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UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

GRADUATE COLLEGE

THE MIRROR SPEAKS:

THE FEMALE VOICE IN MEDIEVAL DIALOGUE POETRY AND DRAMA

A Dissertation

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

By

SUSAN M. HALLORAN
Norman, Oklahoma
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THE MIRROR SPEAKS:
THE FEMALE VOICE IN MEDIEVAL DIALOGUE POETRY AND DRAMA

A Dissertation APPROVED FOR THE
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

BY

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Table of Contents

Dissertation Abstract	v
Preface	vii
Chapter One	1
Chapter Two	41
Chapter Three	102
Chapter Four	177
Bibliography	273

Dissertation Abstract
for
The Mirror Speaks: The Female Voice in Medieval Dialogue Poetry and Drama

This study focuses on relationships between male and female characters as they are manifested in a variety of Western medieval dialogue literatures. I approach my task from a psychoanalytic perspective, using Lacanian theory to argue that dialogue exchanges between male and female characters show the male to be using the female as the "other" of Lacan's mirror stage--in whom one may find constitution and confirmation of identity, or at least the illusion of it. In the course of such an effort I examine subjectivity as it is created through the verbal interplay of self and other--and how the positioning of self and other may in some cases be reversed.

I argue that medieval literature, despite its overt emphasis on male sensibility and subjectivity, is permeated with the influence of the feminine. Through dialogue exchanges between male and female characters, identity is constructed, primarily for the male but sometimes also for the female characters. In the course of advancing this thesis I examine selected English lyrics and the troubadour poetry which influenced them; poems which contain male-female dialogue exchanges, such as the Middle English Pearl and Piers Plowman and their continental and Latin predecessors, the Consolation of Philosophy, the Complaint of Nature, and the Romance of the Rose; and the English morality, saint's, and mystery play traditions. In discussing them I focus on the frequently paradoxical nature and function of female voicings within the

literature. While the female speaker in such works is more often than not ancillary to any male presence, her position as "other" in his construction of self nonetheless emphasizes the necessary and constitutive role of the female voice in medieval discourse and culture. What emerges in the end is the necessity of inter-gender complementarity to the fulfillment of both social and spiritual models of existence.

Preface

This study focuses on relationships between male and female characters as they are manifested in a variety of Western medieval dialogue literatures. I approach my task from a psychoanalytic perspective, using Lacanian theory to argue that dialogue exchanges between male and female characters show the male to be using the female as the "other" of Lacan's mirror stage--in whom one may find constitution and confirmation of identity, or at least the illusion of it. In the course of such an effort I examine subjectivity as it is created through the verbal interplay of self and other--and how the positioning of self and other may in some cases be reversed.

I have chosen this approach to my subject matter because it seemed a complement to critical analyses already in circulation. Many of the older studies examining male-female relationships in medieval literature explore the effect female characters have on the more central males of the work, excavating the notion that women served sometimes important, although almost always ancillary positions to males in literature.[1] More recent works have examined the male-female literary

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[1] Joan M. Ferrante's Woman as Image in Medieval Literature: From the Twelfth Century to Dante (1975; Durham, NC: Labyrinth, 1985) is the classic early feminist medieval study; in it she focuses primarily on the symbolic function of women in the literature of the Middle Ages (for more on this see Chapter One). More recent works, such as Carolyn Dinshaw's Chaucer's Sexual Poetics (Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 1989) and Elaine Tuttle Hansen's Chaucer and the Fictions of Gender (Berkeley: U of California P, 1992) have used this classic approach to rethink a classic subject. Both writers seek to relocate Chaucer within the sphere of male appropriators or "translators" of the feminine, a fate he has traditionally avoided thanks to his apparent empathy for such female characters as Griselda, Criseyde, even the Wife of Bath.

dynamic to conclude that marginalized, otherwise suppressed, or simply oppressed women manage to resist and/or subvert not only male characters but even the largely masculinist agenda of the male author.[2] Such activity often includes an examination of female subjectivity--how the female character is able to define herself through resistance to the opposing male forces. Yet studies that are primarily psychoanlytic in nature have more often than not focused on the development of male subjectivity rather than female; the literary woman is again relegated to the margins. Two recent book-length studies focusing on the lyric expression of the Provençal troubadours--the progenitors of the literature within which I begin my study--serve as examples. Sarah Kay is "concerned with [troubadour] subjectivity as produced by language or rhetoric"[3] but does not cover the role of inter-gender exchange in the construction of subjectivity. Rouben Cholakian, while concerned with the psychological impact of

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[2] One such example, M. Keith Booker's "'Nothing That Is So Is So': Dialogic Discourse in the Voice of the Woman in the Clerk's Tale and Twelfth Night," Exemplaria 3.2 (1991): 525-37, takes a Bakhtinian approach in suggesting that Shakespeare's Viola and Chaucer's Griselda manage to resist authoritative, patriarchal directives by employing "double-voiced" speech--language that seems to confirm but actually resists or undermines the dominant paradigm. In a variation on that idea, E. Jane Burns offers in Body Talk: When Women Speak in Old French Literature (Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 1993), "If [the female character's] voice is contained within the dominant voice of male culture, it can also speak to us in registers generally foreign to that dominant voice" (xvi). It is possible that the creation of female characters such as these was influenced by real-life women. Joan M. Ferrante's recent To the Glory of Her Sex: Women's Roles in the Composition of Medieval Texts (Bloomington: U of Indiana P, 1997) suggests that despite the "intense misogyny" of the Middle Ages, historical women found ways of expressing themselves and wielding influence, particularly in the composition of male-authored texts (4). See below.

the woman's symbolic presence on the poet-lover's sense of self,[4] does not address chiefly the formative effects of her voice upon him--or of his voice upon her.

In my study I attempt to bring all these threads of critical activity together, using a Lacanian lens through which to examine texts in which female characters are both marginalized and of vital importance, are sometimes mere verbal tools in the development process of male subjectivity and at other times themselves consumers of male linguistic offerings. Joan Ferrante has written of the relationships between the historical men and women of the Middle Ages:

> [D]espite the period's intense misogyny. . .women could be respected colleagues, friends, and relatives, whose affection, support, even advice were sought and cherished--or whose antagonism had to be confronted carefully.[5]

I believe that this dynamic is reproduced in the literature of the Middle Ages; furthermore, I believe that a Lacanian reading of the texts' male-female relationships reveals the necessity of complementarity between the sexes, not only within the creation of individual identity but in the furtherance of religious and social harmony, so important to a culture saturated with notions of Christianity as the organizing framework of existence. As I demonstrate in the following chapters, even within secular works, evidence of this sensibility may be found. All things, if right, were

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[3] Sarah Kay, Subjectivity in Troubadour Poetry (Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge UP, 1990) 4.

[4] Cholakian perceives this as especially relevant to the work of the troubadour Guiraut Riquier. See Rouben C. Cholakian, The Troubadour Lyric: A Psychocritical Reading (Manchester, Eng.: Manchester UP, 1990).

[5] Ferrante, To the Glory, 4.

part of the harmonious whole that was God's plan--a plan steeped in paradox that requires the fusion of opposites. In inheriting the earth, the meek became the conquerors; in death, the Christian was born to life everlasting; and in the wilderness that was worldly existence, male and female must cease the opposition occasioned by Adam and Eve's fall to work as allies. Only together were male and female able to navigate the treacherous terrain, drawing their identities from each other and from their shared effort. And the harmony that was the Christian plan came closer to being achieved.

It is also important to note that despite the uniformity of sensibility that is still evident in medieval texts, despite the fact that misogyny and patriarchy are still the rule, this study joins the growing ranks of those maintaining that Western medieval thought was less monolithic with regard to gender issues than has been traditionally thought. The subsequent chapters' analyses suggest that medieval texts are not homogenous in their approach to the dynamic of male-female relationships. As I note in Chapter One, depictions of male-female interplay range from the stereotypically masculinist presentation of the woman as mere window dressing for the man's self-image to the somewhat surprising presentation of men and women as equal partners in the creation of each other's identity. Among such variety what remains constant is the need for the voluntary input of both genders to create a single identity, especially if any sort of satisfaction is to be achieved in the process. And although not all male-female partners in medieval literature are ideally matched, the potential for an ideal

complementarity exists even within seemingly antagonistic male-female pairings, suggesting that cooperation between the genders, not competition or hostility, is what is ultimately required for a stable existence. An echo of the prelapsarian dynamic between the first man and woman, this complementarity permeates all subsequent depictions of relationships between males and females, even if only as a distant ideal at best difficult to achieve.

Chapter One

Introduction: Lacan and Goldin's Lady of the Mirror

> [Woman] is defined and differentiated with reference to man and not he with reference to her; she is the incidental, the inessential as opposed to the essential. He is the Subject, he is the Absolute--she is the Other.[1]

> [W]oman has traditionally been the object upon which man has projected his own. . .illusions of wholeness in order to shore up his self-image. . . .[2]

> [T]he nature of women[:] be they never so near God, yet they love to die in a man's arms.[3]

St. Gregory of Nyssa (4th c), identified by Ritamary Bradley as "one of the most prolific" of pre-Augustinian Christian writers "on the figurative meaning of *speculum*," wrote that the human soul functioned as a type of mirror, the "moral purity" of which determined whether the individual achieved truth or some hazy substitute for it.[4] Bradley explains:

> [Gregory] describes the mirror of the soul as able to be turned towards either the sensible or the superior world: when one's soul, after the manner of a mirror, has turned from what has seduced him to evil towards the hope of a future good, he can see in the purity of his own soul the forms and images of beauty shown to him by Divine aid.[5]

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[1] Simone de Beauvoir, The Second Sex, trans. and ed. H. M. Parshley (1952; New York: Vintage-Random, 1974) xix.

[2] M. Keith Booker, "'Nothing That Is So Is So': Dialogic Discourse and the Voice of the Woman in the Clerk's Tale and Twelfth Night," Exemplaria 3.2 (1991): 525.

[3] Robert Greene, Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay, Drama of the English Renaissance Period I: The Tudor Period, eds. Russell A. Fraser and Norman Rabkin (New York: Macmillan; Collier-Macmillan: London, 1976) 14.103-4, 380.

[4] St. Gregory of Nyssa, De Beatitudinis, Oratio VI (PG, XLIV, 1270C), qtd. in Ritamary Bradley, "Backgrounds of the Title *Speculum* in Medieval Literature," Speculum 29 (1954): 107, n. 39.

[5] Bradley summarizes Gregory's "Si ergo sejunxerit ab iis quibus ad malum pelliciebatur, cogitationibus suis in melius conversis, et velut rejecto in tergum vitio, tanquam speculum quoddam animum suum ex adverso spei futororum bonorum

In Gregory's understanding of existence--an understanding common to the patristic period and to the centuries that followed--the soul reflected that to which it was turned; and in the Christian Middle Ages it was a commonplace to believe that most of humanity was attuned more to the sensible world of fleshly desires than to the superior world of spiritual fulfillment. It was also common to regard the signifiers of these worlds--things of either body or spirit--as mirrors themselves, reflections of their respective realms and, if the individual desired it, points of entry into those realms. Centuries of writings by the early Church fathers had linked Eve, the first woman, to the world of the senses because of her instrumental role in the fall of the father of mankind. Thus, Eve, the prime (and primary) example of one seduced by worldly enticements, was a mirror that reflected the sensible world, one who was also--as described by Tertullian (c. 160-c. 225)--"the gateway of the devil,"[6] whose example continued to draw humanity away from heavenly good. Conversely, many patristic texts also connected Mary, the mother of Christ, to the superior spiritual realm; as perpetual virgin, queen of heaven, and intercessor between Christ and humanity, she was the negation of the sensible world, both the mirror of man's salvation and his means to accessing it. That Mary and Eve were also considered mirror images of each other--the much-invoked Latin palindrome EVA-AVE expresses the traditional notion that the angel Gabriel's hail to the Virgin was the antidote to Eve's disastrous counsel to Adam--contributed to their characterization as

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collocarit, sic ut ostensae divinitus sibi virtutis species et imagines animae suae puritate possit exprimere, tunc ei manifestus fratris auxilia undique apparent. . . ." De Vita Moysis (PG, Xliv, 339A), qtd. in Bradley, 107, n. 40.

[6] De Cultu Feminarum, 1.1, trans. C. W. Marx, qtd. in Alcuin Blamires, ed., Woman Defamed and Woman Defended: An Anthology of Medieval Texts (Oxford: Clarendon, 1992) 51. From Tertullian Opera, pt. I, ed. A. Krotmann, CCSL, i (Turnhout: Brepolis, 1954).

antithetical mirrors of the human moral and spiritual condition. In the end, too, all individuals must position their souls toward either paragon or pariah and, in doing so, both define their identities and determine their eternal fates.

This connection between human moral and spiritual choice and Mary or Eve is a chief element in what might be termed a paradigm of identity as it appears in the medieval literary texts to be examined in this chapter (about which more will be said below). I believe three things may be asserted regarding the selfhood of the "I" that appears in these texts: 1) the medieval concept of the soul is inextricably involved in any perception of "self"; 2) identity seems dependent upon the reflective capability of something apparently outside the individual, a presence that is "other" and able to return some sort of corroboration to the individual; and 3) that other is often associated with the feminine,[7] a concept tied ineradicably to the stereotype of woman

[7] This chapter has already touched upon the contribution of Church fathers to the definition of gender-specific characteristics (see also pp. 9-10, below); in addition, as Joan Cadden explains in Meanings of Sex Difference in the Middle Ages: Medicine, Science, and Culture (Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge UP, 1993), concepts of femininity and masculinity in the Middle Ages were further linked to scientific, philosophical and cultural notions about males and females of all species of animal. For instance, females were considered moist and cold in "complexion" while males were dry and warm; this in turn (generally) led to firmer flesh and a hardier constitution in the male and softness and fragility in the female. Consequently, "masculine" came to be associated with vigor and solidity while "feminine" came to suggest insufficiency (172). Connected also to the feminine would be the idea of the void, in reference to the womb which was held to be an empty space either waiting for or actively seeking to be filled by the all-important masculine principal (178). Because of this inherent lack, the feminine must always defer to the masculine, either by presenting itself passively--the behavior more in keeping with the "natural" order of things--or by actively seeking to fill itself with the masculine, which, when applied to the woman, gave rise to the antifeminist stereotype of the dangerous, sexually predatory and voracious woman (178-79). As a result sensuality and even incontinence came to be associated with the feminine while the masculine was linked with rationality and discipline. These conclusions arrived at via natural philosophy and medicine were supported by the Pauline assertion that man is to be the head of woman (I Cor. 11:3)

in the Middle Ages[8]--and for which Mary and Eve were the principal positive and negative exemplars.

A theorist particularly valuable to one who deals with matters of the "other" and with the phenomenon of mirroring in identity construction is French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan. His theories together with Frederick Goldin's analysis of the importance of the mirror motif in courtly love literature are the subject of the final portion of this chapter. Yet before bringing Lacan's and Goldin's ideas to bear on the concept of medieval identity, it is necessary to examine briefly the figure of the

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and by the declaration in Genesis (3:16) that a wife will always be desirous of and subject to her husband. For the purposes of this study, "feminine" refers to those qualities generally associated with women in medieval culture and literature while "masculine" denotes the same regarding the male. The terms "woman" and "female" refer to literary characters (human or otherwise) portrayed as biologically female or to whom the female gender is attributed through the use of the appropriate pronoun. "Male" describes characters who are biologically male or are designated male through the use of the corresponding pronoun.

[8] Carolyn Walker Bynum's Jesus as Mother: Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages (Berkeley: U of California P, 1982) focuses on the societal conditions that led to a feminization of religious imagery and language between 1050 and 1215. It began, Bynum asserts, when monastic communities formerly committed to withdrawal from the world began to integrate outreach and service into their mission. To articulate these missions they fell back on language that best expressed the nurturing character of their new endeavor and which consequently contained images associated with stereotyped notions of woman. References to a God or a Christ who was able to nurse his children, who possessed a womb, who was able to dispense mother-love became common, as did male writers expressing their souls' union with Christ in language recalling a woman's sexual ecstacy. Although Bynum concludes that "[t]hroughout the Middle Ages, authors found it far easier than we seem to find it to apply characteristics stereotyped as male or female to the opposite sex," and then cautions that "[w]e cannot assume that twelfth-century monks associated the feminine with the female to the extent that we do or that they associated certain physical or affective responses with sexuality in the way that we do" (162), I would add that a survey of medieval literary works and historical records suggests that stereotyped notions of gender held power in the Middle Ages even if religious and mystical writers were able to transcend those strictures somewhat. For a description of such stereotyped qualities, see n. 7, above.

mirror in the Middle Ages, not only as St. Gregory and other patristic writers present it, but as it appears in medieval writings in general; this exercise should reveal at least in part how the mirror apparently worked on the medieval mindset.

The essentially Platonic world view of the Middle Ages combined with the pervasive influence of patristic writings, including those of St. Augustine (354-430), who featured the mirror prominently in his works, imbued the figure of the mirror with power and flexibility. The general Platonic perception that "the objects of actual experience"--that is, that which made up human existence on earth--"were known and judged by their resemblance to an ideal Form"[9] prevailed in the Middle Ages. And, following Augustine, this ideal Form was generally held to be the Christian God. Because of this, as suggested above, the human experience--mankind's spiritual, intellectual, social struggles through life--was often presented in terms of the mirror metaphor. Goldin explains, "[W]hen all existence is understood as a relation between paragon and image, between one Reality and its innumerable reflections, the use of the mirror figure is inevitable."[10] Bradley believes the mirror figure also articulates a dual function that the medieval mindset would find appealing: it reveals what *is*, as well as what *should be*. As Augustine suggests in his commentary on Psalm 103, holy scripture is itself a mirror that "[i]n its resplendence. . .shows you what you should be, that is, pure of heart; and it also shows you what you are, that you may confess your deformity and begin to adorn yourself."[11] Scripture, when viewed as a

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[9] Frederick Goldin, The Mirror of Narcissus in the Courtly Love Lyric (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1967) 4.

[10] Goldin, 4.

[11] Bradley's summary (p. 103) of Augustine's Enarratio in Psalmum, CII (PL, XXII, 1338): "Et quid intuens, inquis, me videbo? Posuit tibi speculum Scripturam suam; legitur tibi; *Beati mundi corde, quoniam ipsi Deum videbunt* (Matt. v, 8). Speculum in hac lectione propositum est: vide si hoc es quod dixit; si nondum es, geme ut sis. Renuntiabit tibi speculum faciem tuam: sicut speculum non senties

mirror, reflects to the individual both wise examples and wise dicta-- "biographies or religious rules"[12]--by which he might determine his own position in the scheme of salvation. Alcuin (735-804) echoed this idea in his treatise on virtues and vices: "In the reading of the Holy Scriptures is the knowledge of divine blessedness. Man can consider himself in them as in a mirror: he can see what he is and what he aims at. Attentive reading purifies the soul. . . ."[13] By the fourteenth century, the writer of Speculum Gy de Warewyke could conclude: "Holi writ is oure myrour. / In whom we sen al vre succour."[14] Other written texts designed to dispense rules for right living also came to be known as *specula*. John Capgrave, a fifteenth-century biographer of Augustine, reported that the saint, in his capacity as Bishop of Hippo, had "assembled a book of certain rules, directing how his hermits should live, and that he called this rule a 'mirror.'"[15] The popularity of mirror literature continued throughout the Middle Ages and into the Renaissance--one modern editor remarks, "[I]t would be impossible to enumerate all that has been written in different countries from the

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adulatorem, sic nec te palpes. Hoc tibi ostendit nitor ille quod es: vide quod es; et si tibi displicet, quare ut non sis. Si enim cum foeda sis, tibi ipsi adhuc displices, pulchro jam places. Quid ergo? Quoniam displicet tibi foeditas tua, incipis ei in confessione; sicut albit dicitur: *Incipite Domino in Confessione* (*Psal.* CXLVI, 7). Primo accusa foeditatem tuam: foeditas enim animae de peccatis, de iniquitatibus. Accusando foediatem tuam incipe confiteri, confessione incipis decorari: quo decorante, nisi specioso forma prae filiis hominum?" qtd. in Bradley, 103, 18n.

[12] Bradley, 105.

[13] "Sanctarum lectio Scripturarum divinae est cognitio beatitudinis. In his enim quasi in qhodam speculo homo seipsum considerare potest, qualis sit, vel quo tendat. lectio assidua purificat animam. . . ." Alcuin, "De Lectione Studio," De Virtutibus et Vitiis Liber (PL, CI, 616 CD), trans. Bradley, qtd. in Bradley, 102, 17n.

[14] Speculum Gy de Warewyke, ed. Georgiana Lea Morrill (EETS, ES 75): ll. 505-6, qtd. in Bradley, 102.

[15] Bradley, 105.

twelfth to the sixteenth century under this head"[16]--producing a variety of works both sacred and secular, including Nigel Wireker's late twelfth-century monastic satire Speculum Stultorum, John Gower's fourteenth-century allegory Speculum Meditantis (Mirour de l'Omme in its French translation), and Nicholas Love's early fifteenth-century The Mirrour of the Blessed Lyf of Iesu Christ. Though not termed "*speculum*" or "mirror," Thomas Hoccleve's The Regiment of Princes (1411-12) and John Lydgate's The Fall of Princes (1431-38) serve a purpose similar to that of the others, one George Gascoigne continues in his sixteenth-century The Steel Glas:

> And unto those that love to see themselves,
> How foule or fayre, soever that they are,
> He [Lucylias] gan bequeath, a glasse of trustie Steele,
> Wherein they may be bolde alwayes to look,
> Bycause it shewes, all things in their degree.
> And since myselfe (now pride of youth is past)
> Do love to be, and let all seeming passe,
> Since I desire, to see my selfe in deed,
> Not what I would, but *what I am or should*,
> Therefore I like this trustie glasse of Steele.[17]

The mirror, then, functioned to help the reader know himself, both as he was and as he had the potential to be. Interpreted from a religious perspective, the mirror could not only reveal the status quo--the individual's current, fallen, material existence--but also the ideal--the potential each individual possessed for entry into the superior realm. The message of the mirror, however, would be lost unless the reader was able to process what the mirror showed him; on this note we return to the special function of the soul in this procedure.

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[16] Speculum Christiani, EETS OS, 182 (London: Oxford UP, 1933) xv, n. 1, qtd. in Bradley, 100, n. 2.

[17] George Gascoigne, "The Steel Glas," The Complete Works of George Gascoigne, ed. John W. Cunliffe (Cambridge, Eng., 1910) II, 148-49, qtd. in Bradley, 101, n. 6. Italics mine.

As suggested earlier, Gregory of Nyssa, Augustine and other Church fathers held that the soul was a mirror able to reflect the material and/or the spiritual world. Augustine regarded the soul as the element within humanity most attuned to the Truth and Reality of God; he believed it to be the mirror, according to Bradley, in which the Platonic archetypal ideas "are most properly imaged."[18] Yet human beings were composed of an element other than soul: body, which "occupies by nature a lower rank on the scale of being than does soul," according to Augustine; consequently, soul, "a special substance, endowed with reason, adapted to rule a body,"[19] is a "greater good than body."[20] Processed through the soul are the perceptions of the mind, which Augustine also regarded as a mirror capable of capturing the images of the insubstantial, shadowy material world and the solid, superior realm. Consequently, even if the soul were turned toward images of transience rather than eternity, the individual might still achieve closer congress with the one true Idea by choosing, through an exercise of free will, to call upon his reason rightly: proper perception of such images--that is, judicious management of the mirror of the mind--should lead him to realize the fleeting nature of material life and thereby bring him closer to the eternal God.

In exercising its rational capacity correctly, then, the soul makes superior mirrors of all images to which it turns. In Bradley's summary of Augustine's influential judgment on the matter:[21]

> Things seen by the bodily senses, likenesses of the corporeal (such as representations of the vices and virtues), thought itself, the subjects of

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[18] Bradley, 105.

[19] Augustine, qtd. in "Augustine," Philosophy in the Middle Ages. eds. Arthur Hyman and James J. Walsh, 2nd ed. (Hackett: Indianapolis, 1984) 17.

[20] Augustine, "On Free Will," II: xviii, 47, Hyman and Walsh, 53.

[21] Augustine, De Trinitate, XV, 9.

> instruction such as the liberal arts, eternal truths, even vain and false things are mirrors if they are adapted to the understanding of God.[22]

In this sense, turning toward the mirror of Eve might bring a soul closer to its eventual goal, reunion with God, if the truths seen there are perceived in the right way, if, for example, she is perceived properly as an exemplar of pride, appetite and consequent disaster rather than as an example of right living. The problem arises only if the individual fails to exercise his reason in his perusal of such objects of material experience and chooses instead to accept them as laudable, perceiving materiality as an end in itself. If this is to happen, he has lost his soul to things degraded; so too has he, in essence, lost himself as well.

For as the seat of all vital activity, the soul is indisputably the supreme element in the composition of man, and is indeed, for Augustine, almost the sum of man; in fact he often characterizes man as "an immaterial soul inhering in a body."[23] Because the soul is the element charged with regulation of the body through rational decision, its failure or success to discharge its duty appropriately determines the fate of the individual. And although both body and soul were thought to have a place in the divinely planned map of the afterlife of the individual, it was the soul that lived on after physical death while the body remained entombed in the dust from which it had first arisen. Only at the final judgment would the body be granted its second life, and this event was most likely to occur after the Christian's ultimate hope had already been achieved: the soul's final union with the Father. The body's resurrection was therefore something akin to icing on the cake, not the cake itself--the cake could only be had through the actions of the soul. With its ability to judge the images impressed within it, to take in and process everything it perceives, to determine whether the

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[22] Bradley, 105.

[23] "Augustine," 17.

mirrors it encounters might provide the stuff that works to the good of God, the soul is clearly geared toward preparing the individual for the final "taking-in" of the primary, ideal Form by establishing his moral and spiritual identity. Yet identity for human beings even in the theologically dominated Middle Ages cannot escape being a psychological as well as a moral and spiritual phenomenon; and I believe that the psychological element within the medieval concept of selfhood is made clearer by the application of Goldin's analysis of identity construction and of Lacanian theory to both secular and sacred works of literature, some dealing expressly with the notion of identity, others not. Where an explicit or even implied "I" exists, the issues of consciousness, self, subjectivity, identity are viable; and, in the Middle Ages, gender figured importantly into figurations of identity.

In his analysis of female-male relationships in Chaucer's Clerk's Tale and Shakespeare's Twelfth Night, M. Keith Booker notes that "woman has traditionally been the object upon which man has projected his own. . .illusions of wholeness in order to shore up his self-image. . . ."[24] Woman, one might say, has been the mirror into which man projected his image to find confirmation of himself as a whole entity; the confirmation comes when he takes into himself what he perceives in the mirror, whether it be approval, love, even disdain. The analogous nature of this mirror situation to the heterosexual sexual act--the projection of one into another and the importance of the perceived response of the second party to the first party's self-image--might account for the male-female positioning in Booker's mirroring equation. Yet in the authoritative discourses of the Middle Ages, the feminine element in any equation with the masculine was generally not afforded such an overtly important job as it is given in Booker's figuration; although the contribution

[24] Booker, 525.

of the feminine was necessary in any joint activities (see, for instance, procreation, below), it was regarded as less valuable than the masculine, analogous, for instance, to body while the masculine was analogous to soul. Yet this apparently ancillary relationship to the masculine is one of the traits that identifies the feminine--and the woman--with the mirror, which, as I have already suggested is a position of power in the construction of identity.

Also contributing to the link between things womanly and the mirror in the Middle Ages is the medieval conviction that etymology was destiny, that words often corresponded in *essence* to the things they named: much was made by the early Church fathers of the obvious connection between the Latin term for mother, *mater*, and "matter" (*materia*), the substance of all worldly (and fallen) existence--and the substance of the mirror itself.[25] Matter was regarded as essentially formless, raw stuff dependent upon some external agency to shape or inscribe it: so, too, was the mirror regarded; so, too, was the feminine regarded. A common opinion regarding the respective male and female contributions to procreation was that the woman supplied the basic substance, the matter that would become the corporeal body, while the male supplied the impetus that fashioned the inchoate mass into a human being.[26] The

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[25] For a condensed discussion of the material nature of the mirror in the Middle Ages, see Goldin, 4-15.

[26] At least as far back as Aristotle (384-322 BC) philosophers, theologians and others have argued this position regarding male and female contributions to procreation. In *De Generatione Animalum* Aristotle states: "The male provides the 'form' and the 'principle of movement,' the female provides the body, in other words, the material" (Aristotle: the Generation of Animals, trans. A. L. Peck [Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP; and London: Heinemann, 1943] 1.20, 729^a .). Isidore of Seville (c. 570-636) in his *Etymologiae* and Thomas Aquinas (1225-74) in the *Summa Theologiae* are two in a long line of such writers; Guido Delle Colonne (c. 1287) presents an extended rumination on the subject in Book II of his *Historia Destructionis Troiae*: "[W]e know the heart of woman always seeks a husband, just as matter always seeks form. Oh, would that matter, passing once into form, could be

contribution of the mother was essentially passive, then, and relied upon the vital, shaping force of the father to bring it to any sort of fruition. Similarly, the prototypical mirror had no inherent image; it existed to reflect, to report the stuff to which it was turned. This explains at least in part, then, why medieval representations of the feminine might operate in the capacity of mirrors. Why these representations might be the prime exemplars/mirrors of the superior and material realms is made clearer if we understand that in the literature of the Middle Ages, most of which is written by men about men and male experience, woman and the feminine, for good or ill, contribute significantly to the mapping of male enterprise--and to the male identity that is a result of such enterprise. In twelfth-century European literature, for instance, female characters "are not portrayed as 'real people' with human problems," but are instead "symbols, aspects of philosophical and psychological problems that trouble the male world."[27] Specifically in the courtly romance, the female character may be presented as that which propels the hero toward his goal and that which drags him away from his aspirations.[28] She may also represent some aspect of the hero: his reason, his capacity to love or his inspiration to act.[29] A dichotomy is again present in

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said to be content with the form it has received. But just as it is known that matter proceeds from form to form, so the dissolute desire of women proceeds from man to man, so that it may be believed without limit, since it is of an unfathomable depth, unless the taint of shame by a praiseworthy abstinence should restrict it within the limits of modesty" (trans. Mary Elizabeth Meek [Bloomington, Indiana UP, 1974], qtd. in Blamires, 48.).

[27] Joan M. Ferrante, Woman as Image in Medieval Literature: From the Twelfth Century to Dante (1975; Durham, NC: Labyrinth, 1985) 1.

[28] According to Ferrante, the situation of Lancelot and Guenievre in Le Chevalier de la Charette exemplifies this phenomenon: "When Guenievre functions as Lancelot's inspiration, she is a force for good, inspiring him to do what no other knight in the world can. But when he is in her presence, her effect is always destructive. . . "(81).

[29] Ferrante, 80, 83.

thirteenth-century literature, which presents two seemingly contradictory views of woman: a negative representation suggesting she was either was a defective male, "a creature lacking in reason, useful only to bear children," or a threat to the state of man's soul; and a very positive representation of woman as intermediary between mankind and the Divine Creator.[30] This split also occurs in medieval allegory; in a psychomachia, for instance, both virtues and vices are generally personified as female.[31] Ferrante concludes: "[I]nner conflict is seen in terms of women pulling in opposite directions, towards good or evil." In this struggle, which is "central to Christian morality," according to Ferrante, "man sees both his lower and higher impulses as women."[32] Most of these examples recall the Mary-Eve dichotomy; all of them suggest that woman, femaleness, and the feminine primarily exist to aid, test or reflect all that is man. Simone de Beauvoir's generalization regarding male-female relationships through the centuries seems relevant to their presentation in medieval literature: "[Woman] is defined and differentiated with reference to man and not he with reference to her; she is the incidental, the inessential as opposed to the essential. He is the Subject, he is the Absolute--she is the Other."[33] Medieval theologian Thomas Aquinas (1225-74) positively identifies man as the controlling force of woman's life, exerting power over her just as God maintains his creation: "Man is the beginning and the end of woman, as God is the beginning and end of every creature. . . ." Aquinas suggests that woman's otherness is due to her general weakness (she is possessed of an essential "frailty of nature as regards both vigour of soul and strength

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[30] Ferrante, 3.

[31] The morality play the Castle of Perseverance (see Ch. 4) is an exception to this general rule. While its virtues are personified as female, only one of the vices, Lechery, is female.

[32] Ferrante, 2.

[33] de Beauvoir, xix.

of body"[34]), perhaps a reference to the inherent lack of will and volition often linked with woman, which theoretically marked her as an easy target for the seductive call of the material life--and which made her a perfect material surface upon which man might attempt to mold his identity. Yet it must be noted that the woman-mirror-other, apparently passive, without intrinsic vitality, may wield considerable power over the subject should he choose to allow her/it that power. Lacanian theory suggests why he might allow it: the subject cannot achieve totality without the contribution of the other.

Lacanian psychoanalytic theory holds that the development of subjectivity requires the presence of another--an other--the individual must somehow incorporate into itself in order to achieve a sense of wholeness, a process in which the mirror is instrumental. It is when an infant catches sight of its image in a mirror that it becomes aware of itself as a self; its reflection functions as other, supplying the vital absent element.[35] In addition, M. M. Bakhtin's notion that the internally persuasive discourse of another "is of decisive significance in the evolution of an individual consciousness"[36] positions Lacan's other within rhetoric (if one interprets Bakhtin's

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[34] Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologica I, 93, 4; Supp. 81, 3, qtd. in Anne Laskaya, Chaucer's Approach to Gender in the Canterbury Tales (Cambridge, Eng.: Brewer, 1995) 142.

[35] Jacques Lacan, "The Mirror Stage as Formative of the Function of the I as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience," Ecrits: A Selection, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Norton, 1977) 1-7.

[36] M. M. Bakhtin, The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays, ed. Michael Holquist, trans. Caryl Emerson and Holquist, University of Texas Press Slavic Series 1 (Austin: U of Texas P, 1981) 354. Although Bakhtin is describing events leading up to an "ideological becoming" rather than an awakening to love or the psycho-social construction of subjectivity, he is in essence theorizing, like Lacan, the development of individual identity. Bakhtin regards the discourse of another to be instrumental in the formation of individual consciousness if the individual acknowledges that discourse, allowing it to have some effect on him or her. He writes, "Another's discourse performs here no longer as information, directions, rules, models and so

"discourse" in its most literal sense); I have chosen to limit my application of Lacan to medieval literature similarly by focusing on mirroring situations that involve rhetorical exchange between male and female participants, and by examining how those exchanges participate in the construction of identity. Although the dynamics of male-female rhetorical dyads may vary from genre to genre and even within a genre, one thing remains constant: even when the female character is a woman of some importance within the text (e. g., the Virgin Mary in the cycle drama) her function as speaking subject is intimately caught up in the selfhood of the male character with whom she converses: as reflection and reinforcement of male identity, the female character, when she speaks, generally confirms who and what her male counterpart is.[37] On occasion he may do the same for her, and a sort of interdependency is established--in other words, her identity becomes a factor along with his--but it is male identity with which these texts are most concerned.

Although much of this study will be devoted to exploring this rhetorical situation as it occurs in Middle English literature, specifically the lyric, dream vision, and the drama, it will arrive at that point through examination of antecedent and contemporaneous continental and Latin literary texts that feature male-female rhetorical exchange. As I suggested above, I plan to supplement and complement Lacan's ideas about the role of mirroring in the construction of identity with the

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forth--but strives rather to determine the very bases of our ideological interrelations with the world, the very basis of our behavior; it performs here as *authoritative discourse*, and an *internally persuasive discourse*" (342).

[37] An exception to this may be the exchange between the Virgin Mary and the Angel Gabriel in the Middle English Lyric tradition. Gabriel, a being of some metaphysical importance already, has no need of further definition; he exists to help Mary construct her identity as handmaid of God, and, most significantly, vehicle of salvation. Yet it should be remembered that Mary serves within a patriarchal ethic; in this sense she confirms male identity. See Chapters Two and Four.

analysis of identity formation advanced by Frederick Goldin in his influential study The Mirror of Narcissus in the Courtly Love Lyric. A logical beginning for the application of this theoretical admixture is the earliest known courtly love literature, the poetry of the Provençal troubadours and their imitators and adapters, the northern French trouvères.[38] As I will explore in the following chapter, the majority of works written by these poets do not contain female speakers--more often than not, the woman is simply spoken to or about; however, when a female speaker does engage a male, usually the narrator, in conversation, her speech continues what her image began: as speaking other she has the potential to buttress his identity as a member of courtly society . When courtly love poetry enters the English tradition (probably by way of the trouvères), it becomes a less aristocratic genre, and exchanges in secular poems between male and female speakers have less to do with establishing and reinforcing identity within a court setting and more to do with establishing identity within a society that values a less patrician masculine ideal. Nevertheless, the female speaker in English lyric and debate poetry plays a role similar to that of her continental prototypes, and consequently her rhetoric helps to establish her male counterpart's place within his society--i.e. his identity.

A somewhat different tradition in medieval literature is the subject of the next chapter's examination: the mirror relationship between male characters and female authority figures, many of them allegorical, in selected Latin, French, and Middle English texts. In these instances, the male character's identity is again formed or revealed in reaction to the words of his female interlocutor, yet she reinforces his selfhood in a manner different from those previously discussed. This leads into a

[38] While trouvère poetry does diverge in style and approach from that of the troubadours (I will briefly discuss these differences in Chapter Two), much of what I say above applies to the works of both groups of poets.

study of the dialogue between both allegorical and "historical" female and male characters in selected English morality and saints' plays, followed by an analysis of gender mirroring in the four extant English cycle plays. It is in the scrutiny of the relationships between the women and men of Providential History as depicted in the cycle drama that the phenomenon of interdependence is most fully demonstrated; not only do the female characters contribute to the identity of the male characters, but the reverse is sometimes true, especially within marriages, even if the male characters remain the primary focus of concern. It must also be noted that because of the complex and sometimes counter-social nature of the desire driving the identity construction process, the female other may also be involved in the male subject's subversion of social practice, his privileging of the personal impulse over the social one. This is evident not only in the lyric texts, many of them overtly concerned with social identity, but also in the allegories and the drama, texts generally more concerned with moral and spiritual identity. In these latter works, the spiritual and the moral are both the communities within which the individuals attempt to define themselves and the communities they attempt to resist, often unconsciously.

But in order to proceed in this endeavor it is necessary to set down the general principles of Goldin's and Lacan's theories of identity construction and to touch upon the manner in which they inform each other and consequently support the primary argument of this study. As I mentioned above, Lacan holds that the construction of subjectivity depends upon the other, that external something the subject takes into itself which provides the semblance of wholeness. For Lacan this "other" is also the subject's passport into the realm of the Phallus, the signifier around which reality is

ordered. Goldin, too, suggests that the (always masculine) subject[39] developed in the literature of courtly love is dependent upon his interaction with another, a metaphoric mirror of his function as chivalric man, who affirms his place within the sphere of feudal society. Both models, then, key the selfhood of the individual to an other who in some way helps to position him within his social sphere and, in so doing, confirms his selfhood within that sphere. Yet, as courtly love literature reveals, this all-important other cannot be a reflection in the truest sense--a mere inorganic, inanimate impression; the individual expects action or at least reaction from the other, for maintaining a self is work. The work demanded by Goldin's poet-lover manifests itself in the other's response--a token, a kiss, a look, and, most significantly for the purposes of this study, a word or phrase. For, as later chapters will reveal, it is in the lover's reaction to the beloved's verbal responses that his efforts at self-construction and definition are most evident.

Significantly, psychoanalysis puts a premium on the importance of the subject's words, especially those spoken in a closed, therapeutic setting. Through verbal dialogue with an analyst, the analysand's unconscious motives will surface and present themselves for interpretation. Building upon "a linguistic theory that was implicit in Freud's practice but for which he did not yet have the appropriate

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[39] Goldin does not treat the literature of the *trobairitz*, the female troubadour poets. Meg Bogin's analysis of their writing suggests why they do not fit Goldin's paradigm: "Unlike the men, who created a complex poetic vision, the women wrote about their own intimate feelings." Unlike the male troubadours, whose identity hinged upon the approval of the usually distant and almost deified lady of their poems, the women poets did not worship the men whose love they praised or lamented within their poetry. Rather than adopting a persona, as the men often did, the *trobairitz* apparently wrote as themselves, and as a result their "language is direct, unambiguous and personal." Their poetry "break[s] out--or ignore[s] the more ritualized aesthetic of the men." The Women Troubadours (New York: Norton, 1980) 66-68.

conceptual instruments,"[40] Lacanian psychoanalytic theory goes so far as to propose that the unconscious, that repository of repressed meaning, operates like a language, functioning "according to the stratagems of rhetoric," with the "dreams and symptoms" that communicate meaning "ow[ing] their forms to the principles of figurative speech."[41] This view of the unconscious is one element in Lacan's larger theory of what Elizabeth Grosz calls a "socio-linguistic genesis of subjectivity,"[42] which links individual identity to the acquisition of language. Grosz offers more on Lacan's "speaking subject": "[T]his subject is not simply a speaking being, a being who happens by chance to speak, but a being constituted as such by being *spoken through* by language itself." While the subject "cannot be conceived as the source or master of discourse," it is "the locus or site of the articulation. . .of representations, inscriptions, meanings, and significances."[43] Although Lacan does not note this, it might be said that the subject is himself a mirror, operating in somewhat the same fashion as the soul did according to the Church fathers: the subject "takes in" and processes what it perceives in the world around him, just as the soul was thought to do. Lacan himself does suggests that the "representations, inscriptions," et al., that mark the subject are referenced by and within what Lacan calls the Symbolic order, in Chris Weedon's words, "the social and cultural order in which we live our lives as

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[40] Frederic Jameson, "Imaginary and Symbolic in Lacan: Marxism, Psychoanalytic Criticism, and the Problem of the Subject," Literature and Psychoanalysis: the Question of Reading: Otherwise, ed.Shoshana Felman (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1982) 386-87, qtd. in Maud Ellmann, "Introduction," Psychoanalytic Literary Critcism, ed. Ellmann (London: Longman, 1994) 5.

[41] Ellmann, 5.

[42] Elizabeth Grosz, Jacques Lacan: A Feminist Introduction, (London: Routledge, 1990) 148.

[43] Grosz, 148.

conscious, gendered subjects," and which is itself "structured by language and the laws and social institutions which language guarantees."[44]

Yet as I've mentioned above, Lacan believes that the construction of human subjectivity begins prelinguistically, during what he calls the "mirror stage," which occurs when an infant is six to eighteen months of age.[45] Prior to this developmental step, the child is immersed in the biological need that concerns it as an organism, a developmental period Lacan labels the Real (one of three major developmental stages). During the second major stage of development, the Imaginary, the child progresses beyond mere biological concerns. At this time the infant may catch sight of his reflection in a mirror and mistakenly behave as if the image were evidence of his wholeness:

> Unable as yet to walk or even stand up, and held tightly as he is by some support, human or artificial. . . , [the infant] nevertheless overcomes, in a flutter of jubilant activity, the obstructions of his support and, fixing his attitude in a slightly leaning-forward position,

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[44] Chris Weedon, "Feminist Poststrucuralism and Psychoanalysis," Feminist Practice and Poststructuralist Theory (Oxford: Blackwell, 1987) 52.

[45] This is not to say that every child must engage in an actual experience with a mirror to develop according to Lacan's theory; rather, Lacan posits that between six and eighteen months of age the child has developed psychic mechanisms which are at their most evident in mirror play. Anthony Wilden explains in his introduction to Lacan's Speech and Language in Psychoanalysis, trans. Wilden (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1968) that the mirror stage "is an interpretation of findings in both psychological and biological research concerning the perceptual relationship of the individual to others at a crucial phase in his development" (xiii). Wilden goes so far as to conclude in his essay "Lacan and the Discourse of the Other" (published in the same volume as Lacan's Speech and Language in Psychoanalysis), "What seems fairly clear is that the stade du miroir never "occurs" at all--any more than the genesis of the ego does. . . . [I]t is evident that the stade du miroir is a purely structural or relational concept, conceived before postwar "structuralism" had been heard of" (174).

> in order to hold it in his gaze, brings back an instantaneous aspect of the image.[46]

The infant sees in his mirror image confirmation of wholeness and potential; Maud Ellmann explains:

> At this phase of development, the infant experiences its body as a random concatenation of parts: a "heterogeneous mannequin, a baroque doll, a trophy of limbs,"[47] in Lacan's own words. In contrast to the experience of fragmentation, the mirror offers a mirage of bodily coordination and control that the infant greets with jubilation. [48]

Bruce Fink suggests that "the mirror image presenting a unified surface appearance similar to that of the child's far more capable, coordinated, powerful parents" is "invested, cathected, and internalized" by the infant subject because the "parents make a great deal of [the image], insisting to their infant that the image in the mirror *is* him or her: 'Yes, baby, that's you!'"[49]

Yet Lacan insists that the subject's construction of itself is a *méconaissance*, both a misrecognition and a misconstruction, as we will explore below. These positions identify Lacan's model as what Grosz calls "a critique of the Cartesian *cogito*, the pre-given indubitable, unified subject" that "denounces the illusory mastery, unity, and self-knowledge that the subject, as a self-consciousness, accords itself."[50] To Lacan the idea of an "I," a self, is a fiction initiated during the mirror stage to compensate for anxiety an infant feels upon separation from its mother, for the lack or absence it experiences as it comes to discover its distinctness from its initial other

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[46] Lacan, "Mirror," 1-2.

[47] Jacques Lacan, "Desire and the Interpretation of Desire in Hamlet," Felman, 43-44, qtd. in Ellmann, 17.

[48] Ellmann, 17.

[49] Bruce Fink, The Lacanian Subject: Between Language and Jouissance (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1995) 36.

[50] Grosz, 147-48.

during Freud's famous oedipal stage, when "paternal interdict" prohibits "access to the mother's body."[51]

The child's experience of wholeness is false, then, based on what Weedon calls "a misrecognition of itself as the [*o*]*ther*."[52] Because the infant's reflection offers such relief from the *corps morcelé*, the "body in bits and pieces" perceived as the alternative to the "complete" self the mirror offers, the child identifies its reflection as the other and confirms that other in "the position of control of desire, power and meaning."[53] Yet there is a tension inherent in this identification that makes it unstable. The reflection is, as Grosz points out, both the child and an enhanced version of it: "[T]he child is now enmeshed in a system of confused recognition/misrecognition: it sees an image of itself that is both accurate (since it is an inverted reflection. . .); as well as delusory (since the image prefigures a unity and mastery that the child still lacks)."[54] Because the child's sense of wholeness depends upon a misinterpretation of its image as evidence of power and control, Lacan labels the identity the infant has constructed for itself as "imaginary," a product of "a specular domain of images, reflections, simulacra."[55] And because the subject "identifies with an image of itself that is always also the image of another[, i]ts identification can only ever be partial, wishful, put off into the future, delayed."[56] That is, because the subject depends on an external presence--even if that presence turns out to be only an image--the subject can never be whole. Thus, the self

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[51] Gayle Margherita, The Romance of Origins: Language and Sexual Difference in Middle English Literature (Philadelphia: U of Philadelphia P, 1994) 3.

[52] Weedon, 51.

[53] Weedon, 51

[54] Grosz, 40.

[55] Ellmann, 18.

[56] Grosz, 40.

constructed during the mirror stage is alienated, forever looking to another--the other--both for constitution and confirmation of identity.

It is the continuously operating mechanisms of the mirror stage that enable the child's subsequent acquisition of language to take place, a process which enables it to assume a position in the Symbolic order. Richard Harland calls this last of Lacan's major developmental stages the time "when the child enters into society and the society enters the child"; here, the other is also pivotal:

> On the one side, language belongs to society, and in order to acquire it the child must learn to speak from the position of the 'other.' But on the other side, when the child speaks from the position of the 'other,' this self is more unified and coherent than ever. For to enter into society's language is to enter into a personal name and a personal pronoun; to speak of self is to speak in terms of 'me,' 'myself' and 'I.' The paradox continues as before; the individual self derives not from some real sense of inner self, but from the 'other,' from the outside.[57]

Ironically the child's sense of self is still dependent upon its alienated identity: in order to function in society it must be able to see itself as others see it, and in doing so it understands that it is "I," and separate from others; however, its achievement of this goal necessitates a split between the "I which is watching and the I which is watched,"[58] evidence again that the self's wholeness is imaginary.

At its entrance into the Symbolic order the subject becomes unconsciously driven by a new force: an insatiable desire, a "perpetual effect of symbolic articulation"[59] that is aroused in the child when it observes desire in the other, "pure desirousness. . .manifested in the [o]ther's gaze. . . ."[60] During the Real stage the subject had

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[57] Richard Harland, "Freud's Lacan," Superstructuralism: The Philosophy of Structuralism and Post-Structuralism (London: Methuen, 1987) 39.

[58] Weedon, 52.

[59] Alan Sheridan, "Translator's Note," Lacan, Ecrits, viii.

[60] Fink, 91.

encountered "need," the "experiential counterpart to nature" that "comes as close to instincts as is possible in human life."[61] While need is "represented by its 'natural sign,' the indeterminate cry," the next impulse, "demand," a product of the Imaginary, "is always formulated in language" and "addressed [to] the imaginary other, the alter-ego or double precipitated in the mirror stage." Demand, significantly, "always has two objects, one spoken, the other unspoken: the object or thing demanded. . ., and the other to whom the demand is ostensibly addressed"; yet "[t]he thing demanded is a rationalization for maintaining a certain relation to the other."[62] Alan Sheridan puts it this way: "All speech is demand; it presupposes the other to whom it is addressed, whose very signifiers it takes over in its formulation."[63] Demand, the "result of the ego's self-idealization and aggrandizement--a measure of the magnitude of the ego-ideal (the psychic double or ideal of otherness to which the ego aspires)," is first directed toward the infant's initial other, the "(pre-oedipal, phallic) (m)other" and is "insatiable, a correlate and function of the mother's phallic, omnipotent position *vis à vis* the child." Although "[i]t consciously demands concrete, particular objects," the "only 'things' capable of satisfying it are generalities or absolutes (ultimately, it is a demand for everything) which in the end boils down to nothing."[64] Because "that which comes from the [o]ther is treated not so much as a particular satisfaction of a need, but rather as a response to an appeal, a gift, a token of love,"[65] "[n]eed or instinct is robbed of the security of its access to a given object of satisfaction, and is subjected to the 'defilements' of signification."[66]

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[61] Grosz, 59.
[62] Grosz, 61.
[63] Sheridan, viii.
[64] Grosz, 63.
[65] Sheridan, viii.
[66] Grosz, 63.

Harland explains that "the child acquires language to request and demand and have 'basic' needs met, yet the very process of acquiring language changes the nature of what's wanted."[67] What is produced in this "gap" separating need from the demand that ostensibly articulates it is desire, "at once particular like the first and absolute like the second."[68] Desire works "[i]n opposition to demand" and "in accordance with need" in that it is "beyond conscious articulation," having been "barred or repressed from articulation." Although "it is structured like a language," it "is never spoken as such by the subject." It also "undermines conscious activity[,] speak[ing] through demand, operating as its underside or margin."[69] In Lacan's words:

> [D]esire is situated in dependence on demand--which, by being articulated in signifiers, leaves a metonymic remainder that runs under it, an element that is not indeterminate, which is a condition [of] both, absolute and unapprehensible, an element necessarily lacking, unsatisfied, impossible, misconstrued (méconnu), an element that is called desire.[70]

Grosz elaborates on the difference between demand and the desire that functions as its underlayer:

> Demand attempts to guarantee the ego its self-certainty and self-knowledge. Because it is directed to others who can either comply with or refuse to satisfy it, it is submitted to an interpersonal and familial pressure that prefigures social morality and the norms governing the superego. It is thus proto-social, for the other is the child's first point of access to the social. Desire threatens to subvert the unity and certainty of conscious demand. As unconscious, desire cares little for social approval or the rewards and punishments consciousness offers to demand. Desire is concerned only with its own processes, pleasures, and internal logic. . . . While such logic can

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[67] Harland, 40.

[68] Sheridan viii.

[69] Grosz, 64-65.

[70] Jacques Lacan, The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Norton, 1981) 154.

> support social laws and values it is also able to subvert or betray them, based as it is on expelled, socially inappropriate, repressed wishes.[71]

Demand is the conscious articulation of basic need, directed toward an other who may have the power to supply these needs. Yet, as Harland suggests, the translation of inarticulate verbalization (the baby's cry) into language (the toddler's words, phrases, sentences) complicates a formerly straightforward operation. In order to demand the satisfaction of its need linguistically, the child must become socialized, must learn to see itself as part of the larger Symbolic order--must see itself, as mentioned above, from the position of the other. Some of the child's impulses must therefore be quashed, repressed, nullified, in order for it to communicate in the fashion that is required by the Symbolic order. This process produces desire, an unpredictable, sometimes counter-social impulse that "is not an appetite" [72] in the sense that need is, but something more powerful; Harland suggests that "confirmation of individual selfhood is the ultimate desire," which "surmounts and wholly dominates over the supposedly 'basic' needs of the organism"[73] and sometimes even the requirements of the social order. To confirm selfhood, desire, "essentially excentric and insatiable," [74] requires the feedback of the other. In Lacan's borrowing of the Hegelian "Desire desires the desire of an other": "[T]he first object of desire is to be recognized by the other."[75]

The subject is driven by demand and desire toward the other, an apparent attempt at some sort of satisfaction, but finds itself frustrated in the effort by its imaginary construction of identity. Although the subject is first introduced to Lacan's

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[71] Grosz, 65.
[72] Sheridan, viii.
[73] Harland, 39.
[74] Sheridan, viii.
[75] Lacan, Speech and Language in Psychoanalysis, 31.

developmental stages as an infant, it remains affected by the various exigencies of each stage throughout its life. Certainly, the biological, inarticulate need of the Real may drive the subject long after the infant has encountered and incorporated its mirror image; similarly, the Imaginary, which originates with the mirror stage, does not generally disappear after the subject enters into the Symbolic order but remains a perpetual "stage in the spatial sense, a *stade* or stadium, in which the ego constantly identifies itself with new personae in the effort to evade division, distance, difference, deferral, and death."[76] In other words, the mechanisms of all three stages operate continuously, forming a complicated subjectivity for the subject. Yet dominating the functioning of the subject is desire, continuously operating as an insatiable undercurrent within insatiable demand, with desire and its vehicle ever turned toward the other.

As the above discussion also suggests, the subject's attraction to the other is a displacement of, as Lacan has said, "the desire of the Other,"[77] with a capital "O," the Phallus, the "primary, transcendental signifier"[78] around which the Symbolic order is organized, and the seat of ultimate power and control as the subject perceives it. Ellmann describes the Phallus as "the kingpin in the bowling alley of signification: knock it over, and all the other signs come tumbling down."[79] Initially, in the Real stage, the Phallic presence is the mother; at the child's realization of separateness he or she turns to the other of the mirror for wholeness. Not surprisingly, the other cannot truly provide the subject what the Other, the Phallus, should--stability, permanence, "genuine" wholeness--because the other is actually the result of the

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[76] Ellmann, 18.

[77] Jacques Lacan, "The Direction of Treatment and the Principles of its Power," Ecrits, 264, qtd. in Grosz, 65.

[78] Weedon, 53.

[79] Ellmann,19.

subject's efforts to put a familiar face--that of "a double, an accomplice, a *semblable*"[80]--on the potentially foreign image with which he or she needs to identify in order to "be." The "self" produced as a result of these machinations belongs, then, as suggested above, to the Imaginary and is the result of an "imaginary" effort: "a desperate delusional attempt to be and remain 'what one is' by gathering to oneself ever more instances of sameness, resemblance, and self-replication. . . ."[81]

What eventually occurs, then, as a consequence of the subject's "acquir[ing] the perspective of the 'other' upon 'I'" is narcissism, which "inevitably. . .envelops the forms of desire." Subsequently,

> Desire is caught in a multitude of mirrors: desire to take the place of the 'other' in desire (and love and admire 'I' from outside); desire to be what the 'other' desires (as when the woman desires to become the object that a man desires); desire for the object of the other's desire (as when a man desires a woman who is socially designated as desirable).[82]

What follows is even more confusion, frustration and unsated desire, a "wilderness of mirrors in which self and object oscillate perpetually, each eclipsed under the shadow of the other."[83] The subject's desire for wholeness, it seems, can never truly be satisfied because it seems unlikely that any one individual, institution, philosophy, etc., can truly occupy the position of the other/Other if it is required to be the source of power and the controller of desire, if it is required to be the Phallus.

Nevertheless, certain failure does not prevent individuals from attempting wholeness; nor does it negate the power the idea of the Phallus wields over societal functioning. Lacan's decision to designate the Phallus, the symbol of sexual

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[80] Ellmann,18.
[81] Malcolm Bowie, Lacan (London: Fontana, 1991) 92, qtd. in Ellmann, 18.
[82] Harland, 40.
[83] Ellmann, 18.

difference, as the ordering principle of the Symbolic order, has, as Weedon puts it, "guarantee[d its] patriarchal structure." In a statement recalling de Beauvoir's earlier sentiment, Weedon concludes, "Men, by virtue of their penis, can aspire to a position of power and control" within the Symbolic order while "[w]omen have no position in [it], except in relation to men, as mothers."[84] Because women are granted no access to the Symbolic order by their own right, Lacanian theory places them in the Imaginary, and here they are often identified with the other, the one who provides the Lacanian subject with the illusion of wholeness and the one who facilitates his entry into the Symbolic order by helping him to acquire language. Ironically, though, Lacan allows the other no voice but an imaginary one. For although the other can "be" the Phallus metaphorically, it/she is still a mere trope, not the genuine article. The other exists only for the purposes of the subject, without a reality of its own.

Goldin does not use Lacan's terminology in his discussion of the identity politics of courtly love; still, the principles of the mirror stage seem to be operating within the poetry he analyzes. Usage of the mirror figure has gravitated from the sphere of the abstract and the theological into a realm that is highly spiritual but nonetheless considerably more concrete and social than that of the soul and the Ideal. The troubadour poet looks to the mirror that is his lady for affirmation of earthly, secular identity. But, as Goldin demonstrates in his explication of the Old French narrative that he uses as a centerpiece to his argument, the subject initially becomes aware of himself as a "self" when he is drawn to his own reflection and eventually recognizes the image for what it is. His ability to recognize his beloved for what it is--his own image--shows that he has learned to consider himself from the position of the other. His next step, then, is to turn to a second other, a woman whose appearance and

[84] Weedon, 54.

experience mirror his own, but whose interactive capability can help him construct a self rather than simply reflect the illusion of one. Goldin perceives this to be the psychological motive for courtly love. In addition, what Lacan has termed "desire" in his theory finds its counterpart in Goldin's concept of love, "one of the constitutive elements of a man's existence, one whose origin and duration coincide with his very life."[85] While the Lacanian subject expends his energies attempting to gratify the overwhelming desire for wholeness, an effort which defines his very existence, Goldin's courtier cannot exist without love: both the search for and the discovery of love are what define him as an individual and consequently provide him with a sense of self. But the hero of Goldin's paradigmatic work discovers too late that he must direct his love toward a "real" other, not an image, if he is to create the identity he requires in order to survive.

