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THE ENGLISH POEMS OF CHARLES OF ORLEANS

City University of New York

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The English Poems of
Charles of Orleans

by
Diane R. Marks

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1984

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This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in English in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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Introduction

Harley manuscript 682 contains 230 lyric poems: 84 ballades in an arranged sequence framed by an allegorical narrative; 81 roundels introduced and concluded by longer poems; four caroles; four songs; one dream vision; and a second sequence of 36 ballades. Imbedded in the narrative frames and the dream vision are references to the narrator as "Charlis, duk of Orlyaunce," the French poet-prince captured at Agincourt and held prisoner in England for 25 years until his ransom in 1440.

Charles of Orleans is the acknowledged and esteemed author of a substantial body of French poems. There are several manuscripts of his work, but the Bibliotheque National ms. fr. 25458, which, according to its editor Pierre Champion was Charles' personal copy, contains: 123 ballades, 89 chansons, five complaintes, four caroles, and 435 rondeaux. This collection, although not as structured as the English poems, has a vague narrative order, beginning with the poet's introduction to the court of love and ending, after laments about old age and melancholy, with a roundel bidding farewell to his companions and to poetry. Only one half of the Harley English poems have French versions found in this

authoritative manuscript; the other half have no known French models.

From the end of the fifteenth until the end of the eighteenth centuries the English poems were ignored. In 1790 Joseph Ritson recognized many of the poems in the Harley MS. as versions of Charles of Orleans' French poems and in Ancient Songs and Ballades, published in London that year, Ritson attributed the contents of Harley 682 to Charles himself.

But once Ritson associated the Harley manuscript with Charles of Orleans, attention focused on historical issues, questions of authorship and identity, rather than on literary matters, and most studies still attempt to identify the author, the translator and the ladies to whom the poems may have been written. The poems themselves have only served to illustrate or illuminate these historical theories concerning the author and his circle, rather than being the object of literary analysis and investigation.

Not until the Early English Text Society published the edition by Robert Steele and Mabel Day in 1941 and '46 (reprinted in one volume in 1970) have the English poems been readily available for literary study. Although in recent years there have been a number of studies of Charles of Orleans, the only full length work to examine

the English poems is Norma Lorre Goodrich's Charles of Orleans--A Study of Themes in his French and English Poetry (Geneva: Droz, 1967). Goodrich is interested almost exclusively in the question of authorship and searches both bodies of verse for similarities in theme that will support her belief that Charles is the author of both the French and the English poems. Here again, although Goodrich's book is a literary study it is in the service of a historical question.

It is something of an anomaly to be able to identify a Middle English lyric poet, much less have him identify himself. And for him to be an important personage whose life has been well documented is too much to expect. It is all the more tempting then to focus on the author instead of the poems. It is not our purpose in this study to verify the poet's claim to be the Duke of Orleans. Rather we will assume, as the poet so evidently wishes us to, that he is Charles of Orleans and read the poems in that light.

The Harley manuscript raises many other questions. This book is not just the largest assemblage of courtly lyrics but the only self-conscious collection of love poems in English before the Renaissance. How is the book similar to and different from other contemporary collections? What inspired these poems and how did they come into being? How do they fit into the Middle English lyric

tradition and what effect do they have on it? What relationship exists between the English book and the French book and how do the English poems compare with the French? What influences--literary, historical, personal and psychological can we see at work in this unique collection of poems?

I. The Troubadours: The Invention of the Love Lyric

The works of Charles of Orleans were susceptible to a variety of influences but governed by a unique and refined personal taste. This French Duke with an Italian mother left 230 English poems behind when, after twenty-five years' courtly captivity, he was finally ransomed and returned to France. The poet, schooled in the French tradition and aware of literary developments in Italy, became one of the most skillful and perceptive imitators of Chaucer. An analysis of his English poems requires an examination of literary tradition and developments on the Continent as well as in England. We will direct our attention first towards the forms, themes, and style of the Provençal lyric, which dominate all European vernacular literature for two centuries.

There may be no more innate and essentially human utterance than the lyric. To cry or cry out in joy or pain, delight or sorrow requires no tutoring. Yet every culture has devised elaborate patterns to govern the expression of the most common and intense human feelings. The short subjective poem, set to music or made musical

by rhythm and repetition, explores or depicts an intensely emotional situation. Sung or spoken, the lyric is an accompaniment to life and formulates and expresses the passions that we all, sooner or later, will feel.

Although the roots of vernacular European lyric poetry undoubtedly reach far back to the classical tradition of the Greeks and Romans, as well as to the probable but undocumented folk songs of indigenous peoples, the earliest extant songs in the vulgar tongue, those of the Provençal troubadours, differ radically from the poetry of antiquity and the early Middle Ages.

First, these songs are no longer in Latin, the lingua franca of scholars and clerks, but in a vernacular. Even the literary dialect in which the troubadour songs were composed was probably more comprehensible to the unlettered public than Latin. This shift in language and a change in audience may have affected the themes and style of the verse.

Also the principles of classical verse, the quantitative meters of Greek and Latin, were abandoned, in Latin as well as in the vernacular, for a syllabic accentual line terminated by rhyme. Many theories have been put forth to account for this dramatic change from vowel length to syllable stress and rhyme. The example of Latin Christian hymns which have identical case endings

at the ends of lines may have encouraged the shift towards rhyme. Often, however, these hymns do not exhibit real rhyme, for not only the case ending but the previous accented syllable must be similar to have real rhyme. The possibility of Arab influence, monorhyme and rhymed couplets being the basis of classical Persian poetry, has become a less popular idea in recent years but it should not be dismissed; nor should the hypothesis of a native folk tradition. Even Old English with its very different prosodic system has a rhyming poem.

In addition the theme of most troubadour poetry is quite consistent over a large body of verse. It usually explores the much discussed "new feeling" of love "invented" in the twelfth century. Once again scholarship and criticism both have vehemently debated the novelty and existence of courtly love or fin amors, its characteristics and origins. So much controversy indicates some real observable phenomenon, no matter how dimly perceived or vaguely defined. There seems to be a general change in tone and attitude on the subject of love from ancient times to medieval. The fleshly turmoil and delight of classical erotic poetry, be it the Greek anthology or Catullus, Ovid and Horace, is present in troubadour poetry but somewhat transformed by the belief that sexual

love directed towards a worthy object and suffering to obtain it are spiritually ennobling. Some echoes and instances of this sentiment may be found in classical poetry, but it is by no means a given, a cultural commonplace, an underlying assumption which all poets subscribe to as it is in troubadour poetry. Once again there may be many contributing elements to this theme. Nykl observed that the Hispano-Arabic tradition, descended from classical Persian sources, is rich in erotic poetry with mystical overtones.¹ The Christian religion, with its tenet of a transcendental humanity and suffering for redemption may have helped imbue a secular experience with spiritual overtones, and recently Peter Dronke has emphasized the similarity between Provençal cortezia and the sentimental relationships depicted in the correspondence which the early Church Fathers preserved.² Dronke has further argued that the sentiments expressed in troubadour poetry are innate human ones which occur universally, in oral folk poetry as well as in the most literate cultures.³ Not one source but all of these may have contributed to the enduring "invention of the twelfth century."

Furthermore, Old Provençal lyric poetry displays a diversity of tone alien to classical literature. The meters of Latin and Greek measure the syllables in time.

Usually serious matters are discussed in slower more weighty measures accompanied by a high style of figures. Lighter themes or satires use rough or tripping measures and figures associated with the middle or low style. Tone, throughout a classical poem, is generally uniform and genre distinctions, which govern theme, meter and diction are fairly clear and for the most part respected. In troubadour poetry genre determines the theme and content of a poem, but not its meter, rhyme scheme or other verbal pattern, which may be common to all types of lyrics. Diction and the tone it produces are also highly mixed in troubadour poetry. Comparisons are often surprisingly homely and figurative language may be drawn from a variety of sources. It is as if, while elevating the erotic experience to a significant and crucial episode in civilized man's existence, the troubadours retained a sceptical attitude and mocking language with which to discuss it. The most passionate and idealized love longings are often punctuated by commonsense and the commonplace.

The hallmark of troubadour style involves a rapid variation in the poet-lover's perspective on himself and his situation. The audience is shown the many facets of the lover in quick succession: the proud boasting poet becomes a grovelling suitor or an exalted martyr for love

within a very few lines; the admirer of the lady's virtue and wisdom unabashedly confesses his libidinous desires; he castigates her coldness and then pledges to serve her eternally. He may cry, praise, complain, rejoice, question, despair, renounce, plead and promise, all in the same stanza. The volatile nature of the lover is emphasized by the paratactic nature of the language. The lack of explicit connectives suggests, even creates, confusion. Although within the stanza relationships between clauses are usually signalled, such signals rarely exist between stanzas, and frequently we find the stanzas ordered differently in different manuscripts.

The scarcity of connectives and the diversity of emotional states portrayed produce the impression of accident, confusion and surprise. "He who loves is beyond reason," says Bernard de Ventadorn in a tenso with Peire d'Auvergne,⁴ and the disjunctive grammatical constructions and heterogeneous language of troubadour poetry simulate this state. The unity and coherence of the poem are achieved by fixed intricate rhyme schemes and elaborate meters, rather than by any continuity in argument or expression.

The style of a poem is produced by a combination of form, theme and tone, and the style of old Provençal love poetry differs greatly from that of antiquity while it

becomes the prototype for European love poetry for centuries to come. Although the theme of troubadour poetry, courtly love, has been much discussed and analyzed in the past eighty years, the style of the poetry has rarely been described or analyzed. It is perhaps worthwhile to attempt to describe, differentiate and define it.

Although we are used to thinking about the troubadours as moody and tormented lovers, eternally poised between ecstasy and intrigue, their poems also include a great many social and personal satires, laments for the dead, and complaints, not only about cold-hearted ladies but about an ungenerous patron, an unappreciative audience or God's mismanagement of things; or more idiosyncratic topics, such as the praise of war as the source of valor in Betran de Born or the need for a good horse in Peire Vidal. Many poems deal either overtly or obliquely with the act of composing a song and in the boasts, gap or gab, the poet praises himself for his skills in war, love and poetry, the main themes of the troubadour tradition.

It has often been said that this poetry, like Minerva, springs up full blown, and indeed, the earliest texts we have from the first troubadour, Guillaume de Poitiers, outline the whole tradition in all its variety and wealth, for it would be hard to find a characteristic theme developed by later troubadours which is not introduced or

implied by Guillaume. Yet Guillaume, unlike most of the poets who follow him, observes a very explicit decorum.

The bawdy lei de con are addressed to his companions (companho). These poems depict sexual relationships as an exploitative game of animal instinct to be played with human cunning. The themes of these poems involve the very basest conception of human sexuality, yet they are admirably witty, skillful and energetic. Thus they may appeal to a wide audience. In the song about Agnes and Ermesson (Companho, faray un vers . . . convinen) Guillaume's two mistresses are referred to throughout the poem as two horses. Only at the end is the lengthy double-entendre made explicit. Likewise, when the poet-lover boasts about his skill at games (Ben vuelh que sapchon lei pluzor) the pleasure of the poem, aside from observing an ego completely uninhibited by modesty, is in watching the simultaneous meanings spin themselves out, thinner and thinner. When he speaks out against placing a guard on cunt, (Companho, tant ai agutz d'avols conres) a similar intellectual amusement is felt in observing the wily reasons delivered with moralistic posturing that the poet invents to justify a fully libertine position. Perhaps most interesting is the bawdy story (Faray un vers, pos mi somelh) in which the poet-lover poses as a mute (a theme repeated most notably by Boccaccio) in order to gain intimate access to two

married women. The 188 sexual acts the poet boasts of are merely alluded to, but the trial that the wives of En Garin and En Bernard put poor Guillaume through before he obtains his reward is excruciatingly painful. The poem obviously mocks the hypocritical virtue and gentility of the ladies, but even more so, yet more subtly, the extremes to which the poet's blind lust, based not on a longing for a specific woman, but on sexual opportunity alone, will go to satisfy itself. The poet-lover's childish pride in his sexual feats is countered by the audience's own judgment of his intelligence, wit and stoical endurance for a doubtful reward and their suspicion that the game was not worth the candle.

The focus on the base and uncivilized align the lei de con with the sirventes, personal and social satires in which the evils of men and the world are joyfully castigated. Marcabru is the earliest and foremost practitioner of this genre, and Marcabru too begins with complaints about the relationship between the sexes.

The refined poems which reflect the courtly stance differ from the bawdy poems in both the poet's attitude towards the sexual experience and the object of his desire. In Guillaume's lei de con, love is equated with sex; it is a game, a test of skill, and his partners in the act more often than not adversaries to be outwitted. In the courtly

canso love is not a joke but an abiding condition which informs the lover's whole life. It defines and refines the lover, removing him from the state of the brute and drawing him towards greater things. "For I am aware," Guillaume says, "I do many things and my heart says / it is all nothing," for he does not possess his love. Ever hopeful, the lover persists in humility and obedience to all and perserveres in courtly speaking. This, in hope of winning his lady, makes him a better man.

In these poems the lady's power is tremendous. She cannot be outwitted, or deceived, or manipulated; nor is that the lover's goal. She is the cause of joy and virtue, health, wisdom, beauty and courtesy, but since so much power is invested in her, her absence, silence or anger can also cause their opposites: illness, stupidity, ugliness and churlishness. This dual influence and the poet's vacillation between anticipation and disappointment, bliss and pain, and the equally deceptive positions of hope and despair, are the essence of fin amors. As an illustration, Guillaume, showing a delicacy not to be imagined from the aforementioned bawdy poems, likens the love shared with his lady to the hawthorn which trembles all night in the rain and the frost but which basks the next day in the sun spreading through the leaves and branches.

Guillaume's courtly poems exclude the crude expressions of the lei de con, but the tone does vary within the same poem from the poetic and refined to the personal, colloquial and even earthy. In one poem the serious, almost sacramental ritual of homage is invoked and followed by the lover's denial of intoxication:

Q'ans mi rent a lieys e m liure,
 qu'en sa carta m pot escriure.
 E no m'en tengatz per yure
 s'ieu ma bona dompna am . . .

(Instead I become her man, deliver myself up to
 her
 and she can write my name down in her charter.
 Now don't go thinking I must be drunk
 if I love my virtuous lady . . .)⁵

Another poem calls on the customs of peace making and describes in slightly exalted terms the lovers' pledge. No sonner said than the poet confesses his sexual ambitions:

Enquer me membra d'un mati
 que nos fezem de guerra fi,
 e que m donet un don tan gran,

sa drudari' e son anel:
 enquer me lais Dieus viure tan
 c'aia mas manz soz zo mantel.

(It still reminds me of one morning
 when we made an end to war,
 and she gave me so great a gift,

her love and her ring.
 God let me live long enough
 to get my hands under her mantle.)⁶

The courtly canso and the lei de con are not poles apart but on the continuum of the erotic spectrum. The cansos are love songs in the widest, most inclusive sense but the bawdy poems are reductive and simplistic in their treatment of the erotic impulse. They both admit physical desire, but the bawdy song denies the emotional and spiritual enrichment that the canso celebrates. The canso, then, is the more varied genre, incorporating a greater range of feeling, experience and language.

Another kind of poem that Guillaume composes is the nonsense poem, sometimes called the fatrasie or coq-a-l'ane poem. It is full of paradox, contradiction and oxymoron. The vers de dreyt nien is a boast about the poet's ability to create a song of words but without subject matter:

Farai un vers de dreyt nien:
non er de mi ni d'autra gen,
non er d'amor ni de joven,
ni de ren au . . .

(I will make a vers of exactly nothing
there'll be nothing in it about me or anyone else,
nothing about love or youth
or anything else . . .)

The philosophical paradox of using referents without reference is in some way a parody of creation. The topic for the poem is the composing process itself. The egotistical poet raises himself above others who need subject matter and compares himself to God who creates ex nihilo.

The tone of this song is important. It is the tone of the virtuoso, boasting, playful and witty. The constraints imposed by the poet on himself not only become a theme of poetry but become a necessary element of troubadour style. Although some examples of this genre exist, more often the crazy song of contraries is incorporated into the canso and the sirventes to depict the madness of love and the follies of the world upside down. Raimbaut d'Orange among others uses the contradictions and paradoxes of the genre to express the rival tug of opposing emotions caused by love. The madness of love, the inversions of perceptions it causes, the ambivalent nature of the lovers' desires and emotions are juggled with astonishing skill and quickness. Other poets, such as Peire Cardenal, adapt the contradictory style of the crazy song to the sirventes and demonstrate the follies of lovers, greedy clerks and miserly princes, which subvert the natural and social order. The virtuoso tone and style of the vers de dreyt nien become part of the canso and the sirventes because the paradoxical style is compatible with the subject matter.

Almost every genre that will develop in the next two hundred years in the rich and varied field of Old Provençal verse has its seeds in one of Guillaume's eleven poems. The troubadours that follow him, however, seem intent on

effacing the distinctions that Guillaume carefully observed. The lei de con was frequently signalled at the very start by an address to his companions, as if to warn the audience of the bawdy double-entendres and occasionally crude vocabulary to follow. In contrast his cansos are consistently polite and euphemistic, although not the purely spiritual exercises that some critics would have us believe. The nonsense song and the elegiac tone of the crusading song are absorbed into the sirventes or the canso. By the time we come to Arnaut Daniel we have a great deal of difficulty placing his poems in any category but ludicrously hyphenated ones like the ones Polonious lists to Hamlet. Amors e jois e liocs e temps, for example, is ostensibly a canso because it is concerned with love, but it is filled with nonsense, paradox and some highly suggestive double-entendre.

Between Guillaume de Poitiers and Arnaut Daniel, extremes from a historical and a stylistic point of view, are a number of unique and excellent poets, but none less extreme and more representative than Bernard de Ventadorn. Although technically as proficient as any troubadour, Bernard is more restrained and more accessible than the practitioners of the trobar ric and the trobar clus. His oeuvre consists exclusively of love songs and a few debate poems. The large number of manuscripts and songs

of his to survive attest to his popularity. His apocryphal biography asserts that Eleanor of Aquitaine was one of his patrons and that he spent time at her court in England.

One of Bernard's best known poems is Tant ai mo cor ple de joya, a six stanza canso with an envoy. If we examine the poem in light of Dante's analysis in De Vulgaria Eloquentia, we find that the stanza divides at the eighth line. The frons, the first half of the stanza divides into two pedes (abab abab) of alternating eight and six syllable lines. The four-line coda has six syllables in the first, second and fourth lines and seven in the third and rhymes cccb. This is a fairly unremarkable stanza pattern. What becomes interesting is how the last rhyme of the first stanza becomes the first rhyme of the second stanza and so on throughout the poem. The rhyme scheme looks then like this:

stanza I	a b a b a b a b c c c b
stanza II	b d b d b d b d c c c d
stanza III	d e d e d e d e c c c e etc.

This subtle intricacy of rhyming from one stanza to the other is more effective aurally than visually. This is typical of much troubadour poetry. In fact, the interlocking rhyme scheme may be an essential component of the poem's unity, for beyond the first two stanzas, which are very developed and explicit for Bernard's style, there is

little but the rhyme to keep the stanzas together and in order.

In the first stanza the joyful poet marvels how his happiness transforms nature. His good fortune increases with the bad weather and so he sings.

Tan ai al cor d'amor,
de joi e de doussor,
per que l gels me sembla flor
e la neus verdura.

(I have such love in my heart,
such joy, such sweetness,
the ice I see is a flower,
the snow, green things that grow.)

In the second stanza he fancifully imagines himself so well protected by love that he can walk around undressed in the cold.

Anar posc ses vestidura
nutz en ma chamiza,
car fin'amors m'asegura
de la freja biza.

(I could walk around undressed
naked in my shirt,
for perfect love protects me
from the cold north wind.)⁸

The beauty of the natural images of a colorful, flowery winter is modified by the ludicrous literal suggestion of the lover's going out into the cold, naked but for his shirt. It is one thing for the lover not to notice the intemperate weather; it is another for him to go out in

it undressed. Yet it is the ridiculous aspect that convinces us of the intensity of his feelings. Only his desire to behave in a manner appropriate and acceptable to the lady and the court inhibits him. His behavior is guarded because he expects to be rewarded for it, and for this reward he would not even exchange Pisa. Yet the very next line does not show us his virtue being rewarded but his being kept at a distance by his lady. Even removed from her, his heart feels bliss in anticipation. In the previous stanza the lover said he would not exchange his lady for all Pisa, but now it appears that she is not his to exchange. In the fourth stanza he says he gets good hope from her, but that is all he gets since she keeps him balancing like a ship on a wave. Sad thoughts pull him down and he is sleepless and more sorrowful than Tristan the lover. Yet he persists in loving. He wishes to be a swallow to fly to her for he can no longer endure the separation. But finally in the last stanza he is never separated from her, for no matter what he does, whenever he hears any talk of his lady his face lights up and he wants to laugh. His tears over this love are sweet to him. The more we learn about the relationship, the less we see for the lover to be joyous about. Yet this is the theme of the poem: just as he perceives the winter to be like spring, so he construes his estrangement from his beloved, a metaphorical

winter, to be a cause for joy. In this strange and lovely poem one of the cornerstones of the fin amors ethic becomes apparent. It is not the lady's favor which influences the lover's behavior; it is his belief and hope which transform his life and make him a better man. The force of his love is presented so vividly in the first two stanzas of this poem that as the poem proceeds, we are surprised to learn how imaginary his love is; how he wrings joy out of her absence and her apparent indifference. He has gotten nothing from her but still he behaves with honor and discretion. The power of the imagination is the essential ingredient of this love. It not only prevents foolish and inappropriate behavior, but also produces inspired and beautiful poems.

Some features of this poem are characteristic of the troubadour lyric. The bi-partite stanza construction, the alternation of long and short syllabic lines, and the complex rhyme scheme--only three rhymes to a ten line stanza and two of these rhymes repeated in the following stanza--are formal characteristics found frequently in the Provençal poem.

The theme of the poem, the joys of love, however minimal and illusory they may seem to be to the observer, and love's power to transfigure experience are the main message of the canso. Even the sorrows and sufferings of

the lover are a source of pride and delight. This obstinate, perhaps foolhardy happiness is the reason for loving and living. It makes the lover behave wisely, endure many sorrows and keeps him cheerful.

This poem like most troubadour poems, surprises us. First there is the revelation that the lover sees leaves and flowers where there is frost and snow. This we may attribute to a poetic temperament. But in the second stanza we find that the lover really means it: he is ready to walk around unprepared for the weather. There is in addition the contrast in tone when the lover talks about the frost and flowers and when he talks about going out in only his shirt. Such a shift from the sublime to the ridiculous is common in troubadour poetry. It may perhaps even be considered necessary. The poet, to convince us of his veracity, may have to descend to the prosaic. This may account for the very specific nature of troubadour poems. When the lover uses the non-exchangeability topos, he is very specific, not wishing to exchange his lady for Pisa, rather than for great wealth or a kingdom. This element of the specific gives credence to the lover's more outrageous claims and when we are tempted to think his words just another formula, the unexpected specific detail surprises us into acceptance. The greatest element of surprise is in the movement or argument of the

poem. We learn to our astonishment that the lover's ecstasy has its basis in her absence or inaccessibility; and far from being loved in return, he is deliberately kept in suspense; and although he is joyful enough to go out in the cold naked, at night he is so troubled that he cannot sleep and he suffers more than Tristan did for Isolt. But his desires make him forget his grief. The pirouette of emotional states is standard in troubadour poetry, but still, the follies of a lover never cease to amaze.

Another interesting poem of Bernard's is Bel m'es can eu vei la brolha. A poem of five eight-line stanzas and a four-line tornada, it alternates seven-syllable lines with eight. The first two stanzas use the same rhymes: -olha and -olh; the third and fourth have -ona and -o; the fifth stanza and the tornada share the rhymes -ira and -ir. The rhyme scheme is ababbaab. This relatively straightforward scheme is complicated by the rhetorical figure of adnominatio: each "a" rhyme is paired with "b" rhyme that follows it and is actually a form of the same word. Thus in the first pedes the "a" rhyme brolha is paired with the "b" rhyme brolh; in the second pedes, folha and folh are paired. The a and b rhymes differ at the end of the word but are identical in sound and meaning at the root of the word and so form non-rhyming but

consonant, assonant and semantic couplets. Furthermore the last rhyme in the stanza must be included in the first half of the first line of the next stanza. Were we to diagram this pattern with capital letters to represent the roots of the words, it might look like this:

Wa Wb Xa Xb Yb Ya Za Zb Zb, Sa Sb Ta Tb . . .

The repetition of these closely associated sounds and words produces a hypnotic effect something like that produced by the sestina.

The poem is typical of many of Bernard's in that it opens with a reverdie. More than half of his poems have a Natureingang. The trees, the leaves, the woods and the singing nightingale are the background for his enjoyment of his suffering:

e platz me qued eu m'en dolha
ab sol qued amar me volha
cela qu'eu dezir e volh.

(and it is pleasing to me that I suffer
on condition that she wants to love me
whom I desire and want.)⁹

The stanza ends with the idea of reciprocity and the following stanza continues it. The lady should not be proud, since he is not proud towards her and she should welcome him as he welcomes her. She should accept what he accepts, that is, her love. The reciprocal pattern continues but indicates the lack of similar feeling between

them: she reproaches him for things for which he should reproach her and she is wrong but he pardons her. All her evils are, to her lover, good. The inequality between the lover and the beloved is stressed in this stanza: her prisoner, who can least afford generosity, does not reproach but pardons her. The lover announces himself content with the evils his mistress heaps upon him in the fourth stanza, but he does request a gift: that his mouth will breakfast with a kiss. The simplicity of breakfast suggests an intimacy and banality absent from many of these poems. It brings the frantic passions of the poets closer to our experience. But even this meager request is too great a reward. We see how she overturns his reason: a kiss is too great a reward from the one who so generously rewards. Her generosity, then, has decided limits. Although his reason is overturned, his heart is not. He desires her, he sighs for her, and he contemplates her beauty; she does not sigh and what she contemplates is his death. The poet-lover seeks reciprocity and is met with adversity at every turn. Although he too is led by his unhappiness to contemplate his death, he is certain he will succeed in love by endurance.

Despite the diversity of the troubadours, their different interests, their various temperaments, their broad social and geographic backgrounds, troubadour

poetry from the beginning of the twelfth century to the beginning of the fourteenth is a very unified body of work which may be characterized by certain formal, thematic and stylistic features.

1. All troubadour poetry shares certain formal characteristics and differs strongly from earlier poetry in the Germanic languages as well as in Latin and Greek. Alliteration unified the Germanic unit of verse, the line or half-line. The classical unit of verse is even shorter: the foot and its acceptable metrical substitutions are the basis of longer narrative poems; lyric poems have more elaborate patterns of feet and the line becomes a unit. Stanzas are formed by regularly interspersing shorter lines with long ones. In troubadour poetry, however, pattern is formed with the stanza or strophe. Line lengths follow a fixed count of syllables, but the principal binding together of words is done by the rhyming from one line to another of words at the end of the line. Stanzas may have lines of uniform length or varying combinations of long and short lines; patterns of rhyme may vary: they may be alternating (abab), kissing (abba), or spaced even further apart. Indeed, later troubadour poetry often uses identical rhyme between stanzas: that is, the very same words or sounds are repeated at the ends of lines in every stanza. The sestina, brainchild of Arnaut Daniel, functions on this principle. Sometimes, too, the types of stanza

will vary; stanzas based on different rhyme schemes and line lengths will alternate. By the fourteenth century this habit is widely enough practiced for Eustache Deschamps to define the chanson royal as a poem of 12 stanzas of six different types of stanza, each type repeated once.

2. This poetry is remarkably self-conscious. It is aware of its characteristics and tradition and refers to them. It does not take them for granted but capitalizes on the accumulated body of literature, to such an extent that, as we have seen, we can take the work of the earliest troubadour and use it as a paradigm for all later works--the love songs, the comic verse, the boasts, the mad songs, the meditative renunciation. Not only is Guillaume's work copied, but Marcabru's song of the starling (Estornel, cueill ta volada) is paralleled by Peire d'Alvernhes' nightingale song (Rossinhol, el seu repaire). The contrarities which Guillaume exploits become a standard in later poetry appearing in sirventes and love songs as a variation of the world upside-down motif. The popular jeux parti or tenso, poetic debates, show that each poet is very familiar with the work written by his opponent.

Although troubadour poetry is very conscious of its own tradition, it is not learned poetry. Only sparing allusions to classical mythology are made. Narcissus and Pygmalion are occasionally found in lyric poetry and the

God of Love is almost omnipresent, but none of the other Olympian dieties appear, nor do the epic heroes. No retelling of myths or exploration of their significance is attempted. Some references are made to popular medieval tales: Breton minstrels apparently circulated the matiere de Bretagne, for several love-lorn poets compare themselves to Tristan or allude to Arthur's court or some hero of medieval romance. Despite the fact that these poets must have been literate in Latin and known some of the most popular classical authors from school texts, they do not use the sententious maxims found in classical and Christian Latin works. If a poem seems to require a higher level of generalization, it will most likely be attained by recourse to a popular expression or proverb such as: "A fool cuts the branch with which he is beaten," or "to hope like a Breton." The sirventes may have a wealth of topical allusions, but the love lyrics are far more private and discreet.

3. Troubadour poetry is essentially lyric in nature. It expresses the emotions of the moment and the poet addresses us directly; sometimes like Guillaume, beginning in a formal apostrophe to comrades or companions, other times letting us overhear the internal dialogue occasioned by love. It is rare that the poet will create or imply a narrative situation. There are virtually no circumstances

around these poems. The poets speak only in a here and now, an eternal present, unlike the poets of Old English whose works are laden with the tragic past and the bleak future. There are a few exceptions. Marcabru's song of the starling reveals through a narrative the self-deception practiced by lovers and Peire Cardinal's sirventes on the rain of covetousness describes an imaginary situation which too closely mirrors the real world. The alba by Giraut de Bornelh (Reis glorios, verais lums e clartatz) employs the persona of the lover's friend keeping guard for the lovers, but usually the poet speaks in the first person before an audience to whom he confides his thoughts and feelings of the moment as they occur. Paul Zumthor has described medieval lyric as bound by the parameters of ego-hic-nunc.¹⁰ This is a poetry of immediacy and specificity. The audience is never left to its own devices: there are minimal allusions for the audience to recognize, few generalizations for the audience to test; there are no extended classical similies which would require the reader to examine aspects of similarity and difference, but metaphor is common, as are similes of noun properties.

4. Although lyric, direct and immediate and concerned with the basic eternal human emotions, troubadour poetry is not simple. It has an element of surprise created by

the extremely artful exploration of a complex landscape of emotions seen from varying perspectives. The ecstasy of the lover is not unmixed: there are elements of fear, anger, joy and sorrow mingled and these are expressed in the poems. The lover's desire in the refined poems may not focus exclusively on sexual intercourse, but the poet does not fail to remind us that the love song is on a continuum with the lei de con, not in an entirely separate sphere. As exalted as the lover's feelings may be, they are countered by the earthly pull of human flesh and human expression. This creates a contradictory surprise in these poems which delights the audience. Raimbaut de Vaquieras speaks of a love that "kept me in more joy than water keeps a fish." The sublime and the homely are well wedded in most troubadour poetry. This is most clearly seen in the virtuoso styles of Raimbaut de Vaquieras and Raimbaut d'Orange and Arnaut Daniel. In "L'aur amara" Daniel mixes high and low styles, the sublime with the outrageous. "The joy of enjoying another" exhibits a learned punning technique dear to the more academic Latin poets and it is combined with the homely quotidian comparison "is not worth an apple," so homely and so current as to indicate its true worthlessness. Arnaut also says how completely he is in his lady's service: instead of more abstract and cliché terms as body and soul, with my whole

being, he says with stubborn specificity "from my foot to my hair," naming the ultimate extremities of his physical being and including everything between. It is a combination of the obstinate literal and the figurative imagination. In the same poem he expresses how much he desires his love and the comparison is "more than the monks of Doma God." Again the specificity of this allusion and the all-encompassing aspect of the emotion highlight each other as does the contrast and comparison between sacred and profane devotion. Even in a less flashy writer such as Bernard de Ventadorn, the vacillation of emotion creates a similar effect of surprise:

E doncs, ela, cal tort m'i fai,
 qu'ilh no sap per que s'esdeve?
 Deus! devinar degra oimai
 qu'eu mor per s'amor! Et a que?
 Al meu nesci chaptenemen
 et a la gran vilania
 per que lh lenga m'entrelia
 can eu denan leis me pregen.

(And then what wrong does she do me
 if she is ignorant of what happens to me?
 God! She should have been able to guess already
 that I'm dying for her love. By what signs?
 By my stupid behavior,
 a rustic heaviness
 which paralyzes my tongue
 when I find myself in her presence.)¹¹

The poet begins by excusing the lady's behavior on account of her ignorance of his feelings. Then, by a catalog of obvious symptoms, he both castigates himself and returns to blame the lady for her obliviousness.

5. Without manufacturing an ex post facto creed for all troubadours, all troubadour poetry focuses on the same themes. With rare exceptions, Foulquet de Marseille and Peire Cardenal, in particular, troubadour poetry is resolutely secular. It is concerned with man and his relationship to others. The love songs are concerned with the relationship between a man and a woman. Although they focus on the internal conflicting emotions of the lover, the love affair has its social consequences: on the positive side the affair encourages the practice of Christian virtues, such as humility, obedience, charity as well as the social graces of courtesy, valor, prowess and mezura or discretion; on the negative, love brings about that lack of measure and its consequent folly which result in churlishness, lack of eloquence, despair. A worthy love ennobles and has beneficial social and spiritual consequences. A base love corrupts both man through his suffering and lack of reward, and society by the bad behavior caused by his misery. The sirventes, particularly in Marcabru, focuses on this aspect, the negative social consequences of a lack of valor and the debasement of society.

In this vaguely and loosely formulated system, the greatest good the poet aspires to--the love of his lady--is earthly and temporal (even more, it is perpetually evanescent). This good is the source of all other

virtues. No higher good exists. God, being omnipotent, is often called on as an ally in the struggle for the lady's affections. But the whole Christian system of virtues, chastity in particular, an other world and an after-life, has no connection with our troubadours' scheme (except in some superficial verbal play about being admitted to paradise, for example). Their problems, solutions, virtues and rewards are all earthly ones and exist on a separate plane parallel to the Christian cosmos, but not overlapping or intersecting it. The Christian religion's system of morals and values never impinges on the troubadours' world of secular love.

Notes

¹ A. R. Nykl, Hispano-Arabic poetry and its relations with the Old Provençal troubadours (Baltimore: Furst, 1946).

² Peter Dronke, Medieval Latin and the Rise of European Love Lyric, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), vol. 1, Chapter 4, "Medieval Latin Learned Verse," pp. 163-263.

³ Dronke, vol. 1, Chapter 1, "The Unity of Popular and Courtly Love Lyric," pp. 1-56.

⁴ Moshe Lazar, ed., Bernard de Ventadour: Chansons d'Amour (Paris: Klincksieck, 1966), pp. 17-46.

⁵ Frederick Goldin, Lyrics of the Troubadours and Trouvers (Garden City, NY: Anchor-Doubleday, 1973), pp. 40-41.

⁶ Goldin, pp. 46-47.

⁷ Goldin, pp. 24-25.

⁸ Goldin, pp. 128-129, 130-131.

⁹ Lazar, p. 212, my translation.

