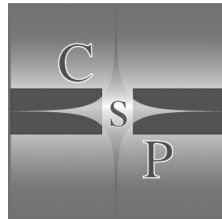


Reflections

Reflections:
New Directions in Modern Languages
and Cultures

Edited by

Sarah Buxton, Laura Campbell, Tracey Dawe
and Elise Hugueny-Léger



Cambridge Scholars Publishing

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FOREWORD

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In the course of its long history, criticism and theory have deployed a host of metaphors in their thinking about literature and culture; about the relationship between different texts and cultural forms; and about the relationship between those cultural forms and the world they mediate and to which they respond. Of these, the theme of reflections appears particularly fruitful. The essays collected here, which emerge out of a postgraduate conference held at the University of Durham in 2006, demonstrate the possibilities it opens up for investigating the links between texts and media, and for understanding the ways in which literary and cultural forms are embedded within broader social contexts.

In organising a conference on 'Reflections', the postgraduates of the School of Modern Languages and Cultures in Durham set out to provoke debate among scholars working on different cultures, periods, and media. Their success in doing so is underlined by the current volume, which traces the presence of a number of reflections and echoes across cultures (French, Hispanic, Italian, Irish, English); genres (autobiography, hagiography, fiction); and media (text, film, painting, drama); and also across time. In her essay on the medieval Spanish legends of Saint Christopher, Sarah Buxton uses the notion of reflection to challenge existing models of hagiographic narrative. She calls for a mode of reading which draws out the complex echoes and resonances between the two halves of the Saint Christopher narrative, and the ways in which structural reflections allow the religious message of the text to be established and reinforced. Through a discussion of the role of symmetry in sixteenth-century Italian art, Kelly Goodman explores the notion and importance of imitation during that period. She demonstrates how the work of Raphael illustrates a shift in the understanding of imitation away from copying towards emulation.

A number of essays draw out the ways in which reflections often give way to distortions and reconfigurations, appropriations and remodellings. Joanne Young, for example, explores the role and significance of intertextuality, echoing and mimicry across medieval texts of the twelfth century. And Isabelle Flour, in her discussion of the *Musée de Sculpture Comparée* and the *Musée des Monuments Français*, underlines the processes whereby nineteenth-century France borrowed and remoulded sculptural and architectural styles from previous periods in its efforts to forge a national culture and identity. Finally, Imogen Long considers the work of the French writer Danièle Sallenave, and the ways in which she weaves reference to, and descriptions of a range of paintings into her novels, in order to foreground themes of communication and alienation.

Various essays consider the relationship between subjectivity, identity and representation, the strategies of self-expression which writers can adopt, and the difficulties those strategies encounter. In her discussion of the seventeenth-century poet Théophile de Viau, Anne Cameron considers the impact of translation into English on his lyric voice, and the way in which his literary persona morphs and shifts as a result. Ross Woods teases out the striking similarities employed by the Irish writer John McGahern and the Spaniard José Manuel Caballero Bonald in their autobiographies, and the ways in which they deflect attention away from themselves and on to the social contexts and frameworks in which their lives unfold. Their autobiographies serve precisely to interrogate the principles of subjectivity and identity on which the genre is based. In another exploration of the strategies of displacement writers can use for autobiographical expression, Katherine Wallington investigates how the eighteenth-century Italian dramatist Carlo Goldoni used the theatre as a means of self-dramatization.

Other essays consider the ways in which texts carry within them a reflection on, or echo of, a broader moment of social change or crisis. Thus, Tracey Dawe reads Kafka's *Penal Colony* as an exploration of the specifically German experience of colonialism and national identity in the early twentieth century. Meanwhile, Barbara Giraud examines the way in which medical discourses of the nineteenth century become imbricated into the fictional writing of the Goncourt brothers. And Anna Hillman considers the way in which shifts in Cuban identity as the nation confronts the geopolitical reconfigurations of the 1980s and 90s are mapped and articulated by Fernando Pérez's Film *La vida es silbar*, and the way in which the film proposes an alternative, 'imagined' Cuban community as a response to the uncertainties and challenges faced by the island.

In sum, the volume demonstrates the rich and productive perspectives opened up by the theme of reflection, and its value in thinking about relationships within and between cultural forms and their contexts. But it also invites us to interrogate that theme, and explore the ways in which reflection shades into, and can be displaced by, processes of refraction, deflection, mobility and fluidity.