Ovid's version of the story of Narcissus[86] is the source for the work Goldin uses, the twelfth-century Old French Narcisus.[87] In "medievalizing" Ovid's tale of the beautiful yet prideful young man who rejects the love of many, including the nymph Echo, only to fall fatally in love with his own reflection, the anonymous poet emphasizes three elements vital to Goldin's argument: 1) that Narcisus and the girl he rejects (called Dané rather than Echo) endure parallel love torments and are therefore figurative mirror images of each other; 2) that love arises through the experience of visual identification with another and brings with it self-knowledge; and 3) that

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[85] Goldin, 43.

[86] Metamorphoses 3.338-510.

[87] Narcisus (poème du XII^{e} siècle), ed. M. M. Pelan and N. C. W. Spence, Publications de la Faculté des Lettres de l'Université de Strasbourg, Facs. 147 (Paris, 1964), qtd. in Goldin, 22. Following the practice of Goldin and Allan M. F. Gunn I will distinguish between the hero of the the Old French lay (Narcisus) and of the classical source (Narcissus) via the different spellings of his name.

Narcisus eventually *turns away* from his reflection and toward Dané in an effort to avoid annihilation. Goldin also implies that self-knowledge leads to a consciousness of the self as an entity separate from all others, and it is for this construction of the self that love is necessary. Once called into consciousness (Goldin suggests this occurs usually through the recognition of beauty; Lacan might say through the look of desire in the other's face), the self will perceive that in order for love to function as a healthy economy it must be reciprocal, it must involve another who can give something back to the self. Goldin sees in the situation of Narcisus a paradigm of the courtly love tradition. What Narcisus experiences--the lover's heart awakened into love by a vision of the beloved; his frustration when the loved object gives him nothing satisfactory; his discovery through suffering that the beloved is not what he thought her to be: an ideal image he had constructed to fit his needs; and finally either the realization that he cannot leave the beloved despite his awareness that she cannot help him or his decision to forsake her and look elsewhere for comfort--is the experience of most courtiers with respect to their ladies. Just as Narcisus finds out who and what he is through the experience of love, so did the poets of the troubadour era seek to construct and maintain an identity for themselves and their society through the exercise of courtly love. By turning his love toward the lady, Goldin asserts, the troubadour sought to "find certainty about his personal worth," to justify the wealth and privilege that defined his milieu:

> If his class was intended to serve as a paragon of all earthly endeavor, how could he know whether, in his deepest inclinations and personal acts, he was truly a member of that class? What he required was not only an adequate secular ideal, but an infallible secular judgment, someone to justify his identity as a courtier. No ideal image could give him that certainty, but the idealized lady could, if she wished.[88]

[88] Goldin, 66-67.

The "living lady," then, "universally esteemed, reflects the idealized image of the man who consecrates himself to serving her."[89] She is his other; if her actions are commensurate with her beauty--that is, if she chooses to interact in some way with him, to favor him, give back to him--then she completes and defines him as a courtly man. In turning to the lady for reinforcement of self, the troubadour demonstrates his dependence on the Lacanian other.

Goldin's analysis of Narcisus suggests, however, that turning to the lady is not necessarily a reflexive response. It is, instead, a reaction born of anguished experience. Goldin writes that "Dané is not," as Echo was in Ovid's narrative, "the aural image of Narcisus, repeating his words as the image in the fountain reflected his person." (Her speech is intimately connected to Narcisus's, however, a point that I will deal with later in this chapter.) Instead she is his double in experience: "Love begins for each with a vision of beauty, and immediately causes pain."[90] Dané, after a sleepless night, pauses to think on the young man she had encountered earlier:

> Or reveul a celui penser
> Que je vi ier par ci passer.
> K'ai ge a faire de ce vassal?
> C'est la riens qui plus me fait mal
> Quant me menbre de sa biauté.
>
> (Now I wish to think again of the one I saw pass by here yesterday. What have I to do with that noble youth? He is what most causes my suffering, when I remember his beauty.)[91]

Her suffering and her identification of Narcisus as the cause of her pain lead her to discover that she is in love. This experience not only prefigures the suffering and

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[89] Goldin, 41.

[90] Goldin, 24.

[91] Narcisus, 237-41, qtd. in Goldin, 25. All translations from the poem are Goldin's.

consequent discovery that is to befall the title character, but it marks Dané as another Narcisus, an idea especially confirmed by the dying experiences of the two, covered below. But, as is usually the case in medieval texts, the man's experience--Narcisus's--is the primary focus of the Old French narrative, and Goldin clearly identifies him as the primary subject of the identity construction taking place in the poem. After Dané's solicitation of affection from him is rebuffed, she then prays that Narcisus, too, should feel the pain of unrequited love. Narcisus later begins to experience what Dané has already endured, when he is struck by an image he sees in a fountain, thinking it to be some guardian water nymph. Although he is not yet aware of it, the poem's narrator tells the audience, he is beginning to undergo the torments of love, what Goldin sees as the first step toward the formation of identity:

> Mout est angouses et destrois.
> Ne set qu'il voit; l'iaue li ment:
> Il se loe, si ne l'entent.
> C'est sa biautés qu'iloques voit
> Et il meïsames se deçoit!
> C'est cil qui or blasmoit Amor;
> Or l'a ja mis en tel freor.
> Or li prie, souspire et pleure;
> Or li prie qu'il le secure,
> ---
> "Cose, fait il, que laiens voi,
> Ne sai conment nomer te doi:
> Se dois estre ninphe apelee,
> O se tu es duesse u fee. . . ."
>
> (He is filled with suffering and affliction. He does not know what he sees. The water lies to him: it is himself that he is praising, but he does not realize it. It is his own beauty that he sees there, and he is deceiving himself. It is he who denounced Amors just before, and now Amors has put him in such dread. Now he will pray to Amors, sigh, and weep; now he will pray to Amors for help. . . . "Thing," he says, "that I see in there, I do not know how I ought to call you,

> whether you should be called a nymph, or whether you are a goddess or a fairy. . . .)[92]

Narcisus's problem, according to Goldin, is more complicated than one might expect. He is beginning to feel the stirrings of love--of the desire for the desire of the other that will bring him selfhood--when he ponders, "Est donc Amors qui si me maine / Et me fait traire mal et painne? / D'Amors ne doi je reins savoir." (Is it Amors who so rules me and makes me bear suffering and pain? I ought to know nothing about Amors.)[93] Yet Goldin argues that the boy has not yet reached full awareness of his situation and is still using

> the language of the youth who finds Dané and all of the others oppressive with their incomprehensible desires; who lives in a world of words (like 'Amors') not yet defined by experience, and of objects (of which he himself is one, and Dané another) not yet called by name because they are not consciously distinguished.[94]

Before he saw the image, he was, like Lacan's infant, insensible to the concept of wholeness or self because he did not know the desire, the love, that produced that longing for wholeness. Currently in the initial phases of the mirror stage, he is like the infant fascinated by its image in the mirror, starting to demand the assistance of the other (he says to "her," "Vien ça! Que te trais tu ariere? / Por qu'es orgelleuse vers moi? / ne sui gaires mains biaus de toi! / . . . . / Parole a moi, si vien avant!" [Come here! Why do you hold back? Why are you haughty toward me? I am hardly less beautiful that you. . . . Speak to me, come forward! . .][95]), beginning to explore the potential the image holds for him. In Lacanian terms, he is still in the Imaginary, unable as of yet to speak the language of the Symbolic order.

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[92] Narcisus, 670-78; 683-86, qtd. in Goldin, 26.
[93] Narcisus, 737-39, qtd. in Goldin, 30.
[94] Goldin, 30-31.
[95] Narcisus, 690-92, 698, qtd. in Goldin, 27, 28.

Another difficulty for Narcisus at this point, according to Goldin, can be traced to his inability to "distinguish between false separateness and true":

> Narcissus does not love himself, but an image that he regards as real. He does not love the image because it is his own, but because it is beautiful; it is an image of perfect beauty. His fate is sealed not because the object of his love is his own likeness, but because it is unreal and incapable of requiting him.[96]

It is the ability to distinguish between himself and others that Narcisus needs to acquire, Goldin argues, in order to recognize the futility of his predicament--that he is demanding love from himself. In essence, he needs to be able to see himself from the position of the other, to see himself outside of himself, distinct from all others, in order to recognize that the loved one is simply an image of him. He clearly did not have that ability at the beginning of his encounter with the mirroring fountain:

> For if he had ever consciously perceived his own body as separate from all other bodies in the world, with a form and figure that all those girls and boys so vainly loved, studied its beauty and cherished it as they did and thereby understood their feelings--then he would never have been deceived and would have trained all of his love onto something truly real.[97]

However, he cannot come to true consciousness of his situation until he fully experiences love's agony and the self-examination that accompanies it: "This leads to new understanding, for not until Narcisus is completely conscious of himself can he recognize the truth about the thing he loves."[98]

Only when Narcisus has acknowledged and accepted the love/desire moving him ("Dedens moi le sent mout engrés," [(W)ithin myself I feel him, so powerful]),[99] has

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[96] Goldin, 27.
[97] Goldin, 33.
[98] Goldin, 30.
[99] Narcisus, 750, qtd. in Goldin, 31.

he, according to Goldin, "discovered the *moi*," a construct composed of "a body whose form and climate are distinguishable from every other" and "an inner life whose events are invisible to everyone else, revealing its existence to a consciousness newly awakened by pain and desire."[100] Yet once Narcisus does recognize his beloved as merely an image of himself, he cannot stop loving it. And this, Goldin says, is what truly defeats him. For although his embrace of love has awakened in him self-consciousness enough to recognize his mistake (he is no longer deluded that his reflection is the other he needs), he is still unable to move completely into Lacan's second stage of identity construction, the acquisition of language, which comes from his being able to see himself from the other's position--an other aside from himself--and leads to his installation in the Symbolic. Lacan's child gains something, language, from his exchange with the mirror; Narcisus, in turn, is introduced to the vocabulary of love. This suggests both relationships are in some way reciprocal, but this reciprocity is an illusion. The only word the infant's reflection can teach it is "I," and indeed the child only acquires that concept if its cognitive and kinesthetic development allow for a realization of separateness. Narcisus, too, develops the language of love only by talking himself through the process. Although his reflection is the catalyst for such a development, his own faculties shepherd the actual process. Just as a mother or some additional, truly reciprocal other must intercede in the language acquisition process if the infant is to successfully enter the Symbolic, so Narcisus must find an other who can genuinely complete him, can requite the love that his newly acquired language has introduced to him.

But when he finally turns to Dané, it is too late. Although she is an other who has the potential to save him, she comes to him when she herself is in the throes of

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[100] Goldin, 31.

suffering. Despite the fact that she is "real" and not an image, Dané is too much like Narcisus to be of any use to him. Significantly, too (although Goldin makes nothing of this), by the time she stumbles upon him he has lost the capacity to speak, and must attempt to communicate with her through gesture. Without words, he no longer has the power to demand from her what he needs, no longer can hope to quell the insatiable desire raging within him. In the end, the longed-for confirmation of identity is denied Narcisus, who fails to master the language he needed to enter into his Symbolic order. Narcisus and Dané die as mirror images of each other, she repentant for her curse on him and he for his earlier rejection of her. Their single shared voice further cements their link; as Goldin writes, "Narcisus expiring in impotent willingness takes on the character, the tragic insubstantiality of the beloved image. . . . Dané becomes to the passive Narcisus what he had been to the passive image."[101] Neither hero nor heroine could supply each other with what was needed to sustain a self.

Goldin labels the story of Narcisus an exemplum, as his peril is the one faced by all writers of courtly love literature, and perhaps by all of courtly society. They, like the youth who lost himself because he could not find a suitable object to aid in his self-definition, ran the risk of doing the same. Yet, like Lacan's subject, the troubadours demonstrate persistence in their effort at self-construction, and were continuously searching for a real[102] other through whom they might hope to create a

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[101] Goldin, 40.

[102] Bogin writes of the courtly lady: "[S]he did not need to be real. She was a symbol, a cipher, an accessory" (61). I would certainly not dispute the symbolic function of the lady in troubadour poetry, nor would I argue that she is presented in realistic or naturalistic fashion in the poetry. But I would agree with Goldin that the lady must have the capability of responding to the poet lover; in this sense that she must be real.

secular paradise, an edenic state in which identity was confirmed by an other who facilitates entry into the Symbolic order of courtly society. For this hope, the troubadour required the mechanism of the mirror. Still, the lover's expectation for such a paradise was rarely satisfied. Sarah Spence suggests that this is due at least in part to the superimposition of the secular upon an inherently Christian model. "Desire for God is not desire for a lady, or at least is not resolved in a similar way," she writes, and "*domna*," the name often accorded the lady by her lover, "is not *dominus*." Lacking the "powers of forgiveness associated with the Trinity," the lady disappoints; while a truly divine figure or force might have the power to listen and accept the knight's request, the "mortal woman, limited by her mortality, often only listens."[103] She cannot in the end supply the "work" the subject-poet needs to sustain him; in the end, she is often as false an other as Narcisus's reflection.

Spence implies that the troubadour attempt at fulfillment through the lady is a failure; it is likely that Lacan would agree. The preservation of an essentially secular way of life within an essentially Christian world required a special exercise of the mirror, which, in Lacanian terminology, was a paranoid exercise in ego construction resulting in an alienated self. Further evidence of this is the nearly constant conflict between demand and desire, between the social overture and the personal impulse that marks most courtly love poetry. Medieval Christian tradition would very likely identify both the soul/self of the troubadour and the lady he depicts in his poetry as mirrors of the sensible world, turned downward after the example of Eve. In both Lacanian and Christian terms, the individual in such a position can never find satisfaction, never sate that which propels him onward. Yet while Lacan allows for

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[103] Sarah Spence, Rhetorics of Reason and Desire: Vergil, Augustine, and the Troubadours (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1988) 122-23.

no other option--*all* identity is a misconstruction, and the self can never truly achieve the Phallus--medieval Christian culture held out that genuine fulfillment was within reach of all people willing to own their souls as divine creations and center their lives around the God of Christianity.

Of course that fulfillment was not possible while they still dwelt in the material world. Middle English cycle drama, however, suggests an inferior, though aimed at the superior, option. After the example of the superior mirror, the Virgin Mary, and her literal and figurative human spouses--Joseph and the disciples who enter her life following the crucifixion, certain male-female couples may find meaning in playing other to their associates' subject. In doing so these pairs (or rarely, groups) achieve a sort of corporate identity which contributes to the successful functioning of Providential History. Medieval allegory, too, presents authoritative female characters who, as types of Mary,[104] are capable of facilitating the reintegration of their male charges into the cosmic plan. When the "other" directly serves the purposes of an "Other" who is the Christian God, the identity constructed, while still alienated, is perhaps less fractured than it might have been. By following the example of Mary, these characters, both individually and collectively, mirror (though imperfectly) Divine truth. Unlike the Virgin's polar opposite Eve, who, like the lady of the troubadours, can only lead to dissatisfaction and the increased fragmentation of subjectivity, the mirror that is Mary leads to the discovery, within the pure state of each soul, as St. Gregory might say, of those divinely revealed forms and images of

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[104] The character of Philosophy in Boethius's sixth-century Consolation of Philosophy is probably situated too early in the Christian literary tradition to be comfortably labled a type of Mary. Yet the tradition from which she descends more directly, that of wise, powerful and nurturing female goddesses, eventually merges with the Mary tradition and had already begun to do so during Boethius's lifetime. See Chapter Three.

beauty, [105] a beauty that contains the Christian plan--a plan that allows for the eventual completion of every individual. From a Lacanian perspective, this process signifies an attempted recovery of the mother, for a Christianized reading of the psychoanalytic situation identifies her as Eve, the pre-oedipal, pre-awareness (m)other, transformed into Mary, the oedipal (m)other situated between the subject and the Other who controls all signification and identity. Although union with Eve may be the subject's original and even perpetual desire, it is Mary who can supply what any Christian Adam should demand: the Phallus that is God.

[105] See above, n. 4.

Chapter Two
The Medieval Dialogue Lyric: the Provençal, French and English Traditions

I shall consider him my lord, in truth, the man
who lets me see this love far away;
but for one good thing that falls to me,
I get two evils, for this love is far away.
Ai! I wish I were a pilgrim there,
my staff and cloak
reflected in her beautiful eyes.[1]

[O]h lord, how gently she slew me
when she showed me the look of her love,
and locked me in such an enclosure,
I never want to see another.[2]

I have never had the power of myself,
I have not been my own man since that moment
when she let me look into her eyes,
into a mirror that gives great pleasure, even now.
Mirror, since I beheld myself in you,
the sighs from my depths have slain me,
and I have lost myself, as fair Narcissus
lost himself in the fountain.[3]

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[1] "Be tenc lo senhor per veray / per qu'ieu veirai l amor be lonh; / mas per un ben que m'en eschay / n'ai dos mals, quar tan m'es de lonh. / Ai! car me fos lai pelgris, / si que mos fustz e mos tapis / fos pels sieus belhs huelhs remiratz!" Jaufré Rudel, "Lanquan li jorn son lonc en may," ll. 8-14, trans. Frederick Goldin, Lyrics of the Troubadours and Trouvères (Garden City, NY: Anchor-Doubleday, 1973) 104, 105. For the convenience of the facing-page translation, I have used Goldin's anthology as source for all troubadour and trouvère poetry quoted in this chapter. The standard edition of Jaufré Rudel's lyrics is Alfred Jeanroy's Les Chansons of Jaufré Rudel, Classiques Français de Moyen Age 15 (1915; 2nd rev. ed., Paris: Champion, 1924). Also frequently used is Giorgio Chiarni's Il canzoniere di Jaufre Rudel, Romanica Vulgaria 5 (L'Aquila: Japadre, 1985).

[2] "[A]i, dieus! tan suavet m'aucis / quan de s'amor me fetz semblan, / que tornat m'a en tal deves / que nuill' autra no vuelh vezer." Cercamon, "Quant l'aura doussa s'amarzis," ll. 45-48, Goldin, Lyrics, 98, 99. The standard edition is Valeria Tortoreto's Il trovatore Cercamon, Unione Academia Nazionale Roma, Subsidia al Corpus des Troubadours 7; Institutio di Filologia Romanza dell'Università di Roma, Studi, Testi e Manuali 9 (Modena: Mucchi, 1981).

[3] "Anc non agui de me poder / ni no fui meus de l'or' en sai / que'm laisset en sos olhs vezer / en un miralh que mout me plai. / Miralhs, pus me mirei ente, / m'an mort li sospir de preon, / c'aissi'm perdei com perdet se / lo bels Narcisus en la fon." Bernart de Ventadorn, "Can vei la lauzeta mover," ll.17-24., Goldin, Lyrics, 146, 147.

Each speaker in the troubadour lyrics excerpted above tells of a painful pleasure, a happy captivity that heralds for him a new state of self-awareness. Like Lacan's infant, each speaker has become aware of himself as a new entity only after seeing himself from the position of the other, after seeing himself reflected in the eyes of his beloved. What he reads in her eyes is his identity, for, following Frederick Goldin's argument, it is within her power to judge him worthy or unworthy of her favor--and, consequently, of the societal esteem that is his measure of selfhood.

Yet, as the previous chapter suggests, the identity-construction process is a vexed one. Ironically, the poet-lover is so dependent upon his lady's favor and his identity is so intimately tied to her that he often "loses" himself in her, just as the speaker in the third lyric above claims, consequently finding himself in a Lacanian "wilderness of mirrors in which self and object oscillate perpetually, each eclipsed under the shadow of the other."[4] This confusion and/or conflation of subject and other supports Lacan's idea that the self is a *méconaissance*, a misidentification of identity as something that may be made whole and self-sustaining. To Lacan, the self is always alienated, forever looking to another for completion, forever disappointed. This paradigm is very much evident in the courtly love poems of the troubadours and their northern French successors, the trouvères, as well as in the Middle English lyrics influenced by the *fin' amor* tradition; this chapter will explore the evolution of the paradigm in the above literatures, focusing on its particular manifestation in rhetorical

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The standard edition is Moshé Lazar's Bernard de Ventadour, troubadour du XII[e] siècle: Chansons d'amour, Bibliothèque Française et Romane, ser. B: Editions critiques de textes 4 (Paris: Klincksieck, 1966). Still useful is Carl Appel's Bernart von Ventadorn: seine Leider, mit Einleitung und Glossar (Halle: Niemeyer, 1915), the only edition to list variants.

[4] Maud Ellmann, "Introduction," Psychoanalytic Literary Critcism, ed. Ellmann (London: Longman, 1994) 18.

exchanges between male and female characters. While the lady of the paradigm remains a distant, ideal figure, the lover may more easily interpret her response in a way that for a while at least bolsters his sense of self. Yet when she is given a voice she becomes at once more immediate and harder to control. No longer can the man project his own desires onto her and then read what he wants to see in her reaction. Instead, he must contend with a person rather than a presence, one with an actual personality, and in most situations, a voice that lays bare the unstable nature of his identity.

Such a function does not diminish her importance, however, and those poems in which female characters discourse with male characters reveal just how integral women are to the male construction of self. Although these women do not usually serve to "complete" the lovers in the fashion the men seem to desire, the women nevertheless do serve as other, reflecting and even contributing to the development of their male counterparts' identities through the medium of rhetorical exchange. And what is more, upon careful examination it is clear that a type of reciprocity begins to show itself in these male-female dialogues: in order to secure the woman with whom he converses as other in his process of identity construction, the man sets himself up as other to the woman--she cannot thrive without him, he tells her. Although in most cases the subjectivity of the male is still of paramount concern, the woman is often a powerful figure, especially as she becomes less rarefied, with a personality that rivals his.

Despite the overtly secular nature of this identity-construction paradigm, it is surely informed by the patristic-platonic notion of human identity resting largely within the soul, and by the significance of the figure of the mirror to such a notion. As detailed in Chapter One, patristic authority, heavily influenced by platonism, held

that the soul functioned as a type of mirror, receiving and processing images of both the material (worldly, inferior) and spiritual (superior) realms of existence. Human reason was thought to reside in the soul, and it was the obligation of each individual to use his reason in processing those images, thereby moving him toward reunion with the Creator, the source of all images and the eventual goal of all Christians. Also of importance was the identification of woman with both matter, existing to be given form, and with the mirrors of either the material or the spiritual realms. When the secular lovers' paradigm is examined in light of these ideas, the spiritual element of the relationship between he who loves and she who is loved comes into focus even more, as does the relationship's impossibility of succeeding. The lady functions as a mirror to which the lover turns the mirror of his soul. He initially perceives her to be a superior mirror, for he looks to her to bring him into closer accord with his ultimate goal: recognition by and integration into the secular ideal that gives him identity. The process goes as follows: his active masculine force imprints upon her what he desires her to reflect to him; he then subjects what he perceives to rational interpretation; the correct, "reasonable" interpretation should confirm his relationship with the secular deity of social position, which in turns gives him identity.

Yet because this situation requires a secular application of a sacred model, because successful results ultimately depend upon the selflessness of both lady and lover--and this rarely occurs--the result is dissatisfaction: alienation rather than communion, separation rather than unification. And this is most evident in the rhetorical exchanges between male and female characters, primarily for those reasons mentioned above. So long as the lover is working only with the lady's image, he may remain hopeful, persisting in his usually delusory interpretation of her reactions as affirming; when she begins interpreting them herself, responding to him verbally, the

situation is generally shown to be more disappointing, unsettling, even disorienting than if he had remained the sole speaker. The poet, in control of this representation, presents a picture of identity construction that is rarely cohesive, almost always fragmentary. In most cases the credibility of the lover or the lady, the validity of secular love itself, or all three are called into question. Such a result is perhaps the inevitable fate of a secular ideal within a culture largely controlled by a Christian ethic.

Before turning to the poetry itself, however, it is first necessary to revisit some of the notions touched upon in the previous chapter about the social and aristocratic nature of the Provençal tradition and examine them in more detail, the better to compare them with the tenets of the Old French and Middle English traditions--and to understand the function of the speaking female character in each group of texts. The recorded troubadour tradition begins with Guillaume (1071-1127),[5] seventh count of Poitiers, ninth Duke of Acquitaine and an inhabitant of an area called Occitania, currently the southern portion of France. Guillaume began composing what came to be regarded as courtly love lyrics shortly after returning from the Crusades--an experience that would have most probably increased his exposure to the Arab tradition of the veneration of the lady. Current critical opinion holds that Guillaume's poetry borrows from a "basic canon of ideas. . .that Arab poets had already codified"--they had, Meg Bogin notes, "been worshipping their ladies for at least 200 years";[6]

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[5] All dates of troubadours and trouvères are from Goldin, Lyrics; I have also followed Goldin in the spelling of names.

[6] Meg Bogin, The Women Troubadours (New York: Norton, 1980) 45. The origins of courtly love have long been the subject of academic speculation. For a succinct discussion of these theories, see Bogin, 44-45. About the favoring of the Arab theory over those which privilege the influence of other western poetic forms, Bogin offers, "This is not to say that other forces did not enter in importantly--popular May songs, women's washing songs, Latin hymns to the Virgin, Latin love songs--

importantly, however, the first troubadour adapted that canon of ideas to the needs of his society.

The primary mark of this adaptation is the involvement of the aristocratic court in the composition and performance of the lyric. The courtly setting, according to Goldin, helps to meet the principal need of both the individual and his society, justifying membership therein, and thereby establishing and confirming identity. As quoted in the previous chapter, Goldin explains it thus: "If [the troubadour's] class was intended to serve as a paragon of all earthly endeavor, how could he know whether, in his deepest inclinations and personal acts, he was truly a member of that class?"[7] Troubadour love lyrics, composed for and presented in "an intimate courtly setting,"[8] responded to this dilemma, offering the courtier as proxy for the rest of the court in his embrace of the discipline of courtly love.

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but the Arab influence was the single most important influence. The image of the lady in the courtly lyric was at once more sensual and more spiritual than anything that could have come directly from European indigenous sources" (47n). Standard works in English that are useful to the study of the continental courtly love lyric include Peter Dronke's The Medieval Lyric (1968; 2nd rev. ed., London: Cambridge UP, 1977) and Medieval Latin and the Rise of the European Love-Lyric, 2nd ed., 2 vols.(Oxford: Clarendon, 1968); see also L. T. Topsfield's Troubadours and Love (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1975), C. S. Lewis, The Allegory of Love: A Study in Medieval Tradition (London: Oxford UP, 1936), and, as a useful recent reference tool, F. R. P Akehurst and Judith M. Davis's A Handbook of the Troubadours (Berkeley and Los Angeles: U of California P, 1995). Non-English studies include Alfred Jeanroy's classic works, Les Origines de la poésie lyrique en France au moyen-âge (Paris: Hachette, 1925) and La Poésie lyrique des troubadours (2 vols., Toulouse and Paris: Champion, 1934), Moshé Lazar's Amour courtois et fin'amors dans le littérature du XII^{e} siècle, Bibliothèque Française and Romane, ser. C: Etudes littéraires 8 (Paris: Klincksieck, 1954), and Paul Zumthor's Essai de poétique médiévale (Paris: Seuil, 1972).

[7] Frederick Goldin, The Mirror of Narcissus in the Courtly Love Lyric (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1967) 66.

[8] Goldin, Mirror, 66.

Guillaume's "Ab la dolchor del temps novel" presents a lover under such discipline, waiting for a word from his lady to proceed; until then he must do nothing:

> De lai don plus m'es bon e bel
> non vei mesager ne sagel,
> per que mos cors non dorm ni ri,
> ni no m'aus traire adenan,
> tro que eu sacha ben de fi
> s'el es aissi com eu deman
>
> (From over there, where everything to me is good and beautiful, / I see no messenger or seal, / and so the heart inside my body knows no sleep, no laughter, / nor dare I to take a step in that direction /until I know for sure about peace,/ whether it is such as I ask for.)[9]

Through such suffering is his greatness forged.

Yet patient waiting is not all; only by adhering to a lengthy catalog of strict behavioral guidelines may the lover access the transcendent benefits of *fin' amor*. Not in this case may Guillaume or any seeker of love muse in similar fashion to the speaker in one of Guillaume's famous "vulgar" poems: "[D]irai vos m'entendensa de que es: / no m'azauta cons gardatz. . ." (I shall tell you my thoughts: these things do not please me: a cunt under guard. . .).[10] The exemplary courtier must instead keep his speech courteous, use decorum and deference in all manner of exchange with anyone intimately or remotely connected to his beloved, and, as suggested in the earlier Guillaume poem, must be obedient to his lady's desires:

> Ja no sera nuls hom ben fis
> contr'amor si no·l es aclis,

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[9] Guillaume, "Ab la dolchor del temps novel," ll. 7-12, Goldin, Lyrics, 46-47. The standard edition for Guillaume's poetry is Nicolò Pastero's Guglielmo IX d'Aquitania: Poesie, Subsidia al Corpus dei Trovatori 1 (Rome and Modena: Mucchi, 1973).

[10] Guillaume, "Compano, tant ai agutz d'avols conres," ll. 4-5, Goldin, Lyrics, 22, 23.

et als estranhs et als vezis
non es consens,
et totz sels d'aicels aizis
obediens.
Obediensa deu portar
a motas gens qui vol amar,
e coven li que sapcha far
faigz avinens
e que's gart en cort de parler
vilanamens.

(Surely no one can ever be Love's / perfect man unless he gives it homage in humility / and is obliging to strangers / and acquaintances, / and to all people of that realm / obedient. / A man who wants to be a lover / must meet many people with obedience / and must know how to do / the things that fit in court, / and must keep, in court, from speaking / like a vulgar man.)[11]

He must also be laudatory and discrete: "Si'm vol mi dons s'amor donar / pres suy del penr' e del grazir / e del celar e del blandir" (If Midons chooses to give me her love, / I am ready to receive it and be grateful, / to keep it secret and pay it compliments).[12] Despite the fact that the lover does not expect his lady to respond immediately to his various overtures of love--and he is prepared to endure all manner of "testing" from her--he does expect his love to win out in the end: "A bon coratge bon poder, / qui's ben sufrens" (When the heart is good, its power is good, / if a man knows patience).[13] And, as Deborah Nelson notes, "[I]t is often apparent that the "favor" pleaded for by the Occitan poet was a sexual encounter. . . ."[14] Guillaume also drives home the point that if she refuses him or throws him over for another, then she shows herself to be no worthwhile object of adulation:

Domna fai gran pechat mortal

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[11] Guillaume, "Pus vezem de novel florir," ll. 25-36, Goldin, Lyrics, 38, 39.
[12] Guillaume, "Mout jauzens me prenc en amar," ll. 37-39, Goldin, Lyrics, 44, 45.
[13] Guillaume, "Pus vezem de novel florir," ll. 23-24, Goldin, Lyrics, 38, 39.
[14] Deborah H. Nelson, "Northern France," Akehurst and Davis, 258.

qe no ama cavalier leal;
mas si es monge o clergal,
non a raizo:
per dreg la deuri'hom cremar
ab un tezo.

(A lady who does not love a loyal knight / commits a great mortal sin. / But if she loves a cleric or a monk / she is in error: her they should burn by right / with firebrands.)[15]

If the lover was to meet certain standards, the lady must as well.

The conduct depicted in troubadour poetry "is more than just a strategy for some lone lover"; it is instead, according to Goldin, the "established and definitive behavior of a social class," and, in the end, that which serves as "the defining visible form of courtly life": the lover's "unsuccess in love necessarily implies his failure as a courtly man," for "[l]ove has become the enactment of courtliness: the way a man loves is the surest sign of his identity as a courtly man."[16]

This connection of environment and identity is further evident in the troubadour lyric's articulation not only of the courtier's point of view but also of the perspective of those within his society who might object to his methods or goals: jealous husbands, perhaps, or those who spread malicious gossip about the character of the lover's attachment to his lady--some or all of whom might have been present in the poet's audience. [17] Thus, many different outlooks on love are given voice through the

[15] Guillaume, "Farai un vers, pos mi somelh," ll. 7-12, Goldin, Lyrics, 28, 29.

[16] Goldin, Lyrics, 10.

[17] Goldin suggests that the court is so intimately involved that certain lines of poetry actually reflect the groups of people who might have attended its presentation. He writes, "In the course of his performance, the singer scanned the entire audience and responded to each segment in a certain order. When he responded to the friends, he spoke like a "courtly lover," and conformed to their image of him. When he turned his eyes to the eyes of the enemies, he spoke like one of them and proceeded to ridicule that same exalted love he had celebrated a strophe, or perhaps only a line, earlier; and he would boast of his own carnality and mock the devotion he had earlier affirmed." Goldin, Lyrics, 445.

troubadour persona, and the result is a "dialectical arrangement" of these differing audience points of view. Goldin regards this as "finally the meaning of the lyric":

> That situation, in which the singer incorporated in his own person every mode of love and lust, was a metaphor, a re-enactment of courtly life itself, of its harmony and dignity, where destructive impulses were controlled by moral and aesthetic ideals. Through his performance the singer sets all of the perspectives in the situations into a hierarchical order: the ideal view is supreme, the vision of the "vulgar ones" confirms his supremacy. This was the basic conviction, the essential experience of courtliness.[18]

The presence of the audience reinforced the social nature of the identity formation that was the lyric experience. The troubadour poem is consequently marked as one in which process is the product--and in this case process and product both amount to a corroboration of the construct that is courtly love.

Yet the presence of apparently varying and even conflicting points of view within the troubadour lyric might also be explained by a conflict between what Lacan identifies as demand, the articulation of what the individual needs in order to become whole, and desire, the force that also craves wholeness but often works to subvert the societally-shaped demand. Whereas Goldin sees the courtly aesthetic as emerging triumphant from a cacophony of baser viewpoints, Lacanian theory suggests that the very presence of the demand-desire conflict within the courtly lyric suggests the instability of the self constructed through courtly love. As Elizabeth Grosz observes, desire works "[i]n opposition to demand" and is "beyond conscious articulation," having been "barred or repressed from articulation." Consequently, desire "undermines conscious activity[,] speak[ing] through demand, operating as its

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[18] Goldin, Lyrics, 446.

underside or margin."[19] Yet desire cannot exist without demand, as the previous chapter explained; in Lacan's words: "[D]esire is situated in dependence on demand," manifesting itself as "a metonymic remainder that runs under [demand]."[20] While demand is engaged in the process of shoring up the self through avenues dictated by society, desire "threatens to subvert the unity and certainty of conscious demand." While the ultimate goal of desire seems to be "confirmation of individual selfhood"[21] via feedback from the other (Lacan holds that "the first object of desire is to be recognized by the other."[22]), "[a]s unconscious, desire cares little for social approval or the rewards and punishments consciousness offers to demand. Desire is concerned only with its own processes, pleasures, and internal logic. . . ." Grounded in "expelled, socially inappropriate, repressed wishes," desire may support the societal paradigm, but it may also betray it.[23] That desire has the potential to wreak havoc suggests that Goldin's optimistic reading of the troubadour lyric ignores the darker implications the dialectical struggle holds for the subjectivity of the poet-lover: although the societally-constructed identity seems to have triumphed over the baser competing models, the very fact of the struggle indicates that the triumph is only temporary, something that will always be prey to the "unapprehensible, . . . unsatisfied, impossible, misconstrued. . .element that is called desire."[24]

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[19]Elizabeth Grosz, Jacques Lacan: A Feminist Introduction, (London: Routledge, 1990) 64-65.

[20] Jacques Lacan, The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Norton, 1981) 154.

[21] Richard Harland, "Freud's Lacan," Superstructuralism: The Philosophy of Structuralism and Post-Structuralism (London: Methuen, 1987) 39.

[22] Jacques Lacan, Speech and Language in Psychoanalysis, trans. Anthony Wilden (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1968) 31.

[23] Grosz, 65.

[24] Lacan, Four, 154.

This conflict explains in part why the courtier's efforts at the love that is to define and complete him as a courtly man rarely meet with satisfaction. His satisfaction, if achieved, can only be temporary, because desire will eventually interfere with what demand seeks to acquire. Even should desire not sabotage demand and the lover be free to bond with a lady who seems perfectly suited to "other" status, she is, as suggested above, only human, and "human" can never equal "perfect." She is incapable of completing him perfectly. That does not mean, however, that his effort fails to delineate any sort of identity for him; nor does it mean that the woman who is other fails to contribute anything to the construction of the male subject's self. In fact, as I mentioned at the chapter's beginning, this cooperative effort is quite evident in rhetorical exchanges between male and female speakers, and it is to instances of these exchanges in troubadour poetry that I now return. On the rare occasion that the female speaker shows herself to be the ideal lady her lover thought her to be, her speech reflects her lover's worth along with her shaping influence on his subjectivity. More often, however, she is the lady-found-wanting, and her frigid, callous, or faithless verbal contributions delineate the miserable state of the man who seeks her. When the lover attempts to construct a self outside the confines of the court, the other he selects is usually a peasant woman (the *pastorela* or *pastourelle*) whose spirited responses to the delinquent knight intent on seducing her in the end point up his failure to adhere to his courtly creed. But these exchanges reveal even more about his identity: in attempting to procure her favors that are so vital to his construction of self, he sets himself up as other to her. He is indispensable, he or his go-between tells his love interest; he can even make her into something "more" than she currently appears to be. What emerges is a type of reciprocity; and when the female speaker's experience is emphasized as much or

(rarely) more than the male's, the result is a poem containing two attempts at identity construction. Significantly, however, both of them issue from the courtier, and both support his singular attempt to define himself. Male subjectivity is still of primary concern.

Two poems by the troubadour Peire d'Alvernhe (fl. 1150-1180) depicting the rare situation of a lover's being requited by a lady who is indeed ideal reveal this dual identity construction. The troubadour lover need merely request that his lady favor him; his messenger, a nightingale, need simply infer to her his master's indispensability; and she concurs on both points. In doing so she demonstrates both her excellence and her reflective qualities, which consequently prove her man to be worthy of high praise. Still, the words of the courtier and his bird go-between forecast and even construct her identity which, as suggested above, reinforces that of her lover.

The lover dispatches a nightingale to plead his case before the lady in the hopes that the bird might bring him back the news he so desires and needs to hear: that his beloved will favor him.[25] The bird does his best to achieve this, encouraging her toward the love his master requires:

> [Q]ui'n amor a son esper,
> no's deuria tardar gaire,
> tan com l'amors n'a lezer;
> que tost chai
> blancs en bai,
> com flors sobre lenha;
> e val mai
> qui'l fag fai,
> ans qu'als la'n destrenha.

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[25] Peire d'Alvernhe, "Rossinhol, el seu repaire," ll.1-14, Goldin, Lyrics, 162, 163. The standard edition is Alberto del Monte's Peire d'Alvernha: Liriche, Collezione di Filologia Romanza (Turin: Loescher-Chiantore, 1955).

([W]hoever has her hope in love, / she must never feel unrushed / while there is still a chance for love. / The white turns quick- / ly into dark, / like the flower on the branch; / and a woman is nobler / who acts / before other things compel her.)[26]

The nightingale makes his case by equating the woman's nobility with her sexual receptivity. And small wonder it is that the bird does so: by acquiescing to the desires of the lover the lady would allow him ultimate success in love and thereby firmly establish his identity as a courtly player.

The lady's reply does not disappoint, and she shows herself to be just the confirming and shaping instrument her lover had hoped for. First exclaiming, "Fort mi pot esser salvatge / quar s'es lonhatz mos amis, / qu'anc joi de negum linhatge / no vi que tan m'abelis" (It is cruel pain to me / that my friend took himself away, / for I never knew another joy / that gave me so much pleasure),[27] she further confirms her role in the development of his identity when she claims:

Que tan l'am de bon coratge,
qu'ades, s'en entredormis,
ab lui ai en guidontage
joc e joi e guag e ris;
e'l solatz
qu'ai em patz
no sap creatura,
tan quan jatz
e mon bratz,
tro que's trasfigura.

(For I love him so with my whole heart, / that always, when I go between sleeping and waking / I have one guide with him together: / play and pleasure and joy and laughter. / The content I have / in silence and peace / no creature knows, / while he lies / in my arms, / till his whole figure changes.)[28]

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[26] Peire, "Rossinhol," ll. 52-60, Goldin, Lyrics, 164, 165.
[27] Peire d'Alvernhe, "Ben a tengut dreg viatge," ll. 11-14, Goldin, Lyrics, 166, 167.
[28] Peire, "Ben," ll. 21-30, Goldin, Lyrics, 166, 167.

Her speech confirms the power she holds over his identity: she may change his "figure," shape him--make him the man he wants to be. She further dispels any anxieties he might have about his social status (most troubadours were not of as exalted a position as Guillaume; they were almost certainly of lower status than the ladies they addressed[29]) by proclaiming his current station meritorious enough for approval: "[G]es de plus ric linhatge / no veulh autr' aver conquis" (I do not wish that I had won / another man of greater lineage). Her willingness to cleave to him confirms his worth. Her speech reveals that both her physical and verbal contributions to the relationship are vital to the validation of her lover's self. It also reveals her to be the reflection of her lover's desires. Her identity confirms his identity; she is the ideal other he seeks.

Significantly, in the process of setting her up as his ideal, the lover has set himself up as other to her. He had implored his messenger, "[M]as de mi·ll sovenha" ([B]ut let her think of me),[30] requesting that his lady invest in him. The bird attempted to facilitate this goal by inferring that his master alone desired the best for her:

> E si·l port per que·s n'esclaire,
> gran gaug en devetz aver,
> qu'anc om no nasquet de maire,
> tan de be·us puesca voler[.]

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[29] As Bogin succinctly puts it: "Most of the troubadours who followed Guilhem IX were men of modest or even humble origins. Many were *joglars* [performers]-turned-poets; most depended for their living on the generosity of wealthy patrons." Consequently, "[t]he model for their lady--the object of their eternal, abject passions--was the wife of their employer" (49). Little is known of Peire's life and acconmpanying social status although a contemporaneus source suggests he was a canon prior to becoming a troubadour (Goldin, Lyrics 161), which suggests at least some, though by no means important, social connection.

[30] Peire, "Rossinhol," l. 7, Goldin, Lyrics, 162, 163.

(If I bring something back to rejoice him, / you should have great joy for that, / for no man ever born of mother / could ever wish such good for you.)[31]

The nightingale presents the lover as a pleasurable and, ultimately, essential element in the lady's existence, and her language attesting to her dependence upon him ("The content I have / in silence and peace / no creature knows, / while he lies / in my arms") registers his success. Her commitment to him validates his status as other in her life, ensuring her dependence on him--and justifying his dependence on her. Each is defined through relationship with his/her partner, each one's need for the other mutual and apparently exclusive. Within this perfectly reciprocal relationship exists no conflict between society's demand and personal desire, and the result is firm confirmation of the lover's fitness for the courtly role.

This is not the situation depicted in a slightly earlier set of poems by the troubadour Marcabru (fl. 1129-1150), which reveals a much different correspondence between lover and loved object. Marcabru is a poet, who, as George Economou has remarked, "feels strongly moved to testify forcefully in [love's] behalf when it follows nature and to bear ferocious witness against it when it does not."[32] If Peire's poems present courtly love as natural and harmonious, Marcabru's "Estornel, cueill ta volada" and "Ges l'estornels non s'oblida" dramatize a love relationship that is the epitome of "unnatural," if by unnatural we mean "uncourtly," and is therefore well deserving of the troubadour's ferocity. In place of Peire's ideal coupling is courtly love at its most decadent: Marcabru's lover is considerably needier, angrier, more pathetic than is Peire's, and his lady reflects this: the man's miserable state corresponds to the woman's faithless nature. She is his other and he is in a sense

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[31] Peire, "Rossinhol," ll. 41-44, Goldin, Lyrics, 164, 165.

[32] George Economou, "Marcabru: Love's Star Witness For and Against," Tenso 7.1 (1991): 23-39.

hers, but their relationship is hardly mutual or exclusive. And what is more: demand and desire are almost completely at odds. Desire has, in effect, extinguished the influence of demand in all but the starling that functions as go-between.

Marcabru also opens his first poem with a lover dispatching a winged messenger to discover why his lady torments him, "per qu'es trasalïa" (why she goes beyond all bounds).[33] The resemblance between Peire's poems and Marcabru's ends with this detail, however. Marcabru's lady is the type of woman, the lover tells the starling, for whom constancy is not even a possibility: "[D]e mil amicx es cazada / e de mil senhors amia" (She has a thousand friends on the supply, / and of a thousand lords is the friend). Consequently, "l'us / non es clus" (the door / is never closed). He concludes venomously: "[B]ad e mus / qu'll vol plus / c'a raüs / part de la traïa" (Let him gape and waste his time / who looks for more in her-- / he'll back off / and walk away from that treacherous bitch).[34] Clearly, the identity his words formulate for her is not an ideal one. But despite her obvious deficiencies, he will not relinquish her as other. His messenger attempts to ingratiate the master into the lady's good graces--thereby establishing the necessity of his presence in her life--by reminding the lady that she is not playing by the rules and by reaffirming what courtly virtues the man might possess. Thus, the starling later says to her:

> . . . Part Lerida
> a pros es tan descremida,
> c'anc no saup plus de gandida,
> plena de falsa crezensa.

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[33] Marcabru, "Estornel, cueill ta volada," l. 11, Goldin, Lyrics, 60, 61. The standard edition for Marcabru's complete works is J.-M.-L. Dejeanne's Poésies complète du troubadour Marcabru, Bibliothèque Méridionale 12 (Toulouse: Privat, 1909). More recent editions of some individual poems (edited primarily by Aurelio Roncaglia, who has long been preparing a complete edition) are available.

[34] Marcabru, "Estornel," ll. 58-66, Goldin, Lyrics, 60, 61.

Mil amic
s'en fan ric:
per l'abric
que us servic,
lo meric
del chastic
n'aura ses faillensa.

(. . . There's a valiant man out there \ beyond Lérida you've been so vicious to, \ he never found any defense against you, you full of bad faith. \ A thousand friends \ brag about you in public: \ but the discretion \ with which *he* served you-- \ he will get \ his reward \ for such restraint, make sure of that.)[35]

The restraint of the starling's master has thus far served him badly; the lady has shown favor to him only once.[36] He seems to have realized that he will never win her by following courtly procedure and instead agrees to be a different type of man in order to win her:

Del deslei
que me fei
li fauc drei,
e il m'autrei,
mas sotz mei
aplat sei,
qe'ela m lass'e m lia.

(The wrong she did me / I forgive / and hand myself over; / only, underneath me / let her lie down on her back / and bind me and tie me up.)[37]

He desires further bondage to the one he has already staked his existence to.

Although the speaker seems to be going to great lengths to obtain his lady's favor; although he clearly regards that favor as vital to his sense of self; and although he shows himself willing to be obedient to her desires, he has chosen an other who

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[35] Marcabru, "Ges l'estornels non s'oblida," ll. 23-33, Goldin, Lyrics, 68, 69.
[36] Marcabru, "Estornel," ll. 12-14, Goldin, Lyrics, 64, 65.
[37] Marcabru, "Estornel," ll. 78-84, Goldin, Lyrics, 64, 65.

cannot validate his courtly identity because she herself is outside of the ideal. This choice on his part may also be explained as a demand-desire conflict. He should want a woman who can validate his courtly identity--this is the demand of the societal paradigm. Yet something clearly interferes with his ability to adhere to this demand; otherwise, he would move on to another who might prove more amenable to the courtly agenda. He does not do so, however, because he desires that which he had to repress in order to embrace the ideal: in this case, the "anti-ideal" that the lady represents.

Because she does not follow the rules of courtly love, she cannot properly contribute to his identity as a courtier. Her response to his message, however, makes clear the type of self the two of them have shaped for him. She tells the messenger starling:

> [P]os amor no'm ressida,
> mas qu'ieu no sui as plevida,
> en cug aver m'entendensa.
> L'autr' amiu
> no vueill ieu,
> e badiu
> ses aisiu
> don m'eschiu
> tug de briu
> ses far contenensa.
>
> ([S]ince your man cannot arouse my lasting love, / and provided I'm not bound to be his alone, / he can count on enjoying my inclination now. / I don't want some courtly lover, / some simpleton / who's no fun-- / such a one / I shake off fast / without further ado.)[38]

She is nothing like Peire's lady, loyal to one man alone, nor does she implicitly support the economy of courtly love; in fact, she explicitly mocks it, regarding its

[38] Marcabru, "Ges l'estornels non s'oblida," ll. 35-44, Goldin, Lyrics, 68, 69.

adherents as dolts unworthy of her good will. Her view of love is practical and cynical: "[Q]u'en un glatz / lev'e jatz / desiratz" ([B]efore the shout is over / desire / rises and falls).[39] She is jaded, and her speech recalls and concurs with her suitor's degradation: when coupled with her he resembles courtly man not in the least. And in making himself other to her he has put himself in a category with those enemies of courtly love that she loves best.

The starling, however, makes one last effort to preserve the illusion of the lady's ideality, thereby lamely reinforcing its master's alleged participation in courtly endeavor. Of her much-rumored faithlessness--faithlessness for which the lover has earlier labeled her a "traïa," which Goldin translates as "treacherous bitch"--the bird tells the lover:

> [C]'als mil drutz
> ha rendutz
> mil salutz
> e pagutz
> per condutz
> ses trautz
> de falsa semensa.
>
> ([T]o a thousand admirers / she has rendered / a thousand greetings / and sated them / with dinners, / never granting / them the rotten fruit they crave)[40]

Still, the lie cannot disguise the fact that his master has in essence committed himself to the service of unrestrained sexual desire, an "ideal" in conflict with the regulatory code of courtly love and courtly society, recalling instead the dynamic of desire that occasioned Eden's loss; the starling concludes the poem:

> S'al mati

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[39] Marcabru, "Ges," ll. 50-52, Goldin, Lyrics, 68, 69.
[40] Marcabru, "Ges," ll. 71-77, Goldin, Lyrics, 70, 71.

l'es aqui
on vos di
e'us mandi,
qu'el ardi
del jardi
e que'us mat e'us vensa!

(In the morning / if you go / where she tells / and sends you, / in the struggle / in the garden / may she checkmate and beat you.)[41]

Just as Adam fell when he chose Eve over God's discipline, man cannot triumph, cannot confirm himself as a chivalric self as long as he subjugates himself to the lesser ideal of sensuality. Marcabru's courtier loves not as a courtly man but as a common sensualist, forgetting his society's "higher" call and thus defining himself as a debased. In choosing desire over demand, he adopted an uncourtly woman as his other; he then made himself into an enemy of courtly love in order to play other to her. Appropriately, then, the reciprocal relationship of lover and lady does not in this case support the courtly ideal; instead it undermines it, and in doing so, calls into question the possibility of its ever being realized.

The troubadour *pastorela* (or shepherdess's song) also involves a man of courtly stature allowing a baser standard to control him. Again, the woman he chooses to focus his wooing efforts upon helps, through her speech, to construct and reflect his less-than-courtly identity, and again his choice reflects that desire is actively subverting what should be his demand, though in a fashion rather different from that shown in the previous lover-lady pairing. Although both the lover of the starling poems and the knight of one *pastorela*, also by Marcabru, favor desire over demand, the starling's master apparently begins courting his lady as an adherent of demand, only gradually giving in to the more expedient (with regard to his lady) methods of desire. The *pastorela* lover, however, is a man of desire from the very beginning of

[41] Marcabru, "Ges," ll. 78-84, Goldin, Lyrics, 70, 71.

his effort, and, in fact seems to co-opt the verbal structures of demand, cynically enlisting them to acquire an other who can play no role in the construction of courtly identity. On the surface these efforts play as lame attempts by the lover to seduce his less-than-appropriate target by "elevating" her through flattery, yet they may also be interpreted as evidence of a psychological struggle taking place at the unconscious level, one common to both the poet and the audience for which he wrote.

The familiar elements of the *pastorela* genre are evident in Marcabru's "L'autrier jost' una sebissa": the knight errant happens across the shepherdess and, in an attempt to seduce her, plies her with compliments, false promises of love, etc.; she in turn sees through his transparent efforts and, more often than not, leaves him unsatisfied and insulted. In Marcabru's *pastorela* the lover also attempts to insinuate himself into the maiden's concept of identity, verbally constructing her as one dependent upon him for the new, more attractive self he has created for her. Yet the girl, while using the common vocabulary of the peasant, speaks in support of courtly love, affirming the necessity of abiding by its rules; the knight, on the other hand, though employing the praiseful and superlative language of the courtier, actually acts in such a way as to devalue *fin' amor*, giving voice to the perspective of its enemies. What emerges from this clash of positions seems to be a reaffirmation of the ideal: although the knight tries to dress the peasant woman in the trappings of the lady, she resists, insisting upon her identity as a child of the fields; in so doing she rejects the false self he constructs for her, refusing to allow him "other" status in her self-concept. And although he claims her as other to him, she is not a courtly other, but a common one--and he, as a result, is shown to be common, too. What also emerges from the exchange is evidence of the knight's desire--wholeness achieved by union with this available other, immediately, now--co-opting demand for the courtly ideal. Desire

infiltrates his adherence to the tenets of courtly wooing, revealing again the problematic nature of the courtly identity.

Marcabru's knight begins his assault somewhat subtly, claiming first to be concerned for the health of the girl he addresses, due to the chilly temperature, and then for her safety and state of mind, due to her lack of companionship. He offers her "protection"[42]; she as other mirrors his bald motives back to him. Although merely "la vilana," a peasant, she replies astutely to such an offer, concluding,

> [L]a vostra pareillaria,
> Seigner. . .,
> lai on se tang si s'estia,
> que tals la cuid' en bailia
> tener, no'n a mas l'ufana.
>
> ("Your comradeship, / Lord. . . , / let it stay where it belongs, for such as I, when she thinks she has it / for herself, has nothing but the look of it.")[43]

Her speech makes clear his transgression: he is not keeping his company where it belongs--that is, in the court--nor has he directed it at a proper target. Yet he persists in his misdirection, and the result is an attempt to disguise his desire as demand, in a sense, turning her into the courtly lady she is not:

> Toza de gentil afaire,
> cavaliers fon vostre paire
> que'us engenret en la maire,
> car fon corteza vilana.
>
> (O you are a girl of noble quality, / your father was a knight / who got your mother with you / because she was a courtly peasant.)[44]

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[42] Marcabru, "L'autrier jost' una sebissa," ll. 10-11, 15-21, Goldin, Lyrics, 72, 73.
[43] Marcabru, "L'autrier," ll. 24-28, Goldin, Lyrics, 72, 73.
[44] Marcabru, "L'autrier," ll. 29-32, Goldin, Lyrics, 72, 73.

Again the girl turns his game back upon him by pointing out that she is of plain peasant stock through and through, and that a knight such as he should not be wasting his time engaged in such endeavors.[45] Again, hers is the voice of courtly demand, his of subversive desire.

Still he persists, this time suggesting that she is above the noble, even fantastical or mystical, after which he then gets to the point of the exchange:

> Toza, fi'm ieu, gentils fada,
> vos adastret, quan fos nada,
> d'una beutat esmerada
> sobre tot' autra vilana;
> e seria'us ben doblada,
> si'm vezi' una vegada,
> sobira e vos sotrana.
>
> ("Girl," I said, "a gentle fairy / endowed you at birth / with your beauty, which is pure / beyond every other peasant girl. / And yet you would be twice as beautiful / if once I saw you / underneath and me on top.")[46]

But the girl recognizes that the knight's efforts, should they succeed, would not make her into the glorious or ideal creature he suggests, and her acceptance of his later offer of money[47] would instead make her something altogether different, something she refuses to become. She tells him: "[M]as ieu, per un pauc d'intratge, / non vuoil ges mon piucellatge, / camjar per nom de putana" ([B]ut I am not willing, for a little / entrance fee, to cash in my virginity / for the fame of a whore).[48] Again, her words uncloak his motives, mirroring the social and moral decrepitude that has claimed him--and the desire that dominates him.

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[45] Marcabru, "L'autrier," ll. 36-42, Goldin, Lyrics, 72, 73.
[46] Marcabru, "L'autrier," ll. 43-49, Goldin, Lyrics, 74, 75.
[47] Marcabru, "L'autrier," ll. 60-61, Goldin, Lyrics, 74, 75.
[48] Marcabru, "L'autrier," ll. 68-70, Goldin, Lyrics, 74, 75

He tries one more time to indulge his desire. In a perversion of courtly concern for the well-being of the lady, a tactic he tried earlier when making his initial advance, and a final move to elevate her status, he suggests that acceding to his wishes would be better for her: sex would make them equal[49]; she agrees that it would abolish any difference between them, but does not agree that such is the proper recourse:

> [S]egon dreitura
> cerca fols sa follatura,
> cortes cortez' aventura,
> e'il vilans ad la vilana;
> en tal loc fai sens fraitura
> on hom non garda mezura,
> so ditz la gens anciana.
>
> ([A]s it is right, / the fool seeks out his foolishness, / a man of the court his courtly adventure; / and let the peasant be with his peasant girl. / "Good sense suffers from disease / where men do not observe degrees": / that's what the ancients say.)[50]

She sees that she is not part of the proper courtly adventure he should pursue; he does not, however, and accuses her of all measure of rascality and fickleness, as though she were a lady who had not fulfilled her end of the courtly love bargain: "Toza, de vostra figura / non vi autra plus tafura / ni de son cor plus trefana" (Girl, I never saw another / more roguish in her face / or more false in her heart).[51] Still, whether or not the knight gets the message, the girl has indeed "won," for she gets the last word, a cryptic message most critics interpret as reinforcing the idea that the man is misdirecting his energies: "Don, lo cavecs vos ahura, / que tals bad' en la peintura / qu'autre n'espera la mana." (Master, that owl is making you a prophecy: / this one

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[49] Marcabru, "L'autrier," ll. 73-77, Goldin, Lyrics, 74, 75
[50] Marcabru, "L'autrier," ll. 78-84, Goldin, Lyrics, 77, 78.
[51] Marcabru, "L'autrier," ll. 85-87, Goldin, Lyrics, 77, 78.

stands gaping in front of a painting, / and that one waits for manna.)[52] Whether she is directing him to return to the court to worship the image of his lady and there wait for heavenly sustenance or making fun of his attempts to turn her into such an image, the girl speaks reason: she is not a suitable other for the knight if he wishes to construct a courtly identity for himself. When he aims his efforts at her, the mastery of demand by desire is evident in her response.

A look at the trouvère *pastourelle* suggests that it offers much the same commentary on the courtly identity as the troubadour *pastorela* does; however, there is some difference in the trouvère approach. As mentioned above, Goldin holds that troubadour poetry is structured by the perspectives of its audience, the result of which is the dialectical emergence of the courtly ideal among the dissonance of divergent viewpoints. Not so the trouvères. The difference, according to Goldin, is in the function of perspective:

> The troubadour played with audience perspectives; the trouvère, with verbal perspectives, with the points of view created by forms of speech, by metaphor, by grammar. The form of the French lyric is determined purely from within, never by some extra-verbal pattern such as the traceable effects of the attending audience.[53]

As a result, trouvère poetry contains more figures, and "the structure of their songs [is] independent of the effects of the audience."[54] Although originally performed within a court setting, the poems do not as obviously react to potential audience perspectives as troubadour poetry seems to.[55] This is perhaps the result of a general

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[52] Marcabru, "L'autrier," ll. 88-90, Goldin, Lyrics, 77, 78.

