

## Female Doubling in *Galeran de Bretagne*

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In his essay *The Double: A Psychoanalytic Study*, Otto Rank considers the figure of the Double in romantic and post-romantic fiction (Hoffmann, Shamusso, Dostoyevsky, Wilde, and others).<sup>1</sup> Although he is dealing with texts from a different period and his concern is with psychoanalysis rather than literary analysis, a number of Rank's observations are of interest in the study of medieval literature. Rank stresses the *exact similarity* of the Double to the protagonist. The Double resembles the main character not only in appearance but 'down to the small particulars, such as name, voice, and clothing – a likeness which, as though "stolen from the mirror" (Hoffmann), primarily appears to the main character as reflection'.<sup>2</sup>

The idea of 'reflection' suggests a strong sense of *model/imitation* relationship between the protagonist and his Double. The protagonist is presented as the original and the Double as an imitation (although this hierarchy is typically destabilised in the course of the narrative as the protagonist increasingly questions his own authenticity). Although the double seems to be identical to the hero (and is often taken for the hero by other characters), he is by no means the hero himself. The main character struggles (usually in vain) to assert his own truth against the illusion represented by the Double who is usurping the protagonist's position in society and the affection of his beloved. However, although existing independently, the Double is still part of the hero: if the latter kills his Double he inevitably terminates his own life. According to Rank's psychoanalytical interpretation, suicide represents the protagonist's hidden purpose in Double

narratives. Literary texts thus expose a mechanism by which a suicidal subject protects its own narcissism and overcomes fear of death and self-destruction. The ego, for Rank, unconsciously creates its own double that starts to function as an independent being in the text. The slaying of the self under the form of the culpable and hated other is therefore desirable and painless.<sup>3</sup> This analysis suggests the existence of a relationship of *creator and creation* between the subject and his Double. The ego (represented by the protagonist) creates its own double in order to be able to achieve the *purpose* of self-extermination. This implies, one might argue, that the figure of the Double is only important and relevant to the narrative until the moment where its ultimate purpose is attained: that is, the death of the protagonist. To summarize, although the protagonist and the Double may appear *identical*, the Double is not only an *imitation* of the protagonist but is also his own *creation*. Most importantly, the Double is created for a specific *purpose*, the attainment of which makes it *redundant*.

The applicability of a theory of the (romantic) Double to the corpus of medieval romances that deal with a double of the heroine has been questioned by Morgan Dickson.<sup>4</sup> Rejecting the analytical framework suggested by the tradition Rank originated, Dickson justly observes that a distinction needs to be made between the use of the figure of the Double in romantic literature and the phenomenon of 'female doubling' in medieval romance because in the latter instance, 'the doubled character is not the one who produces or even perceives the double.'<sup>5</sup> In the medieval French texts that Dickson analyses (*Tristan* by Thomas, *Le Roman de Horn*, *Eliduc* by Marie de France, *Boeve de Haumtone*, and *Le Bel Inconnu*), it is not the heroine herself who perceives another female character as her double but the hero who establishes a connection between the two women. For Dickson, a more productive way of looking at the group of texts in question is to divide them in two groups according to the role of the female double in the plot:

*Eliduc* and *Le Bel Inconnu* follow the *Tristan* model in dividing love and marriage between the doubled figures, so that the hero's wife and beloved are separate characters. The second group consists of *Horn* and *Boeve*, in which the female character who forms the primary love interest is indeed doubled, yet the hero ultimately marries the first, whom he comes to love if he did not already. The second female character is also married, with more or less willingness, to the hero's right-hand man.<sup>6</sup>

Dickson's interest is primarily with Anglo-Norman romance, and she does not consider *Galeran de Bretagne* by Renaut as part of her corpus.<sup>7</sup> However, the similarity in the use of the second female figure in *Galeran* to one of the most famous of Dickson's texts – Thomas's *Tristan* – has been noted by scholars. For example, Kathryn M. Talarico argues that 'since he [Galeran] assumes that Fresne is probably dead, and that he must thus remain incomplete without her, perhaps he can make her live again in the reflection that he finds of her in Flourie (as Tristan marries Yseut aux Blanches Mains, a reflection of his beloved Yseut la Blonde)'.<sup>8</sup> In the present essay, I propose to study *Galeran de Bretagne* as a romance of 'female doubling'. I shall show that Rank's framework is in fact adaptable to *Galeran* and is useful for the understanding of this text. The essay will look at how the ideas of exact similarity, creator and creation, model and imitation, the purpose and elimination of the double, all drawn from Rank's essay and presented above, work in *Galeran de Bretagne* and to what effect. I shall further argue that this text presents two subplots, each of which brought to happy resolution by means of the figure of the double.

*Galeran de Bretagne* being a little known text, I shall begin by outlining the plot in some detail. Then, using Rank's ideas, I shall analyze how the figure of the female double is constructed in the romance and how it is used in the love plot between Galeran and Fresne. In the concluding section of the essay, I shall demonstrate

the role of the double in the denouement of the adultery plot that serves a framework for the romance.