PREFACE

This volume presents the selected proceedings of a conference which took place at Durham University (United Kingdom) in September 2006. In recent years, research and teaching in the Arts and Humanities have encompassed an increasingly broad spectrum. As a discipline, Modern Languages has responded to this general trend by developing closer links to Cultural Studies. The aim of the conference was to showcase the future of Modern Languages by demonstrating the rich diversity and variety that such interdisciplinary study is generating. When choosing the theme “Reflections”, the organisers hoped to underline this diversity by attracting papers on themes such as mirrors, doubles, intertextuality, imitation and parody, illustrations and replications, in fields as diverse as literature, linguistics, translation, cinema, cultural studies, psychoanalysis and gender studies.

Publications of groups of articles, or the selected proceedings of a conference, are commonly structured around a key concept or word. “Reflections” is often used in titles of both books and articles, but is usually intended to refer to a thinking process, rather than to a methodological key to develop conceptual theories. A reflection can be understood as a reproduction of the pre-existing. All the contributions included in this volume demonstrate how pre-existing images, structures or concepts can be incorporated into new frameworks to create an original dimension for analysis. The authors included in this volume engage with this concept in an original and academic manner within the broad remit of Modern Languages and Cultures.

The articles from Italian, French, German and Hispanic Studies encompass a wide range of material from film to poetry to architecture, spanning a period of seven centuries. They set up or build on frameworks for analysis which link, to name a few, texts with images, self with others, literature or culture with national or iconic notions.

The first section of the volume, “Narrative Strategies: Text as Mirror”, analyses the ways in which texts can reflect other types of supports or discourses. Its focus goes beyond the traditional boundaries of Modern Language Studies: the contributions by Joanne Young, Sarah Buxton, Barbara Giraud and Imogen Long encompass myths, hagiography, medicine and painting. In the second section, “Reflections of the Self in

Others”, five essays examine how artistic processes can be viewed as media of expression of the self. These essays cover a variety of fields, ranging from painting (Kelly Goodman) to autobiography (Ross Woods), from film (Julia Brown) to drama (Katherine Wallington) and poetry (Anne Cameron). By examining reflections of the self from the Renaissance until now, this section suggests that the notion of “autofiction” has always been an intrinsic component of artistic creation. Lastly, the final section, “Framing National Identities”, places cultural studies, history and politics at the core of its contributions. Three essays by Anna Hillman, Isabelle Flour and Tracey Dawe examine how *oeuvres*—be they cinematographic, architectural or literary—always reflect the specific culture of the nation which shaped them.

However, the boundaries between the three sections which delineate this volume are far from impermeable. The theme of “Reflections” naturally lends itself to transversal approaches, echoes and mirror effects. It invites the reader to trace links between contributions dealing with the question of imitation and adaptation in art (in essays by Young and Goodman), with intertextuality (Long, Young, Wallington), with echoes between text and paratext (Giraud and Goodman). Reflections of the self are palpable in others, but also in representations of nations and in the Self/author relationship, which is dealt with by Wallington, Brown, Cameron and Woods.

Modern Languages has become intrinsically linked to Cultural Studies, but also with a strong interdisciplinary focus. One of the aims of “Reflections” was to bring together various disciplines and schools of thought. The essays included in this volume draw on theories as diverse as medical discourse, literature, philosophy, translation theory and practices. Also, many contributions adopt comparative approaches, reflecting another growing and fruitful trend in Modern Languages. Finally, it is extremely significant that a third of these essays focus on the link between text and image, echoing the fact that research centres devoted to Visual Studies often share strong links with the field of Modern Languages and Cultures. This also shows that the visual arts provide an invaluable insight into the (inter)cultural aspects of a specific country and often lead to trans-national, trans-cultural, and trans-linguistic studies.

Ultimately, by reflecting new and recent directions in the field of Modern Languages and Cultures, these articles create a coherent volume offering an overview of the current status of the discipline. The articles in this volume are all original, insightful contributions to their specific research field. They have all been revised in order to take into account subsequent discussions at the conference, and the latest developments in

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PART I

NARRATIVE STRATEGIES: TEXT AS MIRROR

The four articles in this section introduce the theme of “Reflection” by investigating differing ways in which narrative techniques such as intertextuality, doubling, reproduction and incorporation are employed in texts to reflect specific discourses, themes and ideas. The authors of these articles, which span seven centuries, demonstrate both the diversity and the universality of narrative analysis in Modern Language Studies. Narrative analysis becomes an heuristic tool with which to illuminate and capture the essence of foreign cultures and societies over time.

The section begins with two articles which offer a fresh perspective on medieval texts by proposing new interpretative paradigms. The first article introduces the recurring theme of intertextuality as a reflection, yet also reinterpretation of existing material. Joanne Young’s “The Monster Mutated: The Intertextual Influence of *Partonopeus de Blois* on Aimon de Varennes’ *Florimont*” discusses interpretations of *Florimont* as both a reproduction and reinterpretation of its predecessor *Partonopeus de Blois*. By comparing portrayals of the heroine in both works, Young not only gives a new and in-depth analysis of narrative strategies employed in them, she also demonstrates that the works provide a commentary on the role of the female in French medieval society.