[53] Goldin, Lyrics, 452.

[54] Goldin, Lyrics, 447.

[55] Goldin, Lyrics, 448. Goldin explains that one indicator of this is the lack of words in trouvère lyrics that suggest the importance of immediate place. The troubadour Bernart de Ventadorn, for instance, used *sai* and *lai,* here and there,

trouvère effort "to remain intellectually accessible to almost any courtly audience," a reaction to the "complex and esoteric expression" of their predecessors who sometimes seemed to write "only for a small circle of the initiated."[56] Instead, the northern French poets choose to dramatize the inner life of the courtier without recalling the struggle of perspectives demonstrated within the dialectical patterning of the troubadours. Certainly the courtly ideal is still important--courtly love would have no existence without it--but the emphasis has shifted away from the troubadours' dueling audience-influenced points of view toward the vividness of the poet-lover's experience as he struggles to secure his ideal and his identity. The theory that is courtly love is no longer so new, and the overt exploration of its tenets perhaps no longer such an urgent task. What seem of more interest to the trouvères are the colorful ways in which the familiar courtly characters might be freshly vivified. The consequence of this is a poetry in which the society that the courtly situation was designed to serve is distanced from the actual lyric experience. Yet the conflict between demand and desire may still be detected within the literature, an indicator that the ideal was still the model that society advocated--and that individual desire unconsciously strove to subvert.

The *pastourelle* of Thibaut de Champagne (1201-1253), is outwardly similar to Marcabru's *pastorela*: a knight meets a beautiful shepherdess, attempts to seduce her, is refused and humiliated. But Thibaut's knight appears franker and more brutal than Marcabru's, and his punishment is more severe--all of which are vividly depicted, all

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frequently in his poetry. The trouvères employ no such verbal "performing gesture[s]" (467-68).

[56] Nelson, 259, 258. Amelia E. Van Vleck ("The Lyric Texts," Akehurst and Davis) observes that Peire d'Alvernhe "composed an enigmatic manifesto of *trobar clus* 'closed poetry'" (30); other practioners of such a style were Guillaume and Marcabru.

of which suggest the knight's desire has powerfully overthrown demand. Here again, the maid's voice mirrors the man, as he himself relates: after he greets her with "Bele, Deus vos dont bon jor!" ("Beautiful, God give you good day."), he adds, "Mon salu sanz demoree / me rendi et sanz targier." ("She gave me my greeting / back without hesitating.")[57] He does endeavor to set himself up as indispensable to her, attempting this through offers of gifts and flattery. By marking her as one beautiful of face and worthy of gifts, he does set her apart, to a degree idealizing her, and in this we see desire working upon demand once again, the courtly approach utilized for base reasons. Yet unlike Marcabru's knight, he sees no need to take his idealizing efforts further with a revisionist version of her lineage and references to her many courtly qualities. In a more direct fashion than his troubadour predecessor, he seeks completeness through sexual union with his other: after some demand-tinged preliminaries, unfiltered desire takes over. He bluntly tells her that he wants her and will reward her with an attractive item of clothing for her efforts,[58] to which she, a much tougher critic of her suitor than the troubadour shepherdess, offers scathingly:

> Tricheor
> sont mès trop il chevalier.
> Melz aim Perrin, mon bergier,
> que riche honme menteor.
>
> (Traitors / are what knights are, the lot of them. / I love Perrin, my own shepherd, / better than any rich and noble liar.)[59]

Just as Marcabru's shepherdess had, she reminds the knight that like should go with like; she too points out the danger of trusting the words of a nobleman, something

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[57] Thibaut de Champagne, "L'autrier par la matinee," ll. 10-12, Goldin, Lyrics, 474, 475. The standard edition is Axel Wallensköld's *Les Chansons de Thibaut de Champagne roi de Navarre* (Paris: E. Champion, 1925).

[58] Thibaut, "L'autrier," ll. 15-16, Goldin, Lyrics, 474, 475.

[59] Thibaut, "L'autrier," ll.17-20, Goldin, Lyrics, 474, 475.

also accomplished by Marcabru's "Beautiful." Yet the invitation to seduction the male speaker extends to the woman is significantly more direct and less playful in the later poem, and the trouvère maid's condemnation of her sparring partner is more vociferous, certainly less good-natured than that of her Provençal counterpart. The speech of Thibaut's shepherdess reflects a knight gone widely astray from the courtly ideal--and his infraction is presented in bolder terms than was that of his troubadour incarnation. In this case, desire does not simply speak through demand; it completely supersedes it, more so even than in Marcabru's starling poems, for at least in that situation the knight was clearly aware that he did wrong. Thibaut's knight appears out of touch with his infringement--something the lass must bring to his attention.

The knight's further dialogue with his would-be conquest proves that he is clearly mired in desire. In trying to change her earlier opinion of him and his peers as "traitors," he completely debases his knightly office: "Qui set donc avoir amie / ne servir a son talent / fors chevalier et tel gent?" ([W]ho knows how to have a little friend / and serve her as she likes / but a knight, one of that class?).[60] After casting doubt upon her shepherd-lover's affection for her, he adds once more, "Partez vos en a itant / et m'amez; je vous creant: / de moi avrez riche don" (Come on off to the side there / and make love with me. I promise you: / I'll give you something nice).[61] Swearing "par sainte Marie" (by Holy Mary)[62] and admonishing him, "Abessiez vostre reson!" (Keep your proposition),[63] she reaffirms her belief in the falsity of all knights to women, declaring them more treacherous than Ganelon,[64] the betrayer of Charlemagne's champion Roland and rest of the king's rearguard. The knight then

[60] Thibaut, "L'autrier," ll. 23-25, Goldin, Lyrics, 474, 475.
[61] Thibaut, "L'autrier," ll. 28-30, Goldin, Lyrics, 476, 477.
[62] Thibaut, "L'autrier," l. 31, Goldin, Lyrics, 476, 477.
[63] Thibaut, "L'autrier," l. 40, Goldin, Lyrics, 476, 477.
[64] Thibaut, "L'autrier," ll. 33-36, Goldin, Lyrics, 476, 477.

proceeds to act very much like the villain she has accused him of being, first using words to further his aim ("Mult li fis longue proiere, / mès n'i poi riens conquester" [I made a long speech full of prayer / but couldn't get anything there]),[65] and then resorting to physical coercion ("Lors la pris a acoler" [So then I tried to use a little force]).[66] He ceases his molestation only to avoid those who would respond to her cries of "Perrinet, trai, trai!" translated by Goldin as "Perrinet, help. He's raping me!" but literally meaning "[I'm] betrayed."[67] He is indeed a betrayer like Ganelon, just as the shepherdess had claimed, and a coward, too, for her last words confirm this. As he runs off she calls after him, her words dripping with irony: "Chevalier sont trop hardi!" (Noble knights are very brave).[68]

The identity constructed for Thibaut's knight in this poem shows him to be not only erring, foolish, and entirely uncourtly. Dominated and driven by desire, Thibaut's knight privileges it above all else (except his physical safety), determined as he is to have his pleasure--and the wholeness he apparently believes will follow--by violence if it won't be offered to him freely. As the knight's chosen other, the shepherdess is instrumental in his construction of self even if she never provides the consummation he longs for: apparently he is on the way to degradation before he speaks with her, and her verbal responses to him mirror and perhaps amplify these elements of his identity. And in the end, even this identity does not hold, for he breaks off pursuit of desire, not believing in it enough to fight for it. The knight's identification as other than *hardi* (as the girl means to imply) at the poem's end

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[65] Thibaut, "L'autrier," ll. 43-44, Goldin, Lyrics, 476, 477.

[66] Thibaut, "L'autrier," ll.45, 47, Goldin, Lyrics, 476, 477. Goldin notes that the line literally translates as "I started to embrace her, take her around the neck" (477 1n.).

[67] Goldin, Lyrics, 477, 2n.

[68] Thibaut, "L'autrier," l. 53, Goldin, Lyrics, 476, 477.

suggests that the way of society, of demand, is clearly the better way to selfhood. The poem's struggle, however, highlights the difficulty of complying with demand.

A poem by the trouvère Conon de Béthune (c. 1150-1220) that begins very much like the *pastourelle* but involves instead a knight and a lady also turns the *pastourelle* convention on its ear by presenting the lady as the poem's initial propositioner and the knight as the one who refuses. The stage is certainly set for a critique of courtly love, a recognition of the difficulties inherent in such a paradigm, yet the subject-other equation is modified somewhat; while the diminished state of the lady reflects the knight's diminished sense of self, it is his words that mark her lessened state. As he delineates each deficiency in the lady he has worshipped, as he chastises her, he in essence condemns himself: he has loved an unworthy ideal. Yet his difficulty is not so much a conflict between demand and desire--he seems to have adhered to the rules of courtly love admirably; instead, the problem is that the lady is imperfect rather than perfect, very human rather than divine--and bad-tempered and spiteful at that. The poem begins:

> L'autrier avint en chel autre pais
> c'uns chevaliers ot une dame amée.
> Tant com le dame fu en son bon pris.
>
> (The other day it happened in another land / there was a knight who loved a lady. / All the while she was at her best / she refused his love and said no.)[69]

Immediately, the courtly love situation seems wrong: the lady has refused for too long to favor the knight, and she even admits, "[M]ené vos ai par parole mains dis" (I

[69] Conon de Béthune, "L'autrier avint en chel autre pais," ll. 1-4, Goldin, Lyrics, 344, 345. The standard edition is *Conon Chansons*, ed. Axel Wallensköld (Helsingfors: Imprimore Centrale, 1891).

have led you along from day to day with talk).[70] When the lady suddenly agrees to bestow the long-requested favor on the knight, that which would signal a type of consummation[71]--and a realization of identity ("[O]re est l'amours conëue et mostrée; / d'ore en avant serai a vo devis" [(N)ow your love is proved, / from now on I shall do what you like])[72]--his response is almost predictable:

> [C]hertes mal sui baillis,
> ke n'ëustes piecha chesta pensée.
> Vostre clers vis, ki sanloit flours de lis,
> est si alés, dame, de mal en pis
> k'il m'est avis ke me soiés emblée.
> A tart avés, dame, chest conseil pris!
>
> ([I]t's my bad luck / you didn't decide this long ago. / Your bright face, that once looked like a lily, / has gone, lady, from bad to worse, so that now I feel I have been robbed of you. / Lady, you made up your mind too late.)[73]

With her beauty gone, her visage/image no longer holds potency, and she no longer has the power to effect identity in him, it would seem.

Still, the process continues with her reply to his criticisms of her beauty. Just how far she is from ideality becomes clear when she reneges on her earlier offer, claiming "[J]el dis por vous gaber" (I only said it to make fun of you),[74] declaring him incapable of loving one of her high renown,[75] and finally taunting, "Nenil, par Deu! ains vos prendroit envie / d'un bel varlet baisier et acoler" (No, by God, I think you'd

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[70] Conon, "L'autrier," l. 6, Goldin, Lyrics, 344, 345.

[71] As a rule, the favor the trouvères sought from their ladies was not as obviously sexual as that desired by the troubadours. Nelson notes that "the trouvère's longing remains vague" (258).

[72] Conon, "L'autrier," ll. 7-8, Goldin, Lyrics, 344, 345.

[73] Conon, "L'autrier," ll. 11-16, Goldin, Lyrics, 344, 345.

[74] Conon, "L'autrier," l. 19, Goldin, Lyrics, 344, 345.

[75] Conon, "L'autrier," l. 22, Goldin, Lyrics, 346, 347.

much prefer / to kiss and hug a pretty boy instead).[76] The balance of their exchange has him emphasizing the disintegration of her reputed greatness and her countering his attack by reminding him that her wealth and position still make her desirable.[77] He has the final word, however: "On n'aime pas dame por parenté, / mais cant ele est bele et cortoise et sage. / Vos en savrés par tens le verité!" (One doesn't love a lady for her family, / but when she is beautiful and courteous and wise. / It won't be long before you learn the truth).[78] Her speech shows her to be an improper other for him; it also justifies his rejection of her. If he is serious about constructing a courtly identity for himself, he will move on to another more suitable to the task. Yet the task of finding her and then successfully winning her according to the dictates he has embraced will not be an easy one.

Almost all of these rhetorical transfers, troubadour and trouvère alike, highlight less-than-ideal goings on within a societal construct premised upon both veneration of the paragon and denial of desire, leaving such a model vulnerable to deconstruction. When he who seeks to build a self through the model must do so by wrestling down repressed elements from his unconscious, he is likely to meet with frustration and failure, and when the paragon to whom he looks for wholeness must also be human, it is inevitable that she who occupies the pedestal must fall and he who worships it must be disappointed. The poetic exchanges between these two players only rarely, as in Peire's two poems, portray courtly love as a mutually affirming, sanctified power; in others, such as Marcabru's *pastorela*, courtly love is apparently affirmed while the individual knight is chastised. Yet the knight in Conon's dialogue has so long served an unworthy lady without any reward to speak of that a reader is led to question his

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[76] Conon, "L'autrier," ll. 23-24, Goldin, Lyrics, 346, 347.
[77] Conon, "L'autrier," ll. 25-40, Goldin, Lyrics, 346, 347.
[78] Conon, "L'autrier," ll. 46-48, Goldin, Lyrics, 346, 347.

judgment, and the wisdom of the whole courtly love enterprise. Thibaut's *pastourelle* suggests an even stronger critique of courtly love: the knight has so distanced himself from the tenets of courtly love that he not only misdirects his affections but he behaves outrageously and his courtly class is roundly denounced, apparently with justice. Marcabru's starling poems, though, may present courtly love at its most debased: the lover knowingly sacrifices his courtly identity--and the ideals of his society--for a few moments of sensual pleasure with a woman who can only be described as an anti-paragon. She has fallen with a resounding thud and, rather than be disappointed, her lover has joined her at the foot of the pedestal, enveloped in desire.

The identity-construction efforts within the majority of these lyrics demonstrate the principle of *méconaissance*, identity as a misrecognition and misconstruction of the self in and through an other who can never truly complete. Peire's two lovers apparently fulfill each other's identity needs perfectly, at least at the moment of the lyric experience; however, it is unknown whether this fulfillment will extend past the brief ecstatic event portrayed in the lyrics. In the identity-construction efforts of the other lyric couples studied, the center of the paradigm clearly does not hold. This suggests that the troubadour and trouvère phenomenon of courtly love is firmly rooted in Lacan's Imaginary, that "specular domain of images, reflections, simulacra"[79]; so too is the more bourgeois love tradition represented in Middle English lyrics.[80]

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[79] Maud Ellmann, "Introduction," Psychoanalytic Literary Criticism, ed. Ellmann (London: Longman, 1994) 18.

[80] The Middle English lyric seems to share characteristic with genres Charles Muscatine identifies as part of the "bourgeois tradition" in his Chaucer and the French Tradition: A Study in Style and Meaning (Berkeley and Los Angeles: U of California P, 1957). Muscatine calls the bourgeois tradition "that cluster of genres, some of

Edmund Reiss has observed that "few Middle English lyrics are courtly";[81] even fewer of the courtly poems involve rhetorical exchanges between male and female speakers. Dialogues between men and women occur most prominently in the largely anonymous lyrics that mix courtly and common elements, and may be placed within the tradition Charles Muscatine labels "bourgeois." The bourgeois tradition found its most common expression in the fabliau, a brief comic tale, usually in verse, which was peopled with a variety of folk interesting to a prosperous, middle-class readership--including peasants, businessmen, clerks, "miscellaneous rascals of all kinds," and even the occasional knight and lady[82] seemingly transplanted from courtly literature. Yet "in contrast to the courtly tradition, the bourgeois tradition has a remarkable preoccupation with the animal facts of life."[83] Middle English dialogue lyrics often share this preoccupation. The identity sought by most male participants in these dialogues is not the courtly one determined by adherence to a rigid, societally-produced ethical code; instead, the emphasis seems to be simply upon winning the maid--once he has her he has what he wants. She does not represent an ideal in the sense that the courtly lady does, nor is she the means to a higher, ethically superior self. Yet in agreeing to become her male wooer's intimate, usually in a sexual way, the woman of the Middle English lyric indeed supplies him with what he apparently needs for confirmation of his identity and a positioning within a society that views woman's receptiveness as an end in itself.

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them stemming in form and theme from the Orient and from classical antiquity, which seems, appearing freshly in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, to attend to the emergence of the new middle class" (58).

[81] Edmund Reiss, "Introduction," The Art of the Middle English Lyric: Essays in Criticism (Athens, Ga.: U of Georgia P, 1972) ix.

[82] Muscatine, 61.

[83] Muscatine, 59.

That is not to say that no courtly lyrics exist in which the woman's ability to transform or improve her lover is implied. Certainly a number a lyrics present lovers who suffer under the discipline of courtly love, awaiting some sign of favor from their lady, unrequited yet determined to endure. Geoffrey Chaucer's narrator offers in "The Complaint Unto Pity," "For wel I wot (know) although I wake or wynke (sleep), / Ye rekke (care) not whether I flete (float) or synke," followed by, "But natheles (nevertheless) yet my trouthe (fidelity) I shal sustene / Unto my deth, and that shal wel be sene."[84] Another bereft lover reassures himself of his effort's value by musing, "Yet throughe governance (self-control) groweth grace."[85] Yet the lyrics in which female characters speak or in which they speak to male characters seem to support a different ethic altogether: the one advanced in the male-voiced "We ben chapmen light of fote," and the female-voiced "betrayed maiden" lyrics. "We ben chapmen light of fote" develops the extended analogy of the sexually predatory male to the

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[84] Geoffrey Chaucer, "The Complaint Unto Pity," ll. 109-12, The Riverside Chaucer, ed. Larry D. Benson (Boston: Houghton, 1987) 641.

[85] "Jesu, that is most of might," l. 40, Middle English Lyrics, eds. Maxwell S. Luria and Richard L. Hoffman (New York: Norton, 1974) 41. Subsequent translations and glosses are by Luria and Hoffman unless otherwise noted. I have used the Luria and Hoffman Norton Critical Edition of the lyrics (and R. T. Davies's lyric collection, see below, for poems not included in Luria and Hoffman) for the convenience of the glosses and translations. I will supply standard edition references for the poems of Henryson and Chaucer and for the Harley Lyrics. Principal collections of English lyrics (excepting Davies) include Carleton Brown's English Lyrics of the Thirteenth Century (Oxford: Clarendon, 1932), Religious Lyrics of the Fifteenth Century (Oxford: Clarendon, 1939), and, with G. V. Smithers, Religious Lyrics of the Fourteenth Century, 2nd ed. [corr.] (Oxford: Clarendon, 1957); R. H. Robbins's' Secular Lyrics of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1955), Historical Poems of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries (New York: Columbia UP, 1959), and Early English Christmas Carols (New York: Columbia UP, 1961); R. L. Greene's The Early English Carols (Oxford: Clarendon, 1935); and R. H. Person's Cambridge Middle English Lyrics (Seattle: U of Washington P, 1953).

traveling salesman, offering his "wares"--not the usual peddler fare of flashy apparel and accessories--to interested maidens. Rather than "[p]urses, perles, silver pinnes" he offers "a pocket for the nones (nonce), / Therein ben tweyne (two) precious stones."[86] The speaker concludes the poem with these stanzas:

> I have a jelif of Godes sonde--°
> Withouten fyt° it can stonde;
> It can smiten° and hath non honde;°
> Ryd° yourself what it may be.
>
> I have a powder for to selle,
> What it is I can not telle;
> It maket° maidenes wombes to swell:
> Thereof I have a quantitee.[87]
> *I have a jelly sent from God*
> *feet*
> *smite / hand*
> *guess*
> *makes*

His identity depends upon two things: what he has to offer a woman, and how she reacts to his offer[88]. It would seem that her reaction to him is usually what he desires, as the many "betrayed maiden" lyrics attest to. The scenario in these poems is usually similar; the man, sometimes identified as a clerk, sweet-talks his way into the woman's heart and bed. In a typical line, the maid of "A, dere God, what am I fayn," explains her capitulation: "To warne (refuse) his will had I no mayn (strength)."[89] As a result, "now will not my girdil met (meet)"[90]; he has established himself as an adherent of this masculine ethic by using her as receptacle for and evidence of his

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[86] "We be chapmen light of fote," ll. 4, 7-8, Luria and Hoffman, 81.

[87] "We ben," ll. 11-18, Luria and Hoffman, 81.

[88] For similar lyric expressions see lyrics nos. 77-78 in Luria and Hoffman, pp. 77-78.

[89] "A, dere God, what am I fayn," l. 10, Luria and Hoffman, 82.

[90] "A, dere God," l. 13, Luria and Hoffman, 82.

potency.[91] And just as the bourgeois tradition adapts certain courtly conventions to its particular style, tone and aim,[92] so does the bourgeois lyric present a unique version of the demand-desire conflict. What is the situation in the Provençal and French exchanges between shepherdess and knight, is the situation in almost all Middle English lyrics; desire permeates the voicings of the male character while the woman speaks what would qualify as society's reason. Yet the female character, in recalling the man to the demand that should, in the end, be victorious if the paradigm is to have any power to bestow identity, is shown in the English lyric to be mouthing sentiments that have no hold over her partner in dialogue. It would seem that in the world of the English lyric, it is primarily lip service that is paid to demand while desire reigns, relatively unchecked.

A comparison of an English *pastourelle* to its Provençal and French predecessors shows this desire-driven ethic more obviously at work in the later poem. Neither the author of the anonymous Middle English "In a frith as I con fare fremede" nor the poem's wooer is concerned with constructing identity by conforming to an aristocratic ideal. In fact, the man seems to have little need to defend his status as knight as the lover did in Thibaut's trouvère *pastourelle*, or attempt to elevate the shepherdess to courtly stature, as Marcabru's lover did, because he is not from a noticeably different social class than is his maid; nor is social status much of an issue at all in the lyric. At issue is the general trustworthiness of men and, specifically,

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[91] For other examples of the betrayed maiden subgenre see nos. 84-88 in Luria and Hoffman, pp. 82-88.

[92] Muscatine discusses this adaptation (67-71); he also writes that "both styles overflow the boundaries of genre" (66), noting that Joseph Bédier, in his standard work Les Fabliaux, 5th ed. (Paris: Champion, 1925) 383-84; 376-85, discusses both the "contamination of the courtly lyric by the fabliaux spirit" and the barrier-crossing practice of aristocratic poets writing fabliaux while bourgeoise poets composed courtly works (66).

whether the woman involved can trust the verbalizations of her male counterpart. The poem suggests that the answer to her question is "no"; and, more perplexing for her, his duplicity will go unchecked: unlike Thibaut and Marcabru, the English poet does not punish the man for failure to aspire to a higher ideal. His behavior is apparently status quo, something the woman laments but otherwise accepts, powerless as she is to fight or change it.

Her only power seems to come in selecting the man to whom she provides her services. The male speaker in the English lyric clearly desires the woman to supply him with a sense of wholeness, and because of this the woman is placed in something of a position of power, just as were the women of the troubadour and trouvère lyric. Yet the situation of those women is relatively independent in comparison to the woman of the English lyric. The aristocratic women could decide to withhold their favor from any solicitor--the implication for most was that they had suitors enough waiting in the wings. Even the shepherdesses, while their selection of male companions was somewhat more limited, had license to turn away the offending knights: the French girl is pledged to loyal shepherd Perrin, while the Provençal maiden implies that a peasant girl might be content with a peasant boy. Yet the English maid has no saving male presence to whom she can rightly turn, no one more in step with the rules of demand--who might use her more generously, as something more than a temporary fix for desire. More so than in the Provençal and French literatures, male-female exchanges in the English lyric emphasize that woman is at the mercy of man. Unprotected by restraining demand, she has little autonomy and no identity to speak of outside of him. Existing primarily to be man's other within a milieu dominated by masculine desire, woman must of necessity be linked to a man, even though no male in her domain is trustworthy.

If "In a frith" is less concerned with courtly identity than its antecedent poems, it does begin, however, in the conventional *pastourelle* manner that recalls the courtly tradition--the male narrator relates that, walking in an unfamiliar wood, he came across a beautiful young woman who "glistnede ase gold when it glemede," and then he adds "Nes ner gome so gladly on gere" (There was never a person so beautiful in clothes).[93] The speaker's offer to provide her with beautiful garments to wear ("Comeliche I wol thee now clethe")[94] and his assertion that she is worthy of courtesy ("Of menkse thou were wurthe, by my might")[95] do recall the knight on the make; as Daniel Ransom has noted, the suitor behaves very similarly to the knight in Marcabru's *pastorela* in his "concern for the young woman's inadequate protection against the cold, . . .(pretended) interest in her lineage, and . . .barter[ing] for her favors."[96] Also reminiscent of the troubadour and trouvère traditions are the girl's desire to remain chaste in her thin clothing rather than sinful in fine attire[97] and the man's attempt to present himself favorably, even making himself indispensable to the girl so that she will give him what he wants, claiming, "I take an hond to holde that I hore (I promise to be faithful until I grow gray) / Of (with regard to) all that I thee have bihight (promised)."[98] Sensing her resistance he continues in a familiar vein:

> Why is thee loth to leven on my lore°
> Lengore then my love were on thee light?°

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[93] "In a frith," ll. 3-4, Luria and Hoffman, 27.

[94] "In a frith as I con fare fremede," l. 12, Luria and Hoffman, 27. The standard edition for this and other Harley lyrics is G. L. Brook's The Harley Lyrics: The Middle English Lyrics of MS Harley 2253, 4th ed. (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1968).

[95] "In a frith," l. 22, Luria and Hoffman, 27.

[96] Daniel J. Ransom, Poets at Play: Irony and Parody in the Harley Lyrics (Norman, OK: Pilgrim, 1985) 85.

[97] "In a frith," ll. 15-16, Luria and Hoffman, 27.

[98] "In a frith," ll. 23-24, Luria and Hoffman, 28.

Another mighte yerne° thee so yore°
That nolde° thee noght rede° so right.[99]
Why are you reluctant to believe my advice?
settled
entreat / long
would (not) / advise

Familiar, too, is the maid's mirroring back to him the truth of his advice to her; she offers that she would "spacliche reowe (quickly rue)" such counsel, since she could expect him to take a new lover "withinne nye naght (nine nights)," leaving her betrayed and outcast by both family and community, a pathetic figure with no recourse but to beg him to be true to her.[100] Just as were her shepherdess precursors, she is clearly aware of the arguments of demand. While the peasant women reminded their knights that they transgressed against aristocratic codes of conduct both in pursuing a woman outside their social sphere and in attempting to acquire her through deceit, the English maid makes clear that her wooer violates more middle-class restrictions against extramarital male-female fraternization, an infraction that would lead to familial and social ostracism. All the women point out that their partners' methods tear down rather than reinforce the paradigms of which they should be a part, and from which they should take their identities.

Yet, curiously, the English maid emphasizes that it is she who will be excluded from the paradigm rather than he--"icaired (separated)" she says, "from all that I kneowe."[101] Ignoring the requirements of demand will cause him no apparent ill effects; it is implied that he is able to move unfettered from one lover to another without experiencing any sort of sanction or correction. The inequity of this situation is further delineated in their continued discussion. For what follows her apparent rebuff of him is a remarkable reversal in which the girl, although she's convinced

[99] "In a frith," ll. 25-28, Luria and Hoffman, 28.
[100] "In a frith," ll. 29-36, Luria and Hoffman, 28.
[101] "In a frith," l. 27, Luria and Hoffman, 28.

herself that the wooer is not likely to have honorable intentions toward her, chooses to take her chances with him rather than run the risk of landing in an odious and abusive marriage--apparently her only other option. If her identity depends upon linkage to man,

> Betere is taken comeliche I' clothe,
> In armes to cusse° and to cluppe°,
> Then a wrecche iwedded so wrothe°
> Thagh he me slowe, ne might I him asluppe.[102]
> *It is better to take a person comely in clothes*
> *kiss / embrace*
> *badly*
> *(That) though he beat me, I might not escape him.*

In the end she agrees to go with her solicitor, choosing this as the more favorable option: "The best red (advice) that I con (know) to us bothe: / That thou me take and I thee toward (to you) huppe (go)."[103] Were it not for the final three lines of the poem it might be possible to interpret her turnaround as John Conlee interprets similar actions by the English *pastourelle* maid in general--"The implication of her surprising *volte face* seems to be that her earlier protestations had been simply for the sake of appearances."[104] The poem's final lines, however, seem to register the serious complaint of one making the best of a bad situation. Lamenting the powerless state of those of her gender and their special vulnerability regarding men, she exclaims, "Nes (was [not]) I never wicche (witch) ne wile (wizard); / Ich am a maide, that me ofthunche (displeases); / Leuf me were gome boute gile (Dear to me would be a man without guile)."[105] Perhaps her displeasure at being a maid stems not from any resentment of sexual inexperience but instead from her virtually defenseless position

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[102] "In a frith," ll. 37-40, Luria and Hoffman, 28.

[103] "In a frith," ll. 41-42, Luria and Hoffman, 28.

[104] John W. Conlee, "Introduction," Middle English Debate Poetry: A Critical Anthology, ed. Conlee, (East Lansing, MI: Colleagues, 1991) xxxv.

[105] "In a frith," ll. 46-48, Luria and Hoffman, 28.

in a world dominated by masculine desire, desire which she can for a time resist by clinging to demand, but which in the end must win out.

A poem in the night parting subgenre also illustrates desire's sovereignty over demand. As with "In a frith," the female speaker of "My deth I love my lif ich hate" is seemingly persuaded by her male counterpart to engage in love-activity, thus securing his identity. She, too, gives voice to demand, while he pursues his desire. The situation also contains a resonances of the courtly love tradition in the male lover's overly effusive rhetoric and apparent valuing of her over all else, even his life. Yet his putting her up on a pedestal seems more a seduction technique than an effort to comply with a code demanding that he venerate her. In the end, the male lover, a clerk, manages to persuade his lady-love, a woman of apparently higher social status than he, to invest in him so that he might confirm his own position in the male-dominated sphere which determines their identities. He presents himself as other to her in order that she may be other to him. Yet his task is not achieved without effort; the lady's verbalization of demand is more prolonged than in the previous lyric, and, as it becomes clear, demand would forbid secret dalliances, especially those between a woman and a man who fails to meet with her family's approval. His initial cry of "[m]y deth I love my lif ich (I) hate, / For a levedy (lady) shene (beautiful)"[106] is stongly rebuffed by her "Do wey (get away), thou clerk, thou art a fol! / With thee bidde (wish) I noght chide (to wrangle)." She continues:

> Shalt thou never live that day
> My love that thou shalt bide.°
> If thou in my boure° art take,°
> Shame thee may betide;°
> Thee is bettere on fote gon

[106] "My deth I love, my lif ich hate," ll. 1-2, Luria and Hoffman, 34. The standard edition for this Harley lyric is Brook's The Harley Lyrics (see above, n. 81).

Then wicked hors to ride.[107]
obtain
room / caught
befall

Giving further voice to the demand that forbids their coupling--it would be shameful for him to be caught in her chamber and foolish for her to grant such an indiscreet request--and perhaps teasing him through the implication that she, herself, is the "wicked horse" he would be better off not riding, [108] she initially resists the onslaught of his desire, thereby denying him other status in her life, and herself in his.

He persists, however, beseeching her: "Thou rewe (have pity) on me, thy man!" and then continuing,

If I deye for thy love,
It is thee mikel° sham;°
Thou lete° me live and be thy lef°
And thou my swete lemman.[109]
great / shame
let / love

Here he acts as the troubadour and trouvère knights had in their exchanges with shepherdesses, attempting to ingratiate himself into the good graces of his lady by laying his very existence at her feet. His persistence begins to pay off, it would seem, as she responds to his entreaties in an increasingly charitable fashion, though still

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[107] "My deth," ll. 17-24, Luria and Hoffman, 34.

[108] Ransom has argued in Poets at Play, 86-87, that the exchange between the two may be read as "[a] moot debate from the start," a "coquettish game" on the part of the lady whose "verbal fencing" is easily parried by the clerk. Yet if the lady intends from the start to be convinced by her lover's argument, why need she bother with the game at all? It would seem that the "game" has some significance beyond play. From a Lacanian perspective, the game charts demand's resistance and seemingly inevitable capitulation to desire. I would also argue that it is the lady's only real means of asserting herself: she tests the lover's conviction and his willingness to show himself as other to her. In fulfilling this requirement he wins his game, convincing her to be other to him.

[109] "My deth," ll. 26, 28-32, Luria and Hoffman, 34.

with the caution of demand. She offers that her hushing of his pleas is for fear of his safety: if he is discovered in her bedroom, her relatives would show no mercy. "The deth so thou maght (may, must) winne!"[110] she tells him. He, observing her warning of imminent death and perhaps sensing a change in her mood toward him, furthers desire's agenda by reminding her of their former intimate exchanges ("We custe [kissed] us fifty sithe [times]."). [111] To this she admits that they had in the past served as other to each other, and in a way that seemed satisfactory to both. She "lovede a clerk all paramours (as a lover)" and in fact "lovede him betere then [her] lif"; he was not only "full trewe" in his love but was, as she confesses, "nout blith never a day / Bote (unless) he me sone (quickly) seye (might see). . . ." [112] Claiming that he has suffered "[w]oundes fele (very) sore," he concludes, "Swete lady, thou rewe of me; / Now may I no more!"[113]

His tactics are successful; her final speech reveals that she has become the perfect reciprocal other: she has accepted him, rather than her family or social propriety, as central to her identity and consequently she will do his bidding, completing the identity that requires her to give herself to him. Desire has vanquished demand. The poem ends with her words:

> Shalt thou never for my love
> Woundes thole° grille;°
> Fader, moder, and all my kun
> Ne shall me holde so stille°
> That I nam thin and thou art min,
> To don all thy wille.[114]
> *suffer / terrible*

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[110] "My deth," ll. 37-40, Luria and Hoffman, 34.
[111] "My deth," l. 46, Luria and Hoffman, 35.
[112] "My deth," ll. 51-55, Luria and Hoffman, 35.
[113] "My deth," ll. 59-64, Luria and Hoffman, 35.
[114] "My deth," ll. 67-72, Luria and Hoffman, 35.

firmly

His identity affirmed by her reaffirmation of commitment to him, he has proved himself a worthy participant in the masculine ethic, which bestows identity through the mediation of woman.

Although the lovers in the previous lyric seem to have come to an equitable arrangement, it is uncertain how long their satisfaction will last. In a system that privileges masculine desire, the woman might easily end up another betrayed maiden, her lover another peripatetic salesman-type who plants his seed and moves on. The female speaker of the bawdy lyric "I pray you cum kiss me" seems well aware of the dangers of such an entanglement, although in the end, even she relents and allows her paramour to kiss her, with the understanding that he press her to go no further. His remarks throughout the poem, however, suggest that his desire probably will not be satiated by a kiss: and, given the usual slant of lyrics of this nature, it is likely that she is aware of his intentions. Despite the poem's apparent lack of serious intent, it nevertheless demonstrates a flourishing masculine ethic: the male speaker seeks to establish an identity through the female speaker, and she eventually complies, apparently aware that, in the end, her continued existence requires that she link herself to a man. Like the maid of "my deth," however, she initially resists her lover's overtures, exercising the little choice she has in the matter. And although demand has not been entirely conquered at the poem's end, it seems likely that desire will eventually prevail.

The male lover in "I pray you" manages to make inroads with his potential lover by responding to her initial refusal to kiss him with "Iwis (certainly) swet hart, if that ye / Had asked a greter thing of me, / So onkind to you I wold not have be

(been)[.]"[115] Here he attempts to manipulate her, presenting himself as going beyond anything she might do for him: he is, in sum, too good to pass up. Continuing with his manipulative tactics, he proclaims complete faith in her "kind"-ness in love, taking her words of refusal as nothing but "wind"; yet as the mouthpiece of demand, she assures him that he should indeed take her words "at the worst," for she will most definitely not let him kiss her.[116] He then tries an earthier approach, asking to kiss her "carchos (carcass's) nocke (cleft in buttocks),"[117] and when she again rejects him he reverts to a more genteel and less anatomically specific request:

> I pray you, com and kiss me,
> My little pretty Mopse,
> And if that ye will not kiss me,
> I pray you, let me kiss you."[118]

Apparently worn down by the barrage of his requests, she does agree to a kiss, provided that he "will do nothing but likke. . . ." Still, her capitulation is conditional, and she insists: "But, and (if) ye begin for on me to pricke, / Iwis, ye shall not kiss me."[119] Her compromise, her willingness to be kissed with the stipulation that he not escalate the sexual stakes, inspires him to label her "kind," and he vows ever to be open with her, always her man, and, he tells her, "[a]t all times redy to kiss you."[120]

She has come round to behavior that he regards as "kind," not only with the sense of "sympathetic" but also that of "natural"--that which complies with his desire and overrules the restrictions of demand; and the natural consequence of his always being around ready to kiss her may be that he'll get access to those other parts of her

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[115] "I pray you, cum kiss me," ll. 8-10, Luria and Hoffman, 79.
[116] "I pray you," ll.12, 14, 17, Luria and Hoffman, 79.
[117] "I pray you," l. 22, Luria and Hoffman, 79.
[118] "I pray you," ll. 36-39, Luria and Hoffman, 79.
[119] "I pray you," ll. 41-43, Luria and Hoffman, 79.
[120] "I pray you," ll. 44-47, Luria and Hoffman, 79.

anatomy that were part of his earlier request. She has agreed to be other to his endeavor; in doing so, she accepts him as other to her. To do so, she must compromise demand in the interests of desire, a phenomenon illustrated in all of the above Middle English lyrics. Although it seems that at least in theory the maid might refuse involvement with her male wooer, all three lyrics suggest why she should not: she requires attachment to man for identity. What Susan Crane has observed of women in medieval romance--"[T]here is no vocabulary of refusal in this generic context"[121]--seems to be true of the woman who is other within the Middle English masculine ethic. The man's participation in such an ethic is determined by his acquisition of woman, and by his registering of his identity through and within her. And when the male lover does indeed follow the rules of this economy of masculinity--he both seizes the opportunity when presented and consequently presents himself as other to her--the lady's acquiescence is assured.

Something of the currency and power of this paradigm is evidenced in a poem that parodies it. "Robene sat on a gud grene hill," a broadly comic late Middle-Scots dialogue poem by Robert Henryson (?1424-?1506), presents the plight of a foolish shepherd so out of sync with the masculine ethic that his desire for quality time with his sheep initially takes precedence over a tumble with a ready country girl. The poem shows a world turned upside down: not only is the woman the aggressor, the one who seems driven by desire, while the man initially complies with what would count as demand, but once the situation reverts to what it should be--boy pursuing girl--the woman is allowed to refuse his advances. The woman, much more knowledgeable than the man in the ways of wooing--and of her role within the

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[121] Susan Crane, Gender and Romance in Chaucer's Canterbury Tales (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1994) 65.

masculine ethic--knows that a man who fails to seize the moment when it is upon him has no place within such an endeavor, and is no suitable other for her. The silliness of the poetic situation does not negate the influence of the paradigm the poem seems to lampoon. It seems, rather, to confirm the paradigm's importance, suggesting that Henryson found it popular and puffed up enough to merit puncturing.

Robene and Makyne, the protagonists of Henryson's completely rustic pastourelle--no aristocrats even suggested--are the ripe ingredients in the poet's puncturing formula. Makyne begins her pursuit of Robene[122] sounding very much like some of the male lovers in the lyrics studied above, claiming first that "love" motivates her to seek him: she has loved him both openly and in secret for (all of) two or three years, and will surely die unless he returns her love. [123] Her approach is relatively reserved, even courtly; she insists, in fact, that he reciprocate her affection in secret, suggesting that, at least at first, a measure of discretion attends to her request. Yet Makyne's restraint does not last long. Robene, clearly uneducated in the type of interpersonal transaction she advocates (he proclaims, "[Q]uhat is lufe, or to be lude [loved]?"), despite being drawn toward it, ("Fane [gladly][124] wald [would] I

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[122] It might at first be possible to label Robene and Makyne's situation as parallel situation to that of the courtly couple of Conon de Bethune's trouvère poem: in both cases, the woman initiates the seduction of the man, who then rebuffs her. Unlike Conon's knight, however, Robene cannot be applauded for his resistance. While Conon's lover must be discriminating in his choice of a paramour--she must, after all, measure up to the courtly ideal if his identity as courtier is to be properly confirmed--Robene's lady must only be alive and willing to meet his criteria for other. His rejection of Makyne puts him outside of the masculine ethic, which proves a punishing and humiliating experience.

[123] Robert Henryson, "Robene sat on a gud grene hill," ll. 4-8, Luria and Hoffman, 73. Glosses and translations by Luria and Hoffman for this poem. The standard edition of Henryson is H. Harvey Wood's The Poems and Fables of Robert Henryson, Schoolmaster of Dunfermline, 2nd ed. (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1958).

[124] My gloss.

leir [learn] that law"),[125] nevertheless rejects Makyne's next offer: both of her "hairt all haill (whole) / Eik and (and also) [her] madinheid."[126] Ever the diligent shepherd, he worries that his sheep may "gang besyd" (go astray), while the lovers take their pleasure with each other. [127] Despite her best attempts to detain him, he finally departs from her with "Makyne, sum uthir man begyle, / For hamewart I will fair."[128] Robene's choice of his sheep over Makyne shows him to be a slave of duty, of demand, rather than a practitioner of the masculine ethic, for being the latter would require him to take advantage of the sexual opportunities open to him.

Were he less of a fool he would furthermore recognize that he is one upon whom all female identity rests. Makyne has attempted to help him toward fulfilling this purpose, first of all, trying to make him over into a courtly wooer. He should, she tells him,

> Be heynd,° courtas and fair of feir,°
> Wyse, hardy° and fre;°
> So that no denger° do the° deir,°
> Quhat dule° in dern° thow dre,°
> Preis the with the pane at all poweir°--
> Be patient and previe.°[129]
> *gentle / demeanor*
> *courageous / generous*
> *disdain / you / hurt*
> *sorrow / secret / endure*
> *Take pains to strive with all your strength*
> *secretive*

When her instruction fails to enact any change in him, she tries to entice him toward his proper role with the more direct approach, offering him, as mentioned above, all

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[125] Henryson, ll. 15-16, Luria and Hoffman, 74.
[126] Henryson, ll. 35-36, Luria and Hoffman, 74.
[127] Henryson, ll. 42-44, Luria and Hoffman, 74.
[128] Henryson, ll. 63-64, Luria and Hoffman, 75.
[129] Henryson, ll. 19-24, Luria and Hoffman, 74.

her love and her virginity,[130] confirming his importance to her continued existence with "I dern with the bot gif I daill (Unless I have intercourse with you in secret), / Dowtles I am bot deid."[131] Her quest for wholeness fueled by desire, Makyne seems aware that achievement of such wholeness depends upon male use of her, and that Robene's disinterest puts her in "sic (such) a styll (plight)."[132]

Yet it is this disinterest that grants her a momentary reprieve from her efforts as well. Because of Robene's initial decision to take no lover ("Ga lufe, Makyne, quhairever [wherever] thow list [please], / For lemman (lover) I lue (love) none."[133]), his later inclining toward Makyne merits him nothing. In rebuffing his declaration, "For all my luve it sal (shall) be thyne, / Withowttin depairting (dividing),"[134] she reminds him that he should know better:

> Robene, thow hes° hard° soung° and say°
> In gestis° and storeis auld,°
> The man that will nocht quhen he may
> Sall haif nocht° quhen he wald.[135]
> *have / heard / sung / said*
> *tales / old*
> *nought*

Still, he seems to have finally caught on to the fact that he needs her to accept him sexually in order to function within the power paradigm controlling his world. Belatedly adopting some of the knightly manner that Makyne had tried to teach him, Robene first tries to convince her that the lovely night and cooperative clime provide them the perfect opportunity and setting for their love, preserving her reputation from

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[130] Henryson, ll. 35-36, Luria and Hoffman, 74.
[131] Henryson, ll. 39-40, Luria and Hoffman, 74.
[132] Henryson, l. 57, Luria and Hoffman, 74.
[133] Henryson, ll. 55-56, Luria and Hoffman, 74.
[134] Henryson, ll. 83-84, Luria and Hoffman, 75.
[135] Henryson, ll. 89-92, Luria and Hoffman, 75.

ruinous scandalmongers.[136] He later tells her she is the "howp (hope) of all [his] heill (health),"[137] and swears eternal loyalty to her, "[n]evir to faill--as utheris feill."[138] But Makyne refuses him to the end, telling him, "Robene, that warld (world) is all away," never to be recaptured. [139] She concludes decisively, "Robene, with the I will nocht deill (have intercourse); / Adew! For thus we mett."[140] The poem ends with Makyne laughing as she makes her way home and with Robene in mourning, left alone with his flock.[141] Having failed to seize the opportunity when it first presented itself, he has failed in his second attempt at identity construction and is instead left with the identity he thoughtlessly selected first. His failure to adhere to the rules of the game has won Makyne the right to refuse him, a luxury seemingly not available to the maids of "In a frith," "My deth," and "I pray you," or to the speakers in the betrayed maiden lyrics. Muriel Whitaker notes, "In the context of medieval satire, clever manipulation" that furthers the requisite humiliation of a foolish man "can endow a woman with sovereign power."[142] In the universe of the poem, Robene is most certainly foolish and Makyne's refusal to couple with him does indeed provide the comeuppance he so deserves for his foolishness. Although the paradigm stipulates that Makyne will eventually need to seek out another man to fulfill her needs, she need not take Robene; his slip-up has apparently granted her a momentary measure of autonomy rarely experienced by other female speakers in the English lyric.

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[136] Henryson, ll. 97-104, Luria and Hoffman, 75.
[137] Henryson, l. 113, Luria and Hoffman, 76.
[138] Henryson, l. 117, Luria and Hoffman, 76.
[139] Henryson, ll. 105-6, Luria and Hoffman, 76.
[140] Henryson, ll. 119-20, Luria and Hoffman, 76.
[141] Henryson, ll. 121-28, Luria and Hoffman, 76.
[142] Murial Whitaker, "Introduction: Roles of Women in Middle English Literature," Sovereign Lady: Essays on Women in Middle English Literature (New York: Garland, 1995) xiii.

"Robene" reveals in no uncertain terms the underbelly of the "love" experienced between male and female characters, love that should unite them in wholeness but instead promotes duplicity and rancor. And to Henryson, courtly love is nothing but window dressing for desire, a mere weapon in the arsenal of seduction. Love in general is also something of a dirty, humiliating business that renders all of its participants absurd--Makyne initially in her transparent and desperate attempts to win Robene, and Robene throughout, with his initial preference of sheeply (!) company over womanly, and finally, in his laughing rejection by Makyne, a thing almost unthinkable. Yet for all its apparent criticism of love-making tactics, the poem does not censure desire in the direct way that the troubadour and trouvère poems do--characters are not punished or humiliated for abandoning demand. Henryson and the Middle English poets do suggest that forging one's identity within a universe dominated by desire is not a pleasant thing, certainly not for the women, but not always, at least in Robene's case, for the men, either. Adhering to demand does not seem to provide a better alternative for either the male or the female characters; demand seems weak and unattractive in many cases: for the maid of "In a frith" it would mean resisting the knight and marrying someone she seems certain would abuse her; for the lover of the clerk, it would mean cutting off her liaison and allowing her family to decide her future; for Mopse, it would mean rejecting her wooer and waiting in the hopes that someone willing to set himself up as other to her will come along. And Makyne has made it clear that listening to demand is not really an option for her; it can offer her nothing in the way of preserving her existence: desire is all. Demand holds few of the rewards that it did in the earlier tradition: spiritual improvement, enlightenment, confirmation of worth and membership within an elite fraternity. In the medieval English lyric, desire offers the surer chance at

identity, but, as the above lyrics show, taking that chance does not ensure satisfaction. Each partner is generally drawn to the other in self-serving and largely desperate attempts to achieve wholeness, and such a situation rarely makes for stability and harmony between its participants.

Lyrics in which the Virgin Mary participates propose a different answer to the problem of identity formation. Far from being the adversary of man, Mary is his perfect advocate. The identity attributed to her in the Middle Ages was multi-faceted, but she was perhaps most venerated by humankind for her role as humanity's advocate to Christ, her son. As Marina Warner explains:

> The theology of the Virgin's intercession maintains very strictly that the Virgin does not have the power to grant any boon herself, but only intercedes with her son, who as God is the only source of salvation. But the powers of mediation attributed to her throughout Christianity are considered sovereign: the son can refuse his mother nothing.

And because "[a]ll men are her children through Christ her son, who gave her to them from the Cross[,] so she lavishes a mother's love and pity on all her brood."[143] Humankind is Mary's special project; for this reason Chaucer may write:

> Soth is that God ne granteth no pitee
> Withoute thee; for God of his goodnesse
> Foryiveth noon, but it like unto thee.
> He hath thee maked vicaire and maistresse
> of al this world, and eek governouresse
> Of hevene, and he represseth his justise
> After thi wil; and therfore in witnesse
> He hath thee corowned in so rial wise.[144]
>
> (It is true that God grants no pity without you; for God, because of his righteousness, forgives nothing unless it is pleasing to you [for him to

[143] Marina Warner, Alone of All Her Sex: the Myth and the Cult of the Virgin Mary (1976; New York: Vintage-Random House, 1983) 286.

[144] Geoffrey Chaucer, "An ABC," ll. 137-44, Benson, 639.

> forgive]. He has made you vicar and mistress of all this world, and also governor of heaven, and he holds back his justice [judgment] according to your will; and therefore, as evidence [of your eminence], he has crowned you in so royal a manner.[145])

In Chaucer's poem, Mary's unique position as Mother of God, Queen of Heaven and Guardian of Humanity imbues her with the power to save each individual who turns to her for sustenance. St. Bonaventure, (1221-74), writing more than two hundred years before Chaucer, calls her (in Joan Ferrante's paraphrase) "the gate of heaven essential to man's salvation." Her role as gateway, as "mediator between us and Christ, as Christ is between us and God,"[146] seems due in large part, according to Bonaventure, to her ability to reflect the essence of divinity. Not only was the Holy Mother the "stainless, spotless mirror that perfectly reflected the light of God,"[147] as Emma Thérèse Healy has written in her commentary on Bonaventure, but also "the glorification of humanity and the mirror of all virtues. . . ." Consequently, God "never receives anyone except through her."[148] Her soul, her person, mirrored God; this in turn made her a mirror--the one to whom all must turn to be remade into beings worthy of salvation.

Yet, as numerous Middle English lyrics dramatize, Mary must first acquire her identity as ideal other to humanity--again through the mechanism of mirroring--before she may take on the intercessory duties allotted her. And she must often deflect the

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[145] My translation.

[146] The ideas attributed to Bonaventure in this paragraph are from his Lignum Vitae (IV, 2), De Assumtione Beatae Virginis Mariae (IV, ix) and In quattuor libros Senteniarum Exposito (Bk. III, D. III, q. I, a. 1); they are paraphrased in Joan M. Ferrante's Woman As Image in Medieval Literature: From the Twelfth Century to Dante, (1975; Durham, NC: Labyrinth, 1985) 107-8. Ferrante consulted A. C. Peltier's edition of Bonaventure, Opera Omnia, 15 vols. (Paris: Vives, 1865).

[147] Emma Thérèse Healy, Woman According to Bonaventure (New York: Georgian, 1956) 228.

[148] Ferrante, 107-8. See n. 133.

effects of worldly, secular desire as it seeks to interfere with what her ordained role demands of her. In one lyric, Mary's identity is constituted through her conversation with the angel Gabriel. The first words of Gabriel, God's messenger, begin the process:

> Heil! be thu, full of grace aright,°
> For Godes sone, this Hevene light,°
> For mannes loven°
> Wile man becomen,°
> And taken
> Fleas° of the maiden bright,
> Manken° fre for to maken
> Of senne° and Devles might.[149]
> *rightly*
> *this light of Heaven*
> *For love of man*
> *will become man*
> *flesh*
> *Mankind*
> *sin*

The angel's words have in a sense impregnated her, planting the seeds of her new identity within her, a necessary development as Mary's "Whiche wise sold ich beren / Child withuten manne?" (In what way am I to bear a child without knowing a man?)[150] implies. Yet this bit of skepticism on Mary's part suggests that she is still taking her cues from the secular paradigm, one that would have her question any such comment coming from a potentially dangerous stranger. Her reaction to the angel's explanation that "[t]hurw th'Holy Gast shall ben iwrought / this ilch thing" ([t]hrough the Holy Ghost this same thing shall be done),[151] however, reveals that she has chosen affinity with sacred demand rather than secular desire. She replies:

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[149] "Gabriel, fram Hevene King," ll. 5-12, R. T. Davies, ed., Medieval English Lyrics: A Critical Anthology (London: Faber, 1963) 100. Glosses and translations for this poem by Davies.

[150] "Gabriel," ll. 15-16, Davies, 100.

[151] "Gabriel," ll. 18-19, Davies, 100.

Ur Lordes theumaiden, iwis,
Ich am, that her aboven is.
Anenttis me,
Fulfurthed be
Thy sawe,
That ich, sithen his wil is,
Maiden, withuten lawe,
Of moder have the blis.

(I am, indeed, the handmaid of our Lord who is above. For my part, let your saying be fulfilled, that, since it is his will, I, being a maiden, against all laws have the happiness of being a mother.)[152]

Through her dialogue with the angel, she has been created handmaiden of God, mother of the messiah. The angel, God's stand-in, has served as her other; yet Mary does not serve as Gabriel's other. Significantly, the identity-formation process does not work two ways in this exchange, for divinity does not need humanity to complete it. Yet divinity's plan of salvation requires the assistance of mankind. Mary literally embodies this plan, mirroring the effect of Gabriel's annunciation back to him. A similar process is also evident in a poetic exchange between Mary and her son at the foot of the cross during the crucifixion. Through his words, Christ molds her identity as keeper of the Christian flame and intercessor for humanity. But to accomplish this he must transform her from a mournful, weeping, very human mother dominated by desire, into one who is semi-divine and an adherent to demand.

His effort begins with the poem's first lines: "Stond well, moder, under rode (cross)! / Biholde thy sone with glad mode (mind); / Blithe (happy) moder, might (must) thou be." She responds as most mothers would to see their sons so tortured: "Sone, how shulde I blithe (happily) stonde ? / I see thin (your) fet, I see thin honde / Nailed to the harde tree."[153] None of her son's reminders of the good his death will

[152] "Gabriel," ll. 29-36, Davies, 101.
[153] "Stond well, moder, under rode," ll. 1-6, Luria and Hoffman, 215-16.

do can console her or change her perspective. To his comments that his deth will redeem Adam and all of mankind from hell, she can only respond in terms of her own pain and wish for her own death.[154] His observation that her pain brings him misery inspires her to invoke her status as earthly mother: how could his wounds avoid causing her pain?[155] When he tells her that he dies specifically to keep her out of hell, she asks him not to blame her for her lamentings because it is her nature: "Ne wit me naught, it is my kinde / That I for thee this sorewe make."[156]

Her son, however, continues to try to change that nature, and only succeeds in doing so when he reminds her of her divinely ordained status as virgin-mother. This is the link he needs to push her toward intercessor status: "Moder, rew of moder kare (have pity on mothers' sorrow), / For now thou wost (know) of moder fare (destiny) / Thou (though) thou be clene (pure) maiden-mon (virgin)."[157] Her sorrow at her son's torment together with her perpetual holy virginity make her the ideal advocate for humanity, especially for women. Mary rises to the challenge, immediately asking Christ to look favorably upon those who will come to depend upon her: "Sone, help at alle nede / Alle tho (those) that to me grede (cry out), / Maiden, wif, and fol (foolish) wimmon."[158] Her final expression of longing to accompany her son through his ordeal in hell suggests not so much a relapse to her former unendurable grief but a signification that she has in a sense endured the crucifixion with him and is therefore qualified to fill her divine office. The poem's narrator explains that "[w]hen he ros, tho (then) fell (abated) her sorewe; / Hire blisse sprong the thridde morewe. / Blithe, moder, were thou tho!," and then, continuing as a penitent Christian, "Levedy (lady),

[154] "Stond well," ll. 13-18, Luria and Hoffman, 215-16.
[155] "Stond well," ll. 19-24, Luria and Hoffman, 216.
[156] "Stond well," ll. 35-36, Luria and Hoffman, 216.
[157] "Stond well," ll. 43-45, Luria and Hoffman, 217.
[158] "Stond well," ll. 46-48, Luria and Hoffman, 217.

for that ilke (same, very) blisse, / Bisech thy sone of sunnes (sin's) lisse (remission); / Thou be our sheld ageyn oure fo!"[159] It is Mary who will link humankind to Christ, and, as a number of lyrics addressed solely to Mary confirm, she often helps those under her care in the manner that the courtly lady was to help her beloved, but with a difference.

Sarah Spence compares the mother of Christ and the lady of the troubadour lyric: "[W]hile Mary, in her divinity, listens and accepts, mortal woman, limited by her mortality, often only listens." The troubadour's lady, then, is "a Mary *manqué*" who "lacks the charity of Mary" and therefore abuses the privilege of the powerful position she occupies.[160] Mary as she is represented in the courtly hymns to her is always presented as a sure thing, someone who will respond with an indication of favor. The lyric "Go! little bill, and do me recommende," is a hymn to Mary, but it differs very little in language from courtly love lyrics except that she is called man's "[m]ost soveraine mediatrice." The final stanza resonates with courtly love conventions:

> Her I beseche, sith I not fein,°
> But only put me in her grace,
> That of me she not disdein,
> Taking regarde at old trespace.
> Sith mine intent in every place
> Shall be to doe her obeisance,
> And her to love saunce° variance.[161]
> *I implore her, since I am not pretending.*
> *without*

Although Mary--not unlike the courtly lady--is set up as a type of divinity, she must be real enough to interact with her petitioner, just as the lady must; in addition, this

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[159] "Stond well," ll. 55-60, Luria and Hoffman, 217.

[160] Sarah Spence, Rhetorics of Reason and Desire: Vergil, Augustine, and the Troubadours (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1988) 122-23.

[161] "Go! little bill, and do me recommende," ll. 36-42, Davies, 202. Translations and glosses by Davies.

last stanza gives the suggestion that Mary requires something from him, too: while it is her office to love him unwaveringly, it is his duty to pay homage to her. The relationship of Mary to her faithful is, then, the divinely transformed version of the relationship between men and women in the Middle English lyric. Mary, born fully human and transformed into a being touched with divinity, is able to enter into a reciprocal relationship with humankind. She plays other to all while they continue to buttress the identity created for her through the agency of God-Christ. In the end, it is she who is the most immediate link to satisfaction.

Rosemary Woolf writes of the new devotion to the Virgin that emerged from the Lateran Council of 1215, "when the Ave Maria was added to the Pater Noster and Creed. . .as part of the basic minimum of doctrine and prayer which every layman must use"[162]:

> By the twelfth century there had merged with this devotion, founded on strict theology, a more emotional idea of Mary as a particular source of mercy, who was on the one hand the supreme intercessor with Christ, and on the other a tender and benevolent *interventrix* in the affairs of the world.[163]

As the writings of Bonaventure, Chaucer and many others suggest, Mary was the lady who had the power to link any individual to the Other that was Godhead. Through her faithful dedication to her petitioners she would be able to bring them into the Symbolic order of Christian society where they might be counted--that is, given identities. If the courtly ideal could not bring certainty, if the secular economy of masculinity could not bring satisfaction, then the sacred economy of God the Father provided both certainty and satisfaction. The eventual pay-off would be in the next

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[162] Rosemary Woolf, The English Religious Lyric in the Middle Ages (Oxford: Clarendon, 1968) 117-118.

