

**Catastrophe Theory in Reading Narratives: A Way to Figure Out  
*Raoul de Cambrai* and its Rôle in the Lyrics  
of Bertran de Born**

USUALLY WHEN A READER tells the plot of a narrative, he categorizes the main characters and describes the series of events in which they participate. The reader's account of the "structuring operations"<sup>1</sup> of a narrative have therefore a basically transformational schema since he perceives its form through the changes from one stability to another. When literary critics, who are nonetheless humble and constant readers, try to express their experience of the relationship between stability and movement, they often use words like "dynamic," "energy," "tension," "transformation," "macrocosm," "microcosm," "space," "time," "archetype," and "universe."<sup>2</sup> The critical community *generally* understands these abstractions, but the use of these words will remain impressionistic as long as it is conceptually severed from a methodology where they are defined and organized in a model that connects the reader's subjective experience of narrative form with the objective existence of form in the bio-physical universe. Such a set of definitions and schemata is available to literary critics in René Thom's Catastrophe Theory.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>See remarks on plot and use of the term "structuring operation" in the recent article by Peter Brooks, "Repetition, Repression and Return: *Great Expectations* and the Study of Plot." *New Literary History*, 11, No. 3 (1980), 503-526. I would like to acknowledge here that the work on reading and the development of my ideas on its relationship to Catastrophe Theory took place in the highly stimulating context of Professor Albert Sonnenfeld's NEH Summer Seminar, Princeton University, 1980.

<sup>2</sup>See Brooks article for the use of these terms in a "New Criticism" study. Since *Raoul de Cambrai* is a major textual focus of my article, note also the frequent use of a number of these words in the more traditional approach of the fundamental book on this epic, *The Old French Epic of Revolt: Raoul de Cambrai, Renaud de Montauban, Gormond et Isembart* by William Calin (Geneva: Droz, f962). Such terminology is evident in the title of Professor Calin's later article, "Un Univers en Décomposition: *Raoul de Cambrai*," *Olifant*, 1, No. 4 (April 1974), 3-9. In a related book, *Medieval French Literature and Law* (Berkeley; Los Angeles; London: University of California Press, 1977), R. Howard Bloch often speaks of general and particular textual "universes."

<sup>3</sup>Extensive discussion of the theory and its applications are found in René Thom, *Structural Stability and Morphogenesis* (Reading, Mass.: VV. A. Benjamin, 1975); "Morphogénèse

Thom's interpretative system is based on a series of topological figures which show how the relationships between structural stability and structural transformations generate all forms. In reading, these figures can function as a shorthand which codifies the reader's sense of a fundamental dynamism underlying the interactions of the characters and the events. The reader can use Thom's simplest figure, the three-dimensional Cusp Catastrophe Model (henceforth CCM),<sup>4</sup> to organize his experience of the text according to what textual elements are associated with or comprise the two opposed complexes, which of those is the dominant stability, the relative structural tension between the two, and what transformations in the system the reader as well as the characters expect. (See Model I.)

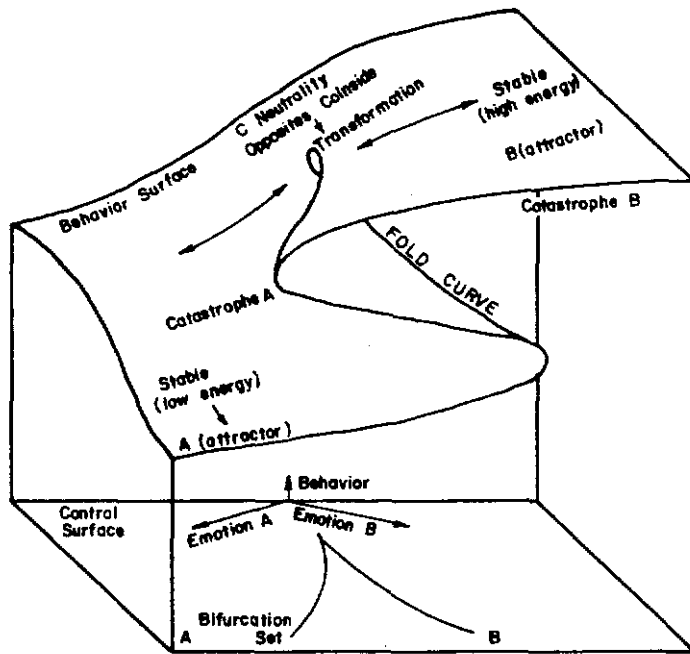
Used here as a Kantian schema rather than a mathematical reality,<sup>5</sup>

et Imaginaire," *Circé*, 8-9 (1978); "At the Boundaries of Man's Power: Play," "Remarks for the Polylogue on Play," *Sub-stance*, 25 (1980), 11-19 and 36-38. Significant if not always reliable discussions of Catastrophe Theory have been published by E. C. Zeeman, "Catastrophe Theory," *Scientific American*, 234, No. 4 (April 1976), 65-83; Claire Lejeune, "Du Point de vue du tiers . . .," *Circé*, 8-9, (1978), 91-118; Jean-Pierre Dupont, "Géométriser la signification," *Circé*, 8-9 (1978), 119-43; Eugen Baer, "Tom Sebeok's Thomism." *Semiotica*, 28, Nos. 3/4 (1979). 349-370; Donald Rice, "CATASTROP(H)ES: The Morphology of Metaphor, Metonymy, Synecdoche and Irony," *Sub-stance*, 26 (1980). 3-18; Peter S. Stevens, *Patterns in Nature* (Boston; Toronto: Little, Brown & Co., 1974), a book which is not "Thomist" but which works along the same lines.

<sup>4</sup>My use of this type of Catastrophe Theory model is based on Zeeman's adaptation of Thom's figure.

<sup>5</sup>Alexander Gelley's discussion of the Kantian schema and its relationship to reading, "Metonymy, Schematism and the Space of Literature," *New Literary History*, 11, No. 3 (1980), 470-87, is also valuable for understanding how the CCM can be used in reading the dynamic form of the text:

The schemata are not to be thought of as a kind of adumbration or ghost of objects, for this notion, with its suggestion of a double or copy, would erode the concept by identifying it with a single instance. Kant defines the schema as an enabling agent, a "method" or "rule" or . . . "monogram." But this last term should not suggest a static element, akin to sign, for what is distinctive to the schema is its constructive and dynamic potential. The image is necessarily fixed and singular. The schema is capable of generating a multitude of images . . . we may think



MODEL I

Model I shows a bifurcation set on the lower or control surface.<sup>6</sup> This set

of it as a characteristic gestic practice of the mind which does not so much fix or stamp an image as delineate and articulate it.