¹⁰ Paul Zumthor, Essai de poétique médiévale (Paris: Seuil, 1972), Chapter 5, "Le grand chant courtois," pp. 189-243.

¹¹ Lazar, p. 218, my translation.

II. The Middle English Love Lyric

If the shift from the Latin poem to the Provençal lyric was dramatic, the change from the Old English poem to the Middle English lyric was radical. A glance at The Wife's Lament from the tenth century Exeter Book demonstrates the extent and nature of the transformation. Although the poem is perhaps closer in content to the Middle English lyric than any other Old English poem, it exhibits the same prosodic and stylistic features as the other more typically heroic Anglo-Saxon poems.

In the poem the female speaker bemoans her exile from home and her separation from her beloved. This separation was brought about in part by her husband's departure on some foreign adventure and in part by the machinations of his kinsmen. Their accusations against her were successful in alienating the husband and wife who once boasted that death alone should separate them.

Ful oft wit beotedan
þæt unc ne dedælde nemne deadana
owiht elles. Eft is þæt onhworfen;
is nu fornumen swa hit no wære,
freondscipe uncer. Sceal ic feor ge neah
mines felaleofan fæhdu dreogan. . .

Frynd sind on eorþan
 leofe lifgende leger weardiad
 þonne ic on uhtan ana gonge
 under actreo geond þas eordscrafu,
 þær ic sittan mot sumorlangne dæg
 þær ic wepan mæg mine wræcsipas,
 earfoða fela. Forþon ic æfre ne mæg
 þære modceare minre gerestan,
 ne ealles þæs longapes þe mec on þissum life
 begeat.

(We had vowed full many a time
 that nothing should divide us but death alone
 and nothing else. All that has changed;
 it is now as though it had never been,
 our friendship. And far or near forever
 I shall suffer the feud of my much beloved.

Lovers are on earth,
 Lovers living that lie in their beds
 while I alone at dawn go
 Under the oak tree around this earthly cave,
 there I must sit this summer-long day.
 There I may weep my wretchedness,
 my many hardships. For I never may
 put to rest my careworn heart,
 nor all the longing that this life has brought
 me.)¹

Exiled to an earth cave under an oak in the forest,
 the wife compares her fate to that of lovers who live their
 love, lying together in their bed all night. Her lonli-
 ness, woe and anguish in her thorny den are generalized into
 part of the human condition and she imagines her beloved
 in a similar plight, in a frozen cranny in a cliff,
 regretting, as she does, a happier home.

The theme is not alien to Middle English literature:
 longing for an absent or inaccessible love. The separa-
 tion caused by slanderers, losengiers (in the Old English
 poem, the kinsmen) is a commonplace of troubadour poetry

and finds its way into Middle English lyrics and romances. (Tristan and Isolde exiled in the forest and loving until death are very vividly brought to mind by the Old English poem.) Although this poem does not pretend to be a lyric, it is typical of Old English literature to take a situation which lends itself to lyric treatment and relate it in a narrative mode. The speaker recounts the origin of her sorrow chronologically, stresses the contrast between what she and her lover had hoped for and what fate allotted them, describes her present situation, both physical and psychological, and generalizes and projects her feelings onto her beloved. The poem is very time-oriented and like most Old English poetry looks back on a past of golden opportunity and forward into a bleak future. The landscape fits the mood of the poem; oppressive, rendering the speaker powerless. This tendency towards narrative and philosophical speculation dominate this lament and the tone, consistent throughout the poem, is the familiar Anglo-Saxon one of nostalgia, resignation, and stoic endurance.

The poetic form is of course the four-stress line, of a varying number of syllables, unified by stress alliteration on both halves of the caesura. As is frequent in Old English poetry, narrative impulse is continually

halted by variation, the repetition of an idea in the next line or half-line. The hallmarks of classical Old English verse are present in this poem, and although less heroic in sentiment than most Old English poetry, it is typical in form of the Old English poem.

If we briefly compare The Wife's Lament with three of the earliest secular lyrics extant in Middle English, we cannot but be struck by the change. The poems, with the exception of the Cuckoo Song, are not joyful ones but the Anglo-Saxon penchant for melancholy despair is absent. In the Cuckoo Song and Foweles in the frith the focus is not on the bleak, stormy cold season but on the delightful advent of spring.

Sing cuccu nu! Sing cuccu!
 Sing cuccu! Sing cuccu nu!
 Sumer is icumen in,
 Lhude sing cuccu;
 Groweth sed and bloweth med
 And springth the wde nu.
 Sing cuccu!
 Awe bleteth after lomb,
 Lhouth after calve cu;
 Bulluc sterteth, bucke verteth;
 Murie sing cuccu.
 Cuccu, cuccu,
 Wel singes thu, cuccu,
 Ne swik thu naver nu.²

While the season brings only joy in the cuckoo song, the mating season disturbs the lonely speaker of Foweles in the frith.

Foweles in the frith,
 The fisses in the flod.
 And I mon waxe wod;
 Mulch sorwe I walke with
 For best of bon and blod.³

The speaker in Mirie it is while sumer ilast delights in the summer, but like the Old English speakers anticipates the grim, dark winter, season of sorrow.

Mirie it is while sumer ilast
 With fugheles song;
 Oc nu necheth windes blast
 And weder strong.
 Ei, ei, what this nicht is long!
 And ich with wel michel wrong
 Soregh and murne and fast.⁴

In addition to the obvious differences in focus is the prosodic change. The lines are now based on syllable count as well as stress. The lines are shorter, syllabic and end-line rhyme forms the poem. The line lengths vary according to a fixed pattern. The movement of the poem, caused by rapid alteration of stressed with unstressed syllables, recalls a dance rather than the stately tread of the Old English poems. Rhyme also contributes to the energetic movement of these lyrics by setting up the expectation of closure, which is fulfilled and then repeats itself. The presence of a refrain, common to many Middle English lyrics, as in the Cuckoo Song, accentuates this rhythmic round. Alliteration, variation and kenning, distinguishing features of Old English

poetry are sometimes exploited, but are frequently just a chance occurrence in the Middle English lyric.

Obviously the installation of a Norman aristocracy on the island imposed a new linguistic and cultural order on the country. But the influences on English life and literature were not only Norman. H. J. Chaytor and Jean Audiau in 1919 and 1927 respectively decided to examine the relationship between the troubadours of Provence, the primary source of vernacular European poetry, and the anonymous poets of thirteenth and fourteenth century England.⁵ The second edition of Audiau's book (the first was a shorter published thesis) contains much of the material in Chaytor's book but extends the study by including a chapter on the troubadours' influence on Chaucer and Gower. As Chaytor's book is the more scholarly and critical of the two, we shall concern ourselves with that.

Chaytor first describes the conditions under which the English lyric was evolved. He tells how the native gleemen, the professional entertainers before the Norman conquest, were displaced by Norman entertainers. Examples from the early English chronicles and romances show us minstrels entering enemy camps where none other can, and prove that minstrels had an established social role and were welcomed wherever they went. But after

1150 we hear of jongleurs and trouvères in England and by the end of the thirteenth century French is the fashionable language, not merely of the transplanted aristocracy, but used by merchants and artisans as well. It is the language of instruction in the grammar schools: Latin lessons were translated into French rather than English. However, the tide turns and by the middle of the fourteenth century English has become established as the language of the law courts and schools. Letters were written in English, as they had not been before, and in 1363 the Chancellor opened Parliament with a speech in English. Chaytor quotes a couplet from a Cambridge University Library manuscript (Ff lv, 9) which summarizes the situation in England in the fourteenth century: "But lered and lewed, olde and yonge, all understonden Englyssh tongue."⁶

Within two hundred years, then, between 1150 and 1350, we see a society become bilingual, with the first effort that of the conquered English to learn the language of the conquerors; and then a reversal, with the formerly French aristocrats identifying themselves more and more with their interests and holdings in England and embracing the English language to distinguish and dissociate themselves from their political enemy during the Hundred Years' War--the French.

The circumstances are more complex than a simple turnabout, for there were two stages of French influence felt in England. The first was that of the Angevin French kings: Henry II, Richard and John (1154-1216). This was the period of Anglo-Norman literature which had, as Chaytor remarks, the disability of being "a transplanted language with little or no possibility of organic growth and decay was rapid. Writers had no environment by which they could, consciously or unconsciously, correct their speech," and furthermore suffered from the attempts of Englishmen "to combine the Teutonic stress system with Romance syllabic system of meter."⁷ Despite the presence in the court of Eleanor of Aquitaine and Bernard of Ventadorn, the Anglo-Norman poetry was highly dependent on the models of the French trouvères.

A second wave of influence was felt beginning in the reign of Henry III (1216-1272). His wife, Eleanor of Provence, brought with her many followers. Henry's mother, Isabelle of Angouleme married Hugo de la Marche and asked Henry's help in recovering Gascony from the French crown. The failure of that attempt resulted in an influx of dispossessed Gascons into England. Also the loss of ports on the English Channel meant the commerce of goods and ideas would pass into England through Bordeaux and the strong steady trade in English wool for Bordeaux wine

assured continuous communication and cultural exchange.

The most solid evidence of literary influence is in the London Guildhall records (II part 1, 216 rolls series) where the regulations for the festival of the puy are to be found. The puy was a poetical tournament in which poets submitted to judgment poems in fixed forms on a given theme. Perhaps originally these themes were secular and erotic, but in the north of France the puy was organized by religious confraternities of the bourgeoisie, and combined guild activities with church celebrations and aesthetic pretensions. Solidarity, sanctity and culture shifted the themes from the praise of a lady to the praise of Our Lady or a patron saint. The effect of this continental import is summarized by Chaytor:

Great importance was attached by the Puy to poetical form, and the poems crowned by them were for the most part variations on a theme already worn threadbare by the troubadours. Probably the productions of the London Puy, if any had survived, would be found similar in character to those of the continental fraternities. It has, however, its importance in the history of the English lyric as one of the channels by which a knowledge of continental stanza form was brought to this country.

Numerous instances of political and poetical contacts between England and the continent are supplied in the second chapter of Chaytor's book and demonstrates that England, although insular, was perhaps during this period

less isolated from the events and the culture of the continent than at any other time in its history.

Both Chaytor and Audiau catalog at some length the themes and images that occur in both the troubadour and Middle English poetry of the period. These are for the most part the commonplaces of the genre. Sighs, tears, sleeplessness and pallor are the symptoms of the lover's malady. The lady is the foe who wounds as well as the physician who can heal with a kiss. The lover wishes he were a bird so he might fly to her and be beside her, her proximity equated with being in heaven. While admitting that "many of them are the obvious commonplaces which would occur to any lyric poet," Chaytor concludes that:

. . . when we consider the close political and commercial relations existing between England and Southern France, it is reasonable to assume that some influence was directly exerted by Provençal lyric poetry; and however trivial many points of comparison may appear, it must be admitted that their cumulative effect is considerable.

Chaytor also provides an appendix in which he lists rhyme schemes identical in Middle English and Old Provençal and the texts of Anglo-Norman poems which resemble closely Provençal models.

Unfortunately, the comparisons made by both Chaytor and Audiau between Old Provençal and Middle English

lyrics rest on the simplest understanding of form and content for they rely on rhyme scheme and theme exclusively. We know that England imported its poetic forms from the continent, either directly from the troubadours or through the trouvères; and we know that the matter of medieval love poetry rapidly became a commonplace, not to say a cliché, throughout Europe. If Provençal poetry was influential in England, there ought to be other elements of troubadour style which appear in the Middle English lyric. There might, too, be differences, traits, perhaps, of the native English tradition which English poets were not willing to abandon.

Through irate references and sly marginal quotation by the clerks we know that secular songs, often accompanied by dancing, were sung in England as early as the twelfth century. In the thirteenth century many secular poems were surreptitiously scribbled amonst or beside more edifying works, but the earliest collection of Middle English secular lyrics to survive the ravages of time and censorship is preserved in Harleian MS. 2253, an early fourteenth century manuscript (ca. 1310-1325). Amidst Latin and Anglo-Norman religious prose and verse, saints' lives, King Horn and the Sayings of Saint Bernard, is a group of English poems: political songs, comic poems and love lyrics. It has long been a source of wonder to critics

that these early poems could show such excellence, but they have all too often attributed the success of these poems to the sincerity and naivete of the Middle English poets instead of to their technique learned in the school of Provence and their own tasteful artistry. If we examine several of these Middle English poems we will see how much they own to their continental heritage.

When þe nyhtegale singes is a good poem to examine first. The themes are all typically those of courtly love. The poem begins with a reverdie and the stereotypical nightingale in the burgeoning April woods. Love is a wound to the heart and the long suffering and great sighing of the lover is to no avail. Nevertheless, the lover pledges fidelity and requests a kiss that will remedy his affliction, or some sign or token of love. The sickly complexioned lover is a prisoner, bound to the fairest in all the land.

When þe nyhtegale singes þe wodes waxen grene;
lef ant gras ant blosme springes in Aueryl, y wene,
ant loue is to myn herte gon wiþ one spere so kene,
nyht ant day my blod hit drynkes; myn herte
deþ me tene.

Ich haue loued al þis 3er, þat y may loue namore;
ich haue siked moni syk, lemmon, for þin ore.
Me nis loue neuer þe ner, ant þat me rewep sore.
Sute lemmon, þench on me, ich haue loued þe
3ore.

Sute lemmon, y preye þe of loue one speche;
while y lyue in world so wyde oper nulle y seche.
Wiþ þy loue, my sute leof, mi blis þou mihtes
eche;
a sute cos of þy mouþ mihte be by leche.¹⁰

These are the commonplaces of the troubadour lyric. Typical are the very small requests the lover makes in comparison to his so great suffering. Chaytor and Audiau both refer to this poem in their works.

The form of the poem is interesting. It is sometimes printed as a long line poem of 14 syllables per line rhyming aaaa. A tendency towards alliteration, particularly in stock expressions such as "neuer the ner," "world so wyde," but also in line four where the "d" occurs in stressed syllables twice before the caesura and once after, recalls the Old English poetry. The first stanza has a sprightly movement to it with lines of anapests, trochees and iambs. Subsequent lines are basically trochaic heptameter with some irregularities but many of them may, with effort, be read as four stress lines. However, the strong caesura plus sporadic internal rhyme tempt us to divide the long line into lines of eight and six syllables rhyming abcbabdb. The form and content of the poem indicate continental influence of a very superficial sort.

The courtly love motifs so diligently recorded here continually strike a mournful note. The lover suffers and pleads throughout with the consistency and tone of a patient in a dental chair. This is not to say that When þe nyhtegale singes is a poor or unsuccessful poem. It

is a convincing portrait of a victim of a fatal passion but more like the nineteenth century romantic malady than the medieval affliction. It is very unlike the internal debates of the volatile troubadours who suffer, complain, exult in their misery and finish the stanza with praise of the lady. The suffering is gratuitous in this poem. In the troubadour lyric the pain of love is to be born because the love or desire or aspiration is itself ennobling; the lover is better for having desired the object, not for attaining it. In this poem there appears to be no recognition that the beloved is the source of his worth and valor as well as of his bliss or pain. The transcendent aspect of fin amors is missing here and without it courtly love is a mere exercise in masochism. The monotonicity of the poem, the absence of paradox, as well as the metrical and stanzaic indecisiveness suggest that the poem pays lip service to a creed it does not fully understand and imitates a style it has not really appreciated.

Wip longyng y am lad is another of the favorite poems from the Harley collection. This melodious litany of a lover's grief contains all the commonplace material of the nightingale poem. The longing, madness and injury caused by love are first enumerated. However, despite his misery, the lover is seldom sad to see the source of

his suffering. He alternately asks for her pity, blames his unhappiness on her and begs her to cure him.

Wip longyng y am lad,
 on molde y waxe mad,
 a maide marreþ me;
 y grede, y grone, vnglad,
 for selden y am sad
 þat semly forte se.
 Leuedi, þou rewe me!
 To rouþe þou hauest me rad.
 Be bote of þat y bad;
 my lyf is long on þe.¹¹

In the second stanza he wishes to be released from the bond which has brought him to woe. He asks for peace and a message from her so that he might have some repose. And again, contradictorily, at the same time that he seeks his freedom, he pledges to love, despite the enmity of men. His steadfast, loyal attitude continues into the next stanza where the strength and nobility of his love is expressed; he repeats his request for pity and guidance and a reprieve from a too early death. Lest this be thought an exercise of poetic license to hyperbolize, he begs her to believe his lay. He has plighted his troth and will keep his word so long as he lives. As in so many other complaints the grievances of the beginning are forgotten by the end and the poem finishes in a paean of praise of the lady.

Lylie-whyte hue is,
 hire rode so rose on rys,
 þat reueþ me mi rest;

wymmon war ant wys,
 of prude hue bereþ þe pris,
 burde on of þe best.
 þis wommon woneþ by west,
 brihtest vnder bys;
 heuene y tolde al his
 þat o nyht were hire gest.

She is no longer characterized as cruel and death dealing, but as wary, wise and proud. Her behavior, however much it might have been lamented earlier, is vindicated, justified. She is one of the best and the fairest under linen. Whether the linen may be her smock or her bed-clothes is not certain, but that the poet intends us to understand an intimate physical relationship is emphasized by the last line.

Typical of the troubadour lyric is the abrupt reversal of the lover's point of view, within the stanza as well as within the entire poem: from the catalog of maladies to the plea for mercy; from the request for release to the pledge of love; from the encomium of some of her sternest virtues--wariness, wisdom and pride--to the clearly yet politely expressed carnal desire. The exposition of these heterodox desires is typically troubadour as is the imagery of health, wounding, remedy, death, feudal servitude, war, peace, and the equation of God's grace with the lady's, or of heavenly and earthly reward.

Not only the content of the poem, but formal aspects of the poem follow the practice of the troubadours.

Chaytor analyzed the first stanza of the poem according to the rules for stanza construction recorded by Dante in De Vulgaria Eloquentia. These rules reflect the musical origins of these lyrics with a setting of either continuous melody without repetition or with a repeated melody. The stanza of a lyric is divided into two parts, the point of division being called the diesis or volta. The first part of the stanza may be divided into two. With our present example Chaytor finds in the first part of six lines, two pedes of three lines rhyming aab. After the diesis or volta we arrive at the syrma or coda, which may also be divided into two parts called versus. Our poem, as Chaytor analyzes it, has a simple unrepeated coda, the last four lines rhyming baab. After cataloging the commonplace ideas found in both the Old Provençal and Middle English lyric, Chaytor says that "The chief points of technique in which the imitation (of Old Provençal) is apparent are the construction of the stanza and the distribution of its rimes."¹²

A regular feature of this poem is alliteration. Almost every line has two alliterating words. The alliteration unifies each line and calls attention to the end stopped quality of this poem. Each line of iambic trimeter, short though it may be, is a syntactic unit, either a clause or a noun phrase. The short line and frequent

syntactic closure keep the lines moving along. The poem is a series of brief personal statements, not greatly elaborated on. In fact, they are rather laconic and their brevity is compensated for by their large number. These unadorned statements recall some of the troubadours' poems, full of sentiment, but devoid of imagery. The one memorable image, "my rest is wip þe roe" refers to the proverbial restlessness of the animal. The other metaphor in the poem "to rouþe þou hauest me rad" and "hire rode so rose on rys þat reuþ me mi rest" all alliterate with the "r" and express the same quality of restlessness, either the motion towards sorrow or the perpetual motion of the restless lover.

This is a poem peculiarly unadorned by images of thought. Most of the metaphors are already dead and cliché, we have seen them so often, such as "les me out of bond". Phonically, however, the poem is quite dense with rhyme, alliteration and these techniques formalize and heighten the simple utterances.

Some of the paradoxes of the troubadour relationship are brought further to the forefront in this poem. The lover's restlessness (and inability to express himself for a longer space than three iambic feet) has been caused by the lady's leading him to sorrow. He is brought in woe and has no rest. Still, he begs her to guide him

again, "red me ryht," her whose complexion alone creates this restless state.

In addition to the simple unadorned statements of fact is a tendency towards understatement. The lover is "unglad"; the lady is "semly". The lover's imminent death is the only hyperbole until the last stanza where she bears away the prize, she is one of the best, brightest under linen, and a night with her is equated with heaven.

The formal aspects of the poem, the bipartite stanza division, and the rhyme scheme are the same as a Provençal poem. The content, the complaints of the lover with his contradictory requests and desires and his eventual lauding the cause of his misery is also the same. More surprising is the adoption of the unadorned style, the direct personal tone of voice which speaks its piece almost without recourse to imagery and metaphor. The outstanding image of the poem, the restlessness of the roe, is very apt in this context but also an allusion to popular wisdom or knowledge. The centering of the paradox, that her guidance has made him restless in the past and yet he sees his hope and rest in it, shows a better grasp of the dilemmas of courtly love than is demonstrated by When þe nyhtegale singes.

Perhaps the all-time favorite Harley lyric is Bytuene Mersh ant Averil, commonly known as "Alysoun."

While so many lyrics have been ignored, this one has been frequently quoted and anthologized, and rare is the work on the early English lyric which does not comment upon it. The poem, a series of poetic commonplaces punctuated by some particularly apt and happy expressions, is a delight largely on account of its musical qualities.

Bytuene Mersh ant Aueril
 when spray biginneþ to springe,
 þe lutel foul hap hire wyl
 on hyre lud to synge.
 Ich libbe in loue-longinge
 for semlokest of alle þynge;
 he may me blisse bringe;
 icham in hire baundoun.

An hendy hap ichabbe yhent,
 ichot from heuene it is me sent;
 from alle wymmen mi loue is lent,
 ant lyht on Alysoun.

On heu hire her is fayr ynoh,
 hire browe broune, hire e3e blake;
 wiþ lossum chere he on me loh,
 wiþ middel smal ant wel ymake.
 Bote he me wolle to hire take
 forte buen hire owen make
 longe to lyuen ichulle forsake
 ant feye fallen adoun.
 An hendy hap, &c.

Nihtes when y wende ant wake,
 forþi myn wonges waxeþ won;
 leuedi, al for þine sake
 longinge is ylent me on.
 In world nis non so wyter mon
 þat al hire bounte telle con;
 hire swyre is whittore þen þe swon,
 ant feyrest may in toune.
 An hendi, &c.

Icham for wowyng al forwake,
 wery so water in wore,
 lest eny reue me my make

ychabbe y3yrned 3ore.
 Betere is polien whyle sore
 þen mournen euermore.
 Geynest vnder gore,
 herkne to my roun,
 An hendi, &c.¹³

As in the troubadour lyric, the traditional spring opening implies comparison and contrast between the bird's song of love and the lover's complaint of longing. The stanza ends with the denial of power and will on the lover's part and shifts it to the lady: "Icham in hire bandoun." Many critics, such as Chaytor, Chambers and Brook, have remarked that the love-service element derived from the troubadours' frequent feudal metaphors is rare in the Middle English lyric. Often it is present in a metaphor so familiar to us that it is dead, as here and as in Wip longyng y am lad, but it is not greatly exploited. The intensity of the lover's feeling rather than the valor of his deeds or his submission to authority deserves recognition in the Middle English lyric. From the abnegation of power and will with its overtones of melancholy longing is a "hendi hap" from heaven. The lover's feeling is withdrawn from all other women and lights on Alysoun. The second stanza describes the lady: fair hair, brown brows, black eyes, lovely face, and a small, well-made middle. This abbreviated top to bottom description is rare, as Chaytor and Chambers both note, in Provençal,

poems, but fairly common in Middle English, borrowed, probably, from romance descriptions of heroines. After the enumeration of her beauties, the lover is willing to give up long life for the chance of being her mate or he will "feye fallen adoun," dommed, fall down. Again the lover skips into the refrain and the doom transforms itself into the "hendy hap" from heaven. The torments of the lover, his restless, sleepless nights, begin the third stanza. Yet the coda to it declares that no man in all the world is wise enough to tell all her goodness. The comparison that follows is either a non sequitur or an example of her untellable beauties which belie the comparisons of even the wisest of men. The swan's white, soft and graceful neck compares poorly to Alysoun's, the fairest maid in town. Now the sprightly refrain follows logically from the lover's contemplation of his mistress' beauties. The last stanza, however, returns to the tone of complaint. He is wakeful, weary as water in a troubled pool lest his love, so long desired, be taken from him. And like a whirlpool or a weathervane the lover turns, between contented contemplation of her beauties and virtues and baleful concentration on his doubtful possession of her. The proverbial "Betere is polian whyle sore pen mournen euermore" enables the state of tension to be maintained and the lover to go on loving despite his lack

of success. As if to justify his decision to persist in love the last two lines of the stanza are an envoy to the "geynest under gore," the fairest one under a gown, or fairest under her gown. The lover begs her to listen to his roun, the song he has just completed. But runes were the magical inscriptions of the druids. It is perhaps on the principle of sympathetic magic that the jolly refrain bursts in again.

There is little novelty in this poem. The spring opening, the lover in thrall, her beauty, his doom, sleeplessness, and suffering are neither sincere confessions nor inspired inventions, but the commonplaces of the poetry of the day. Like Wip longyng y am lad the poem consists mainly of plain statements of the lover's feeling illuminated by a few memorable images: the swan's neck and the troubled water. The steadfastness of the lover is emphasized in the coda of every stanza either by his own lack of power or by the association of beauty with wisdom in the last two stanzas, whether cause for fidelity has been previously indicated or not. The refrain is entirely blissful. By gracious chance, Alysoun, with the power of a natural force such as gravity or magnetism, has taken his love from all other women and drawn it to its proper resting place in her. It is a heavenly gift because it restores the natural order of

things and eliminates the chaos of the lover's former state. Paradoxically the attractive force emanating from Alysoun makes the lover's heart "light", land weightlessly on her.

The paradox within the refrain has gone unnoticed but the paradoxical juxtaposition of the cheery refrain with the woe-laden stanza has caused comment.

The impression is that the narrator refuses finally to be troubled by his frustrated love, and the juxtaposition of unhappiness and happiness provide what may even be regarded as a humorous touch. Because of the juxtaposition and the fact that the concluding note is on happiness and success--we can hardly take the narrator's plight seriously. The juxtaposition continues through three subsequent stanzas with the unhappiness becoming increasingly detailed and appearing more and more extreme. But as this unhappiness continues to be followed by the same affirmative refrain, the result is something approaching farce. Neither is the narrator acting in the manner of someone who is suffering, nor is the gay refrain in accord with his hapless complaint.¹⁴

Yet such is the nature of love. It is part of the system of fin amors to love the impossible and to yoke the emotions of delight and despair. The refrain, a very common feature of Middle English lyric, points out the incongruity of the unrequited passion more boldly than the unrepeatd stanzaic structure of Old Provençal poetry and may in fact be a rueful mocking note consciously sounded by the poet. The troubadours frequently exploited the

contrast between the audience's disinterested and critical appraisal of their behavior and their own obstinate persistence.

The poem is deceptively simple and direct in its language, so much so that Moore has said of it that: "Without benefit of rhetorical flourishes, the poet has explicitly stated his feeling for black eyed Alysoun, representing himself as a sensitive person moved intermittently by hopes and fears."¹⁵ The rhetorical flourishes, the natureingang, implied comparison and contrast, metaphor, description, hyperbole, the inexpressibility topos, similes and sententia, pass unnoticed, they are so familiar to us. More apparent is the musicality of the poem and a great part of its effect comes from its metrical virtuosity.

The poem has four eight-line stanzas and a four line refrain. The stanzas may be divided according to Dante's analysis of stanza construction into two pedes (abab) and a coda (bbbc). The stanza is linked to the refrain (DDDC) by the last word in the stanza (c), which is the only word in the stanza to rhyme with the refrain. This infrequent rhyme clearly signals the start and the end of the refrain and highlights it very significantly. The poem scans much more easily than When þe nyhtegale singes. The first and last stanzas alternate between lines of four

iambic feet and three in the pedes and of three iambic feet in the coda. The second and third stanzas are tetrameter, mostly iambic, except for the short last line. The refrain consists of three iambic tetrameter lines and an iambic trimeter. The "c" rhyme is emphasized because it is always in a short line. The short line and the rhyme tie both the stanza and the refrain together. The first and last lines of the refrain are iambic tetrameter and trimeter respectively. The middle lines have an extra short syllable in the third foot which makes the familiar refrain skip along. The irregularities in the meter of this poem are most often the insertion of short syllables.

Each stanza has a combination of masculine and feminine rhyme, usually the more frequent "b" rhyme being feminine. This too helps the poem lilt. It also contrasts the body of the lyric with the masculine rhymed refrain.

Like With longyng y am lad, this poem gives the impression of being direct, unadorned discourse. Far from being the cri du coeur of a naive unlettered lover, upon examination we find this poem to be a witty and skillful song.

Another of the Harley lyrics, A wayle whyt ase whalles bon, has received little of the praise for sincerity and spontaneity that has been heaped on "Alysoun", for it is a more obviously artful poem. Yet it is composed

of the same cliches--and then some--that make up Alysoun. The lady's eyes, brow and mouth are praised, and because of her beauty, the lover faces an untimely death. He asks for little, but to be near her alone, and gets nothing, which gives him grief. Still, he values her so that he would give up any three other women for one of her, to be her mate. The paradox and abrupt reversals of both troubadour and Middle English poems are present throughout this poem. On the one hand the lady is unfeeling and remote; on the other hand, his joy goes along with his suffering; it does not diminish his ardor. She is beautiful and good and true, so he sings her praises and asks for no more than to be near her, but his woe spreads because of her. The man who brings her to bed is lucky, but the lover-poet knows she cares nothing for him. How then shall he sing? He will die an early death but wishes to greet his love well. He appreciates her beauties, but suffers torments because he cannot tell of his love. And behind all his subsequent sorrows is the origin: the immobility of the lady. "Ich unne hire wel and heo me wo / icham hire frend ant heo my fo." Nonetheless, the stalwart lover hopes she goes in God's greeting.

This poem focuses on aspects of the troubadour theme that most Middle English poems ignore, particularly the lover-poet's concern over his song, its source and its effect.

A wayle whyt ase whalles bon,
 a grein in golde þat godly shon,
 a tortle þat min herte is on,
 in tounes trewe;
 hire gladshipe nes neuer gon,
 whil y may glewe.

So long as he sings, her gladness cannot leave. However, the lover's only hope of moving his mistress through song is threatened by his misery.

Hou shal þat lefly syng
 þat þus is marred in mournyng?
 Heo me wol to deþe bryng
 longe er my day.
 Gret hire well, þat swete þing
 wiþ e3en gray.

Her unresponsiveness harms the singer and his song and therefore diminishes his power over her. Additionally, the relief that the lover-poet might get from pouring out his grief in song is denied him by the necessity for discretion. And there is no fire so hot in hell as a man that loves secretly and dares not tell: "nys no fur so hot in helle / at to mon / þat loueþ derne ant dar nout telle / what him is on."

The articulation of the underlying assumptions of troubadour poetry, of the connection between the song and merit and reward, demonstrates a sophisticated grasp of the essential thematic elements of this poetry. The poet's career, every poem, is an attestation to the lady of his worthiness. Good poems pave the way to success

with the lady and taking pains to achieve them is at least the equivalent of exploits in battle. At the same time that he must speak, he must reveal nothing of the identity of the lady but only allude to her virtues and perfections. To conclude this poem, in a truncated five line stanza, the lover-poet wishes he were a songbird. Certainly not merely so that he may snuggle beneath her clothes, but because these birds, like the poet, sing of love. While the lover wishes intimate physical contact with his lady, the poet wishes to sing her praises.

In other respects this poem is also more dependent on the sophisticated techniques of rhetoric than on the naive sincerity of the artless poet that some impressionable readers have found in the Middle English lyric. To begin with, the poem starts with a series of metaphors. His lady is as white as whalebone. She is a golden grain or seed or bead, which suggests both decorative qualities and generative ones, as the source of his valor. She is also a turtle dove, faithful and true. The lady is de rigeur peerless, but the poet is again imaginative and descriptive when he says that there is none so wise or noble "from helle to heuene ant sonne to see". The hyperbolic cosmic boundaries are the parameters but on a human scale with the lover in the center measuring off his world and figuring the lady's place in it. Again he compares his enforced

silence to the fires of hell. Comparisons and even metaphors are rare in troubadour poetry and they suggest familiarity with the rhetorical treatises of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries that the narrative poets drew upon.

More typically troubadour expressions are those that directly state the lover's feelings without imagery, but turn the phrase felicitously, such as "wel Y wot heo nul me noht" with its internal rhyme and its semantic opposition; and "al for on y wolde 3eue þreo / wipoute chep." Three for one without even bargaining for a better deal clearly fixes the lady's worthiness and the mixture of high flown sentiment (this passage is followed by the hell to heaven and sun to sea hyperbole) with marketplace metaphor is a stylistic feature of troubadour poems. It is as if the poet reminds us that the lover participates in the world that we live in and only his love enables him to transcend it. Another metaphor, "In such wondryng for wo y welle," his boiling in his woe neatly leads into his comparison of silence and hell fire. It also recalls Alysoun's lover, "weary as water in wore." The last stanza is archetypically a troubadour stanza. It is direct speech, somewhat disjointed, juxtaposed as a whole, but very neatly organized in its constituent parts. The opposition of wishes "wel and woe" is nicely emphasized

by the ellipsis of the verb. This allows for a tight monosyllabic conclusion, two pronouns and a noun to the line. The same elliptical structure persists in the next line with a similar opposition between friend and foe. The binary structure is reinforced semantically when the lover says his heart will break in two and for two reasons, sorrow and sighing. Nonetheless, he reiterates his wishing her well with which the stanza began.

These rhetorical flourishes indicate that the poem is a fairly learned one. The subtle use of other poetic techniques prove how carefully it was composed. Alliteration is common in troubadour poems although not systematically employed, and even more common in Middle English. In this poem alliteration occurs in stanzas one, three and five three times in a line. In stanzas two, four, six, seven, and eight alliteration occurs less regularly (only in one or two lines of each stanza) and less frequently, only in pairs. Stanza two has "ben beo wip hire myn one bistad" and stanza six "Wold hyre fere beo so freo". That the alliterative pattern in the poem alternates in frequency from one stanza to another shows an extremely conscious and refined poetic taste.

The poem scans easily for the meter is regular enough. The long lines are mostly iambic tetrameter, the short lines iambic dimeter. The parts of this stanza are not

repeated as they have been in other poems. The first part of the stanza is the frons, not divided into pedes (aaab). The coda is also undivided (ab). The b lines are half the length of the a lines and they occur half as often. The stanza in this poem approaches the regularity and complexity of the Old Provençal poems.

Indeed, not only does each stanza demonstrate poetic techniques of rhythm, meter, rhyme, alliteration, comparatio, opposition, etc., but the whole poem is linked together by a key word, its cognate or synonym binding the last line of one stanza with the first line of the next. Thus "glewe" ends stanza one and stanza two repeats its cognate, "glad." "Wyf" links stanzas two and three, "eye" stanzas four and five, "fere" stanzas five and six. "Wo" of stanza three is not repeated in stanza four but "mourning," associated semantically is. Similarly "lystne" of stanza six, a long stanza with an extra long and short line is not repeated in stanza seven, but the stanza begins with its synonym, "herkneþ." Also stanza seven's "on," a preposition, and stanza eight's "unne," form the Old English verb unnan, to wish, are homonyms and share a similar sound if not meaning. Finally, the last words of stanza eight are the same as the first words of stanza one, so the whole poem, except for its abbreviated last stanza, a kind of envoy, returns upon itself by the device of epanalepsis.

