

## Enchanting the Punishment: Representations of Fairy Lady as Punisher in Sir Launfal and The Romans of Partenay

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### Abstract

*This article discusses the 'fairy' ladies as lovers, helpers and punishers in Middle English metrical romances. It mainly concentrates on the representations of the fairy ladies Lady Tryamour in Sir Launfal and Melusine in The Romans of Partenay. It discusses how these fairy ladies are presented as lovers, helpers and also as punishers of their lover and husband, what makes them distinctive, their differences from the mortal female lovers, helpers and punishers. Meanwhile, their fairy worlds are argued whether they are really sanctuaries for the mortal males who are desperately in need of support and protection, or they are disguised hells. The fairy ladies are compared with saintly helpers when they provide assistance to the mortal males through enchantments; however the reasons of the changes in their roles from helpers to punishers are presented in detail with specific examples from the romances. Enchantment is also discussed whether it is a means of relief or a sinister threat and even a punishment not only for the male lover but also for the other characters in the romances. By arguing the nature of fairies, their fairy world and their use of enchantment either for help or as a threat, this article discusses how angelic and villainous the fairy ladies are, and it presents how they 'enchant help' when they meet desperate males, as well as they 'enchant punishment' once they are threatened or betrayed.*

**Keywords:** Sir Launfal; The Romans of Partenay; fairy lady; enchantment; punishment.

Romances are "stories of adventure in which the chief parts are played by knights, famous kings, or distressed ladies, acting most often under the impulse of love, religious faith, or, in many, mere desire for adventure" (Everett, 1955, p. 3), and these adventurous stories of noble men and women end happily (Schmidt and Jacobs, 1980, p. 1). In his discussion of popular English metrical romances, Brewer (2004) explains that, romances "deal in a fantasy world of adventure and love by knights and ladies" (p. 61). Plenty of the females presented in metrical romances are mortals, without any superhuman power, and love may be either punitive or ennobling for these females, depending on the attitudes of the male and even female villains in romances. In addition to this, there are few females who are either enchantresses or who have supernatural powers. Contrary to their mortal counterparts, the females with supernatural power have remarkable dominance throughout the romances that employ them. In accordance with that unusual feature, this article intends to discuss how fairy ladies are presented as lovers, helpers and also as punishers of their lover and husband in *Sir Launfal* and *The Romans of Partenay* which are Middle English metrical romances with particular interest in the enchantress figures.<sup>1</sup>

In most Middle English romances, ladies are attractive and desirable, obedient to their male superiors, without any attempt to interfere into male concerns. It is noticeable that the most common fate of these submissive ladies is to be falsely accused of adultery by their family members, to be exiled with their children on the sea in a rudderless boat, starve, pray to God for survival, to be separated from their children when they arrive in a foreign land after the children's abduction by wild beasts. They are then found and cared for by noble men until they are reunited with their lovers, husbands and children.<sup>2</sup> However, the romances with a fairy lady distinguish with their presentations of strong and

<sup>1</sup> As for the manuscript details of both romances, see Boffey and Edwards's (2005) *A new index of middle English verse*, number 567 for Sir Launfal and number 819. 5 for The Romans of Partenay.

<sup>2</sup> For weak or submissive representations of mortal females in other Middle English metrical romances see the presentations of the female characters especially in *Amis and Amiloun*, *Athelston*, *Beves of Hamptoun*, *Cheuelere Assigne*, *Emaré*, *Erle of Tolous*, *Floris and Blancheflour*, *Generydes*, *Ipomadon*, *King Horn*, *The King of Tars*, *Lay le Freine*, *The Lay of Havelok the Dane*, *Le Bone Florence of Rome*, *Octovian*, *Sir Degaré*, *Sir Degrevant*, *Sir Eglamour of Artois*, *Sir Isumbras*, *Sir Orfeo*, *Sir Tryamour*, *The Squire of Low Degree*, *Torrent of Portyngale*, *William of Palerne*.

dominant females who are also desirable. Such romances employ unusual female characters who are lovers, helpers and also punishers of their lover or husband at the same time. The multiplicity of their roles makes them distinctive compared to the mortal females represented in many other metrical romances.