[163] Woolf, 118.

world; however, in this world each individual could only look to Mary in the hope that she would prepare his way--and in doing so, prepare him--for that eventual reunion with his maker.

Chapter Three
The Female Authority Figure in the Latin, French, and English Traditions

> Are you the same man who was once nourished with my milk, once fed on my diet, till you reached your full manhood? And did I not furnish you with such weapons as would now keep you steadfast and safe if you had not thrown them away?. . . He has for a little forgotten his real self. He will soon recover--he did, after all, know me before. . . .[1]
>
> *Philosophy, The Consolation of Philosophy*

> Certainly, fair friend, . . .you are a fool when you don't consider the sermon I have given you for your own profit as worth a straw; I will give you another one, for I am ready with all my power to fulfill your good request, but I do not know if it will do you any good.[2]
>
> *Reason, The Romance of the Rose*

> Wy borde ȝe men? So madde ȝe be!
> Thre wordeȝ hatȝ thou spoken at ene:
> Vnavysed, for sothe, wern all thre.
> Thou ne woste in worlde quat on dotȝ mene;
> Thy worde byfore thy wytte con fle.[3]

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[1] "Tunc ille es. . .qui nostro quondam lacte nutritus nostris educatus alimentis in virilis animi robur evaseras? Atqui talia contuleramus arma quae nisi prior abiecisses, invicta te firmitate tuerentur. . . .Sui paulisper oblitus est; recordabitur facile, si quidem nos ante cognoverit." Boethius, The Consolation of Philosophy, trans. S. J. Tester in The Theological Tractates and The Consolation of Philosophy, trans. H. F Stewart, H. K. Rand, and Tester, Loeb Classical Library 74 (Cambridge, Mass., and London: Harvard UP, 1973) 130-435, Bk. 1, Pr. 2, ll. 3-7, 13-14.

[2] Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun, The Romance of the Rose, trans. Charles Dahlberg, 3rd ed. (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1971) 100. The two standard editions of the text are Félix Lecoy's Le Roman de la Rose par Guillaume de Lorris et Jean de Meun, Les Classiques Français du Moyen Age, 3 vols. (Paris: Champion, 1965-70), and Ernest Langlois's Le Roman de la Rose, par Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun, Publié d'Après les Manuscrits, Société des Anciens Textes Français, 5 vols. (Paris: Firmin-Didot; Champion, 1914-24). I will use Lecoy's edition, in which the above selection encompasses ll. 4643-49: "Certes, beaus amis, fols es tu, / quant tu ne prises un festu / ce que por ton preu te sermon; / s'en veill oncor fere un sermon, / car de tout mon poair sui preste / d'acomplir ta bone requeste; / mes ne sai s'il te vaudra guieres."

[3] Why do you jest, man? In this way you are behaving madly! Three statements you spoke at one time: rash, indeed, were all three. You do not know at all what [even] one means; your speech escapes before your understanding [before you are able to understand]. Pearl, ll. 290-94, ed. E. V. Gordon (1953; Oxford: Clarendon,

The previous chapter dealt with dialogue exchanges between male and female characters that served to construct identities for the male character and, to some degree, for the female character. She served as his other, but she was not only the mirror upon whom he projected his desires for wholeness. She was also the real person whom he sought out to supply him with a sense of self via some affirmation from her, usually sexual. In these discussions the speakers are given roughly equal time; if anyone speaks more it is generally the man. The male-female rhetorical exchanges to be studied in this chapter are of a different nature, involving a female authority figure and a male companion who is considerably 'beneath" her in nearly every respect. Despite the fact that the man's identity is still of prime importance in the literary situation as it is presented and the female character does indeed function as his other, it is the female character who is, in a sense, the aggressor in the verbal exchange because she initiates it, reacting to her male companion's undirected and sometimes unvoiced need for assistance. In addition, such a process is reciprocal only in the sense that both parties respond to each other verbally; the female characters, as close as they often are to divinity and therefore to perfection, do not need to repair or construct their selfhoods, while the men, seeking or lost, do. It should also be noted that the authority figure's completion of her charge is not a sexual or a social one, but is rather intellectual, psychological, and, often, spiritual in nature. "Real" only in the sense that she interacts with her charge and seems capable of enacting some growth in him, she is in actuality an allegorized personification or an otherwise symbolic figure occupying his psychological landscape. Consequently,

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1988) 11. I have substituted "th" for the medieval thorn. Translation is mine, as are all unattributed glosses and translations in this chapter.

she attempts to appeal to his intellect rather than any of his other faculties, and the effect she has on him is educational rather than romantic or erotic. His primary role, then, is that of listener and student. Her objective is to speak him into wholeness; his task is to become whole by absorbing the knowledge and authority she imparts. And in her motherly wisdom and command, such a character resembles the Virgin Mary.

The previous chapter suggested at its end that in the various economies of male identity construction depicted in medieval dialogue literature, the Virgin Mary alone of all women could bring satisfaction to the individual seeking the surety of selfhood. She was the quintessential courtly other who, disassociated as she was from risk or sexual frustration, offered a certain result: her intervention with God the son on behalf of her petitioner. It was through Mary that all humanity might access the symbolic order that was both the earthly community of the faithful and the heavenly kingdom of the afterlife. The other female characters discussed in the chapter--the courtly lady, the shepherd lass, the less easily categorized woman of the Middle English lyric--are all more Eve than Mary, for they are in the service (however unwillingly or unconsciously) of an ideal that can provide only the illusion of satisfaction. The difference is that they do not have direct access to or authorization from Godhead and can therefore be only false mirrors of identity and potential; they are weak, perverted copies of the true paragon who reflects only divinity. It is Mary's authority that sets her apart; it is this authority that connects her to the strong medieval literary tradition of the female authority figure.

In medieval literature, the female characters with the best hope of completing a male character, of bringing him into alignment with the dominant paradigm of the work, are those who echo Mary's qualifications and characteristics. Not surprisingly, then, the major female authority figures examined in this chapter mimic the Virgin in

stature, virtue and efficacy. Some of them labor in the service of expressly Christian paradigms; others are involved in supporting principles less overtly Christian. The words of Lady Philosophy, from Boethius's sixth-century Consolation of Philosophy, serve to recall her errant pupil to the philosophical model of existence that stipulates a benevolent, beneficent, all-powerful God in control. The title character of Alan of Lille's Complaint of Nature seeks to reinstall the work's narrator as a participant in what might be termed the natural paradigm: that which governs the proper functioning of sexual desire. The Pearl Maiden of Pearl and Holy Church and Dame Study of William Langland's Piers Plowman help their charges to recover/discover their places within the Christian paradigm, but with differing foci. The Pearl Maiden's efforts bring her father into the fold of those enlightened to the fact that man's judgment of worth and reward is not God's, while Holy Church and Dame Study lay the groundwork for their pupil to join the ranks of Christians who act upon what they know to be true, those who do after the example of Christ. All of these female characters achieve at least a measure of success in their efforts to reconstruct identity for their male companions.

However, despite her obvious similarities to Mary, Reason in Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun's Romance of the Rose fails to achieve her goal of incorporating the work's Lover into a framework of rationality. Although she is clearly presented as a figure of great stature and accomplishment, the rational paradigm she represents in the end seems unable to supply the Lover with the satisfaction he desires. While the forces of desire in the poem promise that wholeness will come through courtly acquisition of the Rose, the forces of demand, of whom Reason is the chief exponent, can only offer the rational living that is demand as an end in itself--no possibility of further wholeness lies beyond. It may also be argued

that this failure is due at least in part to Reason's lack of connection to what was the dominant paradigm in the Middle Ages--Christianity. Due to the pervasive influence of the Christian model of existence, any paradigm presenting itself as worthy of widespread sanction--even those not primarily concerned with Christian teachings--needed to acknowledge a debt to the sacred. The authority-figure tradition, recalling as it does the Virgin Mary, is an example of the degree to which Christian ideas, motifs, and sensibility informed intellectual and aesthetic creation at the time. The texts explored in this chapter suggest that for the female authority figure to be effective she must service a paradigm that supports the rule of a Presence whose universe at least resembles that of the Christian God--and that she must acknowledge her subservient status. This Reason does not do. In failing this she shows herself not a true type of Mary, who after all, acknowledged that she was God's servant, his handmaid, but instead a type of Eve: although she promises satisfaction, she, in the end, cannot deliver it. Had she the requisite Mary quality of humility, she would show herself to be no more than an intermediary cog in the machinery of a larger plan, not the plan itself. An awareness of such function might provide Reason with the extra conviction necessary to reconstruct her charge as something other than a slave of carnal love.

To better highlight the connection between Mary and the literary incarnations I link to her, it is useful at this point to trace in brief the development of Mary as a figure of power within Christian and medieval tradition. It must first be noted, however, that these authoritative female characters do not spring entirely from Mary alone; at the time of Boethius's creation of Philosophy in 524, in fact, Mary had yet to achieve the influence awarded her in the high and late Middle Ages, a phenomenon I will examine below. What did exist in full flower was the pagan tradition of

personifying virtues and other positive elements as women, a practice "brought into Christian tradition through allegory and art,"[4] as Joan Ferrante notes. The practice of identifying some personifications as female was due in part to the gender of the nouns they represented, but "grammatical accident [was] not the only factor in determining gender."[5] In medieval thought "abstract concepts were real forces"[6] and, as Owen Barfield has noted, "Grammar or Rhetoric, Mercy or Daunger were real to begin with simply because they were 'names,'"[7]--in sum, all abstractions had "a real existence for medieval men." Consequently, "the figures that personif[ied] these concepts in literature ha[d] more than a metaphoric relationship to them."[8] Because of the "various impulses to encourage identification of the symbol with the thing symbolized," Ferrante concludes, the effect upon female personifications is that "their female attributes are emphasized and their female powers exalted."[9] The personifying process is generally one of amplification and idealization. In the Middle Ages, then, those female authority figures who are personifications more often than not represent woman at her most elevated and glorified, something that may also be said of the Virgin Mary.

Throughout the early Christian period and into the Middle Ages, Mary developed in stature from a girl of humble means into the Queen of Heaven. Just as the medieval practice of personification drew upon both pagan and Christian practice, so

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[4] Joan M. Ferrante, Woman as Image in Medieval Literature: from the Twelfth Century to Dante (New York: Columbia UP, 1975; Durham, NC: Labyrinth, 1985) 38.

[5] Ferrante, 37.

[6] Ferrante, 38.

[7] qtd. in M. W. Bloomfield, "A Grammatical Approach to Personification Allegory," MPh 60 (1963): 170.

[8] Ferrante, 39.

[9] Ferrante, 42.

Mary, infused with attributes from the classical tradition, became in essence Christianity's answer to a goddess, and one always looking to intercede between humanity and divinity. By the time of Boethius's Consolation in the first half of the sixth century, Mary was already celebrated for her mothering tactics,[10] her educated participation in the analysis of sacred works,[11] and her exemplary chastity.[12] An "influential fiction of her life" current in the early centuries also credited her with "rich and well-born parents."[13] Her symbolic association with the Christian Church, *Ecclesia*, had been established by the early Church fathers; beginning in the fourth

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[10] The earliest known image of the Virgin, painted in Roman catacombs prior to the third century, shows her as a humble mother nursing her child. See Marina Warner, Alone of All Her Sex: the Myth and Cult of the Virgin Mary (1976; New York: Vintage-Random House, 1983) 193.

[11] Robin Lane Fox reports in Pagans and Christians (New York: Knopf, 1987) 311, that by the 240s, the great Christian teacher Origen "was praising her deep reading of the Bible, and in subsequent art, she was raised to the status of a bluestocking." He also notes that Mary was "upgraded" both educationally and socially to make her commensurate with the more educated women of the early Church, many of them affluent and/or well-schooled. A fourth-century Syrian lullaby written in her honor by Ephrem of Nisibin, or St. Ephrem of Syria (d. 373), attributes words to her that suggest her understanding of the paradox of Christ's dual nature and the importance of her unassuming, maternal contribution to the divine plan: "Lo, thou art with me," she sings to her son, "and whole thou art hidden in thy father. All heights of heaven are full of thy majesty, and yet my bosom is not too straitened for thee. . . ." Qtd. in Warner, Alone, 194, found in Paul Palmer's Mary in the Documents of the Church (1952; London: Oates, 1953) 19.

[12] St. Ambrose (339-97) regarded Mary's virginity as emblematic of her virtuous life; in his treatise Concerning Virgins he write to his sister Marcellina: "Let, then, the life of Mary be as it were virginity itself, set forth in likeness, from which, as in a mirror, the appearance of chastity and the form of virtue is reflected. From this you may take your pattern of life, showing, as an example, the clear rules of virtue: what you have to correct, to effect, to hold fast." II.ii.6, qtd. in Jaroslav Pelikan's Mary Through the Centuries: Her Place in the History of Culture (New Haven, Conn.: Yale UP, 1996)120.

[13] Fox, 311.

century she was also identified as the beloved consort of God.[14] By the fifth century, two of the four major Catholic dogmas connected to her, those proclaiming her status as Mother of God and Virgin Mother, were already Church truth or on their way to being so. The Virgin Birth had been defended at least as far back as the second century,[15] while Mary's right to be known as the mother of God was endorsed by both the Council of Ephesus (431) and the Council of Chalcedonia (451),[16] the former council officially authorizing what came to be called the cult of Mary.[17] As an indicator of her growing status and influence, important temples dedicated to pagan goddesses were converted to her worship in that same century.[18] The sixth century saw Mary honored as a supernatural being of miraculous powers, among them the power to close the gap between man and God. According to the sixth-century Greek *Akathistos* hymn, Mary is "'the ladder in the firmament' by which God came down, the bridge leading men from earth to heaven."[19] She was also presented in art as a

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[14] St. Ambrose was the first to present the Bride of the Song of Solomon--already identified as the spouse of Christ--as a "coalesc[ing]" of the Virgin Mary, the Church, and the soul of each Christian (Warner, Alone 126).

[15] Justin Martyr (d. 165) and Origen (d. c. 254) were early defenders (Warner, Alone 35-36).

[16] Jacques Dalarun, "The Clerical Gaze," trans. Arthur Goldhammer, Silences of the Middle Ages, ed. Christiane Klapisch-Zuber (Cambridge, Mass., and London: Belknap, 1992) 25, Vol. 2 of A History of Women in the West, eds. George Duby and Michelle Perrot, 2 vols. 1992.

[17] "Mary, St.," The Middle Ages: A Concise Encyclopedia, ed. H. R. Loyn, (London: Thames, 1989) 222.

[18] Robert Graves reports in The White Goddess: A Historical Grammar of Poetic Myth (1948; New York: Farrar, 1966) 424, that the Byzantine temple of the pagan Mother-Goddess Rhea was re-dedicated to Mary by the Emperor Zeno in the fifth century. Warner notes in Alone that the Basilica at Salonika was dedicated to the Virgin in 470, while the temple of Isis at Soissons was also given over to worship of her during the fifth century; at some point in the sixth century, the Parthenon was converted to worship of Mary (348-49).

[19] The *Akathistos* hymn in general endows Mary with enormous supernatural and spiritual capability, celebrating her as subduer of monsters and insatiable passions as

figure in whom both temporal and eternal authority converged. In the first known image of the Virgin as *Maria Regina*, appearing on a Roman building during the first half of the sixth century (a time period roughly contemporaneous with Boethius's Lady Philosophy), Mary's patristic association with *Ecclesia* is interwoven with other associations to present a complex depiction:

> Seated in majesty on a throne, the Virgin Queen contains a multi-layered message: she belongs to a classical tradition of personifying cities and institutions as goddesses, and as such, in the heart of Rome, she embodies the new Rome which is the Church just as the *Dea Roma* now on the Capitol represented the pagan city. And because she is arrayed in all the pearl-laden, jewel-encrusted regalia of a contemporary secular monarch, she also proclaims, in a brilliantly condensed piece of visual propaganda, the concept that the Church is a theocracy of which the agent and representative is the pope, the ruler of Rome.[20]

By the time of Boethius, Mary had become a figure in whom much authority, both spiritual and secular-political, might rest, one who ruled a world whose spiritual and secular elements seemed intertwined. In the Roman painting, she, as a product of a Christian sensibility that has appropriated pagan devices, is a figure for the Church, a spiritual body presented as the personification of civic authority. She is both of God and of humanity, one able, it seems, to erase the distance between the two.

It is a likely conclusion that Boethius, a Christian learned in the classical tradition, created a female character influenced by pagan practice. But, writing as he did while Christianity's Virgin was gradually assimilating the characteristics that

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well as the intercessor between man and God. Yet this is not all; she is also the "'sea which drowned the spiritual Pharaoh,' the rock that gushed with water and quenched the spiritual thirst of the faithful, the pillar of fire leading those lost in the darkness, as the Israelites were led across the wilderness, and the promised land that flows with milk and honey." In W. Christ and M. Paranikas, Anthologia Graeca Carminum Christianorum (Leipzig: Teubner, 1871) 140-47, qtd. in Warner, Alone, 63.

[20] Warner, Alone, 104.

defined her, some of them inherited from pagan authority figures,[21] he could hardly have avoided the burgeoning stature of Christianity's *magna mater*, who after all, had already been hailed as both consort and virgin mother to God, stately queen, intercessor between divinity and humanity, and learned practitioner of spiritual knowledge. Mary was without doubt already a vital element within the Christian paradigm and well on her way to becoming he most dominant female icon of both the early medieval period and much of subsequent history.

By the time of the later French writers, Alan (late twelfth century), Guillaume (mid-thirteenth) and Jean (late thirteenth), the cult of the Virgin was flourishing,[22] and her symbolic associations had multiplied. Identified from at least the tenth century with *sophia*, Wisdom,[23] the "beloved of God from all eternity" who says in Ecclesiastes 24:9: "He created me from the beginning before the world and I shall never fail,"[24] she was held by many to have been herself immaculately conceived,

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[21] A partial list of titles that Mary eventually took over from pagan goddesses would include "Queen of Heaven (Ishtar and Isis, among the many), the Blessed Virgin (Juno), Stella Maris (Isis), and Queen of Hell (Persephone, Erishkigall)." In A. T. Mann and Jane Lyle's Sacred Sexuality (New York: Barnes, 1995)132. As note 17 mentioned above, she also inherited temples from Rhea and Athena, which suggests that she obtained at least some of their attributes with their real estate. See note 30, below, for Mary's association with fertility goddesses.

[22] Gerda Lerner notes that popular worship of the Virgin began in Western Europe in the ninth century with village and town celebrations of her power and majesty. It began earlier in Eastern Christendom, prior to the fifth century. Lerner attributes both developments to Mary's "acquir[ing] and retain[ing] some of the characteristics of the old goddesses." In Lerner's The Creation of Feminist Consciousness: From the Middle Ages to Eighteen-Seventy (New York and Oxford: Oxford UP, 1993) 123, Vol. 2 of Women and History, 2 vols., 1986-93.

[23] Marina Warner, Monuments and Maidens: The Allegory of the Female Form (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1985) 180.

[24] Warner, Alone, 247.

alone of all humankind untouched by original sin.[25] No longer merely a queen, she was now the Queen of Heaven, ruling alongside her son/husband/king.[26] At this same time, ecclesiastical authorities began, by focusing on Mary's motherhood, to emphasize her humanity, her common link with mankind.[27] And in fact, the whole of European Christendom venerated her. Warner reports that "between 1170 and 1270 the French alone built eighty cathedrals and over a hundred churches"[28] dedicated to Mary; by 1350 she was "paid majestic tribute" in manifold locations all over Europe, including Germany, the Netherlands, and several places in Italy.[29] Among the special causes in which she was thought to hold a particular interest was (somewhat ironically, given her virginity) fertility, and her intervention in the reproductive cycle, sought even during the early Christian centuries, was elevated to the primary objective of certain European sites of worship.[30] The reputation of Mary had become

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[25] The notion of Mary's immaculate conception achieved currency in the eleventh century (Dalarun 25) although it was not made Church dogma until 1854.

[26] A twelfth-century Roman mosaic, reproduced in Warner, Alone, Plate 4, Figure 6, is indicative of this increase in Mary's stature: Christ and the Virgin are presented as the bridegroom and bride from the Song of Songs, seated on thrones covered in precious stones and dressed in royal finery. The crown she wears and her proximity to her son imply that she rules Heaven alongside her consort-child.

[27] Carolyn Walker Bynum notes that Mary "begins to be described as a human mother with a baby" in learned and ecclesiastical twelfth-century writings. In Bynum's Jesus as Mother: Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages (Berkeley: U of California P, 1982) 137.

[28] Warner, Alone, 316.

[29] Warner, Alone, 160.

[30] Warner notes (Alone 275) that "in the first recorded act of homage" paid to the Virgin, female adherents of the Arab Collyridian sect worshipped Mary in the manner that they had formerly worshipped Ashtaroth, a mother goddess associated with sexuality and fertility. Other indicators of what Warner calls Mary's "midwifery" (277) abound. For example, the twelfth-century black madonna of Montserrat in Spain supports a Christ-child in her lap who holds in his hand a pinecone--an ancient fertility symbol (276), and in fact, to this day, the Virgin of Montserrat still retains her medieval protectorship of "marriage and sex, pregnancy and childbirth" (274). A

such that it was commonly believed she would go to any length to oblige the requests of her petitioners if, indeed, they proved themselves faithful to her.[31]

As part and parcel of her influence, "all over Europe, the Virgin was the chief recipient of men's prayers and adoration."[32] Dante celebrated her in this capacity in his Divine Comedy: "Lady," hymns the character of Saint Bernard, "you are so high, you can so intercede, / that he who would have grace but does not seek / your aid, may long to fly but has no wings."[33] She had become the vital other through whom all must pass to achieve true love, true salvation and true identity. It is no surprise, then, that a century prior to the fourteenth-century writings of Langland and the Pearl-poet, "devotion to Mary was firmly established in many learned, liturgical and public ways" in England[34]--including miracle stories, church decoration and popular art.[35]

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further example of this connection was illustrated in fourteenth-century miracle plays that staged enactments of the Virgin's attendance upon childbirth (277).

[31] Bynum explains that the effect of the twelfth-century emphasis on the humanity of both Mary and Jesus is that "in popular religion, she becomes so central that her mediation is considered 'automatic' and 'ethically irrational'" (137).

[32] Warner, Alone, 160. Rosemary Woolf suggests that this may be due in part to hierarchical notions of communication with the deity; English penitential lyrics from the twelfth century on reflect the idea that "whilst the formal confession of guilt. . .was made primarily to God, prayers of penitence and remorse were more appropriately addressed to the Virgin." Furthermore, "an appeal to Mary was sign of sincere remorse, for, once the idea of a hierarchy of appeal had been accepted, an immediate invocation of Christ might suggest a presumptuous unawareness of one's own sinfulness rather than a theologically correct recourse to the only and ultimate source of forgiveness." To forget Mary and seek Christ directly was to mark oneself as ignorant and erring. In Woolf's The English Religious Lyric in the Middle Ages (Oxford: Clarendon, 1968) 118-19.

[33] "Donna, se' tanto grande e tanto vali, / che qual vuol grazia e a te non ricorre, / sua disïanze vuol volar sanz' ali." Paradiso, XXXIII.13-15. All Divine Comedy citations are from The Divine Comedy Of Dante Alighieri, trans. Allen Mandelbaum, 3 vols. (1984; Toronto: Bantam, 1986).

[34] Woolf, 114.

[35] Woolf records that twelfth-century England had been the point of origin for the earliest collections of miracle stories of the Virgin, extremely popular in the Middle

Clearly, the twelfth-, thirteenth-, and fourteenth-century European writers whose works are examined in this chapter lived within a world dominated by the influence and consequent veneration of Mary. As I noted in the previous chapter, the impulse that led poets to celebrate and/or examine secular love was not at all far removed from the impulse that led them to revere Mary. Both the Virgin and the desired woman were sought as a means to actualization, but in the end the Virgin was thought to be far more successful at supplying that actualization than any other woman could hope to be. She was, in fact, the only representative of womanhood whose many virtues[36] and powers truly credentialed her for such an activity. Only Mary had the authority; only Mary could assure wholeness.

In seeking to instill in their pupils a measure of wholeness, the female authority figures examined below serve a purpose analogous to Mary's. Their complex status also recalls Mary: they are frequently both disciplinarian and consort to their followers, nursemaid and queen, matron and maiden. By turns imperious and nurturing, usually beautiful yet chaste, often courtly but not seductive,[37] they are devoted teachers of their male pupils, striving to connect them with the truth that

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Ages, that subsequently spread throughout Europe. Woolf also notes that lady-chapels, newly established in thirteenth century, repeatedly boasted the Madonna-Child image, which was also the "fairly frequent subject of wall-paintings and carving, the latter sometimes occupying the dominating position of the tympanum" (117).

[36] The medieval culmination of Mary as the archetype of the virtuous woman is perhaps Dante's Purgatorio (early fourteenth century), in which she appears as an exemplum of humility, love, gentleness, zeal, poverty, generosity, temperance, and, perhaps most notably, chastity. See Cantos 10, 13, 15, 18, 20, 22, 25.

[37] Piers Plowman's Dame Study is in some ways an exception to the typical characterization of the female authority figure in medieval literature. She is queen only of her habitation, hasn't a maidenly characteristic about her, and is furthermore lean and austere in her appearance rather than divinely beautiful. Yet this variation upon the female authority figure is appropriate to the identity-construction process of Study's male pupil. See below.

delineates each paradigm and, consequently, with an actualized sense of self. Richard Green suggests that Lady Philosophy is able, "by reflecting the light of truth," to bring her pupil, one who has lost himself, into "remembrance of the sun of divine truth."[38] Much as Mary mirrors a higher ideal to her charges and thus constructs for them a higher identity, so Philosophy does for Boethius, and so do the successful female authority figures of the Complaint of Nature, Pearl, and Piers Plowman.

Before turning to individual analyses of the five works studied in this chapter, it is necessary to note that if the theological tradition of the Virgin Mary influenced certain aspects of the characterization and function of female authority figures, the literary tradition set down in Boethius's Consolation of Philosophy--the Socratic dialogue between the authoritative allegorical woman and her male pupil--provides a prototype that the four subsequent writers draw from and build upon. In the Consolation, Lady Philosophy, a regal visitor from the heavens, is also a mother figure, having nursed Boethius with her "milk." Although both encouraging and stern with him, she always returns to a nurturing strategy, one of coaching, assurance and enlightenment. Moreover, despite her great wisdom and authority, she comports herself in a modest, maidenly manner; Ferrante refers to her as a "lovely. . .companion."[39] Nowhere does she approach Eve-like behavior: she recognizes her limits and acknowledges that she is in the service of an ideal greater than she is. As the work reveals, these qualities make her eminently suitable to motivate Boethius toward a philosophic wholeness predicated upon a recognition of the inclusion of all things, even suffering, in a larger, eternal plan. In the tradition of Lady Philosophy,

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[38] Richard Green, "Introduction," Boethius, The Consolation of Philosophy, trans. Green (Indianapolis: Liberal Arts-Bobbs-Merrill, 1962) xxiii.

[39] Ferrante, 48.

Alan of Lille's Nature[40] is suitably credentialed to act as other in an identity-construction effort that promises to complete the narrator's fragmented understanding of his role in the human procreative scheme. She is *vicaria Dei*, God's vice-regent over his earthly creation, whose near omniscience along with her lofty title suggests high authority. Like Philosophy, she dwells in heaven: her home is in the "inner palace of the impassable world."[41] Also like Philosophy, she is both a healer and a stern teacher, first reviving the fainted narrator with her charitable attentions:

> Quem virgo amicabiliter erigens, pedes ebrios sustentanium manuum confortabat solatio, meque ora pudicis osculis dulcorando, mellifluique sermonis medicamine a stuporis morbo curavit infirmum.
> (Pr. 3.449)
>
> (The maiden, kindly raising me up, strengthened my reeling feet with the comforting aid of her sustaining hands. Entwining me in an embrace and sweetening my lips with chaste kisses, she cured me of my illness of stupor by the medicine of her honey-sweet discourse.)

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[40] It has been long noted that Alan, a student of the methods of the Chartrian metaphysician and Boethian scholar Gilbert de la Porrée, was influenced by many aspects of Boethian thought (see, for instance, Winthrop Wetherbee, "Alan of Lille," The Dictionary of the Middle Ages, ed. Joseph R. Strayer, 13 vols. [New York: Scribner, 1982] 1:119). In fact, the form of the Complaint of Nature bears so many similarities to that of the Consolation that Paul Piehler suggests Alan's work is "not merely influenced" by Boethius's but is "even a conscious attempt to produce something in the same genre" (in Piehler's The Visionary Landscape: A Study in Medieval Allegory [London: Arnold, 1971] 46). See n. 90, below, for an obvious borrowing of a prominent character detail.

[41] "impassibilis mundi penitiori. . .palatio." Alan of Lille, Alani Liber de Planctu Naturae, Pr. 1, 431, in The Anglo-Latin Satirical Poets and Epigrammatists of the Twelfth Century, ed. Thomas Wright, 2 vols., Rerum Britannicarum Medii Aevi, Rolls Series 59 (1872; Weisenbaden: Kraus Reprint, 1964) 2: 429-522. English translation comes from Alan of Lille, The Plaint of Nature, James J. Sheridan, Mediaeval Sources in Translation 26 (Toronto: Pontifical Institute, 1980) 73. (This source is hereafter identified in notes as "Sheridan.").

Yet ever a defender of her paradigm, she follows these gentle ministrations with a severe lecture about his rejection of her law (Pr. 3.449-50). She also fits the category of "lovely companion," as the above passage already suggests: when she first appears, the narrator is driven to a lengthy description of her rapturous beauty (Pr. 1, 2) and, in fact, his collapse comes as he sees her making her way to him "with modest gait" (Pr. 3.449).[42] She too acknowledges her limits, noting that certain types of divine knowledge fall beyond the purview of her divine function.

The ultimate failure of the Romance of the Rose's Reason marks her as different from her authority-figure precursors; in addition, her comment to the Lover, "See here [God's] form, and see yourself in my clear face" (5783-94),[43] suggests that she perceives herself as a singular articulation of the ruling deity and not a mediator for it, and in doing so she steps outside the tradition established with Lady Philosophy and adapted in the Complaint. But while the tone of the Romance is largely one of scathing irony--another departure from the Consolation and the Complaint--the characterization of Reason embraces the tradition in its depiction of a royal and otherworldy-wise beauty who descends from on high to aid the work's protagonist in the construction of identity. The verbal exchange between Reason and her male charge resembles those of the Consolation and the Complaint in that all three works present an authoritative female who patiently, regally, lovingly, sometimes sternly, imparts information, corrects misconceptions and otherwise nudges her pupil along toward installation within the paradigm she represents--a feature also found in Pearl and Piers Plowman.

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[42] Sheridan, 116. "pudico. . .incessu."

[43] Dahlberg, 117. "Regarde ci quele forme a / et te mire en mon cler visage."

The Pearl Maiden, Holy Church and Dame Study are in general faithful adherents of Philosophy's model. All three characters are stern, concerned teachers, mother figures who educate their befuddled yet arrogant students. All three are clearly at a higher level of enlightenment than are those they seek to educate. And although Dame Study is a more bourgeois version (married, earth-dwelling, of humble appearance, even comic) of the character type inaugurated in Lady Philosophy, she is nevertheless a conduit through which inspired knowledge may pass. The Pearl Maiden and Holy Church show themselves the more traditional conduits. Stunning, courtly beauties whose appearance and carriage inspire both fear and admiration in the men with whom they converse, they also possess the divine pedigree and ethereal habitation that make their predecessors so impressive.

It is significant that the connection between these two figures and the Virgin Mary is more pronounced than are those of the earlier authority figures; in some respects, the reader is encouraged to think of them, if only momentarily, as the Virgin in one of her many aspects. It is true that Nature's connection to fecundity seems to associate her closely with Mary--the virginity of each marks her as pure enough to serve as mother to all living creatures. It is also true that this resemblance and others shared by both Nature and Philosophy--their divine origins, nurturing approach, supernatural abilities, extra-worldly knowledge, beauty, etc.--together with the mediating function they perform cannot but connect them to the tradition of Christianity's most famed and fabled maiden-mother-queen. Yet whatever connections exist are not rooted in obvious doctrinal association or direct invocation of Mary. Unlike the paradigms supported by the Pearl Maiden and Holy Church, those championed by Philosophy and Nature are not expressly Christian. Because the need of the Pearl and Piers Plowman protagonists and the identity that will assuage

the need both revolve around issues of Christianity, it stands to reason that the other who is an aid to identity construction not only resembles Christianity's mediatrix but at times seems to be her; her closeness to Mary is revelatory of the closeness to Christ that he may attain through her. No such direct linkage with the Virgin Mary is necessary to make Philosophy and Nature suitable others for Boethius and Alan's narrator. That they evidence many of Mary's traits contributes to their authority, certainly; their true effectiveness, however, lies in their ability to provide what is lacking in their charges. The aged Boethius seeks wholeness through the exercise of mind alone, and this Lady Philosophy provides. The somewhat more youthful protagonist of the Complaint--he is at least young enough to be involved in the procreative process, and at least mature enough to evaluate the philosophical framework behind it--needs to be reinstated within the process, and Nature gets him at least part of the way to his destination. In contrast, the young Lover of the Romance seems to want only sensation and the physical transcendence that comes with the sexual act; Reason cannot provide this, nor can she offer him an alternative compelling enough to deter him from his pursuit of the Rose. He, like the male characters of the lyric tradition, seeks wholeness through sex, and, although he adheres to the rules of courtly behavior, his goal has nothing to do with defining himself within a society or shoring up the foundations of his culture. He is in it solely for the gratification of carnal desire.

To better trace a progression of sorts in the function of the authority figure, my analysis of the works will begin with the sexual-physical concerns of the Romance's Lover and move in order through the sexual-philosophical concerns of the narrator of the Complaint, the purely intellectual concerns of Boethius, and the rational-theological concerns of the Pearl Maiden's father and Piers' Will. What the

discussion makes clear is that the female authority figure is an appropriate other only when the identity sought by the male protagonist is one with a strong rational element to it. For when she speaks, she speaks reason, and it is the reason she imparts that impels her pupil toward wholeness.

The Romance of the Rose

Although the character of Reason in Guillaume de Lorris's and Jean de Meun's Romance of the Rose ably presents the rational paradigm to her male pupil as a safe and enduring refuge from the chaos of his existence, the protagonist-Lover of the poem does not perceive a need for embracing Reason's demand and instead longs to define himself through the desire that masters him, which, as suggested above, in Guillaume's and Jean's poem is carnal love as it is attained through a veneer of courtly behavior. An identity embracing reason for reason's sake can not, it would seem, compete with the amenities offered by irrational sexuality. While the Lover may certainly be faulted for casting off the persuasive arguments of the most authoritative of the many teachers he encounters,[44] perhaps the failure of Reason's paradigm resides as much in the presentation of rational exercise as the means to wholeness rather than a step in the process. In the Middle Ages it was a commonplace that rationality could take humanity only so far, a notion illustrated in

[44] In Reason and the Lover (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1984), John V. Fleming states "that Reason alone of all the Lover's teachers. . .commands the authority to be trusted, that hers is the one voice within the poem to which we can listen for the moral adjudication of the poem's amatory doctrine" (3). Yet I think that Reason's inability to fathom the power of sexual attraction or, for that matter, to perceive the need for Christian grace in the salvation process damages her credibility and contributes to her failure. I also think it is possible that Reason comes in for a bit of satire as she continues to waste time on a subject who is clearly uninterested in her entreaties. See discussion, below.

any number of medieval works[45]--and in the Romance as well. It may be, however, that in the universe of the Romance, no certain larger paradigm represents the surety of wholeness.[46] Only the "heavenly God" can effect "the salvation of body and soul," the character of Genius[47] tells the amassed forces of the God of Love near the poem's end, referring also to the "Good Shepherd" and the "son of the virgin ewe" (19865, 19869, 19908, 19964)[48]--explicitly Christian references. But Genius seems to understand very little about the nature of Christian wholeness: he suggests that it comes through aggressive pursuit of procreation. As A. C. Spearing explains, Genius, "dressed as a bishop, . . .inaugurates a new religion, and claims that it will not be through any opposition on his part if eager copulators fail to get to heaven." That Genius has reduced the salvation paradigm to a sexual one suggests that his "doctrine [is] not truth but truth perverted."[49] Spearing argues that the dimly understood references of Genius serve to emphasize that no effective controlling paradigm is

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[45] Both the Consolation of Philosophy and the Complaint of Nature make this point. See discussions below.

[46] This observation generally applies to Jean's portion of the poem, in which Reason makes a much lengthier appearance. For instance, A. C. Spearing notes (in Spearing's Medieval Dream Poetry [Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge UP, 1976]) that Guilluame's lines seem situated firmly within the "framework of medieval religious orthodoxy" (31). On the other hand, Jean's Christian orthodoxy, "if that is what it was," Spearing writes, "was not so much the impetus to a positive expression of religious views, as a source of detachment from all earthly views, so that any human attitude could be the object of satire or irony" (32). He argues that the Christian references throughout the poem serve primarily to highlight the poem's "absent centre" (39).

[47] Jean borrows heavily from Alan's Complaint of Nature in his section of the poem. Reason recapitulates parts of Nature's explanation about the nature of love; Jean also adapts both Nature's lament against those who have offended her and Genius's excommunication of those who have transgressed against his design. See the discussion of the Complaint, below.

[48] Dahlberg, 327, 328. "le dieu celestre"; "saluz de cors et d'ame"; "li filz de la Vierge"; "bon pasteur."

[49] Spearing, 38.

available to the Lover within his sphere of existence, "point[ing] always" as they do "toward the absent centre."[50] Yet although Christianity is present in the poem only along the margins and is co-opted by Genius to serve his limited vision, Jean does not necessarily imply that Christianity is powerless to redeem, to reconfigure identities. In fact, Charles Muscatine argues that the "garden of the Lamb" as Genius presents it "is infinitely more real and more beautiful than. . .the garden of the Rose."[51] What seems clear in any case is that no occupant of the garden inhabited by the Lover can serve as mediator for the Christian paradigm; no one character's connection to Christianity is intimate enough for this purpose. Reason is no exception, even though she seems to occupy territory somewhat above the rest of the garden's inhabitants. As a result, the satisfaction granted by the Rose--that is, the pleasure and force of the sexual urge--is such that it overmasters the human faculty of reason; without the additional force of Christian grace it has no hope of making the fractured parts of human identity cohere.

As mentioned above, Reason's exchange with her male charge, a Lover firmly embedded within the paradigm of courtly love, resembles those of the other authority figures studied in the chapter with one major exception: her pupil seems to learn nothing that will help to free him from the clutches of the God of Love, who, along with other figures such as Ami, a friend who instructs the Lover in the "niceties" of the courtly love model, offer a competing framework within which the Lover might define his existence. This framework, which represents the forces of desire against Reason's demand, offers the Lover the "higher" satisfaction attained through sexual acquisition of his adored Rose. Reason can offer no higher reward for his embrace of

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[50] Spearing, 39.

[51] Charles Muscatine, Chaucer and the French Tradition: A Study in Style and Meaning (Berkeley: U of California P, 1969) 74.

her paradigm, suggesting only that the proper exercise of Reason is reward enough in itself, an argument that has no staying power with the Lover. Even her obvious connection to divinity fails to move him; she cannot offer him a potent reason to give up that which he perceives to be wholeness.

From Reason's initial appearance in Guillaume's part of the poem, she shows herself to be ineffectual against the paradigm of carnality. The Lover's association with the God of Love can lead only to insanity, she argues, and he is apparently willing to risk the sacrifice of his proper mental functioning for the possibility of achieving the Rose. Although he makes note of her origins from on high, her timeless beauty, her star-like eyes, her regal crown and aristocratic bearing, her divinely-crafted form (2957-72), he nevertheless fails to find her arguments persuasive. He is aware that

> . . .Dex la fist ou firmament
> a sa semblance et a s'image
> et li dona tel avantage
> qu'ele a pooir et seignorie
> de garder home de folie,
> por tant qu'il soit tex qu'il la croie.
> (2974-79)
>
> (God made her personally in his likeness and in his image and gave her such advantage that she has the power and the lordship to keep man from folly, provided that he be such that he believe her.[52])

The problem is that his immersion in desire is so complete that he cannot believe the demand of Reason's paradigm. In response to her advice, "You must pit your strength and resistance against the thoughts of your heart"[53] (3053-54), that he fight the sickness comprised essentially of madness (3025-26) currently causing him much

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[52] Dahlberg, 73.

[53] Dahlberg, 74. Tu doiz metre force et desfense / encontre ce que tes cuer croit[.]"

misery, he offers only a rejection, claiming he'd rather die than deserve the God of Love's charges of treason (3074-76). He concludes, "I want to be praised or blamed, at the end, for having loved well. Anyone who lectures me annoys me" (3077-79).[54] He rejects the voice of Reason and chooses to remain within Love's paradigm, freely subjugating both mind and body to an arrangement that thus far has left him miserable--yet hopeful.

When Reason reappears in Jean's section of the poem, she has a different agenda--different, but, in the end, no more effective in remaking the Lover as an adherent of rational demand. George Economou suggests that Reason's task is to clarify the two types of love delineated by Alan of Lille's Nature, *Venus caelestis* and *Venus scelestis*, one rational and one irrational--one acceptable to Reason and one not. In short, since the Lover will not give up love, she offers her pupil an alternative love that is in tune with demand. Yet from the very beginning of their second encounter, it is clear that her alternative love is not powerful enough to make him turn from his desire. For in order for the Lover to adhere to this "good" love, Economou notes, he "would have to leave the garden in which he has been made a prisoner and servant of Amor."[55] This, to him, is not an option. He makes this clear in his resistance to Reason's logical attempts to clarify the evils of the love he has currently follows. Reason explains, according to the dictates of the rational paradigm, that flight is the only solution to the distress this type of love occasions:[56] as both a "[s]weet hell" and

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[54] Dahlberg, 74. "Je me veil loer ou blasmer / au daerrain de bien amer, / si m'anuie qui me chastie."

[55] George D. Economou, "The Two Venuses and Courtly Love," In Pursuit of Perfection, ed. Joan M. Ferrante and Economou (Port Washington, NY: Kennikat, 1975) 29.

[56] A borrowing from Nature's *descriptio cupidinis*, see Alan, M. 5, 472-74.

a "heaven of sorrow" (4297, 4298)[57] it cannot end happily for all involved (4263-4328). Love is no respecter of social class, intellectual acumen or physical prowess; no one, once he has given himself to Love, can resist Love's particular miseries (4305-10). Ever the student of desire, the Lover remains unconvinced by her argument, claiming, "I flatter myself that I now know no more than before of how I can extricate myself from love" (4331-33).[58] Neither her further definition of this love as a "sickness of thought" resulting from heterosexual carnal desire originally encouraged by "disordinate glances" (4348-54),[59] nor her insistence that the sexual experience should be geared toward fulfilling its cosmic purpose, ensuring the survival of the human race (4373-84), makes any impression upon him. His identity firmly rooted within the God of Love's paradigm, the Lover is incapable of adhering to the tenets of rational demand.

He is also incapable of processing her efforts to distinguish between the type of love that enraptures him and what is to her a healthier, truer love. What ensues is a tortuous dialogue shaped by the Lover's desire-fueled refusal to grant her any headway and Reason's ever more circuitous attempts to bring him into accord with demand. "Good love," she states, "should be born of a pure heart; love should not be mastered by gifts any more than by bodily pleasures."[60] The love binding him, on the other hand, is rooted in his desire to possess the Rose carnally (4567-74). But this distinction means nothing to the Lover because, he says, "Love prevented anything from being put into practice, although I heard the whole matter word for word (4600-

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[57] Dahlberg, 95. "enfers li doucereus"; paradise li doulereus."

[58] Dahlberg, 95. "[F]is je, de ce me vant, / je n'en sai pas plus que devant / a ce que m'en puisse retraire."

[59] Dahlberg, 95-96. "maladie de pensee"; "vision desordenee."

[60] Dahlberg, 99. "Bone amor doit de fin queur nestre: / don n'en doivent pas estre mestre / ne quel font corporel soulaz."

3)[.]"[61] Still Reason perseveres, explaining that this other love is called friendship, and that it "consists of mutual good will among men, without any discord, in accordance with the benevolence of God " (4655-58).[62] Yet the Lover labels this sort of love imaginary; he would be a "stupid fool" (5388)[63] if he chased it. Her assertion that he should gratify this love by turning it upon humanity as a whole (5412-20)--a rational, sane alternative to the mad and particular passion of sexual desire--he summarily rejects: he could not possibly find his paradigm wanting (5455-56).

Reason's more roundabout efforts to recruit the Lover also fail. At her pupil's request she attempts to prove this more reasonable love superior to the concept of Justice. At length she reaches a carefully considered conclusion:

> Si Joutice iert tourjorz gisanz,
> si seroit Amor soffisanz
> a mener bele vie et bone,
> sanz jouticier nule persone;
> mes sanz Amor, Joutice non.
> Por ce Amor a meilleur renon.
> (5497-502)
>
> (If Justice were always asleep, still Love would be enough to lead a good and pure life, without judging anyone. But justice without Love? No. It is for this reason that I call Love the better.[64])

But he takes no heed of her logical summation and instead makes an illogical return to an earlier accusation: that by encouraging him to leave off carnal love, she is directing him to hate. Their conversation deteriorates even further into a futile contest between Reason and the unreasoning Lover. Her inquiry, "If I wish to destroy the

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[61] Dahlberg, 99. "mes Amors tout enpeescheit / que riens a euvre n'en meisse, / ja soit ce que bien entendisse / mot a mot toute la matire."

[62] Dahlberg, 100. "est bone volanté conmune / des genz antr'els, sanz descordance, / selonc la Dieu benivolance[.]"

[63] Dahlberg, 111. "seroie fols."

[64] Dahlberg, 113.

mad love to which you aspire, do I order you to hate to that end?" (5698-704)[65] is quickly followed by his "Yes, indeed you do" (5722), [66] a response that further impresses Reason with his irrationality. He has not argued in the proper way, she tells him, which would require that he consult authoritative texts; his lack of rational procedure makes his logic faulty (5724-29). Her words, however, fail to effect any change in him.

The insufficiency of the rational paradigm to serve the Lover's needs is clearly revealed in Reason's offer of herself as the object of his love. She, in essence, is not only the other through whom he may access the ultimate reward for installing himself within the order she advocates; she is herself the reward, something she suggests will bring him ineffable satisfaction. Her status as "daughter of God" would tie him to "such a noble family that there is none to compare with her"; in addition,

> N'onques pucele de parage
> n'ot d'amer tel bandon con gié,
> car j'ai de mon pere congié
> de fere ami et d'estre amee,
> ja n'en seré, ce dit, blamee[.]
>
> (No girl of such descent ever had such power of loving as have I, for I have leave of my father to take a friend and be loved. I shall never be blamed for it. . . .)

Embracing her as lover and other would bring him wholeness beyond that which any other could supply. She also intimates that she is a mirror of God, a connection between divinity and the Lover: of herself she says, "See here [God's] form, and see yourself in my clear face" (5783-94).[67] If he will see himself in her, define himself

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[65] Dahlberg, 116. "Ne por ce se je veill estaindre / conmant je por ce que tu hees."

[66] Dahlberg, 116. "Certes tu manz."

[67] Dahlberg, 117. "fille Dieu"; "si haut lignage / qu'il n'est nule qui s'i conpere"; "Regarde ci quele forme a / et te mire en mon cler visage."

through her, he may perhaps perceive that he himself is created after the image of God. Yet it is unclear what this understanding will benefit him: who is this undefined God and what reward will he provide? In addition, adopting Reason as the other through which he constructs his identity would mean disconnecting himself from carnality or other worldly concerns (6854-56)--something beyond the scope of his desire. He responds to her offer with this undiscerning rejoinder: "Now tell me, not in Latin, but in French, what you want me to serve" (5809-11)[68] This alternative love offered by Reason is "Greek" to the Lover, as one translator puts it.[69] Embracing the rule of Reason when one could instead embrace the Rose is an incomprehensible concept to him. "I can," he tells his would-be significant other, "be nothing other that I am." The identity he has constructed for himself works only within the God of Love's paradigm, and that is where he will stay in the hope of what he believes is sure reward:

> Il me convient servir mon mestre,
> qui mout plus riche me fera
> .c. mile tanz, quant li plera,
> car la rose me doit baillier
> se je m'i sai bien travaillier;
> et se par lui la puis avoir,
> mestier n'avroie d'autre avoir.
> (6871-78)
>
> (I must serve my master, who will make me a hundred thousand times more rich when it pleases him, for he should give me the rose if I know well how to exert myself for it. And if, through him, I can possess it, I would have need of no other possession.)[70]

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[68] Dahlberg, 117. "Or me dites donques ainceis, / non en latin, mes in françois, / de quoi volez vos que je serve?"

[69] Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun, The Romance of the Rose, trans. Harry W. Robbins, ed. Charles W. Dunn (New York: Meridian-Penguin, 1962) Book 28, line 32.

[70] "[N]e peut autre estre." Dahlberg, 132.

His carnality controlling his every perception, he remains a thoroughgoing adherent of desire.

A coda reemphasizing his final statement of identity takes the form of criticism leveled at Reason for a perceived breach of decorum. Invoking the courtly-love practice of using genteel language, he accuses her having used immodest speech in her discussion of Justice--she had mentioned that the age of Justice ended when Jupiter, the ungrateful and usurping son, had cut off Saturn's "coilles,"[71] his testicles.[72] The Lover's courtly sensibilities offended, he intones:

> Vos, qui tant estes sage and bele,
> ne sai con namer les osastes,
> au mains quant le mot ne glosastes
> par quelque cortaise parole,
> si con preude fame en parole.
> (6902-6)
>
> (I do not know how you, so wise and beautiful, dared name them, at least when you did not gloss the word with some courteous utterance, as an honest woman does in speaking of them.[73])

Abandoning reasonable judgment in favor of the hypocritical, manipulative gentility that accompanies courtly love, he remains fixated on Reason's "offense."[74] Despite

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[71] de Lorris and de Meun, 5505-9, Lecoy, 1:169-70.

[72] Dahlberg, 113.

[73] Dahlberg, 133.

[74] The Lover was not the only witness to Reason's remarks to be shocked by them. They constitute one of the most frequently argued issues in *La Querelle de la* Rose, the largely epistolary fifteenth-century dispute among those arguing for or against the morality of Jean's section of the poem. In a typical exchange, Christine de Pisan writes in a letter to her opponent Pierre Col (this and other *querelle* excerpts from Joseph L. Baird and John R. Kane's La Querelle de la Rose: Letters and Documents, North Carolina Studies in the Romance Languages and Literatures 119 [Chapel Hill, NC: UNC Dept. of Romance Languages, 1978]) that speaking the names of the "secret members" could be counted a moral transgression because "the primary associations of the thing have already made the name dishonorable" (118); that is, the carnal connotations of original sin have infused the name of the carnal agent with

multiple gentle attempts to persuade him of his folly, Reason in the end fails to convince him that it is not lewdness to name that which God has created in Paradise for the purposes of ensuring the survival of all creation (6913-48). She has again touched upon that vexing issue that separates the rational from the irrational--the use of human genitalia for procreation or for satisfaction. Rationality names it proper to identify the instrument of "natural love"; the Lover, entrenched within the courtly paradigm of false morality and affected delicacy, perceives such openness as corruption.

Arguing in a confused and irrational way ("At least--and I think that I am quite certain of it--I am doing what is wise when I pay homage to my master" [7178-80] [75]), the Lover is finally successful in discouraging Reason from continuing her efforts, and is at last left alone, but not for long; a more desirable companion appears, Ami, who will facilitate the Lover's efforts to become even more solidly embedded within the paradigm that will win him the Rose. Unlike Boethius and unlike the narrator of Alan's Complaint, the Lover has rejected the teachings of a female authority figure,

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immorality. Col had remarked, however, that "if the pollution of our first parents made the secret members so shameful that one is not permitted to name them, I say that by a stronger reason one ought not to call our first parents by name. For they are the ones who sinned; not their members" (94). Christine also argues that Jean has Reason speak the names for reasons of "carnal enticement" (122); Col holds that Jean's primary intent in much of what might be labeled scurrilous was to highlight the foolishness of carnal loving (92-115). While there can be no doubt that Jean includes details in his narrative that would serve to shock many readers, it is not clear to what end he included them. What is clear, however, is that with regard to the particular situation of genitalia-naming, the Lover cannot be perceived as being more authoritative than Reason. Their previous exchange has established his credibility as slight or non-existent in comparison to hers.

[75] Dahlberg, 137. "mes au mains fis je lors que sages, / de ce cuit je bien estre fis, / quant homage a mon mestre fis."

one of obvious sagacity and divine connection who sought to ease his torment by serving as other to him.

Yet, as I have suggested throughout this section, Reason's ineffectuality in serving as other to the Lover is rooted in an overvaluing of the rational paradigm. As Reason presents it, embracing reasonable loving is a rational choice; but, as Cherniss points out, the garden in which the Lover's adventure occurs is suggestive of the postlapsarian world, one in which "[Reason] does not hold uncontested sway over human emotions."[76] As I mentioned earlier, at the poem's end Genius looks beyond the world of the Garden of Delight to "the park of the lovely field where the son of the virgin ewe in all his white fleece leads his flock with him, leaping over the grass" (19905-909),[77] a place that seems a true paradise. Yet Genius's understanding of this other world is, at best, inadequate. If the paradisiacal park is to supply the wholeness Genius implies it will, something more is needed to bridge the gap between the two worlds. Reason, whose argument calls upon "the sort of rational wisdom available to the great pagan writers" is no such bridge. Cherniss suggests that Reason is limited in her effectiveness as a healer because "she cannot discuss [her patient's malady] from a Christian perspective."[78] It is true that she does not herself represent transcendent Christian wisdom, nor does she, despite her familial relationship to "God," seem to point the way to the greater satisfaction that comes from Him. Reason, in fact, is unable to point beyond herself to any kind of greater satisfaction, Christian or otherwise, and it seems that the attempt to remake the Lover into Rational Man fails altogether for this very reason.

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[76] Michael D. Cherniss, Boethian Apocalypse: Studies in Middle English Vision Poetry (Norman, OK: Pilgrim, 1987) 93.

[77] Dahlberg, 328. "parc du champ joli / ou les berbiz conduit o li, / saillant devant par les herbiz, li fliz de la Vierge, berbiz / o toute sa blanche toison[.]"

[78] Cherniss, 92.

And indeed, the Lover's final statements in the poem suggest that he has absorbed nothing of the teachings of Reason. After successfully attaining the Rose, he reports that his adherence to the tenets of courtly love have raised him to "such high degree" (21713):[79] he has, in other words, arrived at a measure of satisfaction. Reason is not among those he thanks as helpers in what he perceives to be the achievement of wholeness, and he offers, "I didn't remember Reason, who gave me a lot of trouble for nothing" (21730-31).[80] To the Lover, the identity he has constructed is rooted in irrational sensuality, which provides the closest thing available to a transcendent experience. Reason, who failed to satisfy, is not even a memory.

The Complaint of Nature

Because Nature in Alan of Lille's Complaint of Nature is an other more suited to the needs of the work's narrator, she encounters more success than the Romance's Reason does. In addition, the order of Nature is, by Nature's own admission, subsumed within a larger, transcendent paradigm. But because the paradigm she both embodies and advances is primarily concerned with life in the material sphere, many mysteries of this larger paradigm--in spiritual terms, the superior world--remain clouded to her and, consequently, to the narrator. Although the larger universe in which Nature moves is implicitly Christian (made known only through inference rather than direct statement), her primary focus remains on worldly things, among them, the restoration of her male charge to the natural state he has forsaken. Like Lady Philosophy, she tries to set her pupil on the path to selfhood by educating him about his role in her natural paradigm--a paradigm that, if he embraces it, will effect a

[79] Dahlberg, 354. "si haut degré."
[80] Dahlberg, 354. "Mes de Reson ne me souvint, / qui tant en moi gasta de peine."

kind of healing in him. That it may also lead him closer to the God who created it and him is inferred; yet before he may achieve such a final solution he must overcome the desire to flee from Nature's demand. Doing so requires that he harmonize his reason and his sensuality.

The identity-construction process that Nature must mediate for the Complaint's narrator is very much concerned with the force behind fecundity she represents--sexuality. Despite his opening claims to the contrary, he has abandoned Nature's paradigm, refusing to fulfill his rightful role in it. In order to reclaim him, Nature must reconstruct him as one capable of avoiding the desire that propels his intellectual and his physical impulses in divergent directions. Should he be able to yoke these two together so that they might work in tandem, he would move himself closer to an understanding of his role in the larger divine paradigm.

The narrator's problem is obvious from the very beginning of the work. Made miserable by the blatant disregard of the active sex--men--for Nature's laws of procreation (M. 1. 429), he claims to abhor their homosexuality, an act well outside Nature's paradigm. If the kisses which currently "lie fallow on maiden's lips. . .were but once planted on me" (M. 1. 430), [81] he avows,

> Quae. . .mellirent. . .succo,
> Quae mellita darent mellis in ore favum.
> Spiritus exiret ad basia, deditus ori
> Totus, et in labiis luderet ipse sibi.
> Ut dum sic moriar, in me defunctus, in illa
> Felici vita perfruar, alter ego.
> (M. 1.430)
>
> (they would grow honey-sweet with moisture, and grown honey-sweet, they would form a honeycomb in my mouth. My life breath, concentrating entirely on my mouth, would go out to meet the kisses

[81] Sheridan, 70. "Virginis in labiis . . .quiescunt. . . mihi pressa."

> and would disport itself entirely on my lips so that I might thus expire and that, when dead myself, my other self might enjoy in her a fruitful life.)[82]

The "alter ego," or other self, that would live on after the man himself is dead is the natural aim of all intercourse: progeny. The narrator, then, identifies himself as a champion of Nature's order made disconsolate by the refusal of the men whom he decries to adhere to Nature's dictates. But it becomes clear that his self-identification is not an accurate one: he himself is not entirely in sync with Nature. This much is obvious as he fails to recognize her when she does appear to him. In addition, his strong reaction to her beauty and to the spectacular procession that attends her (M. 3) belies his earlier assertion that he would respond to the loveliness of woman with natural ardor, for he does not respond "naturally" to Nature herself. Instead, as she suggests after awakening him, he regards her as something terrible or even abnormal, a reaction that is an apparent failure of his rational mind to correctly govern his emotional and physical response. She says to him:

> Heu!. . .quae ignorantiae caecitas, quae alienatio mentis, quae debilitas sensuum, quae infirmatio rationis, tuo intellectui nubem opposuit, animum exulare coegit, sensus hebetavit potentiam, mentem compulit aegrotare, ut non solum tuae nutricis familiari a cognitione tua intelligentia defraudetur, verum etiam tanquam monstruosae imaginis novitate percussa, in meae apparitionis ortu tua discretio patiatur occasum?
> (Pr. 3.449-50)
>
> (Alas, what blindness of ignorance, what delirium of mind, what impairment of sense, what weakness of reason, have cast a cloud over your intellect, driven your reason into exile, dulled the power of your senses, forced sickness of mind on you, so that your mind is not only robbed of an intimate knowledge of your foster-mother but also that at

[82] Sheridan, 70-71.

