the persona: the hidden than the form of hiding.

There is revelation, both in cases of hidden-face and of hidden-name. Malory does not explain how people, in the adventures referred to earlier, can see that it is Lancelot in Kay's armour before having any ado with him — we must

⁷¹ Although some fools were attached to noble households, many were, like lepers, social outcasts ('Verbal and Visual Disguise', p. 43).

⁷² Ipomadon's impersonation of Lyolyne is, however inexplicable, a dramatic climax to the story; Amiloun's impersonation of Amis is essential. The impersonations cited are if anything more crucial, as plot-elements, than disguises — some of which (eg. in *Generydes*) are hardly necessary.

suppose that Lancelot cannot be hidden for long. Some heroes reveal themselves at an appropriate moment, some are revealed by timely accident (as when Gareth "loses" his ring, or a sword-stroke exposes a birth-mark); others may be spotted — to resounding effect — as Lancelot is by Guinevere in Chrétien's *Charrette*. The moment when somebody sees through a disguise can be quite dramatic: Horn is spotted as Lenburc sings the lay,⁷³ and the moment is marked by the fleeting reappearance of his true name. A startling effect is created when Béroul's Tristan, a leper this time, is recognized by Marc's seneschal. His name has all but disappeared in the passage where he directs wicked barons into the deepest mud, but suddenly Dinas smiles to himself: 'Bien sout Tristran ert soz la chape.'⁷⁴ The name, like a close-up camera shot, signals recognition and the piercing of disguise.

The narrator's collusion with disguise overlaps with collusion in naming. The word 'ladres' in the passage just cited *shows* us the unrecognizable figure, so that the name when it comes is more striking. A hero incognito may be called: his name, the (eg) knight, his false name, or the (eg) fool. A narrator's collusion in dis-naming is rarer and more radical than collusion in disguise; still, a well-placed noun may add vividly to the effect of a story's climax. The next examples are from romances with a strong moral.

Sir Gowther never loses his name completely, in spite of his several disguises. But the people at the emperor's court call him 'Hob hor fole' (368) and the narrator refers to him thus, between his second and his final battles, emphasizing the contrast of fool and unknown champion (499–510). Then, just before the miraculous return of speech to the dumb maiden, the narrator calls Gowther (who is under a vow of silence) 'Tho dompe duke' (619–54).

Sir Isumbras forgets who he is — because a bird tells him so (46–50). It is actually his proper virtue he has forgotten, but the narrator nevertheless suppresses his name quite markedly. It does not disappear altogether, but he is 'the knyghte' or 'her fader' between lines 50 and 217, a noticeable gap, and thereafter his name appears sparsely. Once he has become a palmer (the angel calls him 'Palmere' not 'Isumbras', 524–8) noun replaces name as often as not: the palmer sits and eats in the queen's hall (568–70), tells his adventures (583–6), proves himself strong (613–15), and reveals himself by means of the ring (679–90). The dramatic climax of this passage is the queen's, not the narrator's, declaration of his name: 'Blessed be God ... / Nowe have I my lord, syr Isumbras' (700–1).

In *Robert of Sicily* (an impersonation) the angel is never called King Robert, but the 'wood man' is called King Robert until nearly the end of the story, when he at last realises his foolishness: after his long prayer the name disappears, and the angel calls 'Pe fool' to a last interview. This short but telling passage illustrates the truth of his repentance, and his name returns in triumph as the angel vanishes (385–420). In these, and in other such cases, the narrator switches focus, using other characters' point of view in order to enhance the moment of

⁷³See above, p. 68.

⁷⁴ed. Ewert, ll. 3853–8.

revelation.

Negative evidence, that disguise is usually about naming, is provided by *Generydes*. None of its many disguises involves a false name. The messenger in the “pet-dog” scene (5334–79) is disguised, but unnecessarily: brought in and named just for this role (5240–5), he has no other part in the story. The disguise assumed by Clarionas is necessary, to escape from Sir Yuell, but the moment when Generydes fails to recognize her passes immediately — it is amusing but pointless (4513–19). In the last disguise-scene Clarionas arrives dressed as a herbalist to heal Generydes’ fever. Recognition is achieved, without the aid of the identifying ring, in a charming little scene where she announces that she has brought Clarionas’ ‘ymage’ with her. “Let’s see,” says Generydes, and she lifts her veil (6797–880). The hero’s hesitation about giving his name to the shipmaster (‘he was not wonte hym self to be wreye’ — 4152–9) comes as a surprise, because he is not in the habit of concealing his identity, and because the romance is not about naming.

Disguise is less problematized than naming; a pseudonym often being questioned, mocked, or analyzed within a text.⁷⁵ Disguises are not subject to this sort of comment, in spite of a perceived anxiety in romance to interrogate a pretended name in order to find the truth behind it. The form of a false appearance is less important than the hero (pseudonymous or not) behind it. Disguise is more functional and episodic, whereas (false) naming is more closely bound up with the main thrust of a romance’s plot: the testing of a hero(ine), or the discovery of who he/she really is. And yet, as Snell suggests, disguise (like naming) is one of the distinguishing themes of the romance genre.⁷⁶

Naming as Recognition-Device

A sign, name or mark, permits recognition irrespective of meaning just so long as the sign is already known to stand for that figure. This corresponds to the nominalist notion that semiotic conventions are agreed among language-users. Naming is linked to recognition variously, in many romances;⁷⁷ often it is coupled with a recognition-sign or token.

In *Ipomadon*, the sign is exposed by violence (the hero’s glove is cut off during a fight) and he is at last forced to speak the name he has been withholding. Another violent exposure is found in *Perceforest*,⁷⁸ in a fight between brothers whose mother had prudently marked all her children at birth so as not to be ‘deceue de sa lignie’: the incognito knight’s hauberk is slashed and reveals the right shoulder. In these cases exposing the sign leads to, or causes, the exposure

⁷⁵Nearly all pseudonyms — doubly invented, by writer and by characters — have a negative significance: mockable, or unknown, lost, lacking.

⁷⁶‘The Undercover King’.

⁷⁷For a full study of just one romance, see for example *The Art of Recognition in Wolfram’s Parzival*, Green.

⁷⁸Ed. Roussineau, part III, vol. 2, section XLIV (p. 310:1334 – p. 311:1369).

of name, but in other cases the two go in parallel instead of causally. Recognition is achieved by something other than name, and naming used as a signal or confirmation that recognition is happening, rather than one causing the other. Either name or sign is redundant: perhaps one does the trick where the other might have been expected to. Examples so far include Degaré (broken sword), Silence (birthmark), Horn (ring), La Manekine (stump) — there is something not entirely logical about these. In the case of Degaré, his father ought to recognize him by the sword, but he does not speak his recognition until he is told the name he cannot know because the child was baptized in his absence.

In *SGGK*, Bertilak at last gives his 'right name' at the moment of revelation near the end (2443–70).⁷⁹ This speech releases a cluster of other names, including that of Morgan la Faye (instigator of the plot), and provides Gawain with full recognition — of his own fault, of how he has been tricked, and of his adversary's dual nature (although the latter's primary identity remains unresolved). He learned some moments ago that his host was the green man before him (2338ff), but then the host was claiming only that *he* had set his wife to test the hero. Bertilak's name is a symbol and not a cause of recognition, for it can mean nothing, in the ordinary sense, to Gawain unless the host had introduced himself during the stay at the castle. This is unlikely, because he would have had to say his wife's name too (unthinkable) and the old lady's (which would have given the game away). The scene where the people of the castle discreetly try to find out who Gawain is, in case he does not want to tell (901ff, and note p. 102), is a sort of blind — deflecting attention from or drawing attention to the fact that there is no corresponding revelation of the host's name, let alone who he is. The collusion of narrator with host is echoed, tantalizingly, by the little mystery that takes place as Gawain makes his way to the Green Chapel (2098ff). What is the monster that the servant talks of? Is he in the secret, and testing Gawain, too? Or is Bertilak, like a werewolf, sneaking off to be Green unbeknownst to everybody but his ladies? Although one must think in terms of plot rather than in terms of characterization, this long and vivid passage opens up (as failure to name the host does) a site of indeterminacy, with the result that identity is destabilized and name no longer attaches to person so much as to something wilfully mysterious.

Fair Unknown romances are likely to feature combats between brothers, where at least one is incognito; in *Generydes*,⁸⁰ the hero and Ismael meet face to face once. A potential father-son combat was set up earlier in the battle (2182–4), only to be defused by a move which allows them to recognize each other. When the brothers fight, Ismael's helm is chopped off and Generydes realises that he looks familiar. 'We are broderen,' he says, and leaves (2621–58). They are not set up to be rivals, nor do they go about together. The combats arise not, as in

⁷⁹The anonymity of an arbiter-figure, as in *Amadas et Ydoine*, enhances his mysterious and ambiguous power. (See also Twomey, 'Morgan le Fay at Hautdesert', for Morgan's power over his name).

⁸⁰See Howard, 'Fraternal and Familial in *Generydes*', for a different reading.

more magical romances, because the knights meet by chance or fate, but more realistically because they are on opposing sides in a war. Nor is naming associated with recognition. There is concern about how the hero is to be recognized, but moments of non-recognition are short-lived or not very important, as when Clarionas fails to recognize him at one moment in the battle but picks him out later (2605–7, 2672–82). When helms get smashed off heads the point is not usually recognition: Generydes lays bare Gwynan's face, but he knows whom he is vanquishing (6069–113). A scene, which illustrates that this romance is not about recognition in the way Fair Unknown stories are, is where Amelok smashes Generydes' helm. The seeing is all the other way: 'Thu wend ... that I had lakkid sight, / ffor now I may se better thanne I myght' (6366–72).

Recognition of a special kind is effected by delay in the naming of Bertilak; delayed naming as temporary anonymity is discussed in a later section. Thematic and stylistic, my examples often illustrate more than one of the topics in this chapter. Temporary anonymity in *Sir Orfeo* underlines a theme of loss, even madness; the way names vanish and reappear contributes to the effect of strangeness. This in turn allows the narrator to provide another kind of recognition-signal. Both the king and his wife lose their names in the text after the queen's abduction — becoming pronouns or noun(phrases) for most of the central section of the romance — but when Orfeo sees Herodis in the forest (290–300), and once more when he recognizes her among the folk in the underworld (355–84), both names appear fleetingly in the text as a signal that they recognize each other ... because they cannot speak to each other. The audience, however, hears (or sees) the names, and shares the recognition.

Doubles

Where two figures have one name, a question is raised about their identity. But rather than being two aspects of one character, it seems that the second is in some sense the doom of the first. In happier cases, the second tends to act as foil or complement to the first. One name can pull in two directions. I discuss pairs of characters who stand in significant relation to each other and are (usually) linked by name. The examples differ widely, but they have in common that each one is perceived as having in some sense the potential to become his or her double. Naming is a common way of signalling such potential; doubled names may also emphasize paired situations.

The alter ego — an aspect of a character needed as an independent unit for the sake of the plot and re-embodied elsewhere — is common in romance, and has been studied by scholars such as Ramsey, Fewster, and Wittig.⁸¹ Many alter egos are not namesakes and are thus outside my study; some namesakes are not

⁸¹ *Chivalric Romances*, pp. 32–3 and chs. 3 & 5 passim; *Traditionality and Genre*, on Guy's alter egos Amys, Reinbron, Harrawde, and especially Tyrry: 'a parallel but failing version of Guy himself' (pp. 97–8); *Stylistic and Narrative Structures*, on 'the split role of the hero' in relation to Guy, and to William of Palerne (pp. 151–2).

alter egos (because it is not useful to see them as aspects of the same character) but nevertheless attract attention: effectively opening up the narrative, even momentarily, they mark a passage as more emphatic, memorable, or suggestive. How often is a namesake (or near-namesake) an alter ego? In a long and populous romance some doubles are bound to pass unnoticed, except by readers who — concerned about a dead character reappearing alive later — are led to conclude that these really are two separate characters; if the writer has simply made a mistake then the doubled naming will not be exploited.⁸²

A variety of doubles has been encountered so far. Amis and Amiloun are interchangeable, and one disguises in order to impersonate the other; they do not fight each other, their names are not similar in all versions, and the story is about both of them. Balin/Balaain and his brother are not interchangeable, they fight each other, their names are not quite the same, and the story focuses on just the one. Gawain's 'sosie', in *L'Atre Périlleux*, is a double but does not share the hero's role; here is a different sort of pair: one is mistaken for the other, they meet only when it is established that the one is *not* the other, they do not fight, their names are quite different, and the story is essentially about Gawain.

Two aspects of Frye's "doppelganger" may be detected in these and other such pairs. The darker or shadow double is a reminder of the hero's doom, as in the story of Balin;⁸³ in *L'Atre* the frightening and name-obliterating other dissolves into a happy ending. Frye presents the "Two Brothers" motif for the less dark stories such as *Amis and Amiloun*,⁸⁴ though I find that the stay-at-home brother has to be *shown* that his brother needs help. This is also true of *Eger and Grime*, in which Grime sets out as a result of the adventures told him by Eger. His battle is for his brother's sake, and the story is about both of them, but it would be reductive to regard the two as aspects of a single hero. The writer uses naming skilfully to mysterious or magical effect,⁸⁵ but makes no attempt to fool the audience as to which knight is which — and Looseline sees through Grime's disguise almost immediately.

Where brothers have different names, we are probably meant to be able to tell them apart (even if characters in the story cannot). In *Valentine and Orson*, the civilized one tames the wild one; later their roles are reversed and the civilized one does the wild thing and kills his father. In this they represent opposable, not complementary, attributes, and one can become the other. It is not presented as

⁸²It is probable that Malory confused the name of Dynadan's minstrel with the name of the enemy captain whose story is inserted between two passages about Dynadan's lay (see Vinaver's IPN for Elyot and Elyas).

⁸³See p. 45 above. Male/female doubles are rare: Achilles compares himself to Narcissus, who loved his shadow ([Troie] ed. & tr. Baumgartner & Viellard, 17691-710: "she" is 'umbre', 'mort', and Polyxena).

⁸⁴*Secular Scripture*, p. 111.

⁸⁵The name of the 'venterous knight' of the 'fforbidden countrye' — Gray-steele — is produced dramatically at the end of Eger's narration (345); the artful Looseline remains nameless, as Enide does, until her marriage (1405-8). Note also that she tactfully refrains from asking Eger's name (255-9).

a tragedy, but it contains — with difficulty — very disturbing elements.⁸⁶ The story, based on folk-tale, is entitled *Valentin und Namelos* in German versions;⁸⁷ calling the other one Nameless underlines his shadow nature, so that Valentine can become nameless through evil deeds,⁸⁸ and the other could take his brother's name should he need one. The distinctness of their names in the English does not disguise their interchangeability.

In *King Horn* and *The Romance of Horn* the hero's look-alike "brother" is his double in a small way: the resemblance is exploited only once, early on, and in neither case does his name resemble the hero's. The doubling of the heroine is more significant: according to Dickson the extra princess underlines the desirability of the hero, and she argues that for this reason the original Horn story must have featured, as *King Horn* does, princesses with similar names.⁸⁹ But Thomas gives her a dissimilar name and a comparatively developed character, and he does not marry her off to Horn's "brother" (as in *King Horn*): perhaps he wanted to give a bit of substance to the shadow.

Some doubled ladies have a rather allegorical role: both Generydes and Silence have mothers with names very like those of the women who will play Potiphar's wife to them. In each case the former (Serenye, Eufemie) is explicitly portrayed as good and represents a home environment to be grown out of; the latter (Serenydes, Eufeme) as wicked, representing a kingdom to be challenged and ultimately won (by inheritance or marriage); but these contrasted women do not meet or interact in any significant way. The romances are not otherwise alike, and the ladies' roles are developed very differently, but it seems that each writer is using the names to underline an important piece of structuring in the story.

Malory's *Morte Darthur* has rather few doubles. I have suggested that his version of the Balin story, as compared with the French, lays slightly less stress on the naming (and thus on the doubling) of the brothers. I also suggest that he downplays the changing of Lancelot's name⁹⁰ in order to remove the explicit contrast found in the French: instead of an insistence on the symbolic relationship, of imperfect father set against perfect son (worldly versus spiritual chivalry), Malory is able to make more of the natural human relationship between Lancelot and Galahad.

Interesting namesakes, in Malory, are the Elaynes. The significance of one pair is very clear: Lancelot's mother, Elayne, called her baby Galahad, 'and syn ... conformed hym Launcelot' (125:32-126:11). History repeats itself when he, who became imperfect under his famous name, begets the perfect knight Galahad on Elayne daughter of Pelles. The maiden is not named until after her rescue from the boiling water (if indeed it is the same maiden), after Lancelot and her father introduce themselves, and after the vision of the Grail. The narrator

⁸⁶See esp. Cooper, 'Counter-Romance', pp. 158-62.

⁸⁷*Valentine and Orson* ed. Dickson, pp. ix-xi. See also his *Valentine and Orson: A Study*.

⁸⁸Valentine's vow of silence, at the end of the romance, echoes the dumbness of his brother at the beginning (Cooper, 'Counter-Romance', p. 161).

⁸⁹'Female Doubling and Male Identity', esp. p. 68.

