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CONTRARIES AND PARADOX IN SELECTED ANONYMOUS
MIDDLE ENGLISH LYRICS

Dissertation

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of The Ohio State University

By
Margaret Glockner Hartshorn, B.A., M.A.

* * * * *

The Ohio State University
1974

Reading Committee:  
Alan Brown
Walter Scheps
Christian Zacher

Approved By

Walter Scheps
Adviser
Department of English
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to acknowledge the help of my adviser, Walter Scheps, who first introduced me to the "doctrine" of contraries in his seminar on Chaucer's minor works, and who, in directing this dissertation, has both provided me with guidance and permitted me total freedom (a paradoxical combination). I also thank the other members of my reading committee for their helpful criticisms and encouraging comments. For their less tangible but nonetheless essential contribution I thank my parents, whose expectations of and confidence in me have always been an inspiration, and my husband, whose good sense and sense of humor have helped me keep contraries and paradox in perspective, and whose generosity has permitted me the time to devote to this study.
VITA

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ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS

I. Citation and Representation of Middle English Lyrics:

Some lyrics are mentioned or quoted from briefly in the text. In the case of such quotations, reference is given to the specific lines, the edition, and page number on which the quotation is found. When a lyric is discussed in some detail it is generally quoted in full in the text (if eighteen lines or under) or included in Appendix I; in specific quotations from such poems, only line references are given (fuller references may be found where the poem is quoted in full). Poems are represented exactly as in their printed editions with the following exceptions: (1) stanza and line numbers may or may not be given in the printed editions; (2) the custom of enlarging the first letter of a poem and capitalizing the second (as in the Brown and Robbins editions) is not followed; (3) Middle English ȝ is represented as z; (4) Middle English Þ and þ are represented as th and w respectively, where they occur in a few thirteenth-century poems.

II. Abbreviations:

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Histor  Historical Poems of the XIVth and XVth Centuries, ed.


O.E.D.  A New English Dictionary on Historical Principles, eds.


Common abbreviations are used for well-known periodicals in the Notes and List of Works Cited.
LIST OF POEMS DISCUSSED IN TEXT

All poems discussed in the text of the dissertation are included in the following list by index number (according to Carleton Brown and R. H. Robbins, *The Index of Middle English Verse* [N.Y.: Columbia University Press, 1943] and to R. H. Robbins and John L. Cutler, *Supplement to the Index of Middle English Verse* [Lexington: U. of Ky. Press, 1965]). First lines are those of the specific texts of the lyrics which have been used as the basis for discussion. References are to chapter, part, section, and subsection of the dissertation. For example, Index 1402, "I wolde witen of som wys wiht," is discussed in Chapter Two, Part II, Section A, subsection 5. This list does not include poems mentioned in the conclusion and in the notes.

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<td>4177</td>
<td></td>
<td>Wynter wakenep al my care</td>
<td>2.II.B.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4181</td>
<td></td>
<td>Witte hath wondir that resoun ne telle kan</td>
<td>3.II.</td>
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<td>4223</td>
<td></td>
<td>[W]orldes blis ne last no throwe</td>
<td>2.II.A4.</td>
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<td>4236</td>
<td></td>
<td>Wold god þat men myzt sene</td>
<td>2.I.B.</td>
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<td>*5</td>
<td></td>
<td>And a woman off hauntyng moode</td>
<td>1.II., 1.II.B.</td>
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INTRODUCTION

I

Definition of Terms

Critical study of a large body of anonymous Middle English lyrics has not often been attempted. In fact, although readily accessible and well-edited texts of many of the extant anonymous lyrics have been available since the early 1950's, thanks to the work of Carleton Brown, R. H. Robbins, Richard L. Greene, and G. L. Brook, only a few book-length studies of the lyrics have appeared. One study (the only one limited exclusively to the secular lyrics) is Arthur K. Moore's The Secular Lyric in Middle English (Lexington: U. of Ky. Press, 1951); but Moore devotes only about thirty-five pages to anonymous lyrics and his method of criticism is justly, if somewhat harshly, attacked by Robert D. Stevick in "The Criticism of Middle English Lyrics" (MP, 64 [1966], 103-17). Stevick characterizes the method as a "persistent attempt to criticize the secular lyrics by inventing ad hoc hypotheses to describe how the poet came to write his poem--how, correlatively, we may vicariously write it too. We are offered fiction when we would have criticism" (p. 105). The need for explication and formal criticism of a large body of English lyrics is recognized and such criticism is strongly urged by Stevick in the same article (p. 103):

It is not the world of letters as it was in which Middle English lyrics suffer neglect. It is the world that is now, the one distinguished by criticism of increasing skill and scope. Biographical criticism, to be sure, can not be expected to operate on texts nearly all anonymous. Historical
investigation of context and conventions has produced admirable results in some instances and has raised fascinating controversy over the Corpus Christi Carol, but the attractions of Chaucer, Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, Piers Plowman, the Wakefield pageants, etc., have left the lyrics with unequal attention. Explication de texte applied to the lyrics has been only sporadic and undisciplined. The New Critics liked a late lyric ("Western Wind") very much, but none seems to have worked systematically through a representative sample of the surviving verse.

Three works have attempted to supply the lack of systematic formal criticism, one written before and the others after the publication of Stevick's comments: Stephen Manning's *Wisdom and Number: Toward a Critical Appraisal of the Middle English Religious Lyric* (Lincoln: U. of Neb. Press, 1962); Raymond Oliver's *Poems Without Names: The English Lyric, 1200-1500* (Berkeley: U. of Ca. Press, 1970); and Edmund Reiss's *The Art of the Middle English Lyric: Essays in Criticism* (Athens: U. of Georgia Press, 1972). Reiss's work, which consists of twenty-six self-sufficient essays, each devoted to one anonymous lyric, appeared during the course of the preparation of this dissertation (though some of his essays had been previously published). In a few instances Reiss and I have arrived independently at similar interpretations of particular lyrics, and these correspondences will be pointed out in the notes.

Both Manning and Oliver suggest the importance of paradox, one of the interests of this dissertation, in the Middle English lyrics. In his final brief chapter entitled "Piety and Wit," Manning notes: "Some critics have raised an eyebrow at finding a trace of something which looks remarkably like metaphysical wit in the English religious lyrics. They should be more surprised that the English lyric inherited so little of the embarrassment of intellectual riches in the Latin hymn and sermon" (p. 139). Manning remarks upon about a dozen instances of the
excellent use of wit (including paradox) in the Middle English religious lyrics, the discussion culminating in his well-known analysis of "I syng of a myden."

Oliver, whose Poems Without Names is not only the best general introduction to the lyrics, but also one of the most suggestive works for further criticism, attempts to account for a certain oneness or sameness which he finds in the lyrics. This he partially attributes to three lyric intentions (intention being the "raison d'être of the poem"): to celebrate, to persuade, and to define (p. 8). Oliver contends that these intentions do not "say entirely different things." Furthermore, ". . . these differences of intention do not alter the basic oneness of the medieval lyric, because their unity is, first of all, formal. The poems share certain kinds of diction, metaphor, overall structure, and other general forms that cut across differences among the three intentions . . ." (p. 8). As an example of overall structure Oliver recognizes logic, including paradox: "Paradox, in general, is very well suited to expressing the medieval world view; the truth is transcendent, whether it is the transcendent fact of death, or the divine nature of a human baby, or the virginity of God's mother" (p. 64). Because of the scope of Oliver's book his discussion of paradox in the poems is necessarily brief (less than five pages) and merely suggestive.

Among recent studies of the lyrics Rosemary Woolf's The English Religious Lyric in the Middle Ages (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968) stands alone. Miss Woolf does not attempt a "critical appraisal" of the religious lyrics (although she does make many critical judgments
on the merits of individual poems, often by comparing them to their Latin counterparts); rather, her work is a study in the growth and development of the religious lyrics from Latin meditative tradition, an invaluable source of information on the Latin backgrounds and an aid in understanding some of the themes and images in the poems. A similar study, as its title indicates, is Douglas Gray's *Themes and Images in the Medieval English Religious Lyric* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972). Gray's book, far less scholarly and critical than Miss Woolf's, is seemingly directed to those generally unfamiliar with the lyrics (Gray often limits his remarks to one or two sentences on lyrics which he quotes either in their entirety or in part in the text). Another recent work, also limited to the Middle English religious lyric, is Sarah Appleton Weber's *Theology and Poetry in the Middle English Lyric: A Study of Sacred History and Aesthetic Form* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1969). Miss Weber discusses only eight poems in detail. However, she focuses more on the poetic form of each lyric than does either Miss Woolf or Douglas Gray, concluding that the "purpose, the subject matter, the form and structure of the medieval religious lyric can be discovered only through a knowledge of medieval Christian theology which had a unique subject matter and a unique mode of knowing" (p. 195).

Six years after Stevick's remarks were published, then, there is still need for systematic critical studies of representative numbers of Middle English anonymous lyrics. This dissertation is offered as such a study. The purpose of the dissertation is to demonstrate, by detailed analyses of a large number of lyrics, a certain unity, a
oneness, which is to be found among many of the hundreds of poems composed by an unknown number of anonymous authors over a period of about three hundred years (1200-1500). This remarkable unity may be attributed to an interest in contraries and paradox, which manifests itself in the authors' choice of subject matter and theme, and which is reflected in the form of the poems (from rhetorical devices which govern the choice of a single word to structural devices which inform entire poems).

Before I explain what I mean by contraries and paradox, other terms which will be used in that discussion and throughout the dissertation must be defined; namely, religious, moral, and secular lyrics. The term lyric, of course, might be challenged for its appropriateness to some of the poems to be considered. The term is used not with its more modern connotations. Rather, it is used simply because it has traditionally been associated with the wide variety of anonymous, (relatively) short Middle English poems which have been edited by Brown, Robbins, Greene, and Brook (the major collections from which most of the poems included in this study have been chosen). The lyrics I have chosen to analyze, and from which I have drawn my observations on the nature and significance of contraries and paradox in anonymous Middle English lyrics, are discussed in three chapters, unimaginatively entitled: secular lyrics, moral lyrics, religious lyrics. By dividing the lyrics into these three groups I do not intend to give the impression of disagreeing with those critics who find the traditional division of the lyrics into secular and religious to be artificial and generally unhelpful in determining the distinguishing characteristics of the
lyrics. On the contrary, the purpose of this dissertation is to show that a basic oneness in the variety of lyrics can be partly accounted for by the interest in and use of contraries and paradox. The division into secular, moral, and religious is made simply on the basis of subject matter: the subjects of the religious lyrics, for example, include Christ and Mary, traditional paradoxes of faith such as the Incarnation, the Eucharist, and Redemption, as well as the suffering of Christ and Mary, man's response to Christ's Passion. The moral lyrics are concerned with man's moral or ethical state and treat the subjects of moral disintegration and the moral implications of the transitoriness of all things; some of the moral lyrics are didactic, some are not. Secular lyrics include those whose subjects are human love and women (although a few poems are considered in this chapter not because they deal with the two main subjects but because they display some of the same techniques in the use of contraries and paradox as do the poems on love and women). Most of the subjects named, obviously, would lend themselves naturally to treatment by means of contraries and paradox; some of the subjects have been considered paradoxical in more than one era and national literature (notably love and women). The terms contraries and paradox, not the subjects themselves, may need clarification.

A. Contraries

A contrary, as the term is used in this dissertation, may be defined according to the Middle English Dictionary (part C, p. 568) as "one of a pair of opposed or contrasting qualities, conditions, actions,
conclusions, etc.; the opposite, antithesis, or reverse (of something)"; or, as Aristotle defines contraries: "For we call those things contrary which, being also within the same class, are most distant the one from the other." Contraries are defined fully only in the context of philosophy, and in only a few philosophical systems have contraries been a subject of investigation. In the Aristotelian system inherited by the Middle Ages, even in its earliest form (that is, Categories and On Interpretation), contraries were fully discussed and distinguished from other kinds of opposites. They are treated in the Categories, a work whose purpose has been much debated even by its earliest commentators. Experts in the history of formal logic generally agree with Porphyry that Aristotle is classifying not strictly predicates of propositions or subjects and predicates, but all types of being.

One of the distinguishing features of any category (substance, quality, quantity, relation, etc.) is whether or not its members have contraries.

Aristotle distinguishes among four kinds of opposites, only one of which he called contraries. Another type of opposites he calls privatives and positives. These have reference to the same subject (such as sight and blindness which have reference to the eye). Aristotle distinguishes between these two types of opposites in the following way: there are two kinds of contraries, those with intermediates (such as, in the case of black and white, grey) and those without (such as odd and even). Of those contraries with no intermediate, one or the other must be present in a subject in which they naturally subsist or of which they are predicated. Of those contraries with an intermediate it is not necessary that one or the other be present in the subject (since
an intermediate may be present), unless one of the two contraries is a constitutive property of the subject (such as heat is of fire) in which case that particular contrary, and not the other, must be present. Furthermore, it is possible for contraries in a subject to change from one into the other and for the subject to retain its identity (except in the case where one contrary is a constitutive property).

In the case of positives and privatives, however, these statements do not apply. One or the other need not always exist in a subject; one or the other must exist only if the subject has reached a particular state where this is necessary (for example, with the faculty of sight, when a being has reached the state of development in which sight is natural, either sight or blindness must be present). Furthermore, whereas in the case of contraries a change can take place from either contrary to the other, in the case of positives and privatives there may be change from possession to privation but no change from privation to possession.

The third type of opposition discussed by Aristotle is affirmation and negation (or contradiction). Terms which are opposed by contradiction are, for example, red and not-red (red and everything else in the universe which is not red). Contradiction is distinguished from the other kinds of opposition by means of truth and falsity, which is relevant in a discussion of any of the kinds of opposites only when they occur in propositions. In the case of a pair of contraries or of a privative and a positive it is not necessary that one be true and the other false (though they both cannot be true they could both be false, if, for example, the subject of which they are predicated does not
exist at all or if it has not reached a stage in development where one of the contraries would naturally apply). In the case of contradictory propositions, however, where contradictories are predicated of the same subject, one must be false and the other true (whether the subject exists or not).®

The strict definition of contraries and the subtle distinctions among contraries, privates and positives, and contradictories were not always preserved during the Middle Ages, even by the philosophers, at least in general philosophic discussions. In Reginald Pecock's Donet (which, along with his Folower to the Donet, is considered a "storehouse in the 'comoun peplis langage' of many of the favourite scholastic ideas of mediaeval Europe"), contrariety is defined as opposition in general, encompassing three of the four kinds defined by Aristotle: "Also þiruz oute þis present chapitre and in manye opire placis of my writings, whanne I speke of 'contrariete' bitwix vice and vertu, I understonde not in streitist and properist maner of contrariete, but in general or in large maner, as what euer þing is azenstonding anopir þing, wheþir it be bi streitly takun contrariete, or bi privacioun of it, or bi contradiccioun to it, in þat and so be callid 'contrarie' to it."¹⁰

Pecock omits entirely discussion or mention of the fourth kind of opposition mentioned by Aristotle (correlative opposites such as double and half, one of which presumes the existence of the other), as does Thomas Aquinas, who in one particular question distinguishes only three types of opposition: negation, privation, and contraries.¹¹ In the same context St. Thomas states that although privation and contraries
are distinguished in propositions, they are by nature about one and the same thing. He also finds habit and privation verified in all contraries: good and evil (opposites by privation) are genera of all contraries; every form has the character of good and every privation the character of evil (one contrary is always imperfect in relationship to the other).  

A loose definition of contraries ("as what euer þing is azenstond-ing anopir þing") operates throughout the Middle Ages among English writers such as Chaucer, Rolle, Wyclif, Trevisa, Lydgate, as verified by a study of the particular terms used in conjunction with contrarie or contrariety which have been recorded in the Middle English Dictionary and the O.E.D. Some of these terms are exact contraries: joy and woe, dishonoring and honoring, disparaging and praising, hope and desperation, water and fire, winter and summer, white and black, dry and wet, spirit and flesh, Satan and God, avarice and largesse. Good and evil are considered contraries (while strictly speaking they are opposites by privation). The following pairs of contraries are more or less inexact: unkindness and "alle kyne reson," love and deadly sin, covetousness and God's love, compunction and delights, pride and the art of love, laws of the people and holy writ, reason, and charity.

B. Paradox

Paradox is perhaps one of the most amorphous terms in the English language. The O.E.D. lists three basic meanings: (1) "a statement or tenet contrary to received opinion or belief; often with the implication that it is marvellous or incredible," sometimes with favorable and
sometimes with unfavorable connotations; (2) "a statement or proposition which on the face of it seems self-contradictory, absurd, or at variance with common sense, though, on investigation or when explained, it may prove to be well-founded (or, according to some, though it is essentially true) . . . often applied to a proposition or statement that is actually self-contradictory, or contradictory to reason or ascertained truth"; (3) "a phenomenon that exhibits some contradiction or conflict with preconceived notions of what is reasonable or possible." Paradox, then, may be actually true or actually false, simply contrary to opinion or logically contradictory. The extremes of the definition of paradox are represented in two philosophy reference books. The Dictionary of Philosophy and Psychology ([Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1960], II, 258) defines paradox in one sentence: "An opinion surprising or repugnant to an ordinary mind." The Encyclopedia of Philosophy ([N.Y.: The Macmillan Co. and the Free Press, 1967], V, 45-51) defines only logical paradoxes and discusses several particular paradoxes (notably in mathematics) which have been proposed since the nineteenth century: "A logical paradox consists of two contrary, or even contradictory, propositions to which we are led by apparently sound arguments. The arguments are considered sound because when used in other contexts they do not seem to create any difficulty" (p. 45). This type of logical paradox, now generally called an antinomy, does not occur at all in the lyrics; but it is the only kind of paradox which can be eliminated from the discussion of paradox in the Middle English lyrics.
Since the type of paradox called antinomy does not occur in the lyrics I have appropriated the term logical paradox to designate a type of paradox which does occur. Logical paradox, as used in this dissertation, designates a proposition which is logically impossible. The logical paradoxes are of two general types: those which are believed to be true (record a fact or express an existing psychological state) and those which are not. A logical paradox which is believed to be true can generally be reduced to a simple form: it consists of a proposition in which two contraries are predicated of the same subject at the same time (or two contradictory propositions which are postulated of one subject at one time). An example of such a proposition would be that Mary is both virgin and mother, or that the Eucharist is both bread and the body of Christ, or that Christ is both God and man. This type of paradox, then, is to be found in the religious lyrics; however, it is also found in poems whose subject is love, especially those influenced by courtly conventions. Love, for example, may be defined as being both joy and woe, or both death and life; the lady may be called both cause and cure of the lover's suffering. Another form of the logical paradox is the proposition in which one contrary is predicated of the other; for example, the proposition that mourning is bliss, or that fasting is feast ("X is Y," where Y is the contrary of X). That such propositions may be poetic overstatement (as undoubtedly some propositions made about love are) does not change the fact that as propositions they are logical impossibilities. Logical paradox also takes the form "seems X, but is Y," in which form is said to contradict substance;
for example, in some Eucharistic poems it is said that "it seems bread but is God."

The second type of logical paradox, those propositions which are not believed to be true or possible, will be called impossibilium. They consist of invented propositions which state the reverse of natural phenomena which we experience or witness in our daily lives. An example of such an impossible is that nettles bear roses in winter, which, obviously, has been constructed by substituting one contrary for another (winter for summer) and reversing the relationship of nettles and roses. Impossibilia have often been referred to as part of the topos of the "world upside down." However, in this dissertation, a distinction will be maintained between natural reversals which are logically impossible (impossibilia) and those which actually may occur (world upside down).

A subtype of the logical paradox is what I call apparent paradox: a logical paradox which is created by the poet, but which is then solved, either directly by the poet or by the reader or audience alone. Generally, the paradox is solved by understanding one of the key terms in a new or different way. This is the case in a short poem in which the poet declares that although he has not taken the rose he has borne away the flower (the rose, of course, must be understood as the lady and the flower as her virginity). In a poem filled with word play, one poet declares that "good was never good" (and various meanings of good must be examined in order to solve the paradox). In a religious poem we are advised to "eat this bread and ye be not dead" (both bread and dead must be understood in new ways). In one case in which fortune is
said to be both friend and foe the paradox is solved when the poet presents evidence that these contrary characteristics are not simultaneously present in fortune. In another instance, the apparent paradox of a cherry without a stone is solved when the cherry is characterized as still a seed (this is akin to Aristotle's distinction that until a man reaches a stage of development in which sight is natural he is not said either to have sight or to be blind). All poems which make use of apparent paradox have a puzzle-like character. If the entire poem is composed of apparent paradoxes, it is justly called a riddle.

A second group of paradoxes to be found in the lyrics I will call judgmental paradoxes, as distinguished from logical paradox and its particular types, impossibilities and apparent paradox. Paradox, as used to designate the tenets or propositions in this group, is to be understood in the original Greek meaning of the word, "contrary to opinion." In this sense the term received its first influential use when Cicero popularized the moral tenets of the Stoics as paradoxes, so-called because to general opinion they seemed absurd. Generally, the judgmental paradox may be defined as a proposition which depends for its existence as paradox on point of view. A proposition which is shocking, which seems abnormal, unnatural, or unjust, which contradicts a proposition generally held at a particular time by a particular group of people, may not seem so at a different time and place. The most familiar example of a tenet which was once viewed as a paradox but is not now is the "Copernican paradox," which depended for its existence on two contradictory levels of scientific knowledge. Among the
paradoxes in this group which are found in the lyrics are those which depend for their existence as paradoxes not on different scientific viewpoints but on different value systems, or, in the Christian framework, on the relative importance which is placed on life in this world and on the tension between man's human nature and his spiritual nature. From one point of view the following are paradoxes: that a person is glad to be simple and poor, that we should thank God for misfortunes, that we should welcome death, that we should reject the goods of this world. Not all judgmental paradoxes require competing intellectual systems or contrary value systems. Sometimes an occurrence or a proposition is contrary to wider general agreement about what is normal or natural, contrary, for example, to what is fitting for kingship. Thus it is commonly viewed as a paradox that God was born of a simple maiden and that he was born in a stable (the king-in-a-stall paradox).

Types of paradox, then, are distinguished in this dissertation by several terms: logical paradox, the types of logical paradox called impossibilia and apparent paradox, and judgmental paradox. These terms are applied to propositions which, except in the case of impossibilia and apparent paradox, are believed by a particular group of persons, if not all persons, to be true. The general term paradox is also applied in this dissertation in another way (related to logical paradox): to designate a subject or the subject matter of a poem about which contradictory propositions are offered as simultaneously true. In the lyrics such subjects include love, women, Mary, the Eucharist, and others.
The term **paradox** does not occur in the Middle English lyrics. In fact, according to the O.E.D. it does not appear at all in English writing until the sixteenth century. Several terms are used, however, which refer to what I have called paradoxes: **marvel, mystery, and wonder**. Interestingly, in the first attempt to translate the term **paradox** into English, George Puttenham, a Renaissance literary critic, chose the words "the wonderer."  

C. Contraries and Paradox in the Lyrics

Contraries and paradox function in several ways in the lyrics. Most obviously, some of the major subjects of the lyrics are paradoxes (subjects about which contrary propositions are postulated simultaneously or about which self-contradictory statements are made); in secular lyrics the favorite subjects are love and women; theological paradoxes often comprise the subject matter in religious lyrics (the Trinity, the Incarnation, the Eucharist). Other subjects, such as the transitoriness of all things, which is of major interest in moral lyrics, are traditionally and naturally described by means of contraries, not contraries existing simultaneously (as in logical paradoxes), but contraries succeeding one another. Still other subjects of the lyrics are explored by means of contraries and paradox, even though such contraries and paradoxes may not be intrinsically united with or even traditionally associated with the subjects. Such subjects include the suffering of Christ and his Mother and man's failure to respond to the love of Christ as shown by his Passion (poems which treat both of these subjects are included with the religious lyrics).
Since paradoxes, or subjects which can be treated by means of contraries and paradox, are the subjects of the poems considered in this dissertation, the primary use of contraries and paradox within the poems is naturally to define a particular subject generally for purposes of praise or dispraise. Contraries and paradox are also to be discovered in the form or structure of certain lyrics: in small structures (such as in words, between words, phrases, or lines) and in the form of the poem as a whole. Sometimes the contraries within the structure of the poem as a whole are blended almost inextricably, sometimes they exist independently of each other and are juxtaposed within the poem; in either case I find the lyric characterized by a unity by contraries. Contraries and paradox, then, are found in the lyrics to be discussed as means of definition of the subject and as means of construction or structure. But they are also found, in a few poems, solely for entertainment, the fun of making and deciphering apparent paradoxes or puns, or of imagining logical paradoxes.

1. The Use of Contraries and Paradox to Define
(a) One of the ways contraries are used to define (for celebration or dispraise) a subject, which may or may not be a paradox, is by characterizing the subject in its effects. The subject's power may be described as that of changing one contrary into another (when the contraries are in a substance); or of effecting a paradox (logical or judgmental).

This first type of description of effect (changing one contrary into the other in a substance) occurs, for example, when fortune is
described as making the rich poor or the poor rich; or when death is
described as changing man's wisdom into feeble reason (inexact con­
traries). A courtly lady is often said to change the poet's bale into
bliss. The Redemption is hailed as making man, who was thrall, free.

While the changing of one contrary into the other in a substance
is not a logical paradox (it is allowed by Aristotle, as noted above,
except in the case of strict privation), the changing of one substance
into its contrary certainly is a logical paradox. Christ and Mary,
then, are praised in their power to effect a logical paradox when a
poet says that they change the night into day (a figurative represen­
tation of the power of grace which cannot be fully understood by man,
not a natural sequential change). The power of the Eucharist is praised
in an apparent logical paradox which, even when solved, remains a
paradox: "eat this bread and ye be not dead" (even when bread is
understood as the sacrament and dead is understood as spiritually
dead, the paradox still remains). The love of Christ has the effect of
making a man glad to be simple and poor (a judgmental paradox). But
also for the love of Christ fasting is feast, mourning is bliss;
similarly, in courtly love, suffering is joy. In terms of propositions,
in both cases one contrary is predicated illogically of the other.
Both kinds of love, then, have paradoxical effect (logical paradox)
since they change one contrary into the other. It is irrelevant that
the poets are speaking figuratively; the effects are nevertheless pre­
sented as logical paradoxes, no doubt in order to reflect the poet's
belief that his subject cannot be fully understood in logical terms.
(b) In addition to describing the effect or power of a particular subject, contraries and paradox are used to define the nature of the subject itself. As in the discussion of effect, a distinction may be made between contraries in nonparadoxical relationship (that is, either alternating, successive, or in a continuum) and contraries in logically paradoxical relationship and other paradoxes (logical and judgmental) which are used to define.

Fortune and love are two subjects which are frequently described by alternating contraries; love, for example, is characterized as sometimes hot, sometimes cold; fortune is often defined in terms of a cycle of woe, joy, woe. Transitoriness and earthly bliss, on the other hand, are more often described not by cyclical or alternating contraries, but by successive ones (first the one, then the other—with no return to repeat the process). Of this world or earthly bliss it may be said that first it is here, then away, it comes then passes away, first it is and then it nis. This transitoriness is often expressed figuratively (with examples of transitoriness); for example, it is often said that of green grass comes hay, and fair weather is followed by rain.

There are a few cases in the lyrics when the contraries used to define or celebrate a subject seem to be used as two extremes of a continuum with the implication that everything in between also characterizes the subject. This is the effect, for example, when Mary is hailed as both rose and lily, both of which are symbols of perfection; since they are also contraries in some senses (red and white, passion symbol and purity symbol), the poet who characterizes Mary in this way would seem to wish to attribute all perfection to her. Another instance
of the continuum occurs when a poet describes creation in terms of contraries, such as firmament and stars; he is not limiting creation to the contraries, instead, he includes everything in between. (Aristotle, as noted above, makes a distinction between contraries with and without intermediaries.)