The second article in this section moves the theme of reflection from intertextuality—works reflected in another—to an analysis of narrative techniques such as doubling, mirroring and echoing—a work reflecting back on itself. In her article “A Theory of Narrative Reflection: The Legend of Saint Christopher in Medieval Spanish”, Sarah Buxton analyses medieval hagiographic narrative. Expanding the current level of research in the field, Buxton proposes a new theory for interpreting the narrative structure of the Saint Christopher legend. The legend, so Buxton argues, is structured into two parts, the second part intentionally designed to reflect back on the first, reflexively reiterating, whilst also developing events as the narrative progresses. This theory, as Buxton demonstrates, can be used to illuminate the work’s specific function in medieval Spanish society.

The third article, Barbara Giraud's "A Reflection of the Medical Discourse in the Goncourt Brothers' *Renée Mauperin* (1864)", interprets the theme of reflection as narrative incorporation—prevalent discourse becomes an integral part of both the work's plot and narrative structure. Giraud demonstrates that the incorporation of cutting-edge nineteenth-century medical discourse in literature, is not merely a reflection of, nor is it a justification for the penetration of scientific theory in all aspects of nineteenth-century French life. Giraud argues that the text, dialectically, becomes a reflection and critique of French bourgeois society at the time. The fourth and final article in this section, Imogen Long's "A Journey through Art to Amsterdam: References to Painting in Danièle Sallenave's Novel *Le Voyage d'Amsterdam ou les règles de la conversation*" moves us to more contemporary material. Long's article combines the elements of intertextuality, reproduction, reiteration and narrative incorporation seen so far, whilst adding the new dimension of visual art as it interacts with literature. Long argues that Sallenave's inclusion of works of art in the novel highlights alternative forms of dialogue and intercultural connection which complement the written and spoken word.

CHAPTER ONE

THE MONSTER MUTATED: THE INTERTEXTUAL INFLUENCE OF *PARTONOPEUS DE BLOIS* ON AIMON DE VARENNES' *FLORIMONT*

JOANNE YOUNG

Partonopeus de Blois is an anonymous, late twelfth-century text which enjoyed immense popularity throughout the Middle Ages and is well recognised by critics today.¹ The narrative deals with the eponymous hero who is magically transported across the sea and seduced by an apparent fairy mistress named Melior. Many years younger than her and forbidden to see her, he is persuaded to betray their love by carrying a lantern which enables him to steal an illicit glimpse of her. The taboo she imposes broken, Melior is revealed to be an ordinary mortal possessed of magic powers, which are shattered when Partonopeus sees her. The couple part before being reunited when Partonopeus is declared winner of a tournament in which the prize is Melior's hand in marriage. Aimon de Varennes' *Florimont* was composed about 15 years after *Partonopeus*.² Although very popular in the Middle Ages it has since suffered from an unjustified critical neglect. *Florimont* tells the tale of another eponymous young hero who enjoys a relationship with a fairy mistress, the *dame de l'Île Celee*, before having his heart broken after accidentally breaking the taboo of their relationship. The remainder of the text deals with Florimont's reaction to this loss, the revelation that he is destined to become a great military hero, grandfather to Alexander the Great, and his courtship of and eventual marriage to Romadanaple, heiress to Philip of Macedon's Empire.

Though it was well received at the time, few modern critics have engaged with the literary technique of *Florimont*.³ One who did was Anthime Fourier, who devoted a chapter to it in an influential work on

twelfth-century French romance.⁴ He saw *Florimont* as an inferior imitation of *Partonopeus*, stating that the latter provided not only the structure but also many incidental details for *Florimont*, and that the entire episode with the *dame de l'Île Celee* is an unskilful re-writing of *Partonopeus* (pp. 452–460). His authoritative stance discouraged further study of the text until his views were challenged by Douglas Kelly.⁵ Though conceding some similarities between the two texts, Kelly asserts *Florimont*'s own artistic merit by systematically reducing the strength of Fourrier's parallels (pp. 277–279).

This paper explores *Partonopeus* as an intertext to *Florimont* in an attempt to discover how one text can have produced such divergent viewpoints. Focusing on the portrayal of the female protagonists within the texts, it examines how Aimon adapts the representation of his heroines in order to express his reaction to *Partonopeus*. It then tests conclusions drawn from this analysis against the representation of education within the texts.