⁹⁰See p. 132 and n. 58 above.

then tells us her name (792:10–794:4), but Lancelot does not learn it until the morning, when he finds himself in bed with the wrong woman — she tells him herself (796:4–7). Though prophesied by the hermit as divinely ordained, the affair has all the trappings of secrecy: darkness, guile, enchantment, and shame for Lancelot (795:24–5). Guinevere later discovers the truth because Lancelot talks in his sleep. But in the story of another Elayne, the Fair Maid of Ascolat, it is an untruth that Guinevere discovers, when she sees Lancelot wearing the red sleeve. He does not have an affair with this Elayne; she begs for his love, but the wearing of her favour is all he will grant. It is the outward declaration of a secret love that never happened, and the truth is written by the Maid herself. This doubling of names is one of the ways in which Malory shows that even now, as clouds gather for the final storm, love may still be chaste and suspicions unfounded. It would be an oversimplification to see each Elayne as the alter ego of another, but their names draw attention strongly to parallels and contrasts of paired situations.

For all his interest in Name, Malory fails to exploit a further opportunity to use doubled naming for effect. There is no suggestion that Tristram wants Isode le Blaunche Maynes for her name (433:14–435:4), nor has she any part in his death; Malory presents a radically reshaped Tristan story. In Thomas' version⁹¹ the name is crucial (Sneyd¹, 197–232); Tristan is trying to test in his own person how Ysolt fares with the King, by getting as close as he can to her. His anguish and impotence are embodied later in the poem by the statues he causes to be made, of Queen Ysolt and Brengvein; the scene where he talks to them is closely followed by the famous 'demande d'amour' where Thomas asks which of the four lovers was in greatest torment (Turin¹, 1–151). The doubled name of two women intensifies the stiflingly complex interplay among the characters and their images. In *Sir Tristrem*, too, the hero wants the second Ysonde for her name.⁹² Lupack remarks that the audience were expected to be familiar not only with romance conventions but also with the story — though we cannot be sure how this (incomplete) version ended.⁹³

In Thomas, too, there is a second Tristan:⁹⁴ Tristran le Naim stands for the doomed or enchanted aspect of the character,⁹⁵ because through him the hero receives his fatal wound. Not until the arrival of le Naim is Tristan given the byname 'l'Amerus' (Douce, 907–36), which signifies the lover aspect. Because this aspect of Tristan challenges him into going to his doom (le Naim says "you

⁹¹ *Tristan* ed. Wind. Malory was not working from Thomas but from the French Prose Romance; the latter ignored the legend's tragic conception.

⁹² In *Lancelot and Tristrem* ed. Lupack, ll. 2663–73.

⁹³ Ibid., p. 152, and his '*Sir Tristrem*'.

⁹⁴ Gottfried's version, aware of the value of name-doubling, contains not only a second Tristan but also a third Isolde: 'la mère semble comme un double de la fille' (*Tristan et Yseut* ed. Marchello-Nizia et al., Répertoire, p. 1698). Bérout's 'La mere Yseut' (ed. Ewert, 2139) is possessive, not nominative.

⁹⁵ In Bérout Tristan and his companion are called 'faé': enchanted (4062), from Latin 'fata', cf. OE *fæge*: doomed.

can't be l'Amerus if you won't come and help me right away"), he effectively slips into the other figure for an instant — as if Tristan the lover persuades Tristan the doomed to go to the fight. They go together ('les dous Tristrans assailirent' — 1037), and only one returns alive. The extra figure serves as a plot-device to get the hero wounded, and further underlines, by his name, the tragic dilemma that finds various expression throughout the poem. The naming theme becomes an anti-naming theme; Tristan's 'désaffiliation'⁹⁶ as he renounces the conventional hero's goals amounts to a quest for no-name. His disguises and madness lead away from recognition and reconciliation, he and his double cancel each other out: meeting the doppelganger is death.

There is another Arthurian double⁹⁷ who does not appear in Malory, again because he was not using the source in which she features: the false Guinevere. She has a small part in *Of Arthour and of Merlin*, but a more extended treatment, in English, in the prose *Merlin*.⁹⁸ This is a rare example of a namesake who is, in addition, indistinguishable from the real Guinevere (except for the latter's secret mark). But she is nothing but a plot-device (in both senses) with no autonomy, and her function can be summarized using only passive verbs. She is conceived and born at the same time as her (legitimate) half-sister, and described as exactly like her. She is substituted for the Queen, but is soon unmasked and then banished. It would be untrue to say that she "impersonates" Guinevere; she is a pawn in plots which involve, among other things, the stealing of her mother from her step-father and the kidnapping of the Queen. In this version (versions) Guinevere is shown to be actively in love with Arthur before and up to her marriage (229, 320, 448, 466):⁹⁹ her double's passivity makes her seem more alive. The false Guinevere's part in the royal couple's later estrangement, and her future fate, are mentioned but never narrated (466–70).¹⁰⁰ The story pushes her out of the way by returning immediately to the newly-weds' happiness (471), of which we are reminded several times (561, 678). Illegitimate and "false", she is the base foil against which the true Guinevere is tested.

My last example is another namesake: in *Athelston*,¹⁰¹ a messenger bears the same name as the king. Although not a long romance (812 lines), it contains only seven personal names; some of the nobler characters — the queen, the little boys — are nameless, and even the named characters are named infrequently. Alryke is named only once (51), then becomes the (arch)bishop throughout; Wymound is named fifteen years "after" the other three protagonists (79; 85), as his jealousy

⁹⁶ed. Marchello-Nizia et al., pp. xxxix–xli.

⁹⁷There is a second Gawain in *The Crown*, though the narrator uses his real name to avoid confusion! This writer frequently plays with naming (the real Gawain also forgets who he is for a long time).

⁹⁸[Merlin I] ed. Wheatley. References are to page numbers.

⁹⁹In Malory, nothing is said about how Guinevere feels at this point in her life (97:9–98:28; 102:22–4).

¹⁰⁰The same goes for Lancelot's part (the likewise proleptic mention, at 393, is concerned with the events preceding the Last Battle): Merlin's account, to Blaise, ends with the girl's banishment (562).

¹⁰¹ed. Trounce.

makes a traitor of him, then not again until the king is persuaded to identify 'Wymound, oure weddyd broþer' (691); the countess is named only twice (47; 192); Egelond and Athelston himself are usually 'the earl' and 'the king' respectively. The messenger's name is prominent because the writer flags it:

I wene he bar his owne name:
He was hoten Athelstane;
He was foundelyng (184-6).

He is called 'noble man' twice (199; 339) if indeed, in spite of a slightly unrealistic time-table, the one messenger is considered as doing all the journeys (p. 39). His nobility would derive from his foster-father;¹⁰² in any case, messengers in medieval narrative are often noble. It is significant that the four "brothers" began as messengers (10-15).

Topographical detail in the poem has a dual function: together with pseudo-historical personal names (pp. 28-9) it sets the scene for a realistic England that never was, and it underlines the symbolic importance of carrying messages: these build into a main theme of the poem and are journeys from truth to falsehood and ultimately back again to truth. The messenger's role is central. The editor's note on his name quotes a theory that the author 'must have been using an original, since he could not invent such a piece of information';¹⁰³ I am not convinced. Some writers copied the names they found, and others invented, altered, or suppressed them — how else do we account for different names in different versions of a story? Furthermore, if he was using an 'original' (which means that somebody else invented it) what was to prevent the poet from *leaving out* this name in a story otherwise so bare of names? The possibility must remain open, that the messenger is named deliberately as a sort of alter ego to the king. He seems to know so much, for one thing: the editor comments on the double sense of '3oure arende' in his speech to Wymound and on its ironical implications (p. 132, note to l. 733). The journey that killed the messenger's horse was concerned with Egelond's imprisonment, which Wymound brought about, and the present journey will bring about Wymound's death — but how can the messenger know the identity of the traitor responsible for the 'business'? The king revealed the truth only to the bishop in confession (675-91). The extra knowledge of the messenger's is in a sense balanced by the king's rather puzzling ignorance (for example, about the fire: 561-75) and his overall blind credulity. It is as though the king's right hand did not know what his left hand (the messenger-namesake) was doing; the messenger, galloping about to put things right, is like an independent personification of the king's troubled conscience. The doubling of a name can open up new readings.

Doubles, like disguises, are not uncommon in romance (whereas name-changes, and total anonymity, are very uncommon). There is unlikely to have been much

¹⁰²Dickerson ('The Subplot of the Messenger') has doubts about the fostering. He stresses the importance of the messenger, though he is less intrigued by the name than I am.

¹⁰³See pp. 105-6. Old Celtic tales often feature foster-children so named.

anxiety, in the rest of life, about meeting one's double, because owing to the low name-stock during much of the medieval period one was likely to have name-sakes, even within the family.¹⁰⁴ This is not to say that doubles in fiction did not matter: real people did not generally have marvellous objects, anonymous damsels, or mysterious quests either — and their own names were no less stable than yours and mine. The examples I have given are too widely different to be reducible to a single pattern, but they show that the use of doubles, with same or similar names, can significantly strengthen a narrative: they lend emphasis or nuance to a character by shadowing him/her; they mark parallels and contrasts; they suggest potential but unfulfilled narrative.

Not-Names

One of the emptiest proper names in medieval literature must be Wade; we know so little about him.¹⁰⁵ The legend was all but lost by the late Middle Ages, nor do we know whether the name had a descriptive meaning. Between this and the other extreme — a name as it were ultra-cratylic, so descriptive as to be merely a noun (conveniently marked in modern English by the use of a lower-case initial letter) — are several intermediate states. Whether a name is or is not a name, or somewhere in between, varies from one text to another; within a text a name may be more or less “namely” because of its context (for example, whether other characters are named or not, and whether it is used to describe or to label in name-tag fashion). One must be open to what the text wants a name to be and, more difficult, to what a medieval audience might have heard: as with a modern audience, it would depend upon what other literature they were familiar with, and what other language.

It has been seen how a descriptive name (the Fere, Degaré, Libcaus) may become a proper name in the course of a romance. Le Bel Inconnu is not a proper name because it is shortened only to ‘li Descounceüs’, essentially a noun (the hypocoristic form would, by analogy, be Libiaus), and it disappears halfway through the romance as soon as he learns his real name. That process works the other way when names (Perceval, the Celtic name which became Tristan, saints’ names in *The Golden Legend*) are etymologized in order to make them descriptive. Such etymologizing was deliberately forestalled by the change of Myrddin to Merlin, because of the meaning of Latin ‘merda’.¹⁰⁶

Translation and adaptation may alter names that once had a clear meaning (such as Felice/Phyllis), or transform noun into name. We may imagine a Welsh

¹⁰⁴See Bennett, *The Pastons and their England*, p. 13; Benton, ‘Consciousness of Self and Perceptions of Individuality’, pp. 277–82 (quoted by Montaigne: *Essais: Livre 1*, ‘Des Noms’); Jones et al., *Who Murdered Chaucer?*, p. 252; Wilson, *The Means of Naming*, p. 336.

¹⁰⁵See Wilson, *Lost Literature*, pp. 16–19, and his *Early Middle English Literature*, pp. 197–8.

¹⁰⁶It happens that Mirthin would have done nicely in English, because of the wizard’s famous laughter!

story about a 'vortigern': a superior ruler.¹⁰⁷ The vortigern became famous for his exploits, and as he took his place in British history he lost the (notional) article and grew a capital letter. The meaning is now known to none but scholars, and it would be perverse to insist that Vortigern "is" a title.¹⁰⁸ Once-descriptive names such as le Morholt¹⁰⁹ and le gringalet tend to lose their articles in later and/or English versions: Sir Marhalt in Malory's 'Tristram', Gryngolet in *SGGK* — they also become more firmly attached to their respective stories.

Grammar (and spelling) conventions of different languages will affect an audience's perception of name. In translation, a name is no longer dependent on the language to sustain it but depends on the text (the story).¹¹⁰ An editor deciding whether to capitalize words such as Cowardice or Love has a reader in mind; a listener hears abstract noun, or Personification, or both.¹¹¹ Generally speaking, the definite article makes a name more descriptive, because less specific (hence its loss as a name becomes more hermogeneous). It may also be used to indicate a type ("the Helen of the modern world" is an extra-textual reference), as may the indefinite article: "he was a Lancelot for valour". Scholars might say "a Gawain" to mean one of the many in our romances, not a "character" in any novelistic sense. Narrators may call somebody "a judas", and here the notional capital letter is on the brink of giving way. ("That's a very Helen thing to do" is, by contrast, person-specific). Though rarely in English, article (and preposition) can attach permanently to French-derived names: Lamartine, de la Marche/de Lamarche, Le Corbusier, Dupont.¹¹²

Libeauss' lady has no name because, although she is clearly identified as the lady of Synadoun, everybody else in the romance is given a comparatively proper name; one can imagine, however, another version of the story in which "Lady Synadoun" is named. Laudine has no name in some versions of *Yvain*, *pace* the editors' reluctance to believe that Chrétien would omit to name her.¹¹³ Le Fresne is a name, even were it spelt without capitals, because Marie says it is (ll. 228–30). But Bisclavret is not a name: it is possible to imagine a romance about Sir Bisclavret (compare Sir Marrok in Malory),¹¹⁴ but Marie makes it clear that the word bisclavret is used only of the beast, or with specific reference to the man

¹⁰⁷See Wace's *Brut*, ed. & tr. Weiss, Introduction, p. xiv.

¹⁰⁸See Jones, 'Penda's Footprint?', p. 57. To insist on a distinction between epithets and personal names is proper so long as it is recognized how names can change, both in form and in function, within and across texts.

¹⁰⁹See *Tristan*, ed. Marchello-Nizia et al., Répertoire, pp. 1667–8.

¹¹⁰In Latin, one needs context to distinguish aurally between draco (a dragon) and Draco (somebody in particular). A reader will be helped by a modern editor's capitalization.

¹¹¹See Burrow, *Medieval Writers*, pp. 96–7.

¹¹²See Beck, 'Personal Naming', pp. 153–4: 'When the anthroponym lost the article or the preposition, it was set free from laws that governed the common noun and became a proper name for which the earlier meaning was no longer essential'.

¹¹³p. 391 and note pp. 1205–6.

¹¹⁴1150:27–9. Marrok (once) meant knight (see Milin, 'Le bon chevalier loup-garou', pp. 66–7); Malory may have known a story in which the knight had no name.

as beast.¹¹⁵ His friends call him the ‘chevaler ... Que lung tens ad esté perduz’ (251–4). It is sometimes written without article, as though Marie were offering us a choice, or were exploring the way two sorts of identity could be merged. But she has explained the word in two languages — Breton, and ‘Garwaf’ in Norman (‘c[eo] est beste salvage’, 1–12). She is more concerned with naming the lai than with naming the person (‘un ber’, 15); the lai is more truly about the beast than about the knight.

In one group of romances a private personal name (Renaut) is not a Name: the Chastelain de Coucy is a byword for a legendary lover, and is quoted thus in *La Chastelaine de Vergi*.¹¹⁶ The only other names in the latter are the even more legendary Tristan and Yseut (758–60). Coucy, not Renaut, gives his Name to history; compare the way the English Libeaus is *not* known as Geynleyn in other texts. But the English *Knight of Curtesy* is even barer of names than the *Vergi*: there are no off-stage figures and the name Coucy has been “mistranslated” to describe the knight’s excellence.¹¹⁷ A name indicating quality is one step less useful, for identification, than one indicating place. After all, you could find the King of France by going to France and asking for him; but the Good Knight, unless firmly located in a known story, could be anywhere.

Having said that Bisclavret is not a name, I could argue that Namelos is one. Everybody calls him that, he never gets a better one (in that version), and unless you know a little German it has the same status as, say, Nicholas (or as Orson, for that matter).¹¹⁸ The subject of not-names is a slippery one, and especially relevant to romance. There is, perhaps, a diachronic trend for not-names to become names beyond all reasonable argument: because stories seem to like, to capture and fix, names. Nevertheless, as a vigorous, emerging, and fast-changing genre, romance is bound by fewer constraints than are other kinds of narrative: history and hagiography must attempt to transmit recognizable names on which users can depend, for research or for prayer; many exemplary or fabular genres, especially short ones, work best without names at all. Romance can play with (not) naming, and what is (not) a name varies with each writer, each reader, and each audience.

Total Anonymity

I like to know names ... I can’t follow a story without them.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁵Ewert prints it once with lower-case b, Rychner’s edition has several more thus.

¹¹⁶[Couci] ed. Delboulle; ed. Whitehead, ll. 291ff. What is not a name in one text becomes a name, in this important sense, in another.

¹¹⁷ed. McCausland, ll. 13–16.

¹¹⁸Furthermore, it has no negative value, as ‘nemo’ has. See Owst, *Literature and Pulpit*, pp. 63–4, on the ‘neminists’ who combed the Bible for what Nobody, who is greater than God, dared to do. It is possible that Orson got his more conventional name because the English version is much longer (recounting events after the brothers’ discovery of their identity) than the other.

¹¹⁹Lodge, *Small World*, p. 21.

Anonymity is a blank or silence where a name ought to be, necessarily expressed by a noun (noun-phrase, pronoun) as a place-holder. But it does not signal no-importance, except in the case of very minor characters. Sometimes it indicates universality or exemplarity; sometimes it is a form of incognito, or disguise, and thus self-confident; sometimes it is a mark of special power. Unlike in modern fiction, anonymity in romance rarely signals existential anxiety, although characters are usually eager to investigate one another's incognito.

Romance resists total anonymity, and names tend to grow out of epithets. It has been seen, in two very different romances, that namelessness can lead to difficulties: inside the narrative when the lady does not know which Squire is at her door, and outside the narrative when the audience does not know which knight is which in *l'Atre*. There are few romances in which a major character is nameless for such a long stretch as Gawain is in the latter, and fewer still where major characters are nameless throughout, as in the former. In both cases romance's device of using namelessness to draw attention to naming and the search for name is pushed almost as far, to its generic limits, as it will go.