Paradoxes (logical and judgmental) are also used to define a subject and generally to characterize it as an object of praise. Mary is often praised as virgin and mother; the courtly lady is both the cause and cure of the poet's suffering; the Eucharist is defined as both red and white, alive and dead, or as seeming to be one thing while actually its contrary. In defining the Resurrection a poet may state the logical paradox that a dead man lives. Heaven, in many lyrics is described as day without night (a logical impossibility; at least, it is impossible for any particular geographical location) and rest without strife (a judgmental paradox). Other judgmental paradoxes are used in the group of moral lyrics which describe the degeneration of society. In this "world upside down" old men are without respect and guile is chapman. (I find this last example an instance of judgmental paradox since the paradox resides in the statement that guile, rather than honesty, is chapman. Logically of course, chapmen can be predicated neither of guile nor of honesty unless these terms are considered proper names; since guile is personified there is no logical impossibility in the proposition that guile is chapman.) Other judgmental paradoxes are used in the moral lyrics to define proper Christian conduct: that we thank God for misfortunes, that we should welcome death, that we should
not wonder about the contradictions of the faith or about those within our daily lives.

Finally, it is often found in the lyrics that certain paradoxes are generally associated with certain subjects although they do not, strictly speaking, define these subjects. These paradoxes which occur with particular subjects may be called contiguous. When the Incarnation is the subject of a poem, for example, we often find that the logical paradox of the virgin birth and the judgmental paradox of the king born in a stall will be mentioned. When the suffering of Christ is the subject, we almost invariably find a reference to the judgmental paradox that the innocent must suffer.

(c) In the preceding two sections we have examined contraries and paradoxes within a subject as they are used to define that subject as an object of praise or dispraise. But a subject itself will have a contrary, as well as be composed of contraries or have an effect which may be described by means of contraries. Mary, for example, is often praised by citing her dual nature, virgin and mother; however, Mary has a contrary, Eve, and Mary is sometimes defined or praised by comparing and contrasting her to her contrary. Mary's role as mother of Christ is illustrated in one poem by contrasting it to the role of an ordinary mother. In other poems the joys of this life are contrasted to those of heaven, or God's good is contrasted to other good.

In a subtype of this definition by contraries, only one member of the pair of contraries is described; the contrary is implied. This type of description is found most often in the moral lyrics. An extended
treatment of the transitoriness of this life or of the changes of fortune will comprise the body of the poem; but the description is made in order to urge the rejection of this life and the choice of its contrary. In many poems no description of heaven or the afterlife is made; its nature is implied in the description of its contrary. This is even more obvious in the world upside down poems which treat moral disintegration; the nature of the world rightside up is implied in its contrary.

A third and more subtle type of the definition of one contrary by the other occurs when one contrary is described in language, or sometimes in a situation, which is more commonly associated with the other contrary. At its best I call this a "reflective" use of contraries since each may shed light on the understanding and evaluation of the other. In a fairly simple form this use of contraries is seen in the so-called "Love Rune," written by Thomas of Hales, which is discussed in Chapter Three. In this poem Christ is portrayed as an earthly king, but surpassing all known earthly kings. He is said, for example, to be able to offer an impregnable castle in a kingdom where none will lose his rights and in which there is no false friendship. In this reflective use of contraries both the strength of the heavenly kingdom and the weaknesses of the earthly are brought out. This use of contraries also characterizes poems in which spiritual love and devotion are portrayed in language and poetic conventions which are commonly used in describing human love, especially courtly love. The reflective use of contraries takes many forms, some limited, some extensive, so extensive in fact that it may be difficult if not impossible to determine
whether a poem is addressed to a courtly lady or to Mary.

In addition to poems in which Christ is portrayed as a knight or king and in which Mary is portrayed as a courtly lady, I distinguish four other kinds of religious poems which make use of the language and conventions of human love as portrayed in secular poetry, particularly the *Song of Songs*: poems in which man's love for Christ is expressed as passionate human love (generally, the mystical poems); poems in which sensual language and images from the *Song* are used to praise Mary; poems about Christ's love for man which use language and images from the *Song*; and one poem about Mary's love for man which is also dependent on the *Song*. Since there is a long tradition of allegorizing the *Song* which was well-developed and widespread long before the first Middle English lyrics were written, and since the mystical movement which was so much a part of the period makes especial use of the allegory of the *Song*, it should not be surprising to find its sensual language and images very much a part of Middle English religious lyrics. The images and language, however, do not lose their human meaning in the lyrics; on the contrary, their value lies in the degree to which the human or earthly situation can illuminate the spiritual situation. This degree can be evaluated only within each poem. The reflective value of the language and images from the *Song*, that is, whether their use in religious poetry adds to a fuller understanding not only of the spiritual situation but also of human love and passion (to which, of course, they originally applied) is more difficult, perhaps impossible, to determine.
As will be pointed out in the proper chapter, in secular lyrics the use of religious language and images for reflective purposes (rather than for parody or for fun) is rare. A few simple comparisons between secular and religious situations do exist in the poems, as when a poet finds similarity between being in the lady's presence and being in heaven. However, if the courtly conventions were ever intended to parallel the spiritual situation as allegorized from the Song (whether for serious or ironic purposes), all evidence of this has disappeared during the borrowing of the tradition of courtly love into the Middle English lyrics. And while the Song, whose language and images had both religious and secular connotations, was well-known to the mystical poets, at least, no fresh borrowings from it characterize even the later Middle English courtly poetry.

2. Contraries and Paradox in Form or Structure

In the analysis of lyrics which comprises the body of this dissertation, I will point out various stylistic characteristics which depend upon contraries and paradox. One of the most notable characteristics of the lyrics is word-play. Several poems are marked by the repetition of the same word (good, earth, reason, heart) in various syntactical functions. Some of these poems present an only mildly puzzle-like quality; others are more complicated. The complexity of the poems depends upon the number and divergence in denotations and connotations which a particular word carries. A word may even have totally contradictory meanings: yesterday, which is repeated several times in one moral lyric, at the time carried the meanings of our words yesterday and tomorrow.
Often the word-play is not in the repetition of a word, but within a single occurrence of a word. The use of the word fre, which can mean both noble or morally loose, contributes to the ambiguity of a poem which may be interpreted as praising or blaming a courtly lady. In the riddle-like poems, individual words which may have more than one meaning furnish the clues to the solution of the logical puzzles (as is the case in the two poems referred to previously: the rose puzzle, and the Eucharist poem in which bread and dead are both used in word-play). In the sexual double-entendre poems several individual words must be considered in double denotations and connotations; in one poem, for example, several terms which can be applied to chickens and their anatomy may also be sexual slang terms.

A common stylistic device in the lyrics is the use of language generally associated with courtly love in religious poems, or of language which pertains to human passionate love (from the Song) in religious poems. Words such as love, love-longing, leman, and lady, for example, carried an accumulation of both religious and secular connotations. By the fifteenth century the number of such terms had multiplied to such an extent that poems could be written which might be interpreted as either religious or secular.

Another, second, type of word-play depends neither on accumulated connotations nor on actual contrary denotations which might exist within a word. This more subtle type is based on similarity of sound between two entirely different words, or perhaps on similar orthographic representation. In one poem, for example, gode may be read as God (which would be syntactically appropriate and meaningful in the
context) even though the two words did not sound exactly alike; this double reading contributes to the contradictions which are central to the poem. The existence of intentional word-play is more speculative in two other instances occurring in the lyrics which will be discussed. These instances involve *wode* (wood) and the recollection of *wod* (mad), and *hert* (heart) and the recollection of *hart* (the prey of Ovidian love tradition).

Word-play basically capitalizes upon contraries which are contained in (or suggested by) one word. We find contraries and paradox used in another common stylistic device of the lyrics, circumlocution. Contraries in continuum relationship are used to express all-encompassing terms such as *always* (day and night), *everywhere* (field and town), *everybody* (thrall and free). It is only in circumlocution that we find the fourth kind of opposition of terms: relative and correlative (of which Aristotle’s example is double and half [i.e., half of the double]); a relative implies the existence of a correlative. Two circumlocutions for *everybody* composed of relative and correlative seem to designate not simply everybody but also each individual or particular group; these special circumlocutions are "all and some" and "one and all." Paradoxes (*impossibilias*) are used as circumlocutions for *never* when they are introduced by *when*. In a poem about women, for example, the poet states that one may put trust and confidence in them when nettles bear roses in winter.

Word-play and the particular type of circumlocution which is characteristic of the lyrics are both dependent for their formulation on contraries and paradox. Circumlocution generally does not function
in the definition or celebration of the subject of the poem. Word-play, however, is often important in bringing out contraries and paradoxes which are at the heart of the poem. This is especially obvious in the riddling poems where the play on one word often holds the key to an apparent paradox. Moreover, word-play is important in several poems in bringing out the paradoxical nature of the subject matter. Other stylistic devices are also an important means of drawing attention to the contraries and paradoxes which are being used to define the subjects of the poems: antithesis, oxymoron, antimetabole, ironic overstatement, and, in one poem, punctuation.

What I call "unity by contraries" may characterize a poem as a whole. It is both a natural result of and often conscious effort to emphasize the contraries and paradoxes which define the subject of the poem. There are two types of unity by contraries: one in which the contraries are blended, the other in which the contraries exist in juxtaposition within the poem. In the first type are poems which are not what they purport to be; in other words, poems which are written in courtly genres but reverse the courtly traditions, or poems which purport to be prescriptions but which turn out to be nonprescriptions. In this type also are poems for which two (or more) complete interpretations may be sustained: a punctuation poem may be read as both condemning and praising women; some poems may be ironic and serious; some sexual double-entendre poems have two independent readings; some poems written in the courtly idiom may be addressed either to a secular lady or to the Virgin, or some may be read as appeals either by a secular lover or by Christ. The famous "Earth upon Earth" poem has several independent
basic interpretations, and possibly innumerable variations on these. In other poems the contraries are so blended that intense praise may suggest blame or rejection suggest attachment. In some of the religious poems which make use of language and images from the Song, the secular elements supply the primary vehicle for expressing the religious sentiments (although none of the poems are complete allegories).

The second type of unity by contraries, in which the contraries are juxtaposed in modular sections, is characteristic of some religious poems which use courtly elements simply as a framing device, of poems in which a courtly section is followed by a noncourtly one, and of poems in which women are praised and then this praise is undercut. If this pattern recurs in the poem we have the alternation of contraries which is also characteristic of debates (on love or women) and of a lover's complaint which alternates stanzas of the expression of his sorrow with stanzas of joy (in reflection of such alternation in love itself). In some moral lyrics we find devotional material juxtaposed with didactic. In the best poems one section will illuminate the other.

A few poems actually have the form of an apparent paradox or contain a number of apparent paradoxes which are capable of solution; these are called riddles and riddling poems, respectively. Some poems are included which are composed simply of series of _impossibilia_; these are here called _lying songs_, a term which has often been used in a broader sense to designate any poem which contains _impossibilia_ or uses the _topos_ of the world upside down.
3. Contraries and Paradox Used Solely for Entertainment

In some poems about love and women, in particular, we find that contraries and paradox are used not merely because they are naturally or traditionally suited to define the subject of celebration or dis-praise; they are also used for a humorous touch, or for parodic or satiric effects. In the hert word-play poem, for example, the contrary interpretations possible for hert in its various syntactic functions simply give the poem a puzzle-like character; they add little to a definition of mutual love or sorrow at parting (the subject of the poem). In a poem which will be considered in Chapter Two, extensive word play on gode creates apparent paradoxes in the poem which the poet obviously enjoys, but which simply make the true definition of good (the subject of the poem) more difficult for the reader to discover.

In these poems and many others contraries and paradox add an entertainment value to the poem. In a few lyrics, however, contraries and paradox are used solely for entertainment; they have no relationship whatsoever to defining or even conveying in an enjoyable fashion one of the major themes or subjects of the anonymous Middle English lyrics. These poems, primarily double-entendre poems and riddles (whose subject is sex or sexual exploits) and lying songs (which seem to have no subject at all, unless it is simply exaggeration) are considered only peripherally in this dissertation, in the last part of the first chapter. They are included because they reflect the most obvious and extensive use, among the Middle English lyrics, of the contraries in word-play and of the logical paradoxes which characterize other poems to a lesser degree.
(and which elsewhere are either intrinsic or subordinated to the definition of one of the major lyric subjects).

II

Ideological Bases of Contraries and Paradox

A. Scholastic

While it is impossible to determine specific influences on specific poets when the lyrics under consideration are anonymous (or when if the author's name is known this is often the only information we have about him) and when even the dating and geographic origin of many lyrics is open to question, it is nonetheless possible to discuss the general influences which permeated the whole period. The wide-spread use of contraries and paradox in the Middle English lyrics, in subject matter and in structure or form, may be seen against the background of a period in which contraries and paradox were at the center of a basic ideology. It has already been noted that as part of Aristotelian logic contraries received attention in and of themselves in the translations of and commentaries on Aristotle's Categories. However, the primary factor in the ideology of the period, as much a part of that ideology as formulator of it, was not formal logic or any part of formal logic in and of itself. It was, more generally, scholasticism and the scholastic method of exposition, reasoning, and teaching.

The system of medieval Christian philosophy represented by the work of Alexander of Hales, Thomas Aquinas, Bonaventure, Duns Scotus, and William of Ockham (to name only the most outstanding) is generally known as scholasticism. The history of scholasticism is a history of
juxtaposition of conflicting ideas and attempts to reconcile the contraries. It began when, in the study of Aristotle's logic, scholars took an interest in an incidental question posed by Porphyry at the beginning of his Isagoge, a standard commentary on Aristotle's logic: "Are genera and species substances? Are they corporeal or incorporeal? If the latter, are they in sensible things or separated from them?"

This, of course, was the famous question of the nature of universals. Logicians formed various opinions on the problem, separating into the schools of the "realists," who considered universals the only true reality, and the "nominalists," who thought of universals as names only, invented to cover specific particular instances. When the complete logical works of Aristotle became known, the scholastic synthesis between the two schools was formed: universals were said to have a three-fold existence: as idea in the divine mind (ante rem), individualized in concrete objects (in re), and abstraced from the particulars of sense experience (post rem).

While the debate on universals illustrates the scholastic habit of synthesis from two contradictory hypotheses, it is also important because theological implications were deduced from it. For example, Roscellinas, a nominalist, concluded that Trinity was a universal term covering the existence of three Gods. This gave rise to attempts and denunciations of attempts to place theology on a rational basis. In its extreme, the attempt is represented by Peter Abelard, the first of the great logicians of the Middle Ages, who believed that even the unity of the Trinity could be explained on a rational basis, and who wrote a theological treatise on this subject.
Abelard, however, was to influence scholasticism primarily with respect to method. It was his belief that the truths of philosophy and theology could be arrived at by using logical inquiry, and the first step in arriving at truth was to consider the contradictory opinions on each question; the second was to inquire logically into the validity of each position. The first step is represented in his famous *Sic et Non*, a collection of propositions in matters of theology under which Abelard gathers contradictory opinions of the Fathers of the Church and ranges them in juxtaposition to each other. Abelard comments on the purpose of the book at the end of the Prologue: "Wherefore we decided to collect the diverse statements of the holy Fathers, as they might occur to our memory, thus raising an issue from their apparent repugnancy, which might incite the *teneros lectores* to search out the truth of the matter, and render them the sharper for the investigation. For the first key to wisdom is called interrogation, diligent and unceasing. . . . By doubting we are led to inquiry; and from inquiry we perceive the truth."

Abelard's primary interest was in formal logic and one of its branches, dialectic (loosely defined as argumentation), and in presenting his students with paradoxes which presumably could be solved by the rules of logic, through argumentation. The scholastic historian Martin Grabmann evaluates Abelard as a philosopher: "No man of speculation, or of great metaphysical . . . perspectives; . . . a master of dialectic who delighted in the slash and parry of his wit and prided himself most on his skill in the setting up of new paradoxes." Philosophers, however, took over the method of juxtaposition of contraries
invented by Abelard. The famous Sentences of Peter Lombard, the most widely used textbook in the universities for the teaching of theology, makes use of the scholastic method, Abelard's method, of treating theology in terms of questions, ranging under each question conflicting opinions. The Sentences, however, differs from the Sic et Non in that Lombard attempts to reconcile some (but not all) of the opinions. Lombard's own comments and the contradictions which he did not fully solve were the sources for seemingly innumerable commentaries on the Sentences throughout the Middle Ages, the commentators refining Lombard's system of argumentation and introducing their own more complex systems: summarizing Lombard, abstracting the contradictions, discussing Lombard's comments, ranging positions pro and con on Lombard's "solutions" and on problems not touched by him, discussing in detail each contradiction, and, presumably, arriving at truth. 31

The scholastic method of reasoning and exposition is perfected by St. Thomas Aquinas, who, in the Summa Theologica and in his other works, appears to resolve all contradictions in matters of theology and moral philosophy and to arrive at truth. The method practiced in the Summa is well-known: Thomas discusses all matters as questions, divides these into articles, ranges opinions contrary to his own (objections), states his opinion, answers the objections in a general manner, then replies to each objection specifically. It would seem that Thomas's method could solve all contradictions satisfactorily; however, this is not actually the case, as he himself realizes. Unlike Abelard, Thomas does not believe that the basic mysteries of the faith as revealed in
Scripture (such as the Trinity) are matters of speculation. Revelation forms the first principles (undemonstrable) upon which his speculative theology (apologetics) is based. Thus in St. Thomas we find the coexistence of a belief in the value of human reason to solve contradictions and at the same time a conviction that certain contradictory matters of Revelation must remain a matter of faith; we find a reconciliation of two contradictory positions on theology, with Abelard at one extreme and anti-rationalists (such as Peter Damian) at the other.  

The type of reasoning based on the juxtaposition of contraries which is generally characteristic of scholasticism is distinguished as dialectical by Aristotle, as opposed to the type of reasoning known as demonstration. The reasoning is demonstration when the premises from which the reasoning starts are true and primary (the undemonstrable first principles of a science); the reasoning is dialectical if it proceeds from opinions that are generally accepted.  

In the *Topics* Aristotle proposes a "line of inquiry" whereby one can reason from generally accepted opinions. He says that his system will be useful for intellectual training, casual encounters, and the philosophical sciences. With regard to the latter Aristotle states: "Again, [it is useful] for philosophical science, because being able to dispute on both sides, we shall more easily perceive in each the true and the false; also it is applicable to the first principles of each science, since we cannot say anything about these from the appropriate principles of a proposed science, as they are the first principles of all, but we must necessarily discuss these through probabilities in the singulars. This however is peculiar, or especially appropriate to dialectic, for being
investigative, it possesses the way to the principles of all methods."³⁴

The dialectical method of reasoning, expounded and hailed in the *Topics* became, in practice, the disputation, the formal oral argumentation which generally proceeded in this way: one disputant would present a proposition and his opponent would choose either to attack or defend it; the first disputant would then defend the opposite position.³⁵ The art of disputation, of which the *Topics* is a practical handbook, and of which Abelard was the medieval master, soon became almost a craze in the medieval universities. Logic and dialectic, which was studied as a branch of logic, became the major subjects of study. And disputation (the practice of oral dialectical reasoning), which was first used by Abelard in philosophical and theological questions, became a tool in all branches of learning.

Many charters have been produced which indicate the predominance of logic (including dialectic) in the universities of the Middle Ages. One, from the University of Toulouse from the beginning of the fourteenth century, includes a time-table of lectures in the arts course which shows that study of the "new logic" (*Prior* and *Posterior* Analytics, *Topics*, and *Sophistical Refutations*) and the "old logic" (*Categories* and *On Interpretation*, *Divisions* and *Topics* of Boethius, and *Six Principles* of Gilbert de la Porée) was completed every two years, and that aside from the works on logic the only other components of the arts course were a few nonlogical works of Aristotle (given a relatively short time allotment) and some grammar (any emphasis on which was unusual in the universities after the twelfth century).³⁶ However, the most interesting evidence of the craze over logic and disputation
comes from the critics of its predominance, who generally bemoan the
demise of instruction in grammar (which included the study of literary
works). John of Salisbury, for example, who was trained by Abelard in
Paris but later went to Chartres to study grammar and literature,
relates in his Metalogicus what he found upon returning to Paris after
studying at Chartres: "I found them as before and where they were
before, nor did they appear to have reached the goal in unravelling the
old questions, nor had they added one jot of a proposition. The aims
that once inspired them, inspired them still; they only had progressed
in one point, they had unlearned moderation, they knew not modesty.
And thus experience taught me a manifest conclusion that, whereas
dialectic furthers other studies, so if it remain by itself it lies
bloodless and barren, nor does it quicken the soul to yield fruit of
philosophy, except that same conceive from elsewhere."\(^\text{37}\)

Despite objections by humanists like John of Salisbury, disputa-
tions continued in the universities, and, in fact, became the most
characteristic scholastic exercise. Two types of formal disputations
were held.\(^\text{38}\) The regular type was held in the Master's school. The
Master presented a question whose two alternatives were disputed by two
students or two groups of students, the "formal Bachelors," who were
preparing for their Master's degrees after having passed through ordinary
studies and had, for several years, given lectures on the Bible and
Sentences.\(^\text{39}\) Solemn disputations called Quodlibets could be held twice
a year at the option of the Masters, during Advent and Lent. To
St. Thomas have been attributed twelve quaestiones de quodlibet and
seven collections of quaestiones disputatae (in addition to several
uncollected quaecumque). The bibliographer of St. Thomas' quaecumque believes that while some of them show some evidence of the classroom, the quaecumque and quodlibets are "elaborate and stylized compositions which the Master wrote on the basis of these scholastic performances."40

The confidence in dialectic which Aristotleproclaims in the Topics and which Abelard displays throughout his career is shared by the thinkers of the period and, so it seems, by the general public. William of Ockham, hundreds of years removed from Abelard, still finds dialectic a "method by which problems can be distinguished and stated unequivocably, relevant facts gathered and organized, and the requisite materials provided for an act of intuitive recognition of essential character and individual nature to take place."41 This tradition was strong in the last of the scholastics, Peter Ramus, who identifies the whole of logic with dialectic. Though somewhat outside the period of our study, Ramus' opinion is included here to show that the confidence in dialectic had not entirely waned by the time of the Renaissance. In Ramus it is stronger than ever, as shown by the following comment in his Dialectique (1555): "[The art of disputing well] proclaims to us the truth of all argument and as a consequence the falsehood, whether the truth be necessary, as in a science, or, as in opinion, contingent, that is to say, capable of being and not being."42 Thus Ramus gives to dialectic powers which were not granted by Aristotle and the greatest of the scholastics. One of the simplest and at the same time most expansive definitions of the power of dialectic (since it attributes moral powers to the art) is contained in the first English-
language encyclopedia, a translation of Gossouin's thirteenth-century Sensuit le livre de clergie nomme lymage du monde, printed by Caxton.

Logic, as one of the seven liberal arts, is equated with dialectic and defined in the following terms: "The seconde science is logyke whyche is called dyalectyque. This science proueth the .pro. and the .contra. That is to saye the verite or trouthe and otherwyse. And it proueth whereby shall be knowen the trewe fro the fals and the good fro the euyll. So veryly that for the good was created heuen and maad And on the contrarye wyse for the euyll was helle maad and establissyd whiche is horryble stynkyng and redoubtable."  

The general confidence in the value of dialectic to discover truth is presumably responsible for the use of the scholastic method of juxtaposition and resolution (including disputation) in nonphilosophical disciplines. The form, for example of Abelard's Sic et Non and Lombard's Sentences, was adopted in the famous textbook of canon law, the Concordantia discordantium canonum or Decretals of Gratian. In civil law, the attempt to achieve a reconciliation of contraries, which has been shown to be so much a part of the history of scholasticism, began to manifest itself in the second half of the thirteenth century in France with the school of "Dialecticians." These students and practitioners of law attempted a reconciliation of the Roman Civil Law, strong customary law and the new canon law. At its best the school of dialecticians was characterized by a spirit of compromise and constructive dogmatism. But by the fifteenth century their failure became apparent: "Their desire to reconcile every contradiction, and to find Roman authority for practical solutions the reverse of Roman led to
childish hair-splitting and great doctrinal uncertainty. They had covered the Roman texts with a parasitic vegetation so luxuriant as to alter their whole aspect.  

The dialecticians as a school of law had no appreciable influence in England. However, the English were exposed to the influences of dialectic in the study of grammar. In the universities, in England and elsewhere, grammar generally ceased to be the discipline in which literature was studied (contrast the comments of John of Salisbury and his experience at Chartres). Grammar was transformed into a speculative study, with various contrasting authorities, generally Donatus and Priscian, quoted on individual rules, and with the matter being solved by the rules of logic. The old authorities Donatus and Priscian were gradually supplemented in the curriculum by two famous speculative grammars (which, incidentally, were written in verse): the Doctrinale of Alexander of Villedieu (written 1199) and the Graecismus of Eberhard of Bethune (appeared in 1212), the latter named after its section on the Greek etymology of Latin words. The amazing popularity of the Doctrinale is indicated by the fact that 250 MS copies and 295 printed copies still exist. In England, in the lower schools the Graecismus was studied along with the Barbarismus of Donatus (the section of Donatus' Ars Grammatica which contained his discussion of the schemes and tropes); and university students studied Priscian or the Doctrinale.

The close association of disputation with the study of grammar in England even as early as the twelfth century is noted by a passage in the biography of Thomas à Becket, written by William Fitzstephen (c.
On feast days the masters celebrate assemblies at the churches, en fête. The scholars hold disputation, some disclaiming, others by way of question and answer. These roll out euthymemes, these use the better form of perfect syllogisms. Some dispute merely for show as they do at collections; others for truth, which is the grace of perfections. The sophists using the Socratic irony are pronounced happy because of the mass and volume of their words; others play upon words.

... The boys of the different schools vie with each other in verse; or dispute; or dispute on principles of grammar, or the rules of preterites and supines.49

There is a reference to this passage in Fitzstephen in a sixteenth-century work by John Stow, his Survey of London, which shows that grammatical disputations had by no means been minimized three and a half centuries later. After quoting from Fitzstephen, Stowe notes:

As for the meeting of the Schoolmasters, on festiuall dayes, at festiual Churches, and the disputing of their Schollers Logically, etc., whereof I have before spoken, the same was long since discontinued. But the arguing of the Schoole boys about the principles of Grammer, hath beene continued even till our time; for I my selfe in my youth have yearely seene on the eve of S. Bartholomew the Apostle, the schollers of divers Grammer Schooles repayre into the Church yard at S. Bartholomew, the Priorie in Smithfield, where upon a bank boarded about under a tree, someone Scholler hath stepped up, and there hath apposed and answered, till he were by some better scholler overcome and put downe: and then the overcomer taking the place, did like as the first.50

The scholastic method of juxtaposition and resolution is evidenced, then, not only in the dialectical reasoning of the philosophical treatises of the time, which took their inspiration from but expanded upon the Sic et Non model, but also in the textbooks of canon law and
in the grammatical authorities. Not only did dialectical disputations, which reached an early peak in Abelard and his disciples and were instrumental in the rise of the universities, remain in the universities as a test of the skills of ambitious Bachelors, it descended to the grammar schools where philosophical problems were replaced by grammatical ones as the object of the search for knowledge. The interest in contraries and paradox displayed in the anonymous Middle English lyrics is surely not surprising; it is perhaps even predictable when seen against this background.51

B. Literary-Critical

While the influence of scholasticism and the scholastic method surely permeated the period, we might inquire whether one of its basic notions, that truth may be discovered through the juxtaposition of contraries, can be shown to have influenced, in any specific way, a theory of poetics against which we may see the predominance of contraries and paradox in the Middle English lyrics, with their characteristic manner of definition and unity by contraries. First we may examine the logical theory of poetry, then the grammatical-rhetorical.