In *Partonopeus* we have a single heroine, Melior, yet her portrayal hints at a dual or split personality. In the first half of the romance we see her as a fairy mistress, a stereotype from the *lai* genre, possessed of limitless wealth, able to lure Partonopeus across the sea and manipulate a deserted city with her magic before coming to him secretly at night. In the second half, however, she is stripped of her magical powers and revealed to be heiress of a vast and wealthy empire. Moreover, by being the prize to be awarded to the winner of the wedding tournament, Melior allows herself to be portrayed as a more traditional heroine of courtly romance, subservient to the hero and the very antithesis of her initial *persona* as a fairy mistress. It can be argued that, in the two different stages of the romance, she represents two different heroines.⁶ Though she manifestly remains a single character throughout the text, there are considerable differences between the woman we encounter when we are first introduced to her and the blushing bride who marries Partonopeus.

Fourrier notes many similarities between Melior and *Florimont*'s *dame de l'Île Celee*. His parallels are so strong that they suggest not only that she is a fairy mistress, but that her *persona* as such is explicitly modelled on the portrayal of Melior as a fairy mistress in *Partonopeus* (pp. 252–55). Indeed, in some respects, the *dame* is even more obviously a fairy mistress than Melior.⁷ Her sudden appearance when Florimont has killed a monster who has been terrorising her, and her attitude towards Florimont, betray her status as a supernatural being who knows she will be irresistible. She is so certain that Florimont will accept her as an *amie*, for example, that she brings a sword to give to him at their first meeting (lines 2431, 2461–62),

showing none of the uncertainty or self-doubt that we may expect from a human heroine:

Je sai bien que assez sui bele.
Jai tant ne puels aler, se croi,
Que plus bele trusses de moi. (lines 2484–86)⁸

It is she who first proposes that they become *amis* and she who, fewer than fifty lines later, suggests that Florimont abandon his country and his family to live with her (lines 2444, 2490–92). Such arrogance is striking and contrasts sharply with Melior's repeated attempts to reassure Partonopeus that she is not an unnatural being, and with the anxious manner in which she seeks his approval and explains her situation after they first make love, in order that he not think her virginity too easily surrendered (lines 1312–34, in particular lines 1329–32).⁹ Her arrogance is so much more marked than Melior's that one suspects Aimon of deliberately exaggerating it as a warning against the fairy mistress *persona*, and to draw attention to his reworking of the earlier text.

However, there is no trace in the *dame* of the more traditional romance heroine that Melior gradually becomes. The breaking of her taboo and her subsequent loss of powers reveal Melior to be an entirely natural human being, one who then struggles impotently with her love for Partonopeus, even after banishing him. With the *dame* however, there is no such weakness. Her initial separation from Florimont seems almost business-like: she sums up their relationship and states that he may keep everything she has given him, except her love (lines 3783–92).

This is not to say that there are no traces of a courtly heroine character in *Florimont*. Rather than having two *personae* present in one character as the *Partonopeus* poet does with Melior, Aimon has taken the step of separating the two and expressing them in two very different characters: the *dame de l'Île Celee* and Romadanaple. This externalises a tension that the *Partonopeus* poet had expressed internally. For if the *dame* is a fairy mistress, then Romadanaple is every inch a romance heroine, very much the foil for the romance's hero. She is less a character able to act independently, and more an idealised, passive object who can be used to structure and further plot devices.¹⁰ She is a submissive daughter, content to live the life her father has ordained for her, and is a very safe, non-threatening woman.¹¹ She is the complete antithesis of the *dame*, and represents a counterpart to Melior in the second half of *Partonopeus*, after the latter has been humanised through the loss of her powers.¹²

In taking the different generic roles present in Melior and thus externalising them, Aimon has deliberately exaggerated character traits associated with each *persona*, and, in so doing, presented his own commentary upon them. Thus, the danger of the *dame de l'Île Celee* is stressed repeatedly as it is made clear that she is a negative influence on our hero. She becomes synonymous with the depression and poverty engendered in Florimont after she leaves him, and Florimont himself associates her with death more than once. For example, in the course of revealing his identity to Rysus, a later companion, Florimont explains that: “La dame de l'Île Celee, / Sire, m'avoit la mort donee,” (lines 7169–70).¹³ Harf-Lancner has also commented on the negative portrayal of the *dame*, noting that Florimont's desire to follow her is associated with the turning of Fortune's wheel, an antagonistic force within the text as it seeks to foil Florimont's heroic destiny (pp. 127–128). She also points to the *dame*'s marriage and the behaviour of her magician son, Nectanebus, as evidence that she is not a positive influence, stating: “Cette association de la fée et de l'enchanteur rejette... la Dame de l'Île Celée du côté d'une magie maléfique,” (p. 131).¹⁴