Broadly speaking, there are two kinds of nameless figure: one is Everyman, the other is the Mystery Man (the Man in the Street could be either). Everyman (or Everywoman)¹²⁰ may be an exemplary figure; s/he may indicate a type, and may even be given a "typical" name.¹²¹ The Mystery Man is supposed to be, and in romance usually is, solved (as in *L'Atre* and in Fair Unknown stories). The Man in the Street may partake of the mysterious power of faceless and unidentified figures, or remain unfocused (and as if ungendered). It depends to a large extent upon what role the figure plays: in romance we are unlikely to find an Everyman-type hero, and a nameless character with a walk-on part does not pack much mystery-punch unless s/he is specially marked.

As usual, the point at issue is what the text means by Name. Characters can be adequately identified by noun or noun-phrase, and then the lack of an individual, personal, proper name is not important. In some cases, antonomasia is meta-generic;¹²² in others, titles such as the King of France (when there is only one in the story) or La Dame d'Amore are proper names just for the romances in which they appear, unless for some reason their real names are forbidden¹²³ — in which case the fact is specially marked. The main thing is to notice how names and their substitutes are marked and used in a text: how they are placed and how they function with relation to one another in a context.

A forbidden name belongs to either the enchanter or the enchanted; name-magic is a confusing business, because using the name of a supernatural creature could drive it away — or call it up if it is absent. Either way it is likely to notice

¹²⁰Mystery Woman behaves rather differently, as I show in the next section.

¹²¹For a fuller discussion, see eg. Mustanoja, 'Suggestive Use of Christian Names'. Few, if any, of his examples occur in romance.

¹²²The Rich Man for Croesus, The Wise Man/King for Solomon, The Egyptian for one of the saints Mary — these approach the universal within a certain horizon of culture (as does The Once and Future King).

¹²³See eg. Clodd, *Magic in Names*, 'Euphemisms', pp. 88ff.

you, whichever of you holds the power, if you name it. Because much thematic romance-material is magical or marvellous, some concern with name-magic in romance is inevitable. Drewes discusses its importance in Malory: in spite of Malory's habit of adding names, and his explicit concern with (known) identity, hidden identity is a recurring motif that functions in several ways in his work. One is that 'recognition, and thus knowledge of the name ... allows *or* prevents evil magic from being performed'.¹²⁴ Le Guin's short story, 'The Rule of Names', epitomizes the double-edged weapon of Name.¹²⁵

The study of naming in folklore and related areas is a vast one, and throws up several interesting concepts.¹²⁶ For magic, the right name (not a description or euphemism) is vital; rituals must be performed in their original language lest the names lose power in translation. In some cultures, vocabulary changes because a dead person's name is taboo; therefore if a word resembles that name then the something must be called something else. In such cases the discourse itself, reverent intonation or careful circumlocution, calls attention to the name whether present or absent. However, name-magic in romance is more likely to function as part of the power/identity/adventure matrix whereby the hero relates to other knights or to a (fairy?) lady, than to appear as superstition or taboo with regard to community matters such as the weather, or religion. We are unlikely to find, in romance, a taboo such as obtains among theatre people who refuse to name "The Scottish Play" for fear of bad luck. What looks like a reluctance to name God in one copy of a text turns out to be no such thing, since God will be named freely at the corresponding point in another.¹²⁷

Total anonymity in minor characters is clearly less significant than in major characters, although if nearly everybody is named one does wonder about those who are not; likewise it is often significant when a character, even a minor one, suddenly gets a name. Total anonymity, with the exception of one belated naming, is one of the most striking things about *The Squire*. Together with the bizarre (if not truly marvellous) elements, and the fact that much of the story is

¹²⁴'Hidden Identity', p. 21, my emphasis. A parallel example from hagiography (in *Medieval English Saints' Legends* ed. Sperk, pp. 48-54) is when the devil knows Juliana's name, *but* she wins (naturally the dice are loaded) because she can force him to tell her his. See also Wimberly, *Folklore*, pp. 86-9; and Pearsall, 'Madness in *Sir Orfeo*', on the usefulness of Celtic Otherworld legend as a 'common ground of unknowableness' (pp. 54-5).

¹²⁵'Blackbeard' is confident of success because he can speak 'Yevaud's true name, but 'Yevaud' wins without speaking (perhaps without knowing) 'Blackbeard's. The AC/DC of name-magic may have something to do with the ambivalent operation of *geis* (see James-Raoul, *La parole empêchée*, pp. 24-5).

¹²⁶See eg. Wimberly ('The Name-Soul' in *Folklore*); Clodd (*Magic in Names*); Cassirer ('Word Magic' in *Language and Myth*) — who cites a Chinese emperor who allowed nobody to use a first-person pronoun, so as to reserve it for himself (p. 50). Medieval name-magic is not restricted to folkloric elements in romance: names were among the symbols of power inscribed on talismans. Burnett ('Making Talismans') explains that arts of magic were studied (and practised) together with astrology, astronomy, and medicine; texts were plentiful and well known — probably even by (the more clerkly) romance-writers. See also Metlitzki, *The Matter of Araby*, p. 45.

¹²⁷Dalrymple, *Language and Piety*, pp. 32-3 (n. 82).

told from the lady's perspective (focus is displaced from the hero), it lends the romance a quality of fairy-tale — although fairy tales, except for 'Rumpelstiltskin' tales, do not usually call attention to the namelessness of their characters.

Among the few examples of total anonymity is Chaucer's 'Wife of Bath's Tale'. It does not call itself a romance, but it takes a story found in a number of romances and removes all names but that of Arthur. Off-stage names, especially the story of (named) Midas, emphasize the anonymity of the central male character. Focus is displaced from the knight and his adventure so as to emphasize the women's voices, and the story works less as romance than as exemplum: "Everyknight" must heed the moral message(s). Other short narrative genres, with or without a moral, work without names partly for the practical reason that they contain fewer characters and less complicated plots to keep track of: Marie's story of the werewolf is an example.

Several *lais* have anonymous characters, although those most closely resembling romances (because they recount a good proportion of the hero(ine)'s life story)¹²⁸ have at least the hero(ine)'s name: Lanval, Le Fresne, Guigemar, Orfeo. It is notable that all Marie's *lais* whose protagonists are anonymous are dark or tragic ones: 'Bisclavret', 'Les Deus Amanz', 'Chaitivel', and 'Laüstic'. A short romance rather resembling 'Laüstic' is *La Chastelaine de Vergi* — another tragedy in which everybody, not just the hero(ine), is nameless. The story has much in common with certain of the *lais*,¹²⁹ and yet in important respects it is unlike a *lai*. The anonymity of the heroine has less to do with magic than with the convention of keeping one's lady's name secret, in spite of the fact that nobody in the romance is named and that everybody is identified in some other way (Duke of Burgundy, his niece 'de Vergi', and his vassal who loves her) — names are at once known and occluded.¹³⁰ A feeling that we are in the world of courtly lyric, not of *faërie*, is created by the reference to the 'chançon' de Couci (291–302)¹³¹ and by the historicization of the narrative: the court is of Burgundy and not of the fabulous Arthur. Troubadours wrote songs to anonymous ladies who nevertheless existed in political reality. The romance has an exemplary quality, however, not least because of the moral at beginning and end; the naming of even one of the lovers would bring the tragedy of the couple into sharper focus and detract from what the writer is saying 'par cest example' (951–8).¹³²

Persistent total anonymity tends to pull a story away from romance and towards other genres. We cannot know just how differently a medieval audience would respond, say, to a pious tale with an anonymous protagonist (such as *Le*

¹²⁸Not all romances are biographical, but it is interesting that many of the episodic ones are about Gawain — perhaps because he does not (usually) get married.

¹²⁹ed. Whitehead, pp. xii–xix.

¹³⁰See Bloch's discussion in *Medieval Misogyny* (pp. 114–23).

¹³¹And see [Couci] ed. Delbouille, pp. xlvi–lxiii, on the historical troubadour and pilgrim Coucy. For naming as a site of secrecy and coded revelation, see Rossi, 'Carestia, Tristan, les troubadours'.

¹³²In spite of Thomas' urgent message to lovers, most of us do not think of his *Tristan* as primarily a moral tale.

Chevalier au barisel) and a pious tale with a named one, such as *Isumbras*. The most that can be said is that there is a difference: (if) one identifies with the central figures (one does so) in a different way, if they are named; anonymity makes space for the general where the personalized is superficial. However, romance reserves the right to introduce anonymous characters without comment into a more or less nameful narrative; we take it for granted that numerous romance figures are nameless for all sorts of reasons. A modern novel by Russell Hoban explores the danger of names which, like destiny, destroy their bearers. 'The stories are always waiting ... listening for names.' Orpheus and Eurydice resist telling each other their names in an effort to hide from the story.¹³³

Adventures are able to move out of a nameful space into others less well defined. Some Gawain romances are quite un-biographical, and some quite un-romantic. The first part of *The Anturs of Arther* is a sort of ghost-story in which Guinevere's (dead) mother discourses both prophetically and homiletically. *The Avowing of Arthur* is largely taken up with Baldwin's military but rather unchivalric reminiscences; in both *Le Chevalier à l'épée* and *La Mule sans frein* the hero moves out of an identifiably Arthurian space (containing named "regulars") into a world of burlesque, fabliau, even eschatological narrative — where names are predictably very sparse. A shift out of chivalric romance into another world is particularly marked in *Jehan de Saintré*; here the nameless Madame tries to escape, from the court that she has grown weary of, to her own estates (to a different sort of story) where everybody is as anonymous as she is. Her attempt fails, and she is brought back to be publicly humiliated (as discussed above). Romance is very elastic, since so much genre-hopping can take place within it.

Some anonymity is introduced with, as it were, comment — though the comment may consist of a twist in the way a story or character is presented. De La Sale claims there is no name for Madame ("and just as well, too", he says disapprovingly); Chaucer presents a Loathly Lady story with which the audience must have been familiar and in which at least one protagonist is usually named; the Squire is explicitly in quest of his name, and yet the narrative marks its absence.

Total anonymity, like name-change, is in fact rare in romance; *The Squire* is exceptional in having effectively no names and yet being unquestionably a romance. Other such texts are arguably or marginally close to other genres, but this contains pretty well all the elements of romance: love, chivalry, search for name, the marvellous (if grotesque), courtly setting, and prowess (or the report of it). It also contains the references to other romances that situate it in a very specific tradition. And yet it is one of very few where anonymity suggests neither the mysterious nor the exemplary.

¹³³ *The Medusa Frequency*, pp. 69; 118–19 (for Hoban, this story cannot be other than tragedy).

Anonymous Women

It is possible to be visible, and perhaps even to find power in visibility, without being named.¹³⁴

Much of what was said in the previous section applies in a special way to heroines; it is clear that in romance more women than men are anonymous, but that their namelessness does not prove a lack of respect on the part of writers. 'Medieval misogyny' is not the subject of the present study;¹³⁵ there are practical and poetical reasons why women need not, or must not, have names.

Most romances contain more male than female characters; therefore the latter need names less, for the purpose of keeping track of the story. This applies to minor characters in particular, many of whom can be grouped according to function: male (sometimes dwarf) and female (often fairy) messenger-figures need no names, though they may get them if they become companions or guides. Giants, on the other hand, are often enemies, and as such must be named for the same reason that chaps cut notches on canes (names of dead enemies, as well as of dead comrades, are told off in what one might call the cenotaph effect). Heralds are usually named: in a chivalric military context it is important for men to be placed, and a name places one as shorthand for, and often added to, the duke of Here or the count of There. A chronicle or historical tradition requires people (men, that is) to be named, but in fairytale or fable tradition the reverse is likely to be true.

A story needs a name, even if it has no title in the manuscript. A man may thus get a name only because the story needs one, although the woman does not: the tale of Jereslaus' wife needs him only as label for a story-monger's filing system.¹³⁶ Names or titles for romances are not, however, easy to generalize about (and editorial titles are habitually accepted without question). Marie says 'Eliduc' was called 'Guilhelüec ha Gualadun' (the two heroines, ll. 21-5), *Amadas et Ydoine* is given the title 'Ydone et Amadas' by Perot,¹³⁷ the romance of Gawain and the Bridle calls itself the 'aventure ... De la damoisele a la mure',¹³⁸ and several versions of *Jehan de Saintré* put the lady's "name" first. Bruckner points out that naming is not, by itself, a measure of importance, and it is not necessarily the main characters who get named:¹³⁹ in Marie, Guigemar's sister, but not his lover, is named; Brengin but not Tristram's 'reïne qu'il ama' (in 'Chevrefoil'). The persistent anonymity of women in the name-obsessed *L'Atre* loudens their

¹³⁴Sautman & Sheingorn, eds., *Same Sex Love and Desire Among Women in the Middle Ages*, Introduction, p. 2.

¹³⁵Bloch is among the critics who examine evidence of 'misogyny' in medieval literature, this includes the argument that the courtly worshipping of a lady is tantamount to patronizing or marginalizing her.

¹³⁶See above, p. 111.

¹³⁷See above, p. 78.

¹³⁸*La Mule sans frein*, ll. 17-18 and 1134-6.

¹³⁹'Strategies of Naming', p. 34.

power to drive the narrative, and the nameless heroine of *Lybeaus Desconus* is a perfect foil for the busy name-growing of the hero.

A number of shorter romances contain only one name. This is often the name of the hero because so many are concerned with finding, establishing, proving, or re-valuing a name. The mixture of genres in romance can affect naming-patterns, hence Saintr  s anonymous mistress, the loss of Belisaunt's name as *Amis and Amiloun* moves from courtly into exemplary, and the namelessness of Isumbras' wife: the latter is a pious romance, but if we had a "prequel" in which he wooed and won her she could quite properly be named. It would be more accurate to say that name is important for male characters, than that women and their names are not important to (male) writers.

La Manekine is a Fair Unknown, in search of something (it is others who seek her name), in a romance where almost everybody else is nameless. Female Unknowns are as likely as male ones to wonder about who they are; I have noted both Gareth's confidence and Libeaus' blithe indifference in this regard. Characters rarely interrogate their *own* names; so far I have mentioned Soredamors, Romadanaple, Silence, Jo  e — all female, and two Unknown.

The anonymous heroine not in quest is Mystery Woman for one of two reasons, and in neither case will she be "solved" the way an anonymous knight is. In the first case, the narrator is presumed to know her name but will not tell because she is a secret 'amie' and might be married to somebody else — the name must be hidden. But there are not many examples in the romances I have studied: la Dame de Fayel, la Vergi, and the Squire's lady (but everybody is anonymous here), perhaps Saintr  s mistress — until she becomes somebody else's. Malory's Elayne of Ascolat is unnamed in both *Mort Artu* and the stanzaic *Morte*, as if to protect her reputation or to hide her from the queen's jealousy.

The fairy mistress, or wife who used to be a fairy in a story's previous life, is a more common figure. Here, her name is less hidden than unknown. Even if she is secondary to the hero whose name labels the romance, her namelessness signifies mystery and power rather than inferiority. But romances containing such figures have undergone much adaptation since their presumed Celtic origins, and magic does not work straightforwardly: naming a fairy could give you power over her, or give her power over you. We must not imagine Arthurian romance as filled with rainbow-winged tiny ladies: it would seem that a figure roughly corresponding to the heroine under discussion might once have been a sorceress, healer, goddess, or wise woman. Nor can we assume a one-to-one parallel, because a single figure might become plural in transition, or vice versa. To say that a certain lady is a(nother) manifestation or split of Morgan le Fay is on the whole unhelpful.

Why are a significant number of women named at marriage? Properly this question belongs in the discussion of Delayed Naming, below, but such women are a special case. Enide is the most celebrated example, and Duggan, for one, explains that she (and also Mabonagrain's lady) is a 'remnant of the motif that a fairy should not reveal her name lest someone with knowledge of it use the name to

gain power over her'.¹⁴⁰ The idea is that once married she is no longer vulnerable. Laudine is (arguably) anonymous, but it is significant that whatever (mis)reading produced her name occurs exactly at the moment of her marriage.¹⁴¹ It could be explained that partners must give their names (as if producing birth certificates) at the ceremony, but this need not concern the audience — the family could learn the name without the narrator's telling us.¹⁴² Enide is named because she is going to take a fully human part in the action from now on; Yvain's lady does not do very much and can thus remain (as if) nameless in the fairy background.

In *Eger and Grime*, Loosepaine is named at marriage, and so is Emyas, the daughter of that Otherworld knight Gray-steele. A pair of less fairy-like girls, Havelok's foster-sisters, are named only at their marriage (2856-927). Either there is something faintly dangerous about unwed women, and naming pins them down once they are properly attached to men, or perhaps the legendary Grim was once a giant.¹⁴³ Gareth's lady is named a while before her marriage, but the scene is the same significant and central dialogue whereby the hero's true name is revealed.¹⁴⁴ It is also notable that Lyones, like Laudine, was once anonymous (a place-name), and that Loomis concludes she therefore "is" Morgain.¹⁴⁵

Fairy ladies such as Melusine and Melior,¹⁴⁶ although named, must not be seen (as seeing Florimont's nameless mistress is taboo).¹⁴⁷ To see or talk about the lady is to identify, to name, her; like Lanval's lady she will disappear. O'Sharkey, not surprisingly, identifies the latter with Morgan,¹⁴⁸ and it is possible that Chestre named *Sir Launfal's* lady (Tryamour) just so that the audience would not jump to the same conclusion. I suggest that he felt no need to name Libeaus' lady because there was already a (bad) fairy in that story — this is assuming that he wrote both romances, and that he was nervous about fairy mistresses.