At a courtly gathering, a young woman called Gente, the wife of Brundoré, publicly accuses of adultery another woman, who has recently given birth to twin sons. A twin birth, Gente argues, proves that the woman had slept with two men. Soon she herself gives birth to twin daughters. In order to avoid being accused of adultery, she exposes one of them. The abandoned girl is raised in a nunnery where she is given the name of Fresne (because she was found in the branches of an ash-tree). By chance Galeran, son of the count of Brittany, is being brought up at the same convent. The two fall in love but are later separated. Following the death of his parents, Galeran goes to serve at the court of Metz. When the relationship between Galeran and Fresne becomes known to the abbess, Fresne leaves the nunnery and takes up residence in Rouen in the company of a girl named Rose. There she lives under an assumed name of Mahaut, and works as an embroideress. The daughter of the duke of Metz, named Esmeree, falls in love with Galeran who wins a tournament against her suitor Gainant, but Galeran remains faithful to Fresne. When his messengers fail to find Fresne, however, Galeran believes her dead. Prompted by his vassals to take a wife, he chooses the daughter of his friend Brundoré (whom he has met at the court of Metz), Flourie, whose resemblance to Fresne is striking. When she hears the news of the engagement, Esmeree falls ill with despair. On the wedding day, Fresne appears at Brundoré's court where she is recognized by Galeran as his lost beloved and by Brundoré's wife Gente as her abandoned daughter. Brundoré forgives his wife and acknowledges Fresne as his daughter. The lovers can marry, and Flourie decides to take the veil.

Exact resemblance to the beloved is what Galeran values in the objects and persons that remind him of Fresne in her absence. Before disappearing from Beauséjour abbey and from Galeran's life, Fresne sends the young man a sleeve on which she has embroidered her own image. The image resembles Fresne perfectly, only it cannot speak (lines 3250-1). Galeran venerates the sleeve, keeps it close to his skin and sometimes takes it out to kiss it (lines 4440-4). Similarly, Brundoré's daughter Flourie is

presented as perfectly resembling Fresne. When Galeran meets the girl, no one in the text knows the reason for this resemblance; only the narrator and the reader share this knowledge:

Et est a Fresne suer jumelle,  
Et tant la ressemble de vis  
Qu'entre ces deux, ce m'est avis  
N'a descorde n'en piez, n'en membre. (5220-3)

[And she is Fresne's twin sister and she resembles her so much in her appearance that there is no difference, in my opinion, between these two girls in the foot or any part of the body.]

The first impression that Galeran has of Flourie is that of a complete identity between her and his beloved. Flourie reminds him of Fresne even when her face is still covered up with a 'guimple':

Cil la regarde, si li membre  
De l'amour dont il est soubzpris;  
Esbahiz est et maz et pris. (5224-6)

[He looks at her and he is reminded of the love that possesses him; he is disturbed, troubled and captivated.]

The image of the beloved in an unknown woman troubles Galeran. When he sees the face of the young woman, however, he does not 'remember' any longer, but behaves as if she were Fresne herself:

...Quant cil l'esgarde,  
S'a le cuer sans sens et sans garde,  
N'i entent raison ne devise,  
Entre ses braz l'a tantost prise,  
Si l'acole et vingt foiz la baise,  
Cui qu'il soit lait ou cui qu'il plaise. (5233-8)

[When he looks at her, he loses reason and caution, he takes her in his arms straight away, embraces her and kisses her twenty times, regardless of anyone whom this action might displease or please.]

It is the image of Fresne in Flourie that makes Galeran behave unreasonably, when he kisses Brundoré's daughter on meeting her for the first time. However, it would not be correct to say that he *sees* her for the first time, since her appearance is more than familiar to him. Because of her resemblance to Fresne, Flourie makes Galeran experience a total union with the beloved in her absence. Later Galeran regrets his behaviour, which gives the narrator an opportunity to play upon the homophony of words meaning 'kiss' and 'humiliate':

Pour tout l'or qui est a Verdun  
Ne la vousist avoir baisiee  
Galeren, c'or a il baisiee,  
ce dist, s'amie... (5262-5)

[Galeran wishes he had not kissed her – no, not for all the gold at Verdun – for now, he tells himself, he has humiliated his beloved.]

Later, however, he claims that his kiss has not affected his beloved because he kissed Flourie for Fresne's sake (lines 5321-3), and he is ready to love Flourie 'pour Fresnain' (line 5305). Moreover, he claims that he sees in Flourie just another image of Fresne, superior to the image on the sleeve which he used earlier only because Flourie is a living, not inanimate likeness:

Par foy, greindre resons me semble  
A la pucele de ceens  
Qu'a l'ymage, qui est niens  
Envers li, qu'elle me presente  
Fresnain, tant est et belle et gente. (5300-4)

[Honestly, I think it more reasonable that the girl who lives here represent Fresne to me than the image, which is nothing compared to her; because the girl is so beautiful and noble.]

One important difference between Rank's model and romances of 'female doubling' is that it is not the hero but the heroine who is doubled. Moreover, as Dickson has pointed out, the doubled character and the character who creates and perceives the double are here two different figures. In *Galeran* it is the hero who creates a link between Flourie and Fresne and who defines the former as (in modern terms) the double of the latter. Moreover, this link is unknown to others, including Flourie herself, who interprets Galeran's behaviour at their first meeting as a sign of his love for her and who falls in love in her turn (ll. 5330-84). In *Galeran*, the woman is (seen as) doubled by the man, and this doubling is there in order to palliate the protagonist's problem (the absence of his beloved). Thus, as in the romantic narratives of the Double, it is the male protagonist who is at the centre of the doubling situation.