The Middle English lyric shares more than a few superficial features with the poems of the troubadours. The essential elements of Old Provençal poetry were assimilated, to greater or lesser degrees by Middle English minstrels.

The themes were variously exploited. The least perceptive poems are the stereotypical love complaints which might have been modeled on the romance or dream vision as easily as on the lyric, with a lonely, sleepless lover in springtime bewailing his misery. Absent from many Middle English lyrics is the expression of the joy that is the lover's. In the troubadour scheme of things the joy was essential; it justified the suffering. Perpetual unhappiness was not a goal of the troubadours, but eventual reward was, and for different lovers at different stages of the relationship reward might consist of different things: the presence of the beloved, some sign or acknowledgement from her, a kiss, or greater physical intimacy (as in For longyng y am lad, when the lover says "betuene her curtel and her smock / I wolde ben hid"). The troubadours, more than the Middle English poets, focused on the mixture of their feelings and the roller coaster rapidity of their moods. When this is

expressed in Middle English it is almost inadvertent, as in the contrast between the stanzas and the refrain of Betune Mersh ant Averil. The lady as the source of inspiration to great deeds or poetic achievement is another aspect mostly ignored by the minstrels. There is also little emphasis on the reputation or worth of the poet and far less boasting done by the poet about himself and his poems.

In the Middle English lyric, love is a sickness sometimes caused by a wound. The lover may burn, as with fever, toss and turn at night, be restless and grow pale. His great sighing may indicate respiratory failure or cause hyperventilation. But it is a disease of the body. In the troubadour lyric love is a madness, a derangement of the senses as well as of the body. Love is the cause of inversions of perception like Bernard's when he sees flowers in snow. The English poets must believe with Peire Cardenal in his sirventes against love that "the good things of love one has tardily and the bad things every day,"¹⁷ for there is little we see in the English poems but physical distress and unrequited and unrewarded longing. In this sense they maintain the tone of the native Anglo Saxon tradition with its emphasis on the melancholy and elegiac.

There seems also to be greater description and comparison in the Middle English lyric. The focus of the Middle

English poem is often as much on the object of the lover's desire as on the turmoil of his own emotions. The extremely personal, confessional aspect of the troubadour lyric gives way to a more descriptive, narrative, objective style as in A Wayle whyt ase whalles bon. There is little presence of a persona, a unique individual speaking to you about his love. The Middle English poet tries to particularize or concretize his lady by description, but he is the classic lover and she the classic lady frozen in their allotted roles.

Some of this may be due to the differing social status of the troubadours and the Middle English poets. Many of the troubadours were members of the lesser nobility, clerks or from the bourgeoisie and may have had a stake in their personal identity that their counterparts in England did not have. We know the names of the troubadours but not of the Middle English poets and this is no mere accident of history but a reflection of their social situation. The anonymous Middle English poets seem content to represent themselves as everyman and the world in an objective manner, but the troubadours develop a personal voice and poetic identity and employ a highly subjective style.

At the same time that the troubadours cultivate their individuality, they identify with and represent the courtly

class far more than the Middle English poets do. There is little emphasis on a courtly mode of behavior in the English lyric. The lady does not inspire the Middle English poet to valor, either on the field or in verse. Correspondingly there are fewer sirventes and allusions to false lovers and liars. The slanderers are sometimes there and the need for secrecy is expressed in the Middle English lyric, but the danger of being surrounded by rivals who are poseurs is not dealt with. The troubadour must define himself in a variety of ways to prove himself a worthy lover, but the Middle English poet merely must survive his suffering.

Matters of technique are variously assimilated by the poets. We can see the struggle in When þe nyhtegale singes to convert to an accented syllabic line, but meter poses no problem in other poems and in "Alysoun" is handled not only adroitly but expertly. It is fruitless to speculate on the success of rhyme in the Middle English lyric, for much of our knowledge of Middle English pronunciation comes from the assumption that the rhymes that appear in poetry are exact rymes and commentary would prove circular. The establishment of sound patterns was of great importance to poets of the trobar ric like Arnaut Daniel. Among the troubadours Daniel emphasized alliteration most. Middle English poets exploit alliteration less consciously and

systematically than Daniel. However, it occurs frequently, sometimes in every line, but in stock phrases, not necessarily in expressions made for each occasion.

There is even in the Middle English love lyric some of the high seriousness of Old English verse. Where the Provençal poem will use a proverb or a colloquial folk saying, the Middle English poems will use a more sententious or gnomic saying. Wisdom and humour go hand in hand in the Provençal poem but that is not so frequent in Middle English. An example can be found in the poet's stoic conclusion to "Alysoun": "Betere to polien wyle sore / þen mournen euermore." Not only the expression but the sentiment is appropriate to Old English verse.

The influence of the Provençal poetry on the Middle English lyric was not merely superficial. Both forms and themes were adopted by the Middle English poets. Most of the modifications they made can be attributed to the differences in the social situation of the poet. The troubadours either belonged or aspired to an aristocratic class and their themes and style attempt to define it. The anonymous Middle English poet was insignificant himself. His role was to describe in an objective manner the virtues of his lady and his stoic endurance of the pains of love. The more uniformly melancholy and stoic attitude of Middle English poets contrasts with the volatile verve of the troubadours and recalls the heroic tradition of Old English verse. Although some aspects

of the native English style and tone are preserved, the Middle English lyric partakes of the continental legacy of the troubadours.

Notes

¹ Albert H. Marckwardt and James L. Rosier, Old English Language and Literature (New York: Norton, 1972), pp. 210-11, translated with the help of Seally Gilles.

² E. K. Chambers and F. Sidgwick, eds., Early English Lyrics (1907; rpt. New York: October House, 1967), p. 4.

³ Chamber, p. 5.

⁴ Chambers p. 3.

⁵ N. J. Chaytor, The Troubadours and England (Cambridge: University Press, 1923).

⁶ Chaytor, p.

⁷ Chaytor, p. 18, p.

⁸ Chaytor, p. 31.

⁹ Chaytor, p. 120.

¹⁰ G. L. Brook, The Harley Lyrics (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1948), p. 63.

¹¹ Brook, p. 34.

¹² Chaytor, p. 98.

¹³ Brook, p. 33.

¹⁴ Edmund Reiss, The Art of the Middle English Lyric: Essays in Criticism (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1972), p. 60.

¹⁵ Arthur K. Moore, The Secular Lyric in Middle English (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, rpt. 1920), p. 69.

¹⁶ Brook, p. 40.

¹⁷ "Lof bas d'amor a hom a tart / E.ls mals a cascun dia;", from "Ben teinh per fol e per muzart . . .", A. R. Press, ed., Troubadour Lyric Poetry (Edinburgh, 1971), p. 282.

III. Petrarch, Machaut and Chaucer

Thus the troubadours reformed the love lyric. Their innovations spread into every major European vernacular literature. Not only did neighboring France, Spain and Italy adopt and adapt the themes, forms and style of Provençal poetry, but so did more remote Germany and England. The troubadour lyric took root in the various languages of Europe and under the influences of history, politics, culture, technology and fashion, national literatures developed and flourished.

The early vernacular love lyric concerned itself almost exclusively with the emotions aroused by the attempt to win and keep the love of a peerless lady. The finite number of possibilities inherent in the theme varied only subtly and infinitesimally from poet to poet so that although a celibate and sometimes aescetic Christian doctrine developed at the same time as the practice of fin amors, the erotic poetry of the early Middle Ages does not reflect any conflict of conscience in the poets nor any inhibition of their expression of carnal desires.

The poems are in essence lyric and are only minimally descriptive or narrative. Unlike much modern objective and imagistic lyric poetry which eschews the personal and

confessional, the Provençal poems appear to be the recitation by the poet-lover himself of bulletins on the progress of his current love affair and emotional states. We seem to overhear the intimate and unguarded utterance of a sincerely smitten suitor and the poem is defined by the parameters of ego, hic and nunc.

Despite the elaborate patterns of sounds and words, the carefully apportioned syllables, discretely arranged consonants and vowels, the overall effect of the early lyrics is of the personal, the immediate and the spontaneous. The paratactic tendency of early vernaculars contributes to the disjunctive emotional quality, and a certain lack of clarity in relationships between ideas seems to reflect the ambivalence and ambiguity of the lover, impelled by his passions but harrassed by the difficulty and necessity of expressing himself. Although the lyric is a public display, its tone is intimate and the language used may range from the formal to the colloquial. The images too may be drawn from court life and feudal obligations, from the marketplace, or from the fields beyond these pockets of civilization. The juxtaposition of heterogeneous ideas and attitudes is not a result of the naivete of early poets, but an expression of their aesthetic.

The secular themes and motifs and the complex rhymed stanza patterns of the troubadours became established fixtures in European literature. The Provençal lyric

moved most effortlessly into Italy. Raimbaut de Vaqueiras left his native Provence, traveled to Italy and resided there for the greatest part of his life at the court of Boniface I, count of Montferrat, composing and singing in Provençal for a delighted and approving audience. So readily was the troubadour poetry accepted in Italy that Provençal became the literary language of a whole generation, and many an Italian-born rhymmer, such as Sordel, from Mantua, learned and practiced his craft in the foreign but favored Provençal rather than his native unsanctified Italian.

Under impetus from the international but insular Sicilian school at the court of Frederic II, the next generation of Italians adopted their own language for their poetry. A notary of the imperial court Giacomo da Lentino (c. 1200-1250), whose sonnets are the earliest of the form extant, was among the very first to use the Provençal stanzas, themes and fin amors terminology in the Italian language. This evolution was justified and praised on the mainland at the beginning of the new century in Dante's treatise, De Vulgaria Eloquentia, on the eloquence of the vulgar tongue. Yet at the same time that Dante supports the use of a living language, he rejects all spoken dialects of it and admits only an ideal norm, a language "illustrious, cardinal, courtly and curial," free of local variations and humble idiosyncrasies, as the only one worthy

to embody the great art he describes. This political language, to be used for administration, litigation and all formal communication throughout the peninsula is the recommended language for poetry. Expunged is the vocabulary of the marketplace, the farmyard, the tavern and the fields. A literary dialect develops, separate from the language of everyday life. It is restrained, unsurprising and serious. It has little variety and texture because it is uniformly concerned with the privileged activities of the ruling class. Therefore it lacks the liveliness and varied perspective of troubadour poetry which expressed the sentiments of the nobility but allowed for their being viewed by less exalted sensibilities.

Although the change to the vernacular may have created an artificial literary dialect and restricted the poetic language somewhat, the dolce stil nuovo expanded the content of the canso by bringing university curriculum to bear on the love song. They introduced the latest ideas in science and technology into the lyric to express and explain the interior tumult created by love. The scientific interests of the stil novisti do not manifest themselves in other literatures until much later, the Baroque era on the continent and the metaphysical period in England. Scholarly attention to classical rhetoric, however, soon begins to permeate the lyric as well as the narrative, for which

the manuals of rhetorical techniques were compiled.

A more influential and representative figure than Dante or any of the stil-novists is Petrarch, whose effect on the European lyric was immediate and profound. Italians, Frenchmen, Spaniards and eventually Englishmen succumb to the feverish invention of sonnets. A century and more later, poets throughout Europe adopt Petrarch's oxymoronic style, write series of sonnets to a lady, punning on her name as they bewail and exalt their exquisite torment. Just as the troubadours provided the forms, figures, themes and tone for the lyric throughout Europe from 1100 to 1300, so did Petrarch shape the lyric from 1400 to 1600.

Petrarch is certainly one of the most influential poets in the European tradition. But he himself was extremely sensitive and susceptible to influences from the past. The Scipio and the Triumphs are conscious efforts to revive the antique genres and spirit. But even the Rime Sparse, which explores the effect of contemporary events on the poet's psyche, is burdened with the literary past.

The poems of the Rime may be divided into three stylistic categories: those which pay homage to the troubadour tradition; those which exhibit knowledge of classical Latin style and learning; and those poems which reflect the new interest in science and rhetoric. These divergent traditions are manifest throughout the Rime but they become integrated into the corpus of the poetry.

Petrarch's relationship with the troubadours is the most profound. Lyric poetry as he knew it and as we have come to know it is their invention. From the troubadours Petrarch takes his subject matter: he is a love poet writing about a lady who is supreme in his life, always good, even though she may cause or be the occasion for suffering. His emotions about this affair are volatile and mixed, like the troubadours', and similarly give rise to a style full of oxymoron and contradiction. He expresses himself in the traditional forms of the troubadours, in similar stanzaic patterns and types of poems: complaints, debates, poems of praise, compliments, etc.

In a number of poems Petrarch identifies himself with the earlier Provençal and Italian poets. In poem number 70 of the Rime (Lasso me, ch'i' non so in qual parte pieghi),¹ each stanza ends by quoting a famous first line from the poems of Arnaut Daniel, Guido Cavalcanti, Dante and Cino da Pistoia. In the final stanza Petrarch quotes the first line of one of his own poems. He thus clearly links himself with a tradition going back to the master of the trobar ric and proceeding through the Italian transformers of the tradition, the stil novisti. Whether his placing himself last is a function of chronology alone, modesty, or a sense of himself as the culmination of the tradition is difficult to say.

Poem 239 (Là ver l'aurora che s'è dolce l'aura) is one of several sestinas, a favorite form of Arnaut Daniel, and echos Daniel in particular but also the whole tradition of the troubadours. It opens with a reverdie, a frequent troubadour ploy, and declares that the season demands his return to song. His lady, however, is as unmoved by rhymes or verses as the mountain is by the breeze. Still, he concludes that there is nothing in the world that cannot be done by verses.

Nulla al mondo è che non possano i versi:
et li aspidi incantar sanno in lor note,
non che 'l gelo adornar di novi fiori. . . .

esser non po che quella angelica alma
non senta il suon de l'amorose note;

(There is nothing in the world that cannot be
done by verses:
they know how to enchant asps with their notes,
not to speak of adorning the frost with new
flowers. . . .

it cannot be that her angelic soul
will be deaf to the sound of the amorous notes;)

They may even adorn the frost with flowers (an image which appears in Bernard de Ventadorn as well as in Arnaut Daniel). If she can be deaf to these notes, Petrarch will hunt the breeze with a lame ox, an obvious nod to Daniel's famous envoi "I am Arnaut, who hoards the wind / And chases the rabbit with the ox / And swims against the swelling tide" (Ieu sui Arnautz, q'amas l'aura).²

While this poem is the most obvious imitation of

Daniel, other aspects of the troubadour's poetry are present throughout Petrarch. The most frequent shared motif, and one which Petrarch made his very own, was the pun upon the word "breeze", l'aura. With a whole series of poems about the breeze, Petrarch adroitly acknowledges his dual inspiration.

Poem 105 (Mai non vo' più cantar . . .) is perhaps the one which most closely imitates the Provençal canso. The fifteen line stanza exhibits both internal rhyme and end rhyme. It is obscure, allusive and disjointed in the style dear to Daniel. Petrarch begins by disclaiming a wish to sing again as he used to. He complains that a lady should be high and disdainful, altera et disdegnosa, but not proud and stubborn, superba et ritrosa, (a rather fine distinction). He will no longer trust in St. Peter but disentangle himself and stand free. He then recognizes that he does not really wish to and alludes to the perversity of men: "There are some who answer when none calls them; some disappear and flee from those who beg them." In the third stanza he describes the virtues of indifference: "Love him who loves you. . . . In every country there are pleasant dwellings"; so now Petrarch says that he will rely on God to shelter him. The poet seems to allude to the poem's deliberate obscurities when he admits that "not every one who can read can understand" and "he who is too subtle breaks his own neck." In the

final stanza Petrarch's careless cavalier attitude ("For my past harms I weep and laugh . . . I enjoy the present and expect better.") is some what explained by the refusal he has had from his lady. Although she gives a negative response, motivated by a desire to avoid notoriety, Petrarch interprets it as less humiliating than to be rejected for lack of boldness.

Most typically troubadour is the confusion of emotions, the adoption of first one stance and then another and the direct turnabout by the end. For although he begins by denying a desire to sing, he ends by calling his lady "she for whom I write in my heart even more than on paper." In stanza two he will put his trust in St. Peter no more, but in stanza three he will rely on him who rules the world and shelters his followers. As the editor notes "The poem is intentionally obscure, full of proverbs, unidentifiable allusions and ellipses." This deliberate obscurity is a feature of the trobar clus style and the paratactic structure of the poem, common to many Provençal songs, contributes to the difficulty. It is left to the reader to puzzle out the logical connections between sentences since they are rarely supplied in the text. The result is a cryptic passage like the following:

Un'umil donna grama un dolce amico.
Mal si conosce il fico; a me pur pare

senno a non cominciar tropp'alte imprese,
 et per ogni paese e bona stanza.
 L'infinita speranza occide altrui,
 et anch'io fui alcuna volta in danza.

(A humble lady makes a sweet friend suffer;
 figs are hard to judge; it seems to me prudent
 not to begin undertakings that are too difficult,
 and in every country there are pleasant dwellings.
 Infinite hope kills people,
 and I too have sometimes joined the dance.)

The allusiveness as well as the elusiveness is also typical of much troubadour poetry, as is the reliance on proverbs. Yet these are not characteristic of Petrarch's poetry. He generally explicates, with deliberate syntactic clarity, rather than alludes, and his quotations are more frequently literary than popular. Only when he imitates a Provençal poem, in a canzone or a sestina, does he adopt this style.

For although Petrarch's literary ancestors were the troubadours and he recognizes the relationship proudly and almost reverently, he was also enamoured of antiquity. The shifting kaleidoscopic vision of troubadour poetry is very unlike the aesthetic which governs classical literature, one of stasis and symmetry controlling the poem's clarity, order and harmony. Petrarch's longer poems, the canzone and sestinas, follow the heteroclite troubadour style, but his shorter poems, particularly the sonnets which he did much to make popular, manifest many features of classical style.

Petrarch's reading in Latin was extensive, if not complete. Poem 145 (Ponmi ove 'l sole . . .) is an

adaptation of Horace's Integer vitae; poem 207 (Ben mi credea passar . . .) is a complaint utilizing material from Pliny's Natural History; poems 3, 127 and 331 use Virgilian extended similies, rare in troubadour poetry. Petrarch's poetry is full of the matter of classical literature. Allusions and even retellings of Ovid's mythology and Pliny's science abound, but are bound to the central theme of the Rime, the poet's obsession with his love. As an example, poem 102 (Cesare, poi che 'l traditor d'Egitto) describes how Caesar wept, hiding joy on receiving Pompey's head and Hannibal laughed at his own defeat. The point of these two heroic examples is that each soul covers its passion over with the contrary mantle. The modern application is then given, should the lady have missed the point: if Petrarch laughs or sings, it hides weeping. A more complicated compliment is found in poem 187 (Giunto Allessandro a la famosa tomba). The poet describes Alexander at Achilles' tomb, the great conqueror weeping because he has no such poet to herald his achievements as Achilles had in Homer. How much worse, then, is it for Laura, whose equal never lived, and who deserves Homer, Orpheus and Virgil, to have so frail a reed as Petrarch, who adores her lovely name but perhaps mars her praise. This elaborately built comparison is not typical of troubadour poems and the antique references are unprecedented in Provençal poetry.

Since Petrarch draws on a corpus of lore not, like the troubadours' proverbs and romances, familiar to all, the troubadours' technique of careless allusion does not suffice. Petrarch's poems frequently contain more descriptive and narrative elements than do the troubadours' and the relationship between ideas is carefully supplied by Petrarch's syntax rather than suggested by juxtaposition as the troubadours did. This explicitness and clarity lends an expository and prosaic serious tone to the poems and presupposes momentous consequences. The influence of classical syntax is felt on the whole structure of many of Petrarch's poems. His sonnets are often organized like complex sentences, octave and sestet divided into cause and effect, condition and result or the two halves of a comparison. Some of this may be attributed to Petrarch's study of the Latin language and his reading of favorite authors, but the artes poetriae popular at the universities may have contributed too.

The university texts in rhetoric, the other sources of classical influence, took features which were more prevalent in narrative, or prose of legal argument and recommended their use in poetry. More stylistic tricks were thereby made available to the poets. Punning, allegory, apostrophe, catalogs, anaphora all became part of the standard repertoire of the poet in lyric as well as narrative genres. In some poems one rhetorical device

takes over completely. For example sonnet 148 (No Tesin, Po, Varo . . .) rehearses a catalog of rivers and trees and compares them unfavorably to the Sorgue and the laurel. Sonnet 211 (Voglia mi sprona . . .) consists of a personification allegory of desire and its results. Sonnet 161 (O passi sparsi . . .) is a catalog of apostrophes to steps, thoughts, memory, ardor, desire, heart, eyes, and so on for another eight lines. "Alas" is repeated eight times in the first five lines of poem 267 (Oimè il bel viso . . .) and "Go" begins three of the four stanzas of poem 153 (Ite calde sosperi . . .). Some sonnets seem to be exercises or experiments in the exploitation of these devices and they are more systematically used in the short poems than in the longer ones.

It is easy to read one of Petrarch's most famous sonnets, poem 132 (S'amor non è, che dunque è quel ch'io sento?) as an exercise in rhetoric. The first six lines consist of six conditional interrogative sentences all beginning with si. We can see this either as partaking of the longstanding troubadour tradition of addressing the audience directly or as a purely rhetorical interrogatio question but whether suggested by poetic example of the troubadours or the poetic prescriptions of the rhetors, the effect is the same.

S'amor non è, che dunque è quel ch'io sento?
 ma s'egli è amor, per Dio, che cosa et quale?
 se bona, ond'è l'effetto aspro mortale?
 se ria, ond'è sì dolce ogni tormento?

S'a mia voglia ardo, ond'è'l pianto e lamento?
 s'a mal mio grado, il lamentar che vale?
 O viva morte, o dilettose male,
 come puoi tanto in me s'io nol consento?

(If it is not love, what then is it that I feel?
 But if it is love, before God, what kind of thing
 is it?
 If it is good, whence comes this bitter mortal
 effect?
 If it is evil, why is each torment so sweet?

If by my own will I burn, whence comes the
 weeping and lament?
 If against my will, what does lamenting avail?
 O living death, O delightful harm,
 how can you have so much power over me if I
 do not consent to it?)

A syntactic parallelism combines with semantic antithesis in lines two through six. This kind of systematic balancing is rare in the troubadour lyric. Lines seven and eight apostrophize love under the oxymoronic epithets of living death and delightful harm and continue the interrogatory pattern. These lines also reformulate the previous complaints into a paradox: How can love have power over him if he does not consent to it? The first declarative sentence in the poem opens the first tercet and introduces the issue of moral responsibility. The poet-lover concludes, despite his previous reproachful questions, that he has no right to complain if he assents to love's power. He follows this with a metaphor describing his state as that

of a frail and tillerless boat between contrary winds. The last tercet continues the metaphor and adds an antithesis expressed in chiastic arrangement: sì lieve di saver, d'error sì carica, which points up again the moral issue. Finally the lover's confusion is stated and then illustrated with a metaphor for his inappropriate behavior: he shivers in summer and burns in winter.

Et s'io 'l consento, a gran torto mi doglio.
Fra sì contrari venti in frale barca
mi trovo in alto mar senza governo,

sì lieve di saver, d'error sì carica
ch'i'mesdesmo non do quel ch'io mi voglio,
e tremo a mezza state, ardendo il verno.

(And if I do consent to it, it is wrong of me
to complain.
Amid such contrary winds I find myself at sea
in a frail bark without a tiller

so light of wisdom, so laden with error
that I myself do not know what I want,
and I shiver in midsummer, burn in winter.)

In these mere fourteen lines we have: six lines of apostrophe, six of parallelism, four of antithesis, two of apostrophe, two oxymorons, one paradox, five lines of metaphor with one chiastic antithesis and one metaphor and antithesis.

This is not to suggest that some or even all of these features might not be present in a troubadour lyric. We know that apostrophe was the troubadour's habitual mode of speech and they certainly showed familiarity with the antitheses, oxymorons and paradoxes of love. Even the

metaphors in this poem are familiar. Bernard de Ventadorn says in one song (Tant ai mo cor ple de joya) that his lady holds him poised, like a ship on a wave; and the illness of love, with its chills and fevers is a classical commonplace. What is unfamiliar is the concentration and organization of these figures. Just as the troubadours perfected sound patterns and organized their poems more and more tightly according to sound, Petrarch tried to establish patterns and variations with rhetorical figures. His favorites, parallelism, antithesis and oxymoron, show his attempt to achieve a kind of balance in a poem, and to resolve the contradictions inherent in the system of fin amors. The troubadours do not attempt to set up syntactic or grammatical patterns. That kind of repetition seems to hold no attraction for them. For Petrarch it does, and one of the reasons why is that it permits Petrarch to expose an argument or to pose a question and suggest an answer. For Petrarch finds a conflict with the system of fin amors that the early troubadours ignore; how can a man devote his immortal soul to a mortal object? When, as a Christian he is forced to acknowledge the supremacy of God's will, how can he persist in following his own desires? How can he spend his life in thrall to the human and temporal when the divine and the eternal are available to him? For the troubadours there

was no higher good than the love of one's lady; for Petrarch God and his lady are rival benefactors, the one offering infinite peace and serenity, the other, fleeting joys and earthly fame.

One example of Petrarch's art which illuminates his technique as well as his conflict is the metaphor of the ship. We have seen this in Bernard as a two-line comparison tossed into the stanza.

Eu n'ai la bon'esperansa,
 Mas petit m'aonda,
 c'atressi.m ten en balansa
 com la naus en l'onda.
 Del mal pes que.m desenansa,
 no sai on m'esconda.
 Tota noih me vir' e.m lansa
 desobre l'esponda.
 Plus trac pena d'amor
 de Tristan l'amador,
 que.n sofri manhta dolor
 per Izeut la blonda.

(I get good hope from her.
 But that does me little good,
 because she holds me like this, poised
 like a ship on the wave.
 I don't know where to take cover
 from the sad thoughts that pull me down.
 The whole night long I toss and turn
 on the edge of the bed.
 I bear more pain from love
 than Tristan the lover,
 who suffered many sorrows
 for Isolt the blonde.)³

Although Bernard may have meant us to associate the ship poised on the wave with the other events of the stanza, his being dragged down into a sea of sorrows, his tossing

and turning on the edge of the bed and the ill-fated sailing of Tristan, he does not compel us to read the poem this way. Petrarch, who uses the ship image frequently, makes an allegory of it. The frail bark is his body, the winds his desires, the pathless uncharted sea his future; he lacks a tiller as he lacks will, his cargo is little wisdom and much error. The metaphor is insisted on for four lines. Not only does he use the figure with more insistence than Bernard, but he makes this his main point: since he has consented to Love's dominion over him, he should not complain. If he is at sea, he has put himself there; if he has no tiller, he has given it over; the opposing winds are of his own making and his cargo of error, which he does not abandon, puts him in danger of sinking.

Petrarch's literary consciousness resulted in a rich and complex mixture of poetic possibilities. The incredibly complicated sound patterns of Provençal with its dizzying changes of mood; the whole corpus of Latin literature, history, science and mythology to refer to; and the elaborate verbal pyrotechnics of the rhetoricians were available to him for his poetry.

Canzone 206 is an example. It displays features from Provençal verse, classical literature and the study of rhetoric. There are six nine-line stanzas, the first five

having between 14 and 12 syllables, the next three short lines having seven and the final line in the stanza with 14. There are only three rhymes in the whole poem. The rhyme scheme is abbaaccca x 2, bccbbaaab x 2, ccaaccbbbc x 2. The envoy or tornada is cbbac. In a total of 59 lines, there are only three rhymes. This tight rhyming is the hallmark of the virtuoso troubadour, but the poem is even further controlled by the syntactic anaphora or parallelism beginning lines one, three and five of the first four stanzas, a subordinate clause, "s'i''l dissi", if I said it. In the first four stanzas, the controlling dependent clause, "s'i''l dissi", is repeated 12 times and demands corresponding independent clauses of result. The fifth stanza begins "ma s'io nol dissi", but if I did not say it, and is not repeated in that stanza. The sixth and final stanza before the tornada abandons the conditional mood completely and turns to denial: "I nol dissi giamai . . .", I never said it. As in the preceeding stanza, the clause is not repeated. This kind of insistent anaphora, especially as seen in the beginning of the poem, is virtually unheard of in troubadour poetry, but a common technique from the rhetoric texts. Once the pattern has been well established by the first four stanzas, it is varied by becoming a negative condition and then a negative declarative clause.

First the poet straightforwardly announces: if I ever

said it, let my days be few and miserable and every star
be against me, let her hate me and be more cruel to me
and always more beautiful.

S'i''l dissi mai, ch'i'vegna in odio a quella
del ciu amor vivo et senza 'l qual morrei;
s'i''l dissi, che' miei dì sian pochi et rei
et di vil signoria l'anima ancella;
s'i''l dissi, contra me s'arme ognia stella,
et dal mio lato sia
paura et gelosia
et la nemica mia
più feroce ver me sempre et più bella!

(If I ever said it, let her hate me
by whose love I live, without which I would die;
if I said it, let my days be few and miserable,
and my soul the minion of some low power;
if I said it, let every star be armed against me,
and at my side be
fear and jealousy
and my enemy
more cruel toward me always and more beautiful!)

The equivocal position of "always" suggests an incremental
punishment, that she will become increasingly cruel at the
same time that she becomes increasingly beautiful. The
second stanza repeats in essence the first but calls in
Love, with his gold and leaden arrows, the gods and men
to supervise the poet-lover's punishment. The third
stanza uses the metaphors of voyage,

S'i''l dissi mai, di quel ch'i'men vorrei
piena trovi quest'aspra et breve via;
s'i''l dissi, il fero ardor che mi desvia
cresca in me quanto il fier ghiaccio in costei;
s'i''l dissi, unqua non veggian li occhi mei
sol chiaro o sua sorella,
né donna né donzella,
ma terribil procella
qual Faraone in persecuir li Ebrei!

(If I ever said it, let me find this short and
 harsh road
 full of what I least desire;
 if I said it, let the fierce ardor that makes me
 go astray
 grow equally with the fierce ice in her;
 if I said it, let my eyes never see
 the sun clear nor his sister,
 nor lady nor damsel
 but only a terrible whirlwind
 such as Pharaoh saw when he pursued the Jews!)

The fourth stanza makes the point with courtly allegory:
 let pity and courtesy be dead for him. In the fifth stanza,
 where the denial begins, the voyage metaphor returns: may
 she guide his ship with the tiller of mercy as she did
 before. In the sixth stanza the denial is emphatic and
 personification allegory and chivalric metaphor return:

I nol dissi giamai, ne dir poria
 per oro o per cittadi o per castella;
 vinca'l ver dunque e si rimagna in sella
 e vinta a terra caggia la bugia!

(I never said it, nor could I say it
 for gold or for cities or for castles;
 let the truth conquer, therefore, and remain in
 the saddle,
 and let falsehood fall vanquished to earth!)

Throughout the poem the independent half of the clause
 enumerates the consequences the poet wishes may befall
 him should he have uttered some unspecified statement.
 Neither the circumstances nor the meaning of the poem is
 explained but the tornada of the poem gives the broadest
 hint as to the charge leveled against him. Petrarch
 finishes the poem with a Biblical allusion:

Per Rachel ò servito e non per Lia.
 né con altra saprei
 viver; e sosterrei,
 quando 'l ciel ne rappella,
 girmen con ella in sul carro de Elia.

(For Rachel I have served and not for Leah,
 nor could I live with another;
 and I would endure, if Heaven called us,
 going off with her on the chariot of Elijah.)

The suggestion is that Petrarch has been accused of denying his love for Laura or of using her to disguise his love for another. The whole poem refutes this accusation and is essentially a catalog of the catastrophes the poet would deserve if he had ever so perjured himself.

While there are no poems quite like this in Provençal, the slanders of the losengiers are a frequent and central motif of troubadour poetry. Many poems descry the discord caused by their wicked tongues in several lines or stanzas, but no poem devotes its entirety to refuting their lies. However it is typical of Petrarch, as indeed of other poets of the age, to take one element from the mosaic of the troubadour lyric and elaborate it into a complete poem. Instead of the varied panoramic vision of the troubadours, we get a detailed close up enlarged by the systematic exercise of selected rhetorical figures. Here the elaboration is achieved principally by anaphora, a catalog and expolitio, a periphrastic restatement of the main point. The thematic simplicity of the poem contrasts

with its structural complexity and learned adornment. The poet uses astrology, mythology, metaphors, allegory and Biblical allusion merely to say may his lady never be kind to him again if he said what has been alleged against him. This poem perhaps more clearly than any other demonstrates the continuity and the transformation of the medieval lyric. The themes and the forms of Provençal poetry endure. The manner of expression changes from the mixed style of high and low speech of the troubadours to the more uniform but richly ornamental style which heralds the Renaissance.

At the same time that Raimbaut de Vaqueiras was entertaining the Italians with his Provençal poems, poets in the North of France were busy translating the troubadours into the langue d'oïl. We have poems of the trouvères from as early as 1200. These French poems and the many that follow seem pale imitations of the Provençal originals. Even though they are pretty and charming, they lack the vigor and verisimilitude of the troubadour poems. For just as the Italians were doing by Dante's time, the French too chose to limit the language of poetry. Instead of the text being filled with specific references to the world, it comes more and more to rely on itself. Metaphor and allegory displace the details of social life and physical existence and become more and more elaborate

until they take over the text in conceits. And the surprising variety in tone and in diction of Provençal poetry gives way to the French principle of "one genre, one ethic, one style and one voice" as Frederick Goldin says in his introduction to the poems of Thibaut de Champagne.⁴ The tone of the adoring suppliant is maintained throughout the poetry and the effect is of a polite, polished and passionless body of verse. The abstract, judicial mind of the North, culminating in its extreme in Marie de Champagne's courts of love and Andreas Capellanus' codification, intentionally ironic or not, of the concept of fin amors, tempered the volatile erratic explosions of the troubadours and resolved the dichotomies of courtly love.

Having eliminated from their poems the trivial vulgarities of the world and the inconsistencies of the flesh and spirit, the northern French poets were free to concentrate on form, relatively little encumbered by content. Although this poetry does not captivate us like the troubadours', its most accomplished practitioners attained a degree of musicality and refinement which could not be rivalled. Chief among them was Guillaume de Machaut.

Despite a substantial body of narrative verse, Machaut has been lauded in modern times more as a musician than a

poet and it is indeed a disservice to separate his lyrics from their music. Some of his melodies add an exquisite poignancy to his lyrics, for melody was a dimension of Machaut's language as perhaps of no other poet's. Notwithstanding his easy rhyming, elegant metrics and nicely balanced phrases, without his music most of his lyrics seem graceful and insipid.

A case in point is Machaut's virelay Dame a vous sans retollir. A lover's song praising his lady and promising to serve her, it scarcely distinguishes itself from the hundreds penned during the period. The devotion of the lover's whole being to his love, and his suspension between life and death fills the seven-line refrain stanza which appears at the beginning, in the middle and at the end of the poem.

Dame a vous sans retollir
 dong cuer, pensee, desir
 corps et amour,
 comme a toute la millour
 qu'on puist choisir
 ne qui vivre ne morir
 puist a ce jour.