According to the medieval classifications of the branches of human knowledge, poetry was a branch of philosophy. In the general thirteenth-century scheme as presented by Maurice De Wulf, the classification consisted of particular sciences (botany, zoology, etc.) at the base of a pyramid, the philosophical sciences in the center, and the theological (doctrinal and mystical) at the apex. The philosophical sciences were divided into theoretical (physics, mathematics,
metaphysics), practical (logic, ethics, social and political philosophy), and poetical.\(^52\) According to other classifications, however, poetics is considered specifically a part of logic. Dominicus Gundissalinus, for example, following Arab commentators on Aristotle, makes poetics the last division of the parts of the *Organon* in his work on the divisions of philosophy (c. 1150). The parts of the *Organon* are arranged according to the decreasing certainty of their results in arriving at or representing truth: formal logic arrives at demonstration, dialectic at probable demonstration, sophistic at error with the appearance of truth, rhetoric at persuasion, and poetics at "imaginative representation."\(^53\) In his discussion of Gundissalinus' system, O. B. Hardison notes that the device attributed to poetics for arriving at truth is the "imaginative syllogism," but that Gundissalinus never actually defines what is meant by the term.\(^54\)

The theory that poetics is part of logic is recognized by St. Thomas Aquinas, but he combines this with the theory that poetry is part of moral philosophy (its didactic function). In terms of techniques, however, poetry is part of the "inventive" phase of logic (which includes Dialectic, Sophistic, and Rhetoric); and its characteristic device is "resemblance" (similitudo), its purpose is "representation."\(^55\) According to Hardison, "St. Thomas' version was the one that prevailed during the later Middle Ages." It is followed, for example, by Roger Bacon. Hardison finds the theory that poetry is a branch of logic "one of the anomalies of literary history." Yet even he notes that "poetry uses the devices of logic, as does any other form of discourse."\(^57\)
It is perhaps the truth of Hardison's general comment, along with the pervasive influence of scholasticism in the period, rather than the system of the classifiers of human knowledge, which explains why we often find certain forms specifically associated with logic or dialectic in the lyrics. Raymond Oliver, for example, notes that certain poems with binary structure "reflect the question-and-answer method of the schools, the sic et non of Peter Abelard." He also notes that "next to repetition, the most clear and obvious way to organize a poem is through some simplified form of logic. Many of the short poems are, in fact, essentially syllogisms, explicit or implicit; or at least they include large pieces of straightforward reasoning from axioms to conclusions." A few such syllogistic poems will be analyzed in Chapter Two, but their structure, based on example and conclusion, is not the reason for their inclusion in this study. Contraries inform these poems in their manner of definition of the choice man should make: heavenly goods over earthly (the one is known through its contrary).

While one of the basic ideologies of the period seems to have been that the verbal arts (dialectic in its form of disputation, rhetoric, and poetic) were connected in some close way with logic, it is impossible to determine exactly how this theory would have been conveyed to the poets. On the other hand, another theory of poetry, the grammatical-rhetorical, is generally recognized to have been a direct influence on the poets of the period. The grammatical aspect of the theory consisted in the definition of poetry as composition in meter, metrics being one of the traditional concerns of grammarians. The rhetorical aspect of the theory placed an emphasis on the schemes and tropes which
were traditionally a part of rhetoric. The schemes and tropes, among them the "colors of rhetoric" which are so much associated with the poetry of the Middle Ages, were derived from the rhetorical manuals, specifically from the pseudo-Ciceronian Rhetorica ad Herennium, as has been revealed by a comparison of the lists of figures contained in the artes poetriae of the period with those in the Rhetorica ad Herennium. In practice, that is, in the artes poetriae of the period, the grammatical and rhetorical bases of poetry were sometimes combined, for example in Laborintus of Evrard l'Allemand, which treats both rhythmics and ornaments; however, for the most part the artes poetriae considered primarily the ornaments of style, and omitted metrics, as, for example, in John Garland's Poetria, Matthew of Vendôme's Ars versificatoria, and Geoffrey of Vinsauf's Poetria nova.

The poetic treatises are unhelpful in determining whether contraries and paradox were part of the literary-critical background against which we may see the Middle English lyrics. First, as noted, they are primarily concerned with the ornaments of style and pay little or no attention to more basic questions about poetry, even such questions as choice of subject and the unity of the poem. A study of the figures and tropes recommended shows that some of those which are most prominent in the Middle English lyrics and which are intimately related to the contraries and paradoxes within the poems are not even mentioned by the manuals. Moreover, the figures and tropes related to contraries and paradox which do occur in both the manuals and the lyrics have not been particularly recommended by the manuals, and may even have been slighted. The perfunctory treatment of matter which characterizes
the artes poetriae in general is a reminder that they were undoubtedly supplemented by additional materials and that each individual teacher who made use of the manual was free to stress any one or several parts, any one or several of the figures and tropes. One morsel is dropped by Matthew of Vendôme, for example, in his Ars versificatoria, which makes us wish that the master were here to explain the meaning of his dictum, since it is definitely not clear in the context:

"Indeed, since as Boethius says, contraries harmonize with contraries, whatever treatment displeases ought to be omitted; similarly the beauty of the idea ought to be developed fully."^64

A second reason why it is generally unhelpful to consider the contraries and paradox in the Middle English lyrics against the background of the artes poetriae is that, as James J. Murphy has recently shown, poetry was taught in the English schools strictly in conjunction with grammar, and the grammar books used were Donatus (especially the Barbarismus) and the Graecismus (both in the lower schools), and Priscian or the Doctrinale (in the universities).^65 The English writers would, however, have known the basic series of figures and tropes which appear in the artes poetriae, since these original rhetorical ornaments had long been subsumed into grammar. Murphy contends that, John M. Manly's "Chaucer and the Rhetoricians" notwithstanding, rhetoric was not taught at all in English schools in the fourteenth century and before, and therefore, the scheme of figures and tropes in the Rhetorica ad Herennium was not directly known. No mention of the Rhetorica is made at all in school charters until 1431 when it is noted as being used at Oxford.^66 In addition, the artes poetriae were not
used in English schools in the fourteenth century, or before, and the popularity of Geoffrey of Vinsauf's Poetria nova in the fifteenth century may be attributed to an influential treatise written at Oxford about 1405 which quotes Geoffrey eighteen times. (It is well-known that Chaucer's famous allusion to Vinsauf in the "Nun's Priest's Tale" implies no direct knowledge of the Poetria nova since the apostrophe to Friday is contained in Nicholas Trivet's Annales, which Chaucer definitely knew.)

If the grammar books were the manuals for the teaching of poetry, their perfunctory treatment of the figures and tropes (corresponding to that found in the artes poetriae) must certainly have also been supplemented by the master's own dicta and examples, since the program of verse (and prose) composition was evidently a rigorous one. A description of medieval teaching methods for verse and prose from a fourteenth-century Oxford statute is described by Murphy as "arduous": "Every fortnight they (i.e., the students) must present verses, and compositions (literas), put together with fitting words, not swollen or half a yard long, and with clausulae concise and appropriate, displaying metaphors, and, as much as possible, replete with sententiae; which verses and compositions, those who are given the task should write on parchment on the next free day or before, and then on the following day when they return to school they must recite them by heart to the master, and hand in their verses."

Finding little to relate to contraries and paradox in the artes poetriae, we may turn to the words of poets themselves on the (perhaps) wild assumption that they might offer some hint that contraries might
be viewed as a principle of poetic exposition and even of poetic structure. In Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*, the following words are given to Pandarus:

\[\text{By his contrarie is every thyng declared.}\]

For how myghte avere sweetnesse han ben knowe
To him that never tasted bitternesse?
Ne no man may ben inly glad, I trowe,
That nevere was in sorwe or som destresse.
Eke whit by blak, by shame ek worthinesse,
Ech set by other, more for other semeth,
As men may se, and so the wyse it demeth.

Sith thus of two contraries is o lore,

The meaning of the line "By his contrarie is every thyng declared" seems to be clear: everything is known by means of its contrary. This dictum has a solid philosophical basis. Pecock expresses it in the following way: "Dishonouring, dispreising ... be contraries to honouring, preising ... be knowing of beoone contrarie zveep knowing of be oper contrarie."\(^7\) What might be called the "doctrine of contraries" is also expressed in Chaucer's translation of Boethius' *Consolation of Philosophy* (IV, pr. 2, 10 ff.), one of the most popular works in the period: "And of thise thinges, certes, everich of hem is declared and schewed by othere. For so as good and yvel ben two contraries, yif so be that good be stedfast, thanne scheweth the feblesse of yvel al opynly; and if thow knowe clerly the freelnesse of yvel, the stedfastnesse of good is known."\(^7\)

St. Thomas finds the same relationship between contraries: "One opposite is known through the other, as darkness is known through light. Hence also what evil is must be known from the notion of
good." In the same context St. Thomas notes that privation is found in all contraries since "one contrary is always imperfect in relation to another, as black in relation to white, and bitter in relation to sweet." Thus a complementary relationship exists between contraries; and perfection (lack of privation) only exists when both contraries are understood together. The simultaneous existence of contraries in one substance (or other category of being) which is an impossibility in reality, is a necessity in the realm of ideas. This is made explicit by St. Thomas in another passage: "Contraries themselves, as they are in the intellect, are not in opposition to one another, but are understood together, as white and black, healthy and sick. . . . The things themselves that are contrary have no contrariety in the mind, because one is the reason for knowing the other." 

The meaning of Pandarus' line "Sith thus of two contraries is o lore" is not as clear, perhaps because in its expression it appears to present a paradox (of two is one). But that the proverbial expression is simply a restatement of "By his contrarie is every thyng declared" is proven by the explanation offered in two other occurrences of the saying. Wyclif in Of Faith, for example, states: "Sip philosopheres seyn þat contraries han oon lore, feip and hope techen vs to know contraries of hem . . . hope hap desperacion as his contrarie." Henry Medwall in Nature explains the proverb even more clearly: "Of .ii. contrarys there ys but one lernyng, that ys to say, whan thou knowyst well that on, the other contrary ys knowen anon."

This doctrine of contraries must be examined in its context in Troilus. That it was proverbial is obvious from the occurrences which
have been quoted; so it is not surprising that it would be uttered by Chaucer's great spewer of proverbs, Pandarus. However, the doctrine does not prove what Pandarus implies that it does. Pandarus uses it to prove to Troilus (who is experiencing the pangs of love-sickness for the first time) that the man who has had experience in love and its griefs can counsel one who is a novice. Pandarus cites the doctrine at the conclusion of a series of examples of paradoxes: that a blind man may often walk where a sighted man will fall, that a fool may often instruct a wise man. These examples have nothing to do with a doctrine which proclaims that one contrary itself is known by means of its corresponding contrary (except superficially, since the examples do mention contraries). Furthermore, neither the examples nor the doctrine have anything directly to do with Pandarus' commonsense point: that the experienced can often teach the inexperienced (the examples show the opposite of Pandarus's point: that the unexpected, noncommonsensical may often occur). Yet the doctrine is given a prominent place in the poem: Troilus' first complaint about the agonies of passionate love and his first dialogue with Pandarus (love and Pandarus will dominate Troilus for most of the remainder of the poem).

The conclusion is irresistible that Chaucer is providing the audience with a clue to the method of the entire poem. After all, it may be seen as based upon the doctrine of contraries, everything declares his contrary: the love affair is known through the war, Troilus' character is shown by contrast to those of Pandarus and Criseyde, and their characters are revealed by contrast to that of Troilus. And, in regard to the basic contraries of the poem, spiritual
love is known and appreciated by Troilus after he first knows the nature of human love. When one considers the method of contraries throughout the poem the so-called "palinode" comes as no surprise. Even in the smallest details, such as an evaluation of the purpose of the stanza on contraries, one portion of the poem must be seen in relation to another (here the doctrine of contraries is juxtaposed to examples of contraries in the relationship of judgmental paradox: a fool teaching a wise man). 78

It is also interesting to note that the particular contraries Chaucer has chosen to illustrate the doctrine of contraries (in the stanza under consideration) anticipate the "doctrine" of the poem as revealed in its concluding stanzas: sweetness is only known through bitterness, gladness through sorrow and distress, white by black (in all its symbolism), and worthiness by shame. The last two lines of this important stanza illustrate the doctrine of contraries in a slightly different way: "Ech set by other, more for other semeth / As men may se, and so the wyse it demeth" (italics added). Not only is one contrary known by the other, it is known better when compared to its contrary. This idea is also expressed in Troilus by the narrator, commenting on the consummation of the love of the hero and heroine (but, of course, his words also will apply, with dramatic irony, to Troilus' vision at the end of the poem):

And now swetnesse semeth more swete,
That bitterness assailed was byforn;

(III, 1219-20) 79

The same idea occurs in more extended form in the Middle English translation of Boethius (III, m. 1): "Hony is the more swete, if mouthes
han first tasted savours that ben wykke. The sterres schynen more
aggreablely when the wynd Nothus leteth his plowngy blastes; and aftir
that Lucifer, the day-sterre, hath chased awey the dirke nyght, the day
the fairer ledeth the rosenne hors of the sonne. And ryght so thow,
byhooldyng ferst the false goodes, bygyn to withdrawe thy nakke fro the
yok of erthely affeccions; and afterward the verray goodes schullen
entren into thy corage. The person who glossed this passage associated it with the doctrine of contraries: "Namque per oppositum noscitur
omne bonum."

The doctrine of contraries appears also in the Roman de la Rose,
one of the most popular works of the Middle Ages as indicated by its
preservation in several hundred MSS; and, perhaps not coincidentally,
a work which, like Troilus, has been accused of "lack of unity":

Know well, and have no doubt of it, that he
Who never tastes the bad can hardly know
How good things ought to taste; who knows not shame
Will scarcely recognize what honor means;
Who learns not first what real discomfort is
Will scarcely know what things are comfortable;
And he who's never suffered any pain
Will scarcely realize when he's at ease.
No one should offer solace to a man
Who has not learned its worth through suffering.
'Tis thus with all such opposites: the one
Explains the other. He who would define
A thing must have in mind its opposite
Or else no definition can he frame;
For he who knows not both cannot conceive
The difference between them. This unknown,
No proper definition can there be. (Italics added)

Like Chaucer's rendition of the doctrine of contraries, this pas-
sage is given prominence by its placement in the poem. It occurs just
a little over a hundred lines from the end of Jean de Meun's portion of
the poem, just before the lover gains entrance to the ivory tower and
possesses his rose. It is spoken by the lover, but is noticeably uncharacteristic of him, since he is not given to speaking in philosophical terms (this is left to the other characters in the poem such as Nature and Reason). In addition, like the Chaucerian passage, it does not fit in content or tone with the verses immediately preceding, in which the lover rakishly suggests that a man should try young girls as a gourmand tries food (although a superficial correspondence and the mention of old women as lovers in the passage preceding makes the contraries section less incongruous here than it was in Troilus). More obvious is the lack of harmony in tone between the contraries section and that immediately following which begins abruptly, "The sacred relics of the ivory tower / I hoped to touch with all my equipage. . . ." Finally, this passage is pointedly addressed to the audience ("know well . . ."). Obviously, Jean de Meun included it for a serious reason. Again the conclusion is irresistible that Jean is telling us something about his purpose and method.

Some have marvelled at the lack of unity in the Roman de la Rose, whose first part, written by Guillaume de Lorris, is a dream-vision allegory of courtly love and whose continuation by Jean de Meun (which keeps the basic dream-vision form) is obviously a satire on the excesses of passionate human love and at the same time an encyclopedia of medieval learning, especially of moral precepts. Yet I think we find in both the Roman and Troilus a unity by contraries: thematically, one thing is revealed and defined by its contrary (in the Roman courtly love by the satire on courtly love and vice versa) and this is reflected in the structure of the poem. The form of overall structure (juxtaposition
of contraries) is repeated in smaller structures throughout the poem. For example, before the lover continues on his journey to the ivory tower to find Fair Welcome and his Rose, Reason remonstrates with him for over 3,000 lines, supplying the norm by which we are to see the excesses of the remainder of the poem. Reason defines passionate love in all its paradoxicality, then expounds the higher love (friendship) and true happiness, and recounts several stores about the vicissitudes of fortune. Then, abruptly, the lover rejects the pleas of Reason, and this lady (a contrary of the courtly lady, of course) is replaced by the lover's friend who counsels bribery and deceit as the means of attaining the Rose.

The lines noted above in italics in the quoted passage from the Roman offer a specific rationale against which we may see the use of contraries for definition in the Middle English lyrics as well as the more subtle tensions between contraries which occur in the lyrics, tensions, for example, in tone (note that the passage reads "have in mind" the opposite, not, specifically, compare with the opposite). An obvious compliance with this doctrine of definition is found elsewhere in the Roman in a passage which had considerable influence on the Middle English anonymous lyrics, as will be noted in the first and third chapters below. In this passage Reason defines love as one thing, then immediately defines it as the opposite. If the first definition is an oxymoron (itself containing contraries), the second definition is the reverse oxymoron. This part of the Roman has been translated into English, possibly by Chaucer, and although the passage is lengthy it will be quoted in full.
Love, it is an hatefull pees,  
A free acquitaunce, withoute relees,  
A trouthe, fret full of falsheede,  
A sikernesse all set in drede.  
In herte is a dispeiryng hope,  
And full of hope, it is wanhope;  
Wis woodnesse, and wod resoun;  
A swete perell, in to droun;  
An hevy birthen, lyght to bere;  
A wikked wawe, awey to were.  
It is Caribdis perilous,  
Disagreable and gracious.  
It is discordaunce that can accorde,  
And accordaunce to discorde.  
It is kunnyng withoute science,  
Wisdom withoute sapience,  
Wit withoute discrecioun,  
Havoir withoute possesioun.  
It is sike hele and hool seknesse;  
A thurst drowned in dronkenesse,  
And helthe full of maladie,  
And charite full of envie,  
And hunger full of habundaunce,  
And a gredy suffisaunce;  
Delit right full of hevynesse,  
And drierhied full of gladnesse;  
Bitter sweetnesse and swete errour,  
Right evell savoured good savour;  
Sin that pardoun hath withynne,  
And pardoun spotted withoute [with] synne.  
A peyne also it is joious,  
And felonye right pitous;  
Also pley that selde is stabe,  
And stedfast [stat], right mevable;  
A strengthe, weyked to stonde upright,  
And feblenesse full of myght;  
Wit unavised, sage folie,  
And joie full of turmentrie;  
A laughter it is, weping ay;  
Reste, that travelyleth nyght and day;  
Also a swete hell it is,  
And a soroufull paradys;  
A pleasant gayl, and esy prisoun,  
And, full of froste, somer sesoun;  
Pryme temps full of frostes whit,  
And May devoie of al delit,  
With seer braunches, blossoms ungrene,  
And newe fruyt, fillid with wynter tene.  
It is a slowe, may not forbere  
Ragges, ribaned with gold, to were;  
For also wel wol love be set
Under ragges, as riche rochet;
And eke as wel be amourettes
In mournyng blak, as bright burnettes.

If thou fle it, it shal flee thee;
Folowe it, and folowen shal it thee.85

The technique of defining contrary by contrary (and a paradox by paradoxes), as if not clearly enough demonstrated in this passage, is again utilized by Jean de Mœun by virtue of a second definition of love, juxtaposed to the first one of sixty-five lines. After demonstrating that love is a paradox which cannot be defined, Reason defines love, in almost scientific language:

It is a syknesse of the thought
Annexed and knet bitwixe twyne,
Which male and female, with oo cheyne,
So frely byndith that they nyll twynne,
Whether so therof they leese or wynne.
The roote springith, throug hoot brennyng
Into discordinat desiryng
For to kissen and embrace,
And at her lust them to solace.
Of other thyng love recchith nought,
But setteth her herte and all her thought
More for delectacioun
Than ony procreacioun
Of other fruyt by engendring;
Which love to God is not plesyng;
For of her body fruyt to get
They yeve no force, they are so set
Upon delit to pley in-feere.86

Robert O. Payne points out in his discussion of Chaucer's poetics:

"An aesthetic theory may be as much a product or an expression of the principles of its age as it is a formulator of them. It may also, even as a formulator of literary principles, promulgate those principles as effectively through general impact upon the standards and practices of the period as through immediate influence upon particular poets."

The aesthetic theory behind Troilus and the Roman, the beauty of the
unity of contraries, is intimately related, as form to matter, to the
theory of understanding and definition propounded in the doctrine of
contraries, which, itself, is simply an aspect of the pervasive ide­
ology of the period, belief in the value of the juxtaposition of
contraries for discovery of truth. Thus this aesthetic theory as
shown in Troilus and the Roman (and in other works of the period such
as, for example, Andreas Capellanus' De arte honeste amandi) is an
expression of the principles of its age. As Payne implies, we need
not look for immediate influences on specific poets. Rather, the
impact of this theory, as a formulator of literary principles, is dem­
onstrated in the analyses of anonymous Middle English lyrics which follow.
NOTES


3 One group of so-called historical "poems," rather than "lyrics," is included, for reasons which will be made clear in Chapter Two.

4 John Speirs, for example, in Medieval English Poetry: The Non-Chaucerian Tradition (London: Faber and Faber, 1957) states (p. 47): "In imagery, metrical patterns and other essential characteristics, the religious and secular songs will be found to have, as English medieval songs, virtually everything in common. The distinction between them would appear to be a surface one, a difference in the intended application of the thing rather than the thing itself." See also Robbins' discussion of the forms of "popular" (i.e., written for a general audience) and literary lyrics, both secular and religious, XIV-XV, p. xlvii ff.

5 Categories, VI, 6a, 18; trans. Harold P. Cooke, in The Organon, I: The Categories, On Interpretation, Prior Analytics, The Loeb Classical Library (London: Wm. Heinemann, Ltd., Cambridge: Harvard U. Press, 1937), p. 45. All further page references to the Categories are to this edition. Aristotle clarifies "within the same class" in a later chapter where he allows that contraries may either belong to the same genus (black and white belong to the genus color), belong to contrary genera (justice and injustice belong to the respective genera virtue and vice), be themselves actual genera (such as good and evil). Categories, XI, 14a, 19-25, pp. 97-99.


7 For these distinctions between contraries and positives and privatives see Categories, X, 11b 35-13a 35, pp. 83-92.
Categories, X, 13b, 1-35, pp. 93-95.


Summa Theologica, pt. I, Q 48, Article 1, Reply 1; I, 248-49.


The medieval counterparts of the nineteenth-century antinomies were the insolubilia. See note 23 to this Introduction.


O.E.D., vol. 7, pt. 1, p. 450. Thus a real distinction is already made by etymology between this type of paradox and the logical paradox called antinomy, which is from the Greek "against law" (O.E.D., vol. 1, pt. 1, p. 371).

Concerning the ethical doctrines of the Stoic school (e.g., virtue is the sole good, the sole requisite for happiness; all good deeds are equally meritorious and all bad deeds equally heinous, etc.) Cicero says in his Preface to Paradoxa Stoicorum: "These doctrines are surprising, and they run counter to universal opinion—the Stoics themselves actually term them paradoxa" (Preface, 4). In Cicero, De Oratore, De Fat, Paradoxa Stoicorum, De Partitio Oratoria, rev., trans. H. Rackham, The Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard U. Press; London: Wm. Heinemann, Ltd., 1948).


See Appendix II for a comparison of the poetic devices used in the lyrics with the schemes and tropes recommended in the Ad Herennium, the grammar books, and the Artes poetriae.
The distinction between these two kinds of word play depends on features of the language which semanticists call polysemy and homonymy. Polysemy means that a word may have more than one sense, generally because it retains an old one after it has acquired a new one. Polysemy is characteristic of abstract terms which carry overloads of meaning, such as "love." Homonymy, which allows word plays of the second type (God/good), exists when two words of different origin or two different words of the same origin (flour/flower) at some point in time sound alike (or, in written word plays, may be represented in the same way). See Stephen Ullman, The Principles of Semantics, 2nd ed., Glasgow University Publications, 84 (N.Y.: Philosophical Library, 1957), pp. 117 ff.

In commentaries on Aristotle's logic, especially the Sophistic Refutations, an interest appears in logical paradox, per se (now called antinomies; see my discussion of this term in the definition of paradox in this introduction). This interest appears first in the work of an Englishman, Adam of Balsham, who notes in his Ars Disserendi (1132) the possibility of a set of things having a proper sub-set equal in size to itself. The puzzle in ordinary language which came to be studied on its own was what is now called the "Liar Paradox." Albert the Great and Peter of Spain mention this paradox, which takes a form similar to the following: "I say what is false, therefore, it is true that I say what is false," Albert being the first to use the term insolubile which later became a technical term used in reference to such paradoxes. Albert defines insolubile in the following manner: "... those (propositions) which are so formed that whichever side of the contradictory is granted the opposite follows." The history of the study of insolubilia in the Middle Ages is not fully known, but it ends with Paul of Venice (d. 1429) who collects and comments upon fourteen different solutions to the paradox, then offers his own. For information on insolubilia in the Middle Ages see Kneale, pp. 228-29; I. M. Bochenski, A History of Formal Logic, trans. and ed. Ivo Thomas (Indiana: U. of Notre Dame Press, 1961), pp. 237-51 (which contains the quotation from Albert and a discussion of the fifteen solutions to the liar paradox). Interestingly, the paradox, which was dismissed by Aristotle but became so fascinating to the Middle Ages, is a popular subject of modern logic. One work, Robert L. Martin, The Paradox of the Liar (New Haven: Yale U. Press, 1970), contains fourteen pages of bibliography on modern writings on the paradox.

A detailed discussion of various definitions of scholasticism is found in Maurice De Wulf, An Introduction to Scholastic Philosophy: Medieval and Modern [Scholasticism Old and New], trans. P. Coffey (1907; rpt. N.Y.: Dover Publications, 1956), pp. 1-53. De Wulf also divides the scholastic methods into "constructive" (analyticosynthetic) and "pedagogical" (under which he discusses the method of juxtaposition made popular by Abelard's Sic et Non), pp. 19-31. The following necessarily
brief and general discussion of scholasticism is based primarily upon De Wulf; Josef Pieper, Scholasticism: Personalities and Problems of Medieval Philosophy, trans. Richard and Clara Winston (London: Faber and Faber, 1960); and C. R. S. Harris, "Philosophy," in The Legacy of the Middle Ages, ed. C. G. Crump (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1926), pp. 227-53, which contains the best discussion of the problem of universals and the scholastic synthesis which is mentioned below. In addition, I have relied on the particular works on Abelard and St. Thomas and on particular aspects of scholasticism which are mentioned in the following notes.

25Harris, p. 234.

26In The Mediaeval Mind, 4th ed. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard U. Press, 1925), II, 328, Henry Osborn Taylor translates a passage from the ninth chapter of Historia calamitatum in which Abelard relates why he composed his notorious work on the Trinity: "Then it came about that I was brought to expound the very foundation of our faith by applying the analogies of human reason, and was led to compose for my pupils a theological treatise on the divine Unity and Trinity. They were calling for human and philosophical arguments, and insisting upon something intelligible, rather than mere words, saying that there had been more than enough talk which the mind could not follow; that it was impossible to believe what was not understood in the first place; and that it was ridiculous for any one to set forth to others what neither he nor they would rationally conceive (intellectu capere)."


26Quoted in Taylor, p. 335. For general studies on Abelard upon which I have relied for general information, see Gabriel Compayre, Abelard: And the Origin and Early History of Universities (N.Y.: Chas. Scribner's Sons, 1907), and David E. Luscombe, The School of Peter Abelard: The Influence of Abelard's Thought in the Early Scholastic Period (Cambridge: Cambridge U. Press, 1969).