Galeran's interest in Flourie is the consequence of her resemblance to Fresne. Galeran, we have seen, describes his emotion for Flourie as an expression of the highest degree of fidelity to Fresne. It is Fresne that he loves in Flourie, not herself. Thus he sees the girl as an imitation of the model that is Fresne, an imitation through which he can gain access to the original.

However, the clear sense of a model-imitation relationship is somehow confused when the embroidered sleeve comes into play again as yet another (if paler) imitation. If the sleeve is meant to represent Fresne in her absence, one might say that it serves as a 'signifier' of the 'signified' which is Fresne. Flourie may also be just another (speaking) signifier for the beloved. Yet as a living person of extraordinary resemblance to Fresne she can also claim her own role as 'signified' of the image on the sleeve. When Galeran prepares for the tournament that will oppose him and the Breton party to Esmeree's suitor Gaignant and his followers, he

decides to wear Fresne's sleeve publicly for the first time. If earlier it was a private object of veneration, now the sleeve is exposed for everyone to see. The sight of the image on the sleeve helps Galeran to win his battle. However, he is said to wear the sleeve not for Fresne but for Flourie. If only for a short time, Flourie becomes the 'signified' for the image on the sleeve:

Fresnain oublie, ce li semble:  
 Pour Flourie qui la ressemble  
 Veult il demain porter la manche  
 Que li donna Fresne la blanche,  
 Qui chascum jour prie pour li. (5885-9)

[He forgets Fresne, so it seems to him: it is for Flourie who resembles her that he wants to wear tomorrow the sleeve that was given to him by Fresne the Fair, who is praying for him every day.]

This passage thus exposes the troubling quality of resemblance: it has the power to claim the status of the model and produce its own imitations.<sup>9</sup> When Galeran first sees Flourie he behaves as if she were Fresne the beloved; in this later episode, however, Flourie takes the place of the beloved and displaces Fresne, if only briefly. While the initial image of Flourie that Galeran perceives is an image of wholeness, of complete adequacy to the image of the beloved (to the point where the girl, we have seen, becomes the beloved), very soon this image loses its wholeness and appears divided. He starts to see Flourie as a body fragmented. In an interesting reworking of the traditional portrait, Flourie is described as made up of different parts of Fresne's body:

Le semblant Fresnain porte en l'ueil,  
 En nez, en bouche et en visage,  
 En chief, en braz et en coursage,  
 Et en mainte autre contenance. (5306-9)



[She bears resemblance to Fresne in her eye, in her nose, in her mouth, in her face, in her head, in her arms, and in her chest, and in many other respects.]

Also:

Cil la regarde en vis, en teste,  
En gorge, en coul, en braz, en corps,  
Si la voit Fresnain par dehors. (5356-8)

[He looks at her face, her head, her breast, her chest, her arms, her body, and sees her [to be] Fresne from the outside.]

And:

Si prendray feme pour ses dens,  
Et pour ses yeulz, et pour sa bouche. (6850-1)  
[So I will take a wife for her teeth, and for her eyes, and for her mouth.]

As the second of these quotations suggests, another way of presenting Flourie as divided is to oppose the 'inside' to the 'outside'. Flourie is often referred to as Fresne's reflection, her 'ombre' (e.g. lines 5530, 6853).<sup>10</sup> Although Flourie's appearance conveys the image of Fresne perfectly, the 'rest' does not satisfy Galeran:

C'est Flourie, qui a la chiere  
Et le semblant plus avenant  
Qu'elle n'ait tout le remenant;  
Li remenant voir m'en descorde,  
Puis que'au semblant point ne s'accorde. (6826-30)

[This is Flourie who has face and appearance that are more attractive for me than the rest; the rest really does not suit me because it does not correspond to the semblance.]

When Galeran decides to marry Flourie he only cares for her looks:

Mais cil n'y prent que la semblance  
Fresnain que la pucelle porte,  
Flourie; de tant se conforte,  
Qu'il n'y ayme que le semblant,  
Mais le surplus li va troublant. (6442-6)

[But he is only taking in her the appearance of Fresne that the girl Flourie carries in herself; he is consoling himself that he only loves the looks, but the rest [the excess] is troubling him.]

Be it the 'rest' in Flourie that does not correspond to Fresne, or the 'excess' that she brings to the image of the beloved, Galeran is concerned with the inadequacy of his bride to the beloved and thus, one might say, with the imperfection of the imitation.<sup>11</sup> This awareness of the double's imperfection is by no means a criticism of Flourie's personal qualities. What matters to Galeran is that Flourie is not Fresne despite her resemblance to her. Although the romance presents moments of confusion when the protagonist takes the double for the beloved, the sense of the double's inadequacy to its model, which translates into the fragmentation of the double's body, grows as the time of the wedding approaches, and Galeran starts to regret his decision to take Flourie as his wife. Only his promise to Brundoré binds him to Flourie:

Se il s'en pouoit excuser,  
Voulentiers s'en excuseroit  
Ne ja mais ne l'espouserait. (6816-8)

[If he could find a way to avoid doing it he would never marry her.]