The presentation of fairy lady alters from saintly helper to punisher throughout the romances. At the beginning of the romance, the lady provides assistance to the mortal male through enchantments; however, her role changes from helper to punisher, and the lady who enchants help evolves into a lady who enchants punishment, once she is threatened or betrayed by the male she puts thrust in. Similarly, her fairy world which pretends to be a sanctuary for the mortal male who is desperately in need of support and protection reveals to be a disguised hell, following the lady's transformation into a punisher figure. In addition to this, enchantment which is a means of help previously but a means of punishment afterwards, has an ambiguous function. It is arguable whether enchantment is a means of relief or a sinister threat and even a punishment not only for the male lover but also for the other characters in the romances. In these contexts, the nature of fairies, the fairy world and their use of enchantment either for help or punishment provide multiple presentations which blend angelic and villainous, powerful fairy female and desperate mortal male, enchanted help and enchanted punishment.

In *Sir Launfal*, Sir Launfal leaves King Arthur's court not only due to the fact that he has been deprived of his wealth, but also in order to escape from the seduction of Arthur's promiscuous queen Guenevere.<sup>3</sup> However, Guenevere revenges herself on Sir Launfal for rejecting her love, and she abuses her husband's kingly authority to put Sir Launfal into trial. Sir Launfal resists to Guenevere; however, his resistance ends with his submission to another female, who relieves his suffering temporarily but makes him a victim afterwards. Since he has been impoverished and in need of regaining his wealth and respect, Sir Launfal seeks for powerful and prosperous supporter; nevertheless, he is refused to be accommodated by his former mayor because he no longer belongs to the court. In Osborne's (2010) words, he becomes one of those knights "who must find some means of topping up their coffers in order to regain knightly respect" (p. 82).

Sir Launfal's isolation from the noble and rich circle brings him closer to a fairy lady's protection and support. This intimacy with a stranger woman is unusual and threatening because although she is a stranger she seems to be friendly, hospitable and merciful, and she asks for a deal to help Sir Launfal. Being alienated by his former mayor who is supposed to protect and support Sir Launfal in accordance with the idea of kinship in the chivalric society brings Sir Launfal closer to thrust in a stranger lady who offers him comforts. Historically, the chivalric values of friendship, hospitality and mercy were replaced with monetary value and self-interest in the fourteenth century England (Choi, 2010) in which *Sir Launfal* was written, and these values are embodied in Lady Tryamour instead of the mayor not only in order to emphasize the change of chivalric values in the late Middle Ages, but also to present the fairy lady amicable and agreeable before her transformation into a punisher.

Unlike the mayor, Lady Tryamour whom Sir Launfal meets at the forest is not concerned with Sir Launfal's wealth or noble birth. However, Sir Launfal looks for economic prosperity and personal advancement by means of this lady's help because he is aware that he cannot achieve them through chivalric ideals, which have become perverted. Therefore, he submits to a deal with the lady, which recalls the binding by oath in a legal agreement. Once Lady Tryamour provides Sir Launfal with an opportunity to regain his wealth and renown, she asks for a risky deal. Lady Tryamour is protective like an angel, providing Sir Launfal with magical gifts (a purse, a horse, armour and a servant) to make him invulnerable, invincible and comfortable; however, she threatens him by warning that he is destined to lose them all if he boasts of her existence to anyone:

*'But of o thyng, Syr Knyght, I warne the,  
That thou make no bost of me  
For no kennes medel  
And yf thou doost, I warny the before,  
All my love thou hast forlore!'* (1995, p. 220, lines 361-365)

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<sup>3</sup> For a discussion of Sir Launfal and the fairy lady in different versions of Sir Launfal, see Williams, E. (1996). A damsel by herself alone: images of magic and femininity from Lanval to Sir Lambewell. In J. Fellows, & others (Eds.), *Romance reading on the book: Essays on medieval narrative presented to Maldwyn Mills*. (155-170). Cardiff: University of Wales Press.; Stokes, M. (2000). *Lanval to Sir Launfal: A story becomes popular*. In A. Putter & Jane Gilbert (Eds.), *The spirit of medieval English popular romance*. (56-77). Harlow: Longman.

This liaison between human and fairy recalls the courtly ideal that a noble lover shall never betray his beloved lady (Cartlidge, 2010). Moreover, it also makes Lady Tryamour threatening although she is the "giver/gift herself" (Wade, 2011, p. 115). The requirement of secrecy in their deal is functional not only to test Sir Launfal's abiding by his promise, but also to imply Lady Tryamour's dominance in their relationship. Breaking promise creates painful consequences, as occurs in *Sir Launfal*. Sir Launfal assures Lady Tryamour that he will not boast of her existence; yet, when he breaks his promise, Lady Tryamour vanishes and leaves him vulnerable to the evil Queen Guenevere's false accusations. Moreover, the deal for keeping her existence secret makes her the ruler over Sir Launfal, as he has to obey her in order not to be punished.