29Dialectic(s) is a term almost as amorphous as paradox. Plato used it to signify several things: "a cooperative method of investigation, involving a search for definitions," a method of refutation, the method of division and collection. For Aristotle it is the science of argumentation from non-evident principles (see Kneale, p. 10). Aristotle also characterizes the type of reasoning which proceeds from non-evident propositions "dialectical"; this will be discussed in the text. In the Middle Ages "dialectic" is sometimes interchanged with "logic" (and this seems to be the case in some modern critics) but it is not always clear whether by this equation the scope of logic is narrowed to the science of argumentation or whether "dialectic" implies the whole of logic (i.e., study of terms, propositions, syllogisms, and proof from self-evident propositions, or "demonstration"). Abelard seems to distinguish between logic and dialectic in the Aristotelian
manner. In *Logica nostrorum petitioni sciorum* he states: "Logic is not a science of using or composing arguments, but of discerning and estimating them rightly, why some are valid, others invalid" (trans. and quoted by Ivo Thomas in his preface to the English ed. of I. M. Bochenski, p. xii). Yet, L. M. De Rijk indicates that Abelard used the terms "logic" and "dialectic" interchangeably: "Abailard understands 'logica' or 'dialectica' as the art which aims at distinguishing valid arguments from invalid ones," *Dialectica*, ed. L. M. De Rijk (Assen, Netherlands: Van Gorcum and Co., 1956), p. xxiii.

30Martin Grabmann, *Die Geschichte der scholastischen Methode* (1909; rpt. Darmstadt, 1956), II, 175, as quoted in Pieper, p. 84.

31The fullest discussion of the relationship between the *Sic et Non* and the *Sentences* is found in Luscombe, pp. 261-80. An interesting study of the growing complexity of the scholastic method in explication is afforded by three chapters in Richard McKeon, ed. and trans., *Selections from Medieval Philosophers*, 2 vols. (N.Y.: Chas. Scribner's Sons, 1929-30); vol. 1, chapter 5 contains Book I, Distinction III from the *Sentences*; vol. 2 contains the first part of St. Bonaventure's commentary on Book I, Distinction III (chapter 2) and Question IV of Duns Scotus' commentary on Book I, Distinction III.


33Topics, I, 100a, 25-30, in *The Organon, Or Logical Treatises*, of Aristotle with the Introduction of Porphyry, trans. Octavius Freire Owen, Bohn's Classical Library (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1853), II, 359. All further page references to the *Topics* are to volume II of this translation.

34Topics, II, 101a, 35-40, p. 361.

35In the art of disputation it is worthwhile to note that a knowledge of contraries was considered particularly important. Aristotle recommends, for example, that the disputant select the proper contrary for attacking the thesis of the other disputant; see if the accident of a thing have a contrary, if so whether the accident will admit of its contrary; see if anything has been said about something of such a kind that it be true contrary predicates must necessarily belong to the thing. He devotes two chapters to the importance of contraries in attacking a thesis. (Topics, II, 708, 112b 27-114a 25, pp. 396-400.) The best discussion of scholastic disputation (and one of the best introductions to scholasticism in general) is Thomas Gilby, *Barbara Celarent: A Description of Scholastic Dialectic* (London: Longmans Green and Co., 1949). The book even contains an imaginary disputation, in English, pp. 282-93. Concerning the importance of a specific knowledge of contraries in disputation, see Gilby's discussion of refutation of the third sophistic fallacy, pp. 265-70.
For a general discussion of the decline (in favor of logic) of grammar and of rhetorical instruction (with the exception of *ars dictaminis* or letter writing in a few universities) see L. J. Paetow, *The Arts Course at Medieval Universities with Especial Reference to Grammar and the Rhetoric*, U. of Ill. Studies 3, no. 7 (Urbana, U. of Ill. Press, 1910). The timetable mentioned is printed by Paetow, p. 96a.

Metalogicus, II, 10, trans. by R. L. Poole and included in *Illustrations of Medieval Thought* (London, 1844), as quoted in Albert William Parry, *Education in England in the Middle Ages* (London: W. B. Clive, 1920), p. 220. Another interesting instance of criticism of the craze over logic is found in a French allegorical poem, *Battle of the Seven Arts*, by Henri d'Andelli (ca. 1250). Grammar, supported by all the classical authors, goes to battle against Logic of Paris who has gathered under her banner all the books and studies of that university. Grammar is defeated and the muse of poetry goes into hiding. When Logic sends a messenger to Grammar's camp his grammar is so faulty he can't be understood. Paetow quotes interesting sections of this poem, pp. 19, 47 (note 68).

See I. T. Eschmann, "An Annotated Catalogue [of the works of St. Thomas Aquinas]," in Etienne Gilson, pp. 388-89. (This useful catalogue occurs only in the 1956 Random House ed. noted previously.)

The careful preparation of Bachelors before they were allowed to participate in regular disputations is reminiscent of the seriousness which Aristotle attached to dialectics: he urges his pupils not to argue with everyone, especially with the man on the street. *Topics*, VIII, 14, 164b, 8-15, p. 539.

Eschmann, p. 389.


*Dialectique* (1555), p. 2, as quoted in Wilbur Samuel Howell, *Logic and Rhetoric in England, 1500-1700* (N.Y.: Russell and Russell, Inc., 1961), p. 154. Ramus and Ramists are also interesting in the context of this dissertation since they displayed an extreme form of the scholastic love of division into contraries. Ramus recommends a "natural" arrangement of ideas in a treatise or dispute, which was taken by his followers as simply division by dicotomies. Howell concludes: "His followers tended to construe the natural method and the law of justice to mean the severest kind of dichotomizing, as if any given idea had only two members, one completely insulated from the other. But it is worth noticing that Ramus himself did not take the habit of dichotomies as seriously as that" (p. 163). The Ramist system of dichotomies seems closer to the Platonic system of division which Plato called dialectic (as displayed in the *Sophist*) than to the Aristotelian system of genus and species. For Plato's system in graphic form see Kneale, p. 10.
43 [William Caxton], *Mirrour of the World* or thymage of the same ([Westminster, 1481]), sig. C 4 v. From the Huntington Library photostate of their own copy, as quoted in Howell, p. 48.

44 The best discussion of the relationship between the *Decretals* and the *Sic et Non* is found in Luscombe, pp. 214-23.


46 Meynial, p. 375.

47 Paetow, p. 38.


51 Rosalie Colie comments on the relationship between dialectic and paradox: "The paradox is always somehow involved in dialectic: challenging some orthodoxy, the paradox is an oblique criticism of absolute judgment or absolute convention." Yet, paradoxically, paradoxes are "so often designed to assert some fundamental and absolute truth" (p. 10).


According to Hardison, the closest approach to definition is the suggestion by Gundissalinus that "the property of poetic speeches is to make an object be imagined ugly or beautiful which is not so; so that the listener is moved to belief and is repelled by it or attracted; even though we are certain that it is not so in reality" (pp. 13-14).


Hardison, p. 11.


Oliver, p. 109.

Hardison, p. 8. It will be remembered that John of Salisbury studied literature in connection with grammar (see Paetow, p. 13).

See Edmond Faral, Les Arts Poétiques du XIIe et du XIIIe Siècle, Bibliothèque de l'École Des Hautes Études, vol. 238 (Paris: Librairie Ancienne Honoré Champion, 1924), pp. 86-98; and chart which compares the "colours," schemes and tropes of Rhetorica ad Herennium with those of the major ars poetiae.

Faral: Evrard, pp. 336-77; Garland, pp. 378-80; Matthew, pp. 106-93; Geoffrey, pp. 194-262. The rhetorical theory of poetry, of which the ars poetria is generally considered to be representative, is considered by J. W. H. Atkins to be the most influential theory during the period and the period's major contribution to theories of poetry in the Renaissance. See Atkins, English Literary Criticism: The Medieval Phase (N.Y.: The Macmillan Co.; Cambridge: Cambridge U. Press, 1943).

See my comparison of the poetic devices associated with contraries and paradox in the anonymous Middle English lyrics with the devices recommended in Rhetorica ad Herennium, the grammar treatises, and the poetry manuals in Appendix II.

Aubrey Ervin Galyon, Jr. "Matthew of Vendome: Ars Versificatoria" [translation], Diss. U. of Iowa 1970, p. 121. The relevant section in Faral's ed. is as follows: "Quippe, quia, teste Boecio, contraria contrariis conveniunt, sicut, quae tractata displicent, debent praetermitti, similiter venustas sententiae debet prolixius explicari" (IV, 19, p. 185).

Murphy, p. 120.

Murphy, pp. 119-20.
Murphy, p. 120.

67Murphy, p. 121.

69Anstey, Monumenta academica, II, 437-38, as trans. and quoted in Murphy, p. 126.


72Robinson, p. 359.

73Summa Theologica, pt. I, Q 48, Article 1, Answer; I, 248.

74Summa Theologica, pt. I, Q 48, Article 1, Reply 1; I, 248-49.

75Summa Theologica, pt. I of pt. II, Q 64, Article 3, Objection 3, and Reply 3; I, 859.


78Robert K. Presson also finds contrast an important element in Chaucer's works; however, he does not apply his observations to the form of works as a whole. See "The Aesthetic of Chaucer's Art of Contrast," English Miscellany, 15 (1964), pp. 9-23.

79Robinson, p. 434.

80Robinson, p. 341.

81Robinson, p. 816, n. 631 ff.

82Dean Spruill Fansler, Chaucer and the Roman de la Rose (N.Y.: Columbia U. Press, 1914), p. 15.

Ausinc sachiez, e n'en doutez,
Que qui mal essaié n'avra
Ja dou bien guieres ne savra;
Ne qui ne set d'eneur que monte
Ja ne savra quenoistre honte;
N'onc nus ne sot quel chose est aise
S'il n'ot avant apris mesaise,
Ne n'est pas dignes d'aise avere
Qui ne veaut mesaise saveir;
E qui bien ne la set sofrir,
Nus ne li devrait aise ofrir.
Ainsinc va des contraires choses:
Les unes sont des autres gloses;
E qui l'une en veaut defenir,
De l'autre li doit souvenir,
Ou ja, par nule entencion,
N'i metra diffincion;
Car qui des deus n'a quenoissance
Ja n'i quenoistra difference,
Senz quei ne peut venir en place
Diffinicion que l'en face.

(vv. 21,559-82)

84In a recent article Walter Scheps notes these lines from the Roman and suggests that they may offer at least an explanation (possibly ironic) for such a method of definition in Pandarus' doctrine of contraries. Scheps also notes various kinds of contraries operating in Troilus: pleonastic, proverbial, those having to do with topography, and, especially, those related to love; he also distinguishes between consecutive contraries and those which are simultaneously operative. This is, to my knowledge, the only specific discussion of contraries per se (as distinct from contrast in general) in relation to Middle English literature. "Chaucerian Synthesis: The Art of The Kingis Quair," Studies in Scottish Literature, 8 (1971), pp. 143-65; see esp., pp. 161-64.

85Robinson, 11. 4703-4784, p. 609. The French from Langlois, II, 212-15:

Amour ce est pais haineuse,
Amour c'est haine amoureuse;
C'est leiautez la desleiaus,
C'est la desleiautez leiaus;
C'est peeur toute asseuree,
Esperance desesperée;
C'est raison toute forensable,
C'est forsenerie raisnable;
C'est douz periz a sei neier;
Griés fals legiers a paumeier;
C'est Caribdis la perilleuse,
Desagreable e gracieuse;  
C'est langueur toute santeive,  
C'est sante toute maladive;  
C'est fain saoule en abondance;  
C'est couveiteur soufisance;  
C'est la seif qui toujours est ivre,  
Ivrece qui de seif s'enivre;  
C'est faus deliz, c'est tristeur liee,  
C'est liece la courrouciee;  
Douz maus, douceur malicieuse,  
Douce saveur mal savoureuse;  
Entechiez de pardon pechiez,  
De pechié pardons entechiez;  
C'est peine qui trop est joieuse,  
C'est felonie la piteuse,  
C'est li jeux qui n'est point estables,  
Estaz trop fers e trop muebles,  
Force enferme, enfermeté forz,  
Qui tout esmeut par ses efforz;  
C'est fos sens, c'est sage folie,  
Prosperité triste e jolie;  
C'est ris pleins de pleurs e de lermes,  
Repos travaillanz en touz termes;  
Ce est enfers li doucereus,  
C'est paradis li doulereus;  
C'est chartre qui prisons soulage,  
Printens pleins de freit iernage;  
C'est teigne qui riens ne refuse,  
Les pournres e les bureaus use,  
Car ausinc bien sont amouretes  
Souz bureaus come souz brunetes,  
.........................  
Se tu le suiz, il te suira,  
Se tu t'en fuiz, il s'en fuira.  

(vv. 4293-4358)

86 Robinson, p. 610. The French from Langlois, II, 216:

Amour, se bien sui apensee,  
C'est maladie de pensee  
Entre deus persones annexe,  
Franches entre eus, de divers sexe,  
Venant aus genz par ardeur nee  
De vision desordenee,  
Pour acoler e pour baisier,  
Pour aus charnelment aaisier.  
Amanz autre chose n'entent,  
Ainz s'art e se delite en tant.  
De fruit aveir ne fait il force;  
Au deliter senz plus s'efforce.  

(vv. 4377-88)
Note that the English translator has expanded and moralized this section. A more literal English translation is found in Harry W. Robbins, trans., The Romance of the Rose, by Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun, ed. Charles W. Dunn (N.Y.: E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1962), p. 97:

If I know anything of love, it is
Imaginary illness freely spread
Between two persons of opposing sex,
Originating from disordered sight,
Producing great desire to hug and kiss
And seek enjoyment in a mutual lust.
Love cares for nothing but such ardent joys,
For delectation, not engendering,
Is all the end of love. . . .

(11. 112-19)

CHAPTER I

SECULAR LYRICS

This chapter contains, primarily, analyses of some of the anonymous Middle English lyrics whose subject is either love or women, and whose authors have used contraries and paradoxes for defining their subject (for celebration or dispraise). Some of the lyrics included are also characterized by the use of contraries in form or structure: word play, circumlocution, antithesis, oxymoron, and even unity of the entire poem by contraries, alternating or existing simultaneously.

The chapter is in two main parts. The first part is devoted to poems whose subject is love: definitions; poems about love unfulfilled; and those about love fulfilled. The most lengthy section of the first part is the second section, containing courtly complaints or poems whose subject is unrequited love. The courtly complaints will be considered in three groups, the subgenres of complaint for mercy, complaint of the lover who has been granted mercy but who must be separated from the lady, and complaint of the unrequited lover (complaints not made specifically for mercy).

The second major part of the chapter contains analyses of poems whose subject is women in general (as distinct from the courtly lady who is sometimes inseparable from the subject of love considered in the first part of the chapter, especially in the complaints). The first
section of this part contains discussions of poems which attack women; the second section deals with only a few lyrics which contain both elements of attack and defense.

A third part of the chapter contains a group of miscellaneous poems, those whose subjects are neither love nor women (except remotely perhaps) and whose subjects do not correspond with those treated in the second and third chapters of this dissertation. These poems have been included because their use of contraries and paradox, especially of impossibilities and apparent paradox, is so obvious that it could not be ignored. Some of the same devices which are used extensively to define the subjects which are of major interest to the lyricists are also used in the poems included in this third part of the chapter; but these devices are used primarily for entertainment, not for defining a subject. The enjoyment of the contraries and paradox often depends on the appreciation of sexual double-entendre or of a tall tale.

I. Love

A. Definitions of Love

Contraries and paradox are naturally and traditionally associated with one of the favorite subjects of the medieval lyricists, love. In her work on paradox in Renaissance and seventeenth-century literature, Rosalie Colie comments on why love is often expressed in terms of paradox: "In the first place, 'what it is' is far from clear: love encourages that state of nescience so congenial to paradoxes. For all the precision of physiological and psychological description and analysis of love, love itself remains an intransigent mystery to those in its grip, or even to those out of it. It is the world's most widespread
wonder, and it persuades, every time, of its uniqueness."

The paradoxical nature of love is expounded in three Middle English definitions, which, in diction and use of antithesis and oxymoron, show the influence of the widely circulated definitions in the *Roman de la Rose* discussed in the Introduction. These definitions are like that in the *Roman* in another respect. They are characterized by a very subtle type of unity by contraries in which a condemnation of love (because of its sorrows, its madness) is to a greater or less degree (depending on the poem) undercut or balanced by a tone of wonder or of marvelling at the power, complexity, and paradoxicalness of love. The bad aspects of love are balanced to a greater or less degree (in each individual poem) by the good. The balance is often expressed in oxymorons and antithetical phrases. F. L. Utley in *The Crooked Rib* comments on this aspect of the Middle English definitions of love: "In a sense definitions of this sort are satires and renunciations of the love of women; in another sense they exalt its glory and power. They reduce the paradox of courtly love to its simplest terms, and deliver it over to the ascetic satirist. Like the figure behind most of them, oxymoron, these poems are intentionally ambiguous, and anticipate the packed and dramatic ironies of the contemporaries of John Donne."2

The most lengthy Middle English definition, "Loue is sofft, loue is swet, loue is goed sware" (Index 2009, Appendix), is found in MS. Digby 86 of the thirteenth century, which Carleton Brown regards as a collection of already circulating material, compiled in an ecclesiastical house (probably Franciscan) by a friar who was as familiar with French as with English. In this poem, combined with the stylized
method of definition found in the Roman which clearly displays love's paradoxical nature by juxtaposed antithetical phrases, we find a personal, less stylized method of definition. As in the Roman, love is defined as a paradox when two contradictory propositions which are said to describe it are juxtaposed. This method of definition occurs when two contradictory lines are juxtaposed: "Loue is soft, loue is swet, loue is goed sware / Loue is muche tene, loue is muchel kare" (ll. 1-2; see also the juxtaposition of ll. 2-3, 17-18). It also occurs between propositions within a line, this condensation emphasizing to a greater degree the paradoxical nature of love: "Loue is les [false], loue is lef . . . / Loue is fol, loue is fast . . ." (ll. 19, 20). Note that in each of these lines inexact contraries have been used in the definition but the contradictory nature of love is emphasized, nevertheless, not only by the close juxtaposition of the contradictory propositions but also by the alliteration (les, lef; fol, fast) which joins the contraries. The careful construction of lines nineteen and twenty is also evident when we examine the short propositions which conclude each line. We find the juxtaposition of contradictory propositions within each line but we also find it between the two lines, by means of the concluding propositions: "... loue is longinge / ... loue is frowringe [comfort]." Following these lines, which are so full of paradox, the poet makes an explicit reference to the marvelous nature of love: "Loue is sellich an þing, wose shal sop singe."

More exact and familiar contraries are used in another section which is also characterized by the juxtaposition of contradictory propositions within a line: "Loue is wele, loue is wo, . . ."/Loue is
lif, loue is dep, . . ." (11. 22-23). Logical paradox, as noted in the
Introduction, may be expressed not only by contradictory propositions
made of one subject at one time, but also by two contraries predicated
of a subject at one time. This form of logical paradox also occurs in
the Digby definition of love: "Loue is wondred and wo" (1. 4).

A less formal method of definition is exemplified in several lines
of the poem, which suggest that the poet was familiar not only with
stylized definitions of love but also with manifestations of love in
daily life: "Loue makep in þe lond moni hounlede [unfaithful]" (1. 8);
"Loue makeþ moni mai wip teres to wede" (1. 12); "Loue makeþ moni mai
hire wonges to wete" (1. 14). These negative aspects are balanced by
a later judgment that "Hit [love] were the wordlokste [worthiest] þing
in werlde were, ich wene" (1. 25). Of all the Middle English defini-
tions of love, this poem contains the most equal balancing of the good
against the bad, thus clearly representing the marvellous nature of
love. The uniting of the contraries, praise and blame, is evident in
the concluding lines of the poem, in which the poet quotes a current
"song" which describes love: "Loue comseþ wip kare and hendeþ wip
tene, / Mid lauedþ, mid wiue, mid maide, mid quene." The final line
emphasizes the universal application of the sorrows of love, not only
by its inclusion of love with women from every degree (beginning and
ending with the highest estates to emphasize that love there—perhaps
fin'amors—is not excepted), but also by its parallelism and repeti-
tion. F. L. Utley points out that this line is actually ambiguous (in
his listing of the poem in The Crooked Rib): "The specific mention of
women does not tell us whether the point of view is for or against them.
Mid is once more ambiguous; it may mean 'for' (man's love for lady, wife, maid, and queen) or 'among' (love brings sorrow to lady, wife, maid, and queen—the theme of the forsaken maiden, or man's wickedness to women).” Thus the ambiguity toward women which concludes the poem is a parallel to the praise and blame of love which characterizes the poem throughout. That the praise and blame of love necessarily includes that of women, because of the central role they play especially in the courtly love game, is one of the underlying hypotheses of The Crooked Rib.

Another thirteenth-century definition of love, Index 2005, is found with its Latin and French counterparts in Douce MS. 139:

Loue is a selked wodenesse
Pat pe idel mon ledeth by wildernesse,
Pat burstes of wilfulscipe and drinket sorwenesse
And with lomful sorwes menget his blithnesse.

Amor est quedam mentis insania
Que vagum hominem ducit per deuia
Sitit delicias & bibit tristia
Crebris doloribus commiscens gaudia

Amur est une pensee eragee
Ke le vdif humme meyne par veie deueye
Ke a soyf de delices e ne beyt ke tristesces
& od souuens dolurs medle sa tristesces (1)
(XIII, #9, pp. 14-15)

The English version is probably a translation of one of the other versions, as indicated by the use of wilfulscipe (l. 3) which does not contrast as neatly with sorwenesse as delicias (delices) does with tristia (tristesces). The English version adds another dimension to the paradoxical definition by the nature of its syntax. The poem can be read in two ways at once: as a definition of love in which each line describes an aspect or activity of love (as in the Latin and French
versions), and as a definition in which love is the subject of the first line, but the activities of the *idem mon* are the subjects of the next three lines. In the Latin, *vagum hominem* precedes *ducit*, with the inflections indicating that *man* is the grammatical object; but the same word order in the English version signals *mon* as grammatical subject (or it signals a poetic inversion for a second way of interpreting the lines). No inflections in the English version exclude either reading; and the use of *his* (l. 4), meaning either his or its, permits both readings.

The English version further permits a possible play on the word *wodenesse*, whose root is the same as the word for forest, a place where mad lovers often flee (as will be noted in other lyrics). That this play on words is intended is indicated by the poet's choice of the word *wilderness* to conclude line two, a word which is not only a synonym for *wode* (forest) but whose similarity to *wodenesse* is emphasized by alliteration, by identical numbers of syllables, and by identical suffixes. Thus the reading of the poem in which the focus is on the mad lover, rather than on love itself, is encouraged not only by syntax but by word-play. The ambiguity of this simple poem is a fruitful one since it permits a definition of love not only in abstract terms (of the type found in the *Roman*) but also in more concrete or humanized terms (a combination also noted in the Digby MS. definition of love).

Paradoxical definitions of love had wide circulation during the Middle Ages, as is evidenced by the many extant MSS of the *Roman*, by Chaucer's translation of the passages defining love in the *Roman*, and
by passages in John Grimestone's commonplace book, in the English romances, and in certain French works, and by the occurrence of such definitions in Middle English religious lyrics and secular lyrics such as those under discussion. One four-line antithetical definition in Latin was especially popular; it is included in at least three MSS, one from the thirteenth, one from the fourteenth, and one from the fifteenth century. In fact, in the thirteenth-century MS it occurs in the margin opposite the three-language definition of love just discussed, where it is (doubtfully) attributed to John of Garland. In the fifteenth-century MS it is followed by an English adaptation, Index 1359:

Copenhagen MS. Thott 110
Dicam quid sit Amor: Amor est insania mentis,
Ardor ineextinctus, insaciata fames,
Dulce malum, mala dulcedo, dulcissimus error,
Absque labore quies, absque quiete labor.

Y shall say what ynodynat loue ys:
The furyosite and wodnes of mynde,
A instynguyble brennyng fawtyng blyys,
A grete hungre ynsaciat to fynde,
A dowcet ylle, a yvell swetness blynde,
A ryght wonderfulle sugred swete errore,
Wyth-owte labor rest, co[n]trary to kynde,
Or wyth-owte quyete to haue huge laboure.
(XV, #187, p. 287)

Each line of the Latin has been made into two by the adapter. In the process of separating the juxtaposed contradictory phrases he has weakened the expression of the paradoxes, especially the paradox of the last line of the original, which depends on the interpretation that love is both "absque labore quies" and "absque quiete labor." According to the English version, love is "wyth-owte labor rest . . . Or wyth-owte quyete to haue huge laboure" (italics added). The author's addition of
contrary to kynde (l. 7) seems to refer solely to the first part of the line and is probably a direct reference to the "doctrine of contraries" whereby a person could not know rest without first knowing labor (or could know rest better if labor were known first). Thus to describe love as rest without labor would be to note its paradoxical aspect; on the other hand, such a resolution of contraries (day without night, peace without war, etc.) is often found in lyrics which describe heaven or God's love, the contrary of ynordynat loue; and so the phrase wyth-owte labor rest serves to undercut the moralizing of the lyric.

The paradoxicalness of the definition is also minimized by the poet's translation of amor as ynordynat loue, a phrase which immediately gives the lyric a moralizing character and undercuts any good or pleasant connotations which are mentioned in the definition's oxymorons, such as dowcet ylle, yvel sweetness, and sugred swete errore. Thus any undertone of desire or approval (even in the face of the suffering which love is known to entail), or any hint of wonder at the marvelous nature of love, is almost entirely squelched.

This is not the case, however, in a poem which Utley calls a "palinode" to the preceding definition. In this poem a fascination and even desire for love seems to underlie the negative description:

I ne wot quat is love,
Ne i ne love ne lovede nouth;
But wel i wot wo so lov et
He brennet harde in his youth.

I ne wot quat is love,
Ne love me never bond;
But wel I wot wo so lov et
Reste havet he non.
B. Love Unfulfilled: Complaints

The paradox of love, described succinctly and in abstract terms in the Middle English definitions just discussed, is described more concretely (if still in a stylized fashion) in other genres of the anonymous lyric, those genres which supposedly depict personal experiences of love. First to be considered are such poems which have been influenced by the conventions of courtly love poetry, the courtly love complaints. In some formal love complaints the poet-lover insists that joy and woe actually exist at the same time in love; in others, the logical paradox is resolved: the contraries do not exist simultaneously but follow one another (for example, the lover sorrows before he obtains his lady's mercy or mourns only after he has lost it). In both kinds of lyrics certain logical paradoxes are common conventions, the most frequent being that one and the same person (the Lady) is identified both as the cause and the cure of the Lover's suffering, she is both joy and woe to the lover, and is the source of his life and of his death. The poetic conventions which will be identified in the lyrics included here are obviously designed to concretize perceptions about love's mysterious effects on human emotions and actions. The pervasiveness of certain conventions in Middle English formal love poetry has led many to dismiss the body of poems as repetitious and boring. I hope to show by demonstration that the poetic achievement of certain anonymous authors is all the more noteworthy because they did work within a tradition whose conventions were so well-established.
The courtly love complaint flourishes in the fifteenth century in England; and so it is from the lyrics of this period that I have chosen types with which other treatments of the same subject matter may be compared. Within the fifteenth-century genre of courtly love complaint several subgenres may be distinguished, whose members' chief thematic concern is the paradox of love (its joy and woe): (1) the complaint to the lady for mercy (including some lyrics which, though not directly addressed to the lady, describe the psychological and physical state of the longing lover); (2) complaints of the lover who has been granted mercy by the lady, but nevertheless continues to suffer primarily because he must be separated from her; (3) complaints of the lover whose lady has been unfaithful. The members of each subgenre, of course, share certain paradoxical poetic conventions; some poems combine conventions of several subgenres, and we find poets who take pleasure in reversing these conventions for humorous and satiric effects.