Romadanaple, on the other hand, offers a complete contrast to these dubious associations. Her beauty and goodness are repeatedly emphasized (see for example, lines 990–999, and 5999–6028) as she is portrayed almost as the ultimate feminine ideal. Moreover, as a princess, she is a far more suitable wife for the hero that Florimont will become. Romadanaple counteracts the damage caused to Florimont by the *dame* and her sudden departure, making him forget the fairy completely. When he first sees her, the poet observes: “Li amor[s] de l'Île Selee / Fut perdue a cele entree,” (lines 6155–56).¹⁵ This influence is also evident when Florimont is fighting, and, as such, is acting in a fully male role. He abandons the cry of “perdu” (“lost”), which had been his since losing the *dame*, in favour of the cry “novele” (“new”), to signify his new love (lines 6602–05).

What emerges from this analysis is that Aimon recognised certain clear narrative themes and patterns characteristic of *Partonopeus*, and transposes or reworks them as he brings them into his own text. This may well explain the reason for the divide between critics who view the portrayal of the *dame* and that of Melior as “similar”, and those who see it as “different”. What Aimon is seeking to achieve is that balance of the same, but different, to show his reference to his source, but also his reinterpretation of it. This represents a mild form of what was termed, in medieval poetics, *aemulatio*; it is a reference back to his source, but it also shows how material can be used differently and made to vie with that source as the audience decides which they prefer. It also provides a

commentary upon the earlier text. Aimon's division and clear demarcations of the two *personae*—the safe woman as beneficial, the strong woman as harmful—would suggest that he was attempting to redress what he perceived to be *Partonopeus*' inappropriate reversal of the “proper” balance between the genders.¹⁶ In making the *dame* so clearly a fairy and so clearly a detrimental influence, he produced what was arguably a more appropriate version of the fairy mistress myth, with a more satisfactory outcome in terms of gender balance. He thus takes something he considers potentially “monstrous”—a dominant, fairy-like woman—and mutates her into a more acceptable alternative.

It is worth considering other areas of the text to see whether Aimon consistently adopts this approach. One such area is the treatment of the heroine's education, which both confirms this hypothesis of Aimon's interaction with *Partonopeus*, and also reveals the presence of a second intertext, the *Roman d'Alexandre*.¹⁷ When the description of the heroine's education from *Partonopeus* is placed alongside the description of that of Romadanaple in *Florimont*, together with the educations of Florimont, Alexander and Florimont's tutor, Floquart, we see further evidence of Aimon deliberately reworking material from the earlier romance. The relevant quotations are given below.¹⁸

Romadanaple

Et quant ele ot .V. anz passez
Que savoit bien parole antandre,
Li rois li fist letres apanre.
.....
Sipriaigne l'ait bien aprise
Et doctrinee en mainte guise,
De totes riens li aprenoit
Que pucele savoir devoit,
De ref[s]pondre et d'escouter,
Souef et doucement parler,
Et de gramaire li lissoit.
La pucele bien aprenoit,
En lissant trovoit es ators
Des grans batailles et d'amors ;
Mai a amors plus entendoit
Que as batailles ne faisoit.
La pucele ait .X. ans passez,
De grammaire saviot assez.¹⁹ (lines 1000–40)

Melior

“Les set ars tot premierement
 Apris et soi parfaitement.
 Après apris tote mecine :
 Quanqu’est en herbe et en racine,
 Et d’espisses, de lor valor ;
 Après, le froit et la cholor,
 Et de tos maus tote la cure
 Et l’ocoison et le nature ;
 Fesique ne puet mal garir
 Dont je ne sace a chief venir.
 Puis apris de divinité
 Si que j’en sai a grant plenté,
 Et la viés loi et la novele
 Qui tot le sens del mont chaële.
 Ains que eüsse quinze ans passés
 Oi mes maistres tos sormontés.
 Après apris espirement,
 Nigremance et enchantement.

.....
 Cil qui puet faire tant d’effort
 Qu’il sace bien argur et sort,
 Et fesique et astronomie,
 Et nigremance, lor aïe,
 Tant seroit sages et poissans
 Qu’il en feroit mervelles grans.” (lines 4595–4620)²⁰
 (Entire passage dealing with Melior’s education: lines 4583–628)

Floquart (Florimont’s tutor)

Mout estoit bien fondez des ars.
 Li maistres avoit nom Foucars;
 Mout avoit apris en s’enfance
 Astronomie et nigromance
 Et savoit de dialetique,
 De gramair et de musique
 Et de retorique savoit,
 De fîsique asi s’entendoit ;
 Tot savoit quanqu’il a mestier
 Ou a clerc ou a chevelier.²¹ (lines 1863–72)