(Lady, to you without taking back
 whose heart, thought desire
 body and love,
 as has all the best
 that one can choose
 who can neither live nor die
 to this day)⁵

The first 13 line unrepeated stanza explains why the lover

adores his lady. The only hint of originality occurs in the images in this section of the poem. Her virtue and beauty invite comparison with flowers, but her goodness surpasses in value every flower in sweet odor that one can smell and the rose takes its color from her. Her beauty, like a spring or a fountain, dries up all others and makes them disappear. The comparison of her goodness to the scent of flowers and her beauty to a spring is somewhat out of the ordinary, but like all other ladies her sweetness surpasses all and her glance can cure pain. The refrain is repeated and since the lover-poet has established her worth, now he pledges to devote himself to her and without any villanous tricks puts his heart, life and honor in her pleasure. Allegory, by this time so dear to the French and familiar from the narrative poems, appears in the form of Pity, who may consent that the lady hear him, but he hastens to assure her that he seeks no reward for his labor for joie gringour could not come to him. The possible ambivalence of these last two words of the poem, joie gringour, is almost the only point of interest in the second stanza. Although ostensibly derived from Latin grandior, gringour may have some connection, perhaps merely associative, with gringne, discontent. This would create an oxymoron at the end of the poem which neatly summarizes the structure of the poem:

her worth in the first stanza provides joy, his devotion and service in the second stanza imply unfulfilled desires. This is the usual plight of the unsatisfied and insatiable lover, suspended between joy and desire. There is no strong evidence for this reading but the logic of it and without this final ambiguity the poem is drab. Allied to its music, however, it has exquisite phrasing and resonance and suggests a profound delicacy and tenderness.

This virelay exhibits some of the most common transformations of the lyric in its journey from south to north. First, the position taken by the lover-poet does not vary from one part of the poem to another. The vocabulary and images in the poem are totally subordinated to the theme of each stanza. As the lady is to be exalted in the first stanza, she is compared to flowers, fountains and medicines; as befits a suppliant, the second stanza refers to subjection, strength, villanous tricks, claims, labor and merit. Although some contrast exists between the two stanzas, the phrasing and diction minimize the difference and subordinate the contents of the stanzas to the overall polite tone of the poem. A formal change occurred in the lyric as well as a change in tone. The varied flexible canso form of the troubadours eventually crystalized into certain standard patterns. Sometimes a rhyme scheme became fixed; sometimes repetition became standard and a

refrain was produced. The formal aspect of the virelay reinforces the tendency towards uniformity of tone for the refrain introduces, interrupts and concludes the poem. It is difficult then to have the panoramic troubadour perspective given the stanza order of the virelay.

Others of Machaut's poems are enlivened by some of the innovations of the fourteenth century which Petrarch adopted. The renewed interest in pagan mythology and poetry which Petrarch and Boccaccio stirred up surfaced in France, particularly in the guise of the popular Ovide Moralisee. In Machaut's lyrics there are many references to characters and incidents in Greek and Roman mythology. Ballade 115 (Je puis trop bien ma dame comparer) adopts the Pygmalion theme as a foil for the poet-lover's own experience.⁶ He can too easily compare his lady to Pygmalion's, who was beautiful and peerless and just as unresponsive. In the second stanza the poet relates how Pygmalion's prayers were strong enough to change the statue's coldness to warmth, hardness to flesh, and silence to speech. The poet's lady, however, remains unchanged. In the third stanza he explains that Love could do the same for him as for Pygmalion, but Love welcomes disdain that kills the lover who always begs and never answered.

This use of classical myth, comparing and contrasting it with the lover-poet's own experience is interesting and successful, but poetry in this era often introduces

classical references carelessly and gratuitously. In the fourth line of this same poem Machaut describes Pygmalion's folly in loving his statue: "Plus l'ama que Medée Jason." The ominous and tragic overtones of the myth are ignored and only the intensity of Medea's passion is recalled. No further use is made of the comparison, but the casual allusion to a classical story serves to illustrate how literate and literary the culture has become. One hundred and fifty years earlier in L'aur 'amara Arnaut Daniel made the comparison differently: "I desire you / More than the monks of Doma God (anz vos desir / plus que Dieu cill de Doma)."⁷ Instead of a literary reference, Daniel uses a specific local example of general information, as accessible to the unlettered as the literate.

The literariness of the culture shows itself in other ways too. The rhetorical exercises of the university left their mark on fourteenth century French poets as well as Italians. Many of Machaut's poems use the colors of rhetoric as pretexts for poems. There are poems of apostrophe, anaphora, allegory, antithesis, puns, metaphor, simile and catalog. Ballade 109 by Machaut (Je maudi l'eure et le temps et le jour) is very similar in structure to Petrarch's sonnet 61 (Benedetto sia 'l giorno e'l mese et l'anno). Both are in essence catalogs and achieve their effect by anaphora, but whereas Petrarch blesses the day, the month,

the year, the season, the time, the hour, the instant, and the place that he first saw the sweet eyes of his conqueror, Machaut curses the hour, the time, the day, the week, the place, the month, the year and his own two eyes with which he first saw the lady who ended his joy. The similarity is strongest in the first four lines of the poems which are almost as identical in structure as antithetical in content.

Je maudi l'heure et le temps et le jour,
La semaine, le lieu, le mois, l'année,
Et les .ij. yex dont je vi la doucour
De ma dame qui ma joie a finée.

(I curse the hour and the time and the day,
The week, the place the month, the year
And the two eyes with which I saw the sweetness
Of my lady who has ended my joy.)

The two poems begin with nearly identical catalogs of circumstances of the first day and repeat the benediction or malediction every three or four lines. After this the poems differ. Petrarch continues the benediction of the beginning of his love in the second quatrain and the results of his love in the two tercets--the scattered words, sighs and pages, in short, the poems inspired by this love. Machaut goes on with his malediction and curses his heart, thought, loyalty, desire and love as well as the semi allegorical dangier as responsible for the languishing of his grieving heart in a strange country.

In the second stanza Machaut condemns his lady's attractions, the hour of her birth and her deceptive wiles. In the third stanza he places the blame more generally on the false tricks of Fortune, on the planets, chance or destiny that led his heart into such error. But in the last four lines of this final stanza he prays that God will guard her reputation, her welfare, increase her honor and pardon her. Like the troubadours, Machaut makes an about face and reneges on his initial intention. Despite his malediction of all the forces against him, he does not abandon his love. The anger of the first two stanzas dissipates as we reach the third and his refusal to renounce his love makes this poem rather a bid for pity than a farewell to love. By its reversal of the expected intention, this poem does resemble the confusion of the troubadour lyrics; but its method of achieving it, by the systematic exploitation of catalog and anaphora is unlike the varied techniques of the troubadours, but precisely parallel to Petrarch's treatment of the same theme. The French poets of this age generally avail themselves of the same rhetorical techniques and classical mythology of the Italians, but their themes remain resolutely courtly and secular. Like the early troubadours they ignore any conflict with Christian values and are not concerned with the world beyond the court.

Petrarch and Machaut have both just died when in England Chaucer is reaching his literary maturity. Like Petrarch, Chaucer was very sensitive to the literary tradition. A revisionist avant la lettre, his career was devoted to retelling tales told by others. His lyrics are of less interest than his complex commentated narratives. We do not know how many Chaucer may have written, but few of his lyrics survive. Some of them are philosophical poems, adaptations of Boethius; others are translations of contemporary French poems. In the philosophical poems we tolerate a certain vague stuffiness so long as it is redeemed by some essential wisdom, but we have far less patience with the love lyrics which are often equally nebulous and pompous, unfortunately typical of later medieval lyric poetry. Womanly Noblesse--Balade that Chaucier made is all too representative of the fourteenth century love poem, but below the standard of many of Chaucer's other surviving lyrics. The excessively polite tone of the poem almost disqualifies it from the category of erotic lyric.

So hath myn herte caught in remembraunce
 Your beaute hoole and stidefast governaunce,
 Your vertues alle and your hie noblesse,
 That you to serve is set al my plesaunce.

So well me liketh your womanly countenaunce,
 Your fresshe fetures and your comlynesse,
 That whiles I live, myn herte to his maystresse
 You hath ful chose in trewe perseveraunce,⁸
 Never to chaunge, for no maner distresse.

Desire seems far too offensive a sentiment to entertain here, despite the lady's alleged beauty, freshness, and comeliness. But her virtues, nobility and "stidefast governaunce" do not seem to be able to inspire the poet-lover who claims he seeks only to serve her "with al my besyness". If the lady practices "stidefast governaunce" and is as virtuous and noble as the poet declares, what cause does the meek and obedient lover have for the complaint he appears to make in stanzas two and three?

My woful herte suffreth greet duresse;
 And /loke how humblely/, with al symplesse,
 My wyl I conforme to your ordynaunce
 As you best list, my peynes for to redresse.

Considryng eke how I hange in balaunce,
 In your service, such, lo! is my chaunce,
 Abidyng grace, whan that your gentilness,
 Of my grete wo listeth don alleggeaunce,
 And wyth your pite me som wise avaunce,

Since the poet-lover vows to serve simply and humbly in the second stanza, what pains does he suffer? How can he hang in the balance if she is not only beautiful but virtuous, and he is humble, obedient and desires nothing? The troubadours' invention of fin amors depends on a spiral of desire, the prowess and virtue of the lover first

stimulated and then exceeded by his aspiration, the fulfillment of one wish to be immediately supplanted by another. If the conflict of desires within the lover and between the lovers is eliminated, then we are left with a poem at once inconsistent and dull.

The language used in the poem is very much the language recommended by Dante, the one of bureaucratic communication. Its tediousness is nowhere so apparent as at the end of each line in rhyming position. The rhymes of this ballade are -aunce and -esse, two common noun-producing suffixes. Every line ends in a noun and the predictability of the rhyme becomes stultifying. All the words but four, "comleynesse," "besynesse," "hevynesse," and "unbuxumnesse;" are of French origin. It is a relief to get to the envoy where two new English words are introduced, "wommanhede," and, given the context, the not unexpected "godlihede".

The controlling metaphor of the poem, if poems at this time can be said to have one, that of feudal service, is so outworn by this time that it has virtually no effect on the reader. Of greater impact is the metaphor beginning the third stanza, that of the balance, or scale, which is familiar not only from daily observation in the marketplace but also from a great many religious works of art in which St. Michael weighs souls in a scale. In the

paintings his graceful finger may tip the scales to counter the heaviness of the sinful soul; but in Chaucer's love poem it is the lady's grace and pity which are required to relieve the lover's heaviness of heart. This last stanza contains the only redeeming feature of the poem. The image which is already familiar on literal and figurative levels in mundane and spiritual contexts is applied in a new setting and resuscitates an otherwise routine exercise.

Some of Chaucer's lyrics are preserved in his narratives and Troilus and Criseyde is particularly studded with lyric inserts. Rossell H. Robbins disqualifies many of them from the category of lyrics since they are so often interrupted by a narrative link to the text or the context,⁹ but the first Canticus Troili ("If no love is, O God, what fele I so") is unimpeded by narrative phrases.¹⁰ To further strengthen its claim to the genre, its pedigree includes Petrarch's famous sonnet 132, S'amor non è. che dunque è quel ch'io sento. The changes Chaucer makes are for the most part necessitated by translation into English. Others are individually insignificant but have a cumulative consequence. For example Chaucer has Troilus apostrophize God in the first line whereas Petrarch phrases his question "before God". Thus Troilus addresses God and we, the audience, overhear while Petrarch speaks directly to himself or, as in the troubadour tradition, to the audience.

Thus is established at the very beginning of the poem a more dramatic mode for Troilus's utterance and a more lyric, even contemplative one for Petrarch's.

Chaucer has a formal problem to contend with as well. Petrarch's fourteen line sonnet must either squeeze snugly into two rhyme royal stanzas or stretch over three. Chaucer chooses to amplify. The two quatrains of Petrarch's sonnet are expanded into two rhyme royal stanzas. The first three lines Chaucer translates nearly literally from the Italian. He pads the fourth line with "a wonder thynketh me", amplifies "torment" to "torment and adversite," and expands Petrarch's pithy oxymoron "dolci ogni tormento" into two lines: "When every torment and adversite / That cometh of hym, may to me savory thinke." Petrarch uses the metaphor of taste in the first stanza. Love is both bitter and sweet. Chaucer adds to this oral imagery by metonymy and the taste in line seven leads to thirst in line eight and demonstrates not only the lover's complete involvement but also his insatiability: "For ay thirst I the more that ich it drynke." Two half lines and two lines, one completely gratuitous, are added to Petrarch's first stanza by Chaucer. Again in the second stanza the first three lines are a simple translation of Petrarch's first two. The fourth line is an addition. Chaucer whimsically answers his rhetorical question with "I noot"

and adds fainting to his list of symptoms. The final three lines in Chaucer's stanza rephrase Petrarch's last two. The necessities of translation and Chaucer's penchant for amplification change the whole tenor of the poem. Petrarch's poem is balanced by parallelism and antithesis; it is succinct and almost lapidary; Chaucer's, somewhat droll and chatty.

Now Petrarch's two tercets are left to fill Chaucer's last seven line stanza. But with his habit of amplification, Chaucer cannot comfortably fit six lines into seven. Since the constraints of the stanza do not permit him to expand all six lines, he eliminates two and expands the remaining four. Chaucer begins his third stanza as Petrarch does his tercet with the conclusion drawn from the preceeding stanza, that if he consents to love's power he has no right to complain. Here Petrarch's oxymoron and paradox shade into moral dilemma. The lover conspires at his own misery. Petrarch then introduces the image of the tillerless ship. The lover is in a frail boat, at sea, without a tiller and either buffeted or becalmed by contrary winds. Chaucer keeps this image, but uses it as an analogy to explain the predicament of the lover as helpless, at the mercy of forces outside himself--the opposing winds, the trackless sea and the ill equipped boat. Petrarch forces us to perceive the image as an

allegory. The soul, contained in the frail body, lacks the will to direct itself on the turbulent seas. The winds that impede his progress are his own conflicting desires. Line 12 insists on the allegorical reading: si lieve de saver, d'error si carca recalls St. Michael's weighing of souls, and ironically this most material addition to the image, that of weight, emphasizes the spiritual reading of the metaphor. Chaucer eliminates this line and the following where Petrarch confesses confusion and ignorance of his own desires, but retains the concluding metaphor of illness. Chaucer shows the lover to be powerless, at the mercy of the elements, and the frailty of the boat, in short, a plaything of the gods. A lover is a comic hero and Chaucer's Troilus perceives his plight as a soldier might before an invisible adversary. There is constant amazement, bewilderment and frustration, directed outwards. Introspection is not a part of Troilus' character and the Petrarchan conflict of conscience and desire, the latent debate of the body and the soul disappears and we have the surface characteristics of Petrarch's poem reproduced but not the essence. Although Troilus' character dictates these changes, the author created the character and is ultimately responsible. In this poem Chaucer follows the French in their heedlessness of any conflict between earthly affairs and spiritual well being.

The pagan setting keeps fin amors in a realm separate from the moral aspect of life and does not oppose or have to be reconciled with normal Christian duties. Chaucer keeps Petrarch's oxymorons as a way of communicating the confused feelings of the lover invaded by love. He has imitated most of the rhetorical techniques of Petrarch, although his amplification of some and exclusion of others change the tone of the poem from a serious, balanced, lapidary style to the more engaging, mimetic, discursive one suitable to the novice lover that Troilus is.

Chaucer's ballade Against Women Unconstant is a more typically Chaucerian poem. Its bitter chastising tone disguises its seriousness and entertains even as it instructs. It contrasts greatly with the reproachful complaint written by Machaut which bears the same refrain (ballade 193, Se pour ce muir, qu'Amors ay bien servi).

Machaut's poem begins with the establishment of himself as a loyal lover who has not merited his fate and knows his days are numbered by his lady's overt change in apparel from the blue of fidelity to the green of eternal novelty. Machaut's second stanza recalls first his love and second his suffering and transformation by sighs and tears, and finally his hopelessness on discovering in memory her disloyalty. His last stanza curses in series

the eyes with which he saw her, the moment of their meeting, her charms, beauty and sweet looks which engendered a foolish pleasure and error. He finally curses loyalty for suffering from her change.

Chaucer's poem is not really modeled on Machaut's although it uses the same refrain. Chaucer's tone is much less pathetic and accusatory throughout. Chaucer begins his complaint not on a personal note but in a general way, for the lady has dismissed many other suitors. The lover takes his leave because of past evidence: she cannot love one for even half a year, so great is her love of novelty.

Madame, for your newefangelnesse,
Many a servaunt have ye put out of grace.
I take my leve of your unstedfastnesse,
For wel I wot, whyl ye have lyves space,
Ye can not love ful half yeer in a place,
To newe thing your lust is ay so kene;
In stede of blew, thus may ye were al grene.¹¹

The second stanza contains two comparisons, one rather courtly and the other somewhat homely. First her love is like a mirror that keeps no image, but lets all come and go before it. Second, her heart is like a weathercock, turning with every wind.

Right as a mirour nothing may enpresse,
But, lightly as it cometh, so mot it pace,
So fareth your love, your werkes bereth witnesse.

Ther is no feith that may your herte embrace;
 But, as a wedercok, that turneth his face
 With every wind, ye fare, and that is sene;
 In stede of blew, thus may ye were al grene.

The two comparisons encompass extremes in tone by reference to courtly life and common life and makes the condemnation more comprehensive and inclusive. The final stanza compares the lady with Dalyda, Creseyde, and Candace and suggests that she is a better model of infidelity than any of them. No man can erase that stain from her heart.

Machaut's poem reproaches and then renounces and moves from the bathos of self pity to the indignant curse. Chaucer, on the other hand, does not vary his tone but increased its intensity. First the lady is merely flighty, she is guilty of "newfangelnesse"; then the seriousness of her state is revealed by the comparisons. On the one hand she is shallow and impervious to the world outside; like the mirror, nothing penetrates and everything passes by. On the other hand, she is buffeted about constantly. Finally the lady becomes a paragon of inconstancy; reigns, even, over a pantheon of faithless women. The clarity and formality of the first two stanzas dissolves into an allusive, jeering finish.

If ye lese oon, ye can wel tweyn purchase;
 Al light for somer, ye woot wel what I mene,
 In stede of blew, thus may ye were al grene.

Machaut's poem is pallid compared to Chaucer's.

Although Machaut's lover speaks of a personal complaint in the first stanza he does it in the most general terms: he does not deserve death, he has loved with a loyal love, his days are finished. Chaucer's lover speaks at first not so much from personal involvement as from close observation: "Ye can not love ful half year in a place." This specific accusation of a given period of time as the limit of the lady's constancy carries greater weight than Machaut's vague grumblings. The lack of imagery in Machaut's poem makes us seize Chaucer's with relief. The comparison to the mirror and the weathercock convince us of the lady's pathological bent and the poet's good judgment, so that the catalog of faithless women seems less an exaggeration than Machaut's fairly encompassing list of accursed things.

To Rosemounde is one of Chaucer's most delightful ballades. The three eight-line stanzas progress from praise of the lady to complaint over the poet-lover's lovesick state.

In the first stanza the poet-lover addresses the lady and tells her she is the shrine of all beauty "as fer as cercled is the mappemounde." She shines like crystal and her round cheeks are like the ruby. She is so merry and jocund that just the sight of her dancing is a relief from the pains of love. In this stanza particularly we

see Rosemounde as a little universe, complete unto herself, self-contained. Although she may dance at a revel it seems to be independent of social interaction, an expression of her joy and completeness. The dancing relieves the impression of stuffy static perfection and self absorption, the haughty demeanor of the indifferent aristocratic dompna. In fact, Rosamounde seems not to reject her admirer despite his plaintive refrain ("Thogh ye to me ne do no daliaunce") but rather to be oblivious to him, which attests to her innocence rather than arrogance. She has wounded him nonetheless but the disease of love has many remedies and merely watching her dance is an ointment. The specificity of ointment is very suggestive (especially when we consider the medical alternatives of the day--leeches and blood lettings) and characterizes her dancing as sweet and soothing, a precious luxury. The polite courtliness of the first stanza is unbroken. Everything mentioned there is congruent with the courtly ideal as depicted in the beginning of the Romance of the Rose. Beauty, wealth, joy and love are the totality of stanza one.

Stanza two jars the sense of luxury and delight. A lover's tears are not unfamiliar or unwelcomed in the setting established in stanza one, but that they should be measured like beer, by the vatfull, is a ludicrous exaggeration.

For thogh I wepe of teres ful a tyne,
 Yet may that wo myn herte nat confounde;
 Your semy voys, that ye so smal out twyne,¹²
 Maketh my thoght in joy and blis habounde.

Still this copious crying will not destroy him. Her voice, which he imagines her untwining like a skein of silk, fills him with such bliss that, filled with courtesy and bound by love, he finds his love for her reward in itself. The courtly tone and sentiment has reasserted itself by the end of stanza two and we are again in the world of ideal lovers and refined life.

The mood is abruptly shattered by the poet-lover's comparison of himself with a pike encased in fish sauce. And the fish is perceived as being less wrapped up, confined and helpless than the lover. As a consequence of his inferiority to a fish, the lover identifies himself as "trewe Tristram the secounde".

Nas never pyk walwed in galautyne
 As I in love am walwed and ywounde,
 For which ful ofte I of myself devyne
 That I am trewe Tristam the secounde.

The farfetchedness of the comparison, from the ridiculous aspic-enclosed fish to the sublimly tragic Tristram, is little alleviated by the poet's subsequent denial of his resemblance to a cold fish: his love may not be cooled off; unlike the jellied fish, he burns in amorous pleasure

and wills to be in thrall to her despite her lack of attention to him.

In this poem, as in others both lyric and narrative, we find Chaucer returning to the mixed style that Petrarch and Machaut abandoned. The troubadours' use of humorous incident and non-courtly language in their love poems made the experience of love more universal and inclusive, an essential element of life. Just as the troubadours exalted their ladies and abased themselves, so does Chaucer. The exquisite description of Rosamonde is balanced by the portrait of her ludicrous lover. Although we may laugh at his excessive grief and his polarized characterization of himself, his recognition of the exceptional creature that Rosamonde is and his love for her redeem him. The poet-lover portrays himself with a mixture of verisimilitude and defensiveness. Although he deliberately makes himself the butt of the joke and insists on the absurdity of the lover, he never denies the nobility of love, for even though love makes a fool of him, love also makes him a better man. This keystone of the troubadours' belief recurs in Chaucer and he also returns to their habit of mixing styles. His juxtaposition of the ridiculous and sublime serves to satirize the excesses of the courtly tradition while it validates the essence.

By the end of the fourteenth century the middle English lyric has changed. The Harley lyrics showed greater variety in stanza form. By the time Chaucer is writing, a poet no longer invents his own stanza but uses one of the traditional ones. Chaucer's most frequent choice is the seven or eight line ballade stanza which he adapts for lyric and narrative purposes. He did, but rarely, write a rondel. Even when he adopts a sonnet, as in the Canticus Troili, he uses his seven line rhyme royal stanza.

The half crazed quality of the early lyric, of mildly demented lovers simultaneously overcome by passion and sorrow, yields to a more controlled utterance. The disjunctive quality of early lyrics pleased because it seemed to mirror the lover's folly, his hypersensitivity, his lack of perspective. It was partly achieved by a paratactic grammatical construction within the stanza. Chaucer, like Machaut and Petrarch adopts a more syntactic grammar. There is far greater subordination and explication of connection between ideas. Indeed, not only does Chaucer follow Petrarch's model in the Canticus Troili where in the first seven line stanza there are five subordinate conjunctions, but in the first seven lines of To Rosemounde there are six conjunctions or conjunctive adverbs. A greater fluidity develops within the stanza

and there is greater clarity about temporal, causal and conditional relationships than in the earlier poems. This does not make Chaucer's poems better. The Harley lyrics are not successful despite their paratactic nature, but because of it. The poems are held together by their rhymes, but the logical relationship of one utterance to another is rarely signalled. Not only is this technique suitable to the persona of the poet-lover, frequently speechless before the inexpressible of his beloved, but it is an exercise of the audience's powers of perception or reconstruction to justify why one statement follows another, to elucidate the theme, to supply the process of development.

In reading Chaucer's poetry and that of his continental predecessors this challenge is absent. The relationships are spelt out by the poet. The tension and surprise of early medieval poetry is eliminated. Another element must intervene to keep the poetry interesting and Chaucer more than his contemporaries utilizes the mixed style which highlights the discrepancy between the tradition he is supposedly working in and the poems he actually writes. Frequently the language of Chaucer's poems is at cross purposes with the poems' ostensible intent. Against Women Unconstant is a strong indictment of a courtly lady devoted to the fashion of love, but not to its practice.

Most courtly literature focuses only on the conquest of love, not on the maintenance of a loving relationship. Indeed from the lover's point of view the lady is always to be conquered for she either always holds herself aloof or finds some pretext to withdraw. The necessity for eternal conquest is severely criticized. In To Rosemunde the beauty and refinement of the lady, as always exalted, laughably contrasts with the smitten lover filling vats with his tears and wallowing in passion like a fish in its sauce. The excessive adulation of the lady and abnegation of the lover is parodied and yet the poem is delightful as a love poem and as a parody.

We see then that by the fourteenth century the tradition of troubadour verse has been firmly established in every country and has undergone a process of refinement. The themes of Old Provençal poetry remain with many of their habits of expression, but many of the innovative experimental features of the troubadour lyric have been formalized. The flexible inventive canso has spawned a variety of fixed poetic forms. The organization of the poem has become more rational and the relationship between ideas is more frequently explicit. The troubadours' rich variety of language and mood either has been made more uniform or has been polarized into antithesis and paradox. Allusions become learned, not local and

topical and specific reference to the world has been relinquished in favor of abstract generalities.

The lyric has become a very literary genre. Much of the verve and apparent spontaneity of the troubadours has been replaced by a more learned and decorous sensibility. Of the three poets here studied, only Chaucer retains a sense of humour about the predicament of the lover and only Chaucer uses a mixed style incorporating the elevated and the abstract with the quotidian and the specific. While Petrarch and Machaut may emphasize antithesis and paradox, they do not share the Chaucerian taste for joining the ridiculous with the sublime.

Notes

¹ All quotations and translations from Petrarch are taken from Petrarch's Lyric Poems, trans. and ed. by Robert M. Durling (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1976). The poems are consecutively numbered and will be referred to by number and first line.

² Goldin, Lyrics of the Troubadours (Garden City, NY: Anchor-Doubleday, 1973), pp. 218-19.

³ Goldin, pp. 132-33.

⁴ Goldin, p. 449.

⁵ Guillaume de Machaut, Remede de Fortune, Jacket Notes, Ensemble Guillaume de Machaut de Paris, disques Alvarès, c 499, my translation.

⁶ All quotations from Machaut are taken from La Louange des Dames, edited by Nigel Wilkins (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1973). Here too poems are consecutively numbered and will be referred to by number and first line.

⁷ Goldin, pp. 214-15.

⁸ F. N. Robinson, ed., The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer, 2nd ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1957), p. 533.

⁹ Rossell H. Robbins, "The Lyrics," Companion to Chaucer Studies, Beryl Rowland, ed. (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1968).

¹⁰ Robinson, p. 393 (Troilus and Cryseyde, I, 400-20).

¹¹ Robinson, p. 540.

¹² Robinson, p. 533.

IV. The English Poems of Charles of Orleans

1. The Book

Harley manuscript 682 contains over two hundred English poems, mostly ballades and rondeaux, attributed to the French duke Charles of Orleans. Critics have long overlooked the fact that Harley MS 682 is a book, not by the accidental assemblage of pages, but by design. Although it does end suddenly with a poem of farewell, and according to editors Steele and Day there is no marginal notation of the scribe's payment after line 4386 (which suggests that the manuscript was not completed and not paid for in full), the manuscript remains a substantial and coherent collection of lyric poems, linked together by longer verse passages, purporting to be the amatory experiences of "I, Charlis, duk of Orlyanuce." This is the only coherent anthology of courtly love lyrics extant in English, as Julia Boffey notes in a recent survey of fifteenth century lyric manuscripts:

The largest collection, and the only one to concentrate on courtly love lyrics to the exclusion of everything else is--ironically enough but entirely typically--associated with a French poet: Charles of Orleans. . . . It survives as something of a freak occurrence--the only thing of this nature in English, unless one includes works like Troilus and Criseyde or

The Temple of Glass as examples of lyric 'chains'
 . . . No other English collections can match
 either the careful planning or the unanimity
 of tone which characterize these two collections
 associated with Charles.¹

In fact the English book is more carefully composed and arranged than the poet's French manuscript and demonstrates an attempt at autobiography and self-analysis which goes beyond the French collection.

As long as poems have been written down, collections of poems have existed. In ancient and early medieval times these collections were sometimes haphazardly arranged, and sometimes they were carefully ordered according to formal, generic or thematic features. Poems might be somewhat whimsically organized, as the Greek anthology was reputed to be, alphabetically according to the first letter of the first word of the poem; or they might be systematically classified according to their length, meter or subject matter, as the works of many Latin poets were.

The Old Provençal anthologies were arranged according to the social standing of the troubadour, the highest ranking nobleman appearing first in the collection. The collections were mixtures of prose and verse. Songs of each poet were grouped together and prefaced with a vida, a biographical sketch concocted out of apocryphal stories

and the poems to which it was prefaced. Frequently a poem had a razo as well, an explanation or interpretation of it and the circumstances under which it was written.

A similar combination of prose and verse occurs in the prosimetrum or Menippean satire, a favorite form for a book in the early middle ages. Martianus Capella's Marriage of Mercury and Philology took this form as did Boethius' Consolation of Philosophy, perhaps the two most widely read books of the period. Whereas the prose in the troubadour collections is intended to clarify the poetry, in the prosimetrum the poetry is intended to illustrate and ornament the argument. In the Consolation, for example, Lady Philosophy teaches Boethius to come to terms with the vagaries of Fortune and the poems offer an illustration of the principles rationally discovered or disclosed in the Socratic dialogues. The easy pleasure of the poetry soothes and refreshes the reader from the ardors of understanding philosophy.

When Dante decided to assemble his love poems, he had before him the examples of the Provençal anthologies and the Boethian prosimetrum. Like the troubadour collections Dante's Vita Nuova contains both autobiographical information and commentary on individual poems. Many of the subsidiary characters from Provençal poetry appear: friends, confidants, intermediaries and the inevitable

slanderers on whose account disguises must be adopted and the truth hidden. Although partaking of the troubadour tradition, the Vita Nuova is not merely an anthology of poems, to rifle through and sample at random. The intention behind the collection is not to preserve individual poems or to record episodes of high feeling. Like the Consolation of Philosophy of Boethius, the Vita has a didactic purpose. It is designed to chronicle and recreate the poet's spiritual enlightenment through his experience of love and to indicate the course of his self discovery, development and definition. The Vita Nuova is at the same time a collection of poems and an inquiry into the nature and effects of love. In the Vita the form and the intention of both the lyric anthology and the Boethian treatise happily coincide.

Although in its formal aspect the Vita Nuova is a very traditional work, the theme, that of the transformation of secular love into the love of God is radical and revolutionary. The troubadours never seemed to recognize any incompatibility between their professed Christianity and their devotion to the doctrine of fin amors. Orthodox Christian tradition has always seen woman as a temptation of both the body and the soul. The troubadours did not quail at proclaiming their carnal desires for women, married or otherwise, although chastity had long been a

teaching of the church and the restriction against adultery was enunciated in the ten commandments. Even more seriously, the troubadour glorification of women seems at times to flaunt the first commandment. The Italians seem to have been sensitive to these inconsistencies where the troubadours were oblivious. The Vita Nuova resolves the conflict and reconciles Christian doctrine and courtly behavior by having an angelic lady lead the lover from carnal desire to spiritual fulfillment. The troubadours desired woman for her beauty and idolized her as the source of all good. Dante's Beatrice, however, is so perfectly chaste that Dante is never really tempted by desire and her early death obviates concupiscence. And she is so virtuous and humble that she guides Dante to an understanding of her true position in the scheme of creation and her meaning in his life. Dante's angelic lady attracts him by her sensual beauty, but, unlike other mortal women, her inspiration is so pure as to lead him beyond her created being to the creator.

But Dante realized another ramification of the concept of fin amors. The troubadours asserted that the experience of love is a significant factor in man's spiritual and social development. As a result of love, a man becomes more courageous in battle, more courteous in society and more skillful and inspired in poetry. If love both strengthens

and refines a man, then his poems ought to bear witness to it. The collection of love poems serves also as a spiritual autobiography.

In Dante's instance the literary concept shaped his life. The course of his life was determined by an erotic encounter which the Vita Nuova narrates, explains and analyses. It demonstrates how Dante integrated into his life two very significant occurrences: his love for Beatrice and her death. When he finally understands the meaning of this episode in his life, his life changes. He ceases to speak and begins to study so that he may one day speak as he ought. The Vita Nuova is an apology for his life but a mere prologue to the Divine Comedy. The troubadours made this kind of experience possible by making the love affair a crucial event in one's life, a significant element in one's experience, which could color and modify all others. The Vita Nuova demonstrates this concept and chronicles it as well. It is both the culmination of the tradition of the troubadours and the inception of a new literary genre: the poetic sequence.

Petrarch's collection of lyric poems, the Rime Sparse was arranged and rearranged over the course of his life. Although the large number and variety of poems indicate Petrarch's desire to preserve each poem, their number (366) and order, in a rough retrospective autobiographical

chronology suggest the autobiographical impulse to put life into perspective. Like Dante, Petrarch tells of the hope, deception, joy, inspiration and pain instilled in him by love. And like Dante he grieves over his lady's sudden death. He mourns and still continues to depend on her for guidance and inspiration after her death.

But unlike Dante Petrarch does not so easily resolve the conflict he feels between the human attachment to earthly love and his impulse towards the divine. The events of thirty-one years are celebrated and lamented throughout the Rime and as time passes, little changes. The poet-lover remains as attached as ever to his lady and even after her death he yearns for her as he did in his youth, desiring the sight of her, her voice, her presence to comfort and guide him. Although the collection begins with his retrospective knowledge that "whatever pleases in the world is but a brief dream," as late as poem 360 the poet debates Love before the judge Reason. The poet blames Love for his sorrowful, tormented life, for his shunning the path of virtue. Love counters that he has kept the poet pure and virtuous, inspired him with the truth and elevated him above the herd. When Petrarch charges "he has made me love God less than I ought," Love replies: "I gave him wings to fly above heaven through mortal things, which are a ladder to the creator, if one

judges them rightly." The human passion for earthly temporal things and the equally human aspiration towards the immortal abstract perfection of the divine vie constantly in Petrarch as they do not in Dante. In the Divine Comedy Dante climbs, leaving the ladder behind him. But Petrarch wishes to reach the creator without abandoning the rungs.

This difference in temperament is reflected in the form of Petrarch's work. Dante's Vita connects the poems with prose passages, knits the experiences together and forseees a resolution. Petrarch's book is unconnected. There are no prose passages to link one poem to another in a rational scheme. We have instead poems juxtaposed, one to another, offering views of intense moments of joy and despair in the poet-lover's life. The poet does not explain his life to us and show us how he developed, as does Dante. He relives it before us and from the pieces he presents we piece together the theme of his life and his book--both fractured, disrupted by the conflict between a love of this world he could not abandon and a desire for the next world. The fragmentary form of the Rime is especially suited to the disunified, troubled, divided, episodic feelings of the author. Every sonnet is a part of the debate between Love and the lover. Every poem is an attempt to make eternal the ephemeral rungs of the ladder of creation. Petrarch tries to resolve his

conflicting loves by perfecting and making permanent through poetry the things of this world.