1. Complaints for Mercy

In this subsection, four poems will be considered in detail: one fifteenth-century complaint, "Ffair freshest erply creature" (Index 754), and three earlier complaints, "Bytuene Mersh ant Aueril," better known as "Alysoun" (Index 515), "Bryd one brere" (Index 521), and "A wayle whyt ase whalles bon" (Index 105). In addition, a few fifteenth-century poems are mentioned at the conclusion of the section but not analyzed in detail. The purpose of the analyses is, first, to point out common conventions which are part of the courtly love complaints
for mercy, the most outstanding being that love is described as alternating in joy and woe (although, in some instances, the poets attempt to portray joy and woe as existing simultaneously in love). Contraries and paradoxes are associated not only with the direct description of love but also with the description of the lady and of the lover (especially with the effects which love has on the lover). A second purpose of the analyses is to point out excellences of particular poems, and to demonstrate in a few poems contraries in form (in word-play, in structure of the poem as a whole). A third purpose, which has determined the order in which the poems are considered, is to point out some of the differences between the fifteenth-century courtly complaint and its predecessors.

In "Ffaiwr freshest erply creature" (Index 754, Appendix), a somewhat typical fifteenth-century complaint for mercy, the joy and woe of love is presented as alternating: the lover portrays himself as "with wo oppressed sore" (1. 11), and he pleads with the lady to "bryng my bale to blysse agayne" (1. 57). The poet indicates specifically that the lady's refusal of mercy has caused his misfare (1. 23); but in the second and fifth stanzas he develops the contrary aspect of the lady's nature: she is his hele (11. 13, 47), and bote (1. 19), and may relieve him of his sorrows with only a word or two (11. 40-43). Thus the lady is both cause and cure of the poet's suffering. The middle stanzas (three and four) continue the theme of the poet's dependence on the lady, her ultimate power to give him "sikenesse or hele, / lyff or deth, wo or wele" (11. 27-28). The paradox that the lady holds power over the poet's life and death is also stated in line
thirty-eight and is given prominence in the poem by its inclusion in the final line, "... dep y may not a-stert."

The middle stanzas also describe the poet's love-pain: the lady's beauty has, in the figurative language of a logical paradox, set his heart on fire (l. 31)—a state which the poet can describe only in paradoxical language: "That euer sith with cold of hete, / With hete of cold, my hert is bete" (ll. 35-36).

The lyric is framed with a concluding stanza which praises the lady in her power to change one contrary into another (woe to joy [ll. 56-57] or death to life [l. 59]), and with an introductory stanza of praise. The first stanza is interesting because it addresses the lady, who is given certain supernatural curing and life-giving power in the body of the lyric, in terms which might echo descriptions of the Blessed Virgin in religious lyrics (especially ll. 1-2, 4, which specifically recall references to Mary's Immaculate Conception). Furthermore, line five, "... haue been, am, and euer shall in oon," might just as easily be found in a lyric whose subject is the Trinity. Such religious echoes are not uncommon in English courtly lyrics of the fifteenth century. In fact, the courtly love lyrics and some of the religious lyrics have a common stock of words such as lady, sovereign, service, servant, mercy, confess, penance, suffering, pain, pray, prayer; and the courtly lyrics and lyrics of the mystical school share such terms as love-longing, burning love, lemman. This fact has often been noted, but it is generally overlooked that references to divine love in songs of the human, and references connoting human love in divine love
songs (and even the very conception of the "divine" love song) may owe their existence in part to the doctrine of contraries, by which one contrary helps us to know or know better the other.

The exchange between the secular and the religious in Middle English formal lyrics may seem more strange to us than it seemed to the audiences of the fifteenth century, familiar as they were not only with the doctrine of contraries, but also with the quickly established conventions (which probably soon lost the element of surprise and wonder) of courtly love poetry and mystical poetry. It seems that the fifteenth-century English courtly love poets, in general, failed to make full use of the reflective possibilities of religious language and imagery in secular love poetry whereby new insights could be gained into the nature of both the religious and the secular, caritas, cupiditas, and amor itself. In the lyric under consideration, for example, nothing much seems to be gained by the introduction of the religious echoes. So closely are the religious elements associated with the courtly love traditions (especially extravagant praise of the lady which echoes praise of the Blessed Virgin in religious lyrics) that they seem to have become mere courtly love conventions themselves, thus losing identity in their own right; but the religious elements, while identified with the courtly, are at the same time left dangling, as in the lyric in question—still calling attention to themselves, but having lost even all shock value and being put to no reflective use, they are simply there.\textsuperscript{12}

Earlier courtly love poetry which might be compared with our fifteenth-century example comes only from the late thirteenth and very
early fourteenth centuries, and is contained almost exclusively in the
famous MS. Harley 2253. The fact that in a period of almost a full
century no courtly love poetry survives is partly accounted for by the
effects of the Black Death. It is perhaps not surprising that formal
love poetry after its revival by Chaucer in the late fourteenth century
shows little affinity with the Harley poems. The use of the convention
of religious echoes in the secular poems, for example, is much less
frequent in the earlier poems, and it is of a different nature: natural
and unselfconscious (as in the refrain of "Alysoun" which will be dis-
cussed in this chapter) or somewhat reflective (as in the conclusion of
"Mosti ryden by Rybbesdale," Index 2207: "He myhte sayen þat Crist hym
seze / þat myhte nyhtes neh hyre leze, / heuene he heuede here.").

The two most striking differences between the fourteenth and
fifteenth-century formal lyrics, however, are in language and metrical
scheme. Fifteenth-century formal love poems are written primarily in
rhyme royal or ballade stanzas; the Harley lyrics are characterized by
more simple or less rigid forms such as couplets or quatrains with
three or four stresses, and alternating or cross rhyme. While the
language of the fifteenth-century lyrics is characterized by aureate
diction and Latinate vocabulary (and the worst examples are dominated by
it), the language of the Middle English Harley lyrics (the MS does con-
tain French lyrics and macaronic poems) is almost purely native.
Finally, the love lyrics are probably not courtly in the same sense that
the fifteenth-century lyrics are courtly, that is, written for the court,
by court poets, or modelled after such poetry in any English court.
fourteenth century. Nevertheless, some of the earlier secular love poetry shows the influence of the conventions of *fin'amors* as established in the courtly poetry of France.

Because the early formal love poetry is not strictly "of the court" we find somewhat incongruous elements in the subgenre of the complaint to the lady for mercy, elements which recall more humble love traditions. These may be pointed out in one of the most famous of the Harley lyrics, familiarly known as "Alysoun" (Index 515, Appendix). This poem like the fifteenth-century complaint considered, deals with the joy and woe which is love, and as in other complaints for mercy, the paradox is resolved in the body of the poem where the contraries are portrayed as following one another: the lover is woeful now (11. 5, 22-23, 19-20, 31-32), but if his lady grants him mercy he will be in a state of bliss (1. 7). This poem also shares with the fifteenth-century complaint the paradoxical convention that the lady is both cause and cure of the poet's suffering (11. 5-8); and like the other lady, Alysoun has power over the poet's life and death (11. 19-20). Other courtly elements include the poet's address to his loved one specifically as the *levedi* (1. 24); his request that she heed his song (11. 37-38); the nonspecific, conventional description of the lady (11. 13-14, 16, 28), description of hair, brows, eyes, *mìddel*, and neck (which follows the recommendations of the poetic treatises of the time); and, finally, the poet's description of his own sufferings, especially the inability to sleep at night, which is mentioned twice (11. 22-23, 31). The introduction of the poem, with a reference to Spring and the singing of the *lutel foul* is probably also inspired by the conventions.
of French courtly poetry, where a contrast between the mating of birds and other animals and man's lack of love is common in the opening of a chanson d'amour (animals in harmony of love used to help define their contrary, man in disharmony). An implicit comparison is made in "Alysoun" between the freedom of the mating of animals and the poet's love-longing—implicit because it is made only by the juxtaposition of lines three and four with line five; the comparison is reinforced, however, by the rhyme of synge and loue-longinge and the strong consonance and the alliteration of the l sound in the three lines.16

The spring introduction, on the other hand, may have appealed to our poet because of its ultimate association with the reverdie, originally (perhaps) a popular or even folk genre. Other elements of the poem probably derive from popular love song tradition; at any rate, they are definitely not "courtly" in the sense of decorous, polite, refined, demonstrating certain established conventions of formal French and later (fifteenth-century) English formal love poetry. In direct contrast to courtly decorum, for example, is (1) the mention of the lady's name (given prominence by its position in the last line of the refrain, and by the fact that it rhymes with the last word of each stanza); (2) the explicit reference to mating, and probably marriage, in the term make (ll. 18, 33), which in strict courtly poetic tradition would be considered presumptuous, and definitely in bad taste; and (3) the reference to the lady's laughing in the poet's presence (l. 15) which, in the more strict English tradition, would have been enough to bring the lover from woe to wele (in the fifteenth-century complaint considered, Index 754, a word or two so that the poet would not feel his
lady was his foe was sufficient to bring him to full health [stanza five]). Also noncourtly are the slight qualifications which the poet makes in his description of the lady: her hair is fayr ynoh (1. 13), and she is the fairest maid in toune (1. 29). Such realistic terms and phrases as may, toun, hendy hap, very so water in wore, geynest vnder gore (figuratively alive, but literally in petticoat) would not be found in strict courtly poetry, nor would the poet's admission that "betere is þolien while sore / þen mournen euermore" (11. 35-36) with the implicit presumption that the lady will soon show mercy.

While the contraries of woe and joy are seen as following one another in the body of the poem, in which the poet speaks of sorrow but anticipates joy, the paradox that they indeed exist at the same time in love is suggested by a consideration of the tone of the poem in conjunc­tion with that of the refrain. In the main stanzas of the poem the predominance of alliteration and monosyllables, and the alternating rhyme of the first four lines of each stanza, have the effect of slowing the movement from one line to another and even from one word to another. This is especially noticeable in the sections in which the poet most specifically describes his suffering, the opening lines of the last two stanzas:

Nihtes when y wende ant wake,  
forþi myn wonges waxþep won  
(11. 22-23)

Icham for wowyn al forwake,  
wery so water in wore  
(11. 31-32)

The alliteration of w and the assonance of the open vowels in the second lines of each quoted pair seems also to help create the sorrowful tone.18
Each stanza ends with the c-rhyme oun, whose only other appearance is in the last line of the refrain. This has the effect of making the reader or listener stop short, appropriately, since the refrain introduces something entirely new: a strong note of joy, created not only by the sentiments expressed, but also by the sing-song quality of the rhythm, almost perfect iambic tetrameter in the first three monorhyming lines, by the almost tripping, light four-part alliteration of the first line, and (in the shorter fourth line) by the seemingly triumphant exclamation of the lady's name, Alysoun. G. L. Brook, in his edition of the poem, notes that the refrain seems suitable for dancing. Indeed, it may even have been taken from popular tradition and worked into this lyric by the skilled poet. The entire lyric is obviously suitable for singing, with its regular meter and rhyme, although music is not preserved with it. That the lyric may have been written to be sung is further suggested by the use of the same rhyme, oun, at the end of each stanza, also the rhyme of the refrain's "Alysoun," which would signal the appropriate entrance of singers of the refrain. At any rate, within the poem as a whole there is a definite alternation of sadness and joy, a representation in poetic form of the joy and sadness present at the same time in love itself. With great skill the poet is able to achieve a unity by contraries, which is one of the most pleasing in Middle English poetry, by combining as he does elements from literary, popular, and perhaps even folk traditions, and by creating a tone of sadness and joy which perfectly reflects the theme of the love complaint.
The following lyric (Index 521) is interesting as perhaps the earliest extant poem in English which shows the influence of courtly love conventions (ca. 1250), and as one of the few early formal love poems not preserved in the Harley MS:

King's Coll. Cambridge
Muniment Roll 2 W. 32
Bryd one brere, brid, brid one brere!
kynd is come of loue, loue to craue,
blith-ful bryd on me þu rewe,
or greyth, lef, greid þu my graue.

Hic am so blipe, so bryhit, brid on brere;
quan I se þat hende in halle—
yhe is quit of lime, loue-li, trewe,
yhe is fayr, and flur of alle.

Mikte hic hire at wille hauen,
stedefast of loue, loue-li, trewe,
of mi sorwe yhe may me sauen;
Ioye and blisse were me Newe.

(XIX-XV, #147, pp. 146-47)

The poet presents himself as being sorrowful (l. 11), but he is certain of joy to follow if he has the lady's mercy (l. 12). Even while he is sorrowing, however, he does experience joy at the sight of his lady (l. 5). As in the other examples considered, the lady holds in her power the life or death of the poet (l. 4). Noncourtly elements include the lover's condition for release from pain: not a glance from the lady, or even the noncourtly suete cos requested by the author of the Harley poem "When þe nyhtengale singes"; this lover requests nothing less than to have his lady at wille (l. 9). Also going one step farther (away from strict courtly decorum) than the poet of "Alysoun," who refers to the lady simply as his make, the author of "Bryd one brere" alludes perhaps to the natural craving for love and
its resulting natural procreation: "kynd [children] is come of loue, loue to craue" (1. 2). Kynd in addition to natural offspring, has fourteen other meanings, according to the Middle English Dictionary, several of which may also be operative here, such as: the universe, creation (the poet perhaps alludes to the creation of the universe through the love of God); mankind; natural desires, feelings, instincts of man; sex.²² The syntax permits all these meanings to operate at once, perhaps both elevating and bringing to the most naturalistic level the poet's craving. The line may also perhaps indicate that kynd, nature, claims love as man's due.²³ Possibilities for double readings exist elsewhere in the poem; for example, the word bryd, especially common in alliterative love poetry, may mean a bird of any kind, may be used as a term for the male lover or the female loved one, especially a man or woman of noble birth, and may also mean bride, referring to the bride or bridegroom.²⁴ Therefore, it is possible that in the first line the poet is not addressing his lady, as in a typical plea for mercy, but is making his moan to an actual bird (lovers often take their sorrows to the wood, as will be noted in other lyrics). In the fifth line, if the comma is removed between bryhit and brid the poet may be interpreted as referring to himself, addressing his lady, or addressing the actual bird. The possibility that in line five we are not to understand the most obvious reference (address to the lady which is unquestionably called for in line three) is suggested by the fact that the following lines (6, 8) refer to hat hende and yhe, not to you which would be expected if the lady were being addressed directly.
(Change from direct address to the lady to references to her in general as she is not, however, uncommon, and occurs, for example, in "Alysoun.")

The sincerity which is a mark of this lyric (in contrast to the artificiality of some of the later complaints) is in part due to the simplicity of the language, to the brevity of the poem, and to the phrase which twice seems to interrupt the flow of thought: loue-li, trewe (11. 7, 10). In both occurrences of this phrase there is opportunity for double readings. In line ten, both stedefast of loue and loue-li, trewe may refer to the lover or to the lady, and loue-li, trewe may be an address to the bird-audience, such an epithet, of course, suggesting that the bird is a dove. In line seven, loue-li, trewe may describe the lady, or may again be an address to the bird-audience; in this line the bird-lady meanings may come together in a reflective ambiguity since the description of the lady as quit of lime and loue-li, trewe may be intended to bring the dove to mind, as the traditional symbol of the true lover. Such a comparison of the lady to a dove is common in later poems, where flattery is intended by the epithet true turtel. In some lyrics, however, the flattery is in fact two-edged, suggesting a contrast rather than a likeness between the faithfulness of the bestial turtel and that of the human turtel.25

Reference to the lady as a tortle and a byrd unites the first and last stanzas of a Harley complaint which, of the early English formal love lyrics, seems closest both to the stylized courtly love pieces of the fifteenth century with their delicate sentiments and to the earthy French poems which are among the earliest courtly love lyrics. "A wayle
whyt ase whalles bon" (Index 105, Appendix) is a complaint of the longing lover who lacks the mercy of his lady (though the poem may not be directly addressed to the lady). It shares with the other complaints considered the paradoxical convention that the lady is both cause and cure of the poet's troubles (stanza two), holding the poet's life or death in her hands (stanza four). As in other poems the poet defines his predicament in terms of paradoxes, here the judgmental sort. He expresses his position by using familiar pairs of contraries but in a new paradoxical relationship: "Ich vnne hire wel and heo me wo; / ycham hire frend ant heo my fo" (ll. 45-46). But the poet's plight is further compounded by the fact that he is forbidden by the etiquette of love to make his pain known (another paradoxical convention of courtly love poetry, which is paradoxical in more than one sense since the poem itself publicizes the lover's complaint).

One element which can be associated with both early French courtly love poetry and fifteenth-century English formal love poetry is the poet's selfconsciousness. He clearly makes four references to his poem or his art (ll. 6, 19, 38, 39), and possibly makes one other in line twenty-three, which may be a general address to the public, but is more likely an address to his poem, as is common especially in envoys (if the poet is indeed sending the poem to his lady, the paradox of his statement that he "dar nout telle" is compounded). A second element of the poem associated both with early French material and with fifteenth-century English formal love lyrics is a stylization, accompanied by a lack of personal sentiment, which is not characteristic of the other Harley lyrics which show influences of the conventions of
fin'amors. The lyric under consideration lacks the popular elements, seen, for example, in "Alysoun": the description of the lady is conventional with no lapses from exaggerated praise. For example, while Alysoun is the "feyrest may in toune," the subject of this lyric is described in the conventional exaggerated terms: "From helle to heuene ant sonne to see / nys non se zeep / ne half so freo," (ll. 35-37; note the use here of the contraries hell-heaven, sun-sea for circumlocution; the use of contraries here, rather than a term such as nowhere, is essential for the exaggerated courtly effect). The description of the lady as "whyt ase whalles bon" (a common simile) and as "a grein in golde bat godly shon" may be popular in inspiration, but these are the only such elements in the poem and they occur in the first two lines.

This poem is, in my opinion, the closest in tone of any Middle English lyric to the early French courtly love chansons. The light-hearted amorality of this piece is not paralleled in later Middle English formal love poetry (except in obviously ironic or satiric pieces), nor is it found in any of the other Harley love lyrics which show the influences of courtly conventions. Three passages contribute most to this tone: (1) ll. 29-30, which imply that the lady is married, or that she has another companion with whom the poet would like to change places; (2) ll. 13-16, which imply that the poet has had a sexual relationship with the lady, especially if line fourteen is read with line thirteen instead of with the following two lines as Brook has punctuated it (again, perhaps the poet has intended a fruitful ambiguity), (3) ll. 51-55, which contain lightly veiled sexual innuendos,
may be reinforced by the use of coxk as the final rhyming syllable in two successive lines.29

The careful and clever artistry of this lyric (also reminiscent of French courtly poems) is exemplified in the last stanza in which bryd is given the central position and several functions. The importance the poet attaches to the line "swete bryd" (l. 53) is indicated by the fact that he has varied his stanza pattern and placed the line where the audience would ordinarily expect a line of four strong stresses. Bryd may refer to the prestelcok or the lauercok (and thus to the poet himself); but it also refers to the lady, and, as noted earlier, draws the stanzas together by recalling stanza one, in which the lady is described as a tortle. Other examples of the poet's clever workmanship include the play on the words whale and wayle (beautiful or excellent person) in the first line of the poem (unique in Middle English poetry as far as I can determine); the humorous ambiguity occasioned by the poet's construction of lines twenty-nine and thirty, in which myn can be taken to mean my lot or destiny, my wife or mistress, or even perhaps my mouth; the choice of words in line forty, "in such wondryng for wo y welle," in which welle, meaning suffer, naturally calls to mind wele, which is anticipated in conjunction with its contrary wo, the wo-wele pair recalling all the contraries and paradoxes which are the subject of the lover's lament. In one other small detail the paradoxes of love are also reflected, thanks to the poet's careful juxtaposition of contrasting elements. The author combines an element of the traditional description of the lady, the eyebrows, with a reference to the convention of receiving the love wound through the eyes,
the whole displaying in microcosm the joy and woe present at the same
time in love: "Hyre heze hauep wounded me ywisse, / here bende browen, 
pat bringep blisse" (11. 25-26).

Finally, the construction of the lyric, which at first seems
haphazard, may be seen as a progression by association of ideas:
gladships (11. 5, 7) unites stanza two with one; wyf (11. 12, 13)
joins two with three; the poet's wone (1. 18) joins stanzas three and
four (with mournyng, 1. 20); the lady's eyes are the obvious connec­
tion between stanzas four and five (11. 24-25); the lady's fere (11.
30, 31) joins five and six; two addresses to the audience (11. 38-39)
form a connection between six and seven; woy welle (1. 40) connects
with its more conventional sound-alike, wo and wel (1. 45) in stanzas
seven and eight. The connection between the thoughts of the last two
stanzas is less obvious, but the use of wayle whyte (1. 50) does recall
the first stanza and the metaphor of the bird (dove) is carried
out (ambiguously) in the last stanza.

Other contraries present themselves in the style of this lyric:
While the amoral sentiments and tone of the poem are overwhelmingly
French (and in this respect unique in early English formal love poetry)
and while the poem shows more familiarity with the conventions of
courtly love than any other lyric before Chaucer, the diction of the
lyric is purely Middle English. It is phenomenal that this almost
"pure courtly" lyric could or would be composed in a language which was
not yet the literary language of the English court, though it probably
was the first language of much of the educated class. Perhaps the poem
might be considered experimental; at any rate, it does display more artistry but conveys less spontaneity and sincerity than other Middle English poems written before Chaucer which have also been influenced by the conventions of fin'amors.

The complaints for mercy which we have analyzed thus far, "Ffayr fresshest erply creature," "Alysoun," "Bryd one brere," and "A wayle whyt ase whalles bon," have as a common denominator the thematic paradox that "loue is wele, loue is wo . . . loue is lff, loue is defp" (Digby definition of love, ll. 22-23). In all of the lyrics, except "Alysoun" with its cheery refrain, the poets have generally described their state as one of alternating joy and sorrow, depending on the response of the lady, thus resolving the apparent paradox that love is joy and woe at the same time. The author of "Alysoun" is successful in portraying the psychological state in which happiness and sadness are present in the lover at one time (before the possession of the lady or her love token which traditionally change woe to joy); and the author of "A wayle whyt" indicates that the same contrary emotions exist in the lover (before possession of the lady), when he describes the sight of the lady which at once wounds (her eyes) and brings bliss (her lovely eye-brows). In several fifteenth-century complaints for mercy a new dimension is added to the joy-woe paradox: some lovers find happiness, or at least contentment, in their suffering. The author of a five-stanza complaint beginning, "Mercy me graunt off þat I me compleyne" (Index 2161), for example, indicates that since the lady will not cure him of his suffering, he considers his continued service to be his best cure.
Syth zow like nozt my peynys to remedy,
nor at my request to graunte me mercy,
In zour seruyse to deye, and þat I neuer repent;
ffor zow to obeye and serue entendith my best cure,
tyl my lyfe relese his ryzt with-outyn forfeture.

(XIV-XV, #139, 11. 8-12, p. 141)

In a thirteen-stanza complaint of the same period, "With wofull hert &
gret mornyng" (Index 4209), the body of which is actually a conven­
tional seven-stanza description of all the lady's charms (she lacks
only mercy), the poet first describes his suffering, indicating that
the lady is both cause and cure of it:

With wofull hert & gret mornyng,
In gret distresse & no lykyng,
Mi compleynt þus I make
To that þat is most swete;
None but she my bales may bete,
Nor my peynful sorow slake.

ffor her my hert is made al blak,
In sorow & care she doth me wrap;
This is þe lyf þat I lede!
Þe comlynes of her stature
Which passith reson & nature,
Might help me only yn my nede.

(XIV-XV, #127, 11. 1-12, p. 120)

Anticipating no mercy, the poet closes his complaint with a traditional
farewell and a prayer, but not before adding a novel consolation:

But þis I wat, & am full sure,
Mi sorow to her is sum plesur,
And thereof am I gladd;
And god wolde I wold be fayn
ffor her love to suffre payn,
ffor her no þing shuld make me sadde.

(11. 61-66, p. 121)

The lover in a more simple and effective fifteenth-century formal
love lyric, "No wondre tho I murnyng make" (Index 2293.5) is also content
to suffer without hope of attaining joy, finding himself in the
(logically) paradoxical situation of seeking what he knows is not to be had:

My mynde ys so yt is content
with hir dayly to be present,
& yet my seruys ys there mysse-spent.
alone, [I lyue alone.]

Trow ye that I wold be glade
To seke a thynge hat wyll not be hade;
Saw I neuer man so sore be-stad.
[alone, I lyue alone.]
(XIV-XV, #163, 11. 13-20, p. 154)

One short lyric (Index 3722) is fully appreciated only in the context of the paradoxical convention of contentment in suffering:

MS. Ashmole 191
Thus I complayn my grevous hevynesse
to you hat knoweth be trewth of myn entent,
Alas, why shuld ye be merseles—
so mocch beute As god hath you sent!
ye may my payn reles.
do as ye list—-I hold me content!
(XIV-XV, #154, p. 149)

Robbins titles the poem "The Indifferent Lover" but actually the poem can be read in two ways: within the convention of contentment in suffering or as a reversal of it. The trewth of the poet's entent (1. 2) is not limited by the words or syntax of the lyric; instead, two contrary meanings exist in the poem at the same time, giving it a truly paradoxical character.

2. Complaints of the Lover Granted Mercy

In this subdivision of the second section of part one of the chapter, six lyrics will be analyzed, complaints or mock-complaints of lovers who have been granted mercy by the lady but who still suffer, either because of lack of faith in the lady (Index 3534, "Thayr ys no
myrth vnder the sky") or because they must be separated from the lady: Index 1334, "I ne haue Ioy, plesauns, nor comfortt"; Index 2141, "Me þingkit þou art so loueli"; Index 925, "Go hert, hurt with aduersite"; Index 3879, "Welcome be ze when ze goo" (a mock counterpart to the lover's farewell); and Index 3271, "For [wele or w]oo I wyll not fie / To love that hart that lovyth me."

In many of the complaints for mercy (considered in the first subdivision of this second section of poems about love) the logical paradox that love is or contains both joy and woe at the same time is shown, generally, to be only an apparent paradox; that is, it is resolved into succeeding or alternating contraries, woe followed by joy if and when the lady grants her mercy. Some poets, such as the author of "Alysoun," attempt to portray joy and woe existing at the same time in love. In the complaints which follow, love is portrayed as containing sorrow in the midst of its joy; even after the lady grants her mercy the lover mourns, either because he fears that the lady is untrustworthy or because the lovers must be separated.

Index 3534, for example, "Thayr ys no myrth vnder the sky" (Appendix), demonstrates the misery of insecurity which accompanies the reception of the lady's mercy. The lover finds himself in the paradoxical situation that thoughts of his lady bring at the same time the contrary emotions of happiness and sadness. Mirroring the poet's emotions, the poem itself is characterized by a unity by contraries: the tone conveyed contrasts with the literal meaning of the words. The poem opens with the somewhat typical praise of the lady, the "birde of all Plesance" (1. 5), but the reader is surprised by the last line of
the stanza (which becomes the refrain): "Be trew, lady, for I you trust." The sentiment expressed in the first half of the refrain line attracts the readers' attention: it is contrary to the rules or conventions of courtly love for a lover to command his lady, and furthermore, it is shocking (according to the system) that the lover would cast the slightest aspersions on the fidelity of his lady (before an actual break with her). Thus we find a contrast in the refrain line itself which corresponds to the logically paradoxical notion expressed by the line; that is, the line expresses both trust (literally, in the last half) and distrust (connotatively, in the first half).