Interestingly, it is not only Galeran who sees in Flourie an imperfect imitation of Fresne. Although when the reader and Galeran first see Flourie, the girl is said to have a perfect resemblance to Fresne, when the two sisters are seen together a difference in the degree of beauty becomes apparent. When Gente recognizes Fresne as her daughter, she not only recognizes the birth tokens she herself had put into the girl's cradle before abandoning her. She also recognizes Fresne's likeness to Flourie:

Lues que Gente voit la pucelle,  
De s'autre fille si li semble,  
Pour ce que elle li ressemble;  
Mais Fresne de biauté la passé. (7260-3)

[As soon as Gente sees the girl she appears to her to be like her other daughter because she resembles her; but Fresne is more beautiful.]

Gente does not identify parts of Flourie's body in Fresne but reacts to her whole image. Thus for Gente, Flourie seems to be the primary model, the basis on which comparison can be made. If Fresne resembles Flourie it is because she is her twin sister, and therefore Gente's abandoned daughter. However, the fact that Fresne, although identical to Flourie, is also more beautiful suggests that the latter girl may be but a paler reflection (or imitation) of the former. In Fresne, one can argue, Gente discovers the lost model for Flourie's beauty.

Now that we have looked at the topics of resemblance, creator/creation and model/imitation relationships, it is logical to discuss the purpose of doubling for the love plot between Galeran and Fresne. Because of her resemblance to Fresne, Galeran argues, Flourie might make him 'forget his grief' and this is the reason why she is the only woman (except for Fresne herself) that he can

possibly marry.<sup>12</sup> However, we have seen, this project is not successful. Galeran is increasingly aware of a gap between the beloved and her double. Galeran feels trapped in this project of marriage and blames his entourage for marrying him 'a force' (line 6821). Were it not for Fresne's unexpected arrival at the wedding Galeran would have been married to the woman he does not love. When Fresne comes to Brundoré's court, it is not by her appearance that Galeran recognizes her, for her face is covered (echoing the episode of his first meeting with Flourie), but by the *lai* she is singing, the same *lai* that Galeran had taught her in the abbey of Beauséjour (lines 6997 ff.). Fresne is here appealing not to Galeran's knowledge of her image, her 'outside', her 'semblant' but to the 'inside' of the relationship; however we interpret this, it is contrasted with that which is lacking or excessive – the troubling 'remanent' or 'surplus' – in Galeran's relationship with Flourie.

When Fresne disappears from the abbey and Galeran's twenty messengers search for her for a year without result, Galeran starts to believe his beloved dead. However, he declares that he will love Fresne even if she is no longer alive: 's'ell'est morte amer la vueil' (line 4399). Nevertheless, Galeran is concerned by the disappearance of all traces of Fresne. In an interesting monologue, Galeran asks God for Fresne's body:

Et si Dieu a de moi envie  
 Qu'o li en ait l'ame ravie,  
 De mon duel m'oüst oste hors  
 S'il eüst l'ame et moy le corps:  
 C'est convoiteux de tout avoir  
 Quant je ne sçay de li le voir. (4375-80)

[And if God is jealous of me and therefore has taken away her soul, it would take me out of my grief if he had the soul and I the body: it is greedy to have everything when I do not know the truth about her.]

Galeran seems to be asking to find the body of his presumably dead beloved. One may remember that before he left Fresne in Beauséjour, Galeran promised her never to love anyone else as long as both were living:

Tant com je suis en terre vis,  
Et qu'en vostre cors savray l'ame,  
N'avray autre que vous a fame. (2244-6)

[As long as I live on earth and know that your soul is in your body I will take no one but you as my wife.]

Although the romance does not say it explicitly, one may be tempted to interpret Galeran's request to see Fresne's dead body as a desire to be freed from his oath in order to continue with his life. In the text, however, Galeran's wish is granted literally, though ironically. It is in Fresne's double Flourie that Galeran finds the body of his beloved. Since he has met Flourie, he declares, Fresne is not entirely taken away from him: 'Ne m'est pour ce toute tollie' (line 5312). Moreover, he interprets the beloved's appearance in another woman as somehow bringing the beloved back to life:

Dieu! con scet bien Nature ovrer,  
Qu'ainsi me fait Fresnain revivre! (5316-7)

[God! How well can Nature work since it makes Fresne so live again.]

In more than one way, the introduction of the beloved's double into the plot of *Galeran* brings the beloved literally back to life. If only for a short time the protagonist seems to accept Flourie for his beloved when she becomes the model for the image on the sleeve. Moreover, it is news of Galeran's decision to marry Flourie that makes Fresne leave Rouen and come to Brundoré's court, where she is recognized as Galeran's 'real' beloved and Brundoré's other daughter.