The reason for secrecy does not stem from her desire to protect herself from harm, since she has freedom and control over her actions (Marchalonis, 1986, p. 62). Hibbard (1969) states that secrecy "became a test of love, its breaking by the hero a failure in love for which the direst hardships, love-sickness running even into madness, were but rightful expiation" (p. 209). Sir Launfal does not run into madness or suffer from love-sickness; yet, he regrets that he has ignored Lady Tryamour's warning. Keeping Lady Tryamour's existence secret makes it more tempting to reveal it; therefore, Sir Launfal disregards her warning and compounds his suffering by attempting to take an easy way out by sidestepping its consequences and ignoring the fact that he may be victimized eventually. He mistakenly considers that his deal with Lady Tryamour is the only means to keep him away from Guenevere's villainy, therefore he boasts of Lady Tryamour's beauty, which results in her disappearance and his repentance:

*'Alas!' he seyde, 'my creature,  
How schall I from the endure,  
Swetyng Tryamour?  
All my joye I have forelore,  
And the – that me ys worst fore –  
Thou blyssfull berde yn bour!' (1995, p. 231, lines 745-750)*

According to Saunders (1993), "the forest represents exile from an unjust society" (p. 144) which provides a sanctuary for deprived Sir Launfal. However, the threat it encloses is apparent since Sir Launfal consents to a risky deal in the forest. The result of this deal is quite disturbing because after she vanishes Sir Launfal becomes vulnerable to Guenevere's threat and punishment until her reappearance when he is about to be punished by King Arthur. Moreover, after Lady Tryamour leaves Sir Launfal, he becomes vulnerable to poverty, punishment and disrespect until she reappears when he is about to be executed and takes him into her fairy land where he will be invulnerable.

Lady Tryamour's fairy land in *Sir Launfal* pretends to be a sanctuary or a retreat for avoiding any kind of earthly suffering. In the human world, Sir Launfal is subjected to Queen Guenevere's temptations and her attempts to punish him because of his rejecting her love. On the contrary, Lady Tryamour's fairy land is a secure and pleasant isle which resembles the Garden of Eden with its pleasures. Sir Launfal is away from earthly vulnerabilities and harms and threats in Lady Tryamour's fairy land. Nevertheless, the edenic representation of her fairy land is deceptive. In her fairy world, even if Martin (1966, p. 205) states that Lady Tryamour is presented as a mortal woman with a name, which makes her an ordinary woman without any unusual attribution, it is notable that she is free from all social and moral constraints. Her freedom stems from the fact that she is the figure of authority which cannot be threatened by a mortal male. Her power and dominance come from the fact that she has supernatural power. After Sir Launfal's boasting of her to Queen Guenevere, Lady Tryamour disappears as she foretold, which is "a sudden reminder of violence of the faery world" (Saunders, 1993, p. 146) ruled by her. It is a place totally under Lady Tryamour's unquestionable control. Under her supreme authority, Sir Launfal is subjected to being submissive to her in order to be kept in this secure and so-called edenic place.

Finlayson (1999, p. 389) suggests that there is very little attempt in the romance to elaborate on the magical elements; however, magic is significant in revealing the threatening nature of Lady Tryamour. It is particularly apparent when Lady Tryamour punishes Queen Guenevere. Punishment by blinding is, in fact, nominated by Guenevere before her villainy is revealed because she asks to be blinded if she is wrong. Lady Tryamour blows a breath which blinds Guenevere, and she takes Sir Launfal to her fairy land where he will be removed from suffering forever. Guenevere is blinded by Lady Tryamour's breath in return for her false accusation against Sir Launfal; hence the victim is saved while the victimizer is sentenced, which is a reasonable resolution.

Lady Tryamour's punishing Guenevere with magic reveals Lady Tryamour's menacing and violent nature, and the unavoidability of punishment if she is wrathful. In addition to this, Guenevere has already deserved punishment because of her falsely accusing Sir Launfal. It is also emphasized in the romance that Sir Launfal suffers mainly because of his

failure in keeping *trouthe*. *Trouthe* was regarded as an aristocratic honour, a social bond, particularly associated with chivalry and sworn relationships in medieval feudal society, and in its simplest terms may be defined as “verity and fidelity”, “a promise, a pledge of loyalty”, apart from its definition of “divine righteousness in Christian dogma” and “accuracy” (Green, 2002, p. 8-9). Therefore, despite Lady Tryamour’s threatening fairy nature, it is also Launfal’s fallibility which makes him more vulnerable to her magical power.