Doubt is made increasingly more explicit from stanza to stanza. In stanza two the structure is "So . . . that . . . that . . . Thane . . ." (ll. 11-16), having the force of "if I am sure of my lady, then I will live in royalty." The example of the dove and the hind of itself is the most explicit indication of the poet's doubt, but this is made even more pointed in line twenty-three, when the poet directs the example to the attention of his lady: "Take heyd, my swete, for yie are kynde--." The final rhyme word, identical to the word for nature used in the second line of the stanza (referring there to the dove, symbol of fidelity), makes the comparison—or contrast—between the dove and the lady more obvious. In the fourth stanza what has been hinted in the first half of the poem (through conditional phrases, by example, and by the refrain, of course, which contradicts by tone and contrasting structure), is now put into a direct appeal by the poet (ll. 27-31). In addressing his lady as my hert in stanza four, the poet indicates the close relationship between himself and his lady, alluding to the
exchange of hearts which is a logically paradoxical convention in formal love poetry. (In light of this same tradition and of the clear use of the term hert to address the lady in line twenty-seven, my hert in line thirty, "And mak my hert lyk for to bruste," may refer to the poet's own heart or to the lady, which adds another dimension to the line, bringing to mind perhaps the clay idol). The use of the term hert, especially in conjunction with sessone (l. 27) also brings to mind the image of the hunter and his prey, ultimately from Ovid, which is taken over into much Middle English love poetry. A third association also figures in the use of the term hert: it directly recalls the hynde (hart and hind being the male and female of the red deer), mentioned only six lines before, which in the poem symbolizes the unfaithful lady. Thus the courtly capture of the lady, the exchange of love, and the unfaithfulness of the lady are all brought to mind by the use of a single term.

Though the lady is addressed directly in stanza four, the reference is oblique: "Put not your loue vnto sore grevance" (l. 28); but in stanza five the poet, after mentioning the alternating contraries of love ("sumtyme hoyt & sumtyme colde") uses the word dowt for the first time. There is interesting ambiguity in line thirty-seven, "And fals louers youe kepe in hold [imprisonment]," in which you as well as lovers can be either subject or direct object. With you as subject, the poet makes reference, perhaps disparagingly, to the lover's position as one of imprisonment; with lovers as subject, the line displays delicate, courtly rhetoric, placing any blame not on the lady but on false lovers. This latter meaning, though definitely to be recognized, is undercut (as are all other expressions of non-doubt in the lady) by the refrain.
The poem ends with a statement of praise of the lady (as cure), which, though conventional, in its context is most paradoxical of all the poet's statements:

Ther yse no surrance that may hurte me,  
Nor no sorow bot I shall cayste,  
When I think apopn your love so fre—  
By trew, lady, for I you truste.  

(11. 45-48)

The statement of the first three lines is contradicted not only by the refrain, which throughout the poem has expressed distrust and now, even sorrow, but also by the entire poem, which demonstrates that the poet cannot cast out sorrow when he thinks upon his lady's love; the contrary is true: when he thinks on his lady (stanza one) doubt and sadness accompany the joy (stanzas two through six). *Fre* (l. 47) is a paradoxical word, meaning as it does noble, courtly, honorable, and free, loose, unrestrained and, connotatively, ignoble, noncourtly, dishonorable. Used with both meanings here it fittingly describes the lady's love which has prompted the poet to write a poem which counters (false) confidence with lack of confidence, and lack of confidence with (false) confidence.

The two movements within the poem occur in each stanza (due to the refrain), but I think they can also be seen in the larger structure of the poem. In the first three stanzas the poet expresses lessening degrees of confidence in the lady, as reference to the possibility of her unfaithfulness becomes more explicit, and the refrain functions not only to cast doubt on the confidence the poet is expressing, but also to warn the lady. In the last three stanzas lack of confidence is explicitly expressed, in each stanza more clearly, and references to
the poet's own suffering are made for the first time (11. 30, 38, 41-42). In these stanzas the refrain becomes more and more a plea, rather than a warning; and in the last stanza, in which confidence in the lady's love is said to have power to free the poet from his sorrow, the refrain has become almost wishful thinking—as if saying could make it so.

Sadness within the joy of love is expressed not only by poets who doubt the stability of love, but by those who must leave the mistress. The lover in the following lyric (Indes 1334) expresses his predicament in the language of contraries and paradox:

MS. Rawlinson poet. 36
I ne haue Ioy, plesauns, nor comforrt,
In yowre absenss, my verrey hertes quene.
What other men thynk Ioy or disporrt,
To me it nys butt angyr or tene;
Yff fcat I lawgh, yt ys butt on be splene.
thus mak I a gladfull sory chere,
So noyth me be absenss of my verrey lady dere.
(XIV-XV, #159, p. 151)

What other men think joy and entertainment is to this lover anger and misery (judgmental paradox), and when he laughs it is only on be splene. Robbins points out in his note on this lyric that there is "a play on ideas" in spleen which was regarded as both the seat of melancholy and of mirth. Consequently, Robbins argues, "the poet can at one time make a 'gladfull' and a 'sory' countenance." The play on ideas is more complex than this, I think, since on be spleen is used also to mean in jest. The lover could laugh in jest, meaning "not really laugh" or "when it is natural to laugh." Furthermore, chere means not only countenance, but also gaiety, placing the emphasis not on the lover's gladful sorry countenance (only apparently glad) but on his
gladful sorry gaiety (only apparently sorry). Thus the poem may be read two ways.

Another short lyric (Index 2141) whose subject is, at least ostensibly, the separation of lovers, is also paradoxical as a whole, containing as it does three contradictory meanings, one courtly, one ironic, and one moral:32

Harley MS. 7322
*Me þingkit þou art so loueli,
so fair & so swete,
þat sikere þi were mi det
þi companie to lete.*

(XIV-XV, #142, p. 144)

The three meanings depend upon the interpretation of *det* as death or debt, obligation (a play only in spelling, not pronunciation), and the understanding of *lete* as abandon or allow. Thus the last two lines can read: "It were my death thy company to leave"; "It were my debt (or death) thy company to allow (since you are not really so lovely, fair, and sweet at all)"; "It were my death thy company to allow" or "It were my debt or obligation thy company to leave (since you are too lovely, fair, and sweet)."

The paradox of contentment in suffering is introduced in the following lament of the lover who must be separated from his lady (Index 925):

MS. Ashmole 191
*Go hert, hurt with aduersite,
And let my lady þi wondis see;
And sey hir þis, as y say þe:
far-wel my Ioy, and wel-com peyne,
til y se my lady Agayne.*

(XIV-XV, #155, p. 150)

The fourth line, built entirely on the contraries *far-wel—wel-com* and
Ioy—peyne admits several shades of meaning. My ioy may refer simply to the joy the poet experienced while near the lady, it may refer to the lady herself, or perhaps even to the heart, literally, as in the conceit. It is not made known in the lyric why the author welcomes pain. Other lovers have been content to suffer, in anticipation of joy to come, as a test, or as a kind of penance or purification, and one lover we have encountered is content because his suffering gives his lady joy. But it is unusual to find a lover welcoming pain. Perhaps in this case welcome is used because it strengthens the contraries set up in the line and completes the parallelism, and because farewell and welcome as greetings are especially appropriate in a song whose subject is the departure of one of the lovers (or simply the absence of one of them). It is also possible that a fuller understanding of the words may be intended: the lover is actually hoping that his ioy (joy, lady, heart) fares well (perhaps with a reference to the future if his joy in love is understood); and in addition to (or instead of) actually welcoming pain the lover expresses his sadness or resignation under the circumstances: "well may come pain" or "will come pain" or, ironically, "pain, you are well come."

The sentiments expressed in the following lyric (Index 3879) are judgmental paradoxes, by the courtly standards expressed in the previous poems. Moreover, the poem, in form, is characterized by a unity by alternating contraries: conventions are set up and then immediately undercut. Elements which contradict each other are found within lines (11. 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 15) or between them: one line (or two) introduces a conventional sentiment which the following line (or two lines)
contradicts (11. 5-8, 9-12, 13-14):

MS. Arch. Selden B. 26
Welcome be ze when ze goo,
    And fare-wel when ze come!
So faire as ze þer be noo mo,
    As Brith as bery browne.
I love zow verryly at me too,
    Nonne so moch in all þis toune.
I am right glad when ze will goo,
    and sory when ze wil come!

And whan ze be ovth fare,
I pray for yow sertayn,
þat neuer man, horsse, ne mare,
brynge yow to towne a-geyn.
To prayse youre bewte I ne dare,
    ffor drede th at men wille seyn.
ffare-welle! no more for you I care,
    but pray yow of my songe have no deseyn!
(XIV-XV, #174, pp. 163-64)

The pattern of contradiction is seen at its most complex in lines five through eight: each second half line undercuts its partner, and the first two lines as a whole (disregarding for the moment the incongruous courtly or exalted and colloquial or mundane elements of diction) are contradicted by the last two.

The logically paradoxical convention of sending, losing, or exchanging hearts which operates in the short lament "Go hert, hurt with aduersite" probably formed the inspiration for the longer song, in carol form, of a departing lover (Index 3271, Appendix), which is characterized by the refrain "For [wele or w]oo I wyll not fie / To love th hat hart that lovyth me." This carol is especially interesting since it displays in extended form the love of word-play which characterizes many Middle English lyrics (such as the highly alliterative poems in the Harley MS). In this poem the word play consists primarily in the same word (or form of the word) being used in several syntactic positions.
This is seen on a small scale with *cause*, both subject and object in line nine, and with *knyt*, and the related *knot*, used as subject, modifying adjective, and verb in a subordinate clause of the same sentence (ll. 20-21). The poem becomes almost a tour de force, a challenge to the poet himself to use *hart* in as many ways as possible (twenty-two times in a twenty-four line poem, not including the refrain). Syntactically, *hart* is used as subject and object in the same sentence several times, and also as subject or object in subordinate clauses; it is used as the object of a preposition, as an adverb (l. 22), and in direct address as a term of endearment (l.22). The word is used to mean the physical hearts of either or both of the lovers, or the body's center of loving; it is a synecdoche for either or both of the lovers themselves; and when used for the beloved it also suggests the *hart* as a symbol for the lady as prey (and the word may have all, only one, or several of these meanings at once). The uses of the word are not only metaphorical but also symbolic: in line two *one hart* is a symbol of the lover's total unity (the paradox of two becoming one), in the last line the exchange of hearts symbolizes reciprocal love, and in the poem as a whole the giving of the lover's heart symbolizes his total subjugation to the lady. The poem itself, with its appearance of complexity and incomprehensibility, may be designed to reflect the nature of its paradoxical subject, love.
3. Complaints of the Unrequited Lover

In the subgenre of the complaint of the unrequited lover, which will be considered in this third subsection of Section B of the first part of Chapter One, the logical paradox of love as two contraries, both joy and sorrow existing at the same time, is generally resolved (as it is in the complaint for mercy) into consecutive contraries. While joy was anticipated as following suffering in the complaints for mercy, joy is seen only in the past by the lamenting unrequited lovers. Six poems will be considered. Of the first four poems two are laments of jilted lovers (Index 1018, "Greuus ys my sorowe," and Index 267, "Alone walkyng") and two are mock-laments (Index 1280, "I am sory for her sake," and Index 2518, "O mestres, whye"). The last two poems included in this section may be considered laments of unrequited lovers; however, their interpretation is more difficult, as my explications point out: Index 864, "Foweles in þe frith," and Index 1861, "Lenten ys come wip loue to toune." Though some of the conventions of this subgenre are identical to those in the complaints for mercy, the laments considered in this section generally differ from complaints for mercy in two obvious ways: they do not contain descriptions of the lady's physical and spiritual perfection, and they are not usually addressed directly to the lady (Index 2518 is addressed to the mistress, but perhaps only comically).

One of the conventions common to this subgenre is the portrayal of the lover as unable to participate in the routine activities of everyday life, such as eating and sleeping (that he cannot do so is a judgmental paradox). The author of a typical but otherwise unnoteworthy member of this subgenre (Index 1018) makes use of this convention in
the second stanza of his 112-line poem (note here also the use of one contrary, other men who are not in love, to define the contrary, the lover):

When other men doyth sleype
Than do I syght and weype,
All Ragius in my bed,
As one for paynes neyre ded

That vnkyndnes haue kylyd me
And putt me to this payne;
Alas, what remedy
That I cannott refreyne!

(XIV-XV, #206, 11, 9-16, p. 214)

The last four lines of this stanza, which form the refrain for every stanza of the poem, make use of a logically paradoxical convention, common in fifteenth-century formal love poetry: the lamenting dead lover, killed by the unkindness of his lady.

Viewed within the convention under discussion, the mundane activities of the narrator in the following carol (eating, drinking, sleeping soundly), Index 1280, are actually judgmental paradoxes:

Gonville & Caius Coll., Camb. MS. 383

Care away, away, away,
Murnyng away!
I am forsake, another ys take;
No more murne yc may.

I am sory for her sake;
Yc may wel ete and drynke;
Wanne yc sclupe yc may not wake,
So muche on here yc thenke.

I am brout in suche a bale
And brout in suche a pyne.
Wanne yc ryse vp of my bed,
Me liste wel to dyne.
I am brout in suche a pyne,
Ybrout in suche a bale,
Wanne yc hau e rythe god wyne,
Me liste drynke non ale.

(EEC, #470, p. 317)

The final common-sense choice of the author ("Wanne yc hau e rythe god wyne, / Me liste drynke non ale") also no doubt should be understood as referring to the choice of a new and sweeter love over the now less desirable one. The carol's refrain is fruitfully ambiguous, adding to the humor of the lyric: the first two lines may be read passionately, sadly, or joyfully; and may in the last line can mean both maiden and may (referring to the supposed privilege of mourning in love to prove one's faithfulness as a courtly lover).34

Another paradoxical convention, contentment in suffering, which has been seen to operate in complaints for mercy, is included in certain laments of jilted lovers, such as the poem "Alone walkyng" (Index 267, Appendix), one of the few virelays written in English. Though the lover would full gladly abstain from the suffering he is enduring (ll. 29 ff.) he views it as a penaunce (l. 32) which, in some way not explained in the poem, will cause him to auaunce (l.39). The short-line, abbreviated form of the virelay as used in English with its few clues for syntax allows several ambiguities; for example, "Thus desperate" (l. 14) may be understood to modify lyfe (l. 13) or endure (l.16), and "With displesaunce" (l. 38) may modify chaunce (l.36) or auaunce (l. 39). Likewise, the final line of the poem, "And thus an ende," may simply announce the end of the poem, but it may also perhaps refer to an end to the poet's sufferings (perhaps a reinstatement?) and explain somewhat how endurance is going to advance the lover.
Robbins notes only five other examples of virelays in Middle English, four of which are written by Hoccleve (and one of his Robbins considers only "of the nature of the virelay"). Since the virelay form is so rare in Middle English, it is especially interesting to find a poem that I think is within the "nature of the virelay," but which reverses the convention of contentment in suffering central to the virelay mentioned above. The first two stanzas of this four-stanza lyric, Index 2518, "O mestres, whye," express the same sentiments of despair as noted in the virelay just considered; but the last two stanzas, while opening with conventional sentiments, close with surprising reversals:

And me to see
as strange ye be,
as thowe bat ye
shuld nowe deny,
or else possesse
bat nobylnes
To be dochess
of grete Savoy.

But sythe bat ye
So strange wylbe
As toward me,
& wyll not medyll,
I trust, percase,
to fynde some grace
to haue free chayse,
& spede as welle!
(XIV-XV, #137, p. 139)

It is interesting that the poet has used two rhymes in each of the first two stanzas (aaabaaab; aaacaaac) but three rhymes in the last two stanzas (dddaeeea; ddfgggf), and while the same rhyme (d) is used to link the conventional lines of the final two stanzas (as the a rhyme is used in the first two stanzas), entirely new rhymes are employed for the lines of contrasting sentiments. It appears that the poet has made
an attempt to reinforce his change of tone with an incongruous rhyme scheme, while maintaining to some extent the linking rhyme characteristic of the virelay.

Another convention which is common in laments of unrequited lovers is the comparison of the lover, frustrated in love, to his contrary, the plants and, especially, animals who woo according to natural instinct. This convention was mentioned in the discussion of "Alysoun," in which the poet alludes to the mating of be lutel foul. The convention is central to the following two laments. Index 864, "Foweles in pes frith," one of the earliest surviving Middle English lyrics, seems to be structurally based on the contraries of natural fulfillment in animal life and unrequited love in human life:

Douce MS. 139
Foweles in pes frith,
Pes fisses in pes flod,
And i mon waxe wod.
Mulch sorw I walke with
for beste of bon and blod.
(XIII, #8, p. 14)

The contrast set up in the poem between the animals, in their natural state, and man, not in his natural state of reason but becoming mad, is emphasized in several artful ways. The first two lines, which refer to the animals, are linked by common alliteration (f), while the following two lines, which refer to the poet, are linked by separate alliteration (w); the lines referring to the animals have only two strong stresses, while those contrasting the poet's state have three. The cheerful, almost sing-song, meter of the first two lines changes abruptly in the third line, due to the added stressed and unstressed syllables, a change which seems to convey a note of sadness, partly
suggested by the predominant use of open vowels and alliteration with
w. (The same effect with w alliteration and open vowels is noted in
the sorrowful sections of "Alysoun." ) The first strong stress in the
third line is probably to be placed on i, which again emphasizes the
contrast which has been set up (the emphasis might be placed on mon;
however, considerations of alternating weak and strong stress and the
fact that nouns and pronouns are normally stressed more strongly than
auxiliary verbs in the English language indicates the strong stress
should be placed on i).

The abbreviated form of the lyric permits many interpretations.
No reference to the mating of foweles and fisses is made; that they are
in their natural habitat alone is noted. But associations with Spring,
fertility, and mating are so strong in poetic openings which mention
foweles, especially when man and his sorrows follow, that the reader
(or listener) may naturally bring these associations to an interpreta-
tion. Both for and beste have multiple meanings. For, among other
things, may be used in the following senses: (1) because of; (2) by
means of or through; (3) for the sake of, or for the life of, or in
honor of; (4) in memory of; (5) in order to obtain; (6) in exchange for;
(7) appropriate to a state or condition. Beste may be understood as
(1) the superlative of good used as a noun; (2) a member of the animal
kingdom, beast, which may denote any being or creature, any creature
below man on a scale of being, or either of these with connotations of
brutishness, wickedness, ignorance, or crudity. Thus the last two
lines might be paraphrased in several different ways: "For the beast of
bone and blood that I am, I walk with much sorrow" (this reading makes
more explicit the comparison with the fowl and fish); or "For the best or highest of species, I walk with much sorrow" (making an ironic contrast with the fowl and fish); or "I walk with much sorrow on account of (because of, for the sake of, in order to obtain, in memory of, in honor of, in exchange for) the best of bone and blood (or for a beast, possibly with derogatory connotations, of bone and blood)."

Several situations might be the inspiration for the lyric: the death of a loved one, the cruelty of a loved one, a courtly test of the lover, rejection by the beloved. A situation of unrequited love is perhaps the most likely for three reasons: the contrast between nature and man which is so common in love poetry, especially complaints of the languishing lover, the occurrence of the phrase bon and blod which describes the best or beast, a phrase which is often used in the description of lemmans, and the use of the phrase waxe wod.

Wod in the poem means mad or senseless and brings into play the contrast of the animals and man: animals, which follow their natures, and man who is losing the unique element of his nature, reason. There is the remote possibility of a latent pun on wod (mad) and wode (forest) suggested by the use of wod in close conjunction with walke. Walke is used both with wod and wode in Middle English love poetry. The unrequited lover often flees to the wood or "walks the wood," seemingly a metaphorical representation of wodnes (madness), the loss of all his joy, and in courtly poetry perhaps a return to the wild and bestial after the loss of the ennobling effects of love. In Index 1333, for example, a banished lover announces, "I must go walke be woed so wyld, / & wonder here & there / in dred & dedly ffare" (ll. 1-3); the metaphorical
nature of the flight is made clear in the line "as on ffom Ioye were fled" (1. 13). Walke is used in conjunction with wod in a debate which will be considered in section C of this chapter: "pat y wene to walke wod zef hit [sorewe] me lengore laste" (Index 2236, 1. 6). In "Foweles in þe frith" if the wood is called to mind in line three it may be with good or evil connotations, the natural state where all is in harmony (as suggested by the first two lines of the poem) or the state of wilderness and joylessness (as suggested in line four of this poem, and in other poems such as Index 1333). 39

That wode, meaning forest, has two contrasting connotations in Middle English poetry (bestial and idyllic) is also suggested by its use in Index 1333, "I must go walke þe wæd so wyld." The poet indicates that he will walk in dread and deadly fear, but in the same poem he paints a somewhat pastoral scene: "my bed schall be under þe grenwod tre" (1. 11), and "The Ronnyng stremes shall be my drynke, / acorns schalbe m y ffode" (11. 16-17). The contrasting connotations of wode (and its similarity to wod, mad) permit a double reading of a poem preserved in the Harley MS (Index 1861, Appendix), "Lenten ys come wîþ loue to toune," which has generally been regarded as simply a lover's lament.

The first twenty-one lines of the poem describe the joys of Spring, including the blossoming of flowers and plants (the rose, leaves, lillies, daisies, woodrull, fennel, wild thyme), the mating of wild drakes and other animals, and the warbling of birds (the nightingale and thrush), so joyfully that "al þe wode ryngeb" (1. 12). It is not until
the end of the second stanza (two-thirds of the way through the poem) that the poet makes the expected comparison between the rejoicing of nature and the sorrowing of man "for loue bat likes ille" (l. 24).

(It is possible that the poet makes an implicit comparison in the first line. The opening lines occur in a thirteenth-century poem [Index 3222] with only the first word changed: Somer is used instead of Lenten. It seems possible that the poet has substituted Lenten, the Old English term for Spring, specifically because it carries connotations of suffering and self-denial, which is what love brings to toune in contrast to love in the woods.)

Because of its length and detail, the description of nature in Springtime in this poem is unique. The first half of the third stanza is more general in its description (mentioning simply birds and animals) than are the first two stanzas, being almost a review in general terms of the particulars which have preceded (the only new elements mentioned are the sun and the dew). Thus line thirty, "wormes wowe| vnder cloude," is somewhat surprising, both because it is a particular (as opposed to general) example, and because worms are not elsewhere included in idyllic Spring scenes. That worms' activities are to be specifically compared to women's is strongly suggested by the fact that women are first mentioned in the very next line, the two words (and lines) alliterate, the lines rhyme, and they have the same basic syntactical pattern: subject, verb, adverb or adjective; the words corresponding in each line have the same number of syllables, and not only do cloude and proude rhyme, but one line seems the echo of the other:
wormes woswep vnder cloude,
wynmen waxep wounder proude (11. 31-32)

The poet might be implying that since even worms are wooing, women (who
are no better) should do the same. But interpretation of the poem as
either a traditional lament or as an ironic reversal hinges on the last
two lines, especially on the word wode (used as woods in line twelve):

jeffe me shal wonte wille of on
his wunne weole y wole forgon
ant wyht in wode be fleme.

If the lover lacks the will of a woman he will forego this joy of joys
and become a fugitive in the wild woods (or in madness); or, with
wunne weole understood ironically, the lover may simply forego the
proud woman and find his happiness in the pleasures of nature which he
has so carefully and beautifully described in the body of the poem.40

In the three parts of the second section on poems about love,
which includes analyses of the three subgenres of lovers' complaints,
we have noted that love is sometimes portrayed as a logical paradox,
containing both joy and woe simultaneously, and that sometimes this
paradox is resolved—joy is portrayed as following woe, especially in
the complaints for mercy, or woe is presented as the sequel to joy,
especially in laments of the lover who must be separated from the be­
loved, or in laments of the unrequited or jilted lover. Love is gener­
ally defined or celebrated, however, by means of logically or judg­
mentally paradoxical conventions, those which are directly related to
love, and those which are more closely related to the lady or to the
lover. A logically paradoxical convention related specifically to
mutual love is the exchange of hearts. A judgmental paradox which
defines the love relationship is that while the lover is the lady's
perfect friend, she is his foe. Judgmentally paradoxical conventions
are more frequently used to describe the effects of love on the lover
and logically paradoxical conventions are commonly used to describe the
lady and her power (the object of love is as paradoxical as love it-
self). The lady, for example, is frequently described as both cause
and cure of the poet's suffering and she is said to have power over the
poet's life and death. Judgmental paradoxes define the lover's plight
(actually, the effects of the passion of love); he cannot eat or sleep,
he seeks what cannot be had, he is content to suffer, he must become a
rover in the wild woods, he must not make his love known. In one
poem, however, the poet describes the effects of love as a logical
paradox: his heart is said to be beaten by heat of cold and cold of heat.

Contraries, not in paradoxical relationship, are less frequently
used to describe the lover. In some poems, however, he is contrasted
to other men (not in love) or to beasts of nature who are uninhibited
in their love. The lady may be described in language and excessive
praises which might occur in poems to the Blessed Mother. (This use of
contraries, however, is more common in panegyrics addressed to the lady,
sometimes included in a farewell poem, than it is in complaints.41)

Some judgmental paradoxes associated with love are resolved in the
mock forms discussed (for example, one poet eats and drinks when he
thinks of his lady). These mock forms may be said to be characterized
by contraries in form or structure since they combine both traditional
genre forms and conventions with the reversal of these (the form of a
complaint with a resolution of some of the traditional paradoxes or a
reversal of other traditional characteristics associated with the genre form). Contraries in form or structure are characteristic of other poems as well. Word-play, based on contraries existing within a word, was noted in two poems in particular (Index 3271, the heart poem, and Index 521, "Bryd one brere"). The possibility of two or more contradictory readings exists in several poems (Index 3722, 1334, 2141, 864, 1333). A unity by contraries also exists in Index 3879, "Welcome be ze when ze goo," in which one line or part of a line contradicts the preceding line or part of a line. Tone contradicts the literal expression in Index 3534, which is characterized by the refrain, "Be trew, lady, for I you truste." And the Harley lyrics considered in the first subsection of this section are characterized by a unity of the contraries of courtly and noncourtly poetic elements.

C. Love Fulfilled

In concluding this first major division of the chapter, whose subject is love, three poems may be mentioned whose subject is love, but not the effect of unrequited love (as in the complaints) and not the nature of love itself (as in the definitions): Index 2236, "My dep y loue" (a débat), Index 1449, "In a fryht as y con fare fremede" (a pastourelle), and Index 1303, "I haue a zong suster" (a riddling poem). The subject of the three poems considered in this sections is love fulfilled. Contraries and paradox do not function in the same way in these poems as they do in the poems previously considered; that is, they do not define love as a paradox, either directly (as in the definitions), or indirectly (as through the courtly conventions associated with love,
the lady, and the lover in the courtly complaints). Love is defined in
the following poems as nonparadoxical and naturally to be fulfilled,
a noncourtly or popular point of view on love.

The poems which have been analyzed and discussed to this point in
the chapter (aside from the definitions of love) have for the most
part been laments, or songs, or chansons d'amour, as they would be
termed according to the genres of French courtly love poetry. Of the
many genres identified in medieval French love lyrics the chanson is
the only genre well-represented in Middle English lyric poetry. Only
one pure pastourelle survives, in Harley MS. 2253, "In a fryht as y con
fare fremede" (Index 1449, Appendix); and one chanson d'aventure from
the late thirteenth century is preserved in Lincoln's Inn MS. Hale
135, "No[u] spri[nke]s the sprai" (Index 360). These genres, though
cultivated in France for and by the aristocracy, are in general not as
courtly as the chansons, since a noncourtly point of view concerning
love is represented, sometimes alongside a courtly one, especially in
the pastourelle. Another poem which presents both the courtly and
noncourtly perspectives on love is "My de[p] y loue" (Index 2236, Appen-
dix), preserved in the Harley MS. It seems to be related to the French
genre of the débat amoureux, but also contains elements of the
pastourelle (courtly suitor; noncourtly maiden who is the object of the
suit; allusion to the family of the maiden and the dangers of love;
resistance, at least initially, on the part of the maiden).