According to the narrator, when Fresne decides to change her name on taking up residence in Rouen, she does so in order to be forgotten by everyone (lines 4266-7). This explanation, however, seems unsatisfactory, and does not explain why the heroine refuses to join Galeran and even makes it impossible for his messengers to find her because she is no longer known under her own name. I agree with Passon, who argues that this is due to the heroine's internal crisis. Fresne finds herself unable to cope with two different aspects of her personality: on the one hand, she is an abandoned child raised in a nunnery out of charity, on the other, she is Galeran's beloved with 'noble aspirations'.<sup>13</sup> The decision to change her name and thus suspend the existence of her old self provides a temporary solution. It is this temporary suspension of Fresne's existence that Galeran, from his point of view, interprets as death. Only the news of Galeran's wedding makes Fresne reveal her former identity in order to test Galeran's feelings.<sup>14</sup>

In the romantic texts studied by Rank, the figure of the Double is used by the protagonist in order to commit suicide; by contrast, in *Galeran de Bretagne*, as this analysis demonstrates, the figure of female double is used to bring the beloved back to both bodily and social life. In the plots analyzed by Rank an action performed on the Double affects the doubled. In the same way, in *Galeran* the protagonist's acceptance of the beloved's double gives him back the beloved herself.

Once this purpose is attained, the double is no longer important. Like the unconsciously desired death of the protagonist in narratives of the Double, in *Galeran* Fresne's return is the narrative's final goal. An interesting analogy can here be drawn between what happens to Flourie and what happens to the portrait of Dorian Gray in Wilde's novel. When Dorian dies he assumes the features of the portrait and the portrait changes back to representing Dorian the young man. A similar exchange of roles is operated between Flourie and Fresne. Flourie, who was genuinely in love with Galeran, refuses to take any other husband and takes the veil:

Flourie grand duel y demeine,  
 Et tel douleur au cuer s'en met  
 Qu'elle voue a Dieu et promet  
 Que ja mes baron ne prendra,  
 Ançoys de duel se rendera:  
 Et si fit elle puis sans faille. (7716-21)

[Flourie is suffering a great deal, and the pain in her heart is so great that she vows to God and promises never to take a husband but rather to take the veil out of grief; and that she certainly did afterwards.]

By taking the veil, Flourie is giving up her place in society and in her family; in fact, she is leaving this place to Fresne, who has already taken Flourie's place at Galeran's side. Flourie adopts a position of invisibility in society, a position that was initially destined for Fresne.

The text of *Galeran* presents two more female figures that may be theorized as the heroine's doubles – Esmeree, the daughter of duke of Metz, and Rose, the girl of low birth with whom Fresne lives in Rouen. This study is concerned with the image of exact resemblance which is Flourie; however, these two figures deserve mention. These two characters represent different aspects of the second type of the female double according to Dickson's typology.<sup>15</sup> When he serves at the court of Metz Galeran attracts the attention of the duke's daughter, who falls in love with him. Although he defeats Esmeree's suitor Gaignant in a tournament and a game of chess, Galeran is not interested in Esmeree and is faithful to Fresne. It is only an image of perfect likeness to the beloved that attracts him. When Esmeree learns the news of Galeran's engagement, she becomes ill with grief (lines 6454-7).

The figure of Rose is used at the end of the romance to displace Flourie yet again. In Dickson's second type of romance it is the double of the heroine who is given a husband in the end (lines 7790-2). In *Galeran* this happens to Rose as if she, not Flourie or

even Esmeree, were the rejected female double. Thus Rose, Fresne's companion during the time she spent without Galeran, is the only other young female in the romance who is successfully married.

Having demonstrated how the double of the heroine is presented and used in the story of Galeran and Fresne's love, I shall now briefly outline the role of this doubling in the adultery plot which frames the main plot. At the beginning of the extant text it is explained why Fresne, a daughter of noble parents, is brought up in an abbey as a foundling. When Gente calumniates a neighbour's wife, Marsile, she claims that twin birth is the result of the woman's adultery. Although no one seems to believe the slander, the friendship between the two neighbours is over.<sup>16</sup> When Gente gives birth to twins two years later, she is afraid that her own words about twin birth will be recalled against her and she will be called adulterous: 'Or suis je pute sans putage' – 'Now I am a whore even though I did not fornicate' (l. 258). Gente's slander is provoked by the general admiration of Marsile's and Maten's twins ('Ceste parole mist la rage/ Ou cuer Gentin la chastelaine' – 'These words put fury in the heart of Gente the chatelaine' (lines 150-1). The accusation is based on the assumption that the division of a woman's body between two men will manifest itself in multiple births.<sup>17</sup> Gente talks about the violation of unity and as a result her own unity (as a wife) can be put into question. In order to preserve this unity she decides to sacrifice one of her daughters. Although, unlike her counterpart from Marie's *lai Le Fresne*, Gente does not consider murder, what she has in mind is the social death of one of the twins.<sup>18</sup> She strips her of her inherited social standing and silences her by consigning her to a nunnery.