> my first rising the star of your judgment is forced to set as though stricken by some monstrous and unheard-of appearance?)[83]

As Ferrante observes, "[T]here is no connection between what he says and what he does."[84] He is, in a sense, as guilty of an offense against Nature as are the men he so violently censured; to escape the confines of desire he must take Nature as his other, letting her words re-situate him within demand.

As with Boethius, the first step in this narrator's healing is his recognition of his teacher. Yet he is so far out of alignment with the natural paradigm that it is long before such an event occurs. The mediating function of the stunning presence before him becomes evident when he learns that hers is the middle, comparative power to God's superlative and humanity's positive powers (Pr. 3.456). Her role in the creation of the material world and of humanity itself (Pr. 3.451) is made obvious when she discusses her "recipe" and justification for the reason-sense combination within man: she has intentionally set sensuality and rational thought against each other, she emphasizes, "so that if reason could in this debate turn sensuousness into an object of ridicule, the first reward of victory would not be without subsequent ones" (Pr. 3.452).[85] He must also discover that she has limitations: it is not in her nature to comprehend matters of transcendent faith, among them, what she labels the "second birth," although it is in her nature to revere them (Pr. 3.456). All of this is enough to remind the narrator what he as a votary of Nature should know; demand makes inroads into desire and he rouses himself, recognizes his companion, and begins the process of reconstructing his identity. In his words:

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[83] Sheridan, 117.

[84] Ferrante, 59.

[85] Sheridan, 120. "ut si, in hac disputatione, ad redargutionem poterit sensualitatem ratio inclinare, antecedens victoria praemio consequente non careat."

> Cum per haec verba mihi Natura naturae suae faciem develaret, suaque admonitione quasi clave praeambula cognitionis suae mihi januam reseraret, a meae mentis confinio stuporis evaporat nubecula. Et per hanc admonitionem, velut quodam potionis remedio, omnes phantasiae reliquias quasi nauseus stomachus mentis evomuit. A meae igitur mentis peregrinatione ad me reversus ex integro, ad Naturae devolutus vestigia, salutationis vice ejus pedes osculorum multiplici impressione signavi.
> (Pr. 3. 457)
>
> (While Nature was revealing aspects of her nature to me in these words and by her instruction, as by an opening key, was unlocking for me the door of her knowledge, the cloudlet of stupor was drifting away from the confines of my mind. By the final instruction, as by some healing potion, the stomach of my mind, as if nauseated, spewed forth all the dregs of phantasy. When I came completely back to myself after my mind's trip abroad, I fell down at Nature's feet and marked them with the imprint of many a kiss to take the place of a formal greeting.)[86]

Through an exercise of reason he has come to recognize her as the one he claims to worship, who may return him to the sureness of the paradigm that he, like Boethius, had abandoned, and he engages in a physical response appropriate to the conclusion of his rational faculties. He has made the first step toward wholeness.

What the narrator must now come to understand is how the proper reason-sense balance can counteract the very situation that occasioned his vision: the troubled state of human sexuality. It seems that Nature has chosen him as her "intimate and confidant" (Pr. 4.464)[87] because of his intellectual awareness of the problem. Yet he by turns appears reluctant and then overeager to take advantage of such intimate contact with Nature--evidence that control of his lower faculties by his higher ones still evades him. Nature, ever the "mediatrix in all things," must first encourage his participation, assuring him: "[I]mpart to my ears all your questions, not only those of more recent growth, but also those made old with the mildew of great age, so that the

[86] Sheridan, 126.
[87] "familiari et secretario." Sheridan, 138.

pressure from your doubts may be relieved by the secure certainty of my answers" (Pr. 4. 464).[88] Her answers will reinstate demand, if only he will allow it. And for awhile, he patiently absorbs the significance of her words, recognizing the failure of his intellect when he says in response to her explanation of the classical gods' homosexuality (lies made attractive through artistic packaging [Pr. 4.465]), "Mother, I now realise that my questioning smacks of deep, shameful ignorance" (Pr. 4.466).[89] Her confirmation that he has already accurately identified the chief offender of Nature as man[90] illustrates the general soundness of his judgment should he exercise it properly. But he remains a prisoner of desire in that he chooses to veer from Nature's chosen method of imparting the knowledge necessary to his progress. Despite her pointed admonition that he "fan to higher flame the little fire of [his] reason" and "let constancy in attention check the turbulent flow of [his] thoughts" if he is to understand the "original seeds of this plague" (Pr. 4.467),[91] he instead impulsively asks her to skip ahead in her narrative of how sexuality became separated from rationality, focusing on the nature of the sexual urge rather than on the disaster that tainted it. Nature correctly diagnoses him "a soldier drawing pay in the army of Desire" who is connected to the concept "by some kind of brotherhood arising from

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[88] Sheridan, 138. "rerum omnium moderatrix"; "Immo omnes tuas quaestiones, non solum adoelscentes, verum etiam vetustatis antiquatas rubigine, audientiae nostrae communices, ut nostrarum solutionum stabili firmitate, tuarum dubitationum tranquilletur impulsus."

[89] Sheridan, 141. "Jam meam quaestionem, mater, agnosco redolere nimiae ruditatis infantiam."

[90] Man's injustice to Nature is represented by a rip in her garment, which she calls the "vesture of [her] modesty" ("pudoris ornamenta"); it was ripped "by injuries and insults from man alone" ("solius hominis injurious insultibus"). Pr. 4.467; Sheridan, 142-43. The garment torn through man's iniquity is a motif borrowed from Boethius's Philosophy.

[91] Sheridan, 143. "altius mentis accenderes igniculum"; "cogitationum fluctus attentionis compescat stabilitas" "sementitiam. . .pestis originem."

deep and close friendship" (Pr. 4.471).[92] Formerly the narrator was reluctant to access Nature's wisdom regarding sexuality; now, so involved is he in the process that he seeks to direct it himself, or, more accurately, to allow his irrational impulses to guide it. Not only a soldier of Desire, but a student of desire, the narrator has far to go before he can count himself an adherent of demand.

Although Nature tells him he would be better off "directing [his] attention of mind more closely to the account enriched by the wealth of [her] ideas," out of commiseration with his "human frailty"(Pr. 4.471)[93] she obliges his request. It is clear, however, that her explanation of sexual desire as a force that makes love pleasurable, painful, and impossible to avoid unless one would flee it altogether (M. 5.472-74) is not to be fully understood without a discussion of how desire came to be that way. He can listen to her teaching that, as with all things "natural," sexual desire may avoid vice "if it restrains itself with the bridle of moderation." Yet the narrator has demonstrated repeatedly that he shows little inclination toward moderation, a key element in Nature's demand and the result of a proper relationship between the rational and the sensual. He must change his inclinations if he is to keep the "tiny flame" of sexual longing from "turn[ing] into a conflagration."[94] For this he requires context. His detour has again delayed his own quest for wholeness, undermining Nature's efforts to bring about his healing in the most effectual way.

The context she finally supplies helps him to understand why sexuality is so problematic: lawful Desire, personified in the narrative as the son of Venus, Nature's

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[92] Sheridan, 148. "Cupidinis castris stipendiarie militantem"; "quadam internae familiaritatis germanitate."

[93] Sheridan, 148. "narrationi sententiarum locupletatae divitiis, mentis intentionem intentius adaptare deberes"; "humanitatis imbecillitati."

[94] "si circumscribatur frenis modestiae"; "ejus scintilla in flamman evaseri." Alan, Pr. 5, 474; Sheridan, 154-55.

lieutenant in charge of sexual functioning, and her husband Hymanaeus, has been corrupted in all of humanity. That which used to work, to the enjoyment of all parties, inevitably toward Nature's goal of procreation--the goal that the narrator's reason acknowledged near the beginning of his vision--now abhors any goal and seems to offer little satisfaction. This aspect of Nature's creation has been degraded due to Venus's abandonment of demand; she took a lover, Antigenius,[95] and their bastard offspring thereafter ruled where previously her legitimate offspring had (Pr. 5.475-82). No longer were human sexual relations conducted with the moderation Nature had ordained; instead, they fell under the irrational governance of Jocus or Sport, a name assigned to him "by antiphrasis, so to speak," because he "took no pleasure in the charms of love" and "refused to relax in the delights of sport" (Pr. 5.480-81).[96] The narrator is an example of the humanity infected by the introduction of Sport into the cosmic plan: although unable to deliver on his early avowal to participate in the procreative process, he has erratically both hesitated to seek intellectual instruction in his dilemma and hotly sought to immerse himself it its "inextricable labyrinth" (Pr. 4.471).[97] Yet having learned the distinction between *Venus caelestis*--Desire in moderation, love produced in the proper context, marriage--and *Venus scelestis*--Desire turned to Sport, love so bastardized as to be a crime,[98] he demonstrates in his answer to Nature that he has progressed toward an embrace of her

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[95] Sheridan notes that "*Antigenius*, not *Antigamus*, is the reading supported by the best manuscripts." The term means "opposed to Genius" (163, 27n.), who is Nature's consort, see below.

[96] Sheridan, 164. "quasi per antiphrasim[;] nullius delectationis amoenitate gaudet[;] nullius jocositatis vult meridiari deliciis."

[97] Sheridan, 148. "Inextricabilem. . .labyrinthum."

[98] For a discussion of Alan's use of the two Venuses in his Complaint, see two works by George D. Economou: The Goddess Natura in Medieval Literature (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1972) 86, 87, 91; and his "Two Venuses," 17-50 (see n. 55).

paradigm, which relies on rational governance. He replies to his teacher with a proper fusion of emotion and reason: "For some time now I have been cheered by what I have gained from your teaching and I lend a most ready ear to your corrections" (Pr. 5.482).[99]

What he still must next learn is that the same balance of reason and sense is required in all aspects of human existence; the fault infecting sexuality is emblematic of fallen human nature itself. The world, according to Nature, has become a place in which laws are ignored, justice fails and vice reigns (M. 6.482-84). She reinforces the importance of using the mind to interpret experience: wisdom, Nature tells him, because she "changes the earthly into the heavenly, the perishable into the immortal, man into God," is the only counter to the onslaught of vice, "the one remedy for your exile." Wisdom's transcendent power is such that "no darkness in the heavens confuses her keen vision, no thickness of earth blocks her operation, no water's depth dims her vision" (Pr. 6.490). [100] The narrator signals that he understands at last the importance of relying on the fortress that is his reason, asking: "I would have you strengthen the little town of my mind by the rational ramparts of your instruction against the furious armies of these vices"[101] (Pr. 7.500-1). The ammunition he requests is what he has heard earlier but perhaps only now understands: that moderation in everything and self-policing are the best hope for any who would be a

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[99] Sheridan, 166. "Jam pridem mea mens, exhilarata tuae disciplinationis compendio, tuis correctionibus libentissimam aurem inclinat."

[100] Sheridan, 179. "in coeleste terrenum, in immortale caducum, hominem in deum. . .convertit"; "verum tuae peregrinationis remedium"; "Cujus aciem nullius aeris caligo confundit, non densitas terrae operam ejus offendit, nec aquae altitudo aspectum ejus obtundit."

[101] Sheridan, 193. "Vellem ut rationabilibus tuae disciplinationis propugnaculis, contra furiales istorum vitiorum exercitus, meae mentis roborares oppidulum."

"soldier in the army of the right" (M. 8.502).[102] Demand seems on the verge of conquering desire.

What he witnesses, apparently both as reward for his progress and as the final stage of his education, is pivotal to his installation within Nature's plan, and to the healing of his sense of self. At Nature's request, her consort Genius excommunicates from Nature's fellowship those who have rejected the natural paradigm. The narrator, apparently no longer among those offenders of Nature, instead stands among the spectators, all of whom have in some way been victimized by those failing to adhere to demand. The narrator now belongs where he thought he did at his vision's beginning: with the beleagered Hymenaeus, the representative of lawful marriage and procreation, and with a number of personified virtues who have been driven from the earth by humanity's wickedness. He belongs, in other words, in the fellowship of Nature. And although it is a society that cannot hope for the unhindered functioning of Nature's law--Nature, herself admits, "[I]t is not in my power to eradicate completely the poison of this pestilence" (Pr. 8.510)[103]--it is still a society gifted with glimpses of the larger paradigm of which Nature is only a part. What this larger paradigm suggests is hope, satisfaction beyond that inherent in the proper regulation of sense by reason. Genius, a sort of intermediary between Nature and God's paradigm, brings with him intimations of what might occur to any who achieve the demand of the larger plan: "the possibility," as Economou writes, "of restoration."[104] Etymologically, the word "genius" comes from the Latin verb *gignere*, to beget, bear

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[102] Sheridan, 194-95. "honori militent."

[103] Sheridan, 205-6. "nec meae facultatis est, hujus pestilentiae vurus omnifarie extirpare."

[104] Economou, Goddess, 90.

or bring forth,[105] and when the character first appears in the Complaint, his involvement in Nature's generative process is apparent in his continuous drawing of species and individuals that fade quickly and must be replaced by more figures (Pr. 9.517-18). Clearly, he is the "quickening" element in the functioning of natural creation, and the fact that he is intimate with both Nature and God suggests not only that Nature's law is indeed divinely sanctioned but that a higher type of regeneration may be available to those who fulfill it. The offspring of Genius and Nature, Truth, further emphasizes this conclusion. Born not from the lust of the fallen world but from a cosmic platonic event, the "kiss" of the parents that occurs when "the eternal Idea greeted Hyle [matter] as she begged for forms and imprinted a vicarious kiss in her through the medium and intervention of Image" (Pr. 9.518),[106] Truth's countenance and clothing bespeak divine craftsmanship (Pr. 9.518-19); her assistance with her father's painting again suggests both the divine within natural regeneration and the possibility that natural regeneration prefigures the "second birth," the province of the divine realm Nature venerates but cannot penetrate with her perception (Pr. 3.456).

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[105] Economou notes that Alan's Genius draws upon a "conflation of the two Genius figures" represented Bernard Silvestris's *De mundi universitate*: of "two genii. . .resid[ing] in the male genitals for the purpose of preserving the human race," and of a genius figure "who assigns forms to individuals in the world below" (Goddess 92).

[106] Sheridan, 217-18. "Ylem formarum speculum meditantem aeternalis salutavit idea, eandem iconiae interpretis interventu vicario osculata." Economou suggests that Genius's kiss with Nature "identifies [his] office with that of the secondary forms, the doctrine of which posits "intermediary images of divine ideas as the substantial embodiments of those ideas in matter" (Goddess 92). This suggests a further association: with "the transmission of the Divine Wisdom into the sphere of Nature." Winthrop Wetherbee, "The Function of Poetry in the *De planctu naturae* of Alain de Lille," Traditio 25 (1969): 114, qtd. in Economou, Goddess, 92.

Winthrop Wetherbee has argued that "[a]t the end of De planctu naturae man remains alienated." The "implicit message" of such an ending: "the need for redemptive grace."[107] It is true that while hints of a wholeness beyond that which Nature can provide abound, instructions for achieving that wholeness are never spelled out, only implied. Still, it seems that the narrator's rational training has provided him with at least some of the tools he needs to access the paradigm of the second birth. Rationality is again key, as it is expressed in the transcendent concept of wisdom, whom Nature called humanity's only true salvation: she "changes the earthly into the heavenly, the perishable into the immortal, man into God" (Pr. 6.490).[108] In order for the narrator to achieve ultimate wholeness, natural knowledge must be transformed into wisdom; wisdom in turn should lead to membership in the divine paradigm--and a healed sense of self. Perhaps the redemptive grace to which Wetherbee refers is the very element necessary to transform natural knowledge to wisdom, and if this is so, then, that element is not something the narrator can achieve directly through his knowledge-building sessions with Nature. He must, instead, use the rational skills she has cultivated in him to turn to some other avenue for answers--perhaps Theology, mentioned earlier by Nature as one whose province is distinct from her own, would prove helpful in this matter.

What the narrator has achieved by the poem's end, though, is a solution of sorts to the turmoil that apparently inspired his encounter with Nature, a harmonizing of the dichotomy that plagued him earlier. That he awakes from his dream following the excommunication ceremony reinforces the probability of his healing. He has witnessed the punishment of those enemies of Nature who so offended him. Because

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[107] Wetherbee, "Alan," 119.

[108] Sheridan, 179. "in coeleste terrenum, in immortale caducum, hominem in deum. . .convertit."

of his receptivity to Nature's teaching, he himself is no longer among their ranks but seems at last a member of the "harmonious council of the things of Nature" (Pr. 9.52).[109] And through the figure of Genius, regeneration, restoration, redemption are implied. The appropriate physical response to his intellectual processing of this experience would be to regain consciousness, the purpose of the vision having been achieved. He explains, "Accordingly, when the mirror with these images and visions was withdrawn, I awoke from my dream and ecstasy and the previous vision of the mystic apparition left me."[110] From his concluding words it can be implied that the entire experience has served as the mirror within which he has realigned his "natural" identity with the natural paradigm, with Nature herself serving as the most instrumental other in the process.

The Consolation of Philosophy

The task of Lady Philosophy is to remake Boethius into the man he once was--an adherent of the philosophical paradigm, which she represents. This is his need. And by firmly installing him in the philosophical paradigm, she prepares him for eventual installation within the eternal one: as the embodiment of man's most god-like endeavor, the product of the highest exercise of his rational mind, Philosophy intercedes between man and heaven precisely because of this intimate link with man's most divine attribute, his reason. But if Philosophy's task is clearly defined, it is not easy. Boethius is mired in desire, lost in emotional self-indulgence that, in effect, blinds him to the intellectual and spiritual truths of the Philosophical model. He only gradually recovers who he is, only slowly reinvigorates himself through realignment

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[109] Sheridan, 220. "naturalium rerum uniformi concilio."

[110] "Hujus igitur imaginariae visionis subtracto speculo, me ab extasi excitatum in somno prior mysticae apparitionis dereliquit aspectus," Alan, Pr. 9, 522; Sheridan, 221.

with Philosophy's demand. His healing process is played out in dialogue, with Philosophy effecting a cure by allowing her patient to view experience in the mirror that her verbalizations put to him. The truth of her responses clarify his muddied understanding of the workings of the universe, and his cure will come with acceptance and internalization of the wisdom her words hold.

The first stage in Boethius's identity-recovery process amounts to recognizing Philosophy as the one by whom he had formerly lived. Although awed by her burning eyes and vigor and by her timeless authority and obvious connection to divinity (I. Pr. 1.1-13), he does not seem to know the majestic woman who has appeared suddenly in his prison cell, interrupting his maudlin immersion in weepy poetry. She diagnoses his problem almost immediately, drawing him toward her paradigm with these words: "[Y]ou have forgotten what you are" (I.Pr. 6.40).[111] She continues to reconstruct his identity by banishing the poetic muses (she calls them "theatrical tarts" [.Pr. 1.29][112]) with whom he had created his present self-absorbed, lachrymose identity, and then by gently wiping his eyes (I, Pr. 2.15-16), clouded as they are with desire: futile concerns for his lost reputation and the unfairness of his imprisonment. The result of this, Boethius relates, is a reestablished link with the transcendent, and he immediately thereafter identifies his physician: "Just so the clouds of misery were dispelled, and I drank in the clear light, recovering enough to recognize my healer's face"(I.Pr. 3.1-3).[113] Reemphasizing her nurturing, motherly qualities, he calls her his "nurse," the one who raised him and whose house he visited

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[111] "quid ipse sis, nosse desisti."

[112] "scenicas meretriculas." Boccaccio argued in his Genealogy of the Gods that Boethius did not condemn all poetry through Philosophy's banishment of these muses, but only "a certain kind of obscene theatrical poetry" (Green, Boethius, 4n).

[113] "Haud aliter tristiae nebulis dossolutis hausi caelum et ad cognoscendam mendicantis faciem mentem recepi."

regularly. He also recognizes her connection to divine authority, noting that she has just now come to him from her dwelling place in heaven (I.Pr. 3.3-8).[114] Her mediating function in recouping his identity has only begun, though, and demands more than recognition on his part. He must learn to use what she offers him if he is to pull himself out of his desire-produced funk. He has not used his rational faculties much as of late, however, a fact evident in his self-pitying commentary upon the order of things: "For although it is perhaps a normal human failing to have evil desires, it is surely a monstrous thing in the sight of God that whatever an evil man conceives can actually be done to the innocent" (I.Pr. 4.101-4).[115] He may have moved from the contemplation of his own physical deterioration that begins the work ("My head is white before its time, my skin hangs loose / About my tremulous frame: I am worn out" [I.M. 1.11-12][116]) to a reflection upon things eternal, but he still insists on resisting the notion at the center of the philosophical paradigm for which his teacher is trying to reclaim him: that a single, beneficent presence is in control of the universe. Philosophy must free him of this impulse if he is to become himself once more.

He takes steps toward his recovery, listening to Philosophy's take on the joy-destroying fickleness of Fortune (II), and her further assertion that the embrace of earthly riches--acclaim or power, for instance--can in the end lead only to misery (III). All her explanations lead to what Green calls the "one, all-embracing, perfect good,"[117] the only true source of satisfaction in the universe: the creator God, who drew his creation from his own divine and flawless form. "A fair world in your mind

[114] "nutricem."

[115] "Nam deteriora velle nostri fuerit fortasse defectus, posse contra innocentiam, quae sceleratus quisque conceperit inspectante deo, monsti simile est."

[116] "Intempestivi funduntur vertice cani / Et tremit effeto corpore laxa cutis."

[117] Green, "Summary," 127.

you bear," she sings to God, "and forming it / In the same likeness, bid it being perfect to complete itself / In perfect parts"(III, M. 9.8-9). [118] Boethius "forsakes his proper origin" when he embraces "baser things" (III.M. 6.9), such as fame and worldly success; they are degraded and ineffectual substitutes for Philosophy, who is both the lens through which he may perceive the perfection of God's creation and the link to experiencing that perfection himself. Accepting Philosophy as other will enable Boethius to see that his misery is a part of the "fair" world created by the one true mind, for it is a reflection of that mind. Once he perceives that his misery can only work to his good, he will be able to count himself an adherent of Philosophy's paradigm once more. Demand will have again mastered desire; and he will once more have access to a mirror higher even than Philosophy herself: "For, to the blessed, *you* [God] / Are clear serenity, and quiet rest: to see *you* is their goal, / And you, alone and same, / Are their beginning, driver, leader, pathway, end" (III.M. 9.26-28).[119] It is to this end that Philosophy leads Boethius, a still resistant recruit.

He claims to accept his teacher's explanation, stating, "I accept that, . . .nor can it in any way be contradicted" (III.Pr. 10.38-39)[120]-- yet he still refrains from embracing Philosophy's teachings wholeheartedly, as his follow-up actions make clear. That he refuses to relinquish victimhood is obvious in his focus on the flourishing of evil in a universe supposedly ruled by a good God (IV). He is unable to trust the sureness of the paradigm Philosophy advocates because it runs counter to human rationality in this matter, the sole standard by which he is currently able to judge truth. Philosophy

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[118] "Mundum mente gerens similique in imagine formans / perfectasque iubens perfectum absolvere partes."

[119] "Tu namque serenum, / Tu requies tranquilla piis, te cernere finis, / Principium, vector, dux, semita, terminus idem."

[120] Accipio, . . .nec est quod contradici ullo modo queat."

must teach him to contextualize his rationality within a surety that all things are part of the divine plan, even if the "sense" of some events is available only to God:

> Sola est enim divina vis cui mala quoque bona sint, cum eis enim competenter utendo alicuius boni elicit effectum. Ordo enim quidam cuncta complectitur, ut quod adsignata ordinis ratione decesserit, hoc licet in alium, tamen ordinem relabatur, ne quid in regno previdentiae liceat temeritati.
> (IV.Pr. 6.189-95)
>
> (For only the divine nature is such that to it even evils are good, since by suitable use of them God draws out as a result some good. For a certain order embraces all things, so that that which has departed from the rule of this order appointed to it, although it slips into another condition yet that too is order, so that nothing in the realm of providence may be left to chance.)

As the embodiment of the Philosophical paradigm, of *human* efforts to understand God, Philosophy herself remains limited in her access to the divine details (IV.Pr. 6.196) because "it is not allowed to a man either to comprehend with his natural powers or to express in words all the devices of the work of God" (IV.Pr. 6.197-99).[121] She can explain no more, only highlight for him the importance of belief in the larger, eternal paradigm, which she reemphasizes by assuring Boethius that if he were able to see things as God sees them, he would see that all is good, "that there was no evil anywhere" (IV.Pr. 6.204-6).[122]

He in the end claims to be convinced by her argument ("Your exhortation is right indeed and very worthy of your authority. . ." [V.Pr. 1.2-4]),[123] seems to accept the goodness of all types of fortune; still, he resists re-entering the paradigm. Although Philosophy has taught him that rationality can take him only so far, that something

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[121] "Neque. . .fas homini cunctas divinae operae machinas vel ingenio comprehendere vel explicare sermone."

[122] "nihil usquam mali esse."

[123] "Recta quidem. . .exhortatio tuaque prorsus auctoritate dignissima. . . ."

exists beyond that which makes rational sense, at his current stage of development neither faith nor reason can master the desire-fueled impulse to question once again the nature of God and the universe. His final query: whether chance exists (V.Pr. 1.6-7). It is a question that again requires his teacher to reassert that God is in control but also to clarify for her pupil the issue of free will--a concept undoubtedly at odds with his desire to blame outside forces for his misery and powerlessness. Philosophy, again, calls him away from those tendencies, explaining that man does have the power to choose his life path, and is in turn responsible for his choices even though God ultimately controls all. "Eternity. . .is the whole, simultaneous and perfect possession of boundless life" (V.Pr. 6.9-11),[124] Philosophy begins; furthermore,

> [U]ti vos vestro hoc temporario praesentia quaedam videtis, ita ille omnia suo cernit aeterno. Quare haec divina praenotio naturam rerum proprietatemque non mutat taliaque apud se praesentia spectat qualia in tempore olim futura provenient.
>
> (V.Pr. 6.78-83)
> ([J]ust as you see certain things in this your temporal present, so he perceives all things in his eternal one. And therefore this divine foreknowledge does not alter the proper nature of things, but sees them present to him just such as in time they will at some future point come to be.)

Boethius the character does not speak again in this narrative, and the confirmation that he has internalized Philosophy's teaching, is at last capable of extricating himself from the exile he had adopted, and has returned to the homeland of Philosophy's paradigm is only implied by her final words, which point him beyond the goal of embracing Philosophy herself. Adopting Philosophy as other will inevitably lead to a more intimate relationship with God, who will satisfy. "Nor vainly are our hopes placed in God, nor our prayers, which when they are right cannot be ineffectual," she

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[124] "Aeternitas igitur est interminabilis vitae tota simul et perfecta possessio[.]"

tells Boethius (V.Pr. 6.170-72). [125] And in placing his hope in the power of God to eventually make existence come clear, only one course of action is left open to him. Philosophy concludes, "A great necessity is solemnly ordained for you if you do not want to deceive yourself, to do good, when you act before the eyes of a judge who sees all things" (V.Pr. 6.174-76).[126] In doing good, in adopting good thinking and good behavior, Boethius would be complying with the image of himself reflected in the eyes of the all-seeing judge who is Himself the greatest good. This action, Philosophy suggests, is the final aim of the philosophical paradigm; it is also an act that holds the potential for great reward: a communion of sorts with God, the one who created him, the one with the power to bestow wholeness.

Although Michael Cherniss argues that Lady Philosophy's solution to Boethius's problem is "provisional, not final" because "the final answers are only hinted at,"[127] she has instilled in her pupil a paradigm that will provide him with a measure of security and identity for as long as he abides by its tenets. Philosophy's efforts may be "essentially practical and secular" in that they are "more attuned to life in this world than life in the next world";[128] still, the very nature of the God at the center of her paradigm implies an existence beyond the one Boethius is struggling through: God is eternal, Philosophy tells Boethius ("[T]hat. . .is the common judgment of all who live by reason" [V.Pr. 6.5-7]), and He rules his creation in "perpetual order"

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[125] "Nec frustra sunt in deo positae spes precesque; quae cum rectae sunt inefficaces esse non possunt."

[126] "Magna vobis est, si dissimulare non vultis, necessitas indicta probitatis, cum ante oculos agitis iudicis cuncta cernentis."

[127] Cherniss, 16.

[128] Cherniss, 11.

(III.M. 9.1).[129] Philosophy as other is a way to access the eternal paradigm even if the particulars of eternity are not available to her.

Pearl

The Pearl Maiden of the fourteenth-century Middle English Pearl is able to offer her pupil a host of particulars about the afterlife, and it is little wonder that she can do so; she herself is a bride of the Christ at the center of eternity and is herself firmly ensconsed with His realm. Yet her overtly Christian agenda does not enable her to achieve a speedy reconstruction of her father's identity; the poem's narrator, while less resistant than the Lover of the Romance of the Rose, is arguably more stubborn and petulant than either Boethius or the Complaint's narrator. Her success with him is due in large part to the fact that, despite his resistance to her teaching, he is at root an adherent of the paradigm she advocates. He, like Boethius, apparently already knows the truths that will lead him to wholeness; his present emotional distress prevents him from using that knowledge. If he is to "relearn things about [Christ] and Heaven in the light of his own experience," Cherniss notes, Pearl's dreamer, like the other central figures, "needs assistance to do so."[130] His guide is his daughter, transformed within his vision from a dead infant into the radiant Pearl Maiden, yet another beautiful, courtly, authoritative woman. Her specific task is to convince her father that man's judgment of worth and reward is not God's. This is the paradigm she advances--a paradigm that relies heavily upon rational exercise. What Pearl demonstrates, though, is the utilization of rational thought within a Christian framework for the explicit purpose of understanding Christian reality. Although the Pearl Maiden cannot fully enact wholeness for the man she counsels--he is, after all,

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[129] "cunctorum ratione degentium commune iudicium est," "perpetua. . .ratione,"
[130] Cherniss, 153.

still living, and the Christian paradigm stipulates that wholeness does not come until after death--she can help him achieve wholeness with regard to the matter that has shattered his faith: her death and his loss of her. And in doing so she prepares him for eventual membership within the company of those who eternally embrace Christian demand, a company of which she is herself a member.

The narrator's initial circumstances suggest that he has indeed lost the understanding that he had previously held, that the worldly perception of wealth and reward is not the one able to bring satisfaction. Bereft of his "pryuy perle wythouten spot" (blemishless pearl of special intimacy),[131] which he lost "in on erbere (grassy spot in a garden),"[132] the narrator of Pearl is at the poem's beginning drowning in the self-pity of a desire that measures wholeness through the ownership of riches belonging to the material world. When he is transported to a paradisiacal dreamland stocked with spice and fruit and created from precious materials--silk, crystal , gold, pearl, and other rare stuffs--he is immediately educated to the possibility of reward existing beyond his own limited perceptual paradigm. His primary educator is none other than his pearl, transformed from her material form into a woman of high courtliness, astounding loveliness (gray eyes, hair bright as gold, a countenance of polished ivory), and rich attire (a brilliant white mantle).[133] As he eventually finds out, the opulence of her appearance and the setting in which he finds her is a visual manifestation of the spiritual riches that come from adhering to Christian demand. He is as yet far from being able to do so.

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[131] Pearl, 12.
[132] Pearl, 9.
[133] Pearl, 6, 7, 9, 10,162-63, 178, 213, 254.

Although he immediately recognizes her[134] (which sets him apart from his predecessors), it becomes clear that he recognizes her only as his pearl, she who was to him "nerre (nearer) then aunte or nece" and "lyfed (lived) not two ȝer (years)," he says, "in oure thede (land)."[135] He does not yet see that she, installed in a blissful paradise, luminous with otherworldly beauty, is also the Pearl that suggests the priceless perfection of installation within the Christian paradigm.[136] Before he is able to perceive this, he must first accept the teachings she offers him, teaching designed to help him adjust his understanding of what constitutes reward.

Although he refers to "[h]er semblaunt sade for doc other erle" (her face dignified as a duke's or an earl's),"[137] although he claims that there exists "[n]o gladder gome (man) hethen into Grece (from here to Greece)"[138] than he when his pearl approaches nearer to him, desire still clouds his ability to process her teachings. He sees himself a "joyleȝ jueler" (joyless jeweler),[139] bereft of any reward, a situation incommensurate with her "lyf of lykyng (delight) lyȝte (joyful),"[140] She must communicate to him that this seemingly unjust situation is not a reason for him to feel victimized; it is instead the "bote (remedy) of [his] meschef (distress)":[141]

> Sir, ȝe haf your tale mysetente,°
> To say your perle is al awaye,°

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[134] Pearl, 164, 167-68.

[135] Pearl,. 233, 483.

[136] In signification of this she wears a crown made entirely of pearls (305-6) and a gown covered with same precious stones (192-204, 217-220) that is distinguished by a single "wonder (marvelous) perle wythouten wemme (stain, blemish) / Inmyddeȝ (in the middle of) hyr breste. . ." (221-22). Even her golden hair recalls, in its deepest hues, a pearl (213-16).

[137] Pearl, 211.

[138] Pearl, 231.

[139] Pearl, 252.

[140] Pearl, 247.

[141] Pearl, 275.

That is in cofer° so comly° clente°
As in this gardyn gracios° gaye,°
Herinne to lenge° for euer and play,°
Ther nys nee mornyng° com neuer nere.
Her° were a forser° for the, in faye,°
If thou were a gentyl° jeuler.[142]
told wrongly
entirely lost
coffin / fairly / fastened
pleasing / fair
stay / rejoice
Where sorrow nor grief
here / casket / truly
noble

If he is to be the courteous jeweler she wishes to make him, a proper judge of value, he must understand that the tenets of the paradigm she advocates stipulate that her death was not loss but profit. Once he achieves this realization, not only will he feel no loss or pain regarding her, but he will also realize that her reward prefigures his own. His inevitable fate once he reaches this stage of development: installation within the order of joyful delight she currently occupies. His reply to her makes clear, however, that his progress will be only incremental. Telling her, "My grete dystresse thou al todrawe$_3$ (dispel),"[143] his next action nevertheless reveals that he still doesn't get it: he expresses a desire to cross the river separating them so that he may literally situate himself within the paradigm of bliss. He is of course not ready for such an act, not only because he fails to see what she must tell him, that before he can traverse the water his "corse in clot mot calder keue" [144] (body must sink down, colder, in clay), but also because he has only begun to construct for himself an identity that will allow him to adjust his understanding of valuing. The dreamer is not convinced by her explanation, and his response shows that over-emotional self-

[142] Pearl, 257-64.
[143] Pearl, 280.
[144] Pearl, 320.

indulgence still controls his faculty of rational processing. "Deme$_3$ thou me," he laments, "[t]o dol agayn, thenne I dowyne. / Now haf I fonte that I forlete, / Schal I efte forgo hit er euer I fyne?"[145] (You condemn me to grief again; then I languish. Now [that] I've found what I lost, Shall I ever again lose it before I die [Shall it ever be lost to me until I die]?). Desire prevents him from realizing the truth of her paradigm: that the value of the worldly attachment he shared with his pearl is only a pale foreshadowing of the wealth he might gain from accepting the Pearl Maiden as his other.

At every turn, desire impedes his comprehension of her argument. He eventually does indicate some progress in understanding when he is able to register happiness that her "astate / Is worthen to worschyp and wele" (condition has turned to honor and happiness), consequently concluding, "Hit is in grounde (at the foundation) of alle my blisse."[146] He has at least begun to see that her reward is in some way connected to a world of "blisse" for him, and her answering words confirm his movement toward her paradigm. "Now blysse, burne, mot the bytyde" (Now may bliss betide you, man), she says to him, "And welcum here to walk and byde (stay), / For now thy speche is to me dere." In this his words echo her own; he has shown himself a verbal mirror of her. He very soon, though demonstrates, that he remains largely a creature of desire. While he may have accepted that she now belongs within a rich and noble order, he cannot believe that she is a bride of the Lamb, controller of the order, and his queen "[i]n lengthe of daye$_3$ that euer schal wage" (during the duration of a life-time that shall always bring reward).[147] Unable to perceive that the spiritual afterlife does not offer the same limited system of reward that worldly existence does, the dreamer-

[145] Pearl, 325-28.
[146] Pearl, 393-94, 396.
[147] Pearl, 413-16.

father argues that only one may hold the privileged position of Queen of Heaven--the Virgin Mary. By his logic, only a being more perfect than the Bride-Mother of Christ would be able to wrest the crown from her.[148] The maid advances the tenets of her paradigm, explaining to him that there is no competition there, that "[a]lle that may therinne aryue / Of alle the reme is quen other kyng"[149] (all that may arrive in that place are queen or king of all the realm). For the narrator to accept her argument, he would have to understand that her marriage to the Lamb and her crowning is the reward of each individual who adheres to Christian demand; and were his understanding truly on track he would realize that his daughter, in sharing this detail of the salvation paradigm with him, is symbolically acting as the First Bride and Queen would: serving as a bridge between the worldly and spiritual paradigms.

This significance evades him, however, and he continues to demonstrate his fixation within worldly standards of measurement. The Pearl Maiden cannot be queen, he continues to argue, because of her tender earthly age; she had not contributed to the Christian project long enough to merit such honor.[150] She must counter by suggesting that those who spent little time engaging in earthly endeavors, as she did, might, due to their innocence, be more entitled to heaven's glory than long-term inhabitants.[151] Comparing the case of innocents such as she to the laborers in Christ's parable of the vineyard who worked for only an hour but were paid in full, she offers:

> Thay dyden hys heste, thay wern thereine;
> Why schulde he not her labour alow,
> ȝys, and pay hem at the fyrst fyne?

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[148] Pearl, 425-32.
[149] Pearl, 447-48.
[150] Pearl, 473-80.
[151] Pearl, 617-36.

For the grace of God is gret innoghe.[152]

(They did what he commanded, they were in that place; why should he not give credit to their labor, yes, and pay them completely at the first? For the grace of God is great enough.)

According the tenets of Christianity, any who follow the paradigm's demand will be granted full reward. The Pearl Maiden is as worthy of reward as any Christian, including her father.

His resistance to her teachings indicates his blindness to the important function she may play in helping him to the reward he still seems to begrudge others. It is only after she baldly explains the symbolic significance of the figure of the pearl that he gives an indication of having partially internalized her counsel. The pearl, she notes, as a "mascelle$_3$" (spotless) gem of surpassing value to its jeweler, "Is lyke the reme (realm) of heuenesse (heaven) clere (bright)," bright itself as well as spotless and pure. It is also "endele$_3$ (infinitely) rounde, and blythe of mode (mood), / And commune (belonging equally) to alle that ry$_3$twys (righteous) were." As evidence of this she reminds him, "Lo, euen inmydde$_3$(in the middle of) my breste hit stode (was placed)." He, just as she did, can acquire a pearl like hers, placed there by her "Lorde the Lombe," if only he would "forsake the worlde wode (senseless)."[153] He too, might achieve a saved identity if he would relinquish the worldly notions of worth that he clings to and accept that reward within the Christian paradigm is "commune to alle that ry$_3$twys were." His response to her speech indicates that he is beginning to understand both the significance of the pearl she wears and the significance of the Pearl Maiden for him. He verbally acknowledges for the first time that she "bere$_3$. . .the perle of prys," and that she, adorned "in perle$_3$ pure" is herself a "maskele$_3$

[152] Pearl, 625-36.
[153] Pearl, 735-44.

perle."[154] But a follow-up question, "Breue me, bry3t, quat kyn offys / Bere3 the perle so maskelle3" (Tell me, fair one, what kind of position does the pearl so spotless possess), shows that he has certainly not fully processed what installation within her paradigm amounts to. He is curious about the Pearl she so earnestly encouraged him to purchase, but his curiosity seems connected to the power perks associated with it. He is still thinking in terms of the worldly paradigm, returning again to his doubt over her fitness to serve as the bride of Christ:

> So mony a comly on-vunder cambe
> For Kryst hav lyued in much stryf;
> And thou can alle tho dere out dryf
> And fro that maryag al other depres,
> Al only thyself so stout and styf,
> A makele3 may and maskelle3.[155]
>
> (So many a fair lady has lived in much strife for Christ; and you did drive out all those worthy ones and drive away all others from that marriage, [leaving] quite only yourself so valiant and bold, a maiden matchless and spotless.)

He still perceives installation within the Christian paradigm as a competitive event. Her answering words, however, pinpoint his mistaken perception and confirm his identity's present distortion by desire: spotless she is, but matchless, no. "The Lambe3 vyue3 in blysse we bene, / A hondred and forty fowre thowsande flot, / As in the Apocalyppe3 hit is sene"[156] (We are the Lamb's wives in blisse, a company of one hundred forty-four thousand, as it is seen in the [book of the] Apocalypse), she tells him. If a single queen of heaven/bride of the Lamb other than the Virgin Mary may exist, so may multiple brides; again, she reiterates that all whose sinless nature declares them worthy of such an honor are given it. And again, she turns his desire-

[154] Pearl, 745-46.
[155] Pearl, 775-80.
[156] Pearl, 785-86.

driven verbalizations to the purpose of driving home demand's argument: the reward of salvation is open to any who have honestly sought it.

It is finally the specific example of Christ that compels the dreamer toward the reward that is yoked with demand, but he once more demonstrates that desire still holds him. Hearing his daughter speak of the role her "dere juelle" and "lemman fre" (fair beloved)[157] plays within Providential History, he is at last moved to admit that she, with her "wyt so wlonc" (wisdom so noble)--the wit he has disputed throughout their encounter-- is truly worthy of her designation as one "[t]o Kryste$_3$ chambre. . .ichose" (chosen for Christ's bridal chamber).[158] He finally seems to have internalized her teaching regarding worth and value--seems to have, but has not quite done it. He follows his rather humble acknowledgment of her worth with a fantastic request: he wishes to visit her dwelling in the heavenly city of Jerusalem, a reward reserved only for those, like her, who have been completed within the Christian paradigm. Her response mirrors back the fact that he is indeed presumptuous to ask such a thing: "That God wyl schylde (prevent); / Thou may not enter wythinne hys tor (stronghold)."[159] But she adds something to her answer that implies his faulty logic has nevertheless brought him closer than ever to installation: although he may not yet enter God's city, he is given a type of boon, the maid tells him, for "of the Lombe I haue the aquylde / For a sy$_3$t thereof thur$_3$ gret fauor"[160] (I have obtained for you a sight thereof [of the city] through great favor of the Lamb). There the dreamer is allowed to gaze upon the face of the Lamb, and what he sees is "delyt" in spite of the wound the Lamb bears.[161] The dreamer's longing to participate in this scene speaks to

[157] Pearl, 795-96.
[158] Pearl, 903-4.
[159] Pearl, 965-66.
[160] Pearl, 967-68.
[161] Pearl, 1141-42.

a growing hunger within him to adhere to the demand that is the source of the delight radiating from Christ the Lamb. Desire for the worldly paradigm prevents him, however, from realizing that he is not yet worthy to receive such delight.

He shows himself yet under the power of desire when, forgetting the heavenly injunction against his crossing into the land of ultimate reward, he attempts to ford the river and join the procession of the saved. This reward, of course, is unavailable to those not fully positioned within the Christian paradigm, and the vision, as a result, leaves him. It is only following the dissolution of the dream that he understands in full the significance of his encounter--and that he accepts Christian standards of valuing and reward. Waking up on the mound where he had fallen asleep, his pearl's grave, he says to himself, sighing, "Now al be to that Prynce$_3$ paye (liking)."[162] It is being within the "Prynce$_3$ paye" that is the true reward, not ownership of his pearl. She is not his everything, his all; but her encounter with him has led him to remember what is, and he demonstrates this, saying: "For I haf founden hym [Christ], bothe day and na$_3$te, / A God, a Lorde, a frende ful fyin (excellent)."[163] His words to his teacher-daughter confirm his transformation:

> So wat$_3$ hit me dere that thou con deme°
> In thys veray° avysyoun! °
> If hit be ueray° and soth° sermoun°
> That thou so styke$_3$° in garland gay, °
> So wel is me in thys doel-doungoun°
> That thou art to that Prynce$_3$ paye. °[164]
>
> *So was it dear to me, what you did speak of*
> *true / vision*
> *true / true / speech*
> *are set / fig., the circle of the blessed*
> *dungeon of sorrow*

[162] Pearl, 1176.
[163] Pearl, 1203-4.
[164] Pearl, 1183-88.

as that Prince likes (to his liking)

He has come to understand that Christian reward requires selflessness, a willing endurance of loss if it means the betterment of a loved one--for this is what Christ did when he established the paradigm: suffered death so that all humanity might live. The dreamer realizes, too, that adhering to the tenets of submission and reverence is also key to achieving the "delyt" he witnessed. In doing so he may construct the precious reward of a saved identity, as the poem's final lines indicate. Concluding that the sacrifice of Christ was made so that all individuals may be remade as "precious perle$_3$ vnto his pay (to his liking),"[165] the dreamer has been helped toward this realization by his pearl's "soth sermoun," the words of which reflected and clarified his entrapment in the worldly paradigm and then delineated the spiritual paradigm within which he might transform himself. As his other, she gave him access to the Other who would eventually complete him fully.

Piers Plowman

William Langland's fourteenth-century Middle English Piers Plowman also advances an explicitly Christian paradigm, but with an emphasis on remaking the human will so that it will act upon what it knows to be Truth. The work's central character and narrator, who as Will personified is also both an Everyman figure and a particularized member of human society, encounters two authoritative women, Holy Church and Dame Study,[166] who both offer him suggestions to facilitate the reform of

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[165] Pearl, 1212.

[166] The authoritative Four Daughters of God also appear in Piers Plowman (Passus XX). I have not, however, included them in the current discussion because they have no direct contact with Will; he merely witnesses their involvement in the Harrowing of Hell process. Although their actions have repercussions upon Will in his guise as the work's representative human being--they argue whether or not humanity is worthy of the sacrifice of Christ--they do not contribute directly to his identity formation in the manner of Holy Church and Dame Study. For a discussion of the Daughters'

that most defining aspect of his identity, his will. Yet the nature of the poem--and the nature of the narrator himself--precludes a single guiding presence in the poem. The poem offers multiple locations to accommodate and emphasize the journey Will seems to take through his dreamscape, but the peripatetic character of his spiritual quest is at least in part a product of his inability to make full use of those individuals who might direct him; consequently, each guide necessarily passes the baton, so to speak, to another or occasionally morphs into his successor, behaving in much the same way as the landscape of the poem does. Still, Will's situation bears resemblance to the narrators' in the poems studied above--he's lost the paradigm that leads to wholeness, he's looking for it, and in dialoguing with another, he seeks to regain it. Yet, as my discussion below will indicate, the character who is the most successful in effecting Will's completion of his quest does not speak with him, or even overtly direct him. He instead teaches through example, which is perhaps in keeping with Langland's final vision. Yet Will's female teachers are nevertheless integral to the narrator's achieving his quest, and both point him toward the character who, in the end, does offer wholeness.

Piers Plowman's Holy Church is obviously an authority figure in the tradition inaugurated by Lady Philosophy. Serving as an intercessor between the work's narrator and the paradigm he needs to inhabit for wholeness, she is a figure of great learning and sagacity.[167] Beautiful, dressed in fine clothing and speaking of her

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more direct verbal contribution to the identity construction of a representative human character, see Chapter Four, The Castle of Perseverance.

[167] William Langland, Piers Plowman by William Langland: An Edition of the C-text, ed. Derek Pearsall, York Medieval Texts, 2nd. ser. (Berkeley and Los Angeles: U of California P, 1978) Passus I, l. 68-69. The translation is George Economou's William Langland's Piers Plowman: The C Version (Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 1996). I use the C version of the poem, Langland's third and last rendering of his masterpiece, having decided along with other recent critics that C "offers the fullest

"lemman" (beloved),[168] she is also a lovely, courtly companion. Furthermore, as both the "dere doughter" of "*filius dei*" and the "ducchesse of heuene,"[169] she has great authority within the feudal hierarchy that is the kingdom of heaven. The exchange between Holy Church and Will has other things in common with the literary exchanges that have preceded it in discussion: the narrative begins with the primary character witnessing scenes that leave him befuddled;[170] he does not recognize her when she first appears to him, and then he falls at her feet to implore her grace and aid;[171] she upbraids him a bit for being lax in his learning[172]; and above all she attempts to help him in his task by answering the questions he puts to her and pointing him toward the salvation paradigm (I-11). When Will expressly seeks her aid in his quest for wholeness, asking her, "How y may saue my soule,"[173] she explains that her divine authority enables her to intervene in the fate of those who venerate her, but she herself is only a means to that end. He may reform his identity by participating in the activity of Christianity, in which she, of course, is instrumental but not the activity itself: it presupposes her. From her teachings Will must glean both the goal and the direction of his journey. And it is for this purpose that she seeks him out.

She begins her encounter with her pupil at the beginning of Passus I, after he has witnessed all the machinations and revelry occurring within the "fair feld ful of

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expression of Langland's intellectual and spiritual development" (Economou, William, viii). I have substituted "th" for the medieval thorn.

[168] Langland, II.20.

[169] Langland, II.31, 33.

[170] Langland, I.11.

[171] Langland, I.68-80.

[172] Langland, I.138-40.

[173] Langland, I.80.

folk"[174] that comprises part of the introductory landscape of the poem. From her opening language it is clear that she seeks to awaken his slumbering will, that element within him that may motivate him toward wholeness. She must first, however, reintroduce him to the controlling presence of the paradigm that offers completion: God as Truth. Descending from Truth's tower, which is positioned across the field from the "depe dale" of Death,[175] Holy Church inquires of the narrator,

> Wille, slepestou? seestow this peple,
> Hou bisy thei ben aboute the mase?
> The moste party of this peple that passeth on this erthe,
> Haue thei worschip in this world, thei wilneth no bettere;
> Of othere heuene then here thei halde no tale.
>
> (Are you asleep, Will? See these people, / How busily they move about the maze? / Most of the people that pass through this earth / Are satisfied with success in this world; / The only heaven they think of is here.)[176]

Because his will is inactive, Will has yet to act upon the significance of the crowd scene he has witnessed, to recognize that the "folk" are firmly entrenched within a worldly paradigm, satisfied with material success. His request that she interpret the scene for him not only confirms his "sleeping" state but also implies that the scene may hold some attraction for him. Her answer suggests an alternative paradigm: Truth, the "fader of fayth and formor of all,"[177] will offer more satisfaction than the "mase" the crowd traverses. Yet in order for Will to access the satisfaction offered by this prime former, he must understand how He operates within the scheme of human existence. Will's guide, still unknown to him, imparts to him information vital to his functioning within the paradigm: how His tenets pertain to "goods," both material and

[174] Langland, Pr.19.
[175] Langland, Pr.17.
[176] Langland, I.5-9; Economou, William, 10.
[177] Langland, I.14.

spiritual, a topic that will dominate the rest of the dreamer's quest. Such knowledge will help him repair his fractured identity.

His embrace of the paradigm she advocates depends upon his understanding the proper treatment of both natural human needs and the "artificial" goods[178] of worldly wealth and on his internalization of the connection between Truth and love. Of satisfying the natural needs of all mankind, she tells him that moderation is key; "Mesure is medecyne"[179] in the acquisition of such goods as food, clothing, and drink. This theme carries into her discussion of worldly wealth: reason and common sense should control all decisions governing such treasure.[180] He must also discover that love is central to Truth's paradigm, that as the antidote to the sin occasioned by Wrong, the "[f]ader of falshede," it is "the most souerayne salue for soule and for body."[181] That Will finally asks his guide's identity in the midst of this decidedly theological discussion is significant, for it seems that turning his attention from material to spiritual matters has awakened in him some intuition of her potential to help him toward spiritual wholeness--in the world of Piers Plowman, synonymous with a complete identity. Only after learning that she is Holy Church does he consciously embark upon his quest for wholeness, for self-definition, inquiring of her what he must do to find salvation.[182] Her answer reinforces again the power of adhering to Truth, for "[h]it is as derworthe a druerie as dere god hymseluen" ([i]t is as precious a prize as dear God himself).[183] Love too, will help him in this quest.

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[178] See R. E. Kaske's "Holy Church's Speech and the Structure of Piers Plowman," Chaucer and Middle English Studies in Honor of Rossell Hope Robbins (London: Allen, 1974) 320-27.

[179] Langland, I.33.

[180] Langland, I.50-53.

[181] Langland, I.146-47.

[182] Langland, I.68-75.

[183] Langland, I.83; Economou, William, 12.

Although Will, steeped in desire, professes to have no understanding of love,[184] he soon discovers from Holy Church that this is not the case: love is the divinely created "kynde knowynge of herte" (heart's natural knowledge),[185] the force that should bring all men, including Will, into understanding of Truth and the Son--around whom the paradigm of salvation was created. Holy Church has given Will the knowledge he requested; what remains is for him to actually move toward the Christ, enter into the plan that will effect identity in him.

That he is not yet ready or able to do so is obvious in his reluctance to let Holy Church leave. Obviously not yet an adherent of the paradigm's demand, he seems unconvinced that she has given him enough information to ensure his attainment of the wholeness. His request that she provide him a sure way to recognize Falsehood, so that he might avoid it, confirms that he cannot yet act upon her teachings about Truth, the Son, love, and moderation. Colette Murphy argues, in fact, that her "power as an effective visionary guide for the Dreamer begins to be undermined as soon as he finds out her name." She detects in their exchange a gradual turning away on the part of Will from understanding and application of Holy Church's teachings. This seems partially due to Will's apparent inability to consider entrance into the salvational paradigm as something other than a personal matter. Murphy points out that Holy Church "insists that social morality is central to the search for salvation": in her development of the idea that controls her argument, that "Treuthe is the beste"[186] of all treasures offered, "she links this analogy with the feudal model of social organizations"--heaven, as I mentioned above, resembles a feudal monarchy[187]-- "and

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[184] Langland, I.136.
[185] Langland, I.161-62, Economou, William, 14.
[186] Langland, I.81.
[187] Langland, I.103-5.

thus explains, in gradational terms, how earth's hierarchies should be connected to their spiritual counterparts."[188] Will is not immediately motivated by this aspect of the paradigm Holy Church presents; it is something he only gradually absorbs throughout the course of his journey. Another justification for their parting is that Holy Church, presented as she is, is limited in what she can do for Will as a guide. She is an idealized, aristocratic female figure while Langland's central character comes from a world more bourgeois than patrician. Her presentation of Christian reality in aristocratic and even courtly terms seems to resonate little with her pupil; his subsequent journey shows that his identity-construction process must have little to do with courtly standards or elite conventions. The balance of the poem suggests that Langland wished his narrator to trace out his identity through others less directly linked to a rarefied social and literary tradition.

Yet this ideal female character does indeed serve an important purpose in the central figure's identity construction, even if she is not the one to guide Will personally through the poem. As suggested by the above discussion, Holy Church's "instructions. . .present in outline the Christian principles that are to be applied to this raw material of human life,"[189] instructions that, as Morton Bloomfield has noted, are worked out in the rest of the poem, "sometimes in endless detail."[190] R. E. Kaske, moreover, calls her speech "a kind of germinal statement of the broadest themes" Piers Plowman pursues.[191] Will's entire quest for identity is initiated by her speech

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[188] Colette Murphy, "Lady Holy Church and Meed the Maid: Re-envisioning Female Personifications in Piers Plowman," Feminist Readings in Middle English Literature: The Wife of Bath and All Her Sect, eds. Ruth Evans and Lesley Johnson (London and New York: Routledge, 1994) 147.

[189] Kaske, 320.

[190] Morton W. Bloomfield, Piers Plowman as a Fourteenth-Century Apocalypse (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers UP, 1962) 153.

[191] Kaske, 326.

and geared toward the tenets of the paradigm she lays down. In light of this, it cannot be argued that Holy Church's shaping efforts fail; Will does, after all, eventually come to understand their potential to complete his identity. In her final speech to him, in fact, Holy Church provides the most direct evidence of her usefulness to him. She explains, "[W]hat man me louyeth and my wille foleweth / Shal haue grace to good ynow and a good ende" (The man that loves me and follows my will / Shall have grace a-plenty and a good end).[192] He need only internalize her will, make it his own, to connect with wholeness.

Yet he must still discover how he is to do this. Dame Study, the other female authority figure Will encounters helps him further with his quest, and perhaps significantly, she is a more bourgeois figure than her predecessor. Certainly she is accorded honor in the text--both Will and her husband Wit bow to her[193]--and she is obviously a figure of authority as her husband defers to her wishes in terminating his discussion with Will. She also has impressive family connections: in addition to being the wife of Wit, she is the sister of the venerable Scripture and the "cousin" of Scripture's husband Clergy.[194] In addition, her name implies a connection with wisdom and learning, and an abbreviated list of her accomplishments confirms this: she wrote Scripture a "bible" and also taught her "[l]ogyk" and "al the lawe aftur"; she introduced Plato to books and Aristotle to argumentation; she taught grammar to children; she also invented the compass.[195] Still, Dame Study comes across as a hybrid between the bourgeois and authoritative tradition. Her accomplishments, for one, are meant for practical use within the sphere of humanity. In addition, her

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[192] Langland, II.34-35; Economou, William, 17.
[193] Langland, XI.86-88.
[194] Langland, XI.98, 94.
[195] Langland, XI.117-27.

rebuke of her husband resembles a domestic (though learned) harangue more than it does the formal reprimand of Nature or the dignified lectures of Philosophy. The fact that Wit seems to take great amusement both in her manner of speaking and in deferring Will's further education to her suggests a good-natured husband humoring his easily excitable wife in order to keep the family peace. Wit's directive to Will that he beg Study's grace[196] and even Will's extremely courteous request for her aid seem a bit overly decorous for such a blunt-speaking and austere personage (Will comments on her "lene" and holy-living appearance[197]). Such comic incongruity, however, works less to ridicule Study, the stalwart personification of a sometimes workman-like discipline, than to deflate the desire-induced pretensions of the intellectually arrogant dreamer. Study's bourgeois characteristics also serve to identify her as an other who can instill in Will practical, less rarefied knowledge of how to do after the example of Christ in the world he inhabits.

Appropriate to her nature, Study presents specific, concrete examples drawn from life--as opposed to the general and often theoretical advice of Holy Church--of those who do not do well. Holy Church uses the examples of Malkin, who keeps her virginity not for love of God but for lack of opportunity, and of the churchmen who are chaste but unloving to illustrate the general rule that "[c]hastite withouten charite worth (will be) cheyned in helle"; but her other teachings take the form of principles: for example, the statement that the rich should be charitable to the poor.[198] Study, however, provides very detailed and particular examples that Will should avoid if he is to do her will. He should eschew, for instance, the current "manere at the mete" (custom at meals):

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[196] Langland, XI.87.
[197] Langland, XI.2.
[198] Langland, I.180, 186, 184, 172.