Both the pastourelle "In a fryht" and the débat "My de[p] y loue"
are actually mock-debates. They purport to be rational presentations of
two contrary points of view (the courtly which urges an illicit love liaison, and the noncourtly which presents the commonsense arguments against it). According to all rules of logic, the commonsense position should triumph (which it does in some French examples of the type—with the help of the father of the maiden); but in the English pastourelle and débat both sides argue equally well (or poorly), and it seems that a logically insoluble problem is the result; finally, the whole problem is simply brushed aside (the ultimate satire on the logical disputation) and a third argument settles the question.

In the pastourelle, "In a fryght," the third argument which settles the debate is rather no argument at all, and it contains, in addition, a misuse of authority. The maiden's decision to succumb is based partly on the sudden reflection that it is better "to cusse ant to cluppe" a comely one in fine clothes than to be bound by marriage to a wife-beater (ll. 37-40)—not at all the alternative she is facing. The decision is also based partly on the remembrance, which seems to echo authority, "bat God hæp shaped mey non atluppe" (l. 44). This argument dispenses with free will and ironically echoes the marriage vows. But the most persuasive reflection seems to be: "ych am a maide, bat me ofbuncheþ; / luef me were gome boute gyle" (ll. 47-48); yet the guilelessness of the suitor certainly has not been demonstrated in the course of the debate, which makes the reader wonder about the maidenhood of the feyr fenge (l. 2).

The arguments put forth by both sides in the débat, "My deþ y loue!," are even more interesting in the context of this chapter because, in the first part of the poem, the suitor presents all the laments of
the courtly lovers as seen in the genre of the complaint for mercy. He is in the position in which he loves death and hates life, a judgmental paradox (1. 1); he sorrows and sighs but may be brought out of his woe "al wip a word" (1. 7); he asks for pity (1. 13) indicating that the lady's decision will be either the cause of his life or of his death, a logical paradox (11. 15-16); he indicates that love has brought him from joy to woe: "Ich am al so sory mon so ich was whylen blythe" (1. 22). Up to this point the maiden seemingly pays no attention to the courtly arguments, and she presents the commonsense observation that the clerk is acting like a fool, and that if he is caught in her bower he will be shamed (stanza three); later, now convinced that the lover is a fool, the maid argues that he will be dead for sure (not dying of love) if her father and family catch him in her bower (stanza five). A change of tone occurs in the poem after the clerk mentions that "In a wyndou þer we stod we custe vs fyfty syþe" (1. 23). This remembrance weakens the maiden who admits loving a clerk (the same one?); and when the clerk asserts that he can no longer endure the love wounds (a non-courtly sentiment) the maiden succumbs: "þat y nam þyn ant þou art myn, to don al þi wille" (1. 36). Her resignation to the lover is, of course, the reverse of the courtly situation in which the lover is totally at the will of his lady. As in the pastourelle, rational argument has no force here; it is the remembrance of some of the physical joys of love which finally removes all obstacles. Common sense loses out, but the courtly love ritual does too (with its ever-longing lover). Both the pastourelle and débat are humorous but wise comments on the
ineffectuality of reason, common sense, and ritual to deal with the passion of love.

The view of love underlying the two poems just considered, though they are written within courtly genres, is a popular one: love (generally cupiditas) is a natural human emotion, not necessarily noble or ennobling, which ultimately finds (or should find) satisfaction. This same view is expressed in one of the most often printed and well-known of the popular lyrics, "I haue a zong suster" (Index 1303, Appendix), which employs apparent paradox in a light-hearted manner, but for a more serious purpose also: to explain the nature of love, not as presented in the conventions of the formal love lyrics, but as seen by ordinary lovers.

Paradoxes similar and even identical to those which form the basis of the poem (cherry without a stone, dove without a bone, briar without a branch) are found in more recent pieces: "Lord Roslin's Daughter," printed in an early nineteenth-century chapbook, and "The Four Sisters," collected from oral tradition in the north of England in the early nineteenth century. In "Lord Roslin's Daughter" the paradoxes are presumed to be (but do not turn out to be) impossible requests which the daughter makes of her suitor before she will agree to marry him, and thus are related to the folklore motives of the chaste woman's promise (M 261) and "never" (Z 61), familiar from Chaucer's Franklin's Tale. In "The Four Sisters" the paradoxes stand alone in a simple riddling poem. Only in the Middle English lyric is their solution related to some understanding of the nature of love.
Love without longing would seem to be an impossibility, a paradox, according to the definitions of love: "loue is longinge," in the Digby definition (l. 19); and an "instynguyble brennyng" and "grete hungre ynsaciat" in the Copenhagen MS. definition (ll. 3-4). The parallelism and repetition in "I haue a zong suster" both in the love-token section (stanzas two and three: "che sente . . . with-outyn . . ." repeated without essential change four times) and in the question section ("how xuld . . . be with-oute . . ." repeated four times) lead the reader to expect the same in the final answer section. Each of the paradoxes is solved by distinguishing an embryonic state from a mature state, but there is a reversal in the solution of the love-without-longing paradox, and this new emphasis is reinforced by a change of the syntactical parallelism which has been carefully maintained throughout the lyric. Love is found to be without longing not in its embryonic state (a solution which would be in keeping with the stylized and courtly conceptions of love) but in its fully mature state, when the lover is in full possession of what he loves. The solution to the paradox is in keeping with the popular ideas on love, reflected in the few nonformal remnants of Middle English love poetry, in which the lovers generally possess what they love.

The popular character of the lyric is possibly also revealed in the choice of the feminine pronoun in the last two lines, which may indicate that the speaker of the poem (I) is feminine (lovers in formal love lyrics are overwhelmingly male). In this event lemman (l. 19) is masculine, suster of line one would have to be understood as sister or
friend, and the last lines may be understood to be spoken by the receiver of the love tokens (I), by her sister or friend, by the male lemmam, or by some neutral third party who interprets the love-tokens (stanzas six and seven) for the receiver, who asks what they mean (stanzas four and five). However, the poem could just as well be read as the narration of a male lover (I): Suster could denote either a sister or the lemmam herself, and the last lines could be understood as spoken (1) by the male lover, properly explaining the sister's or lemmam's message about love longing—which would be appropriate in sentiment to the eager female lovers of popular love poetry, or improperly, perhaps eagerly giving her request (1. 12) an interpretation she herself might vehemently oppose; (2) by the lemmam or sister, personally interpreting the love-tokens; or (3) by an outside third party. Thus seemingly innumerable interpretations of this superficially simple and repetitive lyric are permitted by the break in parallelism in the last two lines, by the ambiguity of suster (1. 1), by the nonspecific gender of lemmam, by the structure of the poem which could admit one or two speakers (female narrator with a sister and male lemmam; male narrator with a sister and female lemmam; male narrator and female lemmam who is the suster; narrator of either sex and a third party to ask the questions in stanzas four and five or to provide the answers in stanzas six and seven; male or female narrator and the suster or sender who interprets her own gifts, etc.), and by the suitability of the last two lines (in fact, the entire last two stanzas) to either suster, lemmam, narrator, or third party.
II. Women

In this part of the chapter a few poems will be discussed whose subject is woman's nature, or women in general, and whose authors have made use of contraries and paradoxes in exploring the subject. The first section includes attacks on women, many of which are notable for unity by contraries or for use of impossibilia. The second section discusses a few lyrics which display an ambivalent attitude toward women, praise mingled with blame or blame with praise. Underlying these poems is a conception of woman's nature as paradoxical: good yet at the same time evil (and one never clearly overshadowing the other). F. L. Utley in The Crooked Rib finds that this view of women underlies many of the poems written in the courtly tradition: "The simultaneous view that women are merciless and full of pity, that they bring a man to honor and bring him to his doom, that they should be revered and reviled—these paradoxes are the very essence of the courtly tradition. Codify it men might try, but the war went on within the frame."45 The tensions within the poems in the second section of the second part of this chapter are similar to those noted in some of the definitions of love which displayed both rejection and desire, and to the tension found in the courtly complaint with the refrain, "Be trew, lady, for I you truste" (Index 3534).

A. Women Blamed

The dispraise of women which is found in the Middle English anonymous lyrics is often based on a facet of female nature as analyzed by the lyricists which is itself defined by contraries. This facet is
called doubleness, translated, duplicity, deceitfulness, treachery. The term doubleness, however, most aptly represents the fact that contraries are used to define this (supposedly) typical female trait. Doubleness signifies lack of stability (analogous to fortune, the nature of this life), a general tendency to be true one minute and false the next, or first here, then away (alternating contraries, obviously not paradoxical). Doubleness, however, also seems to be used by the lyricists to designate a trait whereby women may be sweet or beautiful on the outside (or bodily), but bitter and ugly on the inside (emotionally or mentally). One lyricist compares women to an apple, green and good on the outside but rotten at the core (Index *5). The disparity between inside and outside becomes a topos in the poems of dispraise of women. It is superficially similar to the appearance-reality logical paradox mentioned in the Introduction which operates, for example, in poems about the Eucharist (which is the body of Christ under the appearance of bread). The inside-outside topos, however, is not a logical paradox since the lyricists make a point of noting that the outside is not real, it is a fantasy. The only true nature of women is the inside nature.

Both aspects of the doubleness of women are central to Index 1944, "Loke well about, ye that louers be" (Appendix). The danger of the outside of women is reinforced in the poem primarily through the repetition of the refrain, "Beware, therefore: the blynde eteth many a fly," which implies that the sighted man should not be deceived. The first stanza of the poem makes clear, however, that the eye can deceive: Samson and Solomon were deceived because they deemed it right which
they saw through their eyes. Each of the central four stanzas of the poem points out the discrepancy between the inside and outside. In stanza two, for example, the poet declares, "The feyrest owtward well can they peynt," but, they "Feyne frendlynes & worchen treson." In the third stanza the poet cautions, "'Al ys nat gold that shynth!' Men, take hede— / Theyre gall ys hyd vndyr sugryd wede." In the fourth stanza women are said to "Lawgh and loue nat." The outside is particularly called fantasy (1. 27); and the conscious nature of the ruse (vs. a natural paradoxicality in women's nature) is emphasized in the lyric by such terms as treson (1. 12), deseyte (1. 30), and trechery (1. 41).

The term dowbylnesse is used in stanza four, in conjunction with both the inside-outside topos and with the lack of stability (alternating contraries) in women's nature:

Though all the world do his besy cure  
To make wemen stond in stabylnesse,  
Hit woll nat be, hit ys agayn nature;  
The world ys do when they lak dowbylnesse;  
ffor they can lawgh and loue nat—thys ys expresse.  
(11. 22-26)

The alternating contraries in women's nature are brought out in stanza two, where the poet states that they are "chaungeabyll naturally" and that "Theyre stedfastnes endureth but a season."

Women's doubleness, in the sense of lack of stability, is the subject of a twelve-stanza poem with envoy, once attributed to Lydgate, Index 3656, "This worlde is ful of variaunce," which is especially interesting for its unity by contraries. The method of the first half of the poem is ostensibly one of alternation of contraries: the poet
devotes each stanza to a supposed contrast between women and one of the following: flowers, the moon, the wind, the sea, and fortune—which, of course, are constantly changing. Women are said to be devoid of all doubleness or variance. The sixth stanza is typical of those in the first part of the poem:

Fortunes whele gooth rounde about
A thousande tymes, day and nyght,
Whos course stondeth euer in doute,
For to transmewe, she ys so lyght;
For which aduertyth in your syght
The vntrust of worldly fikelnnesse,—
Saue women which, of kyndely ryght,
Ne haue no tachche of doublenesse.

(11. 41-48)

(Note the use of day and night as a circumlocution for always.) In the context of the other poems against women, and of later stanzas of the poem itself in which Delilah and Cleopatra are used as types of the true woman, the irony of the verses is obvious.

Another ironic defense of women, "In euery place ye may well see" (Index 1485), though its theme is not limited to doubleness, may be mentioned here because its method is actually, rather than ostensibly, one of contraries. Each of the ten stanzas is an overstated defense of women, but each is countered by the two line refrain, which itself contains the contraries of praise and blame: "Of all creatures women be best / Cuius contrarium verum est." Even without the refrain, however, the irony of the piece is easily recognized since each defense is an exaggerated denial of a fault long associated with the type of the stupid, proud, or fickle woman. Stanza four, for example, praises woman's ability to keep a secret:
For, tell a woman all your cowsayle,
And she can kepe it wonderly well;
She had never go quyk to hell
Than to her neyghbour she wold it tell.
Of all creatures women be best,
Cuius contrarium verum est.

(EEC, #339, 11. 9-12, p. 266)

The rhetorical device used in both of these poems, the pseudo-Lydgate Index 3654 and the "Cuius contrarium" poem (Index 1485), is *antiphrasis*. The pseudo-Lydgate poem is titled in the MS, "a balade made by Lydgate of wemen for desperte and game per Antyfrasim."47

Another poem in dispraise of women characterized by unity by contraries is Index 1593, a punctuation poem, which anticipates the more familiar use of the device in Ralph Roister Doister. Index 1593 is ostensibly a defense of women if read according to the syntactical junctures which correspond to poetic line lengths, but it contains two contrary readings. The poem is an extreme example of form corresponding to theme considering the nature of its subject matter, especially the outside-inside doubleness topos which is brought to mind by the use of the term *treasone* in the poem. The punctuation is that of the MS, which facilitates recognition of the supposedly hidden meaning:

Cambridge Univ. MS. Hh. 2.6
In women is rest peas and pacience.
No season. for-soth outht of charite.
Bothe be nyght & day. thei haue confidence.
All wey of treason. Owt of blame thei be.

No tyme as men say. Mutabilite.
They haue without nay. but stedfastnes.
In theym may ye neuer fynde y gesse. cruelte
Such condicons they haue more & lesse.
(XIV-XV, #112, p. 102)

Index 232, a longer punctuation poem on women included in the Appendix,
is preserved in four MSS, which perhaps indicates the popularity of such puzzle-like poems, which, in this case, not only provide the satisfaction of attacks on women, but add to the supposed humor by masquerading, very obviously, as defenses.

In other poems *impossibilia* are used in circumlocution with *when* to indicate that women will never lack doubleness. A poem with the refrain "Than put in a woman your trust & confidens" (Index 3999) is composed entirely of such logical paradoxes. The poem is preserved in three versions, which attests to its popularity: one seven-stanza version in a minstrel collection, MS. Eng. poet. e. I (this version in carol form with a burden probably composed and added later to an original version), a four-stanza version in a commonplace book (Balliol Coll. Oxford MS. 354), and a five-stanza version in a sixteenth-century hand written on the last two pages of a book printed by Wynkyn de Worde in 1495 (B.M. printed book I B. 55242). Some stanzas refer to reversals in the plant world, others to reversals in the animal kingdom; the first two stanzas of the Balliol College version demonstrate both types:

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Whan netilles in wynter bere Rosis rede,
& thornys bere figges naturally,
& bromes bere appylyles in every mede,
& lorelles bere cheris in be croppis so hie,
& okys bere dates so plentvosly,
and lekes geve hony in her superfluens--
Than put in a woman your trust & confidens.

Whan whityng walk in forestes hartes for to chase,
& herynges in parkys hornys boldly blowe,
& flownders more-hennes in fennes embrace,
& gornardes shote rolyons owt of a crosse bowe,
& grengese Ride in huntyng be wolf to ouer-throwe,
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& sperlynges Rone with speris in harnes to defence—
Than put in a woman your trust & confidence.
(XIV-XV, #114, ll. 1-14, p. 103)\(^{51}\)

Such impossabilia are also included in a fragmentary debate of the second half of the fifteenth century (Index *5) between a clerk in love and a nightingale who warns of the duplicity of women. When the clerk asks how he can know true and good women, the nightingale replies:

Clerk, ylk trew woman hath vpon,
With-owt any lesyng,
A robbe of grey marbyl ston,
And of gret cumpasyng.

Ylk a woman pat ys good
May doe gret merveyle:
A-reche be sky with hur fote
With-owtyn any fayle;

And zyt sche do, be lady good,
With her rokkes gore
Sche may spred all ynglonde—
Schyp, sayle, & eke ore.

They schul be god wan god ys dede,
And afterward maad all new.
Now take, clerk, thi best rede,
ffor women schul neuer be trewe.
(XIV-XV, #180, ll. 39-54, p. 178)

The "when . . ." formula of Index 3999 is used in the last quatrain, but variety is introduced in the first three stanzas with "a true woman has . . ." and "a true woman may do . . . ." It is interesting that one of the impossible signs is referred to here as a merveyle, one of the two terms used in Middle English, very frequently in religious lyrics, to designate paradox (as mentioned in the Introduction).
B. Women: Blamed and Praised

I have not found any anonymous Middle English lyrics whose subject is women rather than love in general which deal directly and clearly with the paradox that while men condemn women they are at the same time drawn to them, or, at least, fascinated by the doubleness which they find in the female nature. (As poetic evidence of the existence of such a paradox note the reputation of Middle English poets as both writers of misogynous verse and prolific writers of courtly praises of the lady.) There are, however, a few poems, notably the debates, which both praise and blame women, in which praise and blame exist simultaneously and unresolved.52

In the thirteenth-century debate (Index 3222) on the wele and wo of women (1. 8), a thrush takes the con position and a nightingale takes the pro. The thrush first brings up the doubleness of woman's nature (inside-outside and mutability). He notes, for example, "dry hy ben milde of chere, / Hoe bef eikele and fals to fonde" (11. 21-22); and, later, "Hy befe ir e and brizt on hewe, / Here {>out is fals , and ountrewe" (11. 39-40). When these arguments fail to impress the nightingale, the thrush, in separate attacks, draws attention to various examples: Adam, Gawain, Constantine's queen, Eve, Samson. The thrush is filled with information and evidence to prove his point. The nightingale, on the other hand, simply repeats one argument in different words: that women are full of courtesy, meek, mild, and sweet, especially when they are being loved. He states, for example:
Hy beþ of herte meke and milde,
Hem-self hy cunne from shome shilde
Wipinne bourses wowe,
And swelloust þing in armes to wre
þe mon þat holdeþ hem in gle.
(XIII, #52, 11. 55-59, p. 103)

The same sentiments are repeated in lines 76-81, and 123-24. The
nightingale obviously considers that his defense is not weakened by any
of the arguments put forth by the thrush.

Finally, the nightingale rebukes the thrush's insults to women by
recalling that all men are brought to grace through the Blessed
Mother. This prompts the thrush immediately to declare:

I suge þat icham overcome
þoru hire þat bar þat holi sone,
þat soffrede wundes fliue.
Hi sweri bi his holi name
Ne shal I neuere suggen shame
Bi maidness ne bi wiue.
(11. 184-89)

It is important to note that even though the thrush demurs out of
respect to the Blessed Mother, he does not withdraw any of the arguments
he has brought forth against women; nor does the nightingale give in to
the thrush, or even consider his position diminished by the thrush's
examples. Thus both the praise and dispraise of women retain equal
force in the poem.

A fifteenth-century debate between a clerk and a nightingale
(Index 1452) breaks off after about a hundred lines, so it is impossi-
ble to determine the outcome of the dispute. The nightingale (a
female) is the antagonist in the poem. She uses the argument of the
doubleness of women (inside-outside) but, interestingly, she may sug-
gest by her use of the term wonder that this makes woman a paradox:
A woman is a wonder thyng,
bow sho be fayre & stille,
She nys trwe to knyzt nor kyng;
clerk, to be she nylle.
(XIV-XV, #179, 11. 29-32, p. 173)

In keeping with the possible conception of woman's doubleness as para-
doxical (rather than two fronts consciously cultivated from time to
time), the nightingale avoids such terms as deceit, treason, and
treachery, which were noted in other poems. The condemnation of women
is also somewhat muted by the nightingale's admission that women were
indeed made to help man but that 'alle wymmen ar mysse-went' (1. 97).
The clerk argues more forcefully in woman's favor than does the
nightingale of the thirteenth-century debate, but his nightingale oppo-
ponent counters every argument, even the example of Mary (whom the night-
ingale finds not representative of women in general). The clerk
devotes several arguments to women's fairness and ability to be 'bote
of alle bale' (11. 35-36, 47-48, 66-67, 69-72), but his fails to con-
vince the moralistic nightingale who remembers that Christ was sold to
the Jews with a kiss. Even as the debate breaks off, however, the
clerk seems prepared with another defense of women: 'Nyztyngale, þou
gabbist me, / and þat is shame thyn . . . .'

The final eighty-six lines survive of still another fifteenth-
century debate on women (Index *5). We have already noted two sections
of this poem: the nightingale's comparison of women to a green apple,
rotten at the core (made to counter the clerk's argument that women are
'Bryght & schene, myld of mode / Off dedys good & hend--' [11. 15-16]);
and the nightingale's impossible signs of a good woman. The outside-
inside of woman's nature is considered in this poem to be a conscious
device used by women, as indicated by the use of guile twice in the
fragment (11. 5, 10). In the section which survives the clerk-
defender's only argument is women's brightness, mildness, and good
deeds (perhaps to be loosely interpreted). After the nightingale's
impossible signs of the good woman the clerk becomes angry and
declares: "The to smyte I ame prest; / Hens, but þat þow be goyng!"
(ll. 61-62). This brings the debate to a sudden close but the resolu-
tion is balanced between the nightingale's attraction to and revul-
sion from women. He admits the goodness of women (whatever happens
afterward) but also warns that they bring men to scorn:

Nay, clerk for thi curtesy,
Mys-doe thow me ryght noght.
I wold theym preyse by & by,
I wyle chaunge my thought.

I preyse women þat be good,
What afterward be-fall;
They be full of curtesy & mood,
In bowre & eke in hall.

Louve where thy ert may be-happe,
What-so-euer sche be;
And sche schal make a glasyn cappe,
And to skorn lawth the.
(11. 67-82)

The love-sick clerk has the last word in a fifteenth-century de-
bate between clerk and husbandman (Index 344), notable for its attempt
to fit language and arguments to speaker. The clerk's refrain, "Quia
amore languio" is the refrain of the earlier and familiar mystical
poems;53 its formal language and poetic associations contrast markedly
with the refrain of the husbandman: "Bot turn vp hyr haltur and let hyr
"goe," which was perhaps proverbial (it occurs in almost identical form in Index 1938, a minstrel song), and is obviously colloquial. In keeping with the refrains and the occupations of the debaters, the arguments of the clerk are more formal and philosophical: he must love that which loves him, God made woman for man's relief, thus it would be against her nature to do him mischief. Those of the husbandman are ostensibly derived from his experience and from common sense: "hyt ys nat all tru bat peryth in glasse / Women can shaw a dowbull face" (the outside-inside topos, stanza four). The husbandman also notes the other aspect of women's doubleness, their variance, in stanza six. Though the clerk is more articulate and has the last word, the settlement of the question is still open:

The clerk vsward & sayd, 'in bokys I fynde
That gode made woman for manny relefe,
Then schoe ys turnid all agayns kynde
zerf schoe be cause of mannys myschefe;
 Ther-for reherse no such myspreue,
 ffor wethur þou tell me treuth or noe,
Thou schalte nott make me myse-beleue,
 Quia amore languio!'
(XIV-XV, #181, 11. 49-56, p. 181)

The clerk's words are carefully chosen. He does not deny that women are cause of man's mischief, but he says it would be paradoxical (agaynys kynde) if they were. But regardless of any proof the husbandman may advance, the clerk will continue to love. Whether the proofs be true or false, the clerk continues to be drawn to women and to languish in love.

One final lyric may be considered, from the Harley MS, in which elements of the defense of women may be turned to the case for the prosecution. "In may hit murgeþ when it dawes" (Index 1504, Appendix),
which is praised by G. L. Brook as one of the few poems in Middle English which shows sympathy with the young girl's point of view,\textsuperscript{55} is ostensibly a simple defense of the truth of women, which puts the blame for any treachery or untruth on outside trichour(s). The poem begins and ends with references to the poet's own mistress, of which Brook notes: "A further point of interest in the lyric is that side by side with the warning against betrayers it contains allusions to the poet's own mistress, and appeals to her to be favourable to him."\textsuperscript{56}

More accurately, the poet indicates that his lores could bring about a reconciliation between him and his mistress (ll. 45-48). It is possible that over and above being a "point of interest," these references suggest other readings for the poem, for we must determine what relationship the lores expressed in the poem bear to a reconciliation.

Certain words, lines, and entire sections of the poem may be interpreted in more than one way. The other interpretations (not recognized by Brook) create an undertone of irony or even rakishness which may lead the reader to question the whole purpose of the "defense." The first stanza establishes the defender as a lover. It begins traditionally enough with references to Spring but the love scene and the ladies mentioned are not entirely idealized. The wylde wyhtes who woo (l. 5) are most obviously plants and animals, but the phrase may allude to men also. The poet makes a direct connection between the reproduction and fertility of the plant world and ladies by the reference to them as flowers only two lines following his description of the growing bloesmes. Though the poet couches it in general terms, his own desire to bind his lady in love is obvious in lines
seven through nine. (The use of the plural *ladies* and the generalized statement in these lines might be construed as indicating a wide experience among ladies on the part of the poet.)

In the second stanza the poet immediately casts doubt on his outspoken claim of the goodness of women (ll. 13-14) by tacking on an *if* clause (made all the more prominent by the fact that it forms the short line of the established metrical pattern) which may be interpreted in two ways: if many men—or many women—were not false. *Here* red to love when bidden may mean either woman's teaching or man's advice; and the ambiguity of gender in the third person plural pronoun again permits a double reading of line eighteen: the mercenary character of either men or women (or perhaps both) may be referred to. Lines eighteen through twenty-five permit several readings because of the ambiguity of *litt* (few), paralleling that of *feme* (l. 15), of *leue* which may mean love or believe, and of *tricherie* which may be man's or woman's. Thus the lines may be interpreted as being a general condemnation of men: "There are few men here to be believed, though men supposedly give their 'true truth,' because of men's treachery"; or, with a personal exception implied, "There are few men here to be believed (or loved), though some men (poet implied) do pledge true truth, all due to other men's treachery"; or, in condemnation of women (the ironic undertone), "Few women are to be believed, though men do pledge true truth, on account of women's treachery"; or, rakishly, "There are few women to love, though some men (including poet) pledge 'true' truth, on account of the treachery of some other men."
In the third stanza the swyke of the warning (l. 25) may be man in general, a particular man, the devil, or even the poet (as may trichour in l. 39); the fyke or flattery (l. 26) may aptly apply to this particular poem. Lines twenty-nine and thirty seem to undercut the sweeping generalizations which have been made in the poem, especially with reference to women (ll. 14-15, 17-38): the poet warns that so wide in the world is their (the deceivers') dwelling that in each town there is one, from "leycestre to Lounde," which is a narrow boundary indeed compared to all the west from Ireland to India (l. 12). The final warning in stanza three, "to late comeþ he zeynchar / when loue ou haþ ybounde" (ll. 35-36), echoes ironically and contrasts oddly with the poet's own praise and veiled desire in the first stanza: "Y not non so freoli flour / ase ledies tat bet þe bryht in bour / wit loue who mihte hem bynde" (ll. 7-9).