Although a matter of concern to the heterosexual married couple, adultery further results in a complication of the relationship between men. In the tradition of the romances of Tristan and Iseut, the lovers' relationship compromises Iseut's marriage to Mark but also Tristan's relationship with his uncle and Mark's relationship



with his barons. Similarly the outcome of Gente's slander is not Marsile's condemnation but the breaking of the bond between her husband Maten and Gente's husband Brundoré. The initiator of this adultery, however, is not Marsile but Gente herself; it is in a sense 'her' adultery, as is confirmed by the accusation's rebounding onto its originator. But as the roles of the characters in the adultery plot shift (Gente takes the place of the adulterous woman and Marsile's husband that of the offended party while Brundoré loses a friend and vassal), so the character of adultery shifts as well: it is not sexual but discursive. Gente's words, by assigning a meaning to a random event (birth of twins), give this 'adultery' a material body – the existence of twins cannot be denied; and it is Gente herself, the creator of this relationship of signified and signifier, who will suffer from her 'verbal adultery' if the existence of her own twins is discovered. Conventionally in medieval French literature, adulterous lovers have to cover up the existence of sexual relations between them by means of a careful manipulation of words (see, for example, the ambiguous oaths in Bérout's *Tristan* or in Chrétien's *Chevalier de la Charette*). By her slander (a careless use of words?), Gente creates a discursive situation where she has to conceal an 'adultery' that she has not committed. No less than literal, sexual adultery, Gente's words result in the disruption of social relationships. Moreover, this purely verbal adultery cannot be concealed by means of words; it can only be concealed by renegotiating social relations between people.

If Iseut's adultery has been linked to the queen's barrenness,<sup>19</sup> in Gente's version of the adultery tale adultery leads to multiple birth, multiplication of meaning and confusion. According to Tony Tanner, adultery 'introduces an agonizing and irresolvable category-confusion into the individual and thence into society itself'.<sup>20</sup> Gente's verbal adultery creates a category confusion that is exteriorised in her children. Instead of one daughter she has two, the number to which she herself earlier assigned an adulterous meaning. In order to re-establish the 'right' number she rejects one

of the daughters, thus complicating, confusing that daughter's life since, although Fresne herself and her tutor Lohier are convinced of Fresne's high birth (lines 3878-87), she cannot be recognized as noble by everyone before she is readmitted to her own family. This confusion extends to other characters in the romance: Flourie and Galeran, we have seen, have their lives complicated by Gente's 'adultery' and her attempts to conceal it. In fact, Gente's slander generates new connections between the characters. Although Fresne never enjoys friendship with her twin sister Flourie, from whom she was separated at birth, she enjoys a sisterly love with Rose. It is because Fresne is abandoned that she is brought up together with Galeran and the two fall in love. Gente's act (abandoning one of the daughters) turns out to restore what her slander has destroyed: instead of Maten, Brundoré now has a new, nobler and more powerful ally in Galeran. Gente is forgiven because what has happened seems to have happened to everyone's satisfaction.

Gente's remorse for what she has done to her daughter merits, however, further consideration. We have already seen that she thinks Fresne more beautiful than Flourie. Furthermore, Fresne's mother does not appear to regret abandoning a daughter, but abandoning the wrong one. At meeting Fresne, Gente exclaims:

Car pleüst a Dieu que Flourie  
Fust en ton lieu et tu ou sien! (7310-1)  
[Would to God that Flourie had been in your place and  
you in hers!]

Thus Gente never fully denies her initial claim: in the system of signification created by her, the union between one woman and one man can only produce one child at a time. It seems that if this does not happen then the mother, in order to preserve the discursive unity of her body, has to pick the right offspring to keep and to dispose of the wrong. If she makes a mistake, the right child will eventually take his or her rightful place anyway. As the text

shows, all the characters but one benefit from this exchange of the 'wrong' daughter for the 'right' one.

In conclusion, it is through the figure of Flourie, the double of the heroine, that the connection between different characters and different lines of the narrative is operated in *Galeran*. Galeran's attraction to Flourie brings him closer to Brundoré's family and brings Fresne to the court; this provokes the discovery of Fresne's identity; which makes Gente confess her act to Brundoré and Brundoré forgive her. Flourie's function as a connector places her in the centre of the narrative. But this central position is ironic (echoing the irony of Gente's 'verbal adultery'): although central to the text, Flourie is eventually disposed off by it. As Galeran is looking for a means to have the beloved back and Gente is striving to conceal the consequences of her careless words, the text silences the character who (in spite of herself) brings all the threads of the narrative together and allows what is presented as a satisfactory resolution. Gente's 'verbal' adultery, her subsequent 'wrong' choice of daughter, Galeran's own 'wrong' choice of bride have to be forgotten, become just another secret of the past, and Flourie has to disappear.

Ironically, while *Galeran de Bretagne* is 'silencing' the heroine's double in a nunnery, it is also exposing the fact that its own rewriting of the adultery plot can only come to a successful closure by sacrificing a character and her feelings. Flourie is in love with Galeran, and her unknown twin sister's arrival deprives her not only of her mother's affection but also of the prospect of marrying her beloved. Her withdrawal by taking the veil reflects her recognition that there is no place for her in the new scheme of things. Now Gente has only one daughter again – this time the 'right' one. Her wish is fulfilled: what was to happen to Fresne (the life of a nun) is now going to happen to Flourie. Only thus can Gente be finally cleared of the adultery accusations she herself invented. Once again the text confirms that whereas in traditional adultery narratives the reality of bodies is concealed by words, in this story of purely verbal adultery the damaging effect of words

on marriages can only be palliated by destroying other people's lives. Human relationships suffer from adultery, and those who suffer most are unquestionably innocent of all blame. The double of the heroine is the figure that makes a happy denouement possible, but only by herself suffering, unresignedly and undeservedly. Flourie's role contrasts starkly with that of Yseut aux Blanches Mains, who incarnates the hero's doubts and the destructive power of love in Thomas's *Tristan*. The ideology of love presented in Renaut's text is, therefore, a distinctive one. The text conveys an image of love – and life – as livable only within secular society and its traditional bounds.