Another famous lady without a name is the wife in *SGGK*: we cannot call her

¹⁴⁰*Romances of Chrétien*, pp. 307-8. He also notes that she is a fairy like Lanval's lady, whose existence (name) must be kept secret (p. 213), and suggests that the protective function of many women in romance is because of their origin as (good) fairies (p. 325).

¹⁴¹See Wilson, *The Magical Quest*, p. 63 (who also cites Hunt, that she remains mysterious), and *Chrétien*, tr. Owen, p. 517. In *Yvain and Gawain*, Alundyne is named only once: at her marriage (l. 1254).

¹⁴²Roger Middleton pointed out, in a talk on *Erec et Enide* for the Medieval French Graduate Seminar (Oxford, March 2004), that correct names had to be established when marriage was by consent alone before 1215. But this does not explain why the *woman's* naming is so strongly marked in romances.

¹⁴³Jones asserts that Grim is Woden ('Penda's Footprint?', p. 34); the Grimsby Seal shows him as gigantic (see [Havelok] ed. Skeat, frontispiece and pp. xxi-ii — where a 'strong Norse influence' is also noted).

¹⁴⁴See above pp. 31-2.

¹⁴⁵'Onomastic Riddles', p. 186.

¹⁴⁶See Müller, 'La dé-nomination dans *Méluise*'; among the 'vertues' Melior says she lost, when she was seen, is her name (*Partonope* ed. Bödtker, ll. 6045-52).

¹⁴⁷For these ambiguous women, see Westoby, 'The Role of the Fée', who points out that in later romances the knight is trying to escape from, not with, his fée. Lang's version of 'The Dragon of the North' refers playfully to the variable outcome: '... would you not rather have stayed with the pretty witch-maiden?' (p. 20).

¹⁴⁸'The Identity of the Fairy Mistress'.

Lady Bertilak any more than we could call Felice Lady Guy. Safely(!) married, and adequately identified by her position in the household and in the narrative, her anonymity nevertheless underlines the otherworldliness of both lady and lord. The shapeshifter and his wife remain morally ambiguous, despite or because of Morgan's declared motive: to test the Round Table and to frighten the Queen preferably to death. The knight in green departs, at the end, 'Whiderwarde-so-ever he wolde' as though the castle Hautdesert had never been (2477-8). The lady has all the beauty, cunning, and magical charm that we associate with the figure of Morgan, and yet we see Morgan herself (whose own naming is dramatically delayed) in her company. Not one and the same, but perhaps mistress and pupil.

We shall never know whether Sir Thopas' elf-queen had a name.

Temporary Anonymity

Names that Come and Go

Many romances contain naming-patterns that can be grouped as follows: characters given names once, at the outset, but never named again; characters not given names at the outset but whose names appear later at some dramatic moment; characters whose names disappear and return within the story for a variety of reasons. Such patterns may be found in other genres, but are typically very common in romance.

Disappearing names look like genre-markers. Why should a king, say, be given a name at his first appearance and then be called nothing but "The King" thereafter? An illusion is being created, that the king could in theory be identified and placed in historical context; once the story settles into the comparatively ahistorical space of romance the name serves no purpose and can be dropped.¹⁴⁹ A name of this type may reappear, perhaps once, to remind us that the story really is as advertised; no longer "disappearing" names they are nevertheless genre-markers, and I give examples of these as well. Disappearing names are more common than might at first appear, because they are easy to miss: being part of the context, they are not intended to be noticed as names.

Among the most straightforward examples are Earl Bragas in *Eger and Grime*, Emperor Dyaclysyon in *The Erle of Tolous*, and King Arthur in *The Avowing of Arthur* (Queen Guinevere, though introduced later and playing a smaller role, is also named only the once in this latter). The opening section of *Partonope* includes a history of the kings of France, from Troy on down, and gives the name of Partonope's mother (Lucesse) who is never named again.

In *Emaré*, the emperor is named Sir Artyus at the beginning (27, 37) and never again (nor is his wife Erayne, 34). Conceivably the name is intended to label the romance as Arthurian, but it is not a very Arthurian story; there are

¹⁴⁹Like delegates at a conference, they lose or remove their labels after the first day. The labels, which — name irrelevant — show that they belong to the conference, can be discarded once their owners have been "placed", eg. from a previous conference!

other romances containing what might be Arthurian names, but we cannot always guess why they are there.¹⁵⁰ The king in *Sir Cleges* is named Uther at the start (becoming just "The King"), but here the story-teller makes other references to the legend, including mention of the Round Table and of the Cornish lady (Ygerne); the king is named Uther one more time (433), so this romance exemplifies not the name that disappears but the name that insists we really are in Galfridian space despite appearances. The narrator of Chaucer's 'Wife of Bath's Tale' wants us to see the world of Arthur as fable, not history. Arthur's name¹⁵¹ disappears as he steps back to let his (unnamed) queen deal; he is named just once more by the 'olde wyf' as she reproaches the knight for his ungallant woe: 'Is this the lawe of kyng Arthures hous?' (1089). Evidently not, for she wins him round only by offering a carrot — that she can be fair for part of the time.

Disappearing names that signify a change of genre, or a change of mood or status, within the story include Belisaunt in *Amis and Amiloun*:¹⁵² this reverses the pattern whereby anonymous ladies are named at marriage. Silence's parents lose their names once their love-story is fulfilled.¹⁵³ Eglantyne, in *Valentine and Orson*,¹⁵⁴ reappears as Myllon dangler's wife ('Charles syster', pp. 302-3) years after her affair with Valentine. We are not told explicitly that she is the same woman, but there is no mention that Charles had any other sister. I note that loss of name, and Percyvell's mother is another example,¹⁵⁵ does not necessarily (nor usually) entail diminution in a character's importance.

In *Athelston*, Alryke's name is dropped after one mention because the archbishop, although an important figure, needs no name. Furthermore, the naming of three companions, in the early stanzas, underlines the delay in naming the wicked fourth.¹⁵⁶ The wicked brother in *Gamelyn* is named only once (57) and never again. He addresses his brother as Gamelyn frequently, but nobody (including the narrator) will address him by name. He even swears by his name-saint (366) when preparing to play one of his nastiest tricks. "The false knight", and worse, are adequate appellations for him. An interesting example of an unnecessary name is that of the Sultan, in *Generydes*. He is named Goffore (651) when he enters the story, but thereafter "The Sultan" is sufficient. Furnivall makes a mistake that illustrates how easy such names are to miss: the IPN to his edition of *Syr Generides* gives Goffare as the name of the Sultan's niece. The redactor of this version failed to name the Sultan when introducing him, but the name must have been somewhere: the lady introduces herself as 'Soudanes Nece Goffare (9111), identifying but *not* naming herself.¹⁵⁷ I notice that the Furnivall

¹⁵⁰Do the names Kay, in *Eger and Grime*, or Cananeus in *Ipomadon*, make these romances Arthurian? They must be there for a reason, but probably not for "advertising", given that each is placed well down into the body of the text.

¹⁵¹CT: III (D), 857 and 882.

¹⁵²See p. 115 above.

¹⁵³See p. 62 above.

¹⁵⁴ed. Dickson.

¹⁵⁵See p. 162 below.

¹⁵⁶See p. 144 above.

¹⁵⁷For another example of this construction, see Mannyng of Brunne, *The Chronicle* ed. Sul-

version contains fewer, than Wright's, of the devices studied in this chapter: the latter's redactor seems to have been anxious to exploit naming-conventions but was not very good at making them work.

Delayed names are also common. They are less likely to indicate a switch of mood or genre;¹⁵⁸ their placing creates stylistic effects ranging from the rhetorical flourish to the stunningly dramatic, and they can be crucial to a romance's main theme. Some writers/readers find an anonymous character more realistic, even sympathetic, than one pinned down by name. Chaucer cleverly names Aleyn and Malyne for their natures, which 'keeps them from turning suddenly into real human beings near the end of the story'.¹⁵⁹

In *Guy*, Felice's name is delayed only until the climax of a detailed description of her charms. I have discussed the special device of delaying maidens' names until their marriage; the "fairy mistress" in *Generydes* is not named until after she has conceived the hero. It is not marriage that bestows the name (though she later marries her lover and has another son), but her emergence from mysterious forest into political foreground: she becomes a queen.¹⁶⁰ The late naming of Sir Ote in *Gamelyn* is entirely appropriate. He is mentioned early in the story, where focus is on his brothers and their father, but naming him here would detract from the name-play symbolizing the power-struggle that is being set up. He remains unnoticed until his time to take part in the action (727). Ipomadon, true to his reputation as a name-hider, is called "strange lover", "best knight", "prize hunter", and so on, by the narrator before his name first appears. Merlin's magical nature is stressed by his delayed naming in the Welsh version of Geoffrey's History.¹⁶¹ 'And when they could not drain the pool, Merddin with his arts drew it off ... Annvab y llaian [the nun's son] he was called before this, but myrddin after this'. He is not named until after his first magic act. *Partonope* contains two notable naming-features in the closing tournament-section: one is the way enemies appear, are named, and then are cut down. They are in a sense valedictory, if not in any sense delayed, and they serve as a victory-list for Partonope. But two important combatants are introduced by title: the Sultan and the King of France. Their names are withheld until the parade before Melior and the judges, where they add pomp and solemnity to the scene.¹⁶² The delayed naming of Sir Antore is truly valedictory, in *The Erle of Tolous*, and provides a dramatic climax to his small but miserable story: the boy is introduced (706) and

lens: 'Sho was þe kynges douhter, Demetie' (or Dymenice), part I, l. 7913. King, not daughter, is named. Furnivall's edition (Rolls series 87) has the following rubric (to l. 8027): 'the daughter of king Dymenice'.

¹⁵⁸The delayed naming of Blaise, in Robert's *Merlin*, is part of a dramatic genre-shift.

¹⁵⁹Hinton calls this 'abstract naming' ('Two Names in *The Reeve's Tale*'); he cites Old French meanings of coupling and trickery, respectively.

¹⁶⁰ll. 225-56. Compare Silence's mother, whose name disappears once she has conceived.

¹⁶¹ed. Griscom, p. 383.

¹⁶²Margarys, whose promise to turn Christian for Melior's sake is not to be trusted, bears a name likely to mean 'renegade' (see [Roland] ed. Whitehead, IPN). Somebody guessing at name-meanings might think it suggested 'rich-oriental' (because marguerite means pearl); would an audience not knowing about renegades think in terms of jewels?

rather well characterized — even his feelings as he cowers in hiding are described — but he is not named until after the traitors have murdered him. They name him triumphantly to the Emperor (851–8), and an old knight who suspects the plot names him again, sympathetically, in his bid to save the lady's life. These are all examples of an incident, a character, or a scene which becomes more effective and memorable because the delayed naming gives it more point.

Chaucer uses the device to give extra punch to the unpleasant little story of Virginius' daughter.¹⁶³ As Cooper points out, her name is not only morally defining but also dramatically placed so that she can never be anything but 'Virginia' — a virgin until death at her own father's hands.¹⁶⁴ She is adequately identified from the start, but her identity is strongly marked by her late naming. Many examples of delayed naming which dramatically affect the story (by providing genuine suspense, or by being an integral part of the plot) have been mentioned: Maradose in *The Squire*, Gareth and several other characters in Malory, Sir Bertilak in *SGGK*, and Gawain's many companions/adversaries in *L'Atre*. The importance of delayed naming as a topic for romance is borne out by the quantity of critical writing devoted to *Li Biaus Descouneüs*, to Chrétien's Knight of the Cart, and to the anonymous boy in his Grail story. Chrétien's work was hugely influential, but he did not invent a trick that was then copied to a greater or lesser extent by other writers: Ulrich's *Lanzelet* (the hero's name is withheld until halfway through)¹⁶⁵ is among the evidence that such devices were current in stories circulating before Chrétien's time.

Disappearing names signal genre or shift-of-genre, whereas delayed names necessitate the writer's collusion with a character. Realigning him/herself within the story, the writer adopts a sort of non-omniscience — whether the name is delayed, or given and then withheld for a space. This allows for dramatic interplay of points of view, as is specially well illustrated in *Ipomadon*, and the enhancing of namelessness, disguise, or alienation. Examples are Emaré, Orfeo and Herodis, Horn, Gawain in *L'Atre*, Gareth, and (another sort of name-hiding) the masculine pronoun for Silence.¹⁶⁶

Hero(in)es spend much time in disguise of one sort or another, but there is not a corresponding number of missing or false names in the texts. The device was there to be used (or not) at will by writers, to remind an audience that a character is lost or unrecognizable, and to enhance naming-themes. As with other devices, the effects may pick out a detail, bring a scene to life, or underpin

¹⁶³The Physician's Tale: VI (C), 1–286.

¹⁶⁴*The Structure of the Canterbury Tales*, pp. 156–8. Chaucer does not take naming as a theme the way romance-writers do, but he does use naming devices for various effects, including genre-play.

¹⁶⁵ed. Loomis. If no pseudonym is given, a narrator can conceal true name only by the use of endless noun(phrase)s, which loudly stress the absent name — this is especially true in *Lanzelet*. It seems probable that elements of Celtic stories, as well as historical "fair unknowns" such as William Marshal, inspired romances of this kind.

¹⁶⁶See p. 137 above for the narrator's partial but effective collusion with Isumbras; see Kay, 'Who was Chrétien?': 'play with anonymity informs the conventions of romance-writing' (p. 32).

the meaning of a whole story; the examples chosen show that they are used across a wide range of romances and related narratives.

Fergus, whose soubriquet derives from his 'bel escu', has much in common with Fair Unknown heroes.¹⁶⁷ The writer enjoys naming-games, and it is likely that he is amusing himself at the expense of Chrétien's famous work.¹⁶⁸ One example must suffice, here: the heroine's name disappears when she does. Galïene is named quite straightforwardly at first appearance and following scenes (1533-901), but when the story returns (after some adventures) to her uncle's castle the girl has gone, name and all (2562). Distressed by Fergus' refusal of her love, she has run away, and she is not named from the moment she decided to sneak into his room that night until the moment when a prescient dwarf not only recognizes Fergus but also knows the object of his quest: 'bien sai que tu vas querant Galïene' (3743-4). Although not all the intervening text was about her, the sound of her name is startling here, given the amount of lamentation over the lost niece, pucele, amie, and so on (esp. 2546-808).

In the stanzaic *Morte Arthur*,¹⁶⁹ the queen's name is used in the text — significantly during the episode of the poisoned apple (834ff), so that her name but not his appears on the dead man's tomb — and then disappears. This is especially noticeable in the passage where Lancelot returns her to Arthur (2332-87). Once Mordred's treachery, and his true relationship to Arthur,¹⁷⁰ is revealed, she is "his uncle's wife" and "his father's wife" (2946ff). Her name returns as she takes the decision to flee and begin a new life as a nun (3566).

In *Generydes*, the wicked queen's name disappears while she plays Potiphar's wife to the hero. This is conventional behaviour for a stereotype who needs no name because she is supposed to be universal. Here the episode serves only to get Generydes out on the road to adventure (470-573); compare the thematic importance of this motif in the Seven Sages tradition, where it initiates the action, and in *Silence*, where it sets in train events leading to the dénouement.

Merlin is known as a man of disguises; in *Of Arthour and of Merlin*¹⁷¹ the narrator colludes with a good many of them. The beggar (1931, who says they would not recognize Merlin if they saw him!) is not revealed until 1958. The identity of another beggar is withheld until recognized by Ulfin (2451-70) — who also recognizes the 'eld cherl' shooting ducks (4134-74). A series of three disguises begins with a messenger (7029-62), who reappears but then vanishes, to be sought in vain (7212-46) — "not surprising", says the narrator, "Merlin had now turned into a 'garsoun' ". A boy shows up with letters purportedly from Ywain (7811-18), though he, when asked, 'wist of non' (8227-30). Then a knight leads Gawain to where his mother is in danger and then disappears (8386-472). In all these scenes Merlin's name is delayed or withheld altogether, the narrator

¹⁶⁷[Fergus] ed. Frescoln.

¹⁶⁸See eg. Owen, 'The Craft of *Fergus*'.

¹⁶⁹[Arthur] ed. Bruce.

¹⁷⁰Only after this is Gawain referred to as the king's nephew — emphasizing the falseness of Mordred's status.

¹⁷¹[Arthour] ed. Macrae-Gibson, vol I (Auchinleck text).

using a noun, and an audience cannot be sure whether the 'garsoun' is the same as the 'litel knape' six hundred lines later until Sir Do explains that 'Al þre it was on Merlin' (8565–8). The magician's mysterious comings and goings are interwoven with his military exploits in a way that adds interest and humour to the long sequences of battle and politics.

In *De Ortu Waluuanii*, the narrator tells us what the baby was christened, but the name disappears until the final scene at Arthur's court where it, together with his identity 'nepos regis Arturi', is revealed. The 'filiu adoptivo' of Viamundus is called 'puer sine nomine' even after his foster-father's meeting with the Pope — the child is not to be told who he is. Knighted, and clad in a 'tunicam purpuream', he wins a distinguished reputation ('celebre nomen') as 'Miles cum tunica armature'. Hearing the name of Arthur, he wants to go to him; on arrival he announces himself as 'Miles cum tunica armature', because that is what he thinks his name is ('sortitum vocabulum').¹⁷² This romance contrasts with the *Enfances Gauvain*:¹⁷³ here too the name is given at baptism and then withheld until, very probably, the end (missing in this version). But the 'vallet' is not named 'sine nomine', and it is stated that he 'ne sot mie encor son non'. Part of the fun of reading *De Ortu* is the fact that everybody, thanks to the letter, knows who he is except himself, and he does not consider himself nameless; they are determined to keep from him, until the last possible moment, that he is not who he knows himself to be. The effect would be spoilt if the narrator called him Gawain throughout.