The CCM is an exceptional type of schema, however, since it is also used to model the fundamental processes of the universe itself—thus the mathematical expression and often biological vocabulary of the Thom methodology. In applying it to the reading experience of textual form, the reader's subjective sense of dynamism in the textual microcosm is continuous with his experience of dynamism in the macrocosmic matrix.

<sup>6</sup>See Thom, *Structural Stability*, for mathematical explanations; see Zeeman for discussion in non-specialist terms. A useful non-technical presentation of this material is also found in Thom, "Morphogénèse," but he does not make the narrative associations that I do.

controls the divergence of the dynamic relationships shown on the sloped upper surface. The high end of the upper surface represents high energy values while the low end indicates low energy values. Either set of energy relationships, high or low, can assume dominance at the expense of the other, depending on how factors associated with one energy level or another are clustered in the text. At a point of structural crisis, there is no longer a smooth system where, despite the existence of an opposed configuration, one attractor (a stability complex attracts both like and unlike elements) is dominant. The cusp (curled line) expresses the structural coincidence of the two groups as they are pressed and folded together in a state of maximum structural tension. As the opposed configurations pass through the cusp—and they must since structural stability at this level of tension is impossible to maintain—the attractor which was competing but not previously dominant assumes dominance and the structure is transformed. Thom calls this transformational system a chreod. The chreod remains potential as long as the opposed elements do not pass into the cusp; the chreod is actualized when the pattern of structural tensions results in structural transformation. Catastrophe Theory thus schematizes an orderly if radical metamorphic process rather than only tragedies and disasters. In a structural system, repetition of the transformational pattern expressed in one CCM results in the presence of multiple CCMs; this common phenomenon is called the "stacking" of chreods. Thom's method thus valorizes the microcosm which illuminates macrocosmic form by the high tendency of microcosmic patterns to repeat themselves and so greatly limit structural variation in the macrocosm.

Recognition of repeating patterns and reflection on their meaning is, of course, one of the fundamental acts of reading.<sup>7</sup> By using the CCM to *figure out* the text, the reader changes the ill-defined abstract coin of literary criticism into fixed schematic values which also integrate the reading experience into the patterns of the reader's bio-physical matrix—the same matrix that conditioned the production of the text. "Tension" in the narrative exists and varies according to the relationship of the two opposed complexes. In my formalization of narrative on the CCM, these opposed complexes are defined as groups of primarily behavioral elements. These behavioral manifestations have a fixed energy value (high or low potential for action) that is correlated with controlling emotions. The repeated

<sup>7</sup>Brooks, "Repetition"; Lucien Dällenbach, "Reflexivity and Reading," *New Literary History*, 11, No. 3 (1980), 435-49.

association of such emotional-behavioral complexes with certain types of characters, such as the Hero or the Mother, links them to the system of "archetypes" which defines the range of essentially dynamic patterns exploited obsessively by the human imagination.<sup>8</sup> Variations in tension between these basically archetypal complexes comprise the "structuring operations" of the plot—that is to say, the "narrative dynamics." Though there may be specific references to real "space" or "time" (i.e., room dimensions, exact distance, dates, certain days or moments) in the work being read, these are always associated in the text with one opposing complex or another. Space and time are unified and defined in the CCM by the attraction-repulsion-transformation movements of the opposed groups. This unity of space and time in the CCM expression of narrative form reflects the actuality of the reading experience where any spatio-temporal references are subordinate to the "structuring operations" of the plot. Seen in Thom's framework, narratives are like every other form in the universe: they are generated by changing intervals of tension between a dominant system and a competing system in a space-time continuum that is dependent on the process of competition between these two stabilities and not on any General Concept of Space and Time.<sup>9</sup> Let us turn now to the structural problems posed to the modern reader of an Old French epic, *Raoul de Cambrai* (henceforth *R*), to see how the Thom methodology can be used to figure out a particular narrative.<sup>10</sup>

Debates about the unity of *R* have long raged because the single version we have apparently has two sections. There is a rhymed part, vv. 1-5555, often considered older because its hero-centered form reflects that of the canonical epic, and an assonanced part, vv. 5556-8726, usually thought younger because it features romance and burlesque elements.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>8</sup>Thom, "Morphogénèse," 25-64.

<sup>9</sup>Thom, "Morphogénèse," 65-77; Lejeune, 113-118.

<sup>10</sup>By focusing my article on *reading* a medieval text. I am acknowledging only the *present* framework in which we experience medieval literature and not suggesting any conclusions about the *medieval* circumstances of its composition.

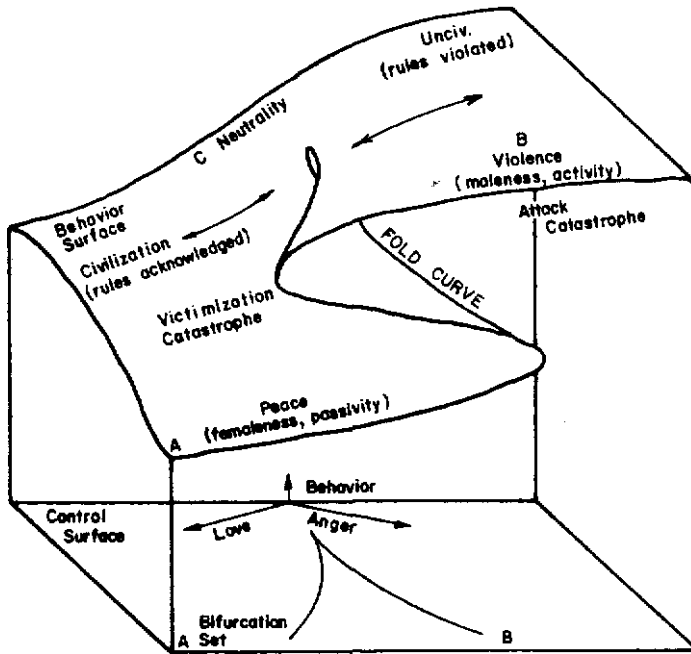
<sup>11</sup>See discussion of various positions on this problem in P. Meyer and A. Longnon, eds., *Raoul de Cambrai* (Paris: Didot, 1882); Pauline Matarasso, *Recherches historiques et littéraires sur "Raoul de Cambrai"* (Paris: Nizet, 1962), and in Calin, *Epic*. R. Howard Bloch treats the poem as a whole in his *Medieval French Literature and Law* as does Larry S. Crist in "Deep Structures in the Chansons de Geste: Hypotheses for a Taxonomy," *Olifant*, 3, No. 1 (October 1974), 3-35.