Historically, punishment by mutilation, including blinding, was legal in the thirteenth century, however it was ceased by the turn of the century (Bellamy, 1973, p. 181). All the same, the punishment of Guenevere by Lady Tryamour represents the administration of justice within the historical background of judicial inquiry in the fourteenth century, in a time of unsettled monarchical control; therefore, “the intervention of a supernatural being in the administration of justice condemns the failure of ruler and court and presents a model for emulation: perfect moral and humane value and action” (Hazell, 2003, p. 135). Guenevere’s desire for empowerment through perverting justice and her punishment are, therefore, realistic occasions which were witnessed and sentenced in the period. It is significant that the execution of Guenevere’s sentence is performed by a supernatural agent, which historically implies that no one in the court would punish her although justice legally demanded it (Tuma and Hazell, 2009, para. 48). The queen being punished by a supernatural agent is significant due to the fact that her or her husband’s authority and wrath were frightened of and avoided as much as possible. Thus, Lady Tryamour replaces the authority which is supposed to be the punisher of the villainy and the evil. Consequently, she becomes the figure and means of justice which is fair and direct, and hence she alternates with the noble and legal authorities. In that sense, her roles as the punisher of Sir Launfal and the punisher of Queen Guenevere do not differ substantially. In both cases, the breaker of the *trouthe* (promise) and the breaker of truth (justice) are penalized successively.

Likewise, the fairy lady figure as the protector of *trouthe* and the punisher of the breaker of *trouthe* is a recognizable issue in *The Romans of Partenay*. Similar to Lady Tryamour in *Sir Launfal*, it is unclear whether the fairy lady Melusine in *The Romans of Partenay* is an angelic woman or a villain. She is enchanted by her mother as a punishment and she is destined to be half-snake every Saturday; however, she can live like a mortal woman and die naturally unless her secret is revealed. Her double nature generates both a fairy and mortal woman in the same body; however, her fairy side dominates over her mortal side. As an ordinary woman Melusine comforts Raymond who mourns after accidentally killing his uncle, marries him, provides him with lands and even forgives him, although he ignores her warning and sees her on a Saturday. Nevertheless, after their son burns his brother Fromont, Raymond blames Melusine’s inherent evil, her half-snake nature, for the cause of suffering in their family. As Saunders (2010) states, “the taboo is broken, the monstrous revealed” (p. 190). Melusine blames Raymond for causing her suffering although she helped him when he suffered. Subsequently, her mortal nature and her role as reliever of suffering change into her fairy nature and her role as victimizer, and Melusine punishes Raymond by withdrawing all comforts she has provided. She has already prophesied that Raymond is destined to suffer great pains, provided that he ignores her warning:

*Iff iit be, ye shall haue gretly to doo  
huge noisaunt pannes with aduersite,  
And desherite be wrechedly also  
Of tennementes, landes, the beste to se; (1899, p. 42, lines 1044-1047)*

However, Melusine is not evil, since she advises Raymond on family matters so that he will not suffer much after her disappearance. She advises her husband Raymond to kill their son Horrible to prevent the suffering he may bring into their family if he survives. Lewis (2011) calls Melusine’s warning “the most dramatic lesson” (p. 19) given by a mother, to stress her distress while giving her counsel. Her care for her family’s peace more than her child’s life, and making this the reason for victimizing her child, brings her closer to justifiable villainy. On the other hand, although foretelling many ordeals, Melusine also comforts Raymond by saying that bemoaning their son Geoffrey’s burning of his brother Fromont and the monks in the abbey is in vain, as this was a punishment for the monks, who indulged in lechery. Historically, there were moral corruptions recorded in monasteries in the Middle Ages. There were also monks who had adulterous affairs, like Brother Thomas Barton who was accused of adultery with a washerwoman when Bishop Alnwick visited Bardney in 1438 (Keen, 1973, p. 222). In the romance, it is implied that the English monasteries needed spiritual cleaning, and the monks because of their lechery are the deservers of punishment.