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## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Otto Rank, *The Double: A Psychoanalytic Study*, trans. by Harry Tucker Junior (London, Maresfield Library, 1989). First published as Otto Rank, *Der Doppelgänger: eine psychoanalytische Studie*, (Leipzig, Internationaler Psychoanalytischer Verlag, 1925).

<sup>2</sup> Rank, *The Double*, p. 33.

<sup>3</sup> 'The frequent slaying of the double, through which the hero seeks to protect himself permanently from the pursuit of his self, is really a suicidal act. It is, to be sure, in the painless form of slaying a different ego: an unconscious illusion of the splitting-off of a bad, culpable ego – a separation which, moreover, appears to be the precondition for every suicide. The suicidal person is unable to eliminate by direct self-destruction the fear of death resulting from the threat to his narcissism. To be sure, he seizes upon the only possible way out, suicide, but he is incapable of carrying it out other than by a phantom of a feared and hated double, because he loves and esteems his ego too highly to give it pain or to transform the idea of his destruction into the deed' (Rank, *The Double*, pp. 79-80).

<sup>4</sup> Morgan Dickson, 'Female doubling and male identity in medieval romance', pp. 59-72 in Philippa Hardman (ed.), *The Matter of Identity in Medieval Romance* (Cambridge, Brewer, 2003); p. 60. Toril Moi, by contrast, successfully uses Rank's framework in her study of Thomas's *Tristan* ('"She died because she came too late...": Knowledge, Doubles and Death in Thomas's

*Tristan*, *Exemplaria*, 4 (1992): 105-33.) Moi demonstrates how images of doubles (Yseut aux Blanches Mains and Tristan le Nain) are used in Thomas's text to represent the protagonists' death drive (pp. 117-24) The present essay puts more emphasis on the way Rank's model theorizes relationships between characters in the plot of the Double.

<sup>5</sup> Dickson, 'Female doubling', p. 60. Dickson maintains the distinction between the figure of the Double in romantic fiction (analyzed by Rank) and the wider sense of the word 'the double' by capitalizing the first letter of the word in the former instance. This distinction is maintained in the present essay.

<sup>6</sup> Dickson, 'Female doubling', p. 63. Resemblance between the heroine and her double is not an absolute requirement for Dickson. Another way of describing the phenomenon of 'female doubling' in medieval texts is represented by the critical tradition dating back to Gaston-Paris's 'La légende du mari aux deux femmes' (in *La Poésie du Moyen Age*, t. 2, Paris, Hachette, 1895, pp. 109-30). For Paris, the motif has two sources: Celtic tradition and the social reality of the time of the Crusades when knights brought new wives from overseas. To illustrate his point, Paris uses late-medieval German ballads, and Marie de France's *Eliduc*. Both *Tristan* and *Galeran* have been identified as part of the 'man with two wives' tradition. See for example, Marie-José Heijkant, 'Yseut aux Blanches Mains dans le *Tristano Riccardiano*: le motif de l'homme entre deux femmes et le motif de la femme abandonnée', *Tristania*, 16 (1995): 63-76 (p. 66). On *Galeran* as a version of the same motif, see Gianfelice Peron, 'Una variante del tema dell' "homme entre deux femmes" nel *Galeran de Bretagne*', *Studi di Letteratura Francese*, 3 (1974): 49-60. For Peron, Renaut presents a moralizing version of the motif that solves all contradictions.

<sup>7</sup> Jean Renart, *Galeran de Bretagne: roman du XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, ed. by Lucien Foulet (Paris, Champion, 1925). The romance was composed between 1295 and 1225 according to the editor and survives in a single 15<sup>th</sup>-century paper manuscript (Paris, B.N., f. f. r. 24042 ). The romance is signed by an otherwise unknown Renaut and since the publication of Rita Lejeune's monograph (*L'œuvre de Jean Renart: contribution à l'étude du genre romanesque au moyen âge*, Liège, Faculté de philosophie et lettres; Paris, Droz, 1935) its attribution to Jean Renart, the author of the *Lai de l'Ombre*, the *Roman de la Rose ou de Guillaume de Dole* and *L'Escoufle*, is no longer considered plausible. Due to a number of similarities in plot and the identical names of the heroine, *Galeran de Bretagne* is considered to be a rewriting of Marie de France's *lai Le Fresne*. This study will make occasional references to the *lai* but will not include it in the analysis since the twins' resemblance is not stressed in Marie's text. For analysis of Renaut's reworking of Marie's material see, for example, Joan Brumlik, 'Thoughts on Renaut's use of Marie's *Fresne* in

*Galeran de Bretagne*, *Florilegium*, 14 (1995-6): 87-98; Roger Dragonetti, *Le Mirage des sources: l'art du faux dans le roman médiéval* (Paris, Seuil, 1987), pp. 229-62; Paul Vincent Rockwell, *Rewriting Resemblance in Medieval French Romance: ceci n'est pas un grail* (New York and London, Garland, 1995), chapter 2, 'Twin Mysteries: Ceci n'est pas un Fresne', pp. 25-42

<sup>8</sup> Kathryn M. Talarico, "'Un merveilleux contraire": public and private desire in *Galeran de Bretagne*', *Dalhousie French Studies*, 59 (2002): 3-20 (p. 17).