While the great Italian poets were exploring methods of organization which would add another dimension of meaning to their collections of poems, in France the collection remained more traditional and practical. Poems were most frequently arranged according to their form. The lyrics or songs of Machaut, in La Louange des Dames, for example, were grouped according to form and loosely ordered according to length. The chant royal, the ballade, the virelai and the rondeau each have their own sections, perhaps as an aid to musicians or singers searching for a particular type of song. And within each formal division poems may cluster together according to their opening theme.

But Machaut's longer narratives, the dits, also contain lyrics. If sometimes the lyrics are decorative appendages to the narrative, other times the narrative seems a decorative frame for the lyric, as in La Fontaine Amoureuse, for example. The Remède de Fortune, however, is a more interesting case. Although a narrative dit telling the story of the poet-lover's love affair, the Remède incorporates seven songs, each one of a different genre popular at the time. Part narrative, part autobiography, and part handbook of poetic composition, the Remède de Fortune very cleverly blurs the boundaries of

genre. William Calin describes the work:

Each of the seven RF songs belongs to a different literary kind, and each kind is represented by only one poem. Machaut presents a more or less complete tableau of the most important lyric genres in his day. The author's didactic purpose is underscored by the fact that the seven poems are arranged in a pattern, in order of decreasing difficulty and complexity: lay, complainte, canson roial, balladelle, balade, canson baladee or virelay and rondelet.²

The lyric poems are preserved in the Remède de Fortune as models for other poets rather than for their own intrinsic value and the dit itself serves as entertainment, instruction and ars poetica.

Another of Machaut's works, Le Livre du Voir Dit, also contains lyric poems. The true tale that this book tells is of the love affair between the aged poet and his young admirer, Toute-belle. The lady initiates the affair by sending a poem to the illustrious author and most of their romance is carried out on paper, in an exchange of letters and poems. As in the Remède it seems that the poems are not presented in the text for their own sake but as evidence of the author's veracity, as documentary confirmation that this affair did take place. Nevertheless, like the collections of Dante and Petrarch, the Voir Dit chronicles and analyzes the development of the affair.

When Charles of Orleans came to gather his own poems together he had many models and options before him. He certainly knew miscellanies of songs and lyrics that

circulated among the aristocracy. His own father compiled the Cent Ballades. The works of Petrarch and Machaut were most probably known to Charles and he may have been familiar with the Vita Nuova too. So he might have made a random collection or ordered his poems according to their form, their theme, or their chronology, either of composition or of retrospective autobiography. What he did was to separate the lyrics according to form into two groups of ballades and one group of roundels. Then he constructed a frame of narrative verse and longer lyric which at once separates each group from the other and connects them.

Most of the allegorical vision which begins the book no longer exists in the English manuscript, but the French version is intact. In it, Charles explains how he came to write the following ballades. Since he was unable to speak when introduced to Lady Beauty at Love's court, he decided to write to her. He prudently follows the advice that Ovid gives in the Ars Amatoria to "let wax go first;" letters and messages should prepare the way for the suitor's personal appeal. From one ballade to another we infer meetings, separations and messages. Circumstances rather than any reluctance on the lady's behalf seem to keep the lovers apart. This love affair is like many another with just enough joyful moments intercalated among the melancholy ones to keep the affair alive.

Then, suddenly, as in Dante and Petrarch, the lover learns of his lady's death. Poems of grief and sorrow proliferate and the lover wishes only to die. In two ballades he describes the loss of his lady like the loss of a queen in a chess game and he admits that the game will be lost "without so be y make a lady newe" (2128). But in the next poem he vows to be faithful to his deceased lady all his life. Like Petrarch he notes anniversaries: New Year's Day and May Day are painful reminders of his loss, and his desire for death is frequently repeated. Then a dream interrupts the ballades and Age advises the lover to quit Love's service and retire honorably. The lover petitions Cupid and Venus to release him from their service. The ballades resume and Love, convinced of the lover's intent, grants his request. The lover bids the court farewell and retires with Comfort to his childhood residence, the castle of No-Care. He writes a letter to Love and a final ballade describes, perhaps overconfidently, his convalescence and cure from the illness of love. In this section there are 82 ballades, an introductory narrative, two legalistic parodies (a letter of admission into service and a petition for release) a narrative "vision in complaint" and finally a letter in ballade form. Thus ends the first section and this might even be the conclusion of the whole work, so self-contained is it.

The second section, the Book of Jubilee, begins with ballade 83, a kind of prologue or apology. The lover has become so weak and slothful since his withdrawal from court that he is unused to poetry, but some few samples of pleasant speech from his amorous youth are left him. So in ballade 84 he invites lovers to come to a banquet of song and dance, fit food for lovers. The roundels are numbered through 102 but some pages of the manuscript are missing so only 81 are extant. They tell essentially the same story as the first ballade sequence. It is spring and even though the lover knows that love involves suffering and pain, he cannot keep himself from loving a lady who is goodly, fair and without peer. His pledges to serve her alternate with his pleas for mercy since she gives her favors and withholds them at will. Although the lover is once banished from love for some unspecified offence, he is soon welcomed back into the lady's graces. Soon the lover no longer needs to steal kisses but demands them as his due. Nevertheless, tossed between joy and woe like a ship at sea, the lover decides that he will no longer be ruled by his heart but let reason guide him instead. At this point Fortune "dischargid me of my good aventure"; death slays the lady and so deals the lover a wound which has no cure. The banquet concludes with two benedictions in rhyme royal and eight short poems supposedly in various dance meters called "caroles".

The Book of Jubilee is interesting in two aspects. The first is the poet's conception of the book as a banquet. After the prologue in which the poet apologizes in advance for his offering, the second ballade invites lovers to partake of some poor but dainty fare, roundels, which, like the sweet meat of small birds, may be preferred to grosser food. ". . . Folk sayne that lovers lyue by lokis / And bi wisshis and othir wanton thought . . ." (3126-27) so these poetic morsels should suit their tastes. Charles believes that the lyric, not the music as Shakespeare would have it, is the food of love. The two benedictions at the end of the banquet seem more like an after dinner speech than grace. The first blesses lovers and prays that the god of love defend them from the evils occasioned by a lack of troth. The second makes a punning reference to washing or wishing after dinner (although as the poet says "ther nys her no/no dishe / That as me thynkith ought fowle your hondis here" (4391-2) and the lover rehearses "the wishe pat y was wont to do" when his lady was alive. The host takes his leave of the guests but provides dance songs to conclude the banquet. The parallel drawn between the book and the banquet is maintained throughout the frame.

This conceit does not appear in the French version which speaks of the book only as a "jubilee". This is one indication of the care with which the entire English work

is constructed. To make a jubilee meant to celebrate having held an office for fifty years, and by extension, to retire from office. So Charles here celebrates his retirement from the lists of love with a banquet of poetry, the food of love. It is not, however, a particularly joyous occasion for it does not signal the successful completion of his term but his abandonment of it, forced by his lady's death. His retirement has resulted in his sloth, churlish lack of eloquence and a premature, debilitating old age. Although the banquet indicates a return to society from his egocentric withdrawal, there is a funereal tone to it and it resembles a requiem mass more than a festive celebration. The prologue warns us that we will be served leftovers and the poems and benediction invoke the deceased mistresses's memory. There is a grim irony here. On the one hand the banquet is an attempt to distract himself from heavy thought and to reintegrate himself with society, to rejoin the living, as it were. But the presence invoked throughout the banquet is that of the dead lady.

The Book of Jubilee then appropriately follows the first ballade sequence. It ostensibly celebrates the poet-lover's retirement from love which was effected at the end of the ballades, but in fact it revives his tragic love affair. As we finish the ballades we hear of the

lover's retreat and recovery from his malady, but as we begin to sample the roundels, we recognize the pattern of events: his reluctance to love, his infatuation, his debates with his heart, his delight and despair and lastly the sudden blow of his lady's death.

The most striking difference between the first ballade sequence and the roundels is the treatment of the lady's death. In the ballade sequence 25 out of 82 ballades speak of the lady's death, the lover's grief and his withdrawal from love. Of the roundels, only 11 out of 102 follow the announcement of the lady's death.³ The roundel series only discusses the lady's death and its immediate impact on the lover. There is no elaborate process of grieving and coming to terms with the loss as there is in the ballade sequence. The roundel series ends very abruptly. The work of mourning is reserved for the two longer poems at the end of the banquet. For the most part the roundels themselves reflect only the petty vicissitudes of love.

Indeed the form of the roundel is better suited to the recollection of brief moments than to the arguments and allegories of the ballade. Thus we have a number of poems on kisses, wishes, pleas and the joy of beholding his love. Moments of pique at the flirtatiousness or at his own lack of fortune never gather much momentum in the

ten unrepeatd lines allotted to them. The brevity of the roundel eliminates the narrative and argumentative possibilities of the ballade and its circular repetitive structure generates a static meditative response to an experience. "La pensee se replie sur elle-meme," Daniel Poirion says of the roundel, "comme les deux pages d'un livre qui se referme."³ And they have the extemporaneous air of the Rorschach--offhand, spontaneous jeux d'esprit, more spontaneous and revealing than the ballades. Certain double-entendres, references to imprisonment, ransome, seige, escape, battle and retreat, are less methodically construed as love-allegory convention and more overtly ambiguous. In matter and in manner the roundels are more joyous than the ballades.

The retelling of the love affair in roundels gives a new perspective on the story. Different kinds of experience are emphasized in the two sequences and the method of composition seems to differ too. In the series of roundels we have examples of the pleasant speech of his youth. They are lyric fossils of his love affair, apparently unmediated by time or memory but placed in a sequence, the outcome of which is already known to us. The contrast between their ephemeral and inconsequential nature and the tragic and shocking finale makes them all the more pathetic. The ballades are more serious

and ominous and there is less surprise when the worst comes to pass.

The repetition of the love story not only gives us a different perspective on the affair, one of more mixed emotional attitudes reviewed in retrospect, but indicates the obsessive hold that this event had on the poet-lover's mind. Despite his retirement from Love's court and his mocking stance at the end of the first ballade sequence, he still grieves for his lady. Nothing has entered his life since her death and he has no distraction but memory. Of course Charles of Orleans was confined to the estates of his "hosts" and his social contacts were restricted. Except for courtly pastimes he had no occupation. An unguarded word or deed might isolate him even further. His life was consequently barren of events, and most particularly of events that he might write about. Only the themes of the courtly lover were available to him. He might, however, have invented some new amorous adventure to structure the roundels or have combined the roundels with the ballades in one sequence. Yet he opted, at the risk of repetitive tedium, to retain the formal distinction between roundel and ballade and to repeat this story. He has survived the loss of his love but remained an invalid. This is made clear by the two poems at the end of the sequence. The first, in which he attributes the

misfortunes and unhappiness of lovers to a lack of troth, beseeches Love to grant that lovers may lead their lives in troth. In the second the poet-lover rehearses "the wish that y was wont to do." These were ideals he had striven towards, that he might equal his lady in virtues; to be as bold as she is fair, to be praised for justice as she is for dancing, to do what is proper to a man as she does what befits a woman. This poem brings out the fact that love is not only a personal experience but a social phenomenon. When his lady was alive, she inspired the lover to greater valor and courtesy. This was the socially redeeming value of the often adulterous fin amors. But now that she is gone, the lover has lost not only her but the better half of himself. His aspirations are dead, his inspiration is exhausted and his value to the world has diminished.

By the end of the Book of Jubilee we have reached an impasse. The lady's death has made the lover withdraw from life. He will not love again: his troth prevents it. He has vowed fidelity to his lady and even though she is gone, he will keep his word until he dies. This troth, which he glorifies in the first benediction at the end of the banquet as the source of virtue and happiness in love, condemns him to a living death. If he will not love, he will not live. He can only repeat in memory and in poetry his unfortunate adventure.

This is a problem not only for the lover, but doubly damning for the poet. The troubadours insisted on the symbiotic relationship between love and poetry. Bernard de Ventadorn boasted not of his skill in poetry but of his devotion to love:

Non es meravilha s'eu chan
 melh de nul autre chantador
 que plus me tra.l cors vas amor
 e melhs sui faihz a so coman.
 Cor e cors e saber e sen
 e fors' e poder ia ai mes.

(Of course it's no wonder I sing
 better than any other troubadour:
 my heart draws me more toward love,
 and I am better made for his command.
 Heart body knowledge sense
 strength and energy--I have set all on love.)⁴

The poet needs to be inspired by love and skill in poetry makes him worthy of love. If the poet withdraws from love, how can he remain a poet? Charles remains a lover in memory so that he may remain a poet, but this means that he must repeat the cycle and relive his loss again and again or cease to write.

At the end of the Book of Jubilee the poet-lover anticipates the next section by referring to his new fortune in love which we shall shortly hear and at the beginning of the third section he places events "after my jubilee was made". Again each section is carefully linked, one to another and the order of events is fixed.

The dream vision which prefaces the second ballade sequence begins by reminding us of the poet-lover's melancholy state. Bereft of his lady, he occupies himself by writing love poems on command. He is just so occupied with a complaint to Fortune which he reproduces for us when he falls asleep on a cliff overlooking the sea and dreams that Venus comes floating towards him. She addresses him by name and in the debate which follows tries to dissuade Charles from his obstinate celibacy. Although he will not be persuaded, his shifting arguments reveal his dissatisfaction with his solitude. During the debate with Venus, Charles sees Fortune descend from the sky bearing a lady on her wheel. He at first believes this is his lost lady but then sees that this is another who resembles her. He wishes to approach her so Venus lifts him up to the goddess Fortune. At this point he awakens from his dream, but he retains Venus's kerchief as a token. On his way home through the woods he meets a company of lords and ladies playing post and pillar in a clearing. In the group is the lady Charles saw on Fortune's wheel. He joins the game and manages to speak to the lady and requests permission to write to her. She agrees and they all depart and the second series of ballades begins.

The dream vision is the turning point of the book. It provides the lover with a new object for his affections, and the poet with a new object for discourse. Yet it

must be achieved by the abandonment of that troth the lover so valued and praised. He may love again and write anew but only by betraying his first love. The debate with Venus and the vision of Fortune argue against his position and persuade him to change his attitude.

This change is foreshadowed even in the first ballade sequence by the metaphor of the chess game. In ballade 61 the lover, undone by his lady's death, is likened to a chess king whose queen had been taken. He is checkmate: powerless, immobilized and defenceless. All is lost "without so be y make a lady newe" as the refrain insists. The next poem continues this thought as it begins "Shuld y me make a lady newe Fy Fy / Nay rathir dye than doon so fowl a dede" (2141-2). In these two poems the poet-lover accurately assesses the consequences of his loss and identifies the remedy for his situation. He acknowledges his circumstances and considers a solution but rejects it out of principle. In the ballade the peerless lady is compared to the phoenix of which there is only one, yet the second stanza admits "But of the asise as these clerkis sayne / Of this Fenyx ther cometh another blyue" (2149-50). This paves the way for the lady that Fortune brings him, but the poet-lover doesn't expect to see such a one in his "paynyd lyve" and even to consider a new queen is a betrayal:

Then shulde y false allas so goodly on
 And shulde y breke the trewth y to hir hight
 Nay rathir man a leuyr were y noon
 For whi y thenke most how y am a knyght
 The oth thereof/and oth y to hir plight (2157-61)

After these two ballades the question of a new love is closed for the poems which follow are concerned with memories of his lady occasioned by New Year's Day, May Day and a memorial service. Until the vision of Fortune the poet-lover remains immobilized by troth and made miserable by solitude. Unable to move towards another love and powerless to create anything new, he is doomed to repetition.

Troth is the issue the poet lover must confront. He has promised to love his lady above all others. When she dies, he does not cease to love her but he remains as faithful to her memory as he remains constant to the social ideal. His dissatisfaction with his loyal but lonely life is revealed in the dream vision when his arguments against Venus eventually wind down to the difficulty of loving a new lady rather than the propriety of such a step. When Fortune shows Charles the new lady, his reservations vanish and his new adventure begins. Similar situations were faced by characters in other poems. Venus appears to the bereaved lovers in Froissart's Joli Buisson de Jonece and in the anonymous Le Songe Vert to encourage them to love again. These ideal lovers with their persistent fidelity are the opposites of the

newfangeled ladies that Chaucer complains of, most explicitly in his embittered ballade but also in Troilus and Criseyde. The society which gave rise to the conventions of courtly love poetry was organized around the principle of personal loyalty. One's rights, duties and possessions depended on the faithful relationship of vassal and lord. The lover's relationship to his lady was modeled on this. In return for loyal service the lady would grant the lover privileges. Troth was the keystone to the entire theoretical edifice of this society and it was the proving ground of the lover.

The feudal metaphor the troubadours had used had become so completely assimilated into the poetic convention by the fifteenth century that it was as frequently applied to the relationship between lovers as between lord and vassal. So commonplace and familiar were the metaphors that the tenor and vehicle could switch places: in Charles' poems not only is the love relationship discussed in the conventional socio-political terms, but matters concerning social and political relationships may now be discussed in the terminology of love. The circumstances of the lover may be described in feudal terms of homage and service, and chivalric terms of battle, capture and imprisonment, just as the situation of the prisoner may be alluded to through the nearly dead metaphors of love.

The making of a book may be seen as an attempt to resolve some conflict or integrate into one's life some

traumatic event. Charles' book focuses on the issue of troth. The first ballade sequence celebrates a love affair distinguished from many others by the staunch fidelity of the lovers to each other. Neither jealousy nor inconstancy, elements caused by an imperfect devotion, appear in this sequence. The only circumstance that disturbs the poet-lover is his lady's absence: first temporary, due to their enforced separation; then permanent, due to her death. The relationship depicted between the lover and his lady is a model for other loyal relationships. Just as fidelity persists between the lady and her absent lover, so should it endure between a lord and vassal. Just as the lady attempts to aid her lover when he is helpless, so should lord and vassal respond to each other in a similar situation.

At the lady's death the poet-lover attempts to continue his exemplary loyal behavior. For a long time he lives in No-care, in a state of suspended animation, participating in life only through memory. Yet we learn in the dream vision how he wishes for the joys of love and companionship that release from his oath of fidelity may bring him. At the same time, he also wishes to embody the social ideal of the loyal lover.

It can be no accident that this book concerns troth. A medieval prince had many bonds of obligation. Charles' loyalties--to his father, king, and country, as well as

to wife or mistress--were sorely tested. When Charles' father Louis of Orleans, was assassinated by John the Fearless, Duke of Burgundy, Charles appealed to his uncle, King Charles VI, to bring Burgundy to justice. The king's lack of interest and vacillation in prosecuting the affair drove Charles to alliances with the English and the Armagnacs against the king and a six-year war against the Burgundians in the king's own territories. Eventually, after repeated frustrations, Charles made a reluctant peace with Burgundy and returned to the king's side. Charles demonstrated his allegiance to king and country by his presence at Agincourt and was captured for his pains. His ransom and return were not high on anyone's list of priorities, and little was done by anyone except his family, notably his half-brother Dunois, companion in arms to the Maid of Orleans, to aid the Duke.

Although in 1417 Charles firmly refused to repudiate his overlord and recognize Henry V as King of France, by 1433 he was willing to do so. Hardly an abrupt or opportunistic move, Enid McLeod comments on this change of heart:

Some French historians have roundly condemned Charles for these promises, accusing him of selling both his country and his honor. . . . But actions can only be fairly judged in the light of circumstances prevailing at the time and by contemporary codes of conduct of accepted behavior and practice. . . . In 1417 France had

in Charles VI a universally recognized king, even though he may have been feeble-witted . . . Charles' offer /to recognize Henry V as king of France/ was made first and foremost with the aim of ending a war that 17 years later had brought his country into a state of abject ruin such as she had rarely known and as a result of his mature belief that her own sovereign prince was powerless to save and govern her.⁵

Despite the reversal of his position, a reconsideration which at least made some action or negotiation possible, Charles could accomplish nothing alone. Only an alliance with the most powerful of French princes, Philip the Good of Burgundy, could effect a peace between France and England and Charles' release. Philip, the son of John the Fearless, against whom Charles had long waged war, had allied himself with the English against his own king, Charles VII, to avenge John the Fearless' assassination, which Philip believed was carried out with the complicity of the king. Charles and Philip both had to overcome ingrained hereditary enmities, renege on former obligations, renounce old feuds and vows, in order to achieve peace and freedom.

At the same time that Charles had to realign his own loyalties in order to survive and be released, he had to depend on the traditional loyalties of his retainers towards him to preserve his fortune and estates. While his half-brother Dunois guarded Charles' estates and fought against the English and the Burgundians for the French

King, Charles negotiated with the English and Burgundy for peace.

The intricate tangle of political and personal alliances made the question of loyalty extremely complex. The distinction between realigning one's loyalties and betrayal is a fine one. In his youth Charles had made a treaty with the English against Charles VI, his king, as did the house of Burgundy subsequently. Some years later The Duke of Alençon, Charles' former son-in-law, did the same and was tried for treason. In 1458 Charles made one of his rare public appearances to speak in defense of Alençon, but the Duke was condemned to death, the sentence commuted to imprisonment in the donjons of Loches.

The question of troth, then, was a meaningful one to the poet on several levels. We learn as the poet-lover did that sometimes necessity or fortune makes us abandon cherished ideals. As Daniel Poirion points out in Le Poete et le Prince, the backward-looking decadence often attributed to 15th century court poetry might be better understood as nostalgia, not only for the comforts and privileges of the past, which were threatened by the rise of the bourgeoisie and a money economy, but for its ideals, which were undermined by social change as well. The raison d'etre of poetic lyrism Poirion sees in "the will to take the ideal seriously." While the rest of the world

attached itself to practical and rational values, the aristocracy countered with nostalgia and fantasy in order to:

comprendre et composer l'homme, l'élèver au dessous de la nature et le soumettre à l'ordre des idées, lui faire dépasser le monde de la vulgarité et la médiocrité pour réaliser la société élégante et raffinée de la cour.⁶

Charles' English book is concerned with the examination of the ideal of truth and the attempt by the poet-lover to live up to that ideal. It is the task of lyric poetry, says Poirion, to define man and present him in his most intimate truth. The English poems of Charles of Orleans do that and reveal a man inadequate to his aspirations of perfect truth, but made noble by his aspiration and human by his failure.

2. Convention and Autobiography in the First Ballade Sequence

The series of poems which opens the book is so carefully composed that it might stand as a book on its own. It tells of the poet-lover's affair with Lady Beauty, his grief at her death and his withdrawal from the service of love. Although ostensibly a commonplace collection on a typical courtly theme, the first ballade sequence disguises profound personal concerns with the habit of allegory.

The narrative introduction to the series, a part of which is missing in the English manuscript, but extant in the French, describes how Charles is brought to the Court of Love by Age and enrolled in Love's service. Charles has heard of the pain a lover must bear, but his reluctance to love is overcome by the sight of Lady Beauty. The English version begins with the letter of admission to Love's service and then diverges from the French, for, proclaiming himself too timid to speak to the lady, Charles resolves to write to her and thus gives the excuse for the ballades to follow.

In the first ballade the lover begs to be admitted to the lady's service and in the second requests that they

exchange hearts. The third poem describes the effect of the first sight of Beauty on the lover: "Gret Perille is in hasty biholding / Such thyng as may encause a body dye". The next ballade (four) continues in this strain with a description of the heart, defenceless against the lady's eyes. The power of the lady's eyes is a frequent topic among the Italians. The lover again begs for mercy in ballade five, and the sixth, the first of several allegorical debate poems, recounts a conversation between the lover and his heart. The traditional conflicts between the pain and hope of love are depicted in seven. Ballade eight again uses the dissociated lover and his heart. Compliments to the peerless lady follow in nine, and ten tells how her letter has allayed his grief. The eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth ballades complain about the lady's absence and the fourteenth asks for more news of her and pledges fidelity despite their separation. In the next two poems the lover seeks to move the lady to pity and complains that he is denied pleasure. The seventeenth ballade, as common in English as in Provençal by this time and similar to Petrarch's sonnet 269, is a typical reverdie: beginning with a description of joyous May, it ends by pointing out that the gay season is at odds with the Lover's life in captivity. In eighteen, despite the alliance of his enemies Displeasure, Thought, Woe and Heaviness, the lover remains steadfast. The lady delights the

Lover by requesting a ballade in 19, and in 20 the lover marvels how he lives on without the heart he has given to his lady. Ballade 21 is a unique poem in praise of writing and the soothing effect it has on the lover as well as its possible moving effect on the beloved. The next two poems have clear political overtones and demand succour. After a ballade describing the heart enthroned in a paradise for the martyrs of Love (24), the lover again calls for aid against his allegorical enemies (25). In 26 the lover's heart is aflame: unable to extinguish the fire with his tears the lover again calls to his friends for help. The heart again seeks allies in ballade 27 and in the next two poems receives news from his lady and tells how comforted he has been. His relief is short lived, however, and his anxieties reassert themselves, for in ballade 30 he reminds the lady of the alliance between them and in the following poem asks for assurance of her fidelity. The 32nd ballade describes how the lover takes care of the heart which the lady left in his safe-keeping. In a dialog between the lover and the heart (33), the lover announces that the lady is coming: she set sail yesterday. This causes the lover to rejoice in 34 over the lady's faithfullness. Another source of comfort to the lover is a mirror he bought from love which shows him his lady (35). His spirits are lifted by a letter he receives in ballade 36 and the lover trusts to see the

lady soon. He finds his heart in the company of Hope (37), and writes in praise of his lady (38). But by ballade 39 the lady has apparently come and gone because the lover misses her and then rails against unkind Fortune (40). Although the lover feels that Fortune is changing her attitude towards him (41), on May Day (42) he resents the seasonal jollity while he is held captive. So the heart becomes a hermit in 43 because he has had no word from his lady. Although the heart is sunk in a depression, in ballade 44 the lover rouses enough passion to issue a formal challenge to Danger, who keeps the lover and the lady apart. In 45 the lover feels that his heart will not awake until the lady lets in sunlight at the windows of the lover's eyes. A game of tables, the forerunner of backgammon, is described in ballade 46 and the lover asks Love to teach him some new technique to win the game. The lover's spirits are better in 47 and he praises the lady's fidelity. In another May poem (48), the lover encourages his heart to participate in the rites of May. In ballade 49 the lover tells how richly he describes his heart's woe in writing. But still faced with adversity he must fortify the castle of his heart in 50. In 51 the lover predicts that he will be both blind and speechless when he sees her again (this speechlessness in moments of emotional upheaval is a frequent motif

in Charles' poetry) but anticipates later telling her his whole life if they are left together without candlelight. Ballade 52 has the lover chiding Hope for not bringing the lady as promised and the weather that May Day, full of thunder, wind and rain, mirrors the adversity in the lover's heart (53). He believes that May bears him company: "For wrecchis whiche that ere in thought have / As doth hit them a gret tranquyllete / To haue a felawe lyue with them in payne." The lover begs the lady in ballade 54 not to stop loving him and to write, but her silence is explained in the next poem when Woeful Tidings gains entrance to the heart with news that the lady is sick. This throws the heart into the blackest despair and he wishes only to die (55). And in 56, although the lover informs the heart that the lady has recovered, the heart scarcely dares to believe it. In 57 comes the shocking news of the lady's death and the lover's promise to serve her with prayers and tears. The next three poems do not occur in any French version and all express to a greater or lesser extent a desire for death. Number 58 recreates the great lack in the lover's life: he knows not whether he is alive or dead, feels no pleasure or joy and compares himself to zero, which makes a number but is nothing itself. Christine de Pisan's poem "Seulete suy" is an obvious analog for ballade 59, an exercise in anaphora in which every line begins with "alone." A ballade of

contrarities (60) based on his living death follows and is reminiscent of Petrarch's sonnet 104. We rejoin the French sequence with ballade 61 in which the metaphor of the chess game is used and his mistress, the all powerful queen of the board, is captured by Death. The next ballade has no French equivalent but carries over the refrain of the previous ballade, "Without so be y make a lady newe", into the first line of the poem: "Shulde y me make a lady newe Fy Fy." In this ballade, nevertheless, the lover resolves that his oath of fidelity to his lady shall last all his life. In ballade 63 the arrival of New Year's Day evokes the painful memory of how often the lover thought of what gift to present to his love, but now that she is dead he can only offer her masses and prayers. In the same tone the next ballade (64) recalls the beauty of the lady and compares her to the legendary beauties of the past also slain by death and concludes that a life in which death wars continually against love is a thing in vain. May Day comes around once again (65) and the lover is asked to choose between the flower and the leaf. He chooses the leaf since his flower has already been taken from him but he again pessimistically concludes that "Ther nys leef nor flowre that doth endewre / But a seasoun as sowne doth in a belle." The next poem recounts a dream in which a flower comes to chide the lover on his choice of the leaf. He continues to dwell on his lady's death and his demonstrations of grief in the next two ballades (67, 68). Ballade 69

is more resigned to the vicissitudes of life and the lover thanks Love for his largesse but laments the doubleness of love; he hints that he still hopes for some benefit from Love since he served faithfully. Another May poem (70) starts out like a chanson d'aventure or a pastourelle or like Petrarch seeking the solitude of desert ways in sonnet 28; but as befits Charles' noble rank he meets no mere shepherdess but the goddess Venus who offers to aid him in his affairs of the heart, but Charles refuses to be comforted. Ballade 71 ties together previous themes: the wounding of the heart through the eyes by beauty and the illness which results; the fire which devours the heart's lodging. The surgeon No-care heals the heart and when he recovers he thanks the surgeon, who advises him to keep away from the winds of love and blasty sighs and to beware of pleasure which creeps in at an eye. In ballade 72 Valentine's Day dawns brightly and the lover can not sleep for the chirping of the birds assembled outside to choose their mates. The lover, envious of the birds' happiness, cries into his pillow. A detached comment on love follows in 73, an octosyllabic ballade, in which the lover speaks disparagingly of those who wish for love's grace without grief. Number 74 is another poem which has no French version and like others which exist only in English expresses a desire for death.

The lover asks whoever wishes to acquaint himself with sorrow to seek him: he has enough to lend without worrying about repayment. He invokes the three Fates and asks for death.

At this point the ballades are interrupted by a vision in complaint, a dream narrative composed of ballade stanzas without refrains. The lover goes to bed and in his sleep is visited by a grey-locked old man who identifies himself as Age. He advises the lover that if he continues in Love's service he will only be mocked by the young, but if he thanks Love for his courtesy and humbly seeks to yield his homage, he may acquit himself honorably. The lover awakes and decides to heed the advice of Age. He resolves to shut fast his eyes and ears: he who wishes to keep away from love must imprison his eyes, for if they go at large they will awake the heart, pluck him, shake him, and shove out reason. The lover begins to write a petition to Love, which he will present at the next feast when he asks for release from his agreement. The petition formally distinguishes itself by a very different meter and names the humble servant as "Charlis, duk of Orlyaunce." Speaking of himself in the third person he courteously makes his excuses to Love.

The narrative mood continues as the ballades resume. In ballade 75 Love takes the petition and chides the lover for his wilfulness and lack of reason. The only solution

to his sorrow is to make a new conquest "Syn gyne the strok of deth ther is no cure." The lover replies in ballade 76 and swears that he will never love another lady so he will no longer seek Love's courtesy. Although reluctant to release the lover, Love finally agrees to do so in ballade 77. He convenes his parliament and presents the matter to them. On their accord, the heart which lay in hostage is returned to the Lover's bosom. Sad to quit the folks of Love's company, the weeping lover leaves (78). Comfort accompanies him to the lover's childhood home, No-care, where the lover intends to remain until he dies (80). The next day before the sun rises the lover writes a letter which Comfort takes when he returns to Love. After formal greetings and elaborate pleasantries he apologizes for his tearful leavetaking which prevented him from doing his "welwilling" and signs and dates the letter with the day and the month but unfortunately for scholars omits the year. The final ballade, 82, describes his convalescence: "the plaster of no care / Vnto myn hert so long and soft hath leyne / Thet y am hool" and shall never again be a victim of Love's malady. Even though his eyes are unruly and spy about for beauty, just as they did the first time he fell ill, he is confident; and when he hears folk complain of Love, "I laughe as that myn hert shulde brest atayn." But like

Petrarch's sonnet 62, this overstatement of his confidence leaves us with some suspicion of the permanence of the cure.

The sequence is almost entirely composed of ready made genres and motifs: personification allegories from the Roman de la Rose; debates between the lover and his heart; troubadour complaints and compliments to the far-away lady; a reverdie, a challenge, a catalog of legendary ladies; ballades against Fortune and the enemies of love; on the phoenix, the flower and the leaf, the lady's eyes, the burning heart, the cure for love and the vanity of life; occasional poems on May Day, New Year's Day, St. Valentine's Day; exercises in anaphora, oxymoron, dialog, invective and double-entendre. Despite the extreme conventionality of the poems, centuries of critics have detected the poet's own voice in them and read his intimate history in the sequence. A generation of scholars has burrowed through texts and archives, seeking the identity of the lady to whom the poems were addressed. Anagrams, acrostics, court records, death dates, textual clues and wills have all been brought to bear on this matter. The results have been predictably inconclusive and the candidates sundry.

Robert Steele, editor of the English poems, believed the lady to be Maud, Countess of Arundel, a woman powerful enough to have exercised some influence on Charles' behalf

and whose husband, as Captain of Rouen during this phase of the Hundred Years' War, was her probable excuse for frequent crossings of the Channel. She also died at a time appropriate for commemoration in these poems if they were written in the 1430's as Steele estimates.

Bonne d'Armagnac, Charles' second wife, is a sentimental favorite. She too died conveniently in the mid 1430's and many poems address the lady as "good" or "goodly fair". There are no documented voyages to her husband's side, however, as we hear of in the poems, and that is cause enough for some to eliminate her.

Other scholars object to the aforementioned candidates since they are not "of France" as was Charles' first wife, Richard II's child widow, Isabelle, daughter of King Charles VI. But Isabelle died in childbirth six years before Charles' capture and although she may have retained a place in his thoughts, it is hard to imagine her death as triggering the heartfelt outbursts twenty years later.

Rejecting the cherchez-la-femme school of literary criticism, Constant Beaufils declared that it was evident that the poems were inspired by no mortal woman but by the personification of France, cleverly disguised with such human attributes as eyes, lips, a voice and a body.⁶ A spurious erotic element was introduced into the poems in order to deceive the English and mask the poet's patriotic passions.

Although Beaufils may have carried his argument to extremes, he is among the few critics to acknowledge that a book may be a fiction, that the Lady Beauty may be a convenient invention or disguise around whom the poet may collect, structure and preserve his poems. Who Lady Beauty was the poet did not choose to discuss, but the kind of relationship he had with her is clearly delineated. Throughout the first ballade sequence the poet depicts a relationship of mutual interest and advancement, of reciprocal aid and affection. In ballade 14 the poet speaks of "socoure . . . / Vnto oure hertis bothe." In ballade 22 he asks the lady to avenge him. He recognizes in ballade 28 that he is beholden to her for "she hath tane thee hert as in support / To helpe in all she kan this out of were / Y stonde." Ballade 30 speaks of the alliance made between them by the god of love and the letter of treaty written by Love's secretary, Promise Plain, by which Love binds "for wele or payne / oure weelis twayne to stonde in more surete / as for oon wele." This sounds very much like the traditional marriage vows. When the lady sets forth on a voyage to her lover in ballade 33, the lover wonders "What myght she more for þe don wold y lere / Then put hir silf in such a payne and fray." Hope reminds the heart that "She loueth thee of feithfull fantase / And with good wille wolles doon to the likyng / In all to doon that is to her sittynge" in

ballade 37, and the poet often praises her steadfastness and loyalty to him.