The author of *Guillaume d'Angleterre* colludes almost completely with the heroes' concealment of their names. This is typical of, or surprisingly like, Chrétien — depending on whether it was he who wrote it or not.¹⁷⁴ Guillaume and Gratiene are named at the start; they then become the king and queen (or lady), except when the court discovers that king Guillaume has gone (421). When he takes a false name, the narrator calls him 'Gui' as well as 'li rois' (991–1013). So as not to lie, he uses the first part of his real name. It is curious that Guiolaÿs, who courts Gratiene, also has a name beginning 'Gui'. The queen is named only once, after the beginning of the story, and that is when she marries Guiolaÿs; she is 'dame' until the reunion at the end when 'la roïne' is found. Guillaume is named, again indirectly, by those who notice how like the king the 'marceant' is (2128–33), otherwise he is named in this episode to distinguish him from 'li rois' who is his nephew and also to signal just how close he comes to being unmasked here — he has to restate his alias quite forcefully (2050–264). Even at the end, the king and queen do not regain their names; this may be because of the quasi-exemplary nature of the romance. Its analogues include *Sir Isumbras*, and yet there has been no sin to expiate and no wrong to redress. One of its themes is, however, the disparity ('intolérable au xii^e siècle') between appearance

¹⁷²[Gawain] ed. & tr. Day (pp. 120–3).

¹⁷³[Gauvain] ed. Meyer.

¹⁷⁴In *Œuvres*, pp. 955–1036. See also Kay, 'Who was Chrétien?': her discussion of authors' name-play incidentally foregrounds much intra-textual play with characters' names.

and reality; having explored this by testing the heroes it can return them to the status quo ante.¹⁷⁵

A last example of collusion is found in the *Mabinogion*: Pwyll Prince of Dyfed changes places with Arawn for a year, and the impersonation is stressed by the narrator's referring to him as 'the man who was in Arawn's stead' — his name reappears when the two men reassume their proper form and semblance.¹⁷⁶ Whatever the role played by Celtic material as source for romance, or vice versa, it is notable that certain naming-devices are common to both.

Love-Madness

'And therefore,' seyde sir Dagonet, 'beware, kynge Marke, that thou com nat aboute that well in the foreyste, for there ys a foole naked. And that foole and I, foole, mette togydir, and he had allmoste slayne me.'¹⁷⁷

A moment of revelation may entail a loss of identity.¹⁷⁸ It has been seen that narrators' collusion with characters who hide or lose their names is by no means standard. Such collusion is a powerful tool for de-familiarization, and not using it allows an audience to feel comfortably in on the secret. It could be used to signal alienation in the case of madness; there are numerous episodes of (love)madness in the romances, and here I examine how far such madness is linked to loss of name.

Madness as loss of self, in literature, is illustrated by Nebuchadnezzar; he loses not his name but his wits, as is apparent after the episode: 'In ipso tempore sensus meus reversus est ad me' (Dan. IV: 33). Merlin's case is similar, in that he says afterwards he had lost all self-awareness, but he does not lose his name in the text.¹⁷⁹ Unlike Nebuchadnezzar, Merlin goes mad for grief at the death of companions in battle; Percyvell's mother goes mad also for grief, at the loss of her son: her madness is associated with loss of name because the only time she is named after the beginning of the romance is when Arthur remembers how she took her son to the woods. Her madness, when shown her son's ring, is also narrated in flashback. When she recovers, 'Then scho was in hir awen [state]' suggests that she had lost awareness of who she was, but she does not regain her name.¹⁸⁰ In each case, there is a strong retrospective indication that the character had lost him/herself.

¹⁷⁵See Notice, esp. pp. 1410 and 1429-30.

¹⁷⁶tr. Jones & Jones, pp. 4-6. The men sleep chastely with each other's ladies (a romance motif).

¹⁷⁷Malory, *Works*, 498:24-7.

¹⁷⁸Hopkins, *The Sinful Knights*, p. 21.

¹⁷⁹'The Life of Merlin' in ed. Barber. I do not discuss Merlin's, or anybody else's, *feigned* madness.

¹⁸⁰ll. 2149 to end. Her continuing anonymity, after being reunited with her son, supports my notion that Percyvell in some sense keeps his "wild side".

The romance heroes I examine do not lose their names.¹⁸¹ Amadas, Orfeo, Tristram, Lancelot, Partonope, and Ywain: each is named steadily (in the narration), although each undergoes an alteration of appearance or consciousness (in the story) that could be, but notably is not, signalled by a loss of name from the page. The heroes do not go anonymous, but in several cases the episode of madness is *followed* by an episode that stresses re-naming in one of several ways.

Amadas does not lose his name entirely during his madness — he is called Amadas as well as 'le fol'. But Ydoine's healing charm uses his name as well as her own, and at the tournament following his recovery he is hailed as 'Amadas ... sans gas' — which confirms a name once given in jest.¹⁸²

Orfeo and his wife both lose their names while they are separated; seeing her heals his madness,¹⁸³ but he actually regains the name of king (ie. his former status) by means of a disguise.¹⁸⁴ In beggar's clothes, he looks like the madman he was; his name reappears, after another spell of anonymity, in the steward's declaration of loyalty and the consequent recognition-scene.

The famous folie of Tristan is usually feigned,¹⁸⁵ but in Malory, he canters off into the forest and goes really mad because he thinks Isode loves Sir Keyhydyus. Herdsmen and shepherds are responsible for disguise here: 'they clypped hym with sherys and made hym lyke a foole' (496:23-4).¹⁸⁶ Tristram's name does not disappear from the text, but when the sick man is brought 'to hys remembraunce' nobody recognizes him until the little dog 'felte a savoure of sir Trystram' (501:33-4). There follows a short passage in which his name is declared four times: by Brangwayne, Isode, Andred, and finally by Tristram himself to a disbelieving Mark. In the following episodes he goes incognito: there is much ado about rescuing the Cornish shield from the name of cowardice, until Lancelot himself takes to bearing one; in the next section Tristram wins renown (equal almost to Lancelot's) as the Knight with the Black Shield at the Castle of Maidens.

Malory's Lancelot goes mad after Guinevere, discovering his affaire with Elaine, drives him angrily out of her sight (805:26-9). His long sickness ('in hys wytte they cowde nat brynge hym [ageyn], nother to know hymself' — 819:27-8) can be healed only by the Grail (824:18-27); the narrator uses his name throughout. However, on his recovery he immediately takes a pseudonym, in consciousness of his shame and exile: Le Shyvalere Ill Mafeete. He defends this name (826:18-832:29), reveals himself reluctantly to Percyvale, and is at last persuaded to return to court when reassured that the queen really does want him

¹⁸¹ An exception is Florimont, examined above.

¹⁸² See 'Amadas et Ydoine', above, for full references.

¹⁸³ There are critics who very reasonably deny Orfeo's madness, because he takes flight into the wilderness voluntarily (Spearing, 'Madness and Gender', p. 264). It was a calculated decision (Pearsall, 'Madness in *Sir Orfeo*', p. 56) to abandon his kingdom, but he does not set out with the initial intention of rescuing his wife. He goes because there is nothing else for him to do; this despair is close enough to madness for the purpose of my discussion.

¹⁸⁴ To regain Herodis, he pretended to be a poor minstrel.

¹⁸⁵ See eg. [Folie Tristan] ed. Short: 'feindre mei fol e faire folie' (181).

¹⁸⁶ Vinaver admires the episode, added to stress the similarities between the hero and Lancelot; see p. 1445, and Cooper, 'The Book of *Sir Tristram de Lyones*', p. 193.

back. As before, the writer hangs onto the name while the hero is out of his wits, but as soon as the danger is past some device comes into play that un-names and re-names or otherwise confirms the name of the hero.

Partonope's journey in search of death is not called madness but looks very like it. He laments his shame and that 'Off trowþe for euer ys loste my name.'¹⁸⁷ Like other mad lovers, he keeps his name throughout the rather long episode. He will not eat, nor speak to anybody except the boy who is to help him travel into the forest (whom he abandons en route). But the wild beasts will not touch him, and at last he is found by a nameless maiden whose attention was attracted by the neighing of his horse. The recognition-scene which follows is quite elaborate (7275–399): at first he implores her to go away and let him die, and when pressed he says:

But sith ye list to knowe my name ...
 I shall now tell you as it is:
 A false *traytour* is my name ywisse.
 That I be called So is grete skille.
 Ye mow go walke when ye will,
 And I neuer þe wiser of your name.

He does not wish to know who she is, but she is determined to tell him. It is Wrake, Melior's sister, and as soon as he has recognized her (they had met before) she knows he is Partonope. Here, the anonymity and forceful self-naming of the lady add dramatic power to the finding and recognition of Partonope and the start of his recovery. Later, he wins Melior by fighting for her hand effectively in disguise; because Wrake has told her he is dead (forcing her to admit that she loves him) she has no idea who the champion with silver shield is until Wrake relents and tells all, towards the end of the action. But the naming-scene in the forest is a main turning-point of the story.

Probably the most celebrated of the heroes who go mad for love is Ywain (in *Ywain and Gawain*).¹⁸⁸ As with the others, his name does not disappear (he is named six times before he is found by the women with the healing ointment, 1650–1711). But once himself again he meets nobody who would recognize him until after he has acquired his lion. A significant naming-exchange takes place through the wall of a chapel where 'ane' is imprisoned (2103ff): when she asks who he is, he replies simply 'A man' — who used to be a noble knight. He reveals himself only after she has named the knight she wants, and for whose sake she is in trouble. It is Lunet, the only person who will know who he is (he swears her to secrecy, 2195–7) until the crucial fight with Gawain and even after it — when his new name is the means by which Lunet tricks the lady into reconciliation with her husband. Whatever symbolic significance the lion may have,¹⁸⁹ he is crucial to the re-naming of the hero.

¹⁸⁷ed. Bödtker, ll. 6094–101. Whether he means he has lost his name in truth or for truth hardly matters here.

¹⁸⁸Chrétien's Yvain is named during his madness likewise (see *Œuvres*, pp. 406ff).

¹⁸⁹See Mills' Introduction, p. xv; Hunt, 'Yvain'; Finlayson, 'The Meaning of Adventure'.

For once I have focused on a kind of un-naming that is more discursive and less signalled by the absence of proper nouns with capital letters. Having decided to examine the topos of love-madness, to see whether the narrator colludes by removing the name together with the hero's wits, I was struck by the fact that the name disappears in none of the above cases, and by the fact that there is a good deal of business *after* the madness and *about* naming (recognition, disguise, identity, or self-awareness) in all of them.

Off-Stage Names

Intertextual

The text is a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centres of culture.¹⁹⁰

Names as intertextual references point outside whatever romance we are in, sometimes outside whatever 'matere' or type of romance we are in, and sometimes outside romance altogether. Names of/from other texts, in the text before us, either in the narration or in characters' speech, have a significant effect: demanding recognition by an audience, they set a scene, a mood, an expectation.¹⁹¹ I use the adjective "off-stage", although in one sense such names appear on stage like images on a backcloth. In another sense, inserting a name from a different tradition may actually try to wrench the story away from its expected direction. I focus mainly on non-actants, though the distinction between these and background figures (those in the story's own past, for example) is not always easy to draw,¹⁹² and the latter tend to overlap with "disappearing" names discussed in the previous section.

To say that a hero is as brave as Roland does not, by itself, turn his story into a Charlemagne romance, but it does make us read him differently from how we would read were he described as brave as Guy — providing, that is, we know who Roland and Guy are. A reference to Midas would nowadays make most of us think of gold; the Wife of Bath makes sure we know about the asses' ears. The presence of Arthur in her Tale is not necessary to make it "Arthurian",¹⁹³ but the treatment of Midas, and references to Dante and ancient authors, pull the story away from romance and towards the exemplary — problematizing it in the

¹⁹⁰Barthes, 'The Death of the Author', p. 146.

¹⁹¹Here 'reference' (where the item tells about the world) is less important than 'sense', or the set of relations the item enters into.

¹⁹²Sometimes the "background" author-figure claims attention by naming him/herself; such names are like those of other writers added to "authorize" a text.

¹⁹³At least, not to modern readers. It is likely that Chaucer's (perhaps also Gower's) audience perceived the story as Arthurian — which gives point to his manipulation of it. Gower, on the other hand, tries to remove his version from the Arthurian by "re"-naming characters; the king becomes an anonymous emperor, named Claudius in the Latin rubric ('Tale of Florent', *CA* I:1407–861).

process.¹⁹⁴ Does the name Arthur, in one manuscript of Marie's 'Guigemar',¹⁹⁵ mean that the story is moving towards (or away from) the Arthurian? Even though Hoilas is arguably Hoel, Arthur's nephew, Marie seems as much concerned with teaching lovers a lesson (esp. 234–43, where Venus throws Ovid into the fire) as with writing chivalric fantasy; the king disappears after dubbing the young knight (47), and the lovers are not shown returning to court at the end. Hamel argues that the wounded Ewayne fytz Henry, in the alliterative *Morte*, is not a mistake for the well-known fitz Urien, Arthur's kinsman; the writer has introduced a 'deliberately anonymous' character — the only casualty on 'our' side is not a man of name.¹⁹⁶ It is doubtful whether *Sir Cleges* would be included in a modern collection of romances were it not that the king is identified (rather incongruously) as Uther and given a strong role in the foreground. The writer is taking no chances, and as a result French and Hale actually call this 'fabliau ... and exemplum' a 'romance'.¹⁹⁷ The little romance, or quest-story, in Andreas¹⁹⁸ centres on the court of Arthur, but without Arthur's name it could be the court of Anywhere — nobody else is named. One could amuse oneself endlessly, rewriting non-Arthurian romances by putting in Arthurian names (and vice versa) to see how they would work.¹⁹⁹

Off-stage names employed to define a romance by association are amply demonstrated in Chaucer's 'Sir Thopas'. Not only does the narrator tell us (as if we didn't know) what sort of romance we are supposed to be in, he also points at the romance-writers' habit of citing generically similar heroes in order to enhance their own.²⁰⁰ The numerous off-stage names in *Amadas et Ydoine* are a mixed bag, including personifications, and function rather differently; they mostly manipulate the characters, or are invoked by them. The cumulative effect is to emphasize the scarcity of names in the story proper, and indirectly to underline the power of Name as a main theme of the romance. Amadas and Ydoine are, in turn, invoked by other writers. Gower's reasons for sparing them 'the anonymity which obscures the remainder of Amans' copious reading of romances' are discussed by Meecham-Jones, who supports my view that Gower (like many other medieval writers) has 'faith in the power of names to embody meaning as exemplary signifiers'.²⁰¹ The couple are among those portrayed on Emaré's beautiful cloth, which not only causes her story (by its effect on beholders) but also opens up the horizons of her world in four directions: Burgundian (Ydoine and Amadas), Celtic (Tristram and Isowde), Oriental (Floris and Blawncheflour), and historical

¹⁹⁴In the 'Nun's Priest's Tale', the narrator swears his story is as true as the book of Launcelot, 'That wommen holde in ful greet reverence'. Given the weighty authorities quoted by the cock this reference is likely to be ironic in that it further undercuts the latter's pompous absurdities (*CT* VII:3210–13).

¹⁹⁵Ewert's note to l. 27.

¹⁹⁶[Arthure] ed. Hamel, l. 1558 and note. He is *given* a name to make him anonymous.

¹⁹⁷*Middle English Metrical Romances*, p. 877.

¹⁹⁸*The Art of Courtly Love* tr. Parry, pp. 177–86.

¹⁹⁹The idea is inspired by Pope, *Textual Intervention*.

²⁰⁰See eg. *Riverside*, pp. 922–3, for how the chosen names are significant.

²⁰¹'Questioning Romance', pp. 38; 37.

(the maker of the cloth and her lover). The fourth story is no sketchier than the other three (which are less narrated than stated): it is the ghost of a story in which the 'amerayles' daughter loves the son of a sultan but loses him, we would guess, in the war with Tergaunte's father (172-4). The seamless extension of the fabulous into the factual is quite startling, as though Emaré herself were able to travel about in either.

Many narratives begin with an announcement of what the story is (not) going to be: Tristram's 'fable' is grouped with Galeron's and Renard's, as well as those of Ovid — all of which Chardri piously repudiates at the beginning of his *Set Dormanz*.²⁰² This nicely complements the fact that some versions of the story of Renard and Hersent (the adulterous fox and she-wolf in the *Roman de Renart*) contain allusions to that of Tristan and Yseult — a dig at the conventions of 'courtly love'.²⁰³ In *La Chastelaine de Vergi* the only names are intertextual: de Coucy (quasi-historical) and Tristran and Yseut. In spite of its affinities to folk-tale, there is nothing Otherworldly about this tragedy of misunderstanding,²⁰⁴ nor anything marvellous about (for example) the little dog as messenger: you or I could train one to perform such a simple trick. But unpacking the reference to the old romance yields a few suggestions. In the lady's complaint it could be ironic: 'Je cuidoe que *plus* loiaus / me fussiez ... que ne fust Tristans' (758-60, my emphasis). This may mean "even more loyal", or simply "more loyal" because she knows that Tristan married another woman. Further, it may hint that the lady herself is married — because Yseut is — thus giving more point to her need for secrecy.²⁰⁵ Most of all, it ennobles the story by aligning the lovers with a pair whose tragedy long ago was always fated, and it aligns the story with romance.