However, the correlation of the governing emotional and behavioral patterns in both parts shows them to have a unified narrative dynamics (see charts at the end of this article). I do not claim that my charting of textual structures is exhaustive. This is where the critic's reading experience comes in: I have chosen passages in both parts which support my reading of the dynamic system of the text. When these sections are analyzed according to their relative energy values (relative activity or passivity) and according to the dominance relationships of the competing complexes (composed of elements I have identified as structurally significant since they cohere through the stylistic differences of the two parts), the charts show the continuous presence of the same associations and oppositions in the same dynamic patterns. My charts are not presented as evidence of single authorship (another great *R* debate) because a later author might have read the structural patterns of the supposed "early" part and used them in constructing subsequent episodes.

In my reading of the text, two behavioral/emotional complexes control the shape of the plot: (1) violence and anger are consistently associated with high energy activity, maleness, and violation of cultural rules throughout the structure and are consistently opposed to (2) peace and love, linked in their turn with the acknowledgment of cultural rules, with passivity, and femaleness.<sup>12</sup> The division between these competing stabilities and the transformational effect of their changing positions of dominance is evident on the charts. If a male or female character is angry in *R*, this emotion will almost always lead to violence. Women can and do act in the behavioral mode associated with maleness (let us take as an example the Queen's anger, vv. 6259-65), but this occasional crossing over serves only to underline the division in the cultural system. In the *R* world, where violence is power and love is weakness, words of love in a character's speech will almost always lead to a plea for peace or an evocation of its joys—along with the reality or consciousness of victim status.

The wider implications of this switchback narrative process become clear when the system is projected on the three-dimensional CCM. (See Model II.) When the interaction of these oppositions is analyzed in a

<sup>12</sup>Cf. Bloch (peace vs. war); Crist and Calin (royal vs. feudal). For a consideration of the relationship of *Raoul* to contemporary history, see the Meyer and Longnon edition, Matarasso, Calin, and Bloch. Calin speaks frequently, however, of the use of archetypes in *Raoul* when he discusses the characters, 145-179.



MODEL II

particular passage of the text, the energy value of that interaction is expressed by its relationship to the point of maximum—therefore transformational—structural tension: the cusp. On the sloped behavioral surface, the high energy violence complex is positioned on the upper end and the low energy passive cluster on the lower end. When the violence attractor is dominant, the attack catastrophe can be realized immediately or be present simply as the dynamic potential of the words and actions that are packed together. When the peace attractor is dominant, the victimization catastrophe is either realized or potentially present in the situation of the characters involved: they do not victimize but are themselves either conscious or unconscious victims. If at first they are not conscious of their status as victims, the revelation of this catastrophe can bring about either

the dominance of the violence attractor, or a passive lament of the state of victimization. The repetition of these transformational patterns individualizes the *R* plot since the amount of stacking relative to each pattern establishes a system of dynamic intensities specific to the text and thus defines its "universe." Because the *R* chreods are also part of Thom's classification of dynamic patterns in the universe, the reader's experience of their dynamics is integrated with his general experience of dynamic relationships.

Using a crucial passage from *R*, I shall now illustrate the way in which these opposed stabilities approach the point of maximum tension expressed by the fold or cusp (the infolding of the structure) and the way in which these opposites move away from the fold area towards maximal stability (outfolding). The play of tensions and crises here involves Raoul's uncle, Guerry le sor, who angrily confronts a peaceful Raoul after having just quarreled with the king over Raoul's inheritance. Guerry's anger has a truly catastrophic effect on Raoul and his adherents. Raoul's movement from peace to violence here fixes him and his uncle Guerry le sor, who goads him into transformation, as the principal actors in the actantial system of violence, despite their occasional efforts to move back into the peace system (one always corrects the actantial imbalance by goading the other back into violence). A look at the charts shows the persistence of the anger/violence association throughout the epic. This early passage, then, is critical to the reading of the form of *R*. The *R* narrative expands by stacking the chreod expressed here; this repetition gives the *R* form a very high degree of dynamic unity which transcends any subject matter or stylistic divisions. In *R*, the apparent expansion of these dynamic patterns through the addition of other situations and actors actually condenses the structure since all these diverse elements are packed into one set of dynamic relationships. Though the violence-peace chreod has been previously established in the opening angry scenes featuring Raoul's mother, the king, and Guerry, the chreod becomes structurally critical only in this passage<sup>13</sup> where the hero, Raoul, is initiated into the anger structure. Once the hero is bound into a set of inevitabilities, the reading of the subsequent plot developments in *R* show them also to be bound to those inevitabilities—even long after the hero's death (e.g., where Guerry kills Bernier in late but still angry vengeance).

<sup>13</sup>All quotes from the Meyer-Longnon edition; all translations by the author of this article.

*Stäblein / Catastrophe Theory 11*

E dist li sors: "Mal en sommes bailli.  
Ce chalenge je, par le cors s. Geri!  
Isnelement fors de la chambre issi,           655  
Par maltalant vint el palais anti.  
As esches joue R. de Cambrizis  
Si com li hom q'i mal n'i entendi.  
G. le voit, par le bras le saisi;  
Son peliçon li desrout et parti:           660  
"Fil a putain! " le clama, si menti,  
"Malvais lechieres! por quoi joes tu ci?  
N'as tant de terre, par verté le te di,  
Ou tu peüses conrer .j. ronci."  
R. l'oi, desor ces piés sailli;           665  
Si haut parole qe li palais fremi,  
Qe par la sale l'a mains frans hon oi:  
"Qi la me tout? trop le taing a hardi!"  
G. respont; "Ja te sera gehi:  
Li rois meïsmes, bien te tient a honni   670  
Dont devons estre tensé et garanti."  
R. l'oi; toz li sans li fremi.  
Dui chevalier que ces peres norri  
En entendirent et la noise et le cri,  
De lui aidier furent amanevi,           675  
Et B[ernier] sert qui le henap tendi.  
Devant le roi vienent cil aati;  
Cele parole pas a pié ne chai.  
R. parole, dejoste lui G.