The sympathetic relationship which governs the first ballade sequence contrasts with the adversary relationship of the second. After the first poem in the second series, ballade 85, in which the lady is informed that the lover's life is in her hands, it is suggested that some element of reciprocity might be introduced into the relationship. Then the complaints begin. In ballade 88 everything is subject to change--the seasons, day and night, the moon--all but the cold, cruel lady. The poet-lover pronounces his "fleshly soft" lady in ballade 90 "more hard than eny ston." Her pity is begged as a reward for his service, as a cure for his fatal lovesickness and as her duty as a Christian. In both ballades 92 and 94 he chides her for loving strangers better than her own faithful servant. His life is like a living death and he is like the moth attracted to the candle flame, transfixed between hope and dread. Although the lady relents somewhat in ballade 107 and agrees to accept his heart, in the very next poem he addresses Love and bids adieu to the whole treacherous business. This poem is immediately followed by a letter in which the lover repents for his hasty words. By the next ballade all has been forgiven. He apologizes, puts himself once more at her service and begs

for a kiss. The sequence breaks off with a poem of farewell upon their parting.

Their are few, if any, original or individual elements in either series of ballades. They employ equally familiar and traditional motifs. The beloved objects in both are similarly shadowy and anonymous. Yet the two sequences differ radically. At the same time that he respects the conventions of a highly formalized art, the poet manipulates them to suit his own personal expressive ends. The topoi themselves may be unrevealing and opaque, like letters of the alphabet; but the whole, the accumulation and combination of motifs, is more expressive than the sum of its parts and the sequences communicate specific and personal information. By judicious selection of certain conventions and the rigorous elimination of others, the poet reveals the characters, if not the identities, of the ladies and the nature of his relationships with them.

The lady of the second ballade sequence is a cruel coquette, whose affection the poet has yet to win. She is la belle dame sans merci, a disdainful beauty whose reluctance to accept her suitor motivates him to continue to pursue her. The adversary relationship between the poet-lover and his lady sustains and organizes the poems of the second ballade sequence.

The lady of the first ballade sequence is honest, self-sacrificing, loyal and kind. She is already bound **to**

the poet-lover as the lady in the second ballade sequence is not. The poet never complains of the lady's coldness or obstinacy. He never criticizes her behavior as either too familiar with others or too distant with him. He never doubts or reproaches her.

The first ballade sequence is unusual in this respect. In literature as well as in life the lovers themselves most often create obstacles to the happy conclusion of their affair. And in most series of poems the poet-lover's remonstrations with his diffident or fickle mistress form the bulk of the sequence. His insecure and unstable position vis-à-vis his mistress creates tension and a dramatic situation develops between the lover and his lady. In the first ballade sequence there is no doubt about the lady's reaction, no anxiety on the lover's part. The love affair is not threatened by any internal factors but by external circumstances.

Although assured of his lady's affection, the poet-lover is bereft of her presence. They are separated and he bewails her absence. In ballade 10 it is the poet-lover's distance from the lady which saddens him. In the 11th ballade Absence holds Pleasure under key. The lady is missed in 19 and the lover remembers her departure in 21. In 48 the lady is absent on May Day so the lover urges his heart to go to the woods and seek good company to cheer him. Not only is the lady absent, but the

lover lacks mobility. The lover must wait for the lady to come to him in ballade 36 and in 28 she must come and help him out of where he stands. In 39 he would send his wishes and himself, doubtless, if he could, over the foamy ocean to his lady's house. Often the lover and the heart are garrisoned in a castle preparing for war against foes (29, 50); or the heart, in a fit of melancholy, withdraws from the world (43, 45, 48, 49).

The seige mentality of the lover is further revealed by his frequent use of military metaphors: the challenge, the siege, the enemies and allies, and the battles, which are ever present even under the colors of la tendre guerre. And the lover's alienation from his surroundings is expressed in ballade 25 when he must look glad "in placis straunge or ellis in company."

The separation of these devoted lovers is occasionally explained by the poet-lover's status as a "prisoner." He refers to himself in ballade 17 as a "woofulle caytijf." Caitiff originally denoted a captive in Norman French but usage widened to mean a wretch or pitiful person, so that the poet's use of it is ambiguous, but not insignificant. In ballade 18 the lover is imprisoned, but allegorically by Despair, Wrath, Woe, and Heavyness. The refrain of the 27th ballade is "As in/the prison of grevous disple-saunce." Although typically amatory in the first two

stanzas, in the third the poet hopes "That y may se the tyme sone to arise / That euery man may to his desere / Without safcondit seche ther enterprise." The simple reference to a safeconduct instantly politicizes the stanza, but the poet again turns this into a mere metaphor by concluding "And then may love if so he werken wise / Of daungere take but right a smalle doutance." With similar agility the lover is in ballade 40 a martyr for love and prisoner. Whether he means "and a prisoner of love" or "prisoner" tout court is not indicated. He is more direct in ballade 42 where he is "caytif and martere through Fortune."

Imprisonment in these poems is almost always metaphorical and every reference to imprisonment is rendered innocuous by deliberate ambiguity and double-entendre. Yet nothing else explains the separation of the lover and his beloved and nothing else tallies so precisely with the biographical data of Charles of Orleans. Yet the poet seems to have deliberately minimized references to his own situation.

This was not the only option open to him. Another prisoner of Henry V, King James I of Scotland, chose to exploit the theme of captivity in his poem. He spoke of the four stone walls which confined him, his lack of freedom, and the pleasures enjoyed by all of Nature's

creatures, but denied him: "The bird, the best, the fisch eke in the see / They lyve in fredom euerich in his kynd. / And I a man, and lakkith libertee."⁷ James' only amusement in his dreary cell and only relief from his despair is the window, from which he sees the lady who will be his salvation and through which he escapes in a dream to visit the realms of Venus, Minerva and Fortune.

Charles, of course, was never chained to a dungeon wall nor restricted to a single chamber. During his first few years in England he was held in the Tower of London; then, outside London, under guardians appointed by the king. Later, nobles could request the pleasure of the duke's company. This was neither hardship nor hospitality since Charles was required to pay for his bed and board. He was constantly watched, probably not so much by the jealous husbands of lyric tradition as by careful servants. The privilege of hunting was denied him because too many prisoners had made their escapes that way, but Charles probably had the run of the manor or castle and was permitted to go about the neighboring countryside on foot and accompanied. Friendship ripened between Charles and some of his captors, notably the Duke of Suffolk, who had been Charles' brother's captive in France for some years. Despite the relative ease and comfort of his captivity he longed for home.

On his return to France Charles celebrated his freedom with an ex libris, XL D-C 40, which Pierre Champion interprets as a reference to 1440, the year of Charles' release. The date was inscribed in every book Charles collected at Blois, but there is not a single overt mention of his experience in any book he wrote.

There is a paradox in these poems that has perhaps contributed to doubt over their authorship. The poet refers to himself by name on four occasions. And despite his unequivocal identification of himself in the text, he never describes a single historical event associated with him: the War between the Burgundians and Armagnacs, the Hundred Years' War, Agincourt, or the Tower of London, and he names no others except himself but surrounds himself with allegorical abstractions: Love, Lady Beauty, the heart, Good Tidings, Dangier. The only story he tells is that of the lover. Yet it is hard to believe that when he depicts himself as a prisoner of love he does not see himself as prisoner of the English; and that when he bewails his separation from his lady he does not lament his exile from his homeland.

The poet is a chronic liar who cannot but tell the truth. In using the banal conventions of medieval poetry he liberates the censor of his consciousness and reveals his true concerns. The love poet can speak of himself as

a pathetic captive and defiantly challenge his enemies. He can complain about his separation from his mistress and express his desire to cross the ocean and join her. He can elicit sympathy for his woes from all and sundry. The political prisoner can do none of these without holding himself up to ridicule, angering his captors and risking stricter supervision to prevent any attempt at his escape. In order to express himself the prisoner must adopt another role. The role of lover gives him a freedom of expression he would not otherwise have.

Among the most interesting poems of the first ballade sequence are the personification allegories. The mode usually requires longer and more explicit narratives but the poet uses skillful compression of metaphor and subtle characterization to create some of his best ballades. Many of the characters of the Roman de la Rose appear: Danger, Disdain, Fortune, Pity, and Hope; but they are present as supporting cast only. The real drama revolves not around these conflicting characters, nor even around the lover and his lady. The conflict is between the lover and his heart.

The heart is almost consistently characterized as a poor, naked, defenceless creature and his role in the ballades is generally passive. He has been wounded by the darts from the lady's eyes and is consequently fainty, woundy, poor, leady, dullid and a martyr to love

until a surgeon cures him after his lady's death. But despite his pathetic weakness the heart is undisputed ruler of the lover's being. He commands his messengers, the eyes (ballade 3). He has a fortress built on the rock of Esperaunce which the lover must furnish with the goods of comfort and gladness (50). The heart often holds meetings and his counselors are sometimes summoned (27) and sometimes admitted to his presence (37). Sometimes, despite the lover's vigilance, they sneak in, like Woeful Tidings in ballade 55. Hope is a frequent advisor, but the lover indignantly accuses him of being a flattering false friend (56). The heart has formidable enemies in league against him: Danger, Distress, Disdain, Thought, Pain and Heavyness; and faltering allies: Pity and Truth are often caught sleeping, Comfort is usually absent and Joy imprisoned. Hope feeds the heart, but according to the lover, also takes advantage of him.

The refrain of ballade 7 informs us that the heart is the lover's master ("Myn hert the whiche that mayster is of me"). Although the lover often tries to help him and give him advice, the heart rarely follows it. The lover dares not disobey his heart's desire (8): with imperious inconsideration the heart will not let the lover sleep at night, but reads to him from a romance about the lady's deeds. And like a royal patron of the arts the heart commands the lover to write a poem to send to the lady

(21). The lover attempts to reason with his heart but to no avail. Ballade 6 gives us a good picture of the characters and their relationship.

Not long a-goo y hyed me apase
 In secret wise myn hert forto consayle
 Himsilf forto withdrawe as for a space
 Out of louys paynfulle thought and trauayle
 To which he seide me nay sett there a nayle
 Speke me no more therof y hertly pray
 For god wot to loue y shalle me payne
 For y have chose the fayrist that be may
 As me reportid hath myn eyen twayne

Now pardone me y seide as in this case
 For whi y sey hit for oure both avayle
 With alle the power that god welle in me hase
 Thet in good trouthe thou dost me to meryayle
 Seest thou not welle that fortune doth us fayle
 Hast thou good lust to lyue in sorow/nay
 I wis he seide y trust more to attayne
 I had a praty look yit yestirday
 As me reportid hath myn eyen twayne

Allas seide y thou fonnyst as haue y grace
 That for oon look thi lijf lust to biwayle
 For countenaunce or lookis of this face
 Knowist thou hir thou3t/ye cast me lo a kayle
 O pese/quod he now good y lust not rayle
 Nor y bileue no word thou dost me say
 For trewly serue y shalle and neuyr fayne
 Of good which is the best/leue this aray
 As me reportid hath myn eyen twayne

O y-wis madame in this maner aray
 Myn hert and y thus haue ye brost atwayne
 But what swete hert as gide vs such away
 As me reportid hath myn eyen twayne

The lover, who is always "I" in the ballades, is characterized only through his relationship with the heart. He is always serving the heart, giving advice, provisioning the castle, writing poems, bearing and taking messages.

The lover's voice is that of reason. The heart, in a rare moment of optimism, is willing to gamble away his happiness on the basis of a pretty look. The lover attempts to restrain him. In another ballade (43) the lover has just the opposite problem. Fortune, allied with pain and heavyness, banished the heart from the kingdom of gladness. He took refuge in the wood of care at the hermitage of thoughtful fantasy

. . . in payne to ly
Where he contentith bide his lyvis space
And yet y say him how it is folý

Moche haue y spent of speche to his profite
But that to harke y trowe he is not he
Mi wordis alle nar worthi to him a myte
His wille is sett in suche perplexite
That lightly loo hit kan not chaungid be
So is he gouernyd al as bi distres
Which gainst his profit doth neuýr cesse
Him to avise such counselle ist he hase
That nyght and day him holdith company
That he may not eschewe his wrecchid case
And yet y say him how it is folý

This as for me y cast to leue him quyt . . .

The heart has no equilibrium. When left to his own devices the heart lies abed like an invalid, or mopes around in his room. Glad tidings elate him but woeful tidings distress him unbearably. He is either soaring into bliss at a letter from his lady or drowning in his salt tears. Upon learning of his lady's sickness the heart utterly despairs and wishes to die (55):

That his most fayre and goodly swete hert dere
 Whom he hath long tyme servid feithfully
 O welaway doth now in seeknes ly
 For which dispeyre he doth himsilf confound
 Wishing that he were depe graue vndir ground
 And saith how that his lijf doth him ennoy

I oft have goon to comfort him dowlles
 And bad him take no drede nor displesere
 For what bi goddis grace to his gladnes
 That hit nys deedly seekness shalle he here
 And that she shalle be helid hastily
 But what y say he settith not therby
 Saue wayle and wepe and prayeth in euery stounde
 That he were in his wynding sheet y wounde
 And saith how that his lijf doth him ennoy

So disturbed is the heart that when the lover brings
 good news of the lady's recovery, the heart will not
 believe him. In another poem (ballade 49) the lover
 observes his troubled heart:

When y am hushte hit mervayle to me is
 To here myn hert how that he talkith soft
 And so with loue doth fester his woundis
 Which neue and neue hath hurtis to him brought

In these poems the poet gives us an astute but traditional psychological portrait of a person divided by love. The lover, the "I," represents the rational faculty, and the heart the unruly emotions and appetites. It is far from original, for debates between desire and reason, the body and the soul or will and wit continued throughout the Middle Ages into the Renaissance. The troubadours treated the irrational aspect of love in a mimetic

manner, with an abrupt, paratactic, highly mixed style. Charles chose the traditional French technique of analysis and representation through allegory.

The vivid characterization of the heart tallies all too closely with descriptions of Charles' uncle, the deranged King Charles VI. The king's madness first evinced itself while the king and his companions were crossing a forest. In a fit of panic the king killed four of his guards and then fled from his retainers. He was found unconscious many hours later and several kilometers away. Although he recovered soon from this initial lapse, he periodically succumbed to madness throughout his reign. Prolonged depressive states, during which he would not sleep or wash or see even the closest members of his family were followed by outbursts of manic activity when he would pursue frantically the pleasures of the court. Like the heart he would alternately shut himself away from all or recklessly plan elaborate games and festivities. Even when the king was not "absent," as the chroniclers called it when he was not lucid enough to see any one, he was incapable of governing, of carrying out any policy. Impatient, unbalanced and dependent on advisors he would one day be amenable to requests and the next day obstinate. He acted like the heart, on impulse, and avoided unpleasantness when he was not

overwhelmed by debilitating unhappiness. Charles' knowledge of the king's erratic behavior came to him first hand. Charles' adolescence was abruptly terminated by the murder of his father, Louis, by John the Fearless, Duke of Burgundy. John went unpunished and uncensured for his crime due to the king's lack of decisiveness and resolution. To obtain some kind of justice, or even general acknowledgment of Burgundy's crime, Charles allied himself with Bernard of Armagnac and formented what became known as the war between the Burgundians and the Armagnacs. For nearly six years the war dragged on in and around Paris, with long periods of unsatisfactory truce made by the king. The king first promised to chastise Burgundy, then staged an elaborate public reconciliation where Charles was made to ask Burgundy's forgiveness for waging war against him, but no mention was made of Burgundy's initial crime.

Charles' knowledge of the abnormal psychological behavior he portrays may stem more from his experience at court than from literary models. Madmen in medieval literature either disappear into the woods and live like savages off roots and berries; or in less extreme cases pass sleepless nights, rise early, wander aimlessly, avoid company, weep and despair. No literary model exhibits the manic-depressive swing of the heart: now confident of the success of every unlikely enterprise, but soon causelessly hopeless, immobilized with grief.

The allegory behind the allegory then contains a political element. We see from the love allegory what a poor ruler the heart makes: how dependent he is on his other faculties; how he must be warned, restrained, comforted and coaxed by the lover or reason; how insecure and unstable he is and how his extreme states endanger the lover's being. To what extent and how consciously did Charles equate the heart with the king? How closely did the poet identify with his splintered persona? Did he fear the effect of the long years of imprisonment, exile and alienation? We know from ballade 21 that Charles believed in the healing powers of poetry. The theme of the first ballade sequence is the malady of love, its symptoms, and its cure. The lover acts in many ways as the physician to the heart, emphasizing whatever truths may stabilize it. In these and other poems the poet-lover searches for ways to alleviate the pain of absence, death and loving. And the poems themselves are one way of soothing his sorrow.

Honure and prays as mot to him habound
 That first did fynde the wayes of writyng
 For comfort gret ordeynyd he that stounde
 To suche as haue of louys payne felyng
 For when to speke they naue tyme nor metyng
 To say ther ladies of ther adversite
 Yet doth it them a gret tranquyllite
 Forto endite and sende as in writyng
 What grevous lijf they lede as semeth me
 Only for loue and feithfulle trewe servyng

Writing is a release for his emotions and his techniques of allegory and metaphor serve well as methods of identifying, objectifying and externalizing his woe. His ultimate defense, the cultivation of nonchaloir or no-care in English, provides total immunity and in the late poems his ironic detachment becomes a hallmark of his work.

Even though illness plagues him, loyalty preoccupies him. He begs the lady to remember her troth and be faithful. Blue is said to be fitting to so virtuous a lady because it is the color of fidelity. Hope is scorned because he is not true to his word and Danger is a false traitor. The lover pictures himself as the true and immutable element in a changeable world ruled by the doubleness of Fortune. He constantly stresses his own faithful service and unswerving devotion which he performs without recompense. The motif of troth illustrates perfectly the nature of the first ballade sequence. Although sexual fidelity is a traditionally desired trait in a lover, behind Charles' pleas and protestations, uttered in an ostensibly erotic situation, we sense a demand for something additional. His tone is always one of "not only, but also," and there is a certain transparency in his verse which lets us see one kind of loyalty in terms of another. When the lover praises his lady it is not because she rejects other suitors but because she

aids him either spiritually or materially. He emphasizes his own loyal behaviour so that his lady, the king, and his allies in France will perhaps be shamed into obtaining his release.

Charles' position during those years was extremely precarious. Dependent on his wife to bring his plight to the attention of Charles VI, dependent of Charles VI to secure his release from Henry V, dependent on his half brother Dunois, the bastard of Orleans, to defend his lands and on family friends and retainers to manage his estates so that ransom could eventually be raised, Charles was utterly at the mercy of his lord and his vassals. And this occurred at a time when the bonds of feudal loyalty were most brittle and rusting. Indeed, Charles himself, when on the matter of his father's death he could not obtain satisfaction from the French king, made an alliance with the English king and invited his troops to France to help fight Burgundy. This practice was not uncommon: another time Burgundy was England's ally against Charles. But it indicates the fragility of feudal ties in this period and the necessity for Charles to continually protest his loyalty to the king. For Charles, the bonds of feudal loyalty were the only link to freedom. (Even more ironically, for James I of Scotland it was holy wedlock to an English lady which liberated him.)

The vocabulary and conventions of courtly love originated in the troubadour lyric in metaphors drawn from the socio-political reality of that time. By the 15th century the metaphor was dead. The society had been transformed from a feudal economy to a bourgeois one; the passionate longings of the troubadours which had necessitated disguise and dissembling had become silly holiday games perpetuated by frivolous courtiers; the metaphors of service and bondage had become a commonplace. Charles revived the metaphor by extending it further, completing the circle and pointing it back to his political situation via the complaint of a lover.

The conventional aspect of the late Middle English lyric has often been noted, and those by Charles of Orleans are no less conventional than others. But with Charles we are privileged to know a quantity of details about his life and times. This information can illuminate the relations between convention and autobiography, fiction and truth, art and life in late medieval poetry.

Although the first ballade sequence is an assortment of poems in fixed styles and genres, it nevertheless uses these conventions selectively. The lady is always the princesse lointaine but never la belle dame sans merci. The lover is only occasionally called a prisoner but he always suffers from his powerlessness and immobility. This creates the necessary obstacle to the love affair.

The malady of love is stressed throughout the cycle, not the delirious joy of it that Bernard de Ventedour praises, and the lover attempts to cure his heart of its disease. The story of the whole sequence provides a remedy for love, but not a celebration of it nor yet a condemnation of it.

Despite the extreme conventionality of these poems they make statements as personal as those of later poets, be they Romantic or Modern. Conventions in the medieval lyric are so rich and varied that they do not hinder the poet but allow him to express thoughts which otherwise would have been repressed. The power of these poems lies in the application of literary convention to real experience. We see through the complaint of a lover separated from his mistress to the song of a prisoner. We see behind the allegory of the troubled heart to its dual model in reality: in the external reality of history and in the internal reality of the poet's psychology. All the feeling attached to the poet's individual knowledge passes through a prism of tradition and is dispersed in the colors of allegory. Historical, political, psychological and erotic themes stand for and suggest each other. One shade hides behind another, meanings are revealed, hidden and disguised and the multiple facets of reality are illuminated. Despite the narrow range of experience explored and the conventional mode of exploration, Charles' poetry has a depth and texture unique in courtly lyrics.

3. The Roundels

The book of roundels treats much of the same material as the first ballade sequence. The poet-lover begins the series in May, the time when Love wakes his folk from their sluggardy. For the reluctant lover, however, "Ther nys as now suche thoughtis me to take / For in myn ere may non suche fleis crepe." Rather than be awakened to love, he prefers to sleep since

When that y slepe y nethir wake nor wepe
For ther nys in me sech thoughtis blake
And evyr so y cast hem of to shake
In this most ioyous lijf my self to kepe.

But by the second poem the lover can no longer keep from loving. The heart has become acquainted with Beauty and has sworn to serve her. He will gladly bear any grief or pain in her service, he avows in roundel number five, for he trusts to get "dowtless / More ioy than ther be stichis in my shert." A number of poems in praise of the lady follow but just as the thought of the lady brings joy, realization of her absence brings pain. Roundel 67 cleverly exploits the balanced structure of the roundel to express this essential paradox of love.

The refrain of the roundel introduces, interrupts and concludes the poem. The refrains are separated by

two unrepeated quatrains.

When me bithought is of my ladi dere
 The bewte shappe and goodli gouernaunce
 Hit doth for ioy myn hert to synge and daunce
 That even a blisse me thynke is him to here
 So wonder nyse pou3 pat the self plesere
 Me bynden hool vnto hir ordenaunce
 When me bithought . . .
 The bewte shappe . . .
 But forto thynke y am not to hir nere
 Hit doth myn hert to die in displesaunce
 That vnto me ther nys so gret penaunce
 Thus wel now woo myn hert doth me a-chere
 When me bithought . . .
 The bewte shappe . . .

The refrain to this roundel consists of a dependent temporal clause and an appositional phrase. The first half of the quatrain completes this clause by describing the happy effect of this thought, the singing and dancing of the heart which gives the lover bliss. In the second half of the quatrain the poet-lover says that such pleasure binds him to the lady's service when he thinks of her. The second appearance of the refrain syntactically terminates the second half of the quatrain, just as the first appearance of the refrain introduced the quatrain. A grammatical mirror image is created by the dependent clause refrains bracketing the two main clauses of the quatrain. Although the refrain syntactically belongs to the first quatrain, it reminds us of the circumstance and prepares us for the other effect of the thought of his lady in the second quatrain: when he remembers that he is not near her, his

heart grieves. The poet-lover concludes the quatrain with a summary of the effects of love "Thus wel now woo myn hert doth me a-chere." The fluctuating passions familiar to us from the troubadours' subtly articulated cansos here see-saw between the neutral refrains. As we have seen in the ballades, the extreme behavior of the heart is reminiscent of that of King Charles VI. Although the heart's singing and dancing may be entertaining in the first half of the poem, his complete despondency is worrisome in the second half. The heart is his hectic self in this poem and although the poem exposes his folly, the structure of the roundel emphasizes the contrasting modes of behavior and yet achieves a calm and pleasing stasis.

The familiar relationship between the lover and his heart reasserts itself in the roundels. In number 24 the heart departs from the lover to hold with Love and his party. The lover despairs of the heart's unconsidered action and the heart, heedless as ever, dismisses the lover's complaint with a characteristically colloquial expression:

He doth not ellis but mokke with me & play
 When y him say in myn adversite
 I may not lyue withouten him parde
 But saith me tewche and turneth me away
 Hit is doon ther is no more to say
 Myn hert departid is fro me.

In roundel 68 the lover warns the heart of his rashness

which may cause him to pay a penalty and which demeans the object of his desire:

A wel myn hert but wol ye not ben wise
 Bi veryy god y drede ye will aby
 If that ye pursew moche my rakil ey
 To don us bothe to smert yowre towchis nyse
 What shulde ye chepe a thing of suche a prise
 That are not worth þe thousand part to by.

Not only the heart but the eye must be admonished by the lover. The wanton eye in roundel 91 is careless and greedy. Seeing is considered theft in this poem: stealing a glance is given a literal interpretation. The lover warns: "Take sum and leve sum to anothir day / And for oure ease swift from yowre theftis glide." Should slander catch the eye at his pilfering, he will be locked up, out of the way of theft, so the lover advises prudently, if not morally, "So fy for shame lete reson by yowre gide / And stele spare not when ye se tyme and may."

The lover's advice most often goes unheeded so he is not above saying "I told you so" in roundel 71. The scheming heart, only sporadically optimistic, but then wildly so, had hoped to overcome the lady's coldness and disregarded the lover's warning:

A lo myn hert what tolde y the
 And thou seide twissh let me alone
 That if she louyd an othir one
 For alle þi craft hit wolde not be
 What wolde thou thynke such on an she
 That thei wolde be wonne anoon

A lo myn hert . . .
 And thou seide twissh . . .
 To holde þi foly now let se
 Syn all good hope is from þe goon
 And make in thee a priuy moon
 That pite lakkith in bewte
 A lo myn hert . . .
 And thou seide twissh . . .

Despite the comic circumstance and the humorous refrain, a certain sympathy and shared disappointment is communicated here at the end of the second quatrain by the lover's concession that it is a shame "That pite lakkith in bewte."

In roundel 88 the lover again expresses his exasperation with the heart. The recommendation "Be nyse myn hert as purse is of an ay" is a little mysterious and confusing. The "purse of an ay" is an eggshell and "nyse" usually means foolish or silly. But the intention seems to be to urge the heart to act with prudence and discretion. The heart's characteristic volatility is referred to by "To tittille-fittille thus alday / Think ye it is a fayre aray / As now to wepe and eft to smyle?" The lover cannot understand why the heart will not be satisfied with a negative response from the lady but must once again be beguiled by hope.

The lover finally rebels in roundel 87:

Thous shalt no more rewle me my hert
 I wol no more be to thee thrall
 To folow thee thi bostis al
 That feele therein so great a smert.

Were the heart's service worthwhile, the lover reasons, he would have had some reward for his pains before this.

This open rebellion never takes place in the first ballade sequence. The ballades are more restrained in expression and the sequence is more deliberately plotted. But in the roundels the poet-lover occasionally speaks less guardedly, under the impulse of the moment, and shows himself less subservient, less patient, and less sympathetic towards the heart. His defection from the heart, however, does not last long. By roundel 93 he is back in business restraining his hasty heart and warning him of the consequences of his rashness. This time it is the heart, not the lover, who wishes to leave Love's company. But the lover points out that the heart has not the strength to resist and that Fortune has made him Love's servant until death. And should the heart strive with Love, he may suffer even more sorely. Therefore, the heart should not attempt to flee but rather meekly seek Love's mercy.

In brief references in small poems like these the analogy between the captive heart and the captive duke is most transparent. The lover's advice to the heart is the same a rational prisoner must tell himself when tempted by thoughts of escape. We have seen in the ballade sequence how references to imprisonment are allegorized; the same

holds true in the roundel series but to a lesser extent. The words "escape" and "ransom" never appear in the ballades but in roundel 23 the poet lover admits that he cannot escape from care and heaviness and in 16 he asks his mistress to help ransom him from Danger. The brevity of the roundel seems to permit the poet to relax his self imposed censorship and to express himself more spontaneously.

Short songs are well suited to light subjects. A topic the roundels discuss but the ballades do not is kisses, a common feature of most love affairs, treated here as commodities, to be stolen, bought, given as alms and collected as debts.

In roundel 37 the poet-lover condemns social kisses, those "askanse," glancing brushes of the lips on the cheeks. They are so common that they can be bought without coin and they in no way compare to the kisses of "pleasaunce." These latter kisses are worth great risks. He advises his heart in 35 "Take take this cosse atonys atonys my hert," hushed and hurriedly, lest Danger, who watches all night in his shirt, should perceive it. The repetition of this, the refrain line, and of the words within it communicates the great urgency and secrecy of the undertaking. In roundel 48, however, the poet-lover is frustrated. The lady's mouth invites a kiss, but Danger stands too near and

the lover longs to see his enemy burnt up and "to stampe his ass his with my feet."

Sometimes despite danger the lover steals a kiss "of great plesere" (roundel 33) and should the lady permit, "To stele a nother wold y go right nere / To riche me with to y koude gedir moo." Again in poem 39 he would steal a kiss and confess to his act. He argues, however, that it should not be regarded as a felony, but if the lady agrees, as alms to feed the poor, an involuntary contribution, as it were. The poet-lover makes a confession in 57 to his "gostly fadir." He has stolen a kiss "which don was out avisyness," deliberately, but he vows to restore it or else ask for forgiveness.

The lady is the lover's debtor in roundel 47. She owes him too many kisses and to save her reputation she must pay. So determined is the lover to collect his debt that he even has a writ out and if she does not pay up, she will be arrested by an officer of love. In his greed the lover emphasizes the great shame it is to be a debtor and arrested, and ignores the necessity of discretion in the love affair.

In roundel 41 the poet lover offers to buy kisses if it pleases his lady to sell them.

If hit plese yow yowre cossis forto selle
I redy am here forto bie hem welle
Which geue yow shalle myn hert as in morgage

Hit to dispende as yowre owen heritage
 Mi loue and of plesaunce a thousand elle
 Beth not as hard with /me/ to entirmelle
 As with a straunger which þat bi yow dwelle
 That holde no lyve but of yow in homage
 If it plese . . .
 I redy am . . .
 Which geue . . .
 This bargeyne make and fy on alle perelle
 Though daunger with for sorow him forswelle
 And worche wisly though ye be yong of age
 That y may haue a plesaunt hool portage
 Thus serue me soon or say me that ye nelle
 If it plese . . .
 I redy am . . .
 Which geve . . .

In exchange for the kisses not only will he leave his heart as mortgage which she may dispose of as her very own, but he will give her his love and "of plesaunce a thousand elle." The poet puns here as he does elsewhere measuring "plesaunce," pleasure, by the ell, as he would "plesaunce," fine fabric. The commerical spirit is strong throughout this poem. The poet-lover asks for a better deal than the lady would accord a stranger, since the lover holds his life from her in homage. He urges her to strike the bargain despite Danger and he reminds her not to short-change him but give him his full share. To close the deal he pressures her to deliver the goods soon or cancel the arrangement.

The roundel is practically a lesson in salesmanship. The poet lover proposes a transaction, sets terms, seeks a favored status for himself, deliberately minimizes possible negative consequences, keeps a close watch on his acquisition and pushes to conclude the transaction. This thorough

exploitation of the commercial theme is particularly arresting and fanciful since the commodity in question is kisses.

The roundel, like Petrarch's sonnet, lends itself to the conceit or extended metaphor. The form is long enough, usually fourteen or seventeen lines, for the application of the metaphor to demand an exercise of wit, but not so long that the extension becomes tedious. These extended-metaphor roundels are often among the most successful poems. Several of the roundels play with the theme of imprisonment, as in the ballades. But in 91 the eye is a thief, in 47 kisses are debts, and roundel 56 is itself a confession to a priest. The metaphors and allegories of the first ballade sequence are usually connected with courtly life: they concern feudal obligations or military manoeuvres; those of the roundels are more varied. In roundel 53, for example, the poet-lover is depicted not as a mounted knight but as a peddler or traveler on foot carrying a heavy pack. He asks the lady's help in relieving him of his burden or straightening it. The introduction of new matter for metaphor relieves this series, which renews the events of the first ballade sequence, of monotony and stuffiness.

References to money and wealth are far more frequent in the roundels than in the more aristocratic ballades. We have seen how kisses have a monetary value. In roundel 56

the poet-lover swears by Christ that he wished his lady knew the pains he suffers for her love. He gets no reward and she might well disdain the love of so poor a wretch, yet he would rather obtain her mercy than all the world's goods in abundance.

In roundel 90 he asks for alms and to be made her beadsman. Were he given her grace then he would indeed be a rich man. He assures her that it is hard to beg for one who never did before. To support his repeated refrain for alms he explains that when he, so poor, meets Hope, so sick and wan, the lover can not help keep Hope on his feet.

The lady is a source of riches to her lover in roundel 10. "In hir he shalle se so gret and hvug larges / Of plesaunt spryngyng from gret to more goodly." But in 94 when the lady dies, Fortune takes all the riches the lover had under his care.

Of all the roundels one of the most delightful is number 25 in which the poet lover takes an uncharacteristically pragmatic and uncourtly attitude towards success in love.

Had y as moche of worldly goodis
As ther is trouthe of loue in me
I had therof so gret plente
That richis should y neuyr mys
Als bettir myght y gete y-wis
The good wille lo of my lady

Had y as . . .
 As ther ys . . .
 Forwhi my trust madame is this
 That yowre most plesaunt fresshe bewte
 So der wolde arent it shulde ye se
 That daungere shulde not lette me nor al his
 Had y as . . .
 As ther is . . .

The refrain contrasts the lover's lack of wordly goods with the presence of a spiritual good, troth of love. A chiastic arrangement of the first person pronouns and the antithetical phrases "worldly goodis" and "trouthe of loue" balances and unifies the refrain. The first two lines of the quatrain repeat the same chiastic arrangement of the pronoun around the synonyms "gret plente" and "richis." The lover praises himself when he says that if his wealth equalled his troth he should never know need. But it goes against the courtly grain to say that wealth could buy the good will of his lady. In the second quatrain he explains that he would pay so dearly for her beauty that Danger and his minions should not keep him from the lady. But the relaxation of this sentry's vigilance requires huge sums.

Behind this melodious little lyric with a plaintive charm is the disillusioned courtliness that recognizes that good will can be bought and suspicion allayed by large sums of money.

This poem is the first mild and indirect questioning of the principle of troth that the poet-lover lives by.

It seems no accident that it occurs in the roundel series. Although they express all the traditional attitudes towards love in much of the traditional language that we find elsewhere, the roundels seem less inhibited, less circumspect. They introduce some new themes and employ a more varied tone than the ballades. The metaphors, conceits and allegories which are developed in the roundels are drawn from the world at large, as the metaphors and the language of the troubadours were before the courtly poets of the fourteenth century defined it. The roundel is a more compact and restrained form than the ballade and it seems as if the additional formal restrictions--the forced brevity and repetition--direct the poet to new areas of thought and expression.