References to pictorial decorations, sometimes with named figures, have a specific point: they are 'applications of the rhetorical colour *descriptio*'.²⁰⁶ They allow a writer to insert scenes (or faces) from other stories which will comment on the text they illustrate (as does Emaré's cloth). In *Kyng Alisaunder*²⁰⁷ the lady leads him into a chamber wherein 'Of Troye was ... al þe story, Hou Gregeis hadden þe victory' (211-12): a compliment to Alexander and an echo of the song she was singing, of Dido and Eneas, earlier that day (173-5). Next, she shows him the 'ymage' she had had made of him, thanks to which she can see straight through his disguise (193-204, 233-40). The list of other men caught by women's wiles comes strangely but effectively from her own lips (255-72: "Relax! You're not the first!") but of course the idyll must end with his leaving her (luckily there is no suggestion that she took Dido's way out). Lists of men and their female beguilers are a common feature of anti-feminine discourse, which cannot always be taken "straight": here (as in *L'Atre*) they are quoted by a woman and hence subverted.

²⁰²ed. Merrilees, ll. 51-64. He is going to tell 'verité'.

²⁰³See Gerritsen & van Melle, eds., *DMH*, p. 215.

²⁰⁴ed. Whitehead, pp. xviii-xix.

²⁰⁵References to the husband, if any, are well hidden (*ibid.*, p. xxxviii; though it is stated, p. xxxiv, that there is no husband).

²⁰⁶*Early Middle English Verse and Prose* ed. Bennett & Smithers, pp. 281-2.

²⁰⁷*Ibid.* pp. 28-39. The extract relates the Candace episode.

In *Amadas et Ydoine*, and in *SGGK* (2407–28), they are problematized because spoken by otherwise sympathetic male characters. The background to the former text has a classical/mythological quality (personifications, fates, proverbial women), to the latter a chronicle/legendary quality because of the opening and closing references to ‘Brutus bokes’; anti-women clichés are found patched into all sorts of narratives and genres. The list of names varies, however (*Amadas* includes women usually labelled “good”), and a name detached from the typical list may fulfil a different function. In *La Manekine*, where the scarcity of named characters throws emphasis on anonymity and on off-stage names, Helen is cited as a woman who is not to blame for men’s wickedness.²⁰⁸ A proverbial list of another sort comes to mind here: in the alliterative *Morte* the king dreams of eight nameless Worthies. The philosopher names them in his interpretation (Arthur is the Ninth); this creates a feeling of certainty, as the figures come to life, that the dream will come true.²⁰⁹

The wisest of the Seven Sages appears on stage in *Generydes* (65–203), companion to the nameless maiden who is to be the hero’s mother. His function is to utter some prophecies (a hermit would have served just as well); there is a short embedded narrative explaining how he got out of one romance and into another, but he does not figure in the story after this episode. This mysterious old man (the romance’s only intertextual reference) adds to the charm and glamour of these early scenes, although the hero’s fairy origins are forgotten rather than exploited later. Some interesting off-stage names appear in romances whose writers seem also to be fascinated by other aspects of naming. References to the knight who can be none but Perceval, in *L’Atre*, is a clever intertextual gag which nods to the audience’s sophistication, or “savoir-lire”, as well as commenting on the major concern of a romance filled with anonymous knights: just how unknown can a knight be and still be known?²¹⁰ The references to Guy and Libeaus in *The Squire* mirror its two main concerns: that a man may become a successful hero even though not born into the highest nobility, and that a nameless man may achieve everything — even name — without a name.²¹¹ Libeaus himself becomes known under the name “Unknown”; knights on stage early in his romance become off-stage names later. This mirrors the way the nameless boy moves away from his father and makes an independent name for himself.²¹²

Our feeling of emptiness, even disappointment, when we come across a name we have never heard of (and cannot look up)²¹³ is a measure of the importance of off-stage names, and the colour and depth they give. We cannot know quite what stories a medieval audience would have attached to names such as Alexander,

²⁰⁸ed. & tr. Sargent-Baur, ll. 392–410.

²⁰⁹[Arthure] ed. Hamel, ll. 3218–455. First-person narration, by the dreamer, is actually quite common. Here it makes the figures nameless because Arthur does not know who they are.

²¹⁰See p. 92 above.

²¹¹See p. 80 above.

²¹²See p. 18 above.

²¹³In *Fergus*, Wasselin remains unidentified (l. 5219 and p. 280); fragments and vague memories are all that remain of Wade.

Roland, and the like — but we think we know, and that is a passable substitute. Here it is more than ever true that the listener tells the story.²¹⁴

Saints and Other Superhumans

A name is a convenient shorthand for recalling a whole narrative, which is thus embedded in the actual narrative and sets up resonances for those familiar with it. The fact that medieval audiences were more likely than we are to be familiar with off-stage names in any text, causes problems when it comes to saints' names. First, the sheer volume of hagiographic material, compared with romance, makes it hard to guess which story an audience would connect with any given saint (not to mention stories now lost), and there is more than one saint for some names. The field is narrowed but not simplified by the fact that saints' names sometimes do no more than supply a rhyme, fill up a metre, or add pious tone to a discourse.

As well as by the title 'Saint' (usually present), the names stand out because they overlap very little with those of romance characters: in modern narrative, characters are likely to have names like yours and mine (Margaret, Thomas, Bridget, David), which are also saints' names.²¹⁵ There are not many heroes called Sir Denis or Sir Julian riding around, nor are there many saints Guy or Lancelot.²¹⁶ Names like John, Valentine, and Helena (Elaine) are less usual; an effective irony is created by the *Gamelyn*-poet when the wicked brother swears by his own saint.²¹⁷ Saints' names also have an expletive function: they are used as exclamations, prayer/swear words, invocations, rather than as narrative "seeds" signalling an inset story.

Although many could be dismissed as expletives or line-fillers, the importance of saints in medieval culture (in common parlance as well as in "texts") ought not to be underestimated.²¹⁸ A competent poet could add a name or adjust a verse to include meaning as well as rhyme. Two different, but not mutually exclusive, conclusions present themselves: that sophisticated writers such as Chaucer and the *Gawain*-poet exploited the convention of invoking saints in order to add extra meaning to their works;²¹⁹ also that the convention of invoking saints, in many romances, may have included more intentionality than we expect. Dalrymple shows that pious tags or formulae 'are employed in the romances ... to bring

²¹⁴ 'It is a law of the story-teller's art that he does not tell a story. It is the listener who tells it. The story-teller does but provide him with the stimuli.' Post, *The Doomedorf Mystery*, p. 411.

²¹⁵ For trends of naming children after saints during the medieval period, see eg. Bartlett, *The Making of Europe*, 'Saints and Names', pp. 270–80.

²¹⁶ A Saint Guy was martyred in 303; Saint Lancelot features in *Jehan de Saintré* (battle-cry of the King of Hungary).

²¹⁷ A similar reinforcement is used in the stanzaic *Morte*, when Mordred swears by Judas ([Arthur] ed. Bruce, l. 3250); this is the only invocation containing a name other than those of God's family (Mary is commonly linked with names of God in pious formulae).

²¹⁸ Witness the mass of surviving material, and see esp. Gurevich (*Medieval popular culture*, ch. 2), who also stresses the local importance of many saints.

²¹⁹ For example, St John is part of a coded reference to John of Gaunt in Chaucer's *Book of the Duchess* (ll. 1318–19); in *SGGK* see Burrow's notes to ll. 774, 813, 1644, 1788.

nuance to narrative context, to influence tone and to foreground theme.²²⁰ This is likely to be true also of saints' names: "By Him who died on the Cross" is very similar in function to "By Saint Thomas of Inde". But a full study of the subject would entail difficulties rather different from those tackled by Dalrymple,²²¹ who looks at formulae referring to a body of universally-known biblical narrative: the Creation, the story of Jesus, and so on. The two examples I have just adduced are typical in that the first gives a part of the story of Jesus, the second gives no story at all (unless we know what became of Doubting Thomas): it refers to a Saint Thomas who was in or of India. We must go and find, if we can, the story for ourselves.

A closer look at St Giles, who features in *SGGK*, reveals that he was crippled while sheltering his hind from a hunting king, and there is a legend of an emperor seeking his absolution for a sin he dared not confess. His churches are often found at road junctions (or just outside city gates), he is patron of at least two famous fairs, and of blacksmiths.²²² Who knows what other spheres of influence or significance he and other saints may once have had? Like media stars today, saints were at once real and glamorous, role-models,²²³ and source of endless popular stories.

The use of saints' names as asseverations, in characters' speech, colours their dialogue to contrast with surrounding narrative; in *Lybeaus Desconus*, whose narrator produces relatively few names overall, this adds to the impression that the poet is giving the story to the characters to write. Saint's name underlines theme in *The Romance of Horn*, when the hero swears by St Martin as he proposes to swap his robes for the palmer's no doubt tattered 'esclavine' — the saint is famous for being generous with clothes.²²⁴ The plot of *Havelok* is pretty well sewn together by oaths, promises, and guarantees; these are mostly "on the book". There are seven invocations to named saints: five comparatively content-less, two serious oaths. Goldeboru swears, by St John, that none shall wed her but a king (1109–16); this is echoed by Godrich's oath, by St John, that he will punish any who hesitate to follow him (2561–9). Each helps to characterize the speaker (one good, one bad), and underlines the theme of oaths made and broken, renewed and renarrated, throughout the romance. The names, like small bright pictures, enhance the verbal patterning remarked by Spearing.²²⁵ Smithers comments that the naming of minor characters much enlivens the story, and notes the local reference to St David: Lincoln had Welsh connections.²²⁶

²²⁰ *Language and Piety*, p. ix.

²²¹ Our areas of interest overlap when it comes to passages such as that in *Havelok* where the narrator begs Christ to free the heroine as he freed Lazarus (see 'Religious Formulae', pp. 254–5).

²²² Farmer, *ODS*. Hunting and confession are among the romance's themes.

²²³ Seeking martyrdom, by attempting to convert Muslims, was actually discouraged by the Church (Daniel, *Heroes and Saracens*, p. 11).

²²⁴ ed. Pope, ll. 3965–77.

²²⁵ 'Early medieval narrative style', p. 43.

²²⁶ *Havelok*, Introduction (lvi–lxiv), and note to l. 2868.

In *Fergus*, the use of St Mungo's name may not help scholars decide where, when, or for whom the romance was written,²²⁷ but it works effectively to localize the hero. An unlikely-looking rustic, his name is delayed until his arrival at court (738); he and his mother are the only characters to swear by 'Saint Mangon', patron of Glasgow (486, 823, 845). Note that the royal hunt strayed far from home, through many regions and forests, before achieving the stag and camping overnight. The choice of saint reveals that Soumillet's family (however rich the father or noble the mother) are "foreigners"; later in the romance Fergus swears by more conventional saints (eg. St Nicholas, 5877-81), as other knights do. The invocation of St Anne, in *Athelston*,²²⁸ may be another localizing touch in a romance which stresses the importance of travel in identifiable space and, indeed, of St Edmund of East Anglia.

In *The Avowing of Arthur*, the king prays to St Margaret before attacking the boar. The editors suggest she is Margaret of Scotland (l. 211 and note), but she is just as likely to be Margaret of Antioch. As well as the latter's power to help women in childbirth (related to her power to burst dragons from the inside), she can be invoked by those facing death and will save them from devils;²²⁹ the boar is twice referred to as 'satanas' or devil (120, 228). Also in this romance, Kay's damsel prays very properly to Mary to save her maidenhead (277-84).

The identification of saints by their known attributes or spheres of influence is bound to be a guessing-game, since we cannot know how they were used in common parlance. In *SGGK* the porter at Hautdesert swears aptly by (St) Peter, who keeps the gate of Heaven.²³⁰ In *The Seven Sages of Rome* the wife, in 'Tentamina', seems to be addressing her husband as 'Petur'.²³¹ In 'Avis', however, another wicked wife (both tales are against women) says 'Petur' to her lover (1514). The Wife of Bath also does it;²³² perhaps (fictional) wicked women have a habit of swearing by St Peter when they want to sound convincing.

In *La Mule sans frein* the editors have hunted up two saints Marcel in an effort to identify the giant with which the 'vilains' is compared. But neither seems to have been regarded as of unusual stature.²³³ This exemplifies our quandary: we shall never know whether one of the two was in fact as described, whether there was a third and gigantic Marcel, or whether he is there only to rhyme with 'vilains fel'.

Interpreting the use, for invocations, of other religious figures is an equally slippery business. As Tinkle points out,²³⁴ there are at least half a dozen in-

²²⁷ed. Frescoln, Introduction, pp. 8-16.

²²⁸ed. Trounce, note to l. 669.

²²⁹See Farmer, *ODS*.

²³⁰Peter and Mary ("Marry ...!") are among the few saints sometimes invoked without honorific.

²³¹ed. Brunner, ms F (appendix), ll. 757, 870.

²³²*CT*, III (D), 446; she is tormenting one of her husbands. The next saint she swears by is Joce, patron of pilgrims! See also the wife in 'Shipman's Tale': VII (B²), 214/*1404.

²³³Note to l. 510. (They had better luck with Pantaleon: note to l. 666).

²³⁴'Saturn of the Several Faces'.

terpretations of Saturn in Chaucer's 'Knight's Tale', one can get nothing like enough information from a Classical Dictionary,²³⁵ and in any case the medieval author may be making some of it up. When a named god has well-known attributes, s/he may appear in a group of allegorical figures, for example Venus (as Love) with Fortune, Nature, and so on. The study of allegory in medieval poetry is complicated by the fact that a listening audience cannot hear whether an abstract noun (cowardice, friendship) is a personification (Cowardice, Friendship) or not.²³⁶ However, the use of such figures, whether they appear in propria persona or via citation, effectively colours a narrative by suggesting superhuman forces at work, and by adding an extra dimension to — perhaps emphasizing the anonymity of — on-stage figures. The fun really begins when allegorical figures appear with, and even cite, historical or legendary ones. Examples are Alexander, Arthur, Kay, and Gawain (with Largesse, Fraunchise, and the like) in Chaucer's *Romaunt of the Rose*.²³⁷ In the twelfth-century *Architrenius*, Gawain heads the army against Avarice and delivers a long sermon (which includes Galfridian history) at the Hill of Presumption. 'Gawain and [his qualities] ... exist on their own plane, at an uncertain remove from the main action'.²³⁸ Extremely famous figures become types or ideals (religious or not): citing Helen or Judas, for example, no longer invokes any story but an abstract noun or attribute.

Finally, there are the so-called pagan gods worshipped by Saracens. I give a few examples of the way religious names are used in romances where pagan and Christian values are supposed to be in conflict. The happy ending of *Floriz and Blancheflour* contains a nice touch: the Amiral (of Babylon, naturally) takes the lovers to a church to marry them — what is more, he swears by God at the moment when he relents towards them (1036–65). In the Anglo-Norman *Alexander* names such as Amon, the Fates, Marcolon, Mercurie, and Tervagant are scattered about, but the heroes on "our" side have a proleptic tendency to invoke a Christian god. This adds to the pious tone of the romance, as the editors note.²³⁹ But the poet creates an impression of avoiding anachronism by citing no religious names later in time than Jesus' life: there are Old Testament figures, then Mary and Herod. George and Jerome are place-name (Braz Seint Jorge) and writer respectively — neither is invoked as a saint; other figures intervening before Thomas himself (Orosius and Josephus) are likewise historians.

The writer of *The Sege of Melayne* handles religious figures with remarkable boldness; the poem is full of fighting talk as well as action (and image-burning), with shouts, oaths, prayers, and the like. Calling down curses in the name of God (169–74, 602–4, 680–97) is not unusual, but it is nevertheless strong language;

²³⁵ Which in any case is compiled for moderns, not for medieval(ist)s; one would need also to be well versed in astrology.

²³⁶ See Burrow, *Medieval Writers*, pp. 96–7.

²³⁷ A 1149–52, 1197–212, 1246–50 and note; B 2206–12. The figures' appearance in allegorical space alters our perception of their reality.

²³⁸ ed. & tr. Wetherbee, p. xiv. I am grateful to Clive Brooks for showing me this bizarre irruption into Architrenius' allegorical journey. See also *Gawain on Marriage* ed. & tr. Rigg.

²³⁹ [Alexander] ed. Foster & Short, vol. II, pp. 60; 64–6; and see IPN.

Turpin's furious reproaches to Mary after a defeat are more startling (542–65). It is battle-language ('flete' is the same verb as 'flyting') and recalls the violence done to their idols by defeated pagans, as the editor points out. But it also recalls the 'lowering' and 'humiliation' practised by believers both clerical and lay upon saints whose performance was deemed not up to scratch.²⁴⁰ Possibly the most dangerous language in the poem is the designation 'saint' for Mahownn (395, 1254).²⁴¹ It is spoken by the sultan, then by victors once a battle is safely over; even so, it is very close to the edge, and the poet gets away with it by enthusiastic use of the possessive "our" for the Christian side. This may be an effort to naturalize a foreign mode of poetry for a new audience;²⁴² it also ensures we know the poet's heart is in the right place, and adds to the vigour and vividness of the story.

Everybody knows that you get more out of a book, film, or play if you are familiar with at least some of the many "texts" that lie behind it (though you can enjoy, say, *Alice* without knowing anything about maths or logic) — whether it is a full-blown reinterpretation of an old theme (Python's *Holy Grail*, Joyce's *Ulysses*) or simply a few references that not everybody, you think, is clever enough to pick up. The well-"read" medieval audience — literate in vernacular culture — was familiar with a vast store of biblical, exemplary, hagiographic, legendary, and romance material: intertextual play for writer and audience alike.