Florimont

Florymons mout bien aprenoit
Tot seu que il savoir devoit.
Li dus le fist bien doctriner
De chevacher, d'armes porter,
De lance roidement ferir
Et a cheval d'escut covrir,
Jeus des taubles, d'eschas mater,
As dames belement parler,
Et puels d'espreviers et d'ostors,
De counoistre faux jugeors,
Parler em plait cortoisement
Et conoistre faux jugement,
D'escremie, de champions,
De menu ferir de bastons,
De harpe et de vïele aprist.²² (lines 1901–15)

In both *Partonopeus* and *Florimont*, the number of lines devoted to the description of the heroine's education is unusually long. The forty-six lines spent detailing both Melior's education and the powers resulting from it contrasts sharply with the more typical ten to fifteen lines generally devoted to a heroine's—and indeed a hero's—education.²³ The forty lines Aimon devotes to Romadanaple's education and her mistress is also much longer than the average. At first sight, the two descriptions seem very different, but I argue that the lengthy portrayal of Melior's education inspires Aimon's treatment of the same topos.

Once again, it is the differences between the descriptions which are most revealing. The curricula of the two women, for example, could not be more dissimilar. Where Melior studies “nigremance” (“necromancy,” line 4612), Romadanaple learns “souef et doucement parler” (“to speak softly and sweetly,” line 1032); where Melior has several male tutors, Romadanaple has a single, female tutor. Yet it is precisely these differences and this lack of direct echoes which argue persuasively for a relationship with *Partonopeus*, as Aimon uses the portrayal of education as another way of expressing his disapproval of Melior. Her education is more typical of the education of a male heir—or romance hero—than that of a twelfth-century lady or heroine.²⁴ She learns “les set ars” (line 4595), “tote mecine” (4597) and “fesique” (4603) (“the Seven Arts, all remedies and medicine”). Romadanaple's education represents the almost diametric opposite of Melior's: it is far more traditional and a great deal more feminine. She studies all that a demure young heroine should. Melior's

education is explicitly linked in *Partonopeus* to her role as a fairy mistress figure, and it thus becomes a likely target for Aimon's corrective re-writing strategy. Therefore we have no medicine, magic or astronomy for Romadanaple; Aimon's heroine is perfectly passive and unlikely to cause trouble as Melior does.

What is surprising, however, is that there is a parallel to Melior's education in *Florimont*, and one which presents some verbal similarities. These are to be found in the education of Floquart, Florimont's tutor. His curriculum is the same as Melior's, but with the constituent subjects reversed. Melior learns the seven arts "tot premierement" ("first of all", line 4595) before then progressing on to medicine, necromancy and astronomy. With Floquart however, Aimon lists his knowledge of astronomy and necromancy (line 1866) first and then moves on to subjects such as music and rhetoric that would form part of the seven arts (lines 1867–69). We are also told that both learn medicine (line 1870 for Floquart, 4617 for Melior). Such distinct verbal parallels draw attention to Aimon's borrowing and remodelling of material from *Partonopeus*, and his reversal of the subjects of the curriculum neatly mirrors his adaptation of the thematic patterns to which those elements belong in their original context.

However, this begs the question of why Aimon has bestowed the idealised male education of Melior on his hero's tutor and not his hero. He does describe his hero's education, but it bears no resemblance to Melior's. Where Melior learnt magic (line 4611), necromancy (4612) and medicine (4617), Florimont learnt how to ride, how to joust and how to fight (lines 1904–06). Where Florimont learnt hunting and how to address ladies (lines 1908–09), Melior learnt theology (4605) and how to cure all ills (4601). This description points to the *Roman d'Alexandre*, known in a number of different versions at the time of *Florimont's* composition.²⁵ Florimont's education closely resembles that of Alexander, the hero to whom Aimon would have us believe Florimont is grandfather. Alexander was a well-known figure in the Middle Ages, and one fact known about him is of particular relevance here; namely that the philosopher Aristotle tutored him. This explains the importance accorded to Floquart in *Florimont*; where a tutor is often an episodic or secondary character, here he is given a main role.²⁶ More unusual still is the description of what he has been taught, rather than what he teaches. In making clear links between the education of Alexander and that of Florimont, Aimon puts Floquart on a footing with Aristotle, the archetypal learned man. He must, therefore, ensure that Floquart appears to be as prestigious as possible. He achieves this by transposing Melior's education on to Floquart, who

becomes a pivot around which two textual traditions—two literary “greats” which preceded Aimon—are juxtaposed.