<sup>9</sup> Rockwell quotes lines 5855-9 to support his argument that *Galeran* demonstrates the danger of resemblance. Resemblance has the power to overshadow its model; and, for Rockwell, Renaut's use of the resemblance theme in *Galeran*, a text which itself resembles Marie de France's *Le Fresne*, questions Marie's own collection's 'resemblance' to its Breton prototypes (*Rewriting Resemblance*, pp. 33 ff.)

<sup>10</sup> Ann-Marie Plasson gives a detailed analysis of the use of the related oppositions inside/outside, body/reflection, truth/illusion which make up the 'obsession with reflection' of the *Galeran*-poet. She argues that on several occasions the protagonists have to make their choice between illusion and reality, and it is the choice of the former that brings the plot to a happy resolution ('L'obsession du reflet dans *Galeran de Bretagne*', in *Mélange de langues et de littératures médiévales offerts à Pierre le Gentil*, Paris: S.E.D.E.S. et C.D.U. Réunion, 1974, pp. 673-89).

<sup>11</sup> According to Dragonetti, the 'remanent' / 'surplus' is the part of Fresne that *Galeran* is unable to find in Flourie, who is therefore lacking. For Rockwell, it is the part of Flourie that comes in excess of her resemblance with Fresne. For the purposes of the present discussion, what is important is that Flourie is forever seen as divided and not adequate to Fresne. Whether less or more than Fresne, Flourie has a part that is like her sister (the 'semblant') and a part that is not (Rockwell, *Rewriting Resemblance*, p. 37; Dragonetti, *Le Mirage des sources*, p. 246.)

<sup>12</sup> Ce vous vuel je bien faire entendre, / Si je n'ay celle que je sçay, / Par celi me puis je a essay / Mettre d'oublier ma pesance (6410-3).

<sup>13</sup> Plasson, 'L'obsession du reflet', p. 678.

<sup>14</sup> For Plasson, Fresne's decision makes her understand which aspect of her personality is true and which just a matter of appearance (Plasson, 'L'obsession du reflet', p. 678).

<sup>15</sup> See above, pp. 72-73.

<sup>16</sup> Qu'onques plus pour nulle achoison / Maten Brundoré ne servi, / Quar sa femme l'ot desservi (ll. 186-8).

<sup>17</sup> The episode of the slander is borrowed from Marie de France's *Le Fresne*, but Gente claims for her opinion the authority of 'clerc' and 'prestre' (158). Eric Kooper, investigating the provenance of the motif in Marie's *lai*, argues that Le Fresne's mother does not express medical ideas of the time: 'Although according to modern gynaecology bipaternity resulting from superfecundation is a real possibility, medical handbooks of the Middle Ages ruled it out completely. To a medieval medical doctor there was no causal relation between multiple birth and adultery'. The motif, for Kooper, is to be explained by an assumption that 'twins ... are ideally suited to complicate the narrative'; an idea that 'seems to reflect the survival of an old superstition' (Eric Kooper, 'Multiple Birth and Multiple Disaster: Twins in Medieval Literature', pp. 253-69 in Keith Busby and Norris J. Lacy (eds.), *Conjunctures: Medieval Studies in Honor of Douglas Kelly*, Amsterdam and Atlanta, Rodopi, 1994; p. 268). Shulamith Shahar writes of the medieval belief 'that a woman could conceive twice (consecutively)' and claims that some children were abandoned 'in the event of their being born ... as one of a pair of twins'. The only evidence she cites to support this statement are the literary examples of *Le Fresne* and *Galeran de Bretagne* (Shulamith Shahar, *Childhood in the Middle Ages*, London and New York, Routledge, 1990; p. 122). *Galeran* emphasises Gente's responsibility for the association between twins and adultery, perhaps suggesting that the idea was not such a widely accepted one.

<sup>18</sup> Joan Brumlik comments on Renaut's elimination of the mother's murderous intentions: 'Renaut chose not to follow Marie's model in this regard, perhaps on the basis that a woman who seriously contemplated infanticide could not without difficulty be redeemed' (Joan Brumlik, 'Thoughts on Renaut's use', p. 91).

<sup>19</sup> See Peggy McCracken, *The Romance of Adultery: Queenship and Sexual Transgression in Old French Literature* (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998), p. 11, for the link between the queen's barrenness and the charge of adultery made as a pretext for divorce. See also chapter 4, 'Adultery, Illegitimacy, and Royal Maternity', pp. 119-43.

<sup>20</sup> Tony Tanner, *Adultery in the Novel: Contract and Transgression* (Baltimore and London, John Hopkins University Press, 1979), p. 12. The most important category confusion is represented by the figure of the adulterous woman herself as she does not fall into any category 'recognized as having an existence', even that of 'lover', mistress', 'whore' (p. 12).