Other Non-Humans

Proper names affect the tone of a narrative. Place-names may interact with personal names and/or anonymity; some animals are named, and so are some objects. I am not concerned with place-names in any geographical sense (even allowing for medieval romance's peculiar sense of space): they sketch geographical space, and are unaware of one another; personal names sketch historical (narrative) space and react to one another. However, place-names may (try to) become attached to anonymous people as though the text, here, abhorred a vacuum.²⁴³ Examples are Lyones in 'Gareth', Laudine in *Le Chevalier au Lion*, and the lady of Synadoun in *Lybeaus*. The first may once have been the lady of Lyones, as the second is in some mss 'la dame de Landuc' (the "name" is in transformation); the third is anonymous but could plausibly become Lady Synadoun (by scribal error or by authorial intention). An interesting inversion is where Niniame the sorceress becomes part of Morgan le Fay's address: in *Arthour and Merlin* Merlin

²⁴⁰See Gurevich, *Medieval popular culture*, p. 46.

²⁴¹The designation is very rare. Daniel doubts whether it is significant (*Heroes and Saracens*, pp. 164–5), but he seeks description of these figures in the formulae; like Dalrymple, I seek to relate the formulae to elements in the surrounding text.

²⁴²Mills' Introduction, p. xii.

²⁴³Place-names, like descriptions (Libeauss, Vortigern, Phyllis), become personal proper names and lose their locative or toponymic quality with time — witness many modern surnames.

is beguiled by Arthur's sister, who lived near "there".²⁴⁴ That place-names can escape into the rest of life because of confused transmission is instanced nearer our own time by the girl's name Selma: a castle in "Ossian".²⁴⁵

An interesting aspect of place-names is their absence. We saw that a character without a name is Mystery-man or Man-in-the-street, depending on how he (or she) is presented; a name such as Arthur or Charlemagne at the beginning of a romance advertises it as promising a certain kind of tale. Names of places, even if not identifiable on a modern map, have a similar function. The *Romance of Horn*, for example, is located in a space-time grid of ancestors and geography, but one of the elements that makes *The Squire* so like a folk-tale is its vague location in space, and what is more we do not follow the hero's travels, so that not even a fantasy-space of enchanted forest or roads to the East is offered to us.²⁴⁶ The village where Merlin was born is not named; somewhere between the Harrowing of Hell and Vortigern's Britain, it seems independent of ordinary time and space. The value of such anonymity is discussed by Henry James, as he regrets naming the New England village in *Roderick Hudson*.²⁴⁷ He wanted 'a peaceful, rural ... community *quelconque*'. It is hard to imagine Robert de Boron naming his rural community in Old France: some Biblical or allegorical name might suggest the exemplary quality best achieved here by namelessness. The village in Woolf's *Between the Acts* has, and needs, no name, being 'the very heart of England'.²⁴⁸ In fact one could "find" it, because surrounding places are named. As when hunting for the Tarn Wadling or Camelot, one would use as map references any place-names the story-teller has not invented. Creating the illusion that one could find such places is here part of the writer's art. Merlin's birthplace may be similarly identifiable in some texts, but in Robert's we are not invited to guess.

Objects and animals can be discussed together, but divided into two groups. Swords and horses may be named almost randomly to give colour or emphasis to a moment in the action. But some named swords and horses belong inalienably to their hero and usually appear whenever he does. Everybody knows the name of Roland's sword, of Beves' horse, and of Tristan's dogs. But what about Arthur's horse, Gawain's sword, or Ipomadon's dogs? If an Arthurian knight appears riding (the) Gringalet, he has borrowed or stolen him; Guillaume carries Joicuse, Charlemagne's sword, because he was given it. But if a hero in 'The Knight's Tale' rides Gringalet then Chaucer has borrowed or stolen him. Arthur rides Passelande in Bérout, and in Chrétien he rides 'l'aubagu' which, even if a proper

²⁴⁴See [Arthour] ed. Macrae-Gibson, l. 4446 and note. Accident or design on the part of the writer (the name makes a useful rhyme-word); as with Laudine, another (hypothetical) redaction could rationalize it further.

²⁴⁵Kisbye, 'Ossianic Names', pp. 96-7.

²⁴⁶Magic places, by and large, are named — so that we know where we are!

²⁴⁷Preface, pp. 13-15.

²⁴⁸Paxman, *The English: A Portrait of a People*, p. 149. His note quotes the metonymic strategy by which the village stands for all English life.

name, does not appear anywhere else.²⁴⁹ Tristan's dogs are named in most of the Tristan texts, but only once is he given a named horse.²⁵⁰ A named sword or horse is a great hero's badge, and in the narrative it functions better, and more economically, than a shield-device that has to be described. The latter is more effective "visually" (to characters in the story) but tends to be less stable between (even within) texts;²⁵¹ the former is more effective "aurally" (to the audience outside the story) and, if a hero arrives in literature with one already attached, it tends to stick. As with human names, the meaning is not important unless the text says it is, and both spur-of-the-moment names and inherited "magical" names may (not) have recoverable meaning.

If names such as these travel among texts in the medieval period, it is reasonable to assume they are inherited along with other motifs, themes, figures, from earlier material. In Celtic and other legend²⁵² beasts and objects, especially (iron) weapons, seem to have been named because of — or perhaps to endow them with — their special powers.²⁵³ In romance special beasts and objects retain their names (or are given names to signal their importance). Gawain's horse, and Alexander's Bucephalus, are special beasts but show no supernatural power that I am aware of; Beves' horse and the horse of the Four Sons are definitely super-equine. Both have common horse-names (Arondel = swallow, Bayard = bay-brown), and have namesakes in other texts: there is an Arondel in *Fergus* and another in *Le Couronnement de Louis*; there is a blind and blundering Bayard in proverbial lore.²⁵⁴ But Beves' Arondel is especially sagacious and a character in his own right, and the epic Bayard is anything but blind. 'Bayard the blinde' in *The Tournament of Tottenham*²⁵⁵ underlines and augments the absurd tomfoolery of the "hotspurs": (ridden) wonderhorse and blind (unridden) fool are collapsed into a single image.

Horses, and swords, are abundantly named in the chansons, perhaps because of epic's self-conscious links with (legendary) history, which needs names not only of people but of places and objects. Further, though beasts in fable are unlikely to be named (there are no beast-names in Marie's, for example), those in beast-epic (the *Roman de Renart*) are given names together with detailed characterization.

²⁴⁹See Répertoire, pp. 1471–2. Gawain's horse (also with definite article) is mentioned here: 'peut-être le souvenir d'un cheval magique'.

²⁵⁰'Le Bel Joëor', Bérout, ed. Ewert, l. 3997.

²⁵¹The fact that a device is identifiable is usually more important than what a device is (this parallels much naming-practice in romances, as I have argued).

²⁵²Reinhard notes that name-magic, or taboo, as a literary motif is not automatically inherited from Celts — the superstitions are common to the whole Aryan family (*The Survival of Geis*, pp. 16–18; 137). I am not primarily concerned with tracing how names became available to medieval writers: what interests me is that they appear (or not) in medieval texts, and that (how) they work.

²⁵³See eg. Cassirer, *Language and Myth*, pp. 59–60; Wimberly, *Folklore*, pp. 89–93. Such customs (and related taboos) may be reflected in literature after their original significance has been forgotten (Reinhard, *The Survival of Geis*, p. 8).

²⁵⁴See Burnley, 'Proude Bayard'.

²⁵⁵ll. 91–5. I question Sands' footnote: Chaucer (for one) uses 'Bayard' both as proverbial and as common name.

Those of Henryson's *Fables* containing named animals are from the epic rather than the fable tradition;²⁵⁶ his cock is Chantecler, but his wolf is nameless. Talking animals are rare in romance; compare beast-epic. Chaucer names the main characters in 'The Nun's Priest's Tale' and also the minor animals (and one of the women, Malkyn). But it is impossible to imagine Colle, for example, shouting "Come on, boys!" to Talbot and Gerland, or Malle the sheep saying anything at all. Animals are named in this kind of story, but only the protagonists of the main (inner) action talk to one another. As so often, Chaucer is playing with genre-expectations. A reference to Pegasus, Cerberus, or even Burnel the Ass, would work in the same way as does an intertextual reference to a named hero or historical figure, as discussed above. The naming of beasts and objects in a romance may also point outside romance to other genres or textual "worlds" in which such things are frequently named.

Tristan's dogs are named because of their unusual nature, but the naming of Ipomadon's dogs enhances the hero's disguises: all the dogs/knights in the fray did well today, but the red one did best ²⁵⁷ Named dogs successful in the chase are symbolic of a persistently unnamed hero successful in the tournament. The writer of *Generydes* understands the importance of naming horses: to give colour to a battlefield, and help combatants and audience to follow the action. But as so often in this romance he repeatedly points at potential naming-motifs (and at motifs recognizable from other romances) as though they were conventions to be exploited for special effect, only to canter past each with no special effect at all. The horses' colours, and names, look significant but do not help us: the hero has two (Grisell and Blanchard, the latter won from Gwynan, king of Egypt's son) but he cannot be identified by his white horse (5049–52) because later he rides a black one (6359–61, 6390–5). In Gwynan's final combat with him it is strange that he asks Generydes' name, because today his adversary rides a horse named Blanchard (6062–120) — perhaps it is not the one that used to belong to him! Other horses are Bayard, Morell, and Sorell; even Generydes' sword is named.²⁵⁸ The result is a rattling good story full of confusing and unmemorable detail.

Specificity (time, place, person, date) operates, as proper nouns do, to lend verisimilitude. A romance containing abundant names of horses as well as of people is different in feel from one containing few names. Anonymous dogs and swords, however, are not an issue because nobody expects them to be named. Rarely do we hear any discussion: usually they turn up ready-named, sometimes the maker of a sword is mentioned, and occasionally an explanation of its name (why Ogier's sword is Short, for example). Excalibur is glossed (usually) as meaning Cut-Steel, and in Malory there is a mystifying exchange between Arthur and the Lady that confirms its name in the mind of readers for ever: "I have forgotyn the name of my swerde that ye gaff me." "The name of hit . . . ys Excalibir" .²⁵⁹

²⁵⁶ *Selected Poems* ed. Bawcutt & Riddy, Notes, p. 211.

²⁵⁷ ed. Purdie, ll. 3548–4154.

²⁵⁸ Once the Emperor Julian's sword (3400–7), it is named Claryet (3480–2).

²⁵⁹ 65:15–18. The sword from the stone (12:26–36) was named Excalibur (19:20–22), but broke

There is a great deal of (Isidorean) explanation of the “name” of the Holy Grail, but this is an exceptional object.²⁶⁰ It keeps its article (when introduced by Chrétien it is just ‘un graal’), and is thus a different order of name from Lanycoll, Adam’s cup in *King Edward and the Shepherd* (446, 504). The rather drunken conversation between the shepherd and his guest also contains the non-sense pledging-words ‘Passilodion’ and ‘Berafrynde’. He probably made these up on the spur of the moment, to show off, unless they were already current at shepherds’ parties. He even names his secret chamber Hakderne (grand or royal chambers might be named, then as now, but the rustic cupboard is a special joke), playfully explaining that this ‘page’ looks after things and need not be paid (509–13). These names are strikingly unusual, and contribute not a little to the comedy of the scene.

Bearing in mind that in modern life domestic animals are named as a matter of course (as they are in fiction when they belong to major characters), and weapons²⁶¹ generally not, it is interesting to notice how romance-writers name beasts and objects: to accompany a hero or to mark a moment.

Local Effects

Many strikingly effective devices, both aural and visual,²⁶² have been mentioned in discussion of romances which have naming as a theme in the first place. They are “Special FX” in that a good performer will take the opportunity to pause, shout, whisper, and so on, to increase their impact. Merlin shouts ‘Balain!’ to awaken the Knight with Two Swords, whose true name has not been heard for a very long time. In both the versions of *Horn* that I examined, the narrator gives us a flash — as from a different camera-angle — of the hero’s face by using his true name at a dramatic moment while he is in disguise. As we watch the “action replay” of the tournament in which an incognito knight carries all before him, Ipomadon speaks suddenly from right beside us. Similarly, Béroutl withholds the name of the leper long enough for us to feel shock when somebody recognizes him — the glimpse of Tristan’s face beneath the hood is enough to make us anxious lest somebody else should see it. Malory removes Lynet so that the kitchen boy can tell Lancelot, quietly, that his name is Gareth — the narrator reverts to Beawmayns once she can “hear” him again. Doubles, real or otherwise, are eerily invoked in *l’Atre* when a nameless knight hears people talking about Gawain as though he were elsewhere or dead.

(50:30) — the sword from the lake (52:9–53:11) is not named until later.

²⁶⁰See eg. Séguy, ‘Naming and Renaming’.

²⁶¹Perhaps the nearest modern equivalent would be that status-symbol, the motor-car. But the minority who name their cars do so not because they are status-symbols but because they are beloved and exasperating pets.

²⁶²Visual effects are those created in the visual imagination of a listener, though names also stand out on the page (especially with the help of capitals, in modern editions). See eg. Gerus-Tarnawecky, ‘Literary Onomastics’.

Ydoine repeats her name, *ostinato*, to heal Amadas of his madness (while the narrator, *ostinato*, repeats 'non' and 'nomme'). A similar if less dramatic effect is achieved by the repetition, noted for example in *Degaré*, of a name when it ends one line and begins the next. The effects range from the paralinguistic — variations of tone and pitch — to the perspective, as they affect audience (or characters') points of view. In Robert's *Merlin*, drama is heightened to shock when messengers announce they have found the fatherless boy: 'De quel Merlin me parlez vous dont?' demands the king (26:27-8). This works both inside and outside the narrative: Vortigern expected the messengers to bring blood, and the placing of the name strengthens the effect, as they arrive with a living child.

The impact of name, or of its absence, is bound up with the main themes, even the plot, of some romances. Libeaus is unable to repeat, or even hear, his father's name — Gawain is blotted out of the story. The name of the Squire is provocatively withheld — this is implicit, as the text repeatedly draws attention to its absence. In *Jehan de Saintré*, the narrator insistently points to Madame's namelessness, alerting us to its significance, and to the main themes of the romance, from the outset. Probably the most stunning, as well as one of the earliest, of such effects is when Guinevere names Le Chevalier de la Charette.²⁶³ The damsel asks his name 'Por ce que il li doie eidier'. Lancelot's naming is delayed for reasons which have been much and famously discussed: honour and dishonour,²⁶⁴ suspense and narrative skill. But as a piece of sheer orchestration, as well as clever plot-mechanics, it is tremendously effective — the queen speaks the name we (and they) have all been waiting for at just the right moment, so that as the damsel yells it out the knight is spurred to victory.

Havelok contains several interesting devices: the use of saints' names; the late naming of Havelok's foster-brothers as they become his brothers in adventure, and of his foster-sisters as they are given in marriage. Bridegrooms do not usually have to wait for a name, but the earl's cook is not named (Bertram) until he gets a wife — and an earldom. The villains, however, lose their names. Godrich and Godard, though differentiated, have doubled names;²⁶⁵ the former is named freely during his last battle (2704-53) then just once, as he is judged (2808-12). Executed as 'the swike' (2820-45), his name reappears only when Bertram is given his earldom (2908-10). Godard's name shapes the narrative leading up to his death in an even more dramatic way. When Havelok has become king and rewarded his brothers he swears revenge on Godard (2367-8). Godard is named six times in the following action, until ('everilk foot of hem he slowe But Godard one ...' 2432-3) he is taken. During the next passage, which describes his shame and his horrible death, his name does not appear at all, as though his screams of agony blotted out language. The name never reappears, and is replaced by a pronoun: Ubbe is given everything that was 'his' (2513-19).

²⁶³In Chrétien, pp. 505-682, ll. 3640ff. This is *halfway* through a romance about him.

²⁶⁴See eg. Kelly, 'Les Fées et les arts'; Toohey ('The Knight who Lost his Name') links this romance with *L'Atre Périlleux*, arguing that both heroes have lost honour, though other forces such as magic may (also) be at work.

²⁶⁵See Weiss, 'Structure and Characterisation'.

The absent name has its own power. Dalrymple warns that periphrases for God and Christ appear 'not to reflect a reluctance explicitly to name the deity'.²⁶⁶ But the *power* of God's name may be invoked directly or indirectly (not simply as expletive) and foregrounded in certain places. The power of Ydoine's name is compared to the power of God's even as the poet acknowledges that such comparison is forbidden (as if trying to cancel out what he has said, he gives the name of God twice in the passage).²⁶⁷ A well-known passage, where names of God are at once given and withheld, occurs in Chrétien's *Conte du Graal*: the hermit whispers a prayer to Perceval that he must learn but never repeat except in extreme peril. The names of God are in the prayer but not in the text (6481–91). I appreciate that scholars might be interested to discover what those names were,²⁶⁸ but the fact that they are *not* given is what makes the passage so magically effective. In another context (a liturgical setting, or Perceval's prayer as he faced death) a recital of the names would have a powerful, but different, impact.