4. "Love's Renewal" and The Second Ballade Sequence

If it were not so firmly fixed by textual references between the "Book of Jubilee" and the second ballade sequence, Charles of Orleans' dream vision might have enjoyed more success. This poem, entitled "Love's Renewal" by editors Steele and Day has no equivalent in French. Of the many dream visions which appeared in England after Chaucer, this may easily be the most delightful and least read. The poem can be divided into four parts: the introduction and setting, the debate with Venus, the vision of Fortune and the encounter in the woods.

Charles begins "Love's Renewal" by situating it for us. After finishing "The Book of Jubilee," he says, he found time heavy on his hands. Matins and evensong in memory of his deceased mistress are his only duties. Since he no longer has a lady to write for, he puts his poetic talents at the service of other lovers. One of them has requested Charles to make a ballade on Fortune's stableness so Charles takes paper and ink to a spot overlooking the sea where he composes a complaint.

The complaint that Charles composes for the lover is a seven stanza poem in a variation of the ballade stanza (rhyming ababbcbc with a refrain but without an envoy).

The first three stanzas describe the paradoxical situation of a variable Fortune who is inconstant in all things save her harshness to the unhappy lover. The fourth stanza expresses the lover's desire to be able to please his mistress, and the last three stanzas are a request to Fortune to change her attitude towards the lover and favor him. Although written for another, the unusual accusation expresses Charles' own grievances against a Fortune which has steadfastly opposed his success and happiness. Ironically, Charles formulates his complaint just as Fortune's wheel is about to turn in his favor.

After this strenuous poetic effort Charles is tired: "So hevy gan myn eye-liddis way / That even therwith into a slepe y fille" (4737-38). Charles prefaces his tale by reminding us that although there are those who do not believe in the significance of dreams, "Yet oon may mete the dreame wel yn his sevyn / As aftirward that shall bifalle him eveyn" (4741-42), and cites Macrobius as a witness to this fact. In his dream Charles sees the place he fell asleep:

That as y lay and slepte þus on the Rokke
That on the cleef vpon þe banke out stokke

Ovir the see where that the roryng waves
Did ouercast the gravelle here and there . . .
(4755-58)

In this dramatic setting Charles dreams that he sees a woman, Venus, "nakid alle thing saue hir here" but with

a "kercher of pleasaunce" billowing about her floating toward him on the water. Botticelli envisioned Venus much the same way. She is crowned by doves and bears an owl on her hand.

Charles, believing that he is awake, goes down to the shore to meet her. He greets the goddess over-courteously and he prepares to steal a kiss while helping her from the water. Venus realizes his intention and sees that he does not recognize her. She blushes (with embarrassment for Charles, we assume) and Charles finally experiences that feeling common to both dreams and waking life, that he should recognize her "For sene y had hir/ how y nyste not where" (4786). When Venus calls Charles by name he finally identifies the goddess and "quoke for verry shame". He begs her to pardon him for having forgotten her. Venus replies that it is easy for him to make amends, but she directly attacks the subject which concerns her most and asks Charles what sort of life he is leading. "As an ancre, madame in clothis blake", he replies (4802). Venus asks if Charles has joined the clergy or is founding a new religious order since he eschews the rose and blue, colors of Love's party. Charles replies that his heart is clothed in blue, signifying fidelity, but all rosy thoughts since the death of his lady he dresses in tawny. He patiently awaits his death. Venus asks if Charles doesn't already

dwell in No-care and Charles answers that he does inhabit that place but only like a madman who has a home but doesn't know where. And no matter how far he dwells from sorrow, sorrow is always with him. But, Venus persists, how can sorrow come to Charles when they dwell so far apart? On the contrary, Charles informs her, they dwell very close together.

This introduces a lyric reminiscent of Troilus' complaint before Criseyde's empty house. In the lyric Charles gives an account of his love affair with the peerless lady by recalling the memories of her associated with different places in the vicinity, including the tower in which he last saw her and the bed in which she died. Being surrounded by so many reminders of his late beloved "Thus ay newly aquaynt y me with woo" (4844). He and his heart are sworn to honor her memory and steadfastly contemplate their past joys. Venus does not approve.

Charles and Venus debate the question but to no avail. Charles maintains first that he must remain faithful to his vow and second that he would have neither success nor joy should he try to find a new love. Then Venus warns that when Charles tries to escape from love his labor is in vain and she predicts that when Charles sees something that he never saw before, he will think

a thought that he never did before. This announces Charles' vision of Fortune.

Casting his eyes aloft Charles sees a chariot of gold studded with rich stones and drawn by two white steeds descending through the air. He is hard pressed to describe the queen that sits in the chariot. The color of her clothing seems to change: the pleats of her coat are sapphire on one side, purple on the other; her mantle is rainbow hued, the color of the silk shifting from blue to red to green. Embroidered on her garments are emblems of mutability: clouds, some stormy, some sunny; the moon in its different quarters; short lived flowers--roses, daisies, forget-me-nots and pansies; her coat is "ful thikke" with laughing and weeping eyes. The spotted ermine bordering the coat recalls the mixed nature of her gifts, as does the necklace of whirling dice. The queen herself, although beautiful with bright spreading hair and a well made face, has an expression which is constantly changing, from sad to glad and back again. In her hand she holds a beryl or glass wheel bearing the motto "I shal rayne y rayne y haue rayned / and y owt rayne was wreten last of al" (5044-45). Many folks are clambering to get on the wheel, or scrambling to keep their places. Others are sitting serenely high on the wheel. In this privileged position Charles sees a beautiful woman he

mistakes for his dead lady. "And ay the more she came me nere / Allas quod y but lyvith my lady yet / Nys she not she/that y se yondir sit" (5055-57). Standing "masid and formad" by this sight, Charles doesn't hear Venus speaking to him. "Where look ye doty fon" she asks and shakes him. He begs her to help him for he would rather die now than be parted from the lady on the wheel. Venus has been unaware of Fortune's arrival so Charles tells her that a queen has come down from heaven bearing a wheel on which he sees his lady. In the conspiratorial manner of the courtly lover he asks her to turn around as if she is looking for something else. Venus complies with this subterfuge, drops a ring, and turns around to pick it up. In a passage it is difficult to construe Charles and Venus argue the subtlety of this action, Venus warning Charles that people think evil of such manoeuvres and although men little care what people say, it behooves women to beware. The queen Charles sees is Fortune, Venus explains. Then Charles remembers her as the one who stole away his lady and he swears to slay her if given the opportunity. Venus tries to soothe him by telling him that the lady on the wheel is not Charles' lady. She then goes on to chide Charles. She thought he had forsworn further love and was no longer interested in "suche litille ware". The lady on the wheel is not Charles' late mistress,

she insists, but another and Charles must decide "So wethir wil ye loue or lete hir go" (5137).

Charles has been much humbled by this apparition and asks for Venus's help. He would rather serve this lady Fortune brings him than be king of the round earth. If she could only know his thoughts he would desire nothing more. Charles places his life or death in Venus's hands. He apologizes if he has done amiss; if he has deserved death, then let him die. But he begs Venus not to be his foe but guide the matter however she pleases. Venus forgives. Henceforth Charles must give every bit of his heart to his new lady and never change. Venus offers to lift him up to the lady on the wheel: "Hange hir vpon my kercher of plesaunce" (5710). She admonishes Charles not to slay Fortune and Charles grants peace to all the world except death. If he lived to be a thousand he could in no way love death. Venus accepts this as understandable and tells him to hold on. Charles is lifted so high and cries out so loud that he wakes up and finds himself where he had lain down. In his hand however is the "kercher of plesaunce".

His peripatetic musing on his dream brings Charles to a clearing in the woods where ladies and their women and knights and their squires are playing at post and pillar. Among them is the very lady Charles saw on Fortune's

wheel. While he stands gazing at her one of the players recognizes Charles. This knight trips and tears his hose and asks Charles to take his place in the game. Charles joins the players and soon he is standing before the lady of the vision. "With gastful hert that quoke for verry fere" (5242) he begs her permission to ask a question: if he should happen to love her above every creature, would she reveal it and scoff at it? The lady replies that if she mocked any man who loved her honorably he would be right in thinking that she wronged him. She knows better how to act. Having received this much encouragement Charles confesses that his life or death hangs on her: "I kan not say that y haue louyd yow long / But welle y wott y loue yow so my dere / That bothe ye are my ioy and payne in fere" (5265-67). Charles wishes the lady to take him as a "gostly child"; she will be the "fayre shrift-fadir" and hear his confession. The lady warns that she will not promise to love him but that she will permit him to speak. Charles, as is his wont, promises to write to her. The lull in the game is over and Charles and the lady are separated. When night falls the company breaks up and Charles returns alone to his lodging. "But alle that nyght myn hert did rore and seke / For nought me nyst/as what was best to do / To speke or writ/when next y came hir to" (5342-44). The very next day, for fear

the lady will forget him, Charles begins to write. The lyrics addressed to the new lady follow.

Both first and second ballade sequences are introduced by narrative poems. "Love's Retinue" which introduces the first ballade sequence, is not a dream vision but a straightforward personification allegory based on the visits to the court of Love common to earlier French literature. Nature commands and Youth escorts Charles to Love's court. Although he is reluctant to enter Love's service because he does not want to suffer, at the sight of Lady Beauty he is smitten and eager to perform whatever deeds Love may require. A letter of agreement admits Charles to Love's service and Cupid himself gives Charles some suggestions on how to conduct himself towards the lady. The structure of the visit offers an occasion for each allegorical character to make a fitting speech. The education of the lover (and the reader too) consists of assimilating this verbal matter and recalling it to mind at appropriate moments. The poem is an imaginative exercise of rhetorical addresses.

"Love's Renewal" introduces the second sequence of ballades to a new lady, but the narrative is the more complex and realistic dream vision which reveals the psychology of the dreamer. Most of the elements found in Chaucer's dreams are present. While we are not told the

season, we know that the weather is mild enough for Charles to compose out of doors. He has not been reading, but rather writing. However, he discusses the significance of dreams and cites Macrobius before he tells us what he dreamt. In the dream he does not follow the bank of a stream but instead goes down to the seaside to greet Venus. There are no songbirds mentioned, which is consistent with the coastal setting, but Venus is accompanied by a flock of doves. Charles does not visit a court but a supernatural visitor comes to him, and in the vision of Fortune he sees the crowd of people surrounding that goddess, vying for her favors. Although the Chaucerian dreamer is usually baffled by his dream when he awakes (and the reader only slightly less confused), Charles is assured of the truth of his dream both by the handkerchief he retains and by the subsequent meeting with the new lady. Like the dreamer in the Parlement of Foules and The Book of the Duchess, Charles is awakened from his dream at the climactic moment by a loud noise: his own shout of fear at having been raised up so high by Venus.

Charles' dream falls into the medieval categories of oraculum in which a respected personage, Venus, advises what action to take; and visio, in which the dreamer himself actually sees the future, the lady he is about to meet. It is also a dream of psychological origin where the

unconscious concerns of the dreamer's waking state are revealed. In modern terms we would understand the dreamer's conflict to be embodied by the characters: Charles, representing the dreamer's idealized nature and Venus, his human needs, appetites and desires. The dreamer works through his conflicting feelings in the debate and fulfills his wish for a new love by dreaming that Fortune presents him with a new lady and that Venus encourages his feelings for her. This kind of complex, realistic dream depends completely on the character of the dreamer.

The character of the dreamer and the content of his dream were inextricably linked even in the earliest dream visions. But in many of the early French dream poems, the narrator-lover-dreamer was a rather dull fellow, a neutral vehicle for the narrative to pass through like the youthful Charles in "Love's Retinue". Machaut seems to have been the first poet to endow his narrator with any personality. The early poem Le Jugement dou Roy de Behaingne is enlivened by the plight of the embarrassed narrator, concealed in the bushes, who overhears the confidences of two disappointed lovers. In a later poem, La Fonteinne amoureuse, Guillaume, a self-confessed coward, hides beneath the bedcovers all night, trembling and soaking his nightshirt with sweat, until he discovers that the frightful groaning next door is not the growling

and roaring of some savage beast but the lament of a distressed and impassioned human lover. The naive and inept narrator in Chaucer's dream visions, and indeed in his subsequent works too, frequently becomes the focus of our interest and amusement. He is, remember, a character in his own Canterbury Tales, as well as the distressed commentator in Troilus and Criseyde. In the dream visions Geoffrey is a simple, timid and unworldly fellow, avid for lore. His late night reading of old books, his careful attention to the content of dream-inspired wall paintings, his patient endurance of the verbose eagle's lecture in the House of Fame all testify eloquently to his devotion to learning. Just as Geoffrey is single-mindedly intent on the pursuit of lore, so is Charles similarly obsessed by the courtly etiquette and ideals which motivate his wish fulfillment dream.

Charles, like Geoffrey, is a little slow witted, and so seriously singleminded (Geoffrey in search of new tales, Charles in unshakable fidelity to courtly conventions) that he often makes himself ridiculous. Although both characters are a bit naive about themselves, Geoffrey, who knows not love in deed is very different from Charles, who is very much a man of the world. Charles has been in Love's service and indeed remains so, although bereft of the object of his affections. And even though faithful

to his beloved, Charles is flirtatious when he greets Venus: "When she came nere þan gan y to hir say / Good thrift madame to yowre streight sidis tayne" (4772-3). He immediately comments on her physical attributes: he may mean her slim figure in general or he may have a more explicit corporal reference in mind. His solicitude for the goddess's comfort in the water disguises an attempt to steal a kiss. Charles is on the whole a more sensual man than Geoffrey. In his lyric lament for his mistress he reminisces about seeing her in the bath naked and kissing "hir fayre round pappis white" (4840). In his conversation with Venus Charles shows he is an old hand at the game of love and knows the difficulties of pleasing ladies. He is also well versed in the virtues of discretion. When he asks Venus to look at the lady on Fortune's wheel, he asks her to do it "not hastily / But as it were who seith for othir thing" (5079-80). And when he meets the new lady and makes his declaration he is anxious to keep up the appearance of normality: "Allas be war yowre coloure gynnys faynt / Pynne vp yowre kercher kepe yowre face covert / Ye mow say how the sonne hit doth yow smert" (5284-86). Charles is also experienced enough to make a model courtly speech like the following:

For leuer nad y ben to lijf y bore
 Than that y shulde for any gref or score
 Wil ye more fer þe may goodly graunt
 Vnto me wrecche/durst y say yowre servaunt

But wold god ye knew myn hert eche deel. (5306-10)

Charles is a character whose worldly manners and polite speech shield an idealistic and simplistic philosophy: once a lover has pledged himself to love, he must remain faithful, regardless of circumstance. Venus, his celestial interlocutor, on the other hand, has a more worldly philosophy but simple manners and plain speech. She arrives on the scene naked, but her poise is in no way disturbed until Charles attempts to kiss her. Then she blushes, perhaps out of embarrassment for this obtuse and presumptuous mortal. She is not a vengeful goddess, but easily forgives Charles for not having recognized her and later aids him after he has scorned her service. She has a gently ironic sense of humor: when she sees Charles all dressed in black, she asks him if he has joined the clergy.

Debates and the apparition of deities are standard features of the medieval dream vision, but most times they are tedious and didactic. They shed a cold, grey light on the topic and while they may clarify the issue, they convince neither the dreamer nor the reader. This debate, however, reveals the psychology of the dreamer and criticizes, by the arguments, character and language of Venus, the conventions and ideals of courtly behaviour the dreamer has bound himself to.

Venus takes the pragmatic position that Charles' denial of love when he is capable of it and his voluntary suffering are futile. He ought to seek comfort with a new lady rather than persist in his disconsolate celibacy. Charles' response, typical of this courtly paragon, is that he has given his word and will be faithful to his first love. But it is characteristic of Charles' state of mind not to stop here. This purely theoretical argument, that his vow must not be broken, is immediately supported by the practical considerations very vigorously expressed:

And where ye say that y shulde ben a man
 A wrecche am y an of-cast creature
 For who is she that ioy of me wolde han
 That am forfadid so in my figure
 Certis/to wrappe me in a sepulture
 Me sittith bet/as wisly god me saue/
 Than in myn armes a newe ladi haue. (4890-96)

Venus counters Charles' argument with another: that Charles' abandonment of Love's service shames Charles, Venus, all her folk, and Charles' late mistress most of all.

And more therin ye do yowre lady shame
 For alle the world wol thynke hit verily
 And she had ben as folk hath gen her name
 ye wolde haue tane an othir hastily
 But they wil say/ye doon it for a sy
 And clakke of hir a fulle ungoodly clawse
 Thus shall ye doon hir shame without a cause
 (4905-10)

Charles replies to this with another theoretical argument:

that it is in vain for him to choose an object for his love that lasts so short a time. His past experience will always remain a source of sorrow to him and would make him dread all the more the passing of a new lady. But once again Charles' argument slides from the lofty peaks of principles to the quagmires of possibilities. Besides, it is so difficult to know how to please a lady:

The craft of love is straunge who to hit goth
 For some they ioy hem in a port al straunge
 And othir some in gladsom demenyng
 And some wil thynke he vsith fillith of chaunge
 And some will deme this word is flateryng
 Thus newe to lere were y in my gidyng (4931-36)

This sliding argument, from the principle to the practical is indicative of the psychological state of the dreamer. As we saw in the introduction, he has not renounced sexual love, only lost the object of his desires. And although he expresses fidelity both waking and dreaming, the progress of his argument demonstrates a suppressed desire to change his celibate life.

In the debate Charles unwittingly puts into question his courtly idealism by revealing his inner conflict: his desire for a new love but his devotion to his word. Venus, too, undermines his position. Her view of love is a socially responsible one, not imbued with the romantic ideology of courtly love. While lovers are alive they

should be faithful to each other, but this loyalty ends at death. For love should be a comfort, a remedy for pain, not a perpetual burden of grief. Noble though her sentiments may be, they are expressed with a directness which borders on the bawdy. When Charles professes fidelity to his memories of the past, Venus reminds him:

Remembre must ye that ye ar a man
 And haue of nature als yowre lymys goode
 So ought ye kyndely, thenk me, spend it than
 Or ellis ye were to moche to blame bi the rode
 (4869-72)

Again she mocks his bootless fidelity and sounds like the goose in Chaucer's Parlement of Foules when she tells him "Ye may as wel chese yow a lady newe/. . . / As wilfully to doon yowre self to day" (4876-79). The poet-lover finds these words foul. And Venus dismisses his objections to loving something he shall not long keep with the flippant observation: "Parde/deth in yowth not alle a sleth / Some may ye se that live four score and twelfe / And by that howre were time for þe to delve" (4955-58).

The down to earth arguments of this celestial creature have little effect on Charles. He is not swayed by Venus' reasoning but by the vision of Fortune with his new lady. So engrossed is he by this apparition that Venus, perceiving her audience's attention has wandered, demands "where look ye, doty fon?" and has to shake him out of his stupefaction.

When he awakes from his dream and encounters the new lady in the woods, it is the memory of his vision of her rather than the cumulative persuasive efforts of Venus that emboldens him to declare himself to the lady.

Although Charles may be unaffected by the debate, the reader perceives more and more clearly how fragile and ludicrous Charles' position was. The dreamer's speech reveals him as an ordinary man with physical and emotional needs like any other, who subscribes to an ideal of fidelity beyond the grasp of mortal flesh. His greeting and his apology to Venus and his approach to the new lady, are models of courtly behavior and gentle speech. His exquisite lament about the places where he used to see his first lady and his desire for the new lady are expressed in elegant and refined language. His speech shows him to be an exemplar of courtly feeling and conduct but the debate reveals the cracks behind the polished aristocratic facade. His arguments to Venus, of which there are too many to be seriously committed to, modulate from principled replies to querelous and petulant complaints. Although he is a superior sort of man he is having a hard time maintaining that position.

His celestial opponent in the debate does not have his courtly manners. She is naked but completely oblivious to her lack of attire. She speaks frankly, referring to Charles' sexual organs and recommending their use.

She jokes about old age and death. Charles' solemn oath to remember past joys and to love "withouten chaunge or new opynyoun" (4857) Venus dismisses lightly. A new love will not disturb Charles' first love in any way: "For though ye take a lady in yowre arme / Got wot as now hit doth hir litille harme" (4881-82). Elaborate codes of behavior are not necessary in love. When Charles objects that it is difficult to know how to please a lady, Venus advises him to select as a model one that his lady praises most and "where he loke glom or glad / Folow the same if that ye kan" (4950-51). Mere mimicry should ensure success in love. The blunt, homely, comic language that Venus uses in addressing him points up the absurdity of Charles' exalted code of conduct. She insists on discussing the matter in human terms, reminding him of his physical nature, of the clakking tongues of scandal mongering folk and of the inevitable mortality of us all. She insists on Charles' temporality with callous expressions such as "bi that howre were tyme for þe to delve" (4958) and "God wot as now hit doth hir litille harm" (4882). She reduces the possible emotional responses of a lover to two in the catchy alliterative phrase, "glom or glad". And when Charles, overcome by the sight of his new lady, changes his mind and seeks the goddess's aid in love, she teases him and uses a bourgeois mercantile metaphor to characterize this noble courtier's behavior. She charges him with

cornering the market on beautiful ladies and warns him that he risks being indicted for this crime.

I haue aspidе ye marchaunt at the fayre
 Ye lust not on a sympil market see
 That cast yow to engros vp such a payre
 As that your ladi was this semeth me
 And now this same which lakkith no bewte
 Ye wold ben ditid sothely were þis knowe
 As for a regrater of the fayre y trowe

I wend that ye wold neuyr bie nor selle
 Suche litille ware but ye it had forswore
 But now ye have not so my thynkith welle (5114-23)

The new love which Venus predicted would come she compares to a bone: "So that y told you now right wel a fyn / When ye had sene parcas ye neuyr saw / It might wel happe you fynde a bon to gnaw" (5132-34). For all the deliberate vulgarity of her expression Venus is always noble in her bearing. She is sincerely concerned about the poet-lover's welfare and seeks him out. She is forgiving, good-humored, comforting and generous in her advice and offer to help. Charles, on the other hand, is a well-spoken and well-mannered character who consistently acts out of self interest. In his refusal to love he is either protecting himself from further hurt and disappointment or protecting his image of himself as loyal beyond all other lovers. There is little humility or humanity in Charles, so enamoured is he of his own courtesy. Everything that Venus says punctures Charles' pretensions to superiority.

The debate between Charles and Venus animates the poem. We see the poet-lover from two points of view, his own and Venus'. At the same time that Venus is less demanding than Charles, she is more critical. She asks for little but is adamant about it, while Charles, as if to compensate for his human frailties, asks the impossible of himself and whines about it. The ironies are multiple. Charles, a true lover, keeps his vow of fidelity to his deceased lady; Venus, goddess and law-giver of love, advises him to break it. She criticizes the excesses of a true believer of her own faith. Charles speaks eloquently and elegantly of love and devotion; Venus talks of the grave, the marketplace and the kennel.

There are many poems in which Venus appears to a bewildered lovesick dreamer. Machaut's Fonteinne amoureuse has much in common with Charles' poem. In both the tired narrator begins by writing down a poem which he reproduces in his narrative; he falls asleep and sees Venus; and upon waking, the lover retains a token attesting to the validity of the dream. In Froissart's Joli Buisson de Jonece and in the anonymous fourteenth century French poem Le Songe Vert as in "Love's Renewal", the goddess appears and commands her man to cease mourning, take a new lady and love again.

Yet "Love's Renewal" is like none of these polite courtly poems. Although similar in plot and theme to

several French and English poems, it has a humour and complexity they lack. This is due chiefly to the language of the poem. The mixed style of the early lyric has returned, but instead of being incorporated into one voice of varied tone, it splits into the separate voices of different characters, Charles taking the serious and polite courtly style and Venus adopting the colloquial. Yet if we understand the characters in the dream to be projections of the dreamer, then upon waking the characters are integrated into one whole undivided personality ready to love again. The variety in tone adds humor and contrast to the narrative. The language of Venus belittles the poses and pretensions of the lover and the excesses of courtesy. The genre of the dream vision determines the content and style of the poem and although it is a genre of courtly concerns and promotes the ideology of fin amors, its language functions as a counterpoint to the theme. Our expectations of the genre are foiled and we perceive the gap between the ideal and experience, word and deed. A tension exists between genre and style when the theme of the poem and its vehicle of expression are at cross purposes. This discrepancy provokes humor and a critical examination of its causes. This is akin to Chaucer's technique in the Parlement of Foules, sometimes in Troilus and Criseyde and in certain of the Canterbury

Tales, where style is similarly critical of genre. The ambiguity which results can be resolved only by a more precise definition and refinement of the principle involved. Of the medieval poets only Chaucer treats courtly concerns in such a sensible and unsentimental way, ostensibly conforming to the conventions of the genre, but through his style inserting a running commentary against it. Charles' earlier narrative, "Love's Retinue", had a uniform and polished but tedious style. Its models were obviously courtly French poems, uninspired imitations of Machaut, whereas for "Love's Renewal" the poet schooled himself at Chaucer's side.

"Love's Renewal" owes a great deal to Chaucer. The dreamers are similarly sympathetic and comic characters, briefly but comprehensively drawn. Their fantastic adventures are logical extensions of their psychological states. And contrasting styles of discourse manage to criticize and parody the courtly concerns of the genre.

For his dream vision Charles also adopted the rime royal stanza. He was probably inspired to use it by Chaucer's *Troilus* of which there are very distinct echoes throughout "Love's Renewal", but he did not use the stanza like Chaucer. Chaucer's stanza is usually a complete unit, either a sentence or a clause, bridge two stanzas. Charles, however, will at times begin a new sentence in

the seventh line of one stanza and not finish it until the second or third line of the next. This makes for a naturalistic, conversational, smooth-flowing narrative and dissipates the effect of a rigid rhyme scheme. But this stanza enjambment is also used for other effects. For example, in an age when punctuation was limited Charles uses the position at the beginning of the stanza to set off as if in quotations the legend on Fortune's wheel:

And in hir hond a wheel she bore
 And gan to turne it euyrmore
 That berel was me thought or glas
 And this was wreten in compas

I shal rayne y rayne y haue rayned
 And y owt rayne was wreten last of al
 On which that many folkis him constraynd
 to gete a-loft that some downe from hit falle
 (5040-47)

Charles uses the position at the beginning of a stanza for a similar effect of emphasis at the end of his dream. He describes his fear at being born up on Venus's kerchief:

That even for fere to falle therwith y quok
 And gan o lady venus mercy cry
 So lowde that it awok me verily
 And found my silf where as y was downe layd
 And in my hond as y from slepe a breid

Yet se y wel a gret pses of plesaunce
 The which y took and in my bosum put
 So forto kepe it in remembraunce (5186-5193)

By the insertion of the dependent temporal clause as well

as by inverting the natural grammatical order and delaying to name the object in the same stanza as it was introduced, the poet creates suspense and surprise. A change in mood is also indicated by the enjambement of stanzas. When Charles first meets Venus he does not recognize her and treats her as a knight in a pastourelle might treat a shepherdess. The climactic moment when Charles realizes that he has mistaken the genre of the poem as well as the identity of his visitor is suspended between two stanzas.

Haue y no service myght be to yow fayne
 Me thynke this watir is vnto yow payne
 Ne nys hit/no no/noon nys hit y-wis
 Coth she/and as y shope me hir to kis

She wayfid me and lokid passyng straunge
 What nys quod she as purse is of an ay
 And even forbashid hir coloure gan to chaunge
 Knowe ye not me/no/yes/nay certes nay (4774-82)

Charles also uses the stanza as an ordinary paragraph division. Venus scolds Charles for his celibate life in one stanza (4869-75) and then prescribes a course of action in the next (4876-82).

Charles' lyric modeled on Troilus' complaint before Criseyde's empty palace in Book V is one of the high points of the poem. The lyric itself is rather rhetorically rigid, being a catalog of the different events in the lovers' lives associated with the different places which recall Charles to his sorrow. Charles overcomes the fixed

pattern enforced on him and produces a very touching poem. But its integration into the narrative is truly remarkable. Charles skillfully weaves Venus's question about Sorrow's presence with Charles into the stanza in which he starts the lyric. The lyric is syntactically embedded into Charles' explanation:

But how is it how cometh he to yow so
 Ye dwelle a sondir fer/nay sothely nere
 For when me happith here or there to go
 And thenke that yondir lo my lady dere
 Gaf me this word/or made me suche a chere
 And aundir herde y hir so swetely syng
 And in this chambre led y hir daunsyng

In yondir bayne so se y hir alle nakid
 And this and that y sawe hir yondir worce
 Here y fond hir slepe/end yondir wakid
 And in this wyndow pleide we at the lorche
 And from the stayre y lad hir to þ chirche
 And bi the way this tale y to hir tolde
 And here she gaf me lo þis ryng of gold

. . .

In suche a towre also y sigh hir last
 And yet wel more a thousand thoughtis mo
 How in that bed/the lijf eek from hir past
 Thus au newly aquaynt y me with woo
 To that to chirche he doth me forto go
 And for hir sowle vpon my knees pray
 lo thus my lyvis tyme y dryve away (4820-47)

Charles of Orleans has been renowned for his brief lyrics, especially his roundels, but in "Love's Renewal" he attempts a longer narrative poem with great success. He shows great technical skill in the articulation of the stanza. He vividly evokes a variety of scenes and situations--

the seascape, the arrival of Venus, the descent of Fortune, the empty palace, the game of knights and ladies in the forest. The characters, Charles and Venus, are among the most delightful and best realized in all dream-visions. The dialog between them is witty and at the same time shows real psychological insight. Charles' suppressed desires are skillfully and subtly revealed as the debate operates on a conscious and an unconscious level. The poet's handling of language recreates the real world and a fantasy world as well as conscious and unconscious realms. The poet respects the conventions of the genre and adopts the sophisticated habits of Chaucer in creation of character, relationship of character to plot and theme, and in the more complex adversary relationship between genre and style. The fact that the poet does not accept uncritically all of the strictures of the code of fin amors, that he criticizes, reinterprets and redefines, adds an element of seriousness and originality lacking from many fifteenth century dream-visions.

The dream-vision represents a turning point and a new beginning for the heart-broken lover. It also represents a healing, an integration of the lover's ideals and desires. In his discontented state the lover falls asleep. Venus appears to him and voices his unacknowledged desires. He experiences hope when Fortune appears. When he wakes, love and hope are within him and he has the force to approach

the new lady.

The dream vision takes the poet-lover from the realm of solitude and fantasy and eases him back into the mainstream of life. A new alliance with a new lady is formed that will bring him back to the court of Love, in just the same way that a new political alliance with the house of Burgundy will return him to France. But before he can make this alliance he must reconsider past promises and renege on old vows. His fidelity to old ties must yield to new. The question of troth must be reexamined. The absurdity of acting on principle without consideration of current circumstances has been demonstrated by Venus' mockery in respect to Charles' fidelity to a dead mistress. The analogy can be made to his political life as well. His loyalty to his king has availed him nought. His hostility to Burgundy serves no purpose. It is a time, then, to form new bonds, return to the world and start life anew.

Having received the new lady's permission to write, the poet-lover wastes no time. The very next day he sends her a ballade. The first dozen poems (beginning with ballade 85) are missives addressed to the lady, praising her, expressing his devotion, and pleading with her to show him some favorable response. In ballade 87 he wonders how long her remote behavior will last and in 88 he marvels at the cyclical mutability of nature but the constancy of his lady's coldness towards him. Her hardheartedness is a great

contrast to her soft and fair appearance (90,91). In ballade 92 he begs her not to disdain and shun him:

O cause is this so hit yow not displesere
 Is when y come to yow in eny where
 To purchase sumwhat to myn hertis ese
 Anoon ye yow withdrawe for veri fere
 Right even as that a Gobelyne as y were
 But as for that ne dowte yow not hardely
 For y am noon nor crewelle worme nor bere
 Thus causeles lo compleyntoure am not y.

She values a stranger more than him and for each happiness he suffers a thousand woes (93). To convince her to treat him better he reminds her in ballade 94 "Oure lord comaundith how eche creature / Shulde doon to othir in the self manere / As he wolde he did him" and the envoy concludes "How loue for loue is skilful gardonyng." The poet-lover fails to acknowledge that this is the exception rather than the rule but in 95 he recognizes what distress it is to love and not to be loved in return. Ballade 96 concerns a temporary parting which is followed by a complaint in 12 stanzas on the lady's absence. After this not all the poems are letters to the lady but some appear to be the poet-lover's outbursts and meditations. By ballade 98 the lady returns and the lover confronts his traditional enemies: Danger and evil-minded gossips. In ballade 100 the talk of wicked folk forces the lover to look inward and investigate the cause:

Who is the cause herof then is hit ye
 Ye./.nay it is my freel hert
 Hert./.nay my fonnyd loue parde
 Loue./.nay my rakille lookis stert
 Lokis/nay for this y may advert
 That ther nys noon kan do so wel y-wis

But false tongis in sugre terme covert
Of wikkid folke therof wol say amys.

The poet-lover rails against Danger (101) and the discretion and delay that scandal-mongers necessitate (102). In 103 he hears that his troth may not reward him and after exchanging his heart with her in ballade 107, he takes leave of love in 108 because he has been deceived. "I wot not whi nor kan welle vndirstonde / Wherefore such promys are y made and sworne / Without it be to holden folk on honde." Here, as throughout the book, troth assumes a great importance for the lover and breaking troth causes him to resign from love. But the next poem is a letter, 6 stanzas of rhyme royal, in which the poet-lover repents of his hasty misunderstanding and begs to be reinstated in the lady's good graces. Ballade 109 thanks her for a promise she made him. He encourages the lady to ignore gossip in ballade 110 and the affair seems to progress in a satisfactory way since the poems continue in a lighthearted vein. Ballade 115 is a witty little poem in which the poet-lover detects a discrepancy between the lady's expressed feelings and her unavowed ones.

Allas madame what maner strijf
Is ther bitwene yowre mouth and y
Not se y but the poore lijf
Which pat y lede must hit aby
Without ye hem accorde trewly
For when yowre mouth me swerith deth
Me thynkith yowre eyen mercy seith

In ballade 118 the lover defies his old foes jealousy and

Fortune. Ballade 119 begs someone, perhaps the lady or perhaps Fortune as the editors suggest, to return. Ballade 120 exclaims in alternate lines on the lady's virtues and flaws. Suddenly in ballade 121 the lover bids farewell to his lady. The parting grieves him and although he wishes to hide it, his swollen heart roars his sighs and reveals his love. For once he is conscious of the need for discretion. "That sore y drede syn y am yeven away / lest þat my bollyng sighis on preve / As maugre me þat hit my loue biwray." He consoles himself with the hope of seeing his lady again soon and asks her never to forget him.

Thus ends the first ballade sequence, with a surprising and abrupt adieu. The previous poems do not hint at this departure nor does the sequence of events or themes explain it. It is surmised that at this point Charles was permitted to return to France so he hastily terminated the series with a single poem.

The second ballade sequence is very different from the first. We have seen how unusual the relationship portrayed in the first ballade sequence is: how the lovers from the beginning are loyal to each other but are kept apart by circumstance. In the second ballade sequence the lady is still to be won: she is sometimes cruel, sometimes kind, sometimes welcoming, sometimes distant, and this vacillation causes the poet-lover to be alternately hopeful and despairing of winning her affection and angry and glad

at her response. Thus many of the themes of the second ballade sequence are different from those of the first. They are most frequently the traditional courtship themes of praise and blame. The structure of the second ballade sequence, whether by accident or design, is looser than the first. A circular pattern was imposed on the first by the lover's reluctance at the beginning of the book, his broken-heartedness at the lady's death and his return to health at the end. This shaping shows a certain self-awareness and an attempt at autobiography. The second ballade sequence shows no such artistic intervention. It is more like a journal, without perspective, than an autobiography. In this sense the second group of ballades resembles the French manuscript, which simply bears witness to the passage of time, recording poems day by day, rather than structuring the poems through time.