And the red-haired man says: "We've been cheated. I challenge this, by Saint Guerry!" Quickly he went out of the room. In fury he came to the ancient palace. Raoul of Cambresis is playing chess like a man who did not expect wickedness. Guerry sees him, seizes him by the arm, tears and rips his fur cloak. "Whore's son!" he calls him, false in fury. "Evil wretch! Why are you playing here? You don't even have enough land to take care of a pack horse! I'm telling it to you truly!" Raoul hears him, jumps to his feet, shouts so loudly that the palace shakes, so loudly that throughout the room many a fine warrior heard him: "Who stole it from me? I think he's much too bold!"

Guerry answers, "I'll tell you at once: the king himself surely considers you a man to be shamed, the king himself—by whom we should be protected and guaranteed!" Raoul hears him; he shivers throughout his being. Two knights whom his father brought up heard it all, both the noise and the outcry; they were ready to help him. And Bernier the cup-bearer also serves Raoul. These defiant men come before the king; *this* speech does *not* lie at the king's feet! Raoul speaks haughtily; Guerry stands next to him.

This passage follows Guerry's and the king's confrontation over Raoul's hereditary and feudal right to Cambrai. The king regrets the injustice but refuses Raoul the fief supposedly because of pressure from the other barons (vv. 641-52). This royal refusal detonates Guerry's defiant anger and reinforces his previously-established identification with the actantial complex of violence and rule breaking (see charts). Not yet at the point of transformation, the tensions are building and constricting the CCM space between this construct and the dominant existential mode of civilized peace. Guerry quickly moves out of the constraint imposed by the king's presence and finds Raoul, though the two men remain within the tradition-laden structure of the royal palace. Along with his uncle Guerry, Raoul has been peacefully serving the king for some time in the hopes that the disinheritance which occurred near his birth would be reversed. He is thus at peace and identified with the general state of victimization—even the king has claimed himself to be victimized. Uncle Guerry, however, has activated conflict by challenging this harmonious reign of peace, civilization, and victimization.

Since he is playing chess without a thought for any challenge to his existential framework, Raoul incarnates the characteristics of the peace attractor. In fact, the extreme degree to which Raoul embodies the passive actantial system works to force Guerry into an even more extreme state of opposition. Guerry's anger is expressed in a physical and moral attack on his nephew. This violent emotion and the associated behavior cause Raoul to shift catastrophically from his state of civilized peace, where conflict and victimization are controlled in the game of chess, to that of uncivilized anger which menaces the civilized structure of the palace. The actualization of the CCM which figures the dynamics of the relationships in this passage is expressed in the *two parts of one line*, v. 665, where the tensions

between the actantially opposed have clearly reached the maximum state of coincidence (i.e., the transformational region of the cusp). Raoul's passivity coincides with his uncle's anger as Raoul receives Guerry's message in the first half of v. 665, *Raoul l'oï*. This precipitates the realization of catastrophic change, and Raoul switches from passive to active in the second half, *dessor ses piés sailli*. The statement of the physically and culturally violent power of Raoul's words, *Si haut parole qe li palais fremi* (v. 666) which precedes their quotation (v. 668) emphasizes the transformation which Guerry has effected: the royal palace is structurally threatened as it will be all through the text as a result of Raoul's and Guerry's anger. However, this reference to the vulnerability of the palace precedes Guerry's focusing of Raoul's anger on the king, so it serves only to underline the general threat to civilization posed by anger. The dominating power of the verbal violence draws allies to Raoul, including Bernier, who will later kill Raoul, as the structure of anger transforms almost all relationships throughout the epic into violent ones. The Guerry/Raoul CCM becomes more and more central to the reader's structural figuring as succeeding episodes repeat its pattern, thus "stacking" the narrative chreods and increasing the structural density of the macrotextual form. At the end of the text, the peace attractor is reestablished definitively, rather than ephemerally, as the dominant mode in *R* when Guerry, the last of the angry company of Raoul, disappears. Various characters may advocate, embody, or long for peace at different points in the poem, but they are constantly being pulled back into the anger system by those around them—as this structurally critical scene shows. On one level, the poem deals with the inevitable pernicious effects of disinheritance and unjust kings on a feudal society. But on another level, as in the sagas, the *Song of Roland*, the *Iliad*, the *Odyssey*, the *Nibelungenlied*, the *Aeneid*, and *Beowulf*, the real dynamic focus of the poem is the power of anger. The dominance of the Anger construct and the associated stacking of chreods in *R* may well be a defining feature of the epic in the general system of stability and transformation patterns that characterizes the narrative dynamics.

Narrative and non-narrative genres *can* intersect, however, when they both exploit the same emotional and behavioral relationships. Anger and violence, along with characters and plot elements common to the Old French epic, are present in Old Provençal lyric poetry. Even the transformational system of the epic narrative is invoked, though not actualized, in the poems of the late twelfth-century troubadour, Bertran de Born. Bertran

used epic, patterns and references to emphasize the tension between his unrealized ideal of a world gloriously at war and the reality of a world flaccidly at peace.<sup>14</sup>

*R* occupies a unique place in the epic invocations of Bertran's extant poems since he refers to a specific episode from that epic alone. Nevertheless, there can be no direct proof of textual borrowing because the unique *R* manuscript dates from the late thirteenth century and because Bertran, immersed in the oral culture of his day, most likely knew the epic in an oral version. Used to express both the supposedly real and the desired dynamic structure of the conflicts between Philip-Augustus, Richard the Lion-Hearted, and Henry II of England in 1187, references to the stacked narrative chreod of *R* play a major rôle in the structure of PSS32 *Al nou doutz termini blanc* and PSS33 *Pois als baros enoia en lur pesa*. Though Bertran merely maps out the unrealized transformational relationships of actantial oppositions in many of his poems, he does realize the transformational pattern in PSS32 by switching from the love-structure of the *canço*<sup>15</sup> which dominates the first stanza to the political focus of the *sirventes*,<sup>16</sup> which dominates the rest of the poem. Given the variations among the troubadour texts in the manuscripts, my analysis of Bertran's use of *R* does not pretend to be based on *true texts* but on *possible* performances of originally flexible poetic structures. The specific shapes of these performances have been determined by me and my fellow editors, William D. Paden, Jr., and Tilde A. Sankovitch.<sup>17</sup>

In PSS32, Bertran focuses on the disjunction between the presence of epic war elements and the lack of energy in his morally deficient society

<sup>14</sup>See William D. Paden, Jr., "De L'Identité historique de Bertran de Born," article forthcoming in *Romania*. Also, Patricia Harris Stäblein, "The Rotten and the Burned: Normative and Nutritive Structures in the Poetry of Bertran de Born," *L'Esprit Créateur*, 19, No. 4(1979), 107-119.