The question of why the absence of name is both mysterious and frightening is here considered with reference to *The Hunting of the Snark*.²⁶⁹ Carroll lays comic emphasis on the Baker, who 'had wholly forgotten his name' (p. 48), by giving him more "names" than anybody else. The Broker, the Bellman, the Beaver, and the rest, have no other names and suffer no anxiety at their lack; the Baker was told about the Snark by his uncle (after whom he was named!) and foresees his own annihilation. Not only are all his names wrong, but so are all his languages: he had warned his companions before the voyage, but in every language but English. Carroll played almost endlessly with 'conventional signs' (pp. 55–6), and resisted questions about the meaning of this poem;²⁷⁰ my contribution to the debate is merely that the Baker was the one to vanish because he did not have his name to protect him. My feeling of anxiety while studying *L'Atre*, that Gawain will vanish away, is because there is so much unexplained magic in that romance. Furthermore, he has forgotten his name; not only does he have a dead double, he also has named and living alter egos repeatedly invoked by his companions. Any one of them could have turned out to be a Boojum.²⁷¹

Absence of name is rather more prosaically marked in medieval narratives when the narrator promises a name in a character's speech, but the speech then proceeds without it. The form of words varies, but the resultant lack of name is

²⁶⁶ *Language and Piety*, pp. 32–3 (n. 82).

²⁶⁷ See above, p. 76.

²⁶⁸ Eg. Cline, 'The Concept of *Nomen*'. She argues that the prayer is an exorcism in which the *essence* of God (that is, the name as being, rather than as standing for, the real thing) is evoked as protection (private copy, p. 9).

²⁶⁹ I use *The Annotated Snark*, because I enjoy Gardner's efforts to find significance in the Baker's alternative names. He does not comment on the significance of the Baker's namelessness, though he remarks poker-faced: 'unfortunately the picture [on p. 65] is not clear enough to make out the name painted on two of the boxes'.

²⁷⁰ Introduction, pp. 21–3.

²⁷¹ '[W]ords mean more than we mean to express when we use them: so a whole book ought to mean a great deal more than the writer meant.' Letter from Carroll, *ibid.*, p. 22.

always striking, especially if the speaker gives a different name/epithet from that (if any) given by the story.

The king 'callid oñ to the Stiward bi his name, / "Traytour," *quod* he ...'.²⁷² We know the steward's name, so the king's failure to use it stresses the rage and violence of the scene.

La Manekine's father sees the mutilated arm, and 'nomma Joïe par non' — but does not. '“Fille,” fait il ...'.²⁷³ He has abused and destroyed her identity, and the mangled incompleteness of her body marks her equally self-inflicted loss of name.

'Haez donc, dist ele, celui / (sel nomma) qui ne fina hui / de moi proier ...'.²⁷⁴ Actions are progressively revealed as the story unfolds towards tragedy, but names never. This revelation, that the chevalier tried to seduce the duchess, is malicious and false — emphasized by the fiction that she tells his name.

Malcus tells the astonished barons 'Pere e mere issi unt nun E mes freres e mes sorurs Issi ...'. When he has "named" all their names, he is accused of lying (he has been asleep for three hundred and sixty-two years).²⁷⁵ Not the most striking of my examples (because not a romance?), nevertheless the pathos of his speech lies in 'tut mun parenté Est ben cunu enz la cité'; his audience, even if they knew of them at all, know that they are long dead. The blank where their names ought to be underlines this remoteness.

Except for the *Vie*, all are from romances with a special interest in naming. Characters are enabled to "use" names without giving them away to the audience. The formula: "He said 'this is So-and-so' ", which refuses to name even in direct speech and compounds that refusal by continuing "When he had named ...", is especially prominent in *Jehan de Saintré*. Whether a romance or not, it switches abruptly from being one kind of story to being something very different, and as with other texts discussed in the previous chapter it uses naming ostentatiously to mark both sides and the divide between them. The absence of the Squire's name is also provocative; he must have won "it" (honour, renown, prowess), because he achieved a lady and a kingdom, but it remains hidden. As so often, the statement of what a name is is subordinate to the fact of naming.

My last example is in *Sir Amadace* (not a romance about naming as such): the writer uses the trick of making the hero ask the merchant's name, and 'Ho told him anon ryghte' — without telling us (199–201). Although nobody but the hero is named, this small touch helps to emphasize the ambiguity, later, of the White Knight and whether he is an agent of Providence or a dead man come to life (or both): equivocal naming suggests or echoes equivocal identity. The word "name" has other meanings in this text: 'he toke so mycul opon his name' = responsibility (166), and 'Hit is on his nome [= behalf] that I say ...' (313).

The word "name" is widely used with a variety of meanings, some of which

²⁷² *Generydes* ed. Wright, ll. 550–1.

²⁷³ ed. & tr. Sargent-Baur, ll. 783–8.

²⁷⁴ *La Chastelaine de Vergi* ed. Whitehead, ll. 120–8; noted in de Looze, 'The Untellable Story', pp. 47–8.

²⁷⁵ Chardri, *La Vie des Set Dormanz* ed. Merrilees, ll. 1345–56.

have been discussed in the foregoing pages. In English, it rhymes with both “fame” and “shame”, thus naturally occurring in discourse about “renown” (literally re-naming) and “honour”. In French it is often rhymed with “non” meaning “not”, which opens up ways of differentiating the entity from everything and everybody else. In verse, then, name itself can have a local effect by the way it sounds with its rhymes.²⁷⁶ As Gertrude Stein might have said, ‘You know my theory about names: to name is to claim, to name is to blame, to name is to determine.’²⁷⁷

A Palinode?

Finally, I revisit a romance very interesting for the study of names, although not about naming. I have cited several passages from *Generydes*, because the writer uses so many of the devices studied in this chapter. Few are developed, and few support the main themes of the romance, so why are they there?

It contains doubled queens, combat between brothers, an anonymous sage, recognition-tokens, and any number of disguises. Other motifs are Potiphar’s wife, fairy mistress, recognition by (named) horses and armour, and separating sword. Yet the romance is not about finding (or losing) identity, status, and renown; nor is naming associated with honour, recognition, magic power, or self-realization. Together, the motifs add up to an action-packed tale of love, adventure, and derring-do; each is used to further the plot and none betrays more than a fleeting interest, on the part of narrator or characters, in naming for its own sake.

No naming-mystery attaches to the arrival of a handsome youngster at successive courts. At his mother’s, he is supposed to be a maid’s nephew, but he knows his own name and is told who his parents are just as soon as he asks (281–319). At his father’s, the son’s face makes him think of ‘that lady that harboryd hym so wele’, and sure enough the ‘maister’ Natanell reveals all before very long (407–45). At the Sultan’s, he hides only that he is a king’s son (652–72; he reveals this later, 3184–92), not his name. He is not in the habit of concealing his identity; the Sultan’s niece fusses that he refused to give his name (6167–76) but his original speech simply omitted it — not the same thing (5967–73).

An episode involving the tear-stained shirt that only Sereyne can wash clean (192–6, 1158–1246) is hardly necessary for recognition because circumstances are bringing the couple together in any case, but it adds detail and poignancy to what might otherwise seem just another complicated encounter. The separating sword is no symbol of chastity — the lovers sleep in separate lodges! — but the incident strengthens a turn in the plot (3914ff). The pet dog (4735–9, 5341–79) does not, as might be expected given our familiarity with Tristan stories, perform the trick of recognizing its mad or disguised master. It becomes ammunition (literally) in a lovers’ tiff — the scene is actually very funny.

²⁷⁶See eg. Sutherland, ‘Rhyming Patterns and Structures of Meaning’; her analysis would be applicable to many poems.

²⁷⁷Dearmore, ‘The Adventure of the Perpetual Husbands’, p. 7.

The most interesting naming-motif in the romance is the doubling of the queens: bad and good. As in *Silence*, the text does not comment explicitly on the similarity of their names, which is here less note-worthy than the fact that both are nameless during episodes that could be characterized as exemplary or conventional. They are important but secondary figures: their actions create and progress the main character, whose career is exciting and eventful but whose naming (like his lady's) is entirely unproblematized. Naming-devices in *Generydes* add up to evidence, I contend, that the writer knew such motifs ought to be ingredients in a good romance and so put them in. They have less thematic effect, cumulatively, than they would in a romance truly about naming, but *Generydes* nevertheless strongly supports my thesis that naming and namelessness are of major concern to writers of medieval romance.

* * * * *

The use and placing of names enhances the effectiveness of narrative motifs, though patterns are not standardized. The conventional (probably inherited) anonymity of the fairy mistress, for example, may be partly or wholly replaced by a name, depending upon how the writer wants her presented. The use of intertextual references, not restricted to romance nor even to medieval literature, varies from one text to another and colours the actions on stage. A writer's relationship with an audience can be studied by the way names are used: a name indicates a change in point-of-view, or it may be released to the audience before being revealed to other characters; sometimes suspense is created by the narrator's collusion with an anonymous character. More often, perhaps, an audience is put (or kept) in touch with characters while they are lost or disguised, creating a pleasant feeling of being in on the trick, or allowing identification with them.

The foregoing review of devices used by writers shows, first, that they are very frequent in my core-texts. This is not surprising, since motifs such as disguise and doubles, discourses such as introduction-rituals, figures such as fairy mistresses, are the common stuff of adventure-romance. Furthermore, examples found in other romances show that the number of texts, for detailed study of naming, could be substantially increased.

6. Conclusion

This thesis shows that naming and namelessness are significant themes in English and French medieval romance. The themes comprise not only the quest for absent name but also the power of present name; a concern with naming is not confined to Arthurian romances, in which it is well documented. Many non-Arthurian romances are included in my study (though the *Matiere de Rome* is not well represented), and I conclude that the naming-theme is so common as to rank with the other themes by which the romance genre is defined.

Name(lessness) is part of the “grammar”, or narrative connectedness, of romance in that its themes are supported or reflected by naming sub-themes such as disguise and recognition, and by rhetorical or stylistic devices to create special effects such as surprise, suspense, and shifted point-of-view. None of these themes and effects can be adequately discussed by name-as-meaning, but they all depend upon name/absence of name as mark — sometimes exclamation mark. The name of the Fair Unknown could be Gareth, Guinglains, or George. Merlin shouts a true name to wake the Knight with Two Swords: Balaain! or Kevin! — either shocks the listener.

Because meaning-of-name is known to be central to much medieval thought, some other reason(s) must be sought for the centrality of name-without-meaning to much medieval romance. Its other themes, such as quest, prowess, the marvelous, and the fact that romance is frequently biographical, naturally foreground name or namelessness. Sophisticated writers, trained in (or familiar with) philosophical issues, worked with folktale material in which name was less meaningful than magical. This magic is not only the power wielded or experienced by characters within the story, it is also the power wielded by the story-teller and experienced by the audience. Romance does not generally explicate name: it seeks name and exploits it, frequently playing with name and namelessness. This name-play (hiding, marking, withholding, repeating, dropping names) means that romance does not offer answers to questions about name-theory, though its consciousness of naming is bound to raise them. Such functions of name suit romance so well that they appear to be conventional among the earliest romances, as well as in those whose writers are unlikely to know or care anything directly about philosophy. In a story where the hero goes incognito, for instance, it is much more fun if the narrator colludes with the pseudonym (either for suspense or for interesting changes in point-of-view) than if s/he holds up the action by explaining what the name means.

Ultimately, romance combines the biographical (a cluster of notions to do with identity) and the dramatic (power or magic) — nominalism and realism aside, naming is the game. It is a very stable and durable genre. In spite of the mass of varying texts, it is notable that romances like *Beves* and *Guy* were still being copied and read long after the medieval period. And it lives on into our own day in varying forms: popular romance, science fiction, fantasy, and of course the novel. The form of romance changes, but its themes do not.¹ Therefore, because naming is a theme of romance, there is no discernible development *in terms of naming* from earlier texts to later. Malory, *Jehan de Saintr  *, and the *Squire* are all late in my chosen period; they differ from one another in form, language, style, and mood. All interested in naming (as I have shown), their interest is worked out in different ways: each of these has more in common with earlier medieval romances than with one another. The deliberate withholding of a (woman's) name, playful use of the word "name", a hero's incognito, manipulation of intertextual reference, obsession with name as fame or 'worthship' — these elements are found across the range of romances studied. Given the accumulation of material over the period,² one might expect an increase in self-conscious inter-romance citation, for example. But only one of these three, the *Squire*, makes use of it: to underline its own special themes. An examination of just one sub-genre or story-type might possibly show — if one could be certain of ms datings and of both literary and non-literary influence — some noteworthy development, but I have found that the variety of themes and approaches right across the romance spectrum to be a more fruitful study, for naming.

The subject cuts across conventional ways of looking at romance in more ways than one: counting (women's) names in texts enabled me to step back somewhat from gender issues. It allowed me to focus more clearly on what female characters are actually doing in the stories. Gender is subordinated to narrative: la Manekine, for example, is more interesting as Fair Unknown than as Woman. Emar   chooses her own pseudonym, as some heroes do, and renames her romance. *Silence* is about what is wrong with a society, and about what it means to be named, as well as what it means to be a woman. Romance is a-feminist because not primarily about women, but it could not be written without them. Anti-women discourse, like other medieval sub-genres, appears in romance as elsewhere; it is given differing voices and is sometimes subverted. Women enable romance: they are necessary as guides and advisers, namers and enchanters (and as love-objects); in *L'Atre P  rilleux* they are in every sense the voices behind the text.

I have argued that romances are concerned with naming for a mixture of reasons. The folktale material, from which many derive, is often concerned with magic and the power of name (regardless of meaning). The collision of this ma-

¹Novels both popular and experimental, and romances from Shakespeare on down, also show concern — even fascination — with naming and namelessness.

²Field sees romance as accumulating, rather than developing in the evolutionary sense ('Romance in England, 1066–1400', p. 169).

terial with medieval concerns — courtly, clerical, and chivalric — was bound to have interesting results. Philosophy was moving, in one specialized area, from the realist to the nominalist; such ideas would have been commonplace (even in a crude form, and not in those terms) to a wide range of writers and audiences, as are Freudian and Darwinian ideas today. The power of a name in romance, whether it is hidden or shouted, is not (usually) its etymological meaning. It should be remembered, moreover, that the important literary subject of rhetoric developed from what was originally an oral art form. Ironically, courtly and popular composers both draw on ultimately similar skills, and it is not surprising to find, as I have done, comparable literary and dramatic effects (surprise, suspense, manipulation of audience point-of-view or sympathy, underlining of special narrative moments) in both courtly and popular literature. In any case, the definition of popular literature has recently been problematized and opened up to scholarly discussion.

Sir Percyvell of Gales has been “rescued” by romance scholars: it is now clear that it cleverly rewrites Chrétien (rather than misunderstanding him), and it has been argued that Chaucer took inspiration from it (and not the mickey).³ There is a chain of literary influence in the form of respectful, if amused, dialogue from one romance master to another by way of a Middle English popular romance. The word “popular” also needs to be rescued;⁴ the audience for such romances included the writers of other (sometimes greater) literary works. It can be no coincidence that all three of these writers are interested in name(lessness) and use it variously, skilfully, and significantly. Throughout my thesis I have sought to avoid making distinctions between courtly and popular, because the uses of naming as theme and as narrative tactic do not differ in any meaningful sense from one “kind” of romance to another — although it is clear that naming-patterns differ from one genre (or sub-genre) to another.

Transmission of romances was almost entirely literary, though nobody can say how much oral influence may have crept in from one version to another; performance was almost entirely oral. Even at the end of my period, a fifteenth-century illustration shows Chaucer “reading” from an empty lectern!⁵ This in turn raises questions about fifteenth-century perceptions of literary performance: did Chaucer’s literate audience prefer to hear its entertainment? Did the literate Chaucer prefer to recite from memory, even to improvise? And he portrays himself as an unusually silent reader: nobody would notice that you or I sat ‘also domb as any ston’ over a book, because we all do.⁶ It is reasonable to assume that most audiences listened, whether to a professional entertainer, to an obliging member of the household, or to their own voices reading aloud. Moreover, names or the lack of them — the subject of my thesis — are detectable (allowing for

³See Fowler, ‘*Le Conte du Graal* and *Sir Perceval of Galles*’, p. 18.

⁴See eg. Introduction to Putter & Gilbert, eds., *The Spirit of Medieval English Popular Romance*, p. 3.

⁵The absence of a book can be seen clearly in the large-format reproduction featured on the cover of Jones et al., *Who Murdered Chaucer?*

⁶*The House of Fame*, l. 656.

differences in printing conventions) on the page much as they are to the ear.

One must not be misled by the ostentatious calls for attention found in romances once deemed “popular”; such demands for silence (or for a bowl of ale), or fulsome appeals to lords and ladies of the company, are no evidence for minstrel composition and performance. They are among the formulae of romance (often line-fillers), which also include narrator’s asides, proverbs and other sententiae, pious exclamations and the like. Another commonplace that has recently been opened to question is that English romances are popular merely because they are in English; I note that romances in French, for French audiences, are popular in exactly the same way. There remain the romances that advertize themselves as translated for the benefit of those who know no French; the writers are arguably just seeking a wider market (like the Baroque composers who published their sonatas for flute *or* oboe *or* violin, with harpsichord *or* lute, and so forth). But naming, both as theme and as dramatic effect, has its place in romances of all sorts. Audiences of all sorts, whether they prefer the love-interest or the battle-scenes or the courtly dialogues or the forest adventures, are likely to respond to the skilful use of name. Judging by its recurrence in romances, audiences did.

My study has also opened up questions which invite further research: first, the relationship between medieval philosophy and narrative. This in turn raises the issue of fictionality, and how far romance-writers considered themselves inventors (in either sense of the word). The self-naming of authors has been discussed, but not at length; this is partly because a good deal of work has already been undertaken and partly because it would have taken me out of romance into a far wider range of medieval culture — the subject is trans-generic. Another, more focused, area of study would be the examination of a small group of romances (limited by space and time, if not by language) against a background of naming practices in the rest of life. These topics have been acknowledged in the present thesis, and are among the things I should like to turn to next.

My present contribution is to establish name and namelessness as a defining theme of the romance genre, and to link romance with medieval naming-theory by means of its naming-games.

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