Although it sounds paradoxical with her fairy nature, Melusine’s approval for the punishment of the corrupt monks, one of whom is her own son, is related to her piety. Apart from being a responsible wife and mother, Melusine is also a devoted Christian, despite transforming into a serpent every Saturday. She can live like a mortal woman and die naturally on condition that her husband does not see her on Saturdays. Although her marriage provides a chance for her to live as

a mortal woman with a husband and children, it becomes the reason for her grief as her fate "is subject to her husband's human weakness" (Lewis, 2011, p. 23) when Raymond sees her snake body, accuses her of being the reason for unrest in their family, and she is forced to leave forever. The breaking of a promise is forgiven once in *The Romans of Partenay*, when Raymond breaks his promise to Melusine that he will not see her on Saturdays when her half-snake body is revealed. Although Melusine does not punish him immediately, she disappears after he holds her half-snake nature against her as the reason for the suffering in their family. She leaps out of the window and changes into a serpent. Exposure of her monstrous side not only victimizes her as she loses her chance to live like a mortal, but also makes her husband vulnerable without her support.

Actually, Melusine is not responsible on her own for the punishment of Raymond. Raymond also makes himself a victim, since he fails to accept "what is beyond obvious reason- like Melusine's non-human quality" (Richmond, 1975, p. 80). Therefore, he submits to the punishment he has caused by accepting Melusine's disappearance. His penance moves him "toward a higher level of self-awareness and faith" (Lewis, 2011, p. 17). He cries, tears his hair, smites his breast and wails, and retreats to a hermitage in devotion to God until he dies. He accepts punishment by rightly blaming himself:

*'Alas! alas!' thys ther saide Raymounde,  
'A more purer man in the worlde ne is  
Off verry trought then I am this stounde!  
Alas! Melusine! this day haue don Amys,  
That by my diffaute you haue I loste this!' (1899, p. 102, lines 2871-2875)*

Consequently, Raymond goes to Rome to ask for penance from the Pope for his treatment of Melusine, before retreating to a hermitage until his death. He accepts his punishment willingly because he is aware that he has already deserved it by ignoring Melusine's previous warnings. Just before her transformation into a snake, Melusine foretells what Raymond's punishment is and how he is destined to suffer after she disappears:

*All-way thy dedes shall go to decline,  
Ne neuer shal be wrought ne made again,  
And thi land shal be, After thi discesse plain,  
Parted in partes I beleue shal be,  
Neuer to-geders hold in seueralte, (1899, p. 127, lines 3636-3640)*

Melusine says Raymond's lands will be divided after his death, and some of his men will lose their lands. She warns him to beware of Horrible, as he will waste all the country and make him suffer from poverty. After Melusine's disappearance, Raymond loses all his riches and joy, and his pain does not end until he dies as Melusine prophesied.

The skill of prophecy, especially of the terrific upcoming, implies Melusine's demonic nature; however, she is not purely evil. Melusine blends characterizations of fairy, mortal and divine, which cleanses her of the purely demonic representation. The snake represents the "Christian sinner seeking spiritual renewal" (Wheatcroft, 1999, p. 145) within context of Christianity. Unlike other fairy ladies, Melusine has a half-snake body, which associates her with death and decay (Miller, 2010, p. 7), as well as the devil (Wade, 2011, p. 124). Indeed, Melusine is not purely demonic in her half-human and half-snake body. She lives with mortals on earth, looks angelic, and she is a devoted Christian. Although Melusine is a reliever of suffering and victimizer of Raymond, she is a sufferer as well. She is punished, with her sisters, by her mother after she encloses her father King Helmas in an enchanted mountain, because he has broken his promise to his wife and has seen her giving birth to their daughters, although she warned him not to look. Although Lewis claims that Melusine's adolescent revolt represents female aggression against male power to overthrow patriarchal dominance (Lewis, 2011, p. 20), she has rather been victimized because of her revolt, which initiated the chain of punishments in the romance, not only for herself but also for her family members.

Actually, the blend of fairy, mortal and divine in both *Sir Launfal* and *The Romans of Partenay* is functional owing to the fact that this unusual representation of a female alters the traditional gender roles. In both romances, the female lover who has supernatural gift has power and generosity, which makes her masculine. Hence, female authority is justified only when it becomes extraordinary. Authority monopolized by the male could be surpassed by the female only if a woman is depicted out of her conventional representation. Accordingly, both romances assume ambiguous attitudes towards the fairy female, since it is unclear whether they intend to invoke the necessity of change of gender roles to erase the female submission to the male which has been repeated in several medieval romances; or they imply that female authority is

unrealistic, since it is described through not mortal but fairy ladies, and it is sinister because fairy ladies are threatening and victimizer, despite their angelic pretensions.