<sup>15</sup>For the most extensive study done of the form of the *canço* (600 texts evaluated), see Eliza Ghil, *The Canzo: Structural Study of a Poetic Genre*, Ph.D. Dissertation, Columbia University, 1978.

<sup>16</sup>On the *sirventes*, see discussion in Dietmar Rieger, *Gattungen und Gattungsbezeichnungen der Trobadour lyrik* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1976).

<sup>17</sup>All texts and translations are from the edition forthcoming at the University of California Press. I have also drawn on the edition for historical and literary interpretations.

which prevents its transformation into the cohesive high energy actantial system of the epic world.<sup>18</sup> He changes genres within the lyric range, moving from the *canso* to the *sirventes*, to express the catastrophic intensity of his moral frustration.

1. Al nou doutz termini blanc  
del pascor vei la elesta  
don lo nous temps sens contenta,  
qand la sazoz es plus genta  
e plus avinens e val mais, 5  
et hom deuri'esser plus gais  
e meillor sabor me a jais.
  
2. Per qe-m pesa car m'estanc  
q'ieu ades non pas la festa,  
  
c'us sols jorns tni sembla trenta 10  
per una promessa genta  
  
don mi sortz trebaills et esglais.  
E non vuoiill sia mieus Doais  
ses la sospisson de Cambrais.

1. In the fresh, sweet, white season, I see the signs of Easter with which the new time delights the senses, when the year is most noble, most gracious, and most prized, and people should be gayest, and my joy has its best savor.

2. So it depresses me to stand still, and not get the Midsummer feast over with now; one single day seems thirty to me because of a lovely promise which has brought me trouble and pain. I do not want to own Douai unless I can hope for Cambrai.

Bertran underlines the harmony and joy that unite the poet with nature in an actantial complex typical of the *canso*—as Spring expands so do the poet and his society. However, an oppositional system can also exist in the *canso*: Bertran portrays himself as depressed and anguished relative to the joyous beauty of Spring in the second stanza. All the expansive energy of the first strophe, in which Bertran and Spring are in harmony, is sharply

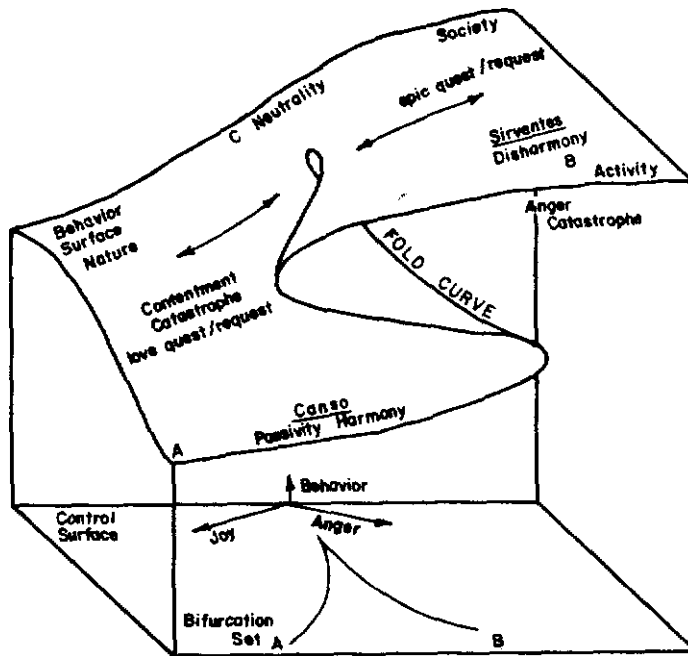
<sup>18</sup>See discussion in Stephen G. Nichols, Jr., "Rhetorical Metamorphosis in the Troubadour Lyric." *Mélanges Pierre Le Gentil* (Paris: S. E. D. E. S. et C. D. U. Réunion, 1973), 305-25.

contracted as Bertran comes to exist in conflict with nature. Since this dynamic reorientation is within the *canso* system, no generic catastrophe has occurred, but potentially transformational tension is certainly present in the structure.

The first allusion to *R* occurs in this agonistic context; this reference introduces another lyric genre to challenge the structural dominance of the *canso*. The second stanza brings up the content of a *promessa genta* (v. 11) that is troubling Bertran. Since he reveals it is not the promise of a lady's love as in the *canso* but the lure of political power as in the *sirventes*, the interiority of the *canso* is thus challenged by the exteriority of the *sirventes*. The matter, if not the form of *R*, is that of Bertran's *sirventes*: *E non vuoill sia mieus Doais/ ses la sospisson de Cambrais* (vv. 13-14). This change in the actantial focus from the love quest to the political quest indicates the structural presence of two opposing actantial sets in tension. The *canso* still dominates, but the dynamic complexity makes the CCM once again a useful figure of reading.

Although the allusion in vv. 13-14 is unclear in terms of the *R* text we have now, the intent to allude to *R* is confirmed by the more definite references in the third stanza and in PSS33 (see below). The lack of precision may also stem from Bertran's use of epic material to suggest another form rather than to imitate the epic itself. In the *R* version we have now, the area dominated by Douai and Cambrai is a patchwork of different holdings where lords are either allied or in conflict. Bertran's point—that there is real power only in the possession of both—is then consistent with the struggle over this region that is the focus of Raoul and Guerry's effort in the extant version of *R*. In Bertran's time (1183), Douai and Cambrai were part of French Flanders, so the poet is not purely interested in the tense dynamic structure created by the convocation of divergent poetic forms within his poem. Bertran is a topical poet as well as a great one: he is encouraging King Philip-Augustus of France to pursue territorial quarrels with Philip of Flanders.

The high dynamic intensity of the curses which begin stanza III signals the transformative passage through the CCM cusp from *canso* actantial dominance to the dominance of the actantial system of the *sirventes*. (See Model III.) In keeping with the new formal arrangement, a new emotion also dominates—anger instead of the joy of the *canso*. The further



MODEL III

development of the *R* associations also testifies to the restructuring of the CCM relationships. Just as the catastrophe in the *R* passage analyzed above was signaled by Guerry's physical attack on Raoul, this catastrophe is expressed in the typically non-active form of the lyric genre by Bertran's wish for the king's adviser to be physically harmed.