A similar flexibility can be seen in the second ballade sequence in respect to style. Almost all the poems of the first ballade sequence relate to some aspect of courtly life: the allegorical battles, the games of tables and chess, the celebrations of New Year's, St. Valentine's and May Days; and the language describing these events is equally refined. In the second ballade sequence we find not only that the poems are less neatly structured, but that their style is less restricted as well. For example in ballade 92 the poet-lover describes the lady withdraw-

ing from him as if he were a "Gobelyne...crewelle worme nor bere." The lover as grotesque, even as a hyperbole, is something the first ballade sequence would not have admitted. Ballade 97 is an extended comparison between the wayward lover and an anchorite enclosed in his cell and the comparison is not in favor of the lover. The poet-lover will even make use of the Bible to plead his case as he does in ballade 94. Ballade 119 exploits and puns on the idea of a journey while ballades 88, 90, and 104 use natural imagery to communicate the lover's plight: the cycles of nature, the erosion of stone by water, and the desire of the moth for the flame.

These non-courtly motifs are found among the more traditional personification allegories, complaints and a few rhetorical exercises in anaphora, parallelism and antithesis. But it is as if the poet's world had expanded. In the roundels the poet included a good many new metaphors concerned with money, the law and the church and in the second ballade sequence there are references to nature, journeys and the fantastic. Some of the wit and preciousity of the early poems disappears and we find a more meditative approach to a universal topic.

Ballade 104 illustrates this. This typical courtly complaint to the lady begins by enumerating her virtues but finishes with the refrain line "to hit like yow enjoy me in sum wise." Then the lover compares himself to the moth

drawn to the flame: "That ay þe more y fele of my grevaunce /
The more desire y in myn entirprise." But the next stanza
continues the analysis of his foolish behavior:

Ther are but foolis twayne as wil ye here
The first is he which felith ennoyance
And hem forto withdrawe ne list not lere
The tothir is he which lyvith in plesaunce
And wilfully withdrawith in substance
The first am y of all and kan not rise

This fully developed exploration of the theme depends on
the observation of nature. Neither moths nor fools are
limited to courtly circles and the poem is accessible to
all. The poet begins to depend more on his own perceptions
and less on the traditional ones of literary convention.

While the first ballade sequence was admirable for its
wittiness, the artful construction of allegory and double
entendre to reveal and conceal meanings, the second bal-
lade sequence is memorable for its thoughtfulness. In
each of the three ballade stanzas the poet seems to ponder
a problem, to focus his thoughts from three different an-
gles to illuminate his theme. The claustrophobia of alle-
gory disappears and it is as if prison walls were taken
away. The poems of the second sequence express a freedom
and independence achieved by apprenticeship to craft and
life.

V. Conclusion: Four Poems

The preceding pages have attempted to trace the development of the Middle English love lyric and define its poetic tradition. A comparison of four medieval poems by different authors of different countries, writing in different centuries illustrates both the continuity and the growth of the tradition.

All four poems are derived from a passage in Ovid's and therefore dependent on the classical heritage of Rome. However, all four poets are love poets in a very different manner from their classical predecessors. They have chosen to write about love as the central significant experience of man's life. They all use stanzaic rhymed verse although each develops his own preferred pattern. They all adopt the tone of the anguished lover, dependent on his lady's mercy for his very survival.

In the Ars Amatoria Ovid advises young men to approach women. "Let wax attempt the crossing; let wax go first," he says, recommending letters and messages to first explore the lady's feelings. But a flat humdrum letter will have little effect. The noble art of eloquence is not only useful in defending clients, but in besieging women. And if she does not receive the message but sends

it back, persist. In time oxen will plough, horses will bear reins, iron will wear out. What is harder than a rock or softer than water? Yet soft water hollows out hard rock. Persevere and even Penelope and Pergamus will fail.

Disce bonas artes, moneo, Romana iuventus,
 Non tantum trepido ut tueare reos;
 Quam populus iudexque gravis lectus que senatus,
 Tam dabit eloquio victa puella manus.

. . .
 Si non accipiet scriptum, inlectum que remittet,
 Lecturam spera, propositumque tene.
 Tempore difficiles veniunt ad aratra iuveni,
 Tempore lenta pati frena docentur equi:
 Ferreus adsiduo consumitur anulus usu,
 Interit adsidua vomer aduncus humo.
 Quid magis est saxo durum, quid mollius unda?
 Dura tamen molli saxa cavantur aqua.

(Learn noble arts, I counsel you, young men of Rome,
 not only that you may defend trembling clients:
 a woman, no less than populace, grave judge or
 chosen senate
 will surrender, defeated, to eloquence.

. . .
 If she does not receive your message and sends it
 back unread,
 hope that one day she will read, and hold to
 your purpose.
 In time refractory oxen come to the plough,
 in time horses are taught to bear the pliant reins;
 a curved share wastes by constant ploughing of
 the ground.
 What is harder than a rock, what softer than water?
 Yet soft water hollows out hard rock.)⁶

This advice to the novice lover did not fall on deaf ears. At least four poets picked up this motif and exploited it in various ways. In a Provençal canso, a

Petrarchan sonnet, a Middle English ballade and an English song the lover not only follows the Ovidian prescription by inundating the beloved lady with verse epistles or prayers and tears, but uses the image of the water and the stone to represent the lover's persistence against the hard-hearted lady.

In Ovid's poem the soft water is associated with eloquence or soft words. Either written on wax tablets or spoken in person, a great enough quantity will, in time, wear away the hardest defenses a woman can muster. The drops of water are also sometimes associated with the tears shed by the unhappy lover and with his pitiful complaints and prayers. Water and eloquence are both deceptively powerful. Despite their apparent gentleness, these forces of nature can overcome the greatest resistance, supposedly that of a woman towards her suitor. In two of the poems the motif emphasizes the hopefulness of the situation: despite her hardness due to anger, she must conform to the laws of nature and eventually give in to her persistent lover. In two others the motif points up the hopelessness of the situation in which the woman, although apparently soft, is really a creature beyond nature who is never worn down by her admirer's sweet words.

Bernard de Ventadorn's canso Conortz era sai eu be uses the image of the water and the stone towards the end

of the poem to indicate an artful turn from a poem of complaint to one of praise. The movement of this poem is typical of troubadour poems in its shifting from one conflicting mood to another, where he blames and excuses his lady, accuses and defends himself, vows fidelity and exalts his beloved.

Conortz, era sai eu be
que ges de me no pensatz,
pois salut ni amistatz
ni messatges no m'en ve.
Trop cuit que fatz lonc aten,
et er be semblans oimai
qu'eu chasse so c'autre pren,
pois no m'en ven aventura.

Bels Conortz, can me sove
com gen fui per vos onratz
e can era m'oblidatz,
per un pauc no'n mor desse!
Qu'eu eis m'o vauc enqueren
qui'm met de foudat em plai,
can eu midons sobrepren
de la mia forfaitura.

Per ma colpa m'esdeve
que ja no'n sia privat, z,
car vas leis no sui tornatz
per foudat que m'en rete.
Tan n'ai estat lonjamen
que de vergonha qu'eu n'ai,
non aus aver l'ardimen
que i an, s'ans no m'asegura.

Ilh m'encolpet de tal re
don me degra venir gratz.
Fe qu'eu dei a l'Alvernhatz,
tot o fi per bona fe.
E s'eu en amar mespren,
tort a qui colpa m'en fai,
car, qui en amor quer sen,
cel non a sen ni mezura.

Tan er gen servitz per me
 sos fers cors, durs et iratz,
 tro del tot si' adoussatz
 ab bels dihz et ab merce;
 qu'eu ai be trobat legen
 que gota d'aiga que chai,
 fer en un loc tan soven,
 tro chava la peira dura.

Qui be remira ni ve
 olhs e gola, fron e faz,
 aissi son finas beutatz
 que mais ni menhs no i cove,
 cors lonc, dreih e covinen,
 gen afliban, conhd' e gai.
 Om no'l pot lauzar tan gen
 com la saup formar Natura.

Chansoneta, ar t'en vai
 a Mo Frances, l'avinen,
 cui pretz enans' e melhura

E digas li que be'm vai,
 car de Mo Conort aten
 enquera bon' aventura.

(Consolation, now I know well
 that you hardly think of me
 for no greeting, nor sign of friendship
 nor message comes to me from you.
 I think I have waited long enough
 and now it seems certain
 that I chase what another catches
 since no good comes to me from it.

Beautiful Consolation, when I remember
 how I was honored by you
 and how you forget me now;
 for little I would die on the spot.
 However, I myself go seeking
 he who would accuse me of folly
 when I reproach my lady
 for my own forfeit.

By my fault it happened
 that I am no longer her intimate friend,
 since I did not return to her
 on account of the madness that held me back.
 I stayed away so long
 that of the shame that I feel
 I do not dare to have the boldness
 to go towards her if she does not reassure me first.

She accuses me of such a thing
 that should have brought me her thanks.
 By the faith that I owe to the Auvergnat
 I did all in good faith
 and if in loving I have been mistaken
 who blames me for it is wrong
 for who looks for common sense in love
 has himself neither common sense nor decorum.

So long have I nobly served
 her wild heart, hard and angry,
 until it be softened
 by sweet words and compassion;
 for I have found in reading
 that the drop of water which falls
 strikes in one place so often
 that it wears away hard stone.

For who contemplates well
 her eyes and neck, forehead and face,
 so fine is her beauty
 that more or less would not be fitting;
 a svelte body, straight and well proportioned,
 nobly dressed, she is gracious and gay.
 One can not praise her as nobly
 as Nature knew how to form her.

Song, go now
 to My Frenchman, the welcome one,
 whose merit increases and improves,

And tell her that I am well
 for of My Consolation I await
 still my good fortune.)¹⁰

This six stanza canso begins ironically by addressing the lady as Conortz or Consolation. She may be his consolation after his unhappiness, but she is also the occasion of it. That she no longer thinks of him causes him regret which soon turns to accusation. He knows he is forgotten because he has no message from her and by this time he believes he chases what another man takes, since he gets

nothing. In stanza two he compares former honors he received from her with her current neglect and could die of it. But he defends his lady by accusing himself of forfaitura, a technical term denoting the crime of a vassal against his lord, a dereliction of duty. He continues to blame himself in the next stanza which begins like a confession, per ma colpa. He is no longer her intimate because of folly and shame which held him back from her. Although he accuses himself at the beginning of the stanza by the end of the stanza the burden is on the lady to reassure him before he can approach her again. His prolonged absence is no longer caused by his foolishness, but by her cruelty. The fourth stanza continues his self defense with an attack on her: she accuses him of things she should thank him for. He only acted in good faith. He further ~~impugns~~ her behavior and casts doubt on her worthiness as an object of love by admitting that he may be deceived in love, but excuses himself by asserting that he who seeks good sense in loving has himself neither good sense nor mezura, a sense of what is proper and fitting behavior for the occasion.

Having exculpated himself, he continues to cast aspersions by describing her heart as wild, hard and angry, which he will nevertheless nobly serve as long as it takes to soften it with beautiful words and compassion. For he

knows from his reading that the drop of water which falls, strikes so often in one place that it hollows out hard stone. In the beginning of the poem he despaired: he knew by having nothing to read that she had forgotten him. Here at the end he has hope: he knows from his reading that enough soft water will dent hard stone, or that persistent eloquence will overcome the greatest difficulties.

The alternating conflicts of blame and guilt resolved, the lover moves on to praise his lady and justify his pains. Her beauty--eyes, neck, face, body--is such that nothing lacks or is in excess. No one can praise her as nobly as Nature formed her. The tornada addresses the song itself and sends it to the jongleur Mon Francais, his intermediary, assuring him that the lover is well and awaits good fortune from his Consolation.

The poem is typical of much troubadour poetry in its pirouetting from one psychological state to another. The lover vacillates between self-abnegation and self-defense, subtle blame of his beloved and extravagant praise. The first four stanzas are essentially complaints but the object of censure wavers between the lover himself and his lady. In this poem the lover's ambivalence is depicted as reasonable and each troubled state leads into the next. By stanza four he has accused the lady, excused her, accused himself, and defended himself against any who might blame

him. Now he has reached an impasse: if, as he says, she has forgotten him and he dares not approach her, we reach a state of permanent stasis and there is no more impassioned agitation, no more love affair, and no more poetry. This triple threat attacks the poet with psychological, social and professional annihilation. So despite the inevitability of the situation, it must be overturned: the excitement must not fade, the love affair must not die, the poems must not cease. Ovid's advice and the indisputable image of the water and the stone permit them to continue to exist, even justify what some may see as the lover's folly. The lover must persevere in his role and the poet persist in his. The sweet nothings of the lover, which are the beautiful words of the poet, will eventually arouse compassion in the lady. The poem, or bels dihz, is the requisite means of causing action at a distance. The lover need not risk himself by approaching where he fears being rebuffed, but by sending his poems as emissaries, he will cause the lady to reassure him of his welcome. Thus the poem can conclude with the panegyric the poet longs to make and the lover can bask in the reflected glory of the perfection of his beloved, such perfection that no artificial praise can compete with her natural beauty and only someone without sense could doubt the lover's good sense. His love is thereby vindicated and his poem sanctioned.

This poem is a very artfully controlled one. The lover passes from misery to misery to hope and exaltation under the very sure guidance of the alert poet. The first words and last words of each stanza direct the poem through its metamorphoses. The first two stanzas begin with the lady's senhal, Consolation, an ironic one in these circumstances. But the first stanza's first line goes on to say "I know," and continues with an account of the present situation, while the second stanza's first line finishes with "I remember" and recalls the past, these words alone indicating the tone of nostalgia for a better time. The third stanza, in which he admits responsibility for the state of affairs begins with "By my fault," but the fourth, in which he denies any basis for accusation against him starts "She accuses me." The pivotal stanza in which the solution is offered begins with the temporal conjunction tan, as long as, and appropriately introduces the idea of perseverance. The final strophe continues the philosophical mood with "Who contemplates well," and the beauty of the lady is described in intellectual terms rather than sensual ones. No physical description is given, but we are told that her beauty is perfect, without lack or excess. The tornadas address the song, Chansoneta, and instruct the song to tell, e digas.

Just as the first words of each stanza orient us as we follow through the maze of the tormented lover's mind, so does the last word in each stanza indicate the direction the next stanza will take. The rhyme scheme of the poem is abbacdce and every stanza uses the same rhymes. The last word in each stanza rhymes with no other word in the stanza but only with the other last words in other stanzas. The first last word, aventura, chance or good fortune, leads us into the second stanza where the poet remembers happier days. Forfaitura, which terminates the second stanza, logically leads to the confession which begins the third stanza because the lady blames him at the beginning of the fourth, and the mezura, suitable behavior or decorum, which ends the fourth stanza brings us to the theme of persistence in the fifth. It is perhaps not without malice or intent that before stanza six describing the lady's beauty, we find dura closing stanza five. Stanza six ends with Natura and the tornadas suggest that, if Nature runs her proper course, the result will be melhura aventura, better fortunes, and bring us full circle.

The virtuosity of the troubadour poets is not a mere mastery of verbal tricks. We can see clearly in this poem how skillfully the poet guides us along the lover's tortured way. Although the lover is batted about by his ambivalent thoughts and feelings, the beginning of each stanza introduces a new direction of thought and the end

of each stanza points the way to the next turning. We can not anticipate the lover's thoughts, yet we follow them smoothly and although the lover himself may be driven to distraction and beside himself, the poem is very tightly controlled by prosody and semantics. Thus the structure in this poem as in most troubadour poems, permits the poet to create a unified work about the ambivalence and dissociation inherent in erotic relationships.

Over a century separates Francesco Petracca from Bernard de Ventadorn yet the same problem plagues them both and the same solution offers itself and is adopted. When a woman ignores her suitor, what should he do? In sonnet 265 of the Rime Sparse the troubadour's artful recreation of the erratic mental processes of the lover gives way to Petrarch's more concise, logical exposition of the problem and its solution.

Aspro core et selvaggio et cruda voglia
in dolce umile angelica figura,
se'l'impreso rigor gran tempo dura,
avran di me poco onorata spoglia;

che quando nasce et mor fior erba et foglia,
quando e 'l di chiaro et quando e notte oscura,
piango ad ogni or. Ben o di mia ventura,
di Madonna, et d'Amore onde mi doglia.

Vivo sol di speranza, rimembrando
che poco umor gia per continua prova
consumar vidi marmi et pietre salde:

non e si duro cor che lagrimando,
pregando, amando talor non si smova,
ne si freddo voler che non si scalde.

(A harsh heart and a wild cruel desire
 in a sweet, humble angelic form,
 if this rigor she has taken up continues long,
 will have spoils of me that bring little honor;

for when the flowers, grass and leaves are born
 or die,
 when it is bright day and when it is dark night,
 I weep at all times. From fate,
 from my lady, and from Love I have much to grieve
 me

I live only on hope, remembering
 that I have seen a little water, by always trying,
 finally wear away marble and solid rock:

there is no heart so hard that by weeping,
 praying, loving, it may not be sometime moved,
 no will so cold that it cannot be warmed.)

The conflicts, perceived by the troubadours to be within the lover's own psyche, are often times in Petrarch's poems displaced to the outside world. This exteriorized dichotomy is evident in the description of the lady with which the poem begins.

Petrarch's lady and Bernard's are characterized as fierce wild animals. Towards the troubadour, the lady's heart was "fers . . . durs et iratz." Towards Petrarch the lady show "Aspro core et selvaggio et cruda voglia." Yet to both poets, the lady's beauty is such that it excuses her savage demeanor. But Bernard's description occurs in the sixth stanza after the lover has taken hope from the image of the water and the stone, so the change in attitude is logical and expected. Petrarch, however,

makes a point by point comparison in the very next line. The three adjectives in the first line, aspro, selvaggio and cruda are balanced by three in the second line which are very nearly the first set's antonyms: dolce, umile and angelica. The poem opens by establishing an antithesis in the nature of the lady, not in the feelings of the lover. In the rest of that first stanza, as the poet warns that her rigor (rock like) will give her a victory but no honor, the antithesis of her nature is reinforced by the resulting oxymoron of the Pyrrhic victory.

Having located the conflicts in the lady, the lover hastens to depict himself as firm and invariable. This too he does with antithesis. In the birth or death of nature, the light or dark of days, at least one thing is constant: the lover weeps as has been ordained by fate, the lady and Love. So amidst the flux of Nature and of time, the lover alone is steadfast and unchanging. The troubadours strove hard to establish, that the lover was ruled by love alone and that his joy or grief, delight or pain, essentially irrational, was a function of his own consciousness rather than of anything outside himself. This principle deliberately contradicted by Petrarch, who sees the lover as a whole hearted and faithful being who must cope with the variable and ambivalent forces around him.

What can succour this anguished creature but hope?

His knowledge of nature sustains him for he remembers that a little water will wear away rock, and he, ceaseless fountain that he is, takes heart. For once in this poem the natural world offers him an image of himself. He makes the analogy between himself and the water, his lady and the rock and the hope that eventually her hardness will be worn down by his persistence sustains him. The motif of the water and the stone occupies the first tercet of the sonnet. The second tercet explains how the lover's observation of nature applies to his personal situation: "No heart is so hard that it will not be moved by weeping, praying, loving." Petrarch stays close to the physical reality by emphasizing the lover's tears. He then carefully extends it by including prayers and loving so that the image may be understood metaphorically.

Although the themes of Bernard's and Petrarch's poems are the same, the styles and the attitudes behind them are very different. We have seen how Petrarch exteriorizes the conflict which the troubadours understood as an internal one. The length and structure of Bernard's canso permit the poet to explore the labyrinth of the lover's mind and to guide the reader through its turnings, dead ends, and surprises. Petrarch does write canzone, and when he does it is in a very close imitation of the troubadour style, but most often he uses the sonnet and in

this concise form exploration must give way to exposition. The sonnet's natural division by rhyme into two quatrains (abbaabba) and two tercets (cde cde) yields a structure that easily lends itself to the exposition of a problem or a situation in the quatrains, and a solution, result or comparison in the tercets. This is a very logical natural form of organization and although the matter is the same essentially irrational one of the troubadours, a cause-effect, comparison-contrast, or problem-solution structure is used frequently. In this poem we see a very tight rational organization. The beautiful but harsh lady of the first quatrain is the cause of the endlessly tearful lover of the second. Between the first and second quatrains a cause and effect relationship implicitly exists as does a relationship of contrast between the rigid lady and her melting lamenting lover. The quatrains expose a problem and the tercets propose the only acceptable, albeit illogical solution. Between the tercets exists the relationship of analogy, made between the lover and water, his lady and stone, between water and tears, prayers and loving, and at the very end in a restatement of the principle, between hardness and coldness and erosion and warming.

Where Bernard had to plant clues very carefully as to the next direction the poem would take, Petrarch does not.

A rigorous logical relationship exists between the parts of the poem, sometimes expressed with an adverb or a conjunction, but sometimes not. But Petrarch always takes pains to make explicit comparisons and analogies, such as between the water and the stone and the lover and the lady, which the troubadours merely drop in passing. Allusion, one of the most entrenched habits of the troubadours, is almost not permitted by Petrarch, who always explains his references by means of narrative, comparisons or explicit analogy. While the movement of Petrarch's sonnet speaks for itself and does not require the verbal signposts that Bernard's needs, Petrarch sets up little correspondences throughout the poem to explicate the analogy lest it escape the drowsy reader. The meaning of the water and the stone is introduced by the rigor of the lady in stanza one and the continual weeping of the lover in stanza two. In stanza three the two are joined together in the comparison to nature and in stanza four the human application of this natural phenomenon is made explicit. In Bernard's poems, in contrast, the example from nature and the poet's vow to continue to serve are placed side by side and their juxtaposition is considered sufficiently illuminating. It is up to the reader to make the connection.

Petrarch made the lyric a more logical, explicit genre and it took on a more learned, rhetorical style and used all the devices of the troubadours and antiquity to

adorn it. Throughout the Rime, although not in this sonnet, Petrarch refers to the myths of antiquity, narrates them and interest in the classical myths inspired and influenced many an author. Ballade 90 of the English poems of Charles of Orleans shows this influence.

Both the first and second ballade sequences by Charles of Orleans are applications of Ovid's advice to let wax go first, and to write persistently to the lady so that when the lover is out of sight, he need not be out of mind. This poem, from the second ballade sequence, has no French version (Ballade 90).

Constraynt of payne pou3t & hevynes
 Ay to pursewe the sewt of my servise
 Me doth enforse to sett my bisynes
 To write to yow bi which y in sum wise
 Myght knowe the fyn only of myn emprise
 Which with myn eyen seme that y loue on
 As flesshely soft as man nede to devise
 That in my resoun fynde yow hard as stoon

As hard ye and yet more hard parde
 For man may se the tendir drope of rayne
 Perse the stoon in fallyng quantite
 But for no thing that y kan write or sayne
 In lengthe of tyme thus dewryng or complayne
 Kan y not ioyme yowre hert and myn in on
 Wherefore y may reherse yow here agayne
 That yow y fynde more hard than eny ston

The gret kerver the prince pigmalioun
 Karf in stoon so quykly a figure
 The bewte of which so raught him his resoun
 That he hir lovid so hoot out of mesure
 To that she turnyd a fleshely creature
 So oft he prayde to god and hir aloon
 But ye the whiche seme flesshely of nature
 For ought y pray y fynde yow but a stoon

O marbil hert more hard if harder be
 If so that ye be made of flesshe and boon
 As with yowre word sumwhat comfortith me
 That y may fynde yow softer then a stoon

To start this epistle the lover explains his motive for writing: pain, thought and heaviness force him to write in order to know the status of his love affair. He questions his progress because, although his eyes tell him that his lady is as fleshly soft a creature as can be devised, his reason finds her hard as a stone.

The refrain line, "That in my resoun fynde yow hard as stoon," is intensified at the beginning of the second stanza: "As hard ye and yet more hard parde." The poet introduces the image of the water and the stone here not as a cause for hope, as Bernard and Petrarch did, but as a reason for the lover's despair. His lady is even harder than a stone, because soft raindrops in quantity will pierce a stone, but neither his endurance nor his complaining have made any dent in her. Rather than being a sign of hope for the persistent, the motif of the water and stone here point up the unnaturalness of the lady and the superhuman task placed on the lover. Bernard and Petrarch were explicitly critical of the lady's behavior even though they praised her beauty. The antithesis of the lady's nature is expressed in Charles' poem by the lover's wonder at the lady's fleshly soft appearance and

adamant heart. Yet more like Bernard than Petrarch, the poet acknowledges the lover's internal conflict by noting that his eyes judge her soft while his reason finds her hard, so the fault may not be in the lady but rather in the lover's perception of her. Nevertheless the lover finds the laws of nature suspended here and he hopelessly concludes his stanza with the refrain intensified: "That yow y fynde more hard than eny stone." The refrain line is introduced by "wherefore" and shows the kind of logical development that is explicit in Petrarch's poems. But the next stanza opens with a brief narrative about the carver Pygmalion, inserted with the paratactic aplomb we associate with the troubadours. The beauty of Pygmalion's own creation took away his reason and so often did he pray to god and to her, that this stone woman became flesh. The myth gives us a narrative example that demonstrates the validity of the topos, yet the lover refuses to take comfort from it because Pygmalion beseeched a stone lady who behaved like stone and was affected by his prayers, whereas the lover's lady defies nature in being flesh and behaving harder than stone. The refrain of this stanza denies her fleshly nature and states "For ought y pray y fynde yow but a stoon." The envoi addresses the lady as "O marbil hert more hard if harder be." With the miraculous example of Pygmalion before him, the lover perseveres

and requests that the lady respond, if she be flesh and bone in a comforting manner so "Thay y may fynde yow softer then a stoon."

This is perhaps the most interesting of the four poems in that it most fully exploits the motif of the water and the stone. Like Petrarch, Charles introduces the antithetical lady, soft looking but hard hearted, and the constant lover who writes to know "the fyn only of myn emprise." Then the image of the water and the stone enters, but not to resolve the situation, as it did in the other poets, but rather to further baffle and frustrate the lover. The second stanza makes explicit the analogy between the drops of rain and the lover's speech: "But for no thing that y kan write or sayne." The lover's time and endurance are also mentioned to strengthen the comparison. But his results are nil.

The story of Pygmalion enters the poem abruptly. Its link with the preceeding stanza is an associative one between the stone of the refrain line and Pygmalion's identity as a carver, an artist who could master stone in its stony nature and eventually transform it. He is perhaps not only more fortunate than the lover, but also more skillful than the poet. However, even though his skill made him his irresistable lady, his recurrent eloquence brought her to life and the power of the word is

emphasized here appropriately. Between Galatea and the lover's lady there is the obvious parallel in that they are both "made of stone," that is to say unresponsive to the lover. But for Galatea it is because she is lifeless, not human, that she does not respond; what excuse can the lover's lady have? Here the analogy breaks down and leaves the lover with little cause for hope. Yet if a real stone woman could come to life, might not an only apparently stony woman? Like Bernard and Petrarch, Charles hopes against his better judgement; he must, so he does, but he can scarcely be called confident. The tone of the poem throughout is one of despair and the comfort that other poets took from the topos is inconsequential here. Only the narrative permits a desperate optimism to creep in.

The ballade form is very well suited to this poem. Unlike the exploratory canso and the antithetical sonnet, the ballade is an incremental form, each stanza and refrain adding to and modifying the one before. Here, each stanza shows us a further reason for the lover's increasing despair. In the first, her hardness and his constancy suffice to create his unhappiness. In the second stanza the unnaturalness of the situation, her not being affected by his pleas, further disturbs him. Finally in the third stanza the contrast between Pygmalion's success and his failure both depresses him and gives him some hope. The refrains emphasize the cumulative effect of the poem.

First the refrain makes a comparison of equality between the lady and a stone: she is hard as stone. Next the lady is compared to the stone and found harder, even worse, harder than not just one type of stone, but of any stone. In the third refrain the comparison gives way to a metaphor: instead of being compared to a stone, the lady is identical to a stone, and thus she is belittled: " . . . y fynde yow but a stone." Irrationally, although the lover begins the envoi by addressing her as "marbil hert," he nevertheless pleads with her and hopes to find her softer than a stone in the final refrain, attempting to reverse the effect he has built up from the beginning. Like Bernard, Charles feels the necessity of continuing, and he will grasp at whatever frail straws he can unearth.

Wyatt's song is composed of six quatrains rhyming abab. It lacks the prosodic complexity of Bernard's canso, but it captures something of the wandering stream of consciousness of the troubadour's poems. However it has a much more logical construction, like Petrarch's sonnet, in that it introduces our axiom and then attempts to apply it. Like Charles, Wyatt finds that his lady seems to exist beyond the laws of nature, and therefore he takes no comfort from the topos.

Processe of tyme worketh suche wounder,
 That water which is of kynd so soft
 Doeth perse the marbell stone a sonder,
 By litle droppes faling from aloft.

And yet an hert that sems so tender
 Receveth no dropp of the stilling teres,
 That alway still cause me to render
 The vain plaint that sowndes not in her eres.

So cruel, alas, is nowght alyve,
 So fiers, so frowerd, so owte of fframe;
 But some way, some tyme, may so contryve
 By mens the wild to tempre and tame.

And I that alwaies have sought, and seke
 Eche place, eche tyme for some lucky daye,
 This fiers Tigre lesse I fynde her meke
 Any more denyd the lenger I pray.

The lyon in his raging furor
 Forberis that sueth mekenes for his boote;
 An thou, Alas, in extreme dolor
 The hert so low thou tredis vnder thy foote.

Eche fiers thing lo! how thou doest excede,
 And hides it vnder so humble a face;
 And yet the humble to helpe at nede,
 Nought helpeth tyme, humblenes, nor place.

The poem begins with our observation of nature, the emphasis being on the effect of time, rather than on the paradoxical action of the soft matter on the hard one. In the second stanza the poet makes the human application of this axiom and like Charles finds that his experience contradicts the natural process, that a heart that seems tender is not softened by the lover's tears and complaints. The lover's tears and his complaints are mentioned together in order to make clear the analogy between water

and words. Like the lady in Bernard's and Petrarch's poems, Wyatt's lady is characterized as a wild beast. She is "cruel . . . fiers, so frowerd, so owte of fframe." Even so, given the time and the method, even the wild may be tamed. This note of optimism is contradicted in the next two stanzas in which the lover tells how he has sought and seeks to find her, "this fiers Tigre," more meek and is ever disappointed; and how, worse than a lion, which will not harm someone who is meek, the lady tramples the pained heart under foot. The final stanza recapitulates several of the themes we have seen in these poems. The lady's fierce demeanor and humble appearance are underlined here, just as Petrarch emphasized them. Like Charles, Wyatt seems to find the discrepancy between appearance and reality a cause for distress and not hope. He contrasts the lady, apparently humble, with the truly humble, the lover, whom nothing, not time, humility, not place helps. Despite his true meekness, the lady has even less pity than wild beasts. The conclusion of the poem directly contradicts the beginning. Time works wonders at the start, but nothing helps the humble at the end.

The earlier poets, Bernard and Petrarch, have a different attitude towards the topos than the later poets. For Bernard and Petrarch, the phrase contains the truth. It must be so. How much of this depends on the poet's attitude towards the author, or the authority? Bernard

carefully mentions that he knows it to be true for he has read it, and literary allusions are nearly nonexistent in troubadour poetry. Petrarch, whom we might have expected to quote from his reading, since he was an acknowledged scholar, tells us that he remembers it, and appropriates it more into the realm of experience than of learning. Charles and Wyatt make no reference to any source; it is common knowledge, a fact of nature which anyone might observe. But in their poems even nature fails against the formidable lady.

The comparison of these four poems shows us how stable and universal the tradition of the vernacular love lyric remained throughout all Europe from the twelfth to the sixteenth centuries. All four poems are concerned with the love of the poet-lover for a lady whose beauty delights but whose unresponsiveness causes grief. The lady is described as fierce, like a wild animal, and hard, like stone. Love, joy, desire and suffering torment the lover whose determined endurance lends him nobility and merit. Despite the ambivalence and instability of his feelings, he remains constant. He hopes that his words will effect a change in the lady's feelings, that the power of the poem will transform his frustration, anger and pain into joy and delight.

Modifications did occur in the lyric over the course of time. The troubadour canço explored the psychology of

the lover and incorporated great variety in its form, language and tone. Order was imposed on the canso by rhyme and other phonic and semantic patterns. Petrarch's sonnet abbreviated the lyric and gave it a different kind of organization: the poem became less exploratory and more explanatory, and its logic became explicit and more evident. The tone of the lyric became more uniform and polite while its favorite figures became the extreme ones of antithesis, oxymoron and paradox. Classical learning in the form of mythological allusion and rhetoric both structured and ornamented the poem.

By the fifteenth century we find the lyric to be a genre rich in possibilities. There are a variety of fixed forms to select and an ever increasing number of figures, themes and motifs to employ. The old metaphors of feudal service are retained in Charles' English ballade, but mythological references and natural imagery are also introduced. The tone of the poem is polite but emphatic and the imagery forceful. The varied refrain insists on and focuses the theme. The poem by Wyatt looks somewhat reactionary compared to Charles' unified and meditative poem. Wyatt's song has the wandering linear quality of the troubadour canso but the explicit logic of the Petrarchan poem.

From the twelfth century England has been part of the continental tradition of love poetry. Differences between Old Provençal and Middle English lyrics are of degree, not

of kind, for England and the continent shared not only the same themes, but the same aesthetic. The Middle English lyric is an imitation of the Old Provençal model, the variations of which are caused by differing social circumstances and linguistic habits. Only in the fourteenth century does Chaucer's humor set the English lyric apart from the continental one. The troubadours' humor and self mockery had disappeared from the French and Italian lyric but Chaucer brings it back. In his narratives and in the most successful of his lyrics he looks upon himself as a lover with a rueful and disbelieving eye, as ready to point out the folly in his own behavior as in another's. The comic vein the Chaucerians unfortunately chose to ignore.

Charles of Orleans arrived in England well versed in courtly French literature. In his early French and English poems he puts the familiar allegories of the Roman de la Rose into fixed form lyrics and with a combination of charm and seriousness tells us of his trials and tribulations as a young lover. To this traditional tale he brings the self-consciousness of autobiography, perhaps inspired by the great Italian poets. Poetry becomes a means of examining his life and as his attention to his task becomes more serious, his perceptions of himself and the world become more comic and critical. Chaucer becomes his model, especially in the dream-vision "Love's Renewal." In his second sequence of ballades all the lessons of French, Italian

and English poets appear to have been assimilated since Charles demonstrates a maturity of skill and of thought new in the book. He relies less on allegory, less on the conventions of courtly life and more on himself as the interpreter of thought and experience into poetry.

The English Poems of Charles of Orleans is the first sequence of courtly love poems in English and the first poetic autobiography, however fictionalized. The book is valuable just for introducing the possibilities of a collection of poems into English. But the poems themselves show great skill and variety, wit, humour and that characteristic melancholy, at times. They avoid the pitfalls of most late medieval lyric: unrelieved conventionality, aureate diction, and humorlessness. Rather they look forward to the flowering of the lyric in the next century.

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