We see, then, that intertextuality is fundamental to Aimon’s poetic technique as he engages both directly and in more subtle ways with contemporary texts. This is entirely fitting both for his age—re-writing of existing models was valued over originality in the Middle Ages—and for the genre in which he was writing: romance is characterised by deliberate references back both to itself as a form and to its specific [past] incarnations.²⁷ The two most important forms of this medieval practice were *imitatio* and *aemulatio*: with *imitatio* a writer attempts “to reproduce a source as model in a new work” whilst with *aemulatio* a writer attempts “to outstrip the source’s version of the model.”²⁸ Aimon’s interaction with *Partonopeus* shows a certain amalgamation of these two techniques: some elements of *Partonopeus* are reproduced in a straightforward way, whilst others are reconfigured in a competitive manner, designed to draw attention to Aimon’s poetic skills. That he then introduces a second, enormously influential intertext in the form of the *Roman d’Alexandre* highlights Aimon’s creative dexterity. By transposing Melior’s education on to Floquart as a means of making him worthy of comparison with Aristotle, Aimon ties his two intertexts together in a manner that reinforces his attitudes towards each. Transferring her education to a male recipient furthers the idea that Aimon disapproves of Melior and *Partonopeus*, whilst the desire to make Floquart worthy suggests that Aimon has a more favourable attitude towards the *Roman d’Alexandre*.

This mastery of intertextual interactions may well account for the critical divide surrounding *Florimont*. Both Fourrier and Kelly are partially right: it is, clearly, a “reproduction” of *Partonopeus* (though not the unskilful imitation which Fourrier would assert), whilst at the same time being something entirely different (but not so different that we cannot perceive the influence of *Partonopeus* as Kelly would assert). As Kelly remarks, intertextuality is *more* than mere source criticism:

Intertextuality comprises a number of different models that explain relations among texts. *It differs from most earlier source study by taking into account the process of adaptation in rewriting sources.* The new author perceives a potential inherent, but not yet realized [sic], in an antecedent work and rewrites it in his or her new version.²⁹

In this respect, *Florimont* is the ideal representative for our understanding of intertextuality as a medium through which to understand literature. It is not merely attempting to reproduce or outstrip *Partonopeus*: it rewrites elements of the earlier text in the context of the *Roman d’Alexandre*, and it

is this use of multiple intertexts which makes *Florimont*'s unique stance so fascinating.

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Notes

¹ *Partonopeus de Blois*, ed. Joseph Gildea, 2 vols. All future references will be to this edition. Many thanks to the AHRC for enabling this research. For full details of all works cited, please see the bibliography.

² Aimon de Varennes, *Florimont*, ed. Alfons Hilka. All future references will be to this edition.

³ No fewer than fourteen extant manuscripts (11 complete, 3 fragmentary) attest its popularity during the Middle Ages. Despite this, there have been relatively few articles written on *Florimont*—34 to date. The majority of these concentrate on philological and linguistic matters rather than literary aspects and not all of them deal solely with *Florimont*. No one has deemed it worthy of a book.

⁴ Anthime Fourrier, *Le courant réaliste dans le roman courtois en France au Moyen Age*.

⁵ Douglas Kelly, “The Composition of Aimon de Varennes’ *Florimont*”.

⁶ See Matilda Bruckner, “The Interplay of Gender and Genres in *Partonopeus de Blois*”. She examines the roles that Melior occupies and notes that *Partonopeus* plays with traditional gender roles, commenting that Melior gradually loses power and exchanges “the role of powerful fairy mistress for that of haughty, but hesitating lyric *domna*,” in the second half of the romance (110).

⁷ Harf-Lancner tells us that the *dame* is never explicitly named as a fairy but that “tous les indices de la féeerie sont rassemblés,” (“all the indications of faerie are present.”). Laurence Harf-Lancner, “D’*Enéas* à *Florimont*: Sens et fonction de la féeerie dans le *Florimont* d’Aimon de Varennes,” 126. All translations are mine.

⁸ “I know well how beautiful I am. I do not believe you could find anyone more beautiful than I, no matter how far you went.”

⁹ She also professes the Christian faith as a way of reassuring Partonopeus, line 1149 and 1535–56.

¹⁰ Romadanaple seems to fit Roberta Krueger’s description perfectly: “romances cast women more often as desired objects than active subjects in chivalric adventures or quests.” Roberta Krueger, “Questions of gender in Old French courtly romance,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Romance*, ed. Roberta Krueger, 137.

¹¹ Before she first meets the *Povre Perdu* her father instructs her to reply sweetly to him, should *Florimont* address her, (lines 6059–60). Romadanaple replies in submissive obedience: “‘Sire,’ fet ele, ‘jai folie / N’orait per moi ne vilonie,’” “‘Lord,’ she said, ‘Neither madness / Nor base behaviour will you ever have from me,’” (lines 6061–62).