- |    |  |                              |
|----|--|------------------------------|
| 3. | Pustell'en son huoil e cranc<br>qui jamais l'en amonesta!<br>Qe ja malvastatz dolenta<br>no-il valra mession genta,<br>ni sojorns ni estar ad ais<br>tant cum gerra, trebails e fais.<br>So sapcha'l seigner de Roais. | 15<br><br><br><br><br><br>20 |
|----|--|------------------------------|

3. Asty in hiseyeanda canker to the man who advises Philip. For never will a miserable whine be as good as a noble effort, or pleasure and loafing as good as war, trouble, and toil. Let the Lord of Roais know that!

The joy characteristic of the *canço* structure is condemned here in favor of war, which is a focus typical of the *sirventes*. Realization of the epic structure and thus of narrative form hinges on the behavior of the Lord of the Arrouaise, Philip-Augustus (Roais can also mean Edessa, but the French region is obviously meant here). The *sirventes* sets up the morphogenetic field of narrative but never structurally realizes it. In keeping with the focus on war of this *sirventes*, the presentation of Philip-Augustus as Lord of the Arrouaise reinforces the *R* illusions of stanza II. The Arrouaise is a wooded region on the borders of Cambresis, Vermandois, and Artois. In *R* the region of Arrouaise is notorious for the cowardly character of its men.

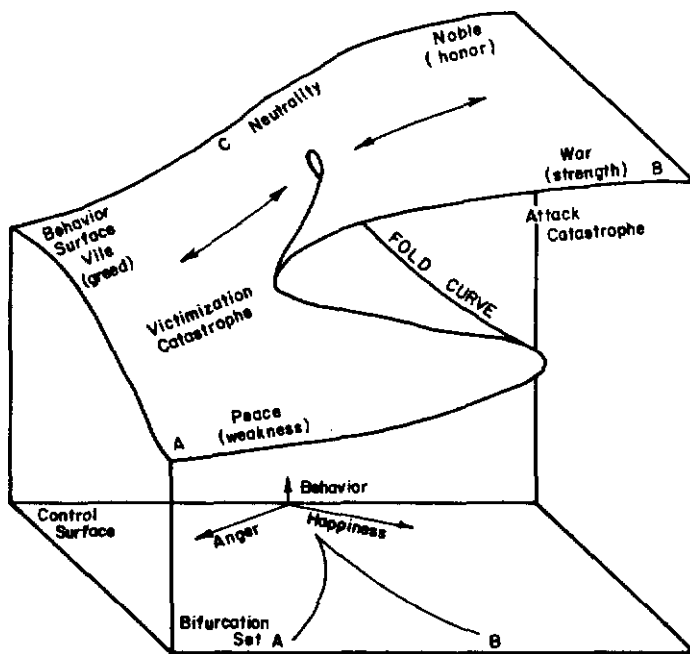
Hom d'Aroaise ne vaut une cinele  
Trop par sont bon por vuider escuele,  
Mais au combatre, tex en est la novele  
Ne valent mie .j. froumaje en fissele.  
(vv. 1184-87)

An Arrouaise man is not worth a haw. Plenty are good enough to empty a porringer but in fighting—this is what people say—they are not worth a cheese on a string!

Strophe three thus begins with an attack on Philip's adviser and ends by using resonances *with* the *R* narrative to scorn Philip as Lord of the worthless.

In the succeeding stanzas, Bertran further develops the structure of epic warfare that Philip and his adversary Richard the Lion-Hearted (vv. 4-9) have failed to realize. This *sirventes* is a poem about the absence of the epic narrative dynamic which constantly evokes that dynamic in the implacably lyric world. While the transformation from one genre to another does take place within the lyric system, the metamorphic passage from lyric to narrative is not actualized. Bertran's criticisms and judgments can only point the way towards the existential transformation that must be realized in his society before his poetic mode can be transformed.

In PSS33, *Pois als baros enoia en lur pesa* (written about the same time as PSS32), Bertran works with a similar set of oppositions but this time uses an episode from *R* to express his narrative ideal. Bertran explores the moral and political relationships of King Henry II of England and King Philip-Augustus of France and their barons in the first four stanzas. Philip's love of peace is presented as essentially weak and corrupt relative to Henry while the latter's aggression is judged ignoble. Since both kings fail to realize the epic idea, Bertran embeds a recapitulation of an epic episode in his lyric form to reinforce the contours of his ideal and thus to intensify the opposition between that ideal and his portrayal of an ignoble reality. The dynamic play of tensions between the two in the context of potential transformation is clearly figured for the reader on a CCM. (See



MODEL IV

Model IV.) The use of the CCM to express these relationships also facilitates the comparative analysis since both the active and passive actantial sets of the stacked CCM characteristic of *R* happen to be present in the episode cited by Bertran.

5. Lo sors Guerrics dis paraulla cortesa  
qan son nebot vic tornat en esfrei, 30  
qe desarmatz volgra n fos la fins presa,  
qand fo armatz non volc penre plaidei.  
E non semblet ges lo signor d'Orlei,  
qe desarmatz fon de peior mercei  
qe qand el cap ac la ventaila mesa. 35

5. Guerry the Red spoke a courteous word when he saw his nephew turn in fear, saying that when he himself was disarmed he wanted to make peace, but when he was armed he would accept no offer. He little resembled the lord of Orleans, who has been more stubborn disarmed than with his helmet on his head.

This stanza seems to be based on material that must have closely resembled the following passage (vv. 2166-93) from the *R* version we have now. The section concerns Guerry's advocacy of the peace offer made to Raoul and his men by Ybert, who is the natural father of Raoul's former ally, Bernier. Wronged by Raoul, Bernier is now his bitter enemy. The four sons of the deceased Herbert de Vermandois join Ybert in the peace offer. It is their land that the king reluctantly yielded to Raoul in fulfillment of the ill-considered royal promise to compensate for the king's equally reluctant disinheritment of Raoul by giving him the land of the next vassal to die.