The lewed a3en the lered the holy lore to dispute,
And tellen of the trinite how two slowe the thridde
And brynge forth ballede resones, taken Bernard to witnesse,
And putten forth presumpcion to preue the sothe.
Thus they dreuele at the deyes, the deite to knowe,
And gnawen god with gorge when here gottes fullen

(The ignorant take on the learned to debate holy doctrine,
And talk about the Trinity how two killed the third
And bring forth flimsy arguments, take Bernard to witness,
And put forth a presumption to prove the truth.
Thus they drivel on the dais, the deity to know,
And chomp on God in their throats when their guts fill up.)[199]

This sort activity, along with those of "lord[s]" and lettred m[e]n" who are interested in holy teachings only insofar as they might provide a cost-effective method of maintaining their wealth,[200] are examples of casting pearls before swine, something Wit is guilty of in his conversation with Will, something Will must extricate himself from if he is to hope for a place within the salvation paradigm. And so he tries: the dreamer's decision to offer himself as "man" to Study so that he may "worche (work) [her] wille the while [his] lyf duyreth (endures)"[201] is evidence that he understands the repair of his will is linked with hers. Despite the fact that she has chastised him for his half-baked interpretations of the Christian paradigm's tenets, he commits to her as his other, and in doing so he comes closer to embracing the demand of Christian doing, which by this point in the narrative is personified as Dowel. Dowel, once accepted, will lead to Dobet and Dobest--and the wholeness of installation within the Christian paradigm.

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[199] Langland, XI.35-41, Economou, William, 100.
[200] Langland, XI.76-77.
[201] Langland, XI.89, 91.

Educated now as to the fact that he will not find Dowel in the scenarios Study sketches, he must follow her advice, to take the understanding she has provided him with and seek out Clergy. Study, it is clear, (like Alan's Nature) is not herself the key to Will's finding and emulating Dowel. She has been, however, an important consultant in his identity-construction effort, and it is now her job to facilitate the effort by pointing Will toward one who can provide what she herself cannot: the theological particulars of Will's search. Clergy, with the "counsail (counsel) of Scripture" will help the dreamer to "kunne and knowe kyndeliche Dowel" (perceive and understand Do-well quite naturally).[202] She then reemphasizes what Holy Church had earlier suggested: the importance of love in accessing the paradigm that will complete Will's identity. "Lerne for to louie yf the lik Dowel" (Learn how to love if you'd like to please Do-well),[203] Study tells her pupil before he takes leave of her. It is this love that in the end must motivate Will toward achieving the identity he seeks, and it is Divine love, in the end that will complete him. Yet he cannot achieve this goal without the efforts of Dame Study; she, like Holy Church, provides direction that lead toward the one figure capable of completing his understanding of Truth, the figure who is Love, Dowel, and Christ.

This figure is, of course, Piers the Plowman. Piers effects the narrator's completion not through direct interview, the somewhat scholarly method Will takes up with Holy Church, Study and most of the other guides he encounters, but through example. By witnessing Piers in his various incarnations as labor organizer, Good Samaritan, and jousting Christ, by watching Piers inhabit varying social strata, Will is able to internalize Holy Church's teaching about the importance of individual effort at

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[202] Langland, XI.101-2.
[203] Langland, XI.135.

every level of society to social cohesiveness and Christian endeavor. He is also the antithesis of those swine whom Study says fill their "hawes" (husks) with "a lykyng and a luste and a loue of the world" (a delighting and desiring and love of this world);[204] his many actions show that he loves nothing so much as abiding by Christian demand. Piers's success, then, is also Holy Church's and Dame Study's, for both have led their charge to the One who can effect positioning within the paradigm of salvation. Through the efforts of all, Will reforms his will and will be granted, it is implied, such a position.

For all of the male narrators of the poems studied above, their authoritative female guides serve as potential bridges to reinstallation within the paradigms they have abandoned. Those guides who are successful in their attempts to direct their pupils toward wholeness all resemble the Virgin Mary of medieval Catholic tradition. All, like Mary, seek to bring their narrators into close conjunction with a presence able to complete them. Philosophy and Nature move the narrators of the Consolation and the Complaint toward the Other who created and will complete all. The authoritative women of Pearl and Piers Plowman prepare the dreamers of both works to seek completion within the order of the Other who is the Christian God. Although Reason of the Romance of the Rose resembles Mary in many respects, she does not, in the end, serve as intercessory between the Lover and a more powerful Other who may offer him wholeness. It is perhaps for this reason that he chooses to ignore the rational paradigm and complete himself instead through the temporary satisfaction offered by the Rose; although the Christian God is clearly He who, in the universe of the poem, could supply genuine wholeness, His ways are only dimly known to those who inhabit the Garden of Delight, and apparently to Reason as well.

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[204] Langland, XI.82-83; Economou, William, 101.

The influence of the Christian model of existence is evident even within those works that do not directly deal with Christian doctrine. References to the second birth and humanity's fallen nature clearly place the Complaint of Nature within the scheme of Christian literature, and the portrait painted of God by the Consolation of Philosophy's Christian author is certainly compatible with contemporaneous ideas about the Christian Supreme Being. Significantly, it is in those works overtly advocating Christian identity construction that the female guides succeed in bringing their charges into close association with the paradigm's ruling presence. While Boethius and the Complaint's narrator must be content with coming close to the idea of God, the dreamer-father of Pearl is allowed a glimpse of the Lamb who is the Christ, the eventual agent of his completion. Will, too, is provided intimate access to Piers, who, throughout much of the poem, is a stand-in for Christ. Another indication of this narrowing of the gap between subject and Other is the fact that the female guides who facilitate this contact, those with the most knowledge of Christian demand, directly recall the Virgin Mary. Although Dame Study, whose province is not Christian truth (she notes, "[T]he deppore y deuine [theology] the derkore me thinketh hit"[205]) but the faculty that aids in such truth's discernment, resembles Mary only in her intercessory role and her association with learning, both Holy Church and the Pearl Maiden recall Mary in a variety of associations. From her first identification as a "louely lady of lere in lynnene yclothed" (lovely-faced lady clothed in linen),[206] the Pearl Maiden recalls the linen-clad Bride of the Apocalypse (Apoc. 19:8); the poem later reveals that she is both Bride of the Apocalypse and Bride of Christ--two frequently made patristic and traditional associations with Mary. She is also linked

[205] Langland, XI.131.
[206] Langland, I.3; Economou, William, 10.

with the another of Mary's associations, that of divine Wisdom, when she cites King Solomon's report of Wisdom's ability to guide the righteous man to the kingdom of God,[207] a function she shares with Mary.

Even more so than the Pearl Maiden, Holy Church may be associated with the Virgin. As I noted earlier, patristic tradition had long connected the two due to their shared status as vehicle of salvation. Furthermore, as Murphy concludes, drawing upon Marina Warner's book Monuments and Maidens: The Allegory of the Female Form, by Langland's century "the Church as the Bride of Christ. . .had considerable currency in the imagistic repertoire of Western Christianity."[208] Warner herself notes that the Church was also associated with divine Wisdom; she labels the sacrament of the Eucharist an act of "ingest[ing] the wisdom of God" which was "itself alive in the world through his foundation, the Holy Church."[209] In addition, the common depiction in medieval art and literature of the Church as a beautiful woman stemmed from the common practice of identifying it with the Bride of the Song of Songs, another of Mary's identifications, and with the Bride of the Apocalypse.[210] And in Langland's narrative, Holy Church's introductory descent from the tower of Truth, who is God, suggests more directly than in any of the other works, including Pearl, Mary's role as humanity's mediatrix. When taken together with the accessibility of the Other, such a direct connection between Mary and the female presence who is the other seems to increase the ability of the Christian paradigm to effect wholeness; even if such a paradigm cannot complete until after the physical death of an individual, it

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[207] Pearl, 689-94.
[208] Murphy, 145.
[209] Warner, Monuments, 199-200, qtd. in Murphy, 145-46.
[210] Pearsall, 42, n. 3.

can make the remainder of the individual's life resonate with tantalizing and unforgettable reminders of the identity that is to come.

No poem demonstrates the power of the Christian model to transform the self more than Dante's Divine Comedy, and no female authority figure effects the reconstruction of her pupil's identity as literally as Dante's Beatrice, probably the most famous female authority figure in western medieval literature. Introduced by Dante in his Vita Nuova as the consummate courtly other, she is transformed in his Divine Comedy into the chief intercessor in the recovery of Dante's saved identity and, as such, is also a vital part of the machinery of Cosmic Love. It is Beatrice who descends into hell to send Virgil to Dante's aid, Beatrice who instructs, reproves, and loves Dante throughout Paradise, instilling again in him the tenets of Christian demand. In doing so, she also recalls the Virgin Mary; but what is inferred in the other works through symbolic identification is made explicit in the Divine Comedy: that the female authority figure acts as proxy for Mary. It is Mary who initially sends Beatrice on her saving mission; and Beatrice's blessed visage, with her eyes capable of curing Dante's temporary blindness[211] and of representing all of Paradise to him,[212] is a less potent version of Mary's, about which Saint Bernard says to Dante, "Look now upon the face that is most like / the face of Christ, for only through its brightness / can you prepare your vision to see him."[213] At the poem's end, the character of Beatrice defers to Mary, her leaving followed by Bernard's directing Dante to look upon the Queen of Heaven, the mirror of all the blessed in paradise, whose smile "made glad the eyes of all the other saints."[214] Jaroslav Pelikan notes that the

[211] Paradiso XXVI.10-12.

[212] Paradiso XVIII.16-21.

[213] "Riguarda omai ne la faccia che a Cristo / più si somiglia, ché la sua chiarezza / sola ti può disporre a veder Cristo." Paradiso XXXII.85-87.

[214] "ridere. . .li occhi a tutti li altri santi[.]" Paradiso XXXI.134-35.

celebration that is salvation "goes on. . .through her" and, as Dante witnesses but cannot yet experience himself, "beyond her--to the celebration of. . .Eternal Light and . . .Eternal Love."[215] In Dante's vision and in the paradigm of identity that permeated medieval existence, Mary is the true gateway to the wholeness that is Christ. Dante's Beatrice is a type of Mary perfectly suited to the needs of the work's narrator--a personalized mediatrix to help him work through the particulars of his own identity struggle; that done, he is prepared to enter the broader paradigm, the one in which he, like all others, may be completed. The other female authority figures examined above who prove successful in effecting their pupil's healing show themselves, to varying degrees, to mirror Beatrice's function. And each, as a type of Mary, is a mirror of the demand that occasions installation within the paradigm she supports, in which at least a glimpse of divine satisfaction may be found. Each, in serving as other, is the mirror in which shattered identities may begin reconstruction; moreover, the mirror is most effective if she, like Mary, is directly reflective of Christian truth.

[215] Jaroslav Pelikan, Eternal Feminines: Three Theological Allegories in Dante's *Paradiso* (New Brunswick: Rutgers UP, 1990) 118.

Chapter Four
Providential Marriage: Cooperative Female-Male Relationships in Middle English Drama

I am ȝoure wyff, ȝoure childeryn these be.
Onto us tweyn° it doth longe°
Hem° to teche in all degré°
Synne to forsakyn, and werkys wronge.[1]
Uxor Noah to her husband in the N-Town Noah

To make my blisse perfyth,°
I menge° with my most myth°
Alle Pes, sum Treuth, and sum Ryth°
And most of my Mercy.[2]
God the Father with regard to his four daughters in The Castle of Perseverance

M[ARY] MAGDLEYN. O, thou dereworthy° emperowre, thou hye devine!
To me this [Christ's resurrection] is a joyfull tiding. . . .
JHESUS. Be stedfast, and I shall ever with the[e] be,
And with all tho° that to me bin° meke.[3]
from Mary Magdalene

REBECCA. Iacob, son! thi fader & I
wold speke with the. . . .
ISAAC. Yei, son do as thi moder says;
Com kys vs both, & weynd° thi ways.[4]
from the Wakefield Isaac

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[1] two; is our duty; them; in every way. All N-Town citations are from The N-Town Play: Cotton MS Vespasian D.8, ed. Stephen Spector, 2 vols., EETS ss 11 (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1991). I have changed the medieval thorn to "th." All glosses and translations are mine.

[2] perfect; mingle; might; righteousness, justice. Castle of Perseverance, 3570-73. All Castle of Perseverance, Mary Magdalene, and Everyman citations are taken from David Bevington's Medieval Drama (Boston: Houghton, 1975). Translations and glosses for these three plays are Bevington's unless otherwise noted.

[3] excellent, noble; those; are (my glosses). Mary Magdalene, ll. 1086-87, 1094-95.

[4] go. All Wakefield citations are from George England and Alfred W. Pollard's edition of The Towneley Plays, EETS es 120 (1922; London: Oxford UP, 1960). All glosses and translations are mine.

A cursory examination bears out the fact that Middle English drama is largely an overtly Christian endeavor.[5] Much has been written about the pedagogical-spiritual imperative of these vernacular late medieval plays[6] to present Christian truths in

[5] Folk plays were the exception, having their root in pagan ritual and in legend. A book-length study on the mummers plays is Alan Brody's The English Mummers and Their Plays: Traces of Ancient Mystery (Philadelphia: U of Philadelphia P, 1969). More on the mummers, Robin Hood plays, and other examples of folk drama is available in Vol. I of E. K. Chambers's The Medieval Stage, 2 vols. (1903; Mineola, NY: Dover, 1996). Examples of these plays are anthologized in Joseph Quincy Adams's Chief Pre-Shakepearean Dramas (Boston: Houghton, 1924), and (modernized) in John Gassner's Medieval and Tudor Drama (Toronto: Bantam, 1963).

[6] The three genres of vernacular drama explored in this chapter (see below) are now considered to be roughly contemporaneous, predominently late-fourteenth-through-early-sixteenth-century endeavors that developed concurrently. This was not always the case. Chambers's notion that the biblical cycle plays "evolved" from the Latin liturgical drama of the church (see Vol. 2, Chs. 18-22 of The Medieval Stage) was influential in placing the genre earlier in history than the morality and the saints' plays, which he suggested subsequently developed from "that leading and characteristic type of mediaeval drama" (2.149). The traditional dating of the Chester mystery cycle in the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century (see discussion in R. M. Lumiansky and David Mills's The Chester Mystery Cycle: Essays and Documents [Chapel Hill, NC: U of North Carolina P, 1983] 166-68) also contributed to the perception of the cycle drama's relative antiquity. Yet as Peter W. Travis has noted, beginning with V. A. Kolve's influential 1966 study The Play Called Corpus Christi, "most critics now agree that there can be recognized within the extant cycles very little influence of liturgical drama" (Dramatic Design in the Chester Cycle [Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1982] 262, n. 25; 39). In addition, the earliest documented evidence of the Chester cycle's existence is 1422; and recent scholars have generally concluded that the cycle's extant manuscripts preserve a late fifteenth- or early sixteenth-century version of the plays (see Travis; Lumiansky and Mills' Chester Mystery Cycle: Essays and Documents, 48; Lawrence M. Clopper, "The History and Development of the Chester Cycle," MP 75 [1978]: 219-246; and Martin Stevens, Ch. 4, Four Middle English Mystery Cycles [Princeton: Princeton UP, 1987] 258-322). The first document alluding to the performance of a Corpus Christi cycle dates to 1376, and most scholars follow Rosemary Woolf in agreeing "it would. . .be hazardous to assume a substantially earlier date for the plays" (The English Mystery Plays [Berkeley and Los Angeles: U of California P, 1972] 355, n. 1). The primary compilation of the York manuscript has been dated between 1463-77 (Richard

accessible fashion to a largely unlettered, urban audience.[7] The plays were considered "quike bookis,"[8] living texts designed to communicate this devotional message to the masses viewing them. The goal of such an endeavor was to instill the tenets of

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Beadle, ed., The York Plays, York Medieval Texts [Baltimore: Arnold, 1982] 11); Wakefield, late fifteenth-early sixteenth century (A. C. Cawley and Martin Stevens, eds, The Towneley Cycle: A Facsimile of Huntington Library MS HM1 [Leeds: U of Leeds, School of English, 1976] ix-x); and N-Town, "probably. . . between c. 1468 and the early years of the sixteenth century" (Spector xvi). As mentioned above, while Chambers thought the morality genre "a further outgrowth" that "sprang from [the] stock" of the mystery genre "in the autumn of the Middle Ages" (2.149), the existing manuscript of the earliest surviving English (actually Anglo-Irish) morality, The Pride of Life, is generally thought to be of early- to mid-fifteenth century creation, although a fourteenth-century date may also be possible (Pamela M. King, "Morality Plays," The Cambridge Companion to Medieval English Drama, ed. Richard Beadle [Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge UP, 1994] 259). These dates suggest that the morality play is a contemporary, not a descendent, of the mystery play. And although Chambers seems to regard the saint's play as an extrapolation of the mystery cycle pageants (he also uses the same term, "miracle play," to refer to both genres [2.156; see n. 10, below]), it seems that the vernacular saint's play developed instead from the liturgical drama and is also a largely fourteenth-to-sixteenth-century phenomenon in England. A twelfth-century reference to a St. Katherine play and a thirteenth-century mention of a St. Nicholas play may be evidence of the genre's liturgical origins; it is possible the two plays were of the Latin liturgical variety (Daryll Grantley, "Saints' Plays," Cambridge Companion, 266), which medieval abbeys and cathedrals regularly offered in honor of their particular patron saints (Bevington, 661).

[7] Standard reference works on the religious drama include Vol. 2 of Chambers's The Medieval Stage, Hardin Craig's English Religious Drama of the Middle Ages (London: Oxford UP, 1955), O. B. Hardison's Christian Rite and Christian Drama in the Middle Ages (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins P, 1965), and Jerome Taylor and Alan H. Nelson's collection Medieval English Drama: Essays Critical and Contextual (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1972). Studies dealing specifically with the mystery or Corpus Christi cycles include Kolve's The Play Called Corpus Christi (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1966) and Woolf's The English Mystery Plays. Robert Potter's The English Morality Play: Origins, History, and Influence of a Dramatic Tradition (London: Routledge and Paul, 1975) is concerned primarily with the morality play. A useful recent handbook of sorts to the English religious drama in general is Beadle's Cambridge Companion to Medieval English Theatre.

[8] qtd. in Kolve, 5.

Christian doctrine in the attending public by enacting the construction of a Christian identity, and such a goal was accomplished in various ways. The mystery, or Corpus Christi, cycles dramatized the unfolding of Providential History, in the process "edify[ing] through the examples" of the biblical characters portrayed.[9] The allegorical morality play took a different approach; a live-action sermon that preached the efficacy of the virtuous life and the eternal dangers of the sinful one, it generally portrayed the Christian and anti-Christian forces involved in human existence as locked in mortal combat for the soul of a representative individual. The saint's or miracle play[10] combined elements of both mystery and morality genres, most often

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[9] Glynne Wickham, The Medieval Stage, 3rd ed. (Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge UP, 1987) 106. The terms mystery and Corpus Christi plays are generally used to designate medieval plays that appear to have been performed as part of a dramatic cycle that enacted the traditional Christian narrative of existence, from the creation of the world through judgment day. These particular labels derive from the cycles' traditional association with the feast of Corpus Christi (see below) and with medieval trade guilds (E. K. Chambers posits that "mystery" probably comes from the Latin "ministerium," or "function"; the French term for function, "métier"; and another French word he suggests derives from the Latin ministerium, "mystère." In English, then, the term mystery comes to "denot[e] the 'function' of the craft guilds"[2.105].), which are thought to have been reponsible for their composition and enactment. While the majority of the English cycle plays seem to have had a connection to both the feast and to the guilds, it is an overgeneralization to assume that all biblical cycles or cycle fragments were actually produced on Corpus Christi Day by the trade guilds of a given town or city. The only extant manuscript of the Wakefield cycle, for instance, contains no reference to trade guilds; the same is true of the N-Town manuscript. It is also generally believed that the N-Town cycle, despite a manuscript label to the contrary (a hand dated later than that of the manuscript's primary scribe has written "The plaie called Corpus Christi" on the manuscript's first page [Spector, xxv]), was not created by a municipal hierarchy to be part of a civic celebration of Corpus Christi Day (see Alan J. Fletcher's "The N-Town Plays," Cambridge Companion, 163). The N-Town cycle was more likely a touring cycle, meant for performance in a variety of locales (Fletcher, 165).

[10] The labeling of the plays that involve the lives of medieval saints and/or the enactment of Christian miracles and/or conversions has been a matter of some confusion. Current standard practice seems to allow for the interchangeable use of

following a saint of Christian tradition (though not always of Christian doctrine) through adventures biblical, apocryphal or invented, but leading its audience toward the same devotional end--awareness and valuation of the Christian life. As is the case in most medieval literature, the drama's identity-construction efforts are generally male-focused--the characters who "stand in" for the audience are most often gendered male--but intimately involved in the effort are female characters. Moreover, in some cases the identities of female characters are given so much weight in the text that the phenomenon of interdependency is manifested. Both members of such a male-female partnership are consequently indispensable to the other's sense of self: not only does

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the terms miracle play and saint's play, although the former rubric has in the past been used to designate drama now considered under the "mystery play" label. In his classic 1903 work, The Medieval Stage, Chambers seems to question the validity of the "mystery" label, arguing that "[t]he distinction between 'mysteries' which 'deal with Gospel events only' and 'miracles' which 'are more especially concerned with incidents derived from the legends of the Saints of the Church' is not a very happy invention of the literary historians" (2.105, n. 1). His method demonstrates that he favors the latter term, as he uses "miracle play" synonymously with "guild play" in his own work (see Vol. 2, Chs. 21-22). Many followed his example; Cawley is one, who called his anthologizing of cycle drama selections with the most famous English morality play Everyman and Medieval Miracle Plays (London: Dent, 1956). As late as 1981, Wickham used the miracle play label for the individual biblical cycle pageants in Volume 3 of his Early English Stages: 1300-1600, 3 vols. (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul; New York: Columbia UP, 1959-1981). Not all followed Chambers's lead, however. As Daryll Grantley has noted (265), John M. Manly, a contemporary of Chambers's, defined the saint's/miracle play as "the dramatization of a legend setting forth the life or the martyrdom or the miracles of a saint" ("Literary Forms and the New Theory of the Origin of the Species," MP 4 [1906-7]: 585). Mary del Villar's more recent and now current definition generalizes Manly's particulars and includes the dramatization of miracles not attributed to a saint: "A saint's play is a play that has a saint as its protagonist or a miracle as its main action" ("Some Approaches to the Medieval English Saints' Play," RORD 15-16 [1972-73]: 84). In another, though not widely imitated, variation, David Bevington uses the title "saints' plays or conversion plays" to describe the genre in his Medieval Drama anthology.

the female serve as other in the male's identity-formation process, but he serves the same purpose in hers.

Chapter Three explored the phenomenon of a female character supplying advice to a male character within a vertical relationship: she was not his peer but clearly his superior due to her greater knowledge, wisdom and connection to divinity. Many female characters in medieval drama retain some of this authority by virtue of their connection to the divine plan. Those in the allegorical morality play especially recall the tradition of the female authority figure in that they are personified abstract concepts--Abstinence, Chastity, Knowledge, etc.,--on a higher plane of understanding and of higher stature than the male characters they address. These characters, too, attempt to speak their male pupils into embracing the demand of Christianity, setting themselves up as other to their charges. In a change from the situation of the previous chapter's works, however, the dramatic female authority figures do not accomplish their male pupils' identity construction alone. Within the morality play, no single female character pursues her task unaided by at least one other female character, and what is more, although the female characters function as the central figures' primary guides, their efforts also require the cooperation of characters who are gendered male. This cooperative gender effort is also evident in the other two genres, which portray relationships of a more horizontal nature between male and female characters. Unlike the Middle English lyrics, in which relationships between male and female peers or near-peers generally result in disharmony and dissatisfaction, in the cycle drama and in the saint's play, both of which dramatize biblical and apocryphal episodes, man and woman often work together as a team, and to good effect: for despite Genesis's injunction against accepting female counsel, in many cases male characters solicit or accept the advice and aid of their very mortal female helpmates, an effort that

contributes to the construction of an identity that furthers the aim of Providential History and the actualization of the Christian paradigm for the viewing audience.

Yet it must also be noted that not any woman can participate in these partnerships; only those who demonstrate characteristics traditionally associated with the Virgin Mary fill the bill. As noted in the previous chapter, the medieval tradition of Mary--archetype of the virtuous woman, mother of all the living, queen of heaven, etc.--was influential in the creation of authoritative female characters in literary works. Those women who held the authority to construct rational and/or spiritual identities for their male protégés showed themselves made from the same mold as the Holy Mother with regard to their unswerving devotion to the ordering principles they served, their sympathetic yet magisterial treatment of their pupils, and even the demeanor and comportment they evinced. Mary is also influential in the creation of female characters in the drama. While the female characters in the morality play follow the authoritative tradition of Mary, those in the cycle play most often replicate her qualities of obedience and humility. The Virgin herself in the cycle plays is both piously submissive and confidently authoritative, a hybrid stance also replicated in the saint's play, which presents a heroine who is sometimes active and commanding, at other times passive and even meek. It should further be noted that female characters who initially interfere with the playing out of Christian truth--who, in other words, act like Eve--can be transformed into Mary-like characters. Those characters who favor characteristics traditionally associated with Eve over those of Mary--skepticism and initiative as opposed to faith and obedience, pride and vanity rather than humility, resistance and sexual awareness instead of acceptance and sexual innocence--may in the end follow the example of Mary Magdalene, the type of the redeemed sinner. Male characters can work in partnership with these rehabilitated

Eves just as successfully as they might a Mary; for who is Mary if not the Second Eve, a ransomed version of humanity's first mother? What matters is that any female character, whether a type of the Virgin or the Magdalene, must follow this dictum if she is to bring a male partner into accord with Christian demand: he, the man, is to have command in the relationship unless he has somehow slipped out of harmony with the plan of the Other, God, or she is blessed with some divine connection to the Other that her man lacks.

The drama suggests that this dynamic facilitates cooperation rather than antagonism between the genders if all participants clearly have their eyes on the prize, so to speak: all will turn out well for both sexes if they, at base, wish to construct their identities within the Christian faith.

The Morality Play

In the Middle English morality play, the protagonists define their identities by the playing out of one or more of the following allegorical ordeals: the *psychomachia* ("soul-war"), or, the battle of virtues and vices; the coming of death; and the debate of the four daughters of God. In the two plays studied below, Everyman (late fifteenth-early sixteenth century) and the Castle of Perseverance (c. 1440), female characters are vital participants in these struggles, in almost every case, ushering, protecting, and educating the plays' male central figures toward membership in the Christian order. [11]

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[11] Female characters are not quite fixtures in the Middle English morality play; in fact, of the five surviving English moralities, only Castle and Everyman give substantial roles to characters gendered female. While a third morality, The Pride of Life, also contains female characters, one of whom is the Virgin Mary herself, who figure importantly into the fate of the male protagonist, the portion of the play in which the Virgin appears, apparently intervening to save the protagonist's soul from Hell, has been lost, and her role in the central figure's salvation is known only from play's prologue, which summarizes the action that is to ensue. For a discussion of the play, see King, 258-62.

Like most of their authoritative counterparts in the vision poems of the previous chapter, the feminine personifications of the morality play are a blend of forceful action and gentleness, vehemence and deference, the product of the superimposition of Christian sensibility upon the classical tradition of powerful allegorical female figures. In the morality play, as in allegorical visions such as Pearl and Piers Plowman, the female characters' connection to Christianity authorizes their power; and as powerful female players within the Christian scheme, they again recall the Virgin Mary, especially in their mediating function and in each character's balance of compassion and command. Whatever their actions, they serve to construct and preserve a Christian identity for the male character at the center of each dramatic piece.

Yet it is significant that the morality play's female authority figures work in pairs or groups. Everyman's Good Deeds and her sister Knowledge both nurture and exhort the title character toward a transformation of his worldly identity, using a bit of tough love when necessary, and consequently preparing him for his final reckoning. The Seven Virtues of the Castle of Perseverance not only instruct their charge in the ways of Christian demand, they even take up arms to protect the play's central figure, Mankind, from the onslaught of the Seven Vices. The same play's Four Daughters of God accomplish their task of delineating the protagonist's eternal identity by debating the proper interpretation of his final utterance: does it connote salvation or damnation? As the above description suggests, no single character accomplishes her male charge's identity construction; and not only does she work in tandem with other female characters but also with those designated male or commonly represented as such. Not only intra-gender, but inter-gender collaboration seems a necessity; in the morality play, salvation requires the input of both feminine and masculine elements.

Everyman

Everyman's Good Deeds and Knowledge are of a piece with the play's "even tone of high seriousness," which perhaps reflects the play's origins in the competitive drama fests of Dutch rhetoricians' guilds. [12] Knowledge and Good Deeds are certainly effective, stately rhetoricians, each serving as an authoritative other who brings Everyman to a reconstruction of identity. Good Deeds, paralyzed and hence unable to bring him directly into Christian demand, nevertheless sets him on the right path. Telling him "[a]nd you do by me (if you do as I advise), that journay with you I will take," she then chastises him in typical authority-figure fashion, pointing out: "If ye had parfitely chered me (thoroughly nurtured me), / Your boke of count full redy had be" (495, 501-2). His present immersion in the worldly desire of "flesshely lustes and . . . treasure" (82) prevents her from helping him as he is called to account before God; yet she is "sory" for his perilous situation, and to fix the situation she passes him on to her sister Knowledge who, Good Deeds tells Everyman, "shall with you abide. / To helpe you to make that dredefull rekeninge" (514, 519-21).

Knowledge accomplishes just this. Generally held to represent "knowledge of self," "knowledge of God" or both,[13] Knowledge is constructed as a stable, static entity whose clear purpose is to bring the title character in line with the truth that is Christianity. As an allegorized facet of Everyman's personality, she is the embodiment of the internalized educatory and disciplinary impulse of the Christian-

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[12] King, 256, 255. Everyman is almost certainly a translation-adaptation of the Dutch Elckerlijc, written for a festival of the Rederijkers Kamer, the rhetoricians' guild, that was held in Antwerp during the last decade of the fifteenth century (255).

[13] G. A. Lester, ed., Everyman, Three Late Medieval Morality Plays, The New Mermaids Series. (London: Black, 1990) 85n. For a review of the various identifications associated with Knowledge, see Michael J. Warren, "Everyman: Knowledge Once More," Dalhousie Review 54 (1974): 136.

Catholic order, fulfilling her purpose by enforcing Catholic doctrine and seeing to her charge's subsequent reinvention as one completed by God. And she is an almost constant presence at his side, first assuring him, "Everyman, I will go with the[e], and be thy g[u]ide / In thy moost nede to go by thy side," and then ushering him "lovingly / To Confession, that clensinge river" (522-23, 535-36). Next she announces:

> Everyman, loke° your penaunce that ye fulfill,
> What paine that° ever it to you be;
> And Knowledge shall give you counseyll at will°
> How your accounte ye shall make clerely. (577-80)
> *see to it*
> *No matter how painful*
> *readily*

Carefully supervising his progress through the stages of confession, penance and finally contrition, which takes the form of a "garment of sorowe," the wearing of which "pleaseth God passinge well," Knowledge finally admonishes him to "Go to Presthode. . . / And receive of him, in ony wise (without fail) / The holy sacrament and ointement (extreme unction) togyder" (642, 647, 707-9). She is indeed Everyman's guide to wholeness, the reason he remarks, "In good condicion I am now in everythinge" (524), and the reason he is eventually able to show himself worthy of installation within God's plan. After his identity transformation is nearly complete he prays, "O blessid Godheed, electe and hye devine, /Forgive [me] my grevous offence! / Here I crye the[e] mercy in this presence" (586-88). Ready now to own both his maker and his sin, he has accomplished most of Knowledge's course of salvation.

Yet it is Good Deeds who must take Everyman the final distance into demand, to completion through reunion with God. Freed from her paralysis by Everyman's performance of penance, she and Knowledge continue to act as other in his identity-construction procedure, affirming the rightness of his action to free Good Deeds (623-26, 629-30) and encouraging him to wear the robe of contrition (638-41, 643-48). As

evidence of Everyman's newly reconstructed self, Knowledge tells him that he should "[b]e no more sad, but ever rejoice," while Good Deeds confirms, "For the[e] is preparate the eternall glory" (636, 631). It is the latter sister who in the end effects Everyman's final stage in the process of wholeness, for she alone can accompany him through this final stage: death. After reminding him that "[a]ll [his companions] fleeth save Good Dedes, and that am I," she infuses him with confidence that he will be made whole, saying, "Fere not; I will speke for the[e]" (873, 876). Knowledge remarks following Good Deeds and Everyman's descent into the grave, "Good Dedes shall make all sure." And so she does: Knowledge further notes, "Methinketh that I here aungelles singe, / And make grete joy and melody / Where Everymannes soule received shall be" (889, 891-93). Everyman has been absorbed into the paradigm of Christian salvation, thanks to the efforts of his Knowledge and Good Deeds. His identity is in the end that of a Christian of "singuler vertue," his soul welcomed as "excellente elect spouse to Jesu" (896, 894). Wholeness for him is complete.

Knowledge and Good Deeds do not accomplish Everyman's salvation entirely on their own, however. Although it is Knowledge's direction that leads her pupil to Confession, Confession himself informs Everyman of that "precious jewell," a "voider (expeller) of adversité" (557, 558): penance, in the form of a scourge. And again, although it is Knowledge who tells Everyman that he "must call to minde / [his] Five Wittes as for his counseylours," it is the Five Wits who explain to Everyman that receiving communion and extreme unction from a priest "is the best that [he] can do" to ensure his salvation because "preesthode excedeth all other thinge" (662-63, 730-32). The final stages of Everyman's preparation for salvation are, in fact, a cooperative effort between Knowledge, Good Deeds, Confession, Five Wits, and even Beauty, Strength, and Discretion. Although the latter four refuse to

make the final descent into death with the protagonist, they nevertheless encourage him toward his goal, giving him support in all but the final step. Good Deeds even notes that Strength, Beauty and Discretion, "[t]hre persones of grete might," are so vital to his identity construction that they "may not abide behinde" (658, 661). Everyman's reaction to each of these supporters shows that he internalizes their words, allowing them to shape him. His responses mirror back to each speaker the effect he or she has had on the central figure, marking each "counselor" to some degree as other in Everyman's identity-construction process.

This group of others is also one of mixed gender. As the above discussion suggests, Knowledge and Good Deeds are clearly designated female by the pronouns assigned to them; reference to Knowledge as Good Deeds' "sister" (519) also confirms the former's gender. In a bit of gender blending, Confession, labeled the "moder of salvacion" (552) by Everyman, is designated by the masculine pronoun through out the play and is also referred to as a "holy man" (539). Priesthood, too, is an obviously masculine concept vital to Everyman's reconstructed identity, even if the character never appears onstage. Five Wits is a plural concept and is referred to only with plural, gender-neutral pronouns, while Strength and Discretion, always referred to as a unit with Beauty, are also described with plural pronouns.[14] Beauty, however, is specifically designated female by the spinning equipage that she carries;

[14] In the Middle Ages, a case could be made that the neutral was often associated with the masculine, since it was the standard by which the feminine was measured. One example of this is Aristotle's designation in his De Generatione Animalium of the female as a "deformed" or "infertile" male, an idea influential in the Middle Ages. A. L. Peck, trans., Aristotle: Generation of Animals (London: Heinemann; and Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1963) 728a, 737a, qtd. in Alcuin Blamires, ed. Woman Defamed and Woman Defended: An Anthology of Medieval Texts (Oxford: Clarendon, 1992) 39-41.

in the Middle Ages, spinning was a task proverbially associated with women and specifically with Eve, a point to which we will return later.

In this cooperative, gender-integrated effort, all participants are necessary, although it is the two sisters who are the clear leaders. Although they do not demonstrate some of the more "feminine" characteristics often attributed to the authority figure in the vision tradition that seem to enhance her bond with her pupil--beauty and courtly behavior, for instance--they nevertheless possess the all-important female authority figure trait of predilection for emotional, intellectual and spiritual nurturance. They go the extra mile for Everyman, intervening in his fate just as the Virgin Mary intercedes for all humanity. Everyman's language, in fact, associates Knowledge and Good Deeds with Christianity's chief mediatrix, moving immediately from a prayer that Mary "helpe [his] soule to save!" to a request for Knowledge to furnish him with the scourge that will effect the saving of his soul (604-5). Good Deeds is especially linked to the Holy Mother by virtue of her offer to speak for Everyman when he appears before God--Mary's function. Yet among those counselors who eventually fail is one linked to Eve. Beauty exclaims at her quick and comic exit from among Everyman's retinue, "I take my tappe in my lappe and am gone" (801). Her possession of a "tap" holding flax used for spinning not only confirms her identity as female but also identifies her as a type of Eve, who is traditionally linked with spinning--the specific labor she was to perform in the fallen world she helped to create. "When Adam delf (dug) and Eve span. . . / Whare was than / The pride of man / That now merres (mars) his mede ([heavenly] reward)?"[15] the lyric goes, recalling the punishment of not merely the couple's overweening

[15] Lyric 60, ll. 1-2, 4-6, Medieval English Lyrics: A Critical Anthology, ed. R. T. Davies (London: Faber, 1963) 143. Glosses are Davies's.

desire for Godlike knowledge but also the prideful vanity often attributed to Eve and the dangerous beauty she used to coax Adam to his doom. Significantly, Beauty is the first of the counselor-others to desert Everyman, while Good Deeds stays with him to the end. And so it is with the false, material mirror of Eve and the true, superior mirror of Mary. Wholeness comes only through the latter. Although the Mary-or-Eve-as-other element within identity construction remains important, Everyman does suggest that male identity, when it is a Christian identity, must in the end be the product of a mixed-gender group of others.

The Castle of Perseverance

The importance of multiple, differently gendered others is also evident in the Castle of Perseverance. The vast majority of female characters in the play are of the authoritative Mary type. The seven Virtues who shepherd the protagonist are certainly of this kind, as are the four Daughters of God who debate the fate of Mankind's soul. Yet one representative of Eve makes her way into the play, and memorably so. She is Lechery, one of the seven Vices whom the Castle protagonist first adopts as a collective other and later rejects in favor of the Virtues. The only female among her sinful brethren,[16] she contributes colorfully and obscenely to Mankind's moral debasement, in the end telling him, her "leve lemman" (dear lover), "I (In) my cunte thou schalt crepe" (1189-90). Given the wealth of anti-feminist literature that preceded the Castle, it is little surprise that of all the sins it is Lechery who is designated female.[17] Medieval anti-feminism, influenced by millennia of classical

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[16] Covetousness says to the six other sins, "Welcum be ye, bretheryn all, / And my si[s]tyr, swete Lecherye!" (1019-20).

[17] In the work that provided the prototype for the battle of vices and virtues, Prudentius's fourth-century Psychomachia, all virtues and vices are female probably because the abstract nouns representing both categories of personification are feminine in gender. However, the Castle playwright seems to have purposefully

and Christian misogynist tradition, labeled woman a sexual temptation who was herself often sexually voracious.[18] But the fact that Lechery is only one of a host of

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transcended the dictates of grammatical gender with regard to the vices. See discussion on p. 193.

[18] Many anti-feminist notions that Ovid (43 BC-AD 18) included in his satirical Art of Love had considerable influence on later sacred and secular writers. One of his more influential passages refers to the sexual insatiability of women: "Birds will sooner fall dumb in springtime, / . . . / . . . than a lover's bland inducements / Can fail with a woman. Even one you suppose reluctant will want it"; and on woman's stronger sexual drive: "If masculine custom precluded courtship of women / You'd find each besotted girl taking the lead herself. . . . / [B]ut our male libido's milder, / Less rabid: man's sex has bounds / Imposed by convention" (from I.269-343). In Ovid: The Erotic Poems, trans. Peter Green (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1982), qtd. in Blamires,18. One later writer who corroborated Ovid's notions of woman was the Church father Isidore of Seville (c. 570-636), who notes, "[S]ome think she is called 'female' [femina] through the Greek etymology for 'burning force' [i.e. Greek fos] because of the intensity if her desire. For females. . .are more lustful than males, among women. . .as much as among animals. Hence the word 'effeminate' was applied to an excess of love. . .in antiquity" (11.2.23). In Isidore of Seville, Etymologies, trans. Blamires, qtd. in Blamires, 43, excerpted from Isidori Hispalensis Episcopi: Etymologiarum sive originarum libri xx, ed. W. M. Lindsay, 2 vols. (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1911). The tradition of the lustful woman flourished in the literature of the Middle Ages. Alan of Lille's Venus, Geoffrey Chaucer's Wife of Bath, and the various women who populate the entire fabliau genre exemplify the connection of woman and lechery. Early Christian writers also developed the idea of the woman as a trap or a snare, building largely upon Eve's role in the fall of mankind. Her physical charms were blamed for tempting her spouse toward the Fall and into an unhappy awareness of and appetite for sexuality. In The Appearance of Women, Tertullian (c. 160-c. 225) advised Christian women to "neglect" their physical appearance, "giving the appearance of a mourning and repentant Eve" (1.1) so that they might better "despise the very idea" of being perceived as "the object of desire" (2.2). Because each woman is Eve, the "gateway of the devil" (1.1), any man is "lost as soon as he desires [her] beauty" (2.2). In Tertullian, De cultu feminarum, trans. C. W. Marx, qtd. in Blamires, 51-52, excerpted from Tertullian Opera, pt. I, ed. A. Kroymann, CCSL, i (Turnhout: Brepols, 1954). In his fifteenth homily on Genesis, John Chrysostom (347-407) seemed to adapt Tertullian's ideas into an admonition against "unchastened gazing": "How often do we, from beholding a woman, suffer a thousand evils; returning home, and entertaining an inordinate desire, and experiencing anguish for many days. . ." (Homilies on Genesis 1-17, trans. Robert C. Hill, Fathers of the Church 74 [Washington, DC: Catholic U of America P, 1986]

threats to Mankind's soul, the rest of which are male, suggests a movement away from the rigidity of the Mary-Eve dichotomy in the Castle of Perseverance, of regarding the feminine as both the greatest aid and the greatest danger to salvation. In this play, the feminine is largely only the former; of the "mirrors" that have the potential to aid Mankind in his identity construction, the superior is associated with the female while the inferior mirror is associated for the most part with the male gender. In fact, the playwright seems to have purposefully departed from the source of the literary "soul-war"; in Prudentius's fourth-century Psychomachia, all virtues and vices are presented as female, while the medieval Castle has masculinized all vices but Lechery (Luxuria) despite their feminine Latin names--Superbia, Ira, Invidia, Gula, Accidia, Avaritia. It is the male Avaritia, or Covetousness, to whom Mankind returns in his old age and adopts as other, an act which constructs for him a sinful and potentially damned identity--one submerged in worldly desire.

The superior effort, the push toward a saved identity, is clearly spearheaded by female characters. This the Virtues carry off as a standard female authority figure would, with a dash of courtly elegance, a respectable pinch of maidenly modesty, and a large portion of divinely inspired zeal. They display, in fact, what might be considered aggressive behavior in the pitched battle they wage against their seven sinful counterparts. Yet it is clear from the text that there is nothing Eve-ish about the

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441, qtd. in R. Howard Bloch, Medieval Misogyny and the Invention of Western Romantic Love [Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1991] 106). Later medieval writers picked up this patristic thread; even Heloise (1101-64) apparently writes in this tradition, lamenting (in a letter to her former husband, castrated by her relatives), "What misery for me--born as I was to be the cause of such a crime! Is it the general lot of women to bring ruin upon men?" (3.5). She then answers her own question with a list of biblical women whose charms had destroyed men, a list beginning with reference to "the first woman. . .who lured man from Paradise, and. . .who became the instrument of his total downfall" (3.6). In The Letters of Abelard and Heloise, trans. Betty Radice (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1974), qtd. in Blamires, 89-90.

initiative they display; such force is, instead, an extension of their divine authority. And it is significant that while their verbal exchanges with the Vices are harsh and condemning, the Virtues themselves never stoop to abusive language ("schrewe" [villain] and "wrecche" [2168, 2129] are the strongest terms they apply to their opponents, as opposed to the Vices' insults of "fowle skowte" [wench], "bolnyd bowde" [swollen malt-weevil], and "bicche"[2287, 2337, 2116]). In addition, the weapons of these "[l]ikinge lelys" (amiable lilies, 1668) are flowers symbolic of Christ's passion. "Ladies" to the end, even as warriors, they gracefully protect the soul of Mankind from the invading demonic throng. [19]

While there is no doubt that female characters are Mankind's spiritual guardians, to be successful their efforts still require ancillary male input. Certainly the female Virtues are more immediately involved in the maintenance of Mankind's saved identity than any male presence, providing him with his most intense theological and spiritual training and embodying the demand he must embrace if he is to find redemption. Collectively they serve as his other, their words mirroring to him what he must do to be saved. Charity, for instance, exhorts Mankind to "have an eye" toward her "in al thinge" (1602-3), while Abstinence advises that he should "[t]ake

[19] The comportment of the Castle's Virtues is also a departure from Prudentius's text, in which they exhibit excessive physical and verbal brutality in their defeat of the foe. M. Lavarenne's reaction to the primary female characters of the Psychomachia may, in fact, be influenced by a familiarity with the Castle's version of events: "It is not without a certain shocked astonishment that we read of the murders that are carried out more or less savagely, greatly intensified by declamatory tirades, by those modest and pure maidens who the Christian Virtues ought, in our eyes, to be. We expect from them sweetness of behavior, modesty of speech: and behold, they appear as amazons, destitute of all timidity. . . . Is it essential that [they] attack with such ardor, kill with such joy. . ?" (Prudence, ed. and trans. Lavarenne, 3 vols. [Paris: Belles Lettres, 1943-48] 3.11-12). At any rate, the Castle playwright's departure from the source text situates these important female characters within the tradition of the female authority figure.

but skilful refeccion (only reasonable repast)" (1616). Chastity urges, "[M]ove the[e] to maidyn Marye (emulate the Virgin Mary). / Fleschly foly loke thou fle, / At the referense of Oure Lady" (1626-31); Industry cautions, "Sumtime rede, and sumtime write, / And sumtime pleye at thy delite" (1650-51); and Generosity concludes, "Spende thy good (wealth) as God it sent. / In worchep of Him that sit (sits) above, / Loke thy goodys be dispent (dispensed)" (1655-67).[20] And for awhile his words and actions do indeed reflect those of the "sevene sisterys swete" (2047), confirming that his identity has been constructed by and through them. "The sevene sinnys I forsake, / And to these seven vertuis I me take" (1690-91), he announces. Yet before he can connect with the Virtues, "Penance" must (as the modern stage directions read) "pierc[e] Mankind's heart with the prick of conscience,"[21] sending him to Shrift for cleansing confession. Of these two personifications, one is specifically designated male (Mankind addresses Shrift as "Sir Schrifte" [1493]) while one is not, although his phallic wielding of the "point of penaunce" (1377) does suggest a possible male identity. The female warriors fight with no such penetrating weapons. Together with Mankind's guardian Good Angel, also male, Shrift and Penance propel the protagonist toward the Castle of Perseverance, the keepers of which are the Virtues. As in Everyman, the spiritual reclamation effort seems to require the participation of both masculine and feminine elements.

This masculine-feminine cooperation extends beyond the efforts of the Virtues and their male associates, who ultimately fail to keep Mankind safe within the Castle. Four more female authority figures take over the effort and, to decide the identity of Mankind once and for all, must bring a masculine element into the endeavor. The

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[20] The speeches of Meekness and Patience are thought to be included in a missing portion of the manuscript.

[21] Bevington, 838

identity Mankind evidences at his death marks him as a humble suppliant of sorts; crying out for Mercy (3007), he apparently rejects of the avaricious identity he had adopted in his later years. The soul of Mankind seems to have taken Mercy as other, mentioning her redemptive potential five times in its post-death voicings.[22] Yet this apparent death-bed identity change has not secured an automatic placement within the salvation paradigm: the soul is dragged off to hell despite its obvious desires to the contrary. The resolution of this dilemma seems to fall to Mercy and her sisters Justice, Truth and Peace, personified aspects of God's nature that are presented here as his daughters. But, as Carolynn Van Dyke has noted, the placement and purpose of the debate in the Castle differ from that traditionally associated with this particular topos.[23] The most common use of the debate occurs within the context of Providential History and just prior to the incarnation; its purpose is to decide whether or not humanity as a whole warrants salvation in the form of the messiah. At the debate's end, the scripture that inspired it--"Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other" (Ps. 85:10 [Vulgate 84:11])--has come to pass, representing the harmonizing of the various aspects of God that needs to occur if the supreme redemptive gesture that is Christ will be made.[24] Yet Van Dyke suggests that in the Castle debate, God's ownership of the qualities the sisters

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[22] Castle, 3008, 3028, 3060, 3063, 3067.

[23] Carolynn Van Dyke, The Fiction of Truth: Structures of Meaning in Narrative and Dramatic Allegory (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1985) 125.

[24] A dramatic example of the traditional placement of the debate can be found in the the N-Town Parliament of Heaven; Salutation and Conception play (ll. 49-188). Another atypical situating of the four daughters' discussion appears in Piers Plowman; here the debate occurs just prior to Christ's harrowing of hell (Passus XX). For a study of the topos of the four daughters of God in the Middle Ages, see Hope Traver, The Four Daughters of God: A Study of the Versions of This Allegory With Special Reference to Those in Latin, French and English, Bryn Mawr College Monographs 6 (Bryn Mawr, PA: Bryn Mawr College, 1907).

represent is not a given prior to the debate;[25] it is, in fact, the debate itself that establishes the nature of God as a compound of the four elements supplied by his Daughters and one he alone brings to the mix. Each Daughter presents her case before Him, with Truth and Justice arguing that Mankind's life of desire over demand should, in the end, condemn him--in other words, that God should own the stringent qualities of truth and justice as His nature--while Mercy and Peace intercede for the soul of the protagonist, Mary-style, urging that God embrace forgiveness as the defining characteristic of His identity. God's decision reflects the nature of Christian salvation, suggesting that it is a combination of the elements represented in the play as either masculine or feminine. To Peace, the last of the speakers, God says, "On the[e] I thinke, and on Mercy." It is not severity he offers to this repentant sinner but "blisse." And "[t]o make my blisse perfyth (perfect)," he tells his daughters, "I menge (mingle) with my most myth (might) / Alle Pes, sum Treuth, and sum Ryth (righteousness, justice), / And most of my Mercy" (3562, 3565, 3570-73). It is important to note that in the scheme of Christian salvation, Mercy and Peace, the embodiment of the nurturing, forgiving aspects of the female authority figure, play a bigger role than do the disciplinary, legalistic Truth and Justice, although the latter two are still necessary ingredients in the divine mix. When commingled with that masculine aspect of God, His might, the four Daughters create the force that is redemption--and all serve as other to the soul of Mankind.

Mankind's retrieved and redeemed soul finishes the play sitting at the right hand of the Father, with heaven as a reward and God's the visage into which he might look to find identity. "My face shall th[e] fede" (3599, 3608-9), God tells this newest arrival among the ranks of the blessed. His entire journey has been the result of an

[25] Van Dyke, 125.

arduous cooperative effort by both male and female characters, and the gender make-up of the participants seems to reflect the nature of the process, which requires typically feminine strengths and typically masculine ones, also. Wholeness can only be achieved when all are acknowledged and incorporated. And in the Castle of Perseverance, the feminine is clearly vital. The Castle playwright, in removing the disputation of God's daughters from the realm of historical time and contextualizing it within the lifetime of an individual,[26] shifts the traditional focus from authorizing the spectacular act that saved all of mankind to delineating the nature of a God who chooses to concern himself with the eternal fate of any member of humanity. Although the ultimate authority and therefore the ultimate power to effect human salvation do rest with God the Father, here represented as male, the components of the salvational force that God invokes to save Mankind are feminine by a four-to-one ratio.

In the Middle Ages, history and tradition stipulated that God and Christ must be gendered male, but only with difficulty might many other aspects of Christian salvation be perceived as masculine. In a time dominated by rigid notions of gender-appropriate behaviors,[27] it seems that a feminine entity was needed to fill the vacuum between a masculine Godhead and the stern but nonetheless loving nurturance Christianity advocated. In Everyman, Knowledge and Good Deeds fill it; in the Castle of Perseverance, the Virtues and the Daughters fill it; and in medieval tradition

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[26] J. A. Burrow calls the "opposition between. . .historical time, in which the Fall and Redemption of mankind takes place[,] and the lifetime of the individual, in which he too falls and may be redeemed," the "main generic distinction" in medieval English drama. In Medieval Writers and Their Work: Middle English Literature and its Backgrounds 1100-1500 (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1982) 59.

[27] See Ch. 1, n. 7 for medieval understanding of the "feminine"; for extrapolation of those notions to actual behaviors, see below.

and religion, the Virgin Mary did. The saint's play Mary Magdalene also suggests the need for a feminine element in the salvational compound, and Mary Magdalene herself provides it.

Saint's Play--Mary Magdalene

Mary Magdalene (late fifteenth century), the only extant English saint's play with a woman as the central character,[28] suggests by the play's end that the feminine is indeed a useful, even constitutive, element within Christian salvation. It accomplishes this in two ways: 1) Mary Magdalene, having served as authoritative other for the unconverted populace among which she moves, is, in the tradition of the Virgin Mary--with whom she is linked throughout the play--granted a type of deification as her life comes to an end, and; 2) the play evidences a double plot: one, the ministry, death, and resurrection of Christ; the other, the fallen life, spiritual rebirth, and ministry of Mary. One effect of this parallel coverage is to dissect the gender-inclusive nature of the Christian life; and when the two narratives intersect--especially when the reborn Magdalene interacts with the risen Christ--a sort of spiritual interdependency is demonstrated. In co-opting the language of courtly love to address each other, Mary and Christ further suggest that their relationship is akin to

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[28] The other surviving English saints' or miracle plays are the Conversion of St. Paul and the Croxton Play of the Sacrament (both late fifteenth century). The Cornish St. Meriasek (early sixteenth century) also survives. Records exist attesting to performances in England of the following plays (some in the vernacular, some in Latin) chronicling the experiences of female saints, although the plays themselves have been lost: a twelfth-century St. Katharine play that may have been liturgical drama (see n. 6, above); another St. Katharine in 1393; St. Clotilda, 1429; St. Susannah, 1447-48; St. Clara, 1455-56; St. Katharine, 1490-91; St. Mary Magdalen, 1503-4; SS Feliciana and Sabina, 1516; St. Christina, 1522 (Grantley 266). Bevington speculates that so many of the English saints' plays have vanished "probably because they were destroyed by Reformation authorities who regarded saint-worship as a particularly idolatrous offense" (662).

a spiritual communion, evocative not only of Christ's union with the soul of the repentant sinner,[29] but also of the nature of Christian salvation--both feminine and masculine elements are needed. Still, it cannot be argued that the feminine is given parity in the power dynamics of salvation. Despite Mary's "doubling" of Christ's experience--he dies to save mankind while she dies to sin and then devotes her life to creating saved identities for humanity; he effects the resurrection of a dead man, she of a dead woman and child--Mary Magdalene also emphasizes that the play's heroine is Christ's inferior in spiritual authority. She, in fact, accords the apostle Peter more authority on earth than she herself holds. In the universe of Mary Magdalene, a female may transform identities and perform miracles, but she must, the playwright offers implicitly, remain under the tutelage of male authority.

In both her deference to male leadership and her spiritual activism, Mary Magdalene recalls the active, allegorical women of the morality genre, and as we shall see, the Virgin Mary of the cycle drama. In her unconverted state, Mary Magdalene is obedient to the secular, patriarchal power structure of the family, headed first by her father Cyrus and then by her brother Lazarus. After her conversion, she remains respectful of the worldly, male-driven institution of the monarchy, behaving in a courteous, even demure fashion before the boorish, heathen King of Marseilles. Within the spiritual hierarchy of the Church, she names Peter her "master" (1681) and sends the converted king to him for christening. Yet, like the authority figures of the moralities, she is also ready to admonish if such a tactic is necessary to bring her charge into accord with demand. She says to the French monarch in a dream:

Thow froward° king, trobelows and wood,°

[29] Grantley notes that in the cycle drama, Mary Magdalene "is presented uniformly as a figure of contrition of sin and in a sense is part of the figural representation of Christ's love for the penitent human soul. . ." (270).

That hast at thy will all wor[l]ddes wele. °
Depart with me with sum of thy good, °
That am° in hongor, threst° and cold!
God hath the[e] sent warningys felle; °
I rede the[e] torne and amend thy mood. °
Beware of thy lewdnesse, ° for thy own hele°! (1611-17).
presumptuous[30] */ troublous and mad*
wealth
Give me some of your goods, wealth
who is[31] */ thirst*
many
I advise you to be converted
wickedness /(spiritual) health

She succeeds in recruiting him for Christianity by following up her visionary lecture not with stronger appeals but with a polite personal visit--only after being sent for--in which she lets him set the agenda. Answering the questions he puts to her regarding salvation, she is able to instruct him to "fulfille. . .Goddes cummaundement, / Pore folk in misch[ef] (trouble), them to susteyn" (1655-56), a message that begins to counteract the pagan desire controlling him. When she is able to prophesy the birth of the king's son, a much-hoped-for boon, she shows herself other to both husband and wife, the latter calling her the "rote (root) of owr sa[l]vacion" (1671) and the happy father-to-be exclaiming, "O, blissyd Mary, ryth well is me / That ever I have abeyden (lived until) this daye!" (1677-78). While Mary's powers of conversion are restricted-- only Peter is able to "crestyn [them] from the fynddes (fiend's) power" (1684)--the king nevertheless rhapsodizes on her spiritual authority, invoking her aid along with Christ's for the couple's journey to Jerusalem for baptism: "Now Jhesu be owr g[u]id[e], that (who) is hye justice / And this blissyd womman, Mary Maugleyn!" (1711-12).

[30] My gloss.
[31] My gloss.

As I suggested above and as the king's statement implies, Mary operates within a universe in which she and Christ are a male-female redemptive movement: Mary recruits in Christ's name and Christ himself supplies the salvation. Their partnership begins when Jesus saves her from a life of indulgent sin; soon after driving seven devils from her, he tells her, "Beware, and kepe the[e] from alle necligens, / And after thou shal be partener of my blisse" (704). When she recognizes him following the resurrection, he further articulates their bond. "Be steadfast," he tells her, " and I shall ever with the[e] be" (1094). Christ in his heaven communicates frequently with his dedicated ally, whom he calls variously, "my servantt" (1366), "my lover" (1588), and "my wel-belovyd frynd" (2005), first sending her across the waters to convert the royal family of Marseilles, then answering her call for help in her task by arranging that she appear to the king in the dream, and again answering her prayers for contemplative revelation by ordering his angels to provide "gostly fode" (spiritual food) for her sustenance (2006). Mary's speech to him shows that he is her everything, her all. When she first speaks to him she identifies him as "Lord of everlasting life" (678) and observes regarding his conversion of her, "This [was] rehersyd for my sped (advantage), / Sowle helth at t[h]is time for to recure (recover)" (692-93). She later says of him, "By vertue of Him, alle thing was wrowth (wrought)" (1387). After Jesus's death, as Mary mourns the disappearance of his body, she refers to herself as his "lover" (1068) and notes that she has "porposed in eche degré (intended in every way) / To have him with [her] verely (truly)" (1065-66). "A, gracius Master and Lord, yow it is I seke," she says to her risen Lord when she recognizes him; "Now will I kesse thee for my hartes bote (remedy)" (1070, 1073). She is truly completed by him; he on the other hand, needs her to work his will.