¹² For a discussion of the humanisation of Melior through this loss see Colleen P. Donagher's "Socializing the Sorceress: The Fairy Mistress Theme in *Lanval*, *Le Bel Inconnu* and *Partonopeus de Blois*".

¹³ "The Lady of the Hidden Isle, / my Lord, had killed me."

¹⁴ "This association of the fairy with the enchanter places... the Lady of the Hidden Isle on the side of a black magic."

¹⁵ "The love for the one from the Hidden Isle / Was forgotten as she entered."

¹⁶ The gender reversal in *Partonopeus* is usually seen as a reworking of the male and female roles of the Cupid and Psyche legend under the influence of the fairy mistress of the *lai*, a form which had become popular from the mid-twelfth century onwards. See for example, Thomas H. Brown, "The Relationship Between *Partonopeus de Blois* and the Cupid and Psyche Tradition".

¹⁷ See note 25 for publication details.

¹⁸ As befits her status as a supernatural entity, we are given no description of an education for the *dame de l'Île Celee*. The presence of such a description for Melior reinforces her status as a human heroine.

¹⁹ "And when she had passed the age of five and knew well the meanings of words, the king had her learn her letters. [...] Sipriaigne taught her well and instructed her in many ways, she taught her everything that a young lady should know; how to reply and how to listen, to speak softly and sweetly, and schooled her in Latin. The young girl learnt well, through reading the Latin authors she found out about the great battles and of love; but paid more attention to love than to the battles. When the young girl had reached ten she was well trained in Latin."

²⁰ "First I learnt the Seven Arts and knew them perfectly. Afterwards I learnt all healing: whatever value there was in herbs, in roots and in spices. Then about cold and heat, and the cause, nature and care of all illnesses. Medicine cannot provide a disease which I do not know how to bring to an end. Then I learnt theology, so that I know about it in abundance: both the old and the new law which command all the order of the world. Before I had reached 15 years I had surpassed all my masters. Then I learnt magic, necromancy and enchantment. [...] Whoever can make enough effort so that they well know auguries and predictions, medicine and astronomy and magic to help them, will be so wise and powerful that they will perform great marvels."

²¹ "He was very well versed in the arts. The master's name was Floquart. In his youth he learned a great deal of astronomy and magic and he knew all about dialectic, Latin and music. And he knew rhetoric and understood medicine as well. He knew everything needful for either a clerk or a knight."

²² "Florimont learnt very well all that he needed to know. The Duke had him well instructed; in riding, in carrying arms, in how to strike hard with a lance, and how to use his shield on horseback. He learnt backgammon, how to win at chess, how to talk beautifully to ladies and then to hunt with sparrow hawks and goshawks, how to recognise false judges, to present pleas in a courteous manner and to recognise false judgment. He learnt to joust, to fight in single combat, to strike precisely with batons and he learnt the harp and the hurdy-gurdy."

²³ The fact that Melior's education also has a significant narrative function as the source of her magical powers is also atypical. Descriptions of education tend to be semi-autonomous narrative units, included as part of the portrayal of hero or heroine, but with no further narrative function. See Penny Simons, "The Theme of Education in 12th and 13th Century French Epic and Romance," and also "Theme and variations: the education of the hero in the *Roman d'Alexandre*," especially 205–06.

²⁴ Bruckner comments: "her father made sure his only heir received what might otherwise be considered a male education, the entire encyclopaedia of twelfth-century learning," (123, "Interplay of Gender and Genres").

²⁵ For further information on the dating of and relationships between these texts, see *The Medieval French "Roman d'Alexandre"*, Elliott Monographs edition, VII vols (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1937–42).

²⁶ Charles François has commented on this role: "en même temps que son propre porte-parole il [Aïmon] en a fait la conscience de son héros et un instrument de sa destinée. Ce mentor est partout, dans *Florimont*," (9–10). Charles François, "Avec Florimont sur les traces de Floire". "At the same time as making him his own [Aïmon's] representative, he has also made him the conscience of his hero and an instrument of his destiny. This mentor is everywhere in *Florimont*."

²⁷ This poetic technique is usefully analysed by Douglas Kelly in *The Conspiracy of Allusion: Description, Rewriting and Authorship from Macrobius to Medieval Romance* and *The Art of Medieval French Romance*.

²⁸ Kelly, *The Conspiracy of Allusion*, 50.

²⁹ Douglas Kelly, "Chrétien de Troyes," in *The Arthur of the French: The Arthurian Legend in Medieval French and Occitan Literature*, ed. Glyn S. Burgess, and Karen Pratt, 148. My italics.