#### CVII

Vait s'en R. a G. conseiller:  
Tout le mesaige dant G, le Poihier  
Li a conté, ne l'en vost plus laisier.  
Oit le Gueris, Dieu prist a mercier:  
"Biax niés, " dist il, "bien te dois faire fier, 2170  
Qant .iiij. conte se vuele[n]t apaier.  
Niés, car le fai, por dieu t'en vuel proier:  
Laisse lor terre, ne la te chaut baillier."  
R. l'entent, le sens quide changier;  
Ou voit G. se li prent a huchier: 2175

"G'en pris le gant voiant maint chevalier,  
Et or, me dites q'il fait a relaissier!  
Trestos li mons m'en devroit bien huier. "

CVIII

Raous parole au coraige hardi:

"On soloit dire le riche sor G. 2180  
Qu'en tout le mont n'avoit .j. si hardi,  
Mais or le voi couart et resorti."  
G. l'oï, fierement respondi;  
Por trestot l'or d'Abeville en Ponti,  
Ne volsist il qe il l'eüst gehi, 2185  
Ne qe ces niés l'en eüst si laidi.  
Par maltalent a juré s. Geri:  
"Qant por coart m'en avez aati,  
Ains en seront .M. hauberc dessarti,  
Qe je ne il soions ja mais ami!" 2190  
Dist au mesaige: "Torne toi tos de ce:  
As fi x Herbert isnelement me di  
Bien se desfendent; bien seront asailli."

CVII. Raoul goes to consult Guerry. He tells him the whole message of Gerart le Poihier; he wants to leave nothing out. Guerry listens to him; he began to thank God. "My fine nephew," says he, "You must be proud of yourself since the four counts want peace. Nephew, do it! By God, I entreat you! Leave their land; holding it does not matter to you." Raoul hears him. He thinks he will go mad with fury. When he sees Guerry, he starts to shout at him: "I took up the glove in the sight of many knights and now you tell me it must be dropped. All the world must well mock me over it!"

CVIII. Raoul the brave speaks: "People were accustomed to say to the powerful Guerry that in all the world there was not one so hardy, but I see him now a coward and a deserter." Guerry heard him; he answered proudly. For all the gold from Abbéville in Ponthieu he would not wish that Raoul had said that to him, nor that his nephew would have so insulted him about that. In anger he swore by Saint Guerry: "Since you have

provoked me by accusations of cowardice, a thousand hauberks will be broken into pieces over it before I and he [Ybert] will ever be friends." He said to the messenger, "Return right away from here. Tell the sons of Herbert to defend themselves vigorously, for they will surely be attacked."

The division noted in *R* between an actantial complex associated with peace and one linked with violence holds true for the analysis of the textual dynamics in these *laissez*. Guerry's acceptance of the peace message and his subsequent extreme advocacy of peace is countered by Raoul's angry and extreme advocacy of war: *R. l'entent, le sens guide changier* (v. 2175). His angry denunciation of Guerry's position causes Guerry to shift—catastrophically—to anger and violence. This scene shows the actantial dynamics outlined in Bertran's stanza: when Guerry was not in the anger/violence structure, he would make peace; but once he had switched modes, he embodied the new actantial set absolutely. Bertran's reference to Guerry's comforting a fearful Raoul with the possibility of peace does not, however, correspond to events in the *R* version we have now. Yet the dynamic maps of the two texts coincide: Bertran's portrait of Guerry as a man who knows how to act appropriately is consistent with that in the epic. Bertran ends the stanza by measuring the distance between the fully articulated dynamic of Guerry in the *R* narrative and the malformed actions of Philip-Augustus, lord of Orleans, which inhibit actantial transformations and thus compel the poet to lyric expression: *E non semblet ges lo seignor d'Orlei* (v. 33). Bertran does not establish this structural differentiation for purely esthetic purposes. As in PSS32, he has a pragmatic political end in view also. Since epic structure is a tool as much as an ideal for Bertran, he uses it to place more pressure on Philip to shift his behavioral mode. In the succeeding stanza, Bertran further develops the references to Philip's armed cowardice and thus expands the statements in PSS32 on the French king's lack of proven prowess.

6. A rei armat o ten hom a flaquesa

qand es en camps e vai qerre plaidei.  
Ben ant camjat honor per cobeesa,  
segon q'auch dir, Bergoignon e Francei.  
E valgra mais, per la fe q'ieu vos dei,                   40  
al rei Felip, comenses lo desrei  
que plaideiar armatz sobre la glesa.

6. It is considered a weakness for an armed king to go seeking peace when he is in the field. The Burgundians and French have exchanged honor for greed, according to what I hear. It would be better, by the faith I owe you, for King Philip to start the attack than to parley, armed, in the mud.

Just as Philip is the opposite of Guerry, so is his greed opposed to epic honor; but the oppositional state and not the catastrophic shift between actantial modes is the focus of the lyric artist. As Bertran's condemnation expands from Philip and the men of Champagne to the Burgundians and the French, he increasingly details his prescriptions for honorable action, in order to create more pressure for structural transformation. Bertran's outpouring of bile thus leaves Philip positioned on the cusp, with his choice clearly indicated. The catastrophe complex is present, but its dynamic realization is exterior to the poetic structure just as the political reality that conditions a *sirventes* is nevertheless exterior to the esthetic construct.

Faced with this dynamic impasse, the poet turns to a motion he can effect, that of his *jongleur*, and through him sends his *sirventes* to Conon de Béthune in the land of Artois.

7. Vai, Papiol, mon sirventes a drei  
mi portaras part Crespin el Valei  
mon Isembart en la terra artesa. 45

7. Go Papiol, carry my *sirventes* straightaway toward Crépy-en-Valois, to my Isembart in the land of Artois.

Bertran hopes his poem will stimulate the transformation of his lyric world into epic form, and significantly, he sends it to one of the crucial regions in the *R* conflict.

This expression of the poet's desired dynamic pattern is then followed by an incomplete transformation of his poetic structure from that of the *sirventes* to the *canço*.

8. E digas li q'a tal dompna sopei  
que marves pose jurar sobre la lei  
qe-ill mieiller es del mon e il plus cortesa.

8. And tell him I bow to a lady who—as I can solemnly swear on the faith—is the best in the world and the most courteous.

In this final *tornado*., Bertran locates his poetic form on the cusp between the *sirventes* and the *canso*. He therefore closes his poem at the point of highest structural tension, ignoring the usual closure process wherein all tensions are minimized if not entirely resolved. The *sirventes* is not necessarily abandoned here, since its political concerns could underlie the *canso* language: the lady in question may well be a lord, just as lords are sometimes ladies in the *senhals* of *cansos*. Bertran's use of legal terminology, *jurar sobre la lei*, may evidence a real and not simply anagogical feudal context. This *tornada*, written in the amorous language that dominates the poetry of Conon, may then express a political as well as an artistic message to the noted *trouvère*.