Their divinely sanctioned team effort is evident in the way the other characters link them through language. As mentioned earlier, the King of Marseilles jointly invokes both Mary and Jesus to watch over his journey to Jerusalem. The king also links the two in the thanks he offers at his wife's return from the dead (1912). By the play's end, the connection between the two is made more acute by Mary's close doubling of Christ's experience and significance. The Queen of Marseilles has labeled her "my bodis sustinauns" (1903)--a Christological function; she has ascended bodily (although temporarily) into heaven; and, at her death, she repeats Jesus's dying words, "In manus tuas Domine. . . / Commendo spiritum meum" (Into your hands Lord, I commend my spirit [2116, 2118]). The priest who gives Mary her final communion suggests a symbolic deification of Mary as he places her within a sort of blessed trinity--Father, Son, and Magdalene:

> O good God, grett is thy grace!
> O Jesu, Jesu, blessyd be thy name!
> A Mary, Mary, mych is thy solas,
> In heven blisse with gle and game[o]! (2123-26)
> *[o] joy and delight*

Mary Magdalene's placement within the above triad also suggests a connection to the Virgin Mary, who was traditionally the reigning female presence in heaven; many subtle and not-so-subtle linkages between the two Marys occur within the play. Mary Magdalene is not only associated with the Virgin by their common name but by syntactic or narrative adjacency, for example, the king's noting that in addition to Jesus, "I thank itt Maudleyn and Owr Lady" (1914) for his wife's resurrection, and Christ's remembering the Magdalene immediately after a rapturous recital of his mother's symbolic associations (1349-67). Yet Mary Magdalene most directly recalls the Virgin Mary when she is called upon to act as intercessor. The King of Marseilles tells his dying wife, ". . .trost in Mary Maudleyn / And she from perelles (perils) shall

us save; / To God for us she woll prayn (pray)" (1751-3). The woman herself says at the moment of death, "Now, Mary Maudleyn, my sowle lede!" (1765). After the deaths of mother and child, the king comments, "Now woll I pray to Mary mild / To be ther g[u]ide here" (1796-97). When the dead queen revives, the king's further references to the play's protagonist continue the Mary-Mary connection. He infers that the Magdalene, whom he labels a "puer vergin" (1896) worthy of blessing, is connected to the functioning of God's grace (1894, 1898)--things typically said of the immaculate Holy Mother. When the queen is fully revived, she continues the thread of association, labeling Mary "almyty maidyn" (1902) and crediting the "demur[e] Maudlyn" (1903) with leading her on a mystic journey involving baptism, the crucifixion, and the sepulcher of Christ. When the royal couple is reunited with Mary, their greetings recall the hailing of the first Mary. "Heyll be thou, Mary! Owr Lord is with the[e]!" the king says, followed by the queen's, "Heyll, thou chosyn and chast of wommen alon!" (1940, 1944). Such persistent connecting of the play's heroine to Heaven's Queen and humanity's intercessor serves to solidify the link between Christ and his loyal servant-lover and to affirm further the importance of such a sacred partnership to those within the universe of the play who would be saved. It also reinforces the notion that Christian salvation is effected through the combination of masculine and feminine elements.

Yet Mary Magdalene, before she serves as authoritative spiritual intermediary, exemplary disciple, and extraordinary woman, before she mirrors or is fused with such divine figures as Christ and the Virgin Mary, was also an ordinary sinner mired in desire until she met her savior. She is, as a result, a representative of humanity with whom the audience may identify. When Jesus promises to partner her in bliss, he is, in essence, making the same pledge to all of humanity. Mary acknowledges

that Christ is not for her alone, and she labels his resurrection as "a joyfull tiding [/] . . .onto all pepull that after us shall reyngne. . ." (1087-88). The line in which Christ promises to be with her forever is presented in the context of the greater fellowship to which she belongs:

> I woll shew° to sinnars, as I do to the[e],
> If they woll with vervens° of love me seke.
> Be stedfast, and I shall ever with th[e] be,
> And with all tho° that to me bin° meke. (1092-95)
> *appear*
> *fervency*
> *those / are*[32]

Her sin could be anybody's sin; her reward, therefore, could be any Christian's reward. In this respect she is also a mirror in which each audience member might see him- or herself reflected, providing as she does a model of identity any viewer could achieve if only he or she would replicate Mary's obedience, devotion and faith. That she is also the play's chief representative of the feminine seems only to enhance her effectiveness as both exemplar and chief communicator of Christian identity. After the manner of the passive, material (feminine) mirror awaiting a (masculine) image, Mary receives the defining essence of Christ and is truly invented for the first time; she then reflects the identity of salvation to those who seek it. In Mary Magdalene, the result of such a cooperative balance between gendered elements can only be an identity-construction effort that serves to further the Christian plan.

Cycle Drama

The input of both masculine and feminine elements is also evident in the cycle drama, with this distinction: the cooperative efforts between male and female characters involve mostly domestic pairings--marriages, or relationships that are

[32] My gloss.

largely vertical rather than horizontal. The one female character consistently granted the status of the authority figure in the cycle drama is, not surprisingly, the Virgin Mary, who is able to appear both as obedient wife and confident, assertive speaker of God's truth. In Mary's pairings with the various men she encounters as well as in those of other cycle drama couples, identity is often created for the female characters as well as for the male, with both parties shoring up the salvation paradigm.

One of the seminal moments in the Providential History that the cycle drama enacts is Adam's decision to eat of the forbidden fruit after the urging of his wife, Eve. Genesis and the various Fall of Man plays record that one of the punishments meted out to Eve for her disobedience in the Garden of Eden was her subjugation to her husband. Adam's penalty of life at hard labor was exacted not only for his disobedience to God but also for his acceptance of his wife's serpent-advised counsel. In the Middle Ages, a large part of the legacy of humanity's fall from paradise were the contention-producing power dynamics of male-female relationships: man should always maintain mastery because the guidance of woman will remain eternally suspect; yet woman will generally resist such subjugation. It is clear, however, from the texts of the four extant English cycle dramas that relationships between men and women should, if God is at their head, contribute to the proper playing out of individual and universal salvation--even the strongly anti-feminist Chester Cycle suggests this. Because the cycle drama is marked by bourgeois and, less frequently, courtly literary influences,[33] some of the dissatisfactory relationships between male and female characters so evident in those traditions do make their way into dramatic situations. Yet more often than not, this dissatisfaction is shown to be the result of men and women out of sync with God's ordering; it is not necessarily an indication

[33] See n. 56, below.

that the relationships are inherently an impediment to satisfaction, although the degree to which this is true varies from cycle to cycle. The Chester cycle presents woman as an other that leads more often to danger than divinity, while the York finds woman only slightly less dangerous. Consequently, Chester also has almost nothing to offer in the way of gender interdependency, and York has little more, as the subjectivity of the female characters is given far less development than the males'. Still, even in these cycles, women may serve as the key to the fulfillment of male characters, to the wholeness that can only come through spiritual salvation. And in the Wakefield and N-Town cycles, the wholeness seems to run both ways, with each partner fulfilling the other by positioning himself or herself within the order of Christ. I begin with the Chester cycle, moving from that work in which women participate the least to the York cycle, which continues the Chester marginalization of "good" women with the exception of the treatment of the Virgin Mary, who is shown to interact extensively with male characters. The next cycle studied, Wakefield, despite its several misogynistic portraits of women, moves beyond York in the degree to which male and female characters participate in each other's identities. The culmination of this phenomenon occurs in the last cycle examined, N-Town, which presents a series of relationships between male and female characters that are genuine partnerships, predicated upon shared responsibility and mutual respect, affection, and, above all, piety.

The Chester Cycle

Martin Stevens has written that the Chester cycle of medieval biblical pageants is "almost virulently antifeminist."[34] A quick study of the Chester playwright's characterization of women might suggest that Steven's qualifier "almost" is

[34] Stevens, 277.

unneeded. Not only does the cycle boast references to the physical infirmity of women--Noah's wife complains in the flood pageant that "women bynne (be) weake to underfoe (undertake) / any great travell (toil)" (67-68)[35]--but also to their spiritual infirmity: the Devil explains in the cycle's Adam and Eve; Cain and Abel play that women "be full licourouse (wanton, greedy)" (199) while a postlapsarian Adam labels his mate a relative to evil. "My licourouse wyfe hath bynne my foe," he mourns; "the devylls envye shent (ruined) mee alsoe. / These too (two) together well may goe, / the suster and the brother" (353-56). Adam's additional comments that men should trust women no more than they should trust Satan (359-60) seem to express the Chester cycle's attitude toward women. For when its women are not presented as unruly, noxious creatures, they are marginalized, far more so than in any of the other three extant English mystery cycles. The playwrights seem to adopt the attitude that because women, following the example of an ambitious, voracious, sexual Eve, are potential threats to the spiritual purity of mankind, the version of Providential History told in the Chester cycle should remind viewers of that potential threat by making its most memorable female characters disorderly in the extreme--Noah's bibulous wife, the violent and foul-mouthed mothers of the children killed by Herod, and the hell-bound ale-wife come to mind[36]--and by making the more positive female figures of Christian tradition, especially the Virgin Mary, largely peripheral to the central action of the cycle.

Yet despite this antifeminist slant, there is evidence in the Chester cycle of a seemingly contrary impulse--a recognition that a woman may occasionally contribute

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[35] All Chester cycle citations are from R. M. Lumiansky and David Mills' edition of The Chester Mystery Cycle EETS ss 3 (London: Oxford UP, 1974).

[36] Noah's Flood, 49-63; The Slaughter of the Innocents, 176-92; and The Harrowing of Hell, 302-15.

in positive fashion to the construction of a male's Christian identity. Mary provides this aid for Joseph, just as the sibyl does for Roman ruler Octavian and the Prophetess Anna for the priest Simeon. These instances of male-female collaboration show the female partner playing other to the male by completing him, making a whole out of two. If this is the case, it may then be argued that notwithstanding the apparently conscious effort of the Chester playwright[37] to downplay the contribution of women to the workings of Christian salvation, the importance of women within either a literal or figurative marriage relationship is evident, as are the possible beneficial aspects of such a marriage.

Yet there is little question that male-female relationships are given briefer treatment in the Chester cycle than they are in the other English cycle dramas. As I've suggested above, part of the explanation for this is the relative lack of involvement of women in the action of the Chester cycle. Although female characters appear in roughly the same percentage of plays in Chester as they do in most of the others,[38] the difference is in the quantity and quality of the stage time allotted to the Chester women within each pageant. While Chester does give relatively full treatment to episodes involving the sisters of Lazarus, Mary and Martha, and to the resurrected Christ's appearance to the three Marys, the cycle does not develop the character of Mary Magdalene or even that of the Adulteress to the extent that the other cycles do, nor does it treat the stories of such biblical matriarchs as Rebecca,

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[37] Stevens argues that "the Chester cycle is quite likely the original work of one playwright. . .and that the cycle is carefully unified in terms of its stylistic and formal devices" (272). David Mills is in agreement, stating that "the thematic and structural coherence of the cycle. . .seems to predicate the controlling hand of some author or overall reviser" ("The Chester Cycle," Cambridge Companion, 113).

[38] York: twenty-six out of forty-seven plays--55 percent; Wakefield: twenty out of thirty-two plays--63 percent; N-Town: twenty-six out of forty-one plays--63 percent; Chester: fifteen out of twenty-four plays--63 percent.

Leah, Rachel, or of a traditional Christian figure such as Anne, mother of the Virgin Mary. The Holy Mother herself is considerably diminished in her Chester incarnation. Stevens summarizes:

> Mary . . . speaks 18 times for a total of 192 lines in the whole cycle. Of these, only one substantial speech comes after the Infancy period, a conventional *planctus* of 24 lines delivered at the foot of the Cross as Pilate affixes his infamous sign. Except for the *planctus*, she makes not a single memorable contribution to the play.[39]

No longer the "embodiment and purveyor of divine love," the link between mankind and Godhead, the Chester Mary is, in Stevens words, "a worshipful and devout but colorless person" whose "speeches are almost all responses."[40] This "colorless" figure is in great contrast to the York Mary, who engages in charged repartee with Joseph on more than one occasion and who rallies despondent apostles at Pentecost; the Wakefield Mary, who gently corrals Joseph to search for the missing Jesus and who is anointed her son's spiritual successor by his disciples; and especially to the N-Town Mary, whose childhood and salvific importance are given almost as much emphasis as are Jesus's. The Chester Mary is largely a background figure, thrust occasionally into the foreground when her traditional role as mother of Christ cannot be downplayed. Hers is little more than a token appearance; she is present because Providential history cannot unfold without her. She is a necessary prop within the dramatization of the Christian story. Mary's situation is that of nearly all female characters in the Chester cycle: when a dramatized episode requires their presence, their actions and utterances are limited so that their input is of only brief significance to the development of the broader narrative, and they are given almost no opportunity to contribute to the construction of individual identity.

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[39] Stevens, 276.
[40] Stevens, 276.

Peter Travis's analysis of Chester's dramatic design confirms the notion that Mary and most other female characters are largely peripheral to the action carried out by male characters. Travis asserts that a central feature of the Chester cycle is its exploration of the effect of Christian illumination on what might be called Everyman figures--characters with whom, for various reasons, the audience may identify; characters that are invariably male. Travis's Everyman is a variation on the "natural man" character identified by V. A. Kolve as an important concern of the Corpus Christi plays in general. As Kolve has noted, it is the impact of the Christian story upon this "non-theological"[41] creature that the cycle drama often focuses upon, and though generally male (for instance, Christ's tormentors, Herod's soldiers, the nativity's shepherds) natural man may also be female (the temperamental wives of Noah, Wakefield's Gill).[42] These fallen characters, separated as they are from God, are those in whom the drama of salvation has the potential to effect an identity change--and inspire a similar change in the audience. Travis holds, however, that in the Chester plays those characters whom the audience might follow through stages of doubt, incomprehension and/or appetite to spiritual enlightenment[43] are men only: Noah, Abraham, Joseph, the Shepherds, the priest Simeon, and the Roman Emperor Octavian are the cycle's Everymen. The most prominent instances of enlightenment experiences involving female characters cannot be read in the same way, according to Travis, because the women involved do not possess the qualities that would identify them as Everymen. Although Travis never produces a general list of criteria that these characters are to meet, he implies that each one should demonstrate some awareness of his own low position in relation to God together with a desire to

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[41] Kolve, 208. Stevens calls the natural man "distinctly human" (9).

[42] See Kolve's discussion, Chs. 9 and 10.

[43] Travis, 115-30.

understand the divine plan. Joseph, for instance, "cast slightly 'beneath' the audience. . .encourages both sympathy and a certain amount of respect."[44] These Everymen, then, may be comic, slightly below the awareness level and/or behavioral standards of any spectators, but they must possess humility, a capacity to learn and the ability to change. Above all they must be drawn as human characters with whom a Christian audience could identify. The close relationship of the Virgin Mary and her cousin Elizabeth to divinity disqualifies them from this category, despite their revelation experiences, because they are portrayed as having been "incapable of any real doubt" in the first place. The midwife Salome's conversion from skeptic to believer fails to mark her as a stand-in for audience members because her attempt to discover for herself whether Mary is indeed a virgin "is too shocking to summon much fellow feeling"[45] in the watching crowd. In sum, female characters in the Chester cycles are drawn with fewer recognizable human characteristics than the males, a sign that their identities are of little concern to the playwrights. They are useful only insofar as they contribute to the construction of male identity.

Because most of the action in the Chester plays takes place through the agency of men, and because the women are too removed from human experience to embody the drama of human redemption, it is not surprising that their relationships to men are presented with little fanfare or emphasis--unless that emphasis takes the form of a warning against the dangers of womanly influence.[46] Although I suggested above that the Chester cycle does allow for woman's usefulness in the establishment of a saved

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[44] Travis, 115.

[45] Travis, 115.

[46] See especially those male-female relationships presented in the pageants mentioned in n. 36.

male identity, it is because she may be as useful in establishing for him a damned identity that the Chester playwright seems to find her objectionable.

The relationship of the Chester Adam and Eve dramatizes the danger of woman's power as other. Adam, it would seem, never has a chance against the villainous female forces that conspire his undoing. In the cycle's Adam and Eve; Cain and Abel play, not only does his wife tempt him to the forbidden act with such tender verbal nothings as "husbande liffe (beloved) and deare" and "leefe feare (dear companion)" (249, 251), but the diabolical one engineering his fall has, according to Eve and suggested by the stage directions,[47] "a maydens face" (195). After the Fall Adam, despite his knowledge of Eve's role in his embrce of desire and expulsion from Paradise, still labels her his only gladness following the murder of their son Abel by his brother Cain. In the midst of such woe Adam remarks, "Noe more joye to me is leade (laid, given), / save only Eve my wyfe" (687-88). Her earlier power over him can not be disputed, for she had easily convinced him to eat of the forbidden fruit, an act which changed forever his positioning within God's paradigm. Even after God's directive to Eve that "man shall master thee alwaye; / and under his power thou shalte bee aye (always), / thee for to dryve and deare (discipline)" (318-20), there is evidence that Eve is more to Adam than simply a responsibility, a charge to be controlled. Adam clearly states that he *needs* his wife if his existence is to have any comfort. He is dependent upon her; she is his other.

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[47] Lumiansky and Mills, The Chester Mystery Cycle, EETS 21. The original Latin stage direction reads: "Supremus volucris, penna serpens, pede forma, forma, puella." (Upper part of the body with feather of a bird; serpent, by shape in the foot, in figure a girl.) Mills notes in his version of the cycle (The Chester Mystery Cycle: A New Edition with Modernised Spelling, Medieval Texts and Studies 9 [East Lansing, MI: Colleagues, 1992] 33) that "exegetes such as Bede considered [the serpent] to have a woman's face, which enabled it to establish a rapport with Eve."

Eve, however, contributes nothing to the construction of a blessed identity for Adam, unless it is to occasion the need for Christ in the first place. A more positive example of a woman contributing to the spiritual education of a man occurs in the relationship of Joseph and Mary. My earlier discussion has already suggested that Joseph is the more dynamic of the two participants in the relationship; it is his journey into which spectators are to be drawn, not hers. As Stevens puts it, Mary is

> often overshadowed by a consistently drawn, affectionate, solicitous, and very compassionate Joseph, who forever recalls the visitation of the angel to him with the message that the Christ Child was conceived without sin. . . . Of the two, Joseph is without doubt the more memorable character.[48]

Yet Joseph's journey would be impossible without his wife. His tenure as the pregnant Mary's guardian brings him to an understanding of the significance of the Virgin birth--that the beginning of a sinless life marks the advent of humanity's salvation. His marriage to Mary also provides him with the added divinely ordained mission of preserving his wife's chaste condition; as he says in The Offerings of the Three Kings: "[F]or God would (desires) in chastitie / that we should together bee, / keeper of her virginitie / I have binne manye a day" (213-15). Mary, then, is his anchor, his other, the one who completes his identity, the one assures his adherence to demand.

But it is less the things she says to him than her central presence in his life that changes his sense of self. Just as Adam's perception of Eve as his vital other rather than what she actually says leads him to value her above all else, Mary's significance to Joseph provides the primary link between them rather than the actual words they exchange. Although she does let him know that he is her "leeffe fere" (The Nativity 461) and confirms that Joseph's counsel to flee the country to avoid Herod's slaughter

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[48] Stevens, 276-77.

of the innocents is divinely inspired (she knows that Joseph's "talent" (wish) is "my lordes will" [278-79]), she herself does not effect his identity in the way that, for instance, Knowledge did for Everyman. It is the sole verbal effort of the Angel that convinces Joseph to adopt his guardianship of Mary; Mary herself says nothing in her own defense when Joseph discovers that she is pregnant. Although the speech that effects Joseph's identity is <u>about</u> Mary, she is allowed no verbal contribution of her own. Yet this does not prevent Mary from remaining the matrix around which his identity is formed; nor does it prevent them from working as a team to bring other characters into Christian selfhood. To the Three Kings Mary offers:

> [T]he high Father of heavon I praye
> . . . . . .
> . . .give you will now and alwaye
> to yerne° the liefe° that lasteth aye ,°
> and never to fall out of the faye°
> that in your hartes is pight.° (<u>The Offerings of the Three Kings</u> 185, 188-91)
> *desire / life / forever*
> *faith*
> *fixed*

Mary, in language that suggests her traditional mediating role, introduces the attending wisemen to the concept of selfhood within the Christian plan. Joseph continues the process, drawing from his identity as Mary's guardian to verify the power of the Christian paradigm to satisfy. He tells them:

> [F]ull faythfully you shall yt find--
> this menskie° that God will have in mind
> and quyte° you well your meede. °
> And leeves° well: of noe mans strynde°
> ys hee, not gotten° by leefe° of kynde; °
> that soe beleevon are full blynde, °
> for I knowe yt in deede. ° (201-7)
> *reverence*
> *repay / reward*

believe / lineage
begotten / permission / nature
whosoever believes that [that Christ was begotten by man] is completely blind
in fact

It is left to Joseph to supply the identity-building information about the divine nature of Christ, just as it was left to the Angel Gabriel to provide Joseph with the same information--that the child his pregnant wife carried was no man's. Although the spouses' cooperative effort serves to integrate their three visitors into the scheme of Christianity, it is Joseph who supplies them the more vital data. Mary is allowed no participation in this part of the endeavor, nor is she given any voice beyond that required by her traditional intercessory role.

Two relationships of a different nature, between male "students" and female advisors, also show male and female characters working together to further the aim of Providential History. In both cases, the woman's counsel directs the male advisee toward acceptance of Christian demand, and there seems to be little or no reluctance on the part of the cycle author to invest this authority in a female character, a fact I will address in this section's conclusion. In the Purification pageant, it is the prophetess Anna's task to convince the skeptical priest Simeon of the veracity of the scriptural prophecy that the Messiah will be born to a maid. As Simeon resolves to erase the word "virgin" from the sacred text and replace it with the more plausible "good woman" (33-40), Anna attempts to correct his limiting of God's power, urging:

> Syr, marvayle yoe nothinge thereon;
> forsooth, God will take kynd° in man.
> Through his godhead ordayne hee can
> a mayd a child to beare.
> For to that high comly kinge
> impossible is nothinge. (72-77
> *nature*

Simeon continues to ignore her wisdom until his erasure is miraculously reversed twice by angelic forces. Then he embraces the idea of the virgin birth and concludes: "Nowe hope I syckerlye (surely) in this place / [God's] Sonne for to see, / that of a virgin must be borne. . . " (114-16). Although he never acknowledges Anna's role in his illumination, attributing all the credit to the angel who restored his erasures, it is quite clear that Anna's argument contextualized the angel's actions; without her input Simeon might not have known what to make of the mysteriously reappearing word. Her words supplement his understanding of God's plan; consequently he is able to utter the famous prophecy to Mary with which he is so identified: "And suffer thou shalt many a throwe (on many occasions), / for sword of sorrowe it shall goe / through thy hart. . ." (186-88). Anna's superior wisdom helps Simeon to access his faith and achieve a greater understanding of his role within Christian salvation. She is other to Simeon's Everyman, just as Mary was to her husband.

A final example of cooperative coupling in the Chester cycle is that of Octavian and his advisor, a sibyl. At the beginning of the annunciation and nativity pageant, Octavian appears much the stock secular ruler of mystery-cycle tradition, speaking in French and expounding upon his extensive achievement and power. Yet he declines the request of his senators to install himself as a god, fully aware of his status as mortal: "[T]hough I bee highest worldly kinge, / of godhead have I noe knowinge. / Hit were unkinde (It would be unnatural)." (334-36) he adds, to pretend to divinity when he knows himself to be "borne of a womane" (322). In this acknowledgment of his limitations he is unlike most mystery-play tyrants--and like the Everyman figures whose enlightenment suggests the possibility of enlightenment for the viewing audience and, consequently, all humanity. To check the accuracy of his belief that he is not omnipotent, the Emperor calls upon his trusted sibyl, who "wytt hase as noe

man livinge" (346). The sibyl then tells of a "savyour" (364) who will apparently surpass the Roman leader's power as part of God's plan to "bringe mankinde to blys." Octavian then asks the sibyl to alert him when the reign of this "erthlye kinge" (347) shall begin; when she does so, he responds not with envy, but has instead a vision of the Christ child and his virgin mother, which he deems, "a wondrouse sight" (651). Vowing to honor both the child and God, he muses

> Should I bee God? Naye, naye, witterlye°!
> Great wronge iwys° yt° were.
> For this childe is more worthye
> then° such thowsande as am I.
> Therfore to God moste mightye
> incense I offer here. (661-66)
> *certainly*
> *certainly / it*
> *than*

The sibyl then offers:

> Reverence him, I read° iwys,
> for other God there none ys°;
> that° hopes otherwise doth amys,
> but him for Christe to knowe.° (659-62)
> *counsel*
> *is*
> *he who*
> *unless he would acknowledge Christ*

It is the sibyl's assertion that God can only be accessed through Christ that inspires Octavian to issue the decree that all his subjects should worship the Christ-child (687-90). Her counsel supplies the information that he needs to achieve a state of Christian enlightenment; in addition, her counsel is the guiding force behind the establishment of the Roman Empire as a Christian kingdom, which, historical evidence to the contrary, is quite obviously what is being suggested in this version of the nativity story. The sibyl helps to create a Christian identity for a leader who was historically

the first Emperor of Rome and its holdings, and consequently foreshadows the Great Christian Empire--and the great redeemer of selfhood--that Rome was to become. The play suggests that monumental reverberations may proceed from the sibyl's powerful counsel.

It might seem curious that the Chester playwright would give such power to certain female characters when he limits the influence of even that most irreproachable of women, the Virgin Mary. But the second sight of Anna and the sibyl--a gift of supernatural provenance--suggests that they are primarily spiritual rather than fleshly beings. Anna's advanced age (eighty-four [193]), too, counteracts any sexual threat to men she might represent. In addition, the classical sibyl is more an icon than a woman, an antique figure put into Christian service.[49] Both women are desexualized figures of extra-worldly wisdom who contribute in an unambiguously positive manner to the fashioning of Christian identities for the men they advise. To a certain extent, the same description fits Mary. Her perpetual virginity desexualizes her, and although she is not allowed to advise Joseph in the way that Anna advises Simeon or the sibyl advises Caesar, it is her proximity to Joseph that effects a change in him, bringing him into an understanding of God's plan. Eve, however, is another case altogether. Adam's attachment to Eve might be regarded as a mark of continuing sin; it is perhaps telling accident that when Adam is finally released from Limbo and

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[49] Although the Cumaean sibyls, prophetesses of Apollo, were traditionally thought to be descended from the "sensuous and seductive" snake woman Lamia, and "as a prelude to prophecy would enact a passionate ecstatic trance" in which they communicated with deity (A. T. Mann and Jane Lyle, Sacred Sexuality [New York: Barnes, 1995] 123.), the Chester sibyl seems to pull from the figure's traditional association with divine knowledge and wisdom. Octavian's comment in the Annunciation and Nativity pageant that his adviser has the understanding of "noe man livinge" (346) helps to situate her within an intellectual rather than a material, bodily paradigm.

installed in Heaven in the cycle's Harrowing of Hell play, he is no longer accompanied by his wife--a departure from the other four extant English cycles. Chester does not portray Eve in a state of redemption; she is not among the liberated souls. While it is possible that her absence is required by the artistic design and the spiritual message of the pageant--the play emphasizes the reconciliation of Adam with the second Adam, Jesus, and Adam's meeting with the prophets of Anti-Christ--her exclusion is also in keeping with the marginal treatment of women throughout the cycle.

It seems as though the Chester playwright acknowledges that the human psyche is unfinished, requiring completion by an other, and that humanity--read: man--often turns to woman to fill this role. Yet because of the Fall, most women are dangerously unworthy of fulfilling such an important function. Only a very few women are qualified to perform the task, which is, after all, serving as stand-in for the Other, the creator God who would eventually both complete and define all believing souls. That ultimate experience, however, would take place only after death; in life an earthly other must do her best to prepare her partner for eventual reunion with his maker, directing him toward Christian truth. And in fulfilling her obligation as agent of God, the one who truly completes, she both counteracts the malfeasance of Eve and circumvents the pitfalls for herself that the example of Eve presents. But she cannot escape anti-feminism; she is, after all, anti-feminism's creation. As a result, her participation, presence, and voice are strictly regulated.

The York Cycle

The Virgin Mary plays a much more prominent role in the York cycle than in the Chester and is, for the most part, granted the authority to serve as other to male characters, including Joseph and Jesus's disciples, bringing them into alignment with

the order of God. Most women in the York cycle, however, do not perform such a function. Some, in fact, take after the York Eve, either willfully drawing their male partners into participating in more sinister paradigms or simply serving as impediments to male enrollment within the fellowship of salvation. The "good" women who seem to be types of Mary perform only marginally, their words and actions constructing a backdrop for the development of identity. Only Mary fully serves as other. Because, however, her characterization is divided between a human identity and a part touched by divinity, she is able to serve both as the irreproachable goddess-like authority figure who remakes man through her commanding presence, and the very vulnerable mortal woman who requires a male to complete her. In this latter sense is interdependency demonstrated in the York cycle, occurring between Mary and the men in her life.

That the York cycle grants woman the power to serve as intermediary between man and an identity-defining presence is initially evident in the exchange between Adam and Eve. Eve, of course, links Adam to Satan and damning desire, reproducing both the sense and the actual verbalization that Satan had used to construct her as one of his minions. In the Adam and Eve in Eden play, Satan says to Eve regarding the consequences of eating the forbidden fruit, "[G]oddis shalle ye be, / of ille (evil) and gode to have knawyng" (71-72),[50] and he directs her to "Byte on bodly (boldly), be nought abasshed" (80), and then to invite her mate to do the same. That she does so immediately, and in language similar or identical to Satan's, confirms that she is his woman; her identity has been formed in reference to his teachings. "We shalle be as goddis, thou and I, / Yf that we ete / Here of this tree" (93-94), Eve tells Adam, and

[50] All York cycle citations are from Richard Beadle's The York Plays. I have changed the medieval thorn to "th." All glosses and translations are mine.

continues to push her agenda with "Byte on boldley, for it is trewe, / We shalle be goddis and knawe al thynge" (102-3). Her argument is enough for her husband, and he immediately replies to the other who has taught him to be a fallen man: "To wynne that name / I shalle it [the fruit] taste at thy techyng" (104-5). That Eve's "ille (evil) counsaille" (107) is responsible for defining Adam outside the scheme of salvation is evident in Adam's response to her. "This werke, Eue, hast thou wrought, / And made this bad bargayne" (118-19), he reproaches. This contentious blame game Adam begins suggests that their relationship is caught in the tenets of Satan's order. Furthermore, even though he laments, "Allas that I lete at (believed) thy lare (advice)" (124), Adam nevertheless conforms to the stipulations of the damnation paradigm by continuing to accept her tutelage; when Eve suggests that they cover themselves with fig leaves to hide their newly shameful nakedness (131-32), Adam responds, "Ryght as thou sais so shall it be. . ." (133).[51] The chaos of their existence is further demonstrated when they are uprooted from their Garden and driven out, all the while squabbling over the verbal exchange that redefined who they are. Adam is again blaming Eve and proclaiming "Nowe God late (let) never man aftir me / Triste woman tale" (trust a woman's words) (149-50) while Eve protests, "Be stille Adam, and nemen (mention) it na mare, / It may not mende. / For wele I wate (know) I haue done wrange. . ." (155-57). Their new identities set them eternally at odds with each other; ironically, it was their cooperation in the enterprise of Satan that shattered their calm. By offering herself as other to Adam, Eve precipitated humanity's fall. By accepting Eve as his other, Adam completed the process of defining not only himself but mankind as adherents of a fallen order. Together their efforts have doomed

[51] Eve also makes this suggestion in the Chester cycle (Adam and Eve; Cain and Abel 273-76) although Adam does not respond as enthusiastically.

mankind; it cannot be overlooked, though, that Eve was the initiator of the damning act.

Pilate's wife Procula also serves as a link between her husband and Satan. It is to Procula that Satan appears in the hope that she will aid him (even if unknowingly) in his attempt to subvert the act that is at the heart of Providential History and Christian belief: Christ's death, which will bring salvation to all humanity. He appeals to Procula's materialism and all-encompassing embrace of worldly desire when he warns against Pilate's condemning of Jesus:

> Sir Pilate, for his prechying, and thou,
> With nede schalle ye namely° be noyed. °
> Youre striffe° and youre strenghe° schal be stroyed, °
> Youre richesse schal be refte° you that is rude, °
> With vengeaunce, and that dare I auowe. ° (Christ Before Pilate I: The Dream of Pilate's Wife 171-75)
> *particularly / oppressed*
> *efforts / strength / destroyed*
> *taken away from / great*
> *confirm*

And Procula does just what the devil asks, immediately sending her son to request that Pilate free Jesus. Procula's vanity, love of fashion, and sexual appetite have already marked her as a worthy participant in Satanic activity: calling herself the "welle (source) of all womanhede. . . , wittie and wise," arrayed in a "richesse (wealth) of robis" (39, 42), she also notes that "[a]ll ladise we coveyte than (then) both to be kyssid and clappid (embraced)"(54); her husband concurs by telling the Beadle that she "[i]n bedde is full buxhome (eager) and bayne (obedient)" (52). Her harsh and attacking language (she calls the Beadle a "javel" [rascal, scoundrel] and a "horosonne [whoreson] boy" [59-60]) further suggests that she is not one with God. Procula's effort to further Satan's agenda almost succeeds; the York Pilate, made

cautious by his wife's message, authorizes Christ's death only after much deliberation.

Both Procula and Eve serve as others who link their male partners to a plan geared to undermine God's own. The cycle's Flood play presents a female character who serves as a constant reminder of woman's connection to the worldly sphere and who serves to impede the other characters', especially her husband's, embrace of redemptive demand. Although avoiding Eve's and Procula's respective aspirations to divinity and ultimate womanhood, Noah's wife is nevertheless reluctant to adhere to the guidelines that will grant her salvation. This fact is evident in her use of the lament Lucifer and his devils employ when they are thrown out of hell in the cycle's Fall of the Angels play and by Satan as he bemoans Christ's power prior to the Procula encounter. "We! Owte! Herrowe!" the Uxor Noah exclaims upon learning that the earth of which she is so fond will be flooded (99); in doing so her language recalls the demonic cries of "We!" (Fall of the Angels 114, 120) and "Owte! Owte! Harrowe!" (Fall of the Angels 97; Christ Before Pilate 1 157a). When her son reinforces the gravity of the situation with "This worlde beis drowned, withouten drede (doubt)," the wife replies, "Allas that I this lare (information) shuld lere (learn)" (104-5). Her attachment to the material sphere continues throughout the play. Despite her knowledge of the world's impending doom she first insists on going home to do her work (109-10), then insists that her friends and relatives come aboard the ark (144-45), and finally settles upon mourning the disappearance of the world in which she had made her identity. "My frendis that I fra yoode (went from) / Are ouer flowen with floode" (151-52), she cries.

Although Noah's wife at one point seems to have made the change from a type of Eve to a type of Mary--she remarks, "Lovede be that lord that giffes all grace, /

That kyndly thus oure care wolde kele (would relieve)" (197-98)--her change of identity, if that is what it is, is short-lived. Acknowledging that they might indeed survive their ordeal through the grace of God, she nevertheless returns to her previous preoccupation with worldly existence, querying, "But Noye, wher are nowe all oure kynne / And companye we knwe before?" (269-70). The wife's final comment in the play, a reaction to Noah's prediction that the world will in the end be consumed by the fires of Armageddon, reinforces her identification as a "natural" human being whose identity falls outside the realm of the saved. Instead of recognizing the final judgment as the last stage in the cosmic scheme of the God who has just preserved her life and provided the potential for a new self, she can only interpret such an incident as another catastrophe to befall her beloved world, offering gloomily: "A, syre, owre hertis are soore / For thes sawes (words) that ȝe saye here, / That myscheffe mon be more (there must be more injury)" (303-5).

Her words throughout serve to counter the other family members' efforts to position themselves inside the sacred paradigm. She proves especially vexing to Noah, who says of her initial wailing, "Thou spilles (destroys) vs alle, ill myght thou speede (prosper)" (106), and in response to her pronouncement that she will return home, "Woman, why dois thou thus? / To make vs more myscheue (harm)?" (111-12). Her efforts are precisely geared to destroy and/or harm her family by keeping them from total obedience to the guidelines God has established for humanity; that she does not succeed is due at least in part to the presence of her pious daughters-in-law, who humbly and respectfully countermand the poison of the wife's remarks. They are types of Mary, and their voicings contribute to a nurturing and God-centered environment in which they and the men in their lives may exist devoutly.

The three young women speak briefly and infrequently in the play, eight speeches altogether (most of them no more than two lines), yet all but one speech expresses faith in and connection to God (the other is an observation about the depth of the water). Three of the statements are made directly to the wife or in reference to her world-linked moanings; the first daughter-in-law tells her, "Dere modir, mende youre moode, / for we sall (shall) wende (go) you with," the second adds, "Nowe thanke we God al goode / That vs has grauntid grith (protection)," and the third concludes, "Modir of this werke nowe wolde ye no$_3$t wene (believe), / That alle shuld worthe (pass away) to watres wan (gloomy)" (149-50, 153-56). That which will thrive after the dark water passes is that which fits into Christian demand, in which the daughters are firmly entrenched--and which their mother-in-law resists. The remainder of their utterances continue to attest to their saved identities; still, they do not influence identity construction in their male partners as directly as the York Eve, Pilate's wife, or even their own mother-in-law. Nor does their positive influence contribute to a radically reconstituted male identity in the way that the Chester Anna and the Chester sibyl do. In fact, with the exception of the Virgin Mary, the rest of the female characters in the York cycle perform a function similar to Noah's daughters-in-law: they contribute to the furtherance of the Christian faith without serving as other to a specific male character--they avoid the responsibility and the privilege of constructing a particular male identity. For instance, In the Purification play, the York Prophetess Anna speaks words that describe Simeon as a pious man worthy of great honor, but she does not speak them to him; her voice does not help shape his identity as part of a verbal exchange. Similarly, the words of Mary and Martha in the Woman Taken in Adultery / Raising of Lazarus play and those of the Marys who discover Christ's resurrection (The Resurrection) serve to reinforce for the

audience Jesus/Christ's identity as master and savior, but they do not serve to effect any identity change in the character. He himself already knows and accepts the words they speak about him and is consequently impervious to their effect. In the York cycle, the one woman who may effect male identity in a way that brings him closer to salvation is the Virgin Mary: the task and privilege are hers alone.

The York Christ and the Doctors play provides the most evidence of Mary's intervention in the construction of Joseph's identity. In the previous plays dealing with Mary's pregnancy, Jesus's birth, and the family's flight into Egypt, there is little suggestion that Mary's verbalizations contribute to Joseph's sense of self. Her repeated assertion in Joseph's Trouble About Mary that her pregnancy belongs only to God and Joseph eventually fails to construct him as a believer in God's tenets; it is only when the Angel Gabriel clarifies the matter for him that he makes a change. Her words do, however, imply his designation as protector of Mary and child, specifically those that acknowledge she is the better for having him near (291) and solicit his aid as they attempt to flee Herod's slaughter of the infant children. "Joseph, I aske mersy," she beseeches. "Help me oute of this lande" (The Flight into Egypt 181-82). He complies, even bearing the infant Jesus himself and advising her to "[h]aue and halde" her horse "faste by the mane" (206). Still, the transformation he experiences at the play's end, from a decrepit old man into a forceful lieutenant of God, has not been effected by Mary's language; instead the "helpe" (224) that Joseph cradles in his arms is the source of his confidence and inspiration. Mary's input has been only marginal.

She does contribute significantly, however, in the play depicting the twelve-year-old Jesus's appearance before the temple priests; and in this play, too, she and her husband interdependently reinforce each other's identities. In this richly layered episode, Mary's responses to Joseph's queries and actions guide her husband toward

the behavior befitting the protector of messiah and mother, a man of faith, and even a human father and head of the household. He, in turn, reaffirms her status as intercessor between her son and ordinary mankind, of which Joseph is also the representative. Upon discovering young Jesus missing, Mary asks of her husband, "A, dere Joseph, what is youre rede (advice)?" (205); Joseph's response defines him both as a thoughtful guardian and a faithful adherent of God's directive: "I rede forther we fare / Till God some socoure (succor) sende" (215-16). When they find the boy in the temple discoursing with the richly dressed learned men, Mary once again reinforces the protective role Joseph is to play both as guardian and as earthly father, suggesting: "Go furthe (forth) and fette (fetch) youre sone and myne" (226); Joseph, however, is suddenly intimidated by the glamour of their attire, and sinks into fearful desire, replying, "I can no$_3$t [interact] with them, this wate (know) $_3$e wele. / They are so gay in furres fyne" (231-32). Mary reassures him that his advanced years will compel the doctors to treat him honorably (233-36); although he seems to internalize her assurance, he nevertheless indicates that he still resists fulfilling the identity assigned to him, worrying,

> When I come there what schall I saye?
> I wote neuere° als° haue I cele.°
> Sertis° Marie, thou will haue me schamed for ay,°
> For I can nowthir croke° nor knele. (237-40)
> *I do not know / as / bliss*
> *certainly / ever*
> *croak, speak*

Mary again assuages Joseph's fear of seeming foolish by declaring that she will go with him and speak if he will not (241-44); he responds enthusiastically, suggesting that she go before him:

> Gange° on Marie, and telle thy tale firste,
> Thy sone to the will take goode hede°

Wende° fourth, Marie, and do thy beste,
I come behynde, als° God me spede.° (245-48)
go
Your son will take heed of you
go
as / prospers

The two of them together not only decide upon a suitable plan to reclaim young Jesus; they also enact one of the major tenets of the medieval salvation paradigm. For as the above speech shows, the focus of Joseph's timidity has shifted from the educated and finely dressed doctors to the Christ himself, whom Mary, in her role as intermediary, must address first if Joseph, the ordinary, natural man, is to have access to him. And because the text continues to operate on more than one level, Mary's "duty" of speaking for her husband before her son takes the form of a worried mother's mild reprimand: "Thy fadir," meaning Joseph, "and I betwyxt vs twa (two), / Son, for thy loue has likid ill (for love of you have been worried). / We haue the (you) sought both to and froo. . ." (241-43). Joseph speaks a short while later mixing his identity as a proper human father with that of grateful human being addressing his savior: "Now sothely (truly), sone, the sight of the (you) / hath salued (healed) vs of all oure sore (suffering)." His subsequent speech reinforces his role as family patriarch: "Come furth sone, with thi modir and me, / Att Nazareth I wolde (wish) we wore (were)" (265-68). It is also significant that just as Mary speaks for Joseph in her reprimand of Jesus, Joseph includes his wife in the above pronouncements. The language each spouse uses in addressing Jesus suggests complete involvement in the self of the other: husband speaks for wife and wife speaks for husband without hesitation. Their collaboration reaffirms not only their respective identities but also the model for humanity's interaction with the one who will complete identity. While Adam and Eve's joint action destroyed humanity's connection to such a divine force, Mary and Joseph's interaction reinvents the link.

The interdependent Mary is also found in the plays that cover the period following the death of Jesus; yet this phenomenon is less in evidence than is her authority. Mary, it seems, has been designated her son's earthly successor, and it is the intensity of her faith and her connection to him that allows her to serve as other to doubting, despairing or feuding disciples. That she first of all belongs in the authoritative company of the apostles is made clear as she, Peter, and John discuss the likelihood of Christ's reappearance to them in The Ascension. In response to Peter's wavering she says, "Whedir it be to come or none, / Vs awe to knowe it all in fere" (Whether [Christ] comes or doesn't come, we ought to know it all together) (31-31). Her status within the group is indicated by the fact that she is the first to speak after Christ does indeed appear and advocates a unified preaching of his word before ascending to the heavens. In proper intercessor fashion, her avowal of faithfulness to Christ's teachings seems to communicate his final message to the rest of the company. After she announces, "Mi sones sawes (words) will neuere I forsake, / It were not semand (seemly) that we straue (argued amongst ourselves) / Ne (nor) contraried no$_3$t that he spake" (204-6), the immediate effect on James and Andrew is corroboration of her action, with the former professing, "Thi likyng (behest) all will I fulfille" (214), while the latter adds, "So wille we all with grete talent (inclination), / Forthy (therefore) lady, giffe the noght ill (do not be concerned)" (215-16). Her influence is also evident in John's later remark, "Mi triste (trust) is nowe euer ilk a dele (entirely) / In yowe, to wirke aftir youre counsaill" (265-66). That she is worthy of this trust is further illustrated in the Pentecost play, when her words reinstill hope and action in the apostles, who have become inactive due to fear of Jewish persecution. When one man suggests, "Itt is most for oure spede (help) / Here to be

stokyn (shut in) still" (59-60), Mary gently but firmly recalls him and his colleagues to the demand that had originally shaped their identities:

> Brethir, what mene ȝe ȝou emelle,
> To make mournyng at ilk a mele°?
> My sone that of all welthe is well°
> He will ȝou wisse° to wirke full wele,
> For the tente day is this to telle°
> Sen° he saide we schull° fauoure fele. °
> Leuys° wele that lange° schall it not dwell, °
> And therfore drede you neuere a dele, °
> But prayes with harte and hende°
> That we his helpe may haue,
> Thanne schall it sone° be sende, °
> The sande° that schall vs saue. (61-72)
> *Brother, why do you mourn continually in this way?*
> *happiness is the source*
> *direct*
> *count*
> *since / shall / know*
> *believe / for a long time*
> *do not fear at all*
> *hands*
> *soon / sent*
> *sending, message*

Mary's words remind the errant apostle and those who share his fear that with the "sending" they expect from Christ comes salvation--wholeness. And she knows of what she speaks; it is Mary who welcomes the Holy Spirit when it enters their presence, and in doing so she reaffirms their security and consequently their identities as purveyors of salvation. "Nowe may we triste his talis (words) ar trewe," she exclaims. "[H]is high hali gaste / He lattis (lets) here on ȝou lende (light), / Mirthis (delights) and trewthe to taste (experience) / And all misse (wickedness) to amende" (101, 105-8). Her remarks then set in motion a round of praise offerings in which all present at the moment of Pentecost participate: Peter picks up on the last line Mary speaks, using it in the first line of his speech of praise, with the others follow suit,

each one using the language of the previous speaker. The result is a speech cycle begun by the Virgin Mother that interlaces the speakers within the paradigm that is Christian faith. She has served as other to all of the apostles, a role she repeats in the cycle's assumption play for all of the apostles but specifically for the guilt- and grief-stricken apostle Thomas.

Thomas shows at the play's beginning that he has temporarily stepped outside the scheme of salvation by failing to attend the Virgin Mary on her deathbed, and his alienation from the rest of the faithful is made plain in his finding himself in the "Vale of Josophat" (97), the province of the now-enemy Jews. Yet Mary nevertheless chooses to appear to him as she ascends into heaven and asks him to enlighten his brethren to the fact of her assumption. He claims first that he will do so, apparently reestablishing himself within the company of the faithful. "Obaye the (you) full baynly (obediently) my bones will I bowe" (151), he says. Yet he is immediately sidetracked by the disabling guilt and fear that come with his realization that he neglected the mother of the Christ at her death. Wailing self-indulgently, lost in desire, he delays his own identity reconstruction:

> Bot I, allas!
> Whare was I thanne°
> When that barette° beganne?
> An vnhappy manne
> Both nowe and euere° I was.
> Vnhappy, vnhende° am I holden° at home;
> What dreyre° destonye me drewe fro° that dede? (152-58)
> *then*
> *trouble*
> *always*
> *unworthy / held*
> *lamentable / from*

His culpability and self-pity have obscured for him the fact that he may regain his positioning and his identity if he will simply do her bidding. She responds to his

emotional extravagance with a concise statement assuring him his lamentings are for nought; because she is being assumed bodily into heaven she has not altered from the pre-death woman he knew: "Thomas, sesse of thy sorowe for I am sothly the same" (159), she says. His response indicates that he is aware of this (160); she then repeats her request with more urgency, attempting not only to reintegrate him into the fellowship of the apostles, an act that would repair his lapsed Christian identity, but also seeking to unite the currently fractious community of saints who might repair their unity upon receiving a post-death message from their second leader: "Thanne spare nott a space (no time) nowe my speche for to spede (hasten), / Go saie (tell) them sothely thou sawe me assendinge" (161-62) she commands. Yet Thomas's continued reluctance to return to his brethren shows that he is still mastered by his own concerns rather than by those of Christian demand; his word will make no impression upon the apostles, he claims: "[T]o my tales that I telle thei are not attendinge. . ." (163). Mary provides him with her belt, a sign that she authorizes Thomas to speak for her, a gesture which serves to enhance his credibility, thereby bringing him closer to reintegration in the fellowship. That her action has helped to heal him, to make the timorous man strong enough to endure the doubts of his comrades, is evident in his reply to her. Now he lacks only a final act from her that will complete his identity:

> I thank the° for euere.
> If thay repreue° me
> Now shall thei leue° me.
> Thi blissinge giffe me
> And douteles I schall do my deuere.°
> *you*
> *challenge*
> *believe*
> *duty*

The blessing Mary does bestow upon Thomas is not her own but, in keeping with her role of mediatrix, is Christ's, a move that further re-establishes the apostle within the Christian paradigm. But Mary also provides an additional message for Thomas to take back to the company of the faithful, a message that confirms her continuing status as other. Whoever finds himself in despair, she tells Thomas, need only call upon the Virgin Mary "[w]ith pitevous playnte (grievance)," and the following will result: "If he swynke (toil) or swete (sweat) in swelte (deadly sickness) or in swoune (swoon), / I schall sewe (sue) to my souerayne sone for to say (tell) me / He schall graunte thame ther grace" (188-91). The blessing together with the knowledge that Mary will intercede for one and all is enough to change Thomas into the confident adherent of God's law who presents the Virgin's words to the other apostles, thus shoring up their faith in the potency of their belief system while simultaneously confirming their identities as messengers of the faith. The fulfillment of Mary's final task as other to the disciples is evident in the speech of Thomas that concludes the play. "Nowe I passe fro (from) youre presence," he says to those around him, "the pepull to preche,"

> To lede thame and lere° thame the lawe of oure lorde.
> As I saide, vs° muste asoundre° and sadly enserche°
> Ilke° contré to kepe clene and knytte in o corde°
> Off°oure faithe. (304-8)
> *teach*
> *we / part company / seek out*
> *each / accord, state of unity*
> *on account of*

As the disciples go their separate missionary ways, it is clear that Mary's words have effected such a change in Thomas and the rest. She is the other through whom their Christian identities were re-confirmed; her efforts also ensure the proliferation of Christian teachings to the world's population.

The disciples' need for Mary is perhaps stated most explicitly in the closing speeches of the Pentecost play. John says to her: "Lady your wille in wele (prosperity) and woo (woe), / It schall be wrought, ellis wirke (work) we wrang (wrong)," a sentiment followed by James's "Lady we both are boune (bound) / Atte youre biddyng to be" (219-22). Mary's reply, though, suggests that she is not merely an authority figure whose sole function is to construct identity. The lines "The blissing of my sone / Be boith with you and me" (223-24), speak not only to her power to effect identity in them due to her connection to Christ, but also to her perception that she too is a participant in the venture, not merely a conduit through which blessedness must pass. She herself has need of Christ's blessing and, as further episodes reveal, of the support of the apostles. They must serve as other to the human element in her, that part which fears retribution from the Jews as much as they, and that part which feels the loss of a loved one deeply and personally. As a result, Mary and the apostles share an interdependent relationship, a relationship that constructs identity on both sides and also serves to further the Christian agenda.

Mary draws from among the apostles both substitute children and security, and in so doing shores up her identity. Her reaction to Jesus's death makes clear that his existence is central to her own: "Allas, why schulde we twynne (part) thus in twoo / Foreuer?" (The Death of Christ 151-52) she says to her crucified son, whom she has labeled "[m]y lorde, my leffe (dear one)" (140). Her connection to her son is evident as far back as The Flight into Egypt and Christ the Doctors. Remarking in the former play, "For all this worlde to wynne / Wolde (would) I not se hym slayne" (109-10), she continues to consider him of great importance to her well-being in the latter play: "My harte is heuy as any lede / My semely sone tille hym I see (until I see my see handsome son)" (207-8). She clearly perceives her child to be the other that

completes her, a situation Jesus remedies by pronouncing John Mary's substitute offspring (The Death of Christ 152-53). Her relationship with John not only provides her with a familial other who may serve to fill the void left by Jesus's departure from earth; it is also useful in providing her with a sense of protection from those responsible for her son's death. With regard to the Jews, she says, "Me to dispise will thei not spare" (The Ascension 190). John reassures her of his continual vigilance:

> [L]ady, sen° that he betoke°
> Me for to serue you as youre sonne,
> 3ou nedis nothyng, ° lady, but loke°
> What thyng in erthe ₃e will haue done.
> I warre° to blame if I forsoke
> To wirke youre wille, midday or none, °
> Or any tyme ₃itt° of the woke. ° (193-99)
> *since / betook*
> *you need [do] nothing / consider*
> *were [would be]*
> *noon*
> *yet / week*

His verbal assurance of filial commitment to her provides her with the security she needs to become the spiritual center of the church after Christ; she is then able to offer her pledge to follow her son's teachings, a pledge taken up not only by John, but also by the rest of the apostles. From this point on in the cycle, she functions as the spiritual center of the Christian endeavor on earth, and as such, it is her words that each apostle internalizes when he sets off on his own to recruit others to the cause of Christian demand. She needs them; they need her. Christianity requires their cooperative effort.

The York cycle created in the Virgin Mary a powerfully connected female character with the authorization to enact Christian identity not only in the elite fraternity of Christ's apostles but also in a humble, ordinary man such as Joseph--he who might easily represent all of mankind. And every context in which she serves as

other resonates with her officially sanctioned role as intercessor; one might even draw the conclusion that it is only her established mediating function between humanity and Christ that allows her to perform in the York cycle in a way denied the other "good" women of Providential History. Mary's direct link to divinity not only keeps her from the marginal status of Anna and Noah's daughters-in-law, it also makes her a sure bet not to repeat the malevolent identity-formation efforts of Eve--the effort that, in the York cycle, doomed human identity to hell.

The Wakefield Cycle[52]

Stevens speculates that the Wakefield cycle is "second-generation" insofar as it is "built upon existing plays, borrowed from nearby communities, especially," he notes, "the city of York."[53] Yet despite obvious appropriations from the York cycle and probable borrowings from others, the Wakefield cycle communicates a distinctive message. More so than the Chester and York cycles, the Wakefield cycle presents the cooperation of male and female as not only instrumental in the formation of individual identity, but also in the furtherance of Christianity itself. While Chester allowed only the barest hint of gender interdependency and York developed it only in

[52] The Wakefield cycle is also known as the Towneley cycle or the Towneley plays, after the name of the family that owned the manuscript when it came to scholarly prominence in the nineteenth century. After Matthew Peacock made the "definitive case" (Stevens, 97) for the town of Wakefield in the West Riding of Yorkshire as the location for the performance of the cycle ("Towneley, Widkirk, or Wakefield Plays?" Yorkshire Archaelogical Journal 15 [1898-99]: 94-103), most scholars eventually followed his lead; not all, however, have been convinced. In Stevens's 1987 Four Middle English Mystery Cycles, he felt the issue merited enough attention to devote a substantial portion of his chapter on the cycle to summarizing the data in support of Wakefield. As recently as 1994, Peter Meredith has concluded, "There is not really enough evidence either way as yet" to situate the cycle in Wakefield or elsewhere ("The Towneley Cycle," Cambridge Companion, 145).

[53] Stevens, 111-112. The N-Town cycle is also thought to have been compiled from a variety of sources (see Fletcher, 167-172, for a concise discussion) although, as mentioned in n. 9, it is no longer thought to be a Corpus Christi cycle.

the relationships of Adam and Eve and the Virgin Mary and her partners, Wakefield suggests something different: that a cooperative relationship between men and women is, in fact, an important and even vital tool in the proper functioning of the Christian plan. Although the cycle does evidence noteworthy examples of gender disharmony--Noah and his unruly wife, Mak and Gill of the Second Shepherd's Play, the combative mothers and Herod's murderous soldiers--it is possible to interpret these instances of discord as reinforcement for the notion that in the Wakefield plays, the cooperative efforts of male and female are not only acceptable within but indicative of the proper functioning of a God-directed human society. The antagonism between the mothers of the innocents and the soldiers who slaughter the children may be read as characteristic of men and women who work against rather than alongside each other, the chaotic results symptomatic of a plan out of sync. The dissonant nature of the collaboration between sheep-stealer Mak and his harridan wife Gill makes sense if we realize that in the parodic, upside-down world of the Second Shepherd's Play, the cooperation of a certain husband and wife should reap calamitous rather than salutary rewards--and her counsel should prove disastrous in this context. And in the Noah play, as I will explore in greater detail later, it should be remembered that after the willfulness of both husband and wife is put away, the joint piloting of the ark by the reconciled spouses signals the beginning of a purified, post-flood era. Just as Noah and his wife look to each other to make their journey a smooth one, so do most of the male-female pairings in the Wakefield cycle display an interdependence, usually to the point of each needing the other to function fully. The implication seems to be that because their "real" selves cannot come to fruition until they are completed after death by the Ultimate Other, God, they must turn the God-sanctioned relationship of marriage into a melding of souls, minds--identities. And in these usually literal

although sometimes figurative marriages, both male and female characters define and sustain who they are.

One instance of this occurs in the play of Jacob, evidenced in the verbal exchanges between the title character and his wives, Leah and Rachel. The women's traditional association with the active and contemplative lives is at work in the scene in which Jacob first contemplates the destruction of his family at his brother's hands and then engages in a wrestling match both physical and metaphysical. As the following discussion reveals, the women function in a manner suggestive of *psychomachia*, as projections of Jacob's own contemplative faculties and active impulses. Rachel's first appearance and utterance coincide with the conclusion of Jacob's prayer requesting the preservation of his wives and their children. She then voices concern for Jacob's own safety, claiming, "Oure anguysh sir, is many fold, / syn (since) that oure messyngere us told / That Esaw wold you slo (slay). . ." (74-76). It is left to Rachel to express what Jacob does not himself address in his contemplative state. Leah, then, appears, directing her husband to action in response to his "where ar oure thyngis, ar thay past Iordan?" (83). "Go and look, sir, as ye can" (84), she suggests, which leads to his engaging God in a wrestling match. At the conclusion of the match, which involves both the physical dislocation of Jacob's hip and the metaphysical experience of being in the presence of God, Rachel speaks again, to warn her husband of Esau's approach. In the biblical account of this it is Jacob who first spots Esau; in granting the wife this task, the maker of the play reinforces the idea that Rachel is functioning as a part of Jacob, as had Leah when she set him in motion. Both symbolically and psychologically, the women complete the subjectivity of the man, and, reciprocally, the man provides for them a point of reference, a reason for existence. It can also be said that this is a relationship that

operates "to good effect" if we consider that it sets up Jacob's anointing as Israel, father of people from whom Christianity was to develop and a concern of no little importance in the cycle plays. The women, then, serve as other to Jacob, linking him to the Christian paradigm by contributing to the identity that will further the aims of the faith. He, too, serves as other to them, providing them with confirmation of their identity as he mirrors back to them their influence upon him with word (hoping that Rachel's fears about Esau's anger will prove unfounded [79-82]) and deed (setting out to "look" as Leah suggested). Each has his or her selfhood confirmed.