Nevertheless, the purely demonic representation of the fairy lady is relatively avoided in *Sir Launfal* and *The Romans of Partenay*. In both romances, the fairy lady's prohibition is laid upon her mortal lover only when the mortal lover breaks the fairy lady's command. She is like an independent ruler; however, she is also a victim after her separation from her lover, especially in *The Romans of Partenay*; therefore, she indirectly becomes her own punisher as well. Publicity of love, additionally, is a reason for punishment of especially the mortal lover besides that of the fairy lady. When the lovers exchange promises on their obligations and duties as lovers, they indeed, define their own understanding of love. Accordingly, love shall have modesty and privacy. In both romances, love is to be kept away from pride and publicity due to the fact that both pride and publicity of love deteriorates the affair. Love is deteriorated when the male lover in both romances breaks his *trouthe*; thus, the fairy lady's role as the punisher of the disobedient male is justified because it is not without a reason.

It is obvious that fairy ladies define their restrictions and make agreements on their own terms with people whose suffering they relieve, and they punish them if they disobey or disregard them. The punishments meted out by fairy ladies following disobedience to them evoke divine punishment after disobeying God's order, which also justifies and sanctifies their role as the punisher of the disobedient. Moreover, neither Lady Tryamour nor Melusine is punished because of their having punished Sir Launfal and Raymond. The punishers' being exempt from punishment hints that the victims have already deserved punishment and neither of the fairy ladies is completely evil.

Both Lady Tryamour and Melusine share angelic and demonic features; however, they differ in some aspects. Different from Lady Tryamour, Melusine is a woman punished by her mother; she is a wife and a mother who has no fairy land of her own. Melusine's life among mortals depends on the conducts of the mortals around her. In other words, she is also on the verge of being punished if someone disobeys her and sees her on a Saturday. Thus, she has a justifiable reason to threaten and punish Raymond who is a disobedient mortal. However, Lady Tryamour has self-control over her power, and there is no external threat to her authority. In addition to this, Lady Tryamour has a fairy land where she takes Sir Launfal at the end of the romance, following her punishing Guenevere. This private and edenic place totally under her control pertains to a heavenly prison for Sir Launfal because of his being under Lady Tryamour's control and order there forever. These differences bring Melusine closer to the representation of a mortal woman since she is weaker and submissive to her fate contrary to Lady Tryamour. On the other hand, Lady Tryamour is portrayed strong, determined and out of the conventional gender roles due to the fact that she has supreme control over herself and others.

In common, *Sir Launfal* and *The Romans of Partenay* employ a fairy lady who is a lover, helper and then punisher of her lover or husband. The fairy lady is compared with a saintly helper when she provides assistance to the mortal male through enchantment. In that sense, enchantment is a means of relief; however, it turns into a sinister threat and even a punishment for the male lover after the change in the fairy lady's role from helper to punisher. This transformation of roles obscures the function of enchantment. The fairy lady enchants help provided that she meets a desperate male, while she enchants punishment once she is threatened or betrayed. Therefore, enchantment recalls God's means of judgement. Hence, Lady Tryamour and Melusine, indeed, substitute for the divine authority in a female body, since they have fair judgement and punishment.

On the other hand, the desperate male is dependent on his fairy mistress/master and he is bound to live in accordance with fairy rules, which make him lose his individuality. This human dependence on non-human beings is disturbing and threatening, reminding the audience of the role of God as the forgiver, protector and saviour of repentant and innocent. Absence of God in the fairy realm becomes the means of understanding God's significance, and his existence as the forgiver of the repentant and the punisher of the disobedient. Hence, *Sir Launfal* and *The Romans of Partenay* indirectly become didactic in a religious way because they demonstrate and emphasize their moral content through mortal victims who finally recognize their hubris and sins, and fairy punishers who are aware of their authorities.

In conclusion, repentance of Sir Launfal and Raymond provide evidence for the distinctive authority of Lady Tryamour and Melusine respectively, which stands for the religious teachings in medieval society. Thus, Sir Launfal and Raymond are implicitly presented as a role model for the Christian audience listening to or reading their punishments and repentance. Hence, the romance audience feels uneasy with the punisher, and empathizes with the punished romance protagonist by shattering himself in the victim's destructed world. The victim's survival process is a form of catharsis for the audience, who can reinvent themselves through it, although they do not actually experience the punishments personally. Therefore, the victims' experiences reflect, or become a foil to, the reaction of an actual or potential victim in real medieval life.

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