Using Thom's CCM to objectify the dynamic shapes of the lyric and epic genres illuminates the textual and intertextual complexity of the structural quotation of one genre within another. Since this CCM also expresses patterns active in the fundamental shape of the universe, we extend the concept of the mimetic relationship of life and art to that of art and the universe. Literary form is only one aspect of all form.

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CHARTS

		Activity				Passivity	
male	anger	rule violation	violence	peace	rule ack.	love	female
<b>(menaced or actual)</b>							
R.'s future adoubement 335, 355-7	319-21, 326-35	King disinherited R. as child	331-3, 355-7				
male inheritance 700-5	641-709	disinheritance of R. as knight	659-660, 666, 689-91, 706-9				
	836-60	R. disinherits the fils Herbert—guilt of <i>King</i> also	919-20				
<b>Quarrel between R(aoul) and A(alais) over the Herbert disinheritance</b>							
1100-1106 male must reject female counsel	1012-16	R. Determined to achieve H. disinheritance	1012-16, 1022-7, 1038-41	964-1135 A. pleads for peace, incapacity of <i>men</i> of Arouaise for war	anti-disinheritance, tradition 1129-30 religion 1034-5	<i>maternal</i> 964-5, 1145-8. etc. <i>divine</i> 991, 1136-49	<i>Mother</i> of R. 985, 1001 and 1002, etc. <i>nun</i> 1009-1011  Men of Arouaise=garconelle 1183
male rôle as "vassal"	mother's anger at Bernier's "disloyalty" 1086	Bernier's "disloyalty" twd. his seigneur Raoul 1079-85	mother's prediction of violence 1087-90				
<b>Origny Episode</b>							
destruction of female 1490-1530 (mother/abbess)	1261-5, 1270-3, 1462-76 R 1507-40 B	1270-3 R. wants to destroy mou tier  1462-1506 all civ. older destroyed	1270-3 R. will to destroy mou tier  1462-1506 destruction	1249-57, 1388-96	orderly beauty of O., religious association  menace of sin if R. Disturbs 1304-6	maternal, filial, and religious 1307-13, 1335-41 1368-71f. 1341-2 r. etc.	Mother of B. (Marsent) Abbess also

		<b>Activity</b>				<b>Passivity</b>
male	<b>anger</b>	<b>rule violation</b>	<b>violence</b>	<b>peace</b>	<b>rule ack.</b>	<b>love</b>
						female

**(menaced or actual)**

B. protests to R. 1638-52	R. violates, and wills to violate	1704-11 B. wills to fight R.	Marsent denies culpability for her
R.'s anger at B.'s protest 1711-18	Lenten and other civ. rules 1556-84	1716-18 R. hits B.	"sin" 1336-42 after R. accuses her 1328-35
			Marsent presents R. with civ. alternative: 1342-58
			B.-must follow R., his lord 1379-85 mother agrees 1386-7
			B.'s defense of mother's innocence 1687-94

**Love of B. and Biautriz (fille de Guerri le sor)—initial episode**

B. and Bi. meet because now peace 5556-94	her desire for him in terms of wifehood 5604, 5696, etc.	erotic 5591-4 and marital 5604-5, etc.	daughter of Guerry, wife of Bernier
Bi. desires marriage to seal peace (greater soc. good) and banish war 5716-5728	Ber. fear of marrying her since bastard 5703-15		

	Activity				Passivity		
male	anger	rule violation	violence	peace	rule ack.	love	female
(menaced or actual)							
<b>War with King continues — he interferes with Love union</b>							
(humiliate) scorn for women — King ready to turn Bi. over to <i>escuier</i> 6245-6252	King-5918, etc. B.'s anger 6104, 6114-17	King and vassals at war— bad king-ship 5939-55	5919-King's desire for violence				Bi. victim in episode, menaced and passive 6253-4 (faints, etc.)
scorn for women— K. laughs at Q. 6266-8	King's hatred for B. 6171, etc.	King ambushes B. and Bi. -lovers separate — interferes with marriage structure 6085-6135. etc.	Ambush-6100- G. and B. vow war 6141-6150				
K. wants to replace one male with another (husband issue) rt. male must be restored	Queen's anger at K. 6259-6265		King's hatred for B. 6177-8				
	anger of G. 6482-85	priests will be killed 6484-5	Bi. injured because of K.'s threat 6254-8				
			G.'s threat of violence 6484-5	Peace made 6570-74	marriage saved as religious makes peace 6525-34	B. and Bi. reunited 6582-4	wifehood realized
<b>St. Gille episode</b>							
Julien-B.'s male child bapt.	B.'s fear of God's anger 6588-94	B. killed his seigneur 6588-94	fight with pagans 6618-6674	After B. taken by pagans, Bi. "married" to false husband; lives in "peace" (battle over 6747-6762	Bi. remains faithful to B. by rendering false husband female	Bi. love for B. 6820-1. etc.	motherhood realized
B.'s identity as dubbed knight— must fight 6623-6	B.'s anger at pagans 6623	G. betrays Bi. 6761-6817	B. fights for pagans 6948-7031 (remembers past violence)	Real peace restored 7560-7583	Bi. and B. reunited with Bi.'s virtue intact— orderly feudal 7575-7583		Bi. renders Erchenbaut female 6848-91. etc.
B.'schevalric identity 6917	Bi.'s anger at G., her father— Trahison 6817-27	Bi. married against her will 6820-1	Bi. attempts to hit B. 7296-7302				wise abbess helps restore order 7315-7349, etc.
King's scorn for Bi. 6128	Corsuble's anger against other pagans 6901	asks B., a Christian, to fight for him 6902-27					
	Bi.'s anger at Baspelerin 7280-3	Bi. thinks "B." trying to interfere with her fidelity 7270-7283					

male	anger	Activity		peace	rule ack.	love	Passivity	female
		rule violation	violence					
		(menaced or actual)						
				<b>G. kills B.</b>				
G. s identity as father of B.'s wife B.'s as husband of G.'s daughter Father of his descendants	G.'s anger at memory of R.'s death 8365	B. remembers R.'s rule breaking 8380-84	G. kills B. 8410-8418					
		G. betrays B., who calls him <i>traitres</i>						