A variation of this relationship occurs in the play of Isaac, in which the title character and his wife Rebecca operate as one, each serving as his or her partner's other, each constructing an identity in accordance with God's demand. Contrary to biblical account, Rebecca, not Isaac, first suggests that Jacob seek a wife in her brother Laban's land, a journey which would serve the additional purpose of removing Jacob from the threat Esau poses. Isaac confirms the soundness of her idea--an idea that further protects the aims of Christianity--and he responds, "Thou says soth, wife" (49), telling Rebecca to call Jacob forth to deliver the news. Significantly, Isaac uses the plural to describe their undertaking: "let us tell hym where & wheder (whither) / That he may fle esaw. . ." (50-51). Despite Isaac's language, however, the play reveals that the effort is all Rebecca's: she is the one to call Jacob forward and urge him toward Mesopotamia (53-56, 58-62). After absorbing his mother's instructions Jacob then turns to his *father*, claiming "I will go fader, at youre rede" (command, counsel) (64). Isaac's response affirms his connection to his spouse: "Yei, son, do as thi moder says; / Com kys us both, & weynd (go) thi ways" (65-66). Rebecca proposes a solution; Isaac enforces it. The wife speaks for the husband; the husband describes the wife's speech as his own. Their verbal reactions to each other

and to their son confirm their importance to each other, revealing intertwined selves, each dependent upon and in service to the identity of his or her mate. And, as I have suggested above, their conjoint functioning saves the life of their son, an individual with an important role to fulfill in the scheme of Providential History. In so doing they position themselves within the order of salvation.

An even more pronounced version of this phenomenon occurs in the highly charged exchange between Noah and his wife. When the couple first appears, they are clearly out of harmony with each other. Even before the wife makes her entrance, Noah confesses: "I am agast (terrified) / that we get som fray / Betwixt us both. . ." (Noah and the Ark 184-85). His language suggests that neither he nor his wife is willing to serve as other; each is entrenched in a separate camp. Yet Noah tries to recruit his wife to the endeavor of the ark, asking her, "[W]ife, with good will com into this place" (335). Her response confirms her rejection of Noah as other; she instead holds to her worldly identity: "Sir, for Iak (Jack) nor for gill (Jill) will I turne my face / Till I haue on this hill spon (spun) a space / on my rok" (336-38). Noah is her passport to a redeemed identity, symbolized by the ark, yet she chooses to continue her immersion in the material sphere by participating in the fallen and Eve-ish activity of spinning. Noah, as the tale reveals, needs his wife's help in piloting the ark; she must be his other if the ark is to sail smoothly. The distance between the two must be narrowed by a comic wrestling match in which both struggle for mastery, with the contest ending in a draw--a signal of reconciliation. That the wife ends up on top of the husband, in what would seem the dominant position, may be only a comic effect--another instance of the "woman on top" motif common in popular literature and drama of the period. It might also suggest that Noah, himself, while spotless in his adherence to God's commands, must learn something about the enforcement of

others' adherence to such commandments: his earlier efforts to force his wife bodily into the ark might be perceived as desire-driven--outside the dictates of a plan that requires the voluntary and coordinated efforts of all involved.

When the wife willingly enters the ark with her husband, a new stage in their relationship begins, and the spouses operate almost as a single entity, each one's actions and words complementing and even mirroring the other's. The first speech Noah utters when aboard requires him to speak for his wife; she does not protest (418-19). Their synchronization is further evident in their separate but matching assessments of their situation: Noah offers, "This is a grete flood wife, take hede," followed by her corroborative, "So me thoght, as I stode. . ." (424-25). Then--Noah seeks God's aid, and his wife follows suit (426-32); she takes the helm while he sounds the depths (433-441); he discovers that the flood waters have receded, she concurs (449-50, 458); Noah's wife suggests casting out a raven to look for land, and Noah himself lets loose two doves (479-86), etc. It should also be noted that the devout Noah of the beginning of the play returns once he sets foot on the ark, and with a difference: he is no longer frightened or complaining of the ravages of time, and his wife changes from suspicious and self-centered to God-centered, so much so that upon sighting land she exclaims, "Now blissid be he / That thus for us can ordand (ordain)!" (467-68). What they could not achieve while they were at odds, they achieve together. In addition, not only does their cooperative effort ensure the survival of the human race, but it also coincides with a return to calm, with the eradication of the pre-flood discord to which they formerly contributed. And it is possible to infer that the collaboration of man and woman has in some way achieved this return to a quasi-edenic state, and that this collaboration will continue to be necessary if life is to flourish after this new beginning. What seems certain, however,

is that neither wife nor husband is complete without his/her spouse: each is the other that confirms his or her mate's position within the Christian plan.

The sole prominent New Testament example of literal marriage in the Wakefield plays is that of the Virgin Mary and her elderly mate. Although many of the Mary-Joseph exchanges are direct reproductions or close paraphrases of the York Mary-Joseph plays, within the context of the Wakefield cycle these exchanges take on the added significance of being one of a number of cooperative male-female relationships that figure positively into the development and demonstration of the saved identity. As it is in the York cycle, the interdependent relationship of Mary and Joseph is most evident in the interplay between them in The Play of the Doctors. Theirs is a relationship that evolves from little interaction to almost complete involvement in each other's selves. In their first play together, The Annunciation, little interdependency is evident, and their verbal exchanges serve primarily to establish their identities as pious vessel of God and doddering doubter, respectively. Joseph repeatedly plies the pregnant Mary with questions along the line of "[W]ho owe (owns) this child thou gose with all?" (186), and she repeatedly answers in this vein: "Syr, ye, and god of heuen" (187). By the play's end Joseph has moved from his initial reaction to her claim, a disbelieving "Myne, mary? do way thi dyn" (188), into his identity as protector of Mary and her child, praising God that he has been chosen "[t]o tent (attend) that chyld so ying (young)" (340), an obligation he will "kepe, to [his] lyfys ende" (373). But paralleling the York Joseph, his new identity has been only indirectly shaped by Mary's protestations of innocence; it is the verbal intervention of the Angel (326-37) that effects real change in him. In addition, there is little apparent indication of symbiosis between the couple except perhaps Mary's remark that she is the better for Joseph's having returned to her (351). But by their

next joint appearance in The Flight into Egypt it is clear that Mary has involved Joseph in her existence, seeking his counsel regarding the best way to prevent Jesus from falling victim to Herod's killing of all male infants (101-2, 112) and depending on him to take them to safety. As is the case with the York Mary, the Wakefield Mary's interaction with Joseph in this scene establishes her identity as a woman intimately tied to her son, so distraught at the thought of separation that she can do little but weep and constantly lament "alas." Although she asks her husband's aid only briefly in the scene, she clearly needs Joseph to preserve her identity as mother of God by physically preserving both her and her child. But in a departure from the York Flight play, Joseph seems to struggle with a resurgence of worldly desire as he resists involving himself in Mary's difficulties. Almost wailing, he offers: "why wyll no ded me slo? (why will death not slay me) / My lyfe I lyke yll" (139-40) and specifically complains about the burdens of marriage: "yong men, bewar, red (counsel) I: / wedyng makys me all wan (faint)" (149-50). Yet in the very next line, Joseph masters desire; his request that she give him her bridle (151) in order that he may lead them all to sanctuary not only reaffirms his status as protector but also ensures that her identity as the mother of the savior will endure. And, as is the case in the Chester cycle, it is his continued interaction with Mary that effects this evolution in him, which suggests both wife and husband have begun to play important roles in the delineation and affirmation of each other's identities. By The Play of the Doctors, the last pageant in which the two appear together, each one's involvement in the self of the other is clear. The Wakefield scene is virtually identical to the York,[54] with

[54] The Wakefield passages that parallel the lines I cited in the York section are as follows: Mary's line to Joseph suggesting that he retrieve young Jesus is "Go furth (forth) and fetche youre son and myne" (214); Joseph's reply regarding the priests and their attire: "I can not [interact] with thaym (them), that wote (know) ye well, / Thay are so gay in furrys (furs) fyne" (219-220). Joseph responds to Mary's assertion that

Joseph again hesitating to rise above his "natural man" status to the identity ordained for him, but his resistance to doing his duty has in this cycle antecedents, a situation that further marks him as a representative of sinful, shirking mankind who is in great need of a reformed identity. The end result of the episode is the same, however: Mary encourages Joseph toward acceptance of his identity as father and protector; Joseph reemphasizes Mary's mediating function. Again, the language each spouse uses suggests both complete involvement in the self of the other and a cooperation that can only further the aims of Christianity.

Mary's involvement with the apostles, particularly John and Simon, suggests something similar. As is the case in the York cycle, by the end of Mary's collaboration with John, he has adopted her safety as his prime directive; she has given him purpose and he, in turn, has provided her with the security she needs to perform her duties as Christ's mother. And in the Wakefield cycle it is Simon rather than the others who installs Mary as protector of Christ's legacy on earth by heaping praise upon her, and in the process, she serves to complete him, providing the "truth" that he craves. Mary and John first appear together in the crucifixion play as Mary weeps inconsolably at the foot of the cross while John tries to buoy her spirits by reminding her of the greater good that will come of Christ's death. He tries to

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his age will command respect from the "doctors" (221-24) with "when I come ther what shall I say? ffor I wote (know) not, as haue I ceyll (bliss); / Bot thou will haue me shamed for ay (ever), / ffor I can nawthere crowke (croak, speak) ne (nor) knele" (225-28). Mary offers to go with Joseph and speak if he will not; he adds: "Go thou and tell thi tayll first, / Thi son to se will take good hede (Your son will take heed of you); / weynd (go) furth, mary, and do thi best, / I com behynd, as god me spede (prospers)" (233-36). Mary's speech to Jesus: "Thi fader and I betwixt us two, / Son for thi luf has lykyd yll (have been worried for love of you), / we have sought the (you) both to and fro. . ." (241-43). Joseph's final speech: "Now sothly (truly), son, the sight of the (you) / has comforted us of all oure care; / Com furth, now, with thi moder and me! / At nazareth I wold (wish) we ware (were)" (253-56).

incorporate her into the larger Christian order; she will have none of it and retains her identity as worldly mother. Although her human grief is understandable and no doubt provoked both sympathy and empathy from audience members, she is nevertheless resisting divine demand. She only emerges from weepy desire only when she is apparently silenced by the intervention of her crucified son, and by, as in the York cycle, his binding Mary and John together as mother and son. At this point only a hint of interdependency exists in the relationship between the two: John obviously cares for Mary's emotional health, but Mary seems almost oblivious to John's existence. Now, however, they are to come into close association with each other as a family. Following Christ's ascension into heaven (The Lord's Ascension), Mary becomes fearful, more so than she is in the corresponding York play, that the villainous Jews who put her son to death would subsequently come for her. Quavering "Help me, Iohn, if thou be kynde, / my son myssing makys me to mowrne" (362-63), Mary is answered with a promise from John to serve her always:

> youre seruande, lady, he me maide,
> and bad me kepe you ay to qweme°;
> Blythe were I, lady, myght I shall the yeme°.
> Therfor be ferd for nokyn thyng°
> for oght that Iues wold do you to°;
> I shall be bayn° at your bydding,
> as my lorde bad,° your seruande lo! (364-71)
> *please*
> *if I might take care of you*
> *afraid of nothing*
> *for whatever Jews would do to you*
> *obedient*
> *bade*

Mary responds with gratitude to his reassurance of protection and service, exclaiming "whils (while) I the se (you see), euer am I safe" (375) and "well mendys thou my

mode (mood), when I am in wo" (379). Her mood mended thus, she returns to the path of demand, and their mutual dependence is firmly established.

The relationship between Simon and Mary begins when Simon suggests that the disciples pay homage to Mary in the absence of her son: "To his (this) buxumly (obediently) I red (counsel) that we bende, / syn hir dere son fro (from) us has gone in a clowde" (384-85), and after praising her virtues, asks her to confirm that the one who ascended was indeed her son Jesus: "Shew show vs the sothe" (show us the truth), he implores, "vs all may it saue. . ." (392). Mary then answers Simon's request, urging the disciples to "Take tent (give attention) to my tayll" (399); her words show that she has indeed become Christ's regent on earth, the one in whom Christian authority is vested:

> he is god and man that stevynd° into heuen;
> preche thus to the pepyll that most ar in price.°
> Sekys to thare savyng,° ye apostilles eleven,
> To the Iues of Ierusalem as youre way lyse,
> say to the cyte as I can here neuen,°
> tell the warkys° of my son warly° and wise;
> Byd theym be stedfast & lysten your steuen, °
> or else be thay dampned° as men full of vyce. (404-11)
> *ascended*
> *are greatest in value/excellence*
> *seek their salvation*
> *relate*
> *works, warily*
> *voice*
> *damned*

The play then concludes with the disciples arranged around the wise and virtuous Virgin, their identities coupled in figurative marriage. Because the play ends abruptly at this point and is perhaps incomplete,[55] it is impossible to say whether Mary and

[55] There is a twelve-leaf gap in the manuscript (from signatures s. 1 to t. 6) between the leaf containing the last extant line of the Ascension play (411 above) to the first leaf of the next play, The Judgment (England and Pollard 366n).

John would begin to speak for each other as the previously mentioned interdependent characters in the Wakefield cycle do, or if a closer bond would develop between Mary and Simon as a result of their exchange. What is clear is that Mary now speaks for her son, upon whom she, the disciples, and the rest of humanity depend. In this scene, she serves as other to John, Simon and the other disciples.

It should be noted that in the Wakefield cycle, as it was in the York, even this authoritative Mary cannot be viewed as a replacement for Christ or God; she is not at this point in the narrative of Providential History a fully spiritual figure. In this scene, Mary as a mortal being, however holy, does not approach the status of her divine son. Unlike Jesus, she herself needs an other to complete her while she is in her earthly form, someone like Joseph to coax out her role as intercessor, someone like John to ensure her safety, and finally, someone like Simon and his brother apostles to install her in a place of authority. Were it not for the post-ascension examples of Mary and the disciples, one could attribute the symbiotic need of the other marriage partners to the absence of Christ. But if Mary, following her son's installation as King of Heaven, still requires aid from human parties to endure, and if the disciples in that same time turn to Christ's mother to fill not only the spiritual but also apparently the physical and emotional void left by his death, it would seem that these interdependent relationships are part of the Christian plan, that which speeds the progress of the individual toward installation within the order of the faithful. And the examples of Isaac and Rebecca, Noah and his wife, et al., suggest that the most mutually beneficial cooperation occurs between individuals of different genders. Perhaps this is attributable to the many resonances of marriage in the Christian tradition--the idea of a bond between individuals or forces of complementary, not necessarily oppositional,

natures. And perhaps the mind[56] behind the Wakefield cycle wished to show that the great promise of the first human marriage was not completely undone by the Fall, with postlapsarian gender harmony a small indicator of what could have been. Because the Wakefield Creation play breaks off at the moment of Eve's temptation by the serpent, it is impossible to know what if any spin the play's writer would have put on the punishment of Adam and Eve. It is, of course, unlikely that he would have eliminated God's chiding of Adam for internalizing his wife's counsel in the matter of the forbidden fruit, a set piece in other medieval dramatic depictions of the Fall. But what seems very clear from the rest of the cycle is that the Wakefield compiler finds a woman's counsel acceptable--even mandatory--if it occurs within the context of a symbiotic relationship that serves to construct pious identities for both parties, thereby shoring up the Christian paradigm as it develops throughout Providential History.

[56] While no scholars seriously assert that a single writer created all the pageants included in the Wakefield cycle--especially since a number are obviously borrowed from York pageants or other sources--current critical opinion seems geared toward accepting a single (and singular) intellect behind the work that is finally recorded in the Towneley manuscript. Stevens believes that the "Wakefield Master," the unknown playwright credited with a number of the cycle's most original and aesthetically satisfying pageants, was also the text's "principal compiler and guiding intelligence" (89). Meredith reaches a similar conclusion, suggesting that the Wakefield Master performed the "last revision of the cycle." He summarizes the evidence as follows: "[T]he Wakefield Master has added to or revised two of the York pageants, and also added. . .to four pageants from other sources. No one has obviously revised or tampered with any of the complete Wakefield Master pageants. . ." (137).

The N-Town Cycle[57]

Like the saint's play Mary Magdalene, the N-Town cycle is known for its double plot: one, of course, focused on the life and salvific efforts of Jesus Christ; the other devoted to his mother, the Virgin Mary. This relative parity afforded the most important male and female figures in the story of salvation is of a piece with the N-Town compiler's[58] treatment of gender: devout, collaborative efforts between male and female characters are one of the cycle's most prominent features. The majority of the cycle's female characters labor in intensely interdependent relationships with male partners, the two of them working as one to facilitate the proper unfolding of the Christian story. Yet with the exception of Adam and Eve, most of the male-female relationships work only at maintaining joint identity rather than constructing each partner's individual sense of self. The characters' speech identifies them as long-time adherents of the plan of salvation; consequently, all they need do is continue functioning in the way that has thus far situated them within the sacred scheme. The

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[57] See n. 9, above about the possibility of the N-Town plays as a touring, rather than Corpus Christi, cycle. The lines from which the cycle's "N-Town" designation is taken also support the touring theory. Though the cycle has been called by such names as Ludus Coventrie (when the plays were thought to have been performed in Coventry) and the Hegge cycle (after a seventeenth-century owner of the manuscript), as Spector points out, only the N-Town name has textual authority (xiii). During the cycle's Proclamation pageant, it is stated that the "play" will be performed "[i]n N-Town" (526, 527). The "N" is generally thought to stand for the Latin "nomen," name, which would suggest, a changing, fill-in-the blank performance location for the cycle.

[58] Despite the "patchwork" nature of the cycle (see n. 53, above), both Stevens and Fletcher perceive a plan behind N-Town. Fletcher concludes from the make-up of the manuscript that the "scribe-compiler" of the cycle "wanted to compile a play repertoire, organised with a Creation-to-Doom framework, which would be more comprehensive than anything available in any one of his sundry individual exemplars. . ." (167); and Stevens regards the cycle as "the outcome of a very careful and literate editing. . ." (184).

Virgin Mary herself is a participant in such relationships although she is less dependent upon her partner for identity than are the other women in the cycle. As a result, she alone of all female characters in the N-Town cycle engages in efforts of Christian identity construction that are relatively independent of male input. Still, in keeping with the motif of gender collaboration that runs throughout the cycle, the instances in which Mary acts individually as an authoritative other are more limited in N-Town than in the York and Wakefield cycles. For the most part, it is the joint participation of masculine and feminine elements in the construction of identity that the cycle seems desirous of modeling.

The blueprint for the cycle's representation of male-female relationships is delineated in the Adam and Eve sequence. As is the case in the York cycle, the N-Town Eve has much influence over her husband; she also adopts the serpent's language as her own once she has become his woman. The snake had told her, "Of this appyl if ȝe wyl byte, / Evyn as God is, so xal (shall) ȝe be: / Wys of conning (understanding), as I ȝow plyte (assure). . ." (100-2), and later, "ȝe xal be Goddys pere!" (108). In enticing her husband, Eve offers, "Of this appyl if thu wylte byte, / Goddys pere thu xalt be pyht (established), / So wys of kunnyng I the plyht" (148-50). What is something of a departure from the York presentation is that Eve is made to seem a bit less detestable for her error. She does, like her counterparts in the other cycles, inappropriately wish to be God's peer: "So wys as God is in is gret mayn (strength)," she says, "And felaw (equal) in kunning, fayn (gladly) wold I be" (113-14). However, the serpent is able to trick her at least in part because she perceives him to be aligned with all things good: he seems a "fayr aungell" (156), as she tells Adam. Only later does she realize he was "[a] werm with an aungelys face" (220). Her subsequent admission of guilt makes her an even more sympathetic character.

Lamenting her foolish deed, she cannot help but consider its ramifications for Adam. "My husbond is lost because of me" (303), she says. Driven by her despair to a type of madness, ("My wyt awey is fro me gon!" [306]), she asks her "[le]ve (dear) spouse" (304), "Wrythe onto my neckebon / With hardnesse of thin honde" (307-8). While Eve's language makes it clear that she cannot abide living with the guilt of having submerged her husband in a slough of desire, Adam's reply makes it clear that the fault is not Eve's alone, but theirs together, for they are an inseparable unit. "Leve woman," he says, "turne thi thought":

> I wyl not sle flescly of my flesch,°
> For of my flesch thi flesch was wrought.
> Oure hap° was hard, our wytt was nesch°
> To paradys whan we were brought.
> My wepyng xal be longe fresch,
> Schort lykyng° xal be longe bought.
> No more telle thu that tale.
> For yf I xulde° sle my wyff,
> I sclow° myself withowtyn knyff,
> I helle logge° to lede my lyff,
> With woo in wepyng dale. (310-321)
> *I will not slay [one] physically made of my flesh*
> *fortune / weak*
> *pleasure*
> *should*
> *slay*
> *lodged*

They must work together to survive, Adam continues, he working the land for food and she providing clothing to cover their nakedness (323-27). Eve's concluding lines show that she accepts Adam's assessment of their joint culpability and indispensability to one another, speaking as she does a condensed version of what he has just remarked upon:

> Alas that ever we wrought this synne!
> Oure bodely sustenance for to wynne,

ȝe must delve and I xal spynne,
In care to ledyn our lyff. (331-34)

Though woman has the power to serve as other to man--something Eve proved when she persuaded Adam to eat the forbidden fruit--man, too, it seems, can serve as other to woman; this Adam does for Eve in his final speech, quoted above. This play, however seems primarily interested in the interdependency of the relationship, indicated not only by each partner's serving as other to his or her spouse, but also by the characters' shared fleshly origins and their desire to live a complementary and harmonious relationship. In fact, each seems to require such harmony as a prerequisite for existence, a harmony that is only achieved through acknowledgment of mutual responsibility and mutual dependence. Despite the fact that Adam and Eve have fallen out of accord with God's teachings, they leave their paradise determined to work as a team. This is in contrast to the feuding York couple who can at best hope only for a tense détente; and the first parents of the Chester cycle occasion no more optimism for harmony, with Adam's last words inside the Garden equating women and devils (Adam and Eve; Cain and Abel 359-60). The contrasting suggestion in the N-Town cycle seems to be that man and woman must work together to re-achieve the salvation paradigm; Adam suggests as much when he tells his wife that they must labor diligently at their respective tasks within the world "[t]yll sum comforth of Godys sonde (sending) / With grace releve oure careful mynde (sorrowful disposition)" (328-29). To relinquish the order of the world requires the efforts of both; and while Adam is the leader, Eve is clearly indispensable.

The earliest example in the N-Town cycle of an interdependent relationship that works to support God's model of existence occurs in the Noah play. The first speech of Noah's wife speaks volumes as to the nature of her relationship with her husband. "I am ȝoure wyff," she says to Noah, "ȝoure childeryn these be":

Onto us tweyn° it doth longe°
Hem° to teche in all degré°
Synne to forsakyn, and werkys wronge.
Therffore, fere, ° for loue of me,
Enforme hem wele evyr amonge°
Synne to forsake, and vanyté,
And vertu to folwe that thei fonge, °
Our Lorde God to plese. (40-48)
two / is our duty
them / in every way
husband
continually
And that they endeavor to follow virtue

It is the collaborative effort of Noah and his wife that must construct identities for their sons and daughters-in-law. Noah's part in the endeavor is soon revealed; immediately upon his wife's declaration of their duty, he addresses all the children, admonishing them to regard God with awe. His conclusion is a more prohibitive version of his wife's final line, seeing to it "in no forfete that we ne fall (that we do not lapse in any misdeed), / Oure Lord for to dysplese" (51-52). The subsequent responses of the children make it clear that the husband-wife effort has indeed produced offspring who are firmly entrenched within sacred demand; what is more, the alternating speeches of the sons and their wives further reinforce the idea that membership within the salvation paradigm is a joint venture best accomplished through husband-and-wife teams.

The family continues to function as a collaborative unit led by the parental pair. Noah laments the great destruction that has come upon man, concluding, "Alas fro gret syn man wyl not fle; / God doth this vengeauns for oure gret trespase," which is followed by the wife's compassionate but echoing "Alas, for gret ruthe (what a shame) of this gret vengeaunce!" (212-4). The six children then follow suit, with most of them elaborating on Noah's judgment of mankind's guilt, which,

significantly, involves the abuse of male-female partnerships. Shem begins, "For grett synne of lechory all this doth betyde (come to pass)" (218); his wife laments the "grett care" mankind's transgression has brought upon then all (225); Ham deplores the "synful levynge (living)" (226) that brings the calamitous flood: Ham's wife notes that the flood is the punishment "[f]or offens to God, brekyng his lawys. . ."(232); and Japhet returns to the specific sin Shem mentioned: "Alas, that lechory this vengeauns doth gynne (begin)" (235). Yet the final speech in this second of the two alternating male-female round of speeches, that of Japhet's wife, recalls the sentiment their mother had added to her compassionate lament. The mother had stated, "But ȝit thankyd be God of this ordenaunce (plan), / That we be now savyd, on lyve (alive) to abyde" (216-17), and Japhet's wife concludes the cycle with

> Oure Lord God I thanke of his gret grace,
> That he doth us saue from this dredful payn.
> Hym for to wurchipe in euery stede° and place
> We beth gretly bownde with myght and with mayn. ° (238-41)
> *time, place*
> *power*

The interdependent identities of the parents are made clear in the connection of their words. Each in that sense serves as other to his or her spouse; and both serve as other to their children, providing them with authoritative discourse that is instrumental in the formation and maintenance of identity. Noah, the clear leader of the play's enterprise, is nevertheless as dependent upon the sentiments expressed within his wife's words as she is on his: he voices discipline, fear and punishment; she interjects notes of compassion and praise. Both speak of faith; both lament sin. These are the elements of the salvation scheme to which both belong; together, they are whole, and together they create identities for those who will populate the post-flood world, integrating them into the Christian order that is to prevail.

An interdependent relationship of a different nature exists between Anne and Joachim, the parents of the Virgin Mary. The words of both spouses reveal their complete involvement in each other. Every speech Anne utters centers upon her spouse; the same is true for Joachim. Each privileges the well-being of the other above him- or herself; each pines for his or her partner when they are apart. Together they are complete; apart they are undone. The first exchange between the two demonstrates this phenomenon. Joachim mentions to his "blyssyd wyff Anne" (Joachim and Anna 58) that he fears their mutual infertility will bring "grett slawndyr" (62) upon them and vows to dedicate any male child they might have to the service of the temple if only God would save them from such tribulation (63-65). Anne's response shows that her husband's speaking has much impact upon her: "ȝoure swemful (distressing) wurdys make terys trekyl down be (through) my face," she notes, and she proceeds to take all the blame for his misery upon herself: "Iwys (certainly), swete husbond, the fawte is in me" (66-67). She then presents the female version of the promise Joachim made to dedicate any offspring they are blessed with to the temple: "If God send frute and it be a mayd childe, / With all reuerens I vow to his magesté, / Sche xal be here footmayd to mynyster (serve) here most myld (humble)" (71-73). Each follows this exchange by commending their joint future to God's grace, with Joachim stoically and devoutly offering, "Nowe lete be it as God wole (wills), ther is no more (nothing greater)" (74), while Anne adds the more emotional but nevertheless pious:

> For dred and for swem° of ȝoure wourdys I qwake.
> Thryes I kysse ȝow with syghys ful sad,
> And to the mercy of God I ȝow betake.
> And tho° that departe in sorwe, God make ther metyng glad. (78-81)
> *grief*
> *those*

They are two parts of the same whole; they are gendered mirror images of each other, with Joachim supplying the sturdy, male element and Anne the compassionate, nurturing feminine component, both in the service of the Christian design.

The remainder of their verbalizations continue to display these qualities. Both express recognition of their sins and connection to God when Joachim's offering is rejected by the priest and he is subsequently ostracized from the community (149-156, 165-66) and both intercede for the other before God: "Punchyth (punish) me, Lorde," Joachim says, "and spare my blyssyd wyff Anne / that syttyth and sorwyth ful sore of myn absens" (159-60) while Anne offers, "Why do ȝe thus to myn husbond, Lord, Why? Why? Why? / For my barynes (barrenness)?" followed by "I fere me I haue offended the (you). . . / Most mekely I pray (beseech) thi pety (pity) that this bale (suffering) thu (you) wyl brest (put an end to)" (167-68, 171). Husband offers to suffer for wife; wife refocuses guilt upon herself and humbly asks for release from misery. Both also receive parallel visits from an angel telling them of their impending parenthood, to which each responds with praise of God and delight at being reunited with his or her dear spouse (201-4, 207, 210, 229-38). When they meet in front of the Gate of Jerusalem, their final exchange reinforces the importance of each to the other's identity and the significance of their joint effort in the maintenance of the salvation plan. Upon meeting his wife, Joachim exclaims, "For joy of this metyng in my sowle I wepe," followed by an indication of the action that traditionally represented the conception[59] of the child Mary: "Haue this kusse of

[59] As J. P. Asselin has noted, "Until the sixteenth century, the conception of Mary was represented in iconography by showing the meeting of Joachim and Anne at the Golden Gate of Jerusalem." It is specifically the "embrace of the spouses" that suggests the conception ("Anne and Joachim, SS," Vol. 1, The New Catholic Encyclopedia, 17 vols. [San Francisco: McGraw] 559. The kiss of cleanness

clennesse and with ȝow it kepe" (241), he says. That his words and his action have taken root in Anne is obvious in her reply: "Ther was nevyr joy sank in me so depe" (243).

Their cooperative involvement in the scheme of salvation is further evident in their final speeches. Joachim speaks as though he comprehends that the birth of his child will benefit him not merely as a parent, but also as an adherent of God's tenets. "I pray the Lord, thin ore (favor), / So mote we levyn (live) evyrmore (always), / And, be thi grace, more holyly" (247-49). He refers not only to their pious earthly existence but to the one who can bring eternal life, introduced into the world as he will be through their child about to be born. Anne's words also contain two levels of significance, as she directs her husband home "[t]o thank God that sytt in tron (throne), / That thus hath sent us his grace." Mary, the grace of God, will not only repair her parents' damaged identities within the community but she will also work to reinstate fallen mankind within the order of salvation. And it is the devout and interdependent identities of her parents that have occasioned the grace that is she.

The N-Town Mary and Joseph are also a husband-and-wife team who function interdependently to further God's aim; Yet Mary, in her role as Mother of God, takes over when the two encounter situations requiring spiritual authority: her words not only recruit repentant gossips to the teachings of God, but they also call down the angel whose message will enlighten Joseph to the nature of Mary's pregnancy. Nevertheless, the interdependency in Mary and Joseph's relationship is genuine. They, too, are in some ways mirror images of each other in that they are both devout virgins who have vowed to remain chaste for the span of their lives. Once they have

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exchanged between the two may or may not reinforce the actual doctrine of the Immaculate Conception; see Spector, 441.

become a team, their language reflects their joint concerns, which, in their early married life, is the preservation of Mary's chastity. Joseph advises Mary, "Kepe the (you) clene, my jentyl spowse" (Marriage of Mary and Joseph 470), while Mary adds later, "Gracyous God my maydenhed saue / Euyr clene in chastyté" (485-86). The defense of their mutual virginity that they make before a court of detractors speaks further to their connection. After Mary is accused of cuckolding Joseph, she speaks in her defense: "I am a mayd ȝit of pure clennes" (172), she offers, later reiterating, "God to wyttnes, I am a mayd" (211). Joseph is then called to corroborate the purity of Mary's sexual condition, with "Sche is for me a trwe clene mayde" (226). But because suspicion of Mary's pregnancy has now fallen upon him, he must also defend his own sexual purity, asserting, "And I for hire (her) am clene also" (227), and "I am not gylty. . ." (246). After Joseph drinks a potion that should prove his guilt or innocence, his language attests not only to his sexually chaste identity but also to his devotion to the demand of God. "If I be wurthy to suffyr blame, / O rightful God, my synne shewe owughte (openly)" (281), he says. Mary also endures a parallel round of questioning, in which she must again defend her virginal state--"I trespacyd nevyr with erthely wight (creature)" (290)--and drink the test of her purity. Her language as she performs this act situates her within God's tenets just as Joseph's had: "To God in this case my cawse I haue betaught; / Lord, thorwe thin helpe I drynke of this potacyon" (332-33), she says. Up to this point in the play, the alleged transgressions of Joseph and Mary have received roughly equal time, and their voicings have reinforced the identities thus far created by them: both "clean maidens,' with Joseph charged additionally with looking after Mary. After they pass the virginity test and their accusers withdraw the charges, it is Mary who recreates for the accusers new identities, speaking for God and forgiving them their transgression, directing them

toward prayerful activity. First declaring, "Now god Lord in hevyn omnypotent, / Of his grett mercy ȝoure seknes (sickness) aswage" (368-69), she continues to speak them into adherence to God's law:

> Now God forȝeve ȝow all ȝowre trespace,
> And also forȝeve ȝow all defamacyon
> That ȝe haue sayd, both more and lesse,°
> To myn hynderawnce and maculacion. ° (374-377)
> *everything*
> *defilement*

Those whom she has asked God to forgive wish to venerate her (381); she has served as other to them, and they desire continued contact with her. She, however, points their attention back to God, requesting that they take their reverence to the priest's "owyn hous" (383), and in this she upholds both the patriarchal Christian hierarchy and the Christian design of salvation.

Mary also repeats this function for Joseph in a scene that resonates with his "representative human" status and her role has mankind's intercessor. It is Mary's intervention that allows for Joseph's inclusion within the fellowship of Christianity, a process that begins with Joseph rejecting Mary's assertions that God is the father of her child. She then directs her words toward God, asking, that he "amend [Joseph's] mone (complaint)" (Joseph's Doubt 86). She repeats her request with more specificity, asking this time that Joseph be brought into intelligence of her situation--and of the Christian plan:

> God, that in my body art sesyd,°
> Thu knowist myn husbond is dysplesyd
> To se me in this plight.
> For vnknowlage° he is desesyd, °
> And therfore, help that he were esyd,
> That he myght knowe the° ful perfyght°
> *seized, held*
> *lack of knowledge*

distressed
you / perfectly

Mary's language signals God's dispatch of the angel with the knowledge that Joseph lacks; his reaction indicates his integration into Christian awareness: "A, Mary, Mary, wel thu be," he says, "and blyssyd be the frewte in the (you), / Goddys Sone of Myght" (193-95). His final line in the play signals that he has accepted his identity as devout husband and protector of the Virgin: "Now I thank God with spech and spelle (words) / That euyr, Mary, I was weddyd to the (you)" (221-22). Mary's response reaffirms her identity as a humble wonder of faith who points ever back to God: "It was the werk of God, as I ȝow telle. / Now blyssyd be that Lord so purveyed (provided) for me" (223-24). In fact, the Lord provides so much for Mary that she seems to need no male other to aid her in the way that the Chester, York and Wakefield Marys do. Only twice does the suggestion occur that she might need an earthly other to complete her, once at Jesus's death and then again at her own. As in the York and Wakefield cycles, she is disconsolate that she has lost her son, and her pairing with John does seem to quiet her. In the end, however, she resolves to return to the temple where she might lead her life "[a]nd serue my Lord God with hertyly drede" (The Crucifixion 287). As she lies on her deathbed she does ask John's assistance, but only to protect her body from the enemy Jews once she has died (The Assumption of Mary 226). Only in her flesh is she vulnerable; the spirit that makes up the majority of her identity is trained on God as other.

For all the focus that Mary receives in the N-Town cycle (she is the primary or a primary character in one-fourth of the plays), as I mentioned above, she is not given as much opportunity to construct individual identity as she is in the York and Wakefield cycles. This seems to be in keeping with N-Town's gender design, which posits a cooperative male-female effort with the male the leader in the enterprise.

Mary's true counterpart in the N-Town cycle is not Joseph or John, but her son, the Christ. Together they enact the scheme of salvation, she invoking him and his father, but he doing the actual saving of identity. Their paired identities are especially made clear in the exchange between them that occurs following Christ's resurrection. Each hails the other as worthy of worship; Mary tells her risen son, "I xal the wurchep in euery place" and ". . .now my blysse is newly breed (engendered); / All men may joye (enjoy) this syght" (Christ's Appearance to Mary 99, 103-4), while the son tells the mother, "All this werle that was forlorn / Shal wurchepe ȝou bothe evyn and morn" (105-6). Yet their language reveals that Mary remains forever subsidiary to Christ; she owes homage to him, but the reverence paid her is due to the fact that she brought him into the world: "Man had be lost in helle," he notes, "had I not of ȝow be born" (108, 107).

In the N-Town cycle, man and woman are meant to work side by side and two by two. There is no question, however, that he is the leader, just as there is no question that God/Christ is the one who ultimately effects identity. Mary can do so only by invoking the deity. Although woman is an indispensable element in the construction and maintenance of the salvation paradigm, man is at the head of such an effort: it is Adam who leads Eve, Noah with whom God communicates directly, Joachim whom the angel visits first with the good news. Even Mary, the most independent speaker of all human women in the cycle, requires a male companion to whom she often defers when not acting in her official mediating capacity. The young Jesus observes in his response to a question as to how his mother is "rewlyd (governed) by nyght and day" (Christ and the Doctors 236) that Joseph "was ordeyned here make (her mate) to be" (252) to "fede and kepe" (239) her and take her to Egypt after Jesus's birth "[b]cawse she xulde (should) nat go alon" (251). In fact,

the impulse to partner Mary throughout the cycle implies that despite woman's necessary involvement in God's plan, she--and consequently her voice--still require male regulation.

As the Presentation of Mary play demonstrates, Mary is given extraordinary license to speak and even seems autonomous from her parents because she demonstrates that she is, to a large extent, self-regulating: she independently turns all of her will and words to the Glory of God. Still, her regimen of self-regulation requires her to seek guidance from authoritative male figures. Ascending the steps of the temple, she, at the age of three, precociously recites the fifteen Gradual Psalms, traditionally designed to bring to speaker closer to God,[60] yet she does so only upon prompting from the priest, whom she also asks, "Holy fadyr, I beseche ȝow forthryght, / Sey how I xal be rewlyd in Goddys hous" (168-69). She furthermore accepts his assigning of five companion maidens and seven instructing priests to her (194-217), all of them allegorical constructs designed to keep her focused upon the godly rules she had apparently embraced even in the womb. The identity Mary expresses with her voice is nourished not only by the advice of priests, but also by the ministering of angels: "We aungellys xul serve ȝow day and nyght. / Now fede ȝow therwith (with it), in Goddys name," one says to her. "We xal lerne ȝow the lyberary (body [of laws]) of oure Lordys lawe lyght (righteous)" (250-52), he continues. But when Mary reaches the traditional age of adulthood, the prior infusion of righteous material into her being is not sufficient to allow for her autonomy; thus her marriage to Joseph, an elderly, committed virgin, is arranged, a match that seems commensurate with Mary's professed desire to maintain her chaste and pious identity. And it is, in fact, the community suspicion that Mary has failed to adhere to Joseph's

[60] See Lumiansky and Mills's notes for ll. 94-167 (442-43).

regulation, either by cuckolding him or by tempting him to abandon the purity that defined him, that occasions the couple's joint trial. The status granted woman in the N-Town cycle is apparently still influenced by perceptions of woman's relative child-likeness or weakness when compared to man. She may speak; it is even necessary that she do so; but in the end it is still the masculine that dominates.

V. A. Kolve notes that the mystery cycles "hold. . .up to [the audience] a mirror of their own society and its moral nature."[61] Kolve undoubtedly bases this assessment on the cycle drama's method of dramatizing the salvation paradigm within a recreation of medieval society itself. Yet Kolve's statement could also pertain to the morality play and the saint's play in the sense that all genres dramatize the human condition from a distinctly medieval and popular perspective. Although medieval religious drama ostensibly deals with biblical history, Christian tradition, and various aspects of the salvation experience, its perspective can hardly be considered rarefied, intellectual or formally "churchy"; in fact, the opposite is usually quite in evidence. The shepherds of the second Wakefield nativity play roam the countryside near the town of Wakefield itself, lamenting such common medieval concerns as gender disharmony and economic inequity;[62] the villains of all the pieces speak in the argot of contemporary obscenity;[63] and resonances of a variety of literary traditions--the authoritative, the courtly and the bourgeois--can be discovered in all dramatic

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[61] Kolve, 113.

[62] For instance, one of the shepherds mentions "Horbury" (455), a town two to three miles southwest of Wakefield. Topographical references such as these in the Second Shepherd's Play helped to definitively identify Wakefield as the performance locale for the cycle the play appears in. England and Pollard, xiv.

[63] An example is the Castle of Perseverance's Envy, who upon facing defeat by the seven Virtues exclaims, "Al min[e] enmité is not worth a fart; / I schite (shit) and schake al in my schete (underware)!" (2208-9).

genres.[64] The drama is, in sum, a patchwork of medieval practice, thought, and convention. Kathleen Ashley, in fact, notes that medieval drama can be considered "cultural performance," "occasions on which a society dramatizes its collective myths, defines itself, and reflects on its practices and values. . . ."[65] The primary myth dramatized throughout involves, of course, Christian salvation; and the role of gender in the construction of Christian identities suggests that collaboration between male and female may, if the woman is the envoy of the tenets of salvation, bring about the wholeness that is reunion with God.

But secondary myths are presented as well, among them the idea that the cooperation of men and women is not only vital to the fulfillment of the Christian plan but also to the functioning of society. As Kolve's above statement suggests, it is commonly held that "the plays' religious and social functions [were] linked"[66]--the Christian paradigm was inextricably bound up with medieval social mores.

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[64] The authoritative allegorical women of the morality plays, the Virgin Mary of certain cycle plays, and Mary Magdalene of the saint's play all belong to the authoritative tradition. The Chester sibyl also fits this category as would the N-Town Veronica. Specific examples of the courtly tradition include the heroine of Mary Magdalene and the Glorified Christ addressing each other as courtly lovers, and in the same play the allegorical Lust's "courting" of Mary. The language exchanged between Mary and Joseph in the cycle drama also has courtly overtones, as do Mary's verbalizations to and about her son and the apostle John. Love relationships in general between husbands and wives often present a domesticated version of courtly sentiment. The bourgeois tradition is evident not only in the cycle drama's comic depiction of the elderly Joseph fearing his young wife's betrayal, but also in his frustrated musings about marriage in general. Any of the comic domestic situations portrayed in the drama--Wakefield's Mak and Gill, the Chester, York and Wakefield Noah families, even York's Pilate and Procula and Mary Magdalene's King and Queen of Marseilles recall bourgeois literary conventions.

[65] Kathleen M. Ashley, "Cultural Approaches to Medieval Drama," Approaches to Teaching Medieval English Drama, ed. Richard Emmerson, Approaches to Teaching World Literature 29 (New York: MLA, 1990) 57.

[66] Peter H. Greenfield, "Faith and Prosperity: Cultural Values in Medieval Drama," Approaches to Teaching Medieval English Drama, 101.

Regarding the drama as cultural performance, something that "literally performs social functions,"[67] brings into focus its role as social agent: when the plays enact male-female relationships situated within the order of salvation, they simultaneously model behavior that ensures the social propriety of women and men, and perhaps preserves the status quo as well. Ashley suggests that this is particularly true of the cycle drama, which "often function[ed] like courtesy literature, modeling and mirroring civic and social identities"[68]--particularly in its depiction of "proper social behaviors for women in its audience."[69] That female behavior was of great concern to medieval society is indisputable. The high and late Middle Ages are characterized by a growing societal concern over the character and conduct of women. Carla Casagrande explains:

> From the end of the twelfth century to the end of the fifteenth century. . . words [written to and about women regarding their behavior] multiplied; secular and sacred texts by clerics and laymen testified to the urgent need to formulate new values and models of behavior for women.[70]

With regard to the relationship of women and their husbands, one such text, Thomas of Chobham's Manual of Confessors (c. 1215) suggests, "[I]t should always be enjoined upon women to be preachers to their husbands, because no priest is able to

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[67] Ashley, "Cultural," 57.

[68] Kathleen M. Ashley, "Medieval Courtesy Literature and Dramatic Mirrors of Female Conduct," The Ideology of Conduct: Essays on Literature and the History of Sexuality, eds. Nancy Armstrong and Leonard Tennenhouse (New York: Methuen, 1987) 34-35.

[69] Ashley, "Medieval," 26.

[70] Casagrande also notes that a "new wave of pastoral letters and pedagogical literature" was created to address the absence of a vocabulary suited to analyzing and describing women. In Carla Casagrande, "The Protected Woman," trans. Clarissa Botsford, Silences of the Middle Ages, ed. Christiane Klapisch-Zuber, Vol. 1 of A History of Women in the West, gen. eds. Georges Duby and Michelle Perrot, 2 vols. (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap, 1992). 71.

soften the heart of a man the way his wife can." Thomas considers the potency of wifely influence to be such that it is incumbent upon the wife to correct any sin of her husband, lest "the sin of the man [be] imputed to her."[71] Sharon Farmer notes that medieval churchmen of the eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth centuries, apparently building upon St. Paul's suggestion in I Corinthians 7.12-16 that Christian men and women might bring unbelieving spouses to wholeness in Christ, frequently urged wives to exercise their persuasive abilities upon their husbands, to quote Thomas again, "in ways beneficial to him and for pious causes."[72] A contemporary of Thomas's, Robert of Courson, used language similar to Thomas's when he advised that a usurer's Christian wife might steer her spouse away from activities that fell outside sanctioned parameters. As Farmer notes,

> [I]n a passage that presupposed the wife's use of oral communication, Robert described her potential effect on the usurer's moral conscience: the wife could work at "softening the heart of her husband" and "inducing" him to restore the stolen property.[73]

With the appropriate words, a wife might, Robert seems sure, bring her husband into closer accord with the Christian plan. In fact, by the early thirteenth century, a body of clerical writing existed that equated the speaking of pious wives with "the voices of saintly preachers. . .aided by divine grace"; according to Farmer, "Again and again, descriptions of these women employ phrases that are also applied to saintly

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[71] Thomas of Chobham, Thomae de Chobham summa confessorum, 7.2.15, ed. F. Bloomfield, Analecta mediaevalia Namurcensia 25 (Louvain: Nauwelaerts, 1968) 375, qtd. in Sharon Farmer, "Persuasive Voices: Clerical Images of Medieval Wives," Speculum 61 (1986): 517.

[72] Thomas of Chobham, 7.2.15, qtd. in Farmer, 517.

[73] Farmer, 532. The passage is from Robert's "Concilium Parisiensis," pt. 5, ch. 10, in J. D. Mansi's Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio, 31 vols. (Florence: 1759-98) 22:852.

evangelists. . . ."[74] It would seem that these writers concluded that "just as saintly preachers served as conduits of divine grace in the public sphere, pious wives could serve as conduits of divine grace in the private sphere."[75] Woman, whose greater material nature[76] rendered her suspect in matters of ethical and social propriety (much as rhetoric itself was regarded by some classical and patristic writers[77]) could be trusted to speak wisely if she was seen to function in accord with divine grace. For "with the aid of divine grace, spoken language"--even if uttered by a woman--"could change the soul, cultivating it and directing it towards God."[78]

Yet this rather generous view of woman's function meets with some qualification in the drama. She must, in the end, be regulated by male companionship, usually within the relationship of marriage and family, or by other factors, such as a direct connection to divinity, if her voice is to have the authority and the grace it requires to effect any changes in her male partner. Her speaking seems connected to her physical person--and often to her sexuality. Peter Stallybrass has suggested that early modern society regarded the policing of women's bodies by male relatives as *de rigeuer*, with

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[74] Farmer, 540. Farmer cites examples from the writings of Sulpicius Severus (c. 363-420), Orderic Vitalis (c. 1075-1143), Peter the Chanter (d. 1197), Pseudo-Gregory of Tours (eleventh or twelfth century), and Thomas of Chobham; see pp. 540-41, n. 65.

[75] Farmer, 541.

[76] For more on woman's material nature, see Chapter One.

[77] Farmer summarizes: "Following upon a long-standing classical and Christian discomfort with the seductive power of spoken rhetoric, many. . .clerical authors assumed that speech--like woman herself and all the other material attractions of nature--was an enticement, luring the soul away from its proper relationship with God. However, they also recognized that with the aid of divine grace, spoken language could change the soul, cultivating it and directing it towards God" (541-42). Farmer cites Cicero (On Invention, 1.1.1) and Augustine (Confessions, 13.4.2, 13.5.6, and On Christian Doctrine, 4.5) as examples of writers who express misgivings about the power of rhetoric (n. 48, p. 541).

[78] Farmer, 542.

the aim of creating a woman who was "finished," that is, characterized by chastity, silence, and a "locked house."[79] Certainly medieval drama also illustrates the idea that female agents must at all times be under the control of male authority. Knowledge, Good Deeds, the Seven Virtues, the Daughters of God--all of these allegorical female characters answer to a masculine deity. Mary Magdalene's title character defers initially to male family members (father and brother) and then male spiritual superiors: Peter, Christ and God. The cycle drama, which more directly depicts the social sphere within which Stallybrass's analysis might readily apply, also suggests that the status quo for women is masculine regulation. The sexual restraint of the medieval drama's efficacious women is also evident; all three genres seem to take the position held by the anonymous Parisian author of a domestic treatise written circa 1393: "[I]t is certain that all good things forsake a girl or woman who is found wanting in virginity, continence, and chastity."[80] Yet all three types of drama, especially the cycle drama, also imply that as long as women are contained within a male-centered construct, whether it is a family relationship or a commitment to a higher power, and as long as sexual continence is operational within such a construct, silence is not necessary. In fact, not only is silence unnecessary for these women; in many cases the speech of female characters who have achieved virtue by means of proper regulation is absolutely vital to the primary goal of the drama: constructing

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[79] Peter Stallybrass, "Patriarchal Territories: The Body Enclosed," Rewriting the Renaissance: The Discourses of Sexual Difference in Early Modern Europe, eds. Margaret W. Ferguson, Maureen Quilligan, and Nancy J. Vickers (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1986) 126-27.

[80] Tania Bayard, ed. and trans., A Medieval Home Companion: Housekeeping in the Fourteenth Century (New York: Harper, 1991) 45.

identities situated within the plan of the Christian faith for many of its central figures, a process that serves to model a saved identity for its audience.[81]

In medieval drama, the female character is not simply a dangerous force to be suppressed, although, of course, she may be that if she is defined outside acceptable spiritual and social guidelines. If she shows herself to be an exemplary woman, after the model of the Virgin Mary, she may contribute verbally to identity-construction processes that promote the proper functioning of both society and Providential History. She may also, too, be part of a cooperative relationship with a male partner in which he verbally contributes to her identity almost to the extent that she contributes to his. After all, Paul's I Corinthians suggestion regarding the conversion potential of spouses is a gender-reciprocal one; the passage concludes: "For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife?" (7:16).[82] Thomas of Chobham's directive that wives should dissuade their husbands from sinful activity is partnered by his advice to men: if a wife is "foolish," her husband "should rebuke her moderately and decently," restraining her if the need arises.[83] That the identity of spouses was all of a piece is further corroborated by the unknown fourteenth-century writer quoted above:

> By God, if a man keeps his wife's honor and a wife casts blame on her husband, or allows others to cast blame on him, either secretly or openly, she herself is to be blamed. . . . If he is tainted in some way,

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[81] Chaucer's Second Nun's Tale provides a Middle English version of the legend of St. Cecilia, a prime example of the self-regulating woman whose sexual restraint invests her with authority. The words of chaste Cecilia convert her husband, brother-in-law, and countless others to Christianity, despite the surety of persecution and death. She herself miraculously escapes multiple attempts on her life, surviving mortal wounds long enough to convert even more to Christ's cause.

[82] King James Version.

[83] Thomas of Cobham, Summa confessorum, 7.2.15, qtd. in Farmer, 517.

> she should conceal and hide it with all her might. Her husband ought to do the same for his wife. . . .

Concluding, "[T]his is how good wives act toward their husbands, and good husbands toward their wives, when they go astray,"[84] he reinforces the notion that the two are in essence a cooperative unit of identity that must be nurtured by both parties if each is to belong to the paradigm of good social behavior. In medieval English drama, the social paradigm is so permeated with the Christian that social tenets seem to be rooted in Christian doctrine; Christian tenets, meantime, are historicized by their presentation within the context of medieval society. Christian goodness and social goodness have become intertwined, and the achievement of such goodness generally requires the cooperative effort of both genders.

The drama allowed such ideas about women and their relationships to men to be enacted, probably operating in what Victor Turner has labeled society's "subjunctive mood,"[85] "one that expresses desire and possibility, rather than simply representing what is."[86] It therefore follows that the plays may be read as correctives to audience members, conditional statements in Turner's subjunctive mood: Should one behave precisely in the fashion dictated, not only would one's voice have influence, but it would situate one within the paradigm of spiritual and social salvation. Didactic on both the religious and social fronts, drama, more perhaps than the lyric or the authoritative exchange, conveyed what the culture that created it valued most. And what it seemed to regard as important was the harmonizing of the complementary masculine and feminine elements within both the spiritual and social spheres. The

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[84] Bayard, 58-59.

[85] Victor Turner, "Liminality and the Performative Genres," Rite, Drama, Festival, Spectacle: Rehearsals Toward a Theory of Cultural Performance, ed. John J. MacAloon, (Philadelphia: ISHI, 1984) 20, qtd. in Ashley, "Cultural," 57.

[86] Ashley, "Cultural," 57.

important role played by the Virgin Mary in the medieval hierarchy of deity seems to imply that the feminine is in some way a necessary and constitutive element within the plan of salvation as it is depicted within a social framework, something that all the English mystery cycles, both morality plays studied in this chapter, and Mary Magdalene also imply. The largely doomed but nevertheless persistent efforts of the lyric tradition reinforce this conclusion, as do the generally more successful exchanges between the pathetic males of the authoritative tradition and their enlightened and goddess-like female teachers. The feminine--and with it, its primary expression, the voice--must still be regulated, it is true, but as long as woman embraces such regulation, identity may be constructed for both men and women, and the drama that was medieval society and Providential History would function smoothly.

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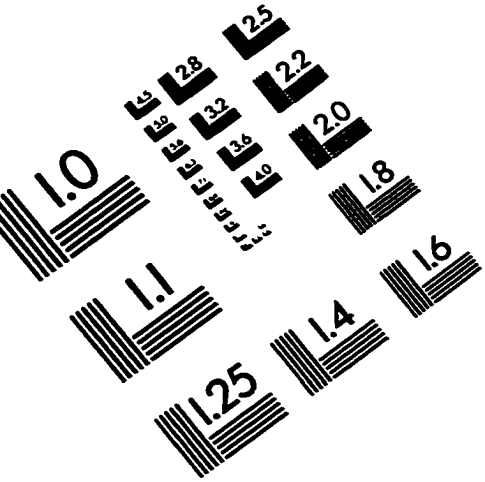
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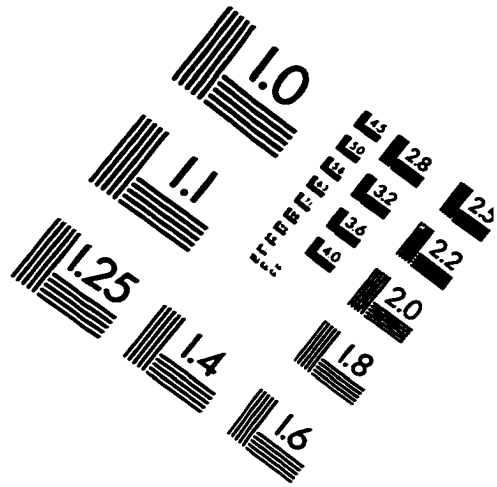
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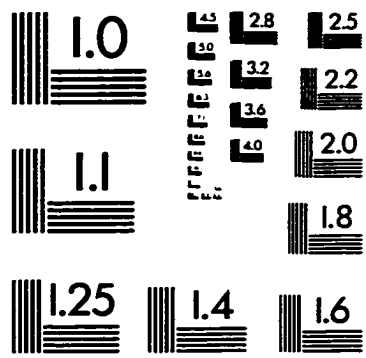
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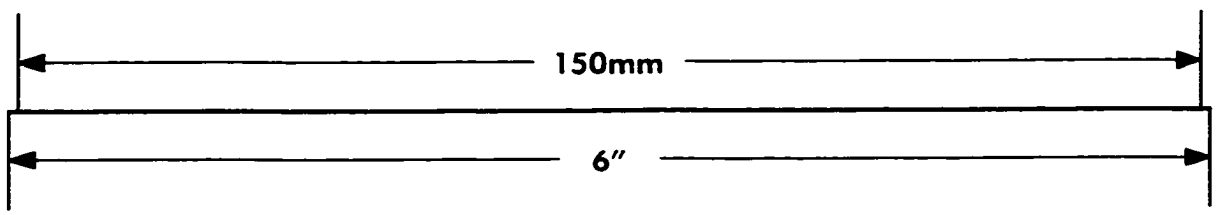
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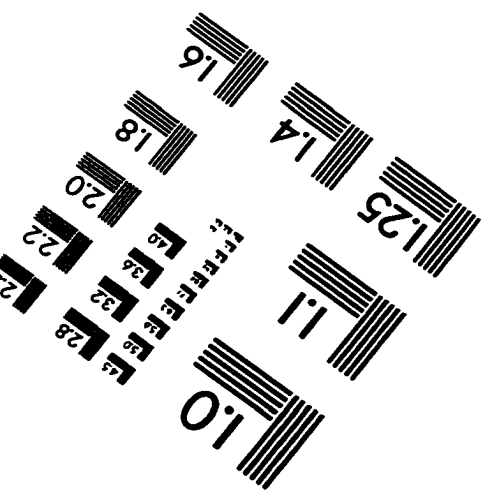
IMAGE EVALUATION
TEST TARGET (QA-3)

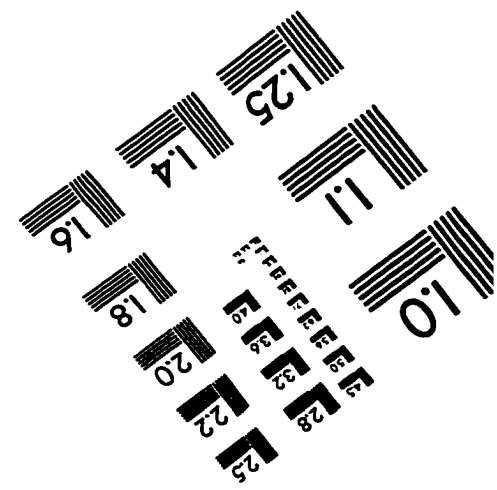












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