The generalized praise undercut by an if clause in the first lines of stanza four parallels the earlier construction in the opening of stanza two. As noted, trichour (l. 39) is ambiguous. Tahte (l. 39) is an unusual word choice since it implies the learning of treachery on the part of women; as a rhyming word it is given emphasis, as is lahte or seized (l. 45), another unusual word choice for any except the ironic poet, since it implies the lady's active part in determining what she must now live with. The poet's final words, an address to his lady in which he asserts that if she hears his lore they would be set at peace, raise the obvious and not easily answerable question, "What could the sentiments expressed have to do with a reconcilement?" Several suggestions may be made: the poet wants his lady to know that he forgives any
slips on her part (or does he?), blaming them not on her but on outside traitors; the poet warns the lady of outside traitors, asserting implicitly his own innocence (or does he?) perhaps because the lady is being deceived by such a traitor, or because she has accused the poet of treachery, or because she is simply wary and the poet wants to dispose of all doubts by being the first to bring up and warn against treachery and at the same time to praise women (perhaps ironically); the poet has been accused of denying women's truth and must now, in order to regain his lady's grace, write a poem in their praise, which he does (or does he) by blaming all untruth on deceivers (or does he?). No one interpretation is to be preferred; rather, the enjoyment of the poem rests on a recognition of its ambiguity. The poem is not a simple defense of woman's truth, nor is it a simple condemnation. From one viewpoint neither alternative is possible—-one contrary must be known through and with the other.

III. Miscellaneous

In this last part of the chapter poems are considered whose subjects are not, except perhaps remotely, love and women. But the authors of these poems have made extensive use of contraries and paradoxes, primarily for purposes of entertainment. Several types of poems are discussed: sexual double-entendre poems and riddles, lying songs, and mock-prescriptions.

Sexual double-entendre riddles are dependent first on two or more contrary connotations or denotations existing in one or more words (one of which must have a sexual reference, of course); and second on
the creation of an apparent paradox which is solved when all the possible meanings of words are understood. The following poem (Index 194) is a refined member of this genre:

MS. Rawlinson D. 913
Al nist by þe rose, rose—
al nist bi the rose i lay;
darf ich noust þe rose stele,
and zet ich bar þe flour away.
(XIV-XV, #17, p. 12)

The poem presents a logical puzzle or paradox: how can one bear away the flower but not steal the rose? The paradox is solved by understanding the terms used in the poem in a poetic sphere of discourse: rose is used figuratively and symbolically to denote the lady in Middle English poetry (and in poetry of other languages, of course, all inspired by the usage in the Roman de la Rose); and flower is used figuratively to mean virginity.

When the sexual connotations and denotations are removed from the poetic sphere of discourse the sexual double-entendre riddle is coarse. Six such riddles survive in the Cambridge University Library MS. Dd. 5.76, carefully transcribed on a flyleaf; three of the riddles have analogues in the Exeter Book. These riddles have two totally independent solutions—one sexual, one nonsexual (so does the rose riddle if we consider rose to mean rose bush and flour to mean rose bud). Actually, the sexual meaning is so obvious that the challenge lies in finding the nonsexual solution to the apparent paradox. One such riddle will serve as a representative example of this genre:

I haue a hole aboue my knee
& pricked yt was & pricked shalbe
& yet yt is not sore
& yet yt shalbe pricked more
The MS answer to the riddle is sheathe.

Among the few examples of popular secular poetry which have survived, several illustrate that a well-established genre of verses characterized by sexual double-entendre existed, of a type must less subtle and tasteful than "Al nist by pe rose," which relies on established poetic figurative language for its second sphere of discourse, one step removed from the colloquial or slang terms so commonly applied to sexual activities in the double-entendre poems. One such poem which is notable for its clever punning (Index 1302, Appendix) is often reprinted, but the editors have failed to explain the puns fully and to point out that the punning and double-entendre solve an apparent paradox which informs the poem: how could the grafting from an early pear tree fail to produce a pear genet, or early pear: "che seyd it was a per robert, / but non per Ionet" (ll. 23-24). "Per Ionet" not only refers to an early pear (jenneting, or genet, not listed by the O.E.D. until 1695!) but also to the name Jeannette (probably not to John as indicated by Robbins); this makes the contrast to Robert (female to male) more meaningful. But there may also be a pun intended on Robert, connecting it with the pear tree imagery: rob (earliest reference in the O.E.D. is 1578) is a fruit jelly, made by reducing the juice of a fruit by boiling and preserving it in sugar.

While the "real" meaning of the pear tree poem is obvious (and even noted explicitly in the poem, ll. 19-20), another poem of sexual double-entendre is more subtle, as evidenced by the fact that none of its editors have noted the possibility of a second reading of the poem;
surprisingly, it is almost universally recognized only as an analogue to a section of Chaucer's *Nun's Priest's Tale*. All of the descriptive phrases in "I haue a gentil cook" (Index 1299, Appendix), may, with imagination, be applied to a man. The *M.E.D.*, though it lists only two primary meanings for *cock* (the male of the common domestic fowl; the male of other birds), does list some instances of the figurative use of *cock* to mean a man, during the fifteenth century. The understanding of *cock* as a male lover might have been facilitated by the use of the term *bird* to signify either male or female lover, as lover, as noted in other lyrics. The *O.E.D.* indicates several instances of *cock* figuratively applied to men; for example, to one who arouses slumberers, so used by Chaucer of the Host in the *Canterbury Tales*, and perhaps used as such of the amorous cock in our lyric (1.3); or to the leader, chief, or head man (as in the phrase "cock of the walk"); or, colloquially, to one who fights with pluck and spirit, hence a familiar term of appreciation among the vulgar.

"Technical applications" according to the *O.E.D.* are also helpful in appreciating the double-entendre of the poem: *cock* can be used to mean a tap or spout for passing liquids through (so noted as early as 1481-90), and in an application "not admissible in polite speech or literature" derived from this technical use, also to indicate a male sexual organ (earliest reference, 1730-36). Thus *cock* in the sense of male lover (and maybe even as *cook*, a type in the period not the most desirable from the point of view of the upper classes), may also have a more specific or biologically localized meaning in the lyric, especially in the last stanza and last line, in which *myn ladyis chaumbyr* may be
understood as having either the immediate constituents my lady's chamber or my lady's chamber, chamber, of course, used figuratively. With these possible readings the speaker of the poem may be regarded as either male or female.67

A minstrel song which combines sexual double-entendre with apparent paradox (as seen in "Al nist by þe rose" and the pear tree poem) is Index 3864 (Appendix). The song is informed by a contrast between the wares of ordinary chapmen (perhaps even friars, who would claim supernatural powers for their relics) and those of the amorous minstrel.68 The apparent paradoxes, solved by the sexual implications, are introduced in stanzas three and four. The Ielyf (jelly)69 which can stand without feet and smite without hands recalls a quatrain (Index 1354) preserved in another minstrel collection, termed by Robbins a "riddling tag."70 While the enjoyment of solving the sexual puzzles of "We bern abowtyn non cattles skynnys" and the laughter occasioned by the solution explain the existence of its paradoxes, the purpose of the similar paradoxes of the "riddling tag" remains a mystery:

I saw iij hedles playen at a ball, 
an hanlas man served hem all, 
Whyll iij mothles men lay & low, 
ij j legles a-way hem drow. 
(XIV-XV, note 45, p. 241)

This "tag" may have been intended as a riddle, but I can find no solution to the logical paradoxes it proposes. For this reason I would call the poem a lying song, in a narrow definition of the term. Many types of poems have been called lying songs: poems which use impossibilita for any purpose (thus "Whan netilles in wynter," Index 3999, which uses impossibilita in circumlocution for never has been
called a lying song) and poems which use the topos of the world upside down (natural reversals which are not impossible, some of which will be discussed in the following chapter) have also been called lying songs. I would restrict the term lying song to a poem which uses logical paradox, impossibilia (not apparent paradox), for no reason except perhaps outdoing (akin to the tall tale). I would call Index 1354, "I saw iij hedles playne at a ball," a lying song.

A more lengthy lying son is Index 1350, a sixteenth-century carol with the burden, "Hay, hey, hey, hey! / I will haue the whetstone and I may." The poem is mentioned here as an obvious member of the lying song genre since the whetstone was the symbol of victory in a lying contest. It is interesting that the form "I saw . . ." is used both in the tag mentioned above and in the longer poem, which begins:

I sawe a doge sethyng sowse
And an ape thechyng an houose;
And a podying etying a mowse;
I will haue the whetstone and I may.

(EEC, #471, ll. 1-4, p. 317)

Each of the poem's seven stanzas of impossibilia begins with the formula "I saw . . . ."

Impossibilia are used in another poem which appears to be a lying song (Index 3324). Actually, the poem seems to be three independent short Middle English verses (each followed by a Latin translation), only the first two of which are lying songs. The first two Middle English sections follow:

The krycket & pe greshope wentyn here to fyzght,
With helme and haburyone all redy dyzght;
The flee bare pe baner as a duzy knyth.
The cherubud trumpyt with all hys myzth.

. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
The hare seyte a-pon be hyll & chappynd here schone,
And swere by the knappes wich were ber a-pon,
That scho wowld not ryse ne gon
Tyll sche se xx howndes and a won.
(XIV-XV, #115, 11. 1-4, 8-12, p. 104)

The fact that these verses are preserved at the end of a grammar book\textsuperscript{73} is extremely interesting since it suggests that \textit{impossibilita} in lying songs (actually nonsense verse) might have been used for teaching grammar and possibly for exercises in Latin and English verse writing.

Two other popular lyrics may be mentioned here which purport to be prescriptions for doing the impossible but actually are nonprescriptions, indicating that the maladies involved cannot be cured at all.

"For a man bat is almost blynd" (Index 813), humorously entitled by the scribe "A good medycyn for sor eyen," prescribes letting a man go bareheaded against the wind all day, at evening putting him in a room full of smoke, then rubbing his eyes with sulphur and soap. The poem concludes:

\begin{quote}
And yf he se not by be next mone
As well at mydnyzt as at none
I schal lese my ryzt arme.
\end{quote}
(XIV-XV, #113, 11. 9-12, p. 102)

It at first seems paradoxical that the writer's right arm would naturally or willfully be lost if the condition is not fulfilled—until we realize that, of course, after the prescription has been followed the blind man will see as well at midnight as at noon, that is, not at all.\textsuperscript{74}

A second nonprescription prescription is intended to make a maid of a woman who has taken a hundred lovers (Index 1409.1). The thirty-four line remedy begins sensibly (feed her well, lay her in a comfortable bed) but its paradoxical nature becomes more clear as obviously
impossible (paradoxical) directions are added:

She must have of the wyntyr's nyghte
vii. myle of the mone-lycht
Fast knyt in a bladder;
Ze must medyl ther among
vij Wellsshemens song,
And hang yt on a lader.

(11. 24-28)

The paradoxes in these mock prescriptions probably have a dual purpose: they satirize the genre of prescriptions and satirize the foolish hope of curing a blind man or recovering lost virginity. They are also, no doubt, included for entertainment value, a natural consideration of authors of poems intended for popular audiences, as the poems in this last part of the chapter obviously are.

Reviewing briefly the uses of contraries and paradox in the poems considered in Chapter One we find that almost all uses outlined in the Introduction are represented in the secular lyrics. Contraries in non-paradoxical relationship are used, for example, to define the courtly lady by means of her effect on the lover: she is defined as having the power to change his bale into bliss or his sorrow into joy. The lady is defined in her effects by means of a logical paradox when she is said to be both the cause and cure of the poet's suffering. The effects of love are defined in a logical paradox when the poet says that his heart is beaten with heat of cold and cold of heat. Judgmental paradoxes also define love in its effects on the lover: he cannot eat or sleep, he is content to suffer, he is glad to seek what cannot be had.

Love itself is described by means of contraries in nonparadoxical relationship. One poet finds it sometimes hot, sometimes cold. In the
love definitions it is sometimes impossible to determine whether the poet is presenting the contraries as alternating or existing simultaneously; perhaps he is presenting them in both relationships when he says, in one line, that love is soft and sweet and, in the following line, that love is much tense and care. Alternating contraries often describe women, one of the aspects of their doubleness being variance. The outside-inside topos used to describe women also presents contraries in nonparadoxical relationship (one is feigned to cover the other but both do not exist in actuality at the same time; first one appears, then the other is revealed); thus women are said to hide gall under a sugared covering, or to weep when they are cheerful.

Contraries in paradoxical relationships and other types of paradoxes are used to define love. Logical paradox is most obviously used in the love definitions by means of oxymoron when, for example, love is described as an evil sweetness. The love relationship is described in a logical paradox by means of the convention of the exchange of hearts; other logical paradoxes associated with the description of love include the propositions that the only cure for love-sickness is to continue to serve the cause (the lady) or to endure the suffering. Judgmental paradox defines the love relationship when the poet declares that he is the lady's friend and she is his foe, he wishes her happiness and she him woe; it also defines the position of the lover who is forbidden to make his love known.

One contrary is used to define the other in several poems considered in the chapter. One poet defines his judgmentally paradoxical situation by saying that when other men sleep, he wakes; a second poet
defines his plight by noting that what other men find pleasurable he finds a source of sorrow. In the pseudo-Lydgate poem women are ostensi­bly contrasted to the changeable forces in the universe (fortune, the natural forces such as the wind, the seasons). In the debates on women and the love debates (including the pastourelle) contrary opinions are defined in relationship to one another. In a few poems we find that one contrary alone may be defined, but its corresponding contrary is implied. In the strongly condemnatory definition of inordinate love, for example, the contrary, properly directed love, seems to be implied. We find little use in the secular lyrics which have been discussed of poetic conventions and language generally associated with one contrary in descriptions of the corresponding contrary. In one fifteenth-century complaint language which might be used in praise of Mary is applied to the courtly lady. (This use of contraries is also common in panegyrics to the lady—which, however, are not considered in the chapter.)

In poems which define, for celebration or dispraise, one of the major subjects of the secular lyrics (love or women), contraries are sometimes used not only for the purpose of serious definition, but also for comic definition (for example, for parody and satire in the mock courtly complaints). The impossibilita used in the poem which defines the truth of women seem to be included as much, if not more, for entertain­ment value as for a circumlocution to emphasize that women will never be true. The pseudo-Lydgate poem which contrasts women to all the variables in nature has a MS heading which attests to its intentions
of entertainment. In some poems, however, contraries and paradox seem to be used solely for entertainment which rests on the recognition and enjoyment of word-play based on contraries and of paradoxes per se. We find this use of contraries and paradox in the poems considered in the third part of the chapter, the sexual double-entendre poems and riddles and the lying songs. The mock prescriptions fall somewhere in-between in their use of contraries and paradox, which do parody and satirize prescriptions (and in one poem, the hope of regaining lost virginity), but which are included primarily, it seems, on their own account--for the comedy of and wonder of the paradoxes.

Contraries and paradox are evident in the form of the lyrics considered in this chapter, in smaller structures such as single words (contraries in word play), and antithetical words, phrases, and lines, and in the larger form or structure of lyrics. Of the smaller structures many word plays have been noted (heart, bird, kynd, wode), as well as oxymorons in the definitions of love, impossibilia and contraries for circumlocution. The blending of contraries in the general form of a lyric, one type of unity by contraries, is often subtle, resulting, for example, in an undertone of praise in the love definitions or of distrust in a poem about trust, or of blame in a defense of women (and the result, of course, is an ambiguous definition of the subject). In other poems the ambiguity is less subtle when the contraries are not statement and undertone but full contradictory interpretations which are permitted by the syntax and vocabulary of the poem; this is the case, for example, in the courtly complaint in which the lover remains content and in the complaint in which the lover maintains a gladful, sorry
chere. Full contradictory interpretations are also possible in the punctuation poem on women, an even less subtle use of contraries, since the two interpretations are dependent on punctuation and rhyme. In another type of poem characterized by a unity by contraries, the sexual double-entendre riddles, two contradictory solutions are permitted but the interpretations are totally unrelated to each other (whereas in the courtly complaints just mentioned and the punctuation poem the two interpretations are related as two sides of the same coin). The blending of contraries is obvious, and no ambiguity results, in poems which both use and deny conventions of a particular genre, such as the mock courtly complaints and the mock prescriptions.

In addition to the blending of contraries, the juxtaposition of contraries in the form or structure of a poem as a whole may be found in the secular lyrics: in poems which proceed by antiphrase and destroying refrain (such as "Cuius contrarium" and the pseudo-Lydgate poem), in the debates on love and on women, in the courtly-noncourtly Harley poems, and in the alternation of joy and sorrow in "Alysoun." Finally, some poems considered in the chapter have the form of logical paradox, per se, or the form of a series of logical paradoxes: the riddles (based on apparent paradox) and the lying songs (based on impossibilia) which are discussed in the final part of the chapter.
NOTES


3Lyrics will generally be referred to by Index number and sometimes by first line and Index number; numbers as in Carleton Brown and R. H. Robbins, eds., *The Index of Middle English Verse* (New York: Columbia U. Press, 1943) and R. H. Robbins and John L. Cutler, eds., *Supplement to the Index of Middle English Verse* (Lexington: U. of Ky. Press, 1965). Lyrics discussed in some detail in the text will be included in the Appendix arranged by Index number, if they are over 18 lines in length; those 18 lines and under will be included in the text. Some lyrics, which are discussed only briefly or whose relevant portions can be adequately discussed by quotation in the text are neither quoted in full nor included in the Appendix.

4Brown, XIII, pp. xxxii-xxxiii.


6For passages in the Roman and the Middle English translations see Introduction. For passages in Grimestone, the romance of Ipomedon, one 14th-cen. religious lyric, and Richard de Fournival's *Conseil d'Amours*, see Brown, XIII, n. 53, pp. 208-209, and n. 9, p. 170.

7See XIII, n. 9, p. 170.

8See Index 2280, 1. 44; Index 3310 (Appendix), 11. 49-54; referring to Christ: Index 3236, 1. 6; Index 66 (Appendix), 1. 142.


11Almost all formal love lyrics which are influenced by the conventions of courtly love are included in these three subgenres. One other courtly genre, which includes a large number of poems, is not included in this discussion, however, because its members are concerned not primarily with the paradox of love, but simply with the description or praise of the lady.
It is possible, of course, that the origin of the convention of the use of religious terminology in secular poetry had nothing to do with the doctrine of contraries. The use of religious terminology in early troubadour and trouvere lyrics seems to have been extremely limited (perhaps a reference to "this prayer" occasionally). At that time devotion to the Blessed Virgin was not well-established and courtly ladies were more often described in feudal terms than in language from religious hymns. The use of religious echoes, of course, could not only have reflecting possibilities; it could serve two other purposes: elevate the secular, or parody the religious. I think it is possible that the earliest troubadours used religious terminology for the latter purpose (William IX of Aquitaine, for example, was known to be a religious skeptic, and in 1101 he was excommunicated). Once the convention was established, more "religious" poets may have incorporated elements from ecclesiastical hymns and the liturgy in order to "elevate" their chansons. Sometimes, of course, what was intended to elevate could diminish, depending on the opinion of the audience. At any rate, it is my contention that by the fifteenth century in England in the formal love lyrics which will be considered in the body of this study, the convention was used haphazardly, with little or no attention to its elevating, diminishing, or distracting effects, or to its reflecting possibilities.

While Chaucer puts the convention to the ultimate reflective use in Troilus and Criseyde, other poets use it even more lightly than it is used in the formal love lyrics under consideration, either demonstrating the ultimate deterioration of the convention, or its original (troubadour) function. Charles d'Orleans, for example, structures the old joke of stealing a kiss and giving it back again with the form of personal confession (Index 2243). See also Lydgate's "Venus Mass" (Index 4186) and Clanvowe's "Cuckoo and the Nightingale" (Index 3361) which takes the names of parts of the Mass as titles for its love songs. Religious and liturgical language is used in popular secular poetry for seemingly decorative, nonfunctional purposes. See, for example, a drinking song beginning "Verbum Caro factum est," an extremely popular refrain in religious carols (Index 795); a carol in praise of ivy (Index 3438) with the cauda and refrain "Veni, coronaberis," traditionally used in religious poetry though ultimately from the Song of Songs (IV. 8); a carol structured on parts of the Office and Mass in which the heroine is ultimately impregnated by a cleric, which has the refrain "'kyrie, so kyrie,' / Jankyn synt merie, / With 'aleyson,'" (Index 377).


There are, of course, some formal love poems in the fifteenth century which show strong influences of the upper middle class, such as the seventeen poems composed by Humfrey Newton (1466-1536), two of which
are represented in XIV-XV, #193, #194. See Robbins' introduction to XIV-XV, p. xlvii.

Although the use of English began to increase among the upper classes after the loss of Normandy in 1204, the thirteenth-century court of Henry III (1216-72) was dominated by foreigners and the King himself had French tastes. English poetry may have been written in the court of Edward I (1272-1307) when nationalism was on the rise, but, at the same time, French was cultivated as the language of the upper classes (though it often had to be taught to children of the nobles), and at the close of the thirteenth century and the beginning of the fourteenth French was still used in parliament, the law courts, and in public negotiations. See Albert C. Baugh, A History of the English Language, 2nd ed. (1935; rpt. N.Y.: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1973), pp. 150-67. Popular English songs are known to have been sung as early as the reign of King Canute. For a summary of the earliest surviving native English songs, see Brook, introduction, pp. 4-6.

An interesting parallel to the beginning of "Alysoun" is found in the first stanza of a canzo of William of Aquitaine; though many French courtly love lyrics begin with a reference to Spring, this canzo specifically mentions the lati (M.E. lud) of the birds. The French lyric makes the contrast explicit between the bird who procures what he desires (st. 1) and the lover who is unable to do so (sts. 2-4). The opening of the French poem is as follows:

Ab la dolchor del temps novel
 Foillo li bosc, e li auel
 Chanton chascus en lor lati
 Segon lo vers del novel chan;
 Adonc esta ben c'om s'aisi
 D'acho don hom a plus talan.

(Ed. Guillaume Picot, La Poésie Lyrique au Moyen Age, Classiques Larousse [Paris: Librairie Larousse, 1963], I, 13). (My translation: With the sweetness of the new time the forest is covered with foliage, and the birds, each chants in his own tongue, according to the melodies of the new song; hence it is good that each enjoy what he most desires.)

The delicacy which in general characterizes the 15th-cen. conventions of formal love poetry was also a later refinement in formal French love poetry. In the canzo by William of Aquitaine previously quoted (note 16), for example, the poet ends his song with the following plea:

Enquer me lais Dieus viure tan
 C'aja mas manz soz so mantel!

(Translation: That God would permit me to live long enough that I might have my hands under her mantle!)

William is known for his earthly, sacrilegious, ironic and satirical poems. Such characteristics were for the most part refined out of much of the later French courtly love poetry, such as that of Bernard of Ventadour who came to England with the court of Eleanor of Aquitaine. Thus in a sense certain "indelicate" or "earthy" elements in "Alysoun"
may be viewed not as far removed from French courtly poetic traditions, but close to some of the original sentiments. These elements in "Alysoun," however, are not at all sophisticated, which is not the case with like elements in "A wayle whyt ase whalles bon" (Index 105), another Harley poem considered in this chapter. "A wayle" is characterized by the rakish tone of some of the early French poems, while such tone is entirely missing from "Alysoun."

Even these short examples show the poet's skill in manipulating alliteration and consonance. This can be seen throughout the poem. For example, the entire first stanza is unified with the consonance and alliteration of the liquid and sibilant l and s, broken occasionally, and in the first and last words of the stanza, with the plosive b sound.

Brook, introduction, pp. 6-7. See also EEC, introduction, p. xxxvii for the form of early dance songs, none of which survive in English except perhaps "Icham of Irlaunde," Index 1008.

Edmund Reiss provides a detailed analysis of "Alysoun" in The Art of the Middle English Lyric: Essays in Criticism (Athens, Ga.: Georgia U. Press, 1972), pp. 59-65. In his interpretation Reiss also places emphasis on the juxtaposition between the joyful refrain and the stanzas which describe the poet's suffering; however, he does not relate this to the alternation of joy and sorrow in love, or to the paradox of their simultaneous existence. He regards the inclusion of the cheery refrain as a "humorous touch . . . the result is something approaching farce" (p. 60); elsewhere he concludes that "the entire statement of the burden may be ironic, or at least may be ironic by the time of its fourth utterance" (p. 65). Reiss makes two especially interesting observations about the poem, I think. One, that the narrator is almost always represented as being acted upon by love-longing or by Alysoun—he remains passive; two, that the poet refers to his poem as a roun, 1. 36, a term which is used to describe the bird's song in other lyrics; this makes even more explicit the contrast set up at the beginning of the poem between birds' happy songs and the narrator's song, mixed with sorrow. (Reiss even suggests that the poem might be viewed as, ironically, "the courtly love-sickness of a bird, as something comparable to what is found in Chaucer's Squire's Tale, or, more humorously, in his Nun's Priest's Tale," p. 62.) Reiss does not mention the juxtaposition of what I have called courtly and noncourtly elements in the poem. I find that two other Harley complaints display similar combinations of the courtly and popular: Index 4194 ("With longyng y am lad") and Index 4037 ("When the nyhtengale singes"). Both poems make use of the qualifications so out of place in the courtly convention of exaggerated description. For example, the lady in Index 4194 is called "burde on of þe best" (italics added, 1. 36), and the poet of Index 4037, though he describes his constant love, asserts at one point, "Ich haue loued al þis zer, þat y may loue namore" (1. 5). Specific references generally not found in stylized formal poetry are seen in Index 4194 in which the poet's lady "woneþ by west" (1. 37), and in Index
4037 in which the lady is said to be fairest "Bituene Lyncolne ant Lyndesey, Norhamptoun ant Lounde" (1. 17). Obviously, the blend of contrasting traditions (courtly and popular) is a mark of the early English attempts in the formal love lyric. Partly a result of the mixture of courtly and popular elements is a certain sincerity and immediacy characteristic of early formal love poetry influenced by conventions of fin'amors but missing in most of the 15th-cen. complaints also influenced by so-called "courtly love" conventions.

21 This poem, an early 14th-cen. text, was discovered in 1932, accidentally preserved with music on the back of an elaborate copy of a Bull of Pope Innocent III. Its publisher, however, believes it to be copied from an earlier MS, probably written before 1250. See XIV-XV, n. 147, p. 273.


24 M.E.D.: brid, bride, birde, birth, prt. A-B, pp. 161-63, 164, 876-77, 884-85. The term will also be noted in religious lyrics, especially those of the mystical school, denoting Christ, the Blessed Virgin, the bride or bridegroom (sponsus), the soul, or Christendom.

25 Such contrast between the beastial and human turtel is made explicit in Index 3534, which will be considered in this chapter.

26 The judgmental paradox lies in the fact that the relationship expressed here contradicts what is ordinarily held to be just, right, or natural: that friendship is returned with friendship, well-wishing with well-wishing. A similar judgmental paradox is exploited in poems considered in the third part of the last section of Chapter Three. In these poems the subject is the paradox of man's response (lack of love) to Christ's love.


28 This sentiment is directly paralleled in early French courtly love poetry, for example, in a passage in a chanson of Guiot de Provins (fl. beg. 13th cen.):

Car m'elbst or son lieu presté,
Dex! cil qui l'a esposee. (Picot, II, 34)
(My translation: Dieu! if only her spouse wished to yield me his place.)

29 See discussion of possible sexual meanings of cock in the last part of this chapter.

30 Robbins' note indicates that the spleen was regarded as "the seat of learning and as the seat of laughter," italics added (XIV-XV, note 159, p. 276). However, since Robbins explains the play on ideas
based on gladfull and sorry it seems probable that there is a misprint in 
the note which should read "the seat of melancholy and as the seat of 
laughter." The O.E.D. makes no reference to the spleen as being re­
garded as the seat of learning, but it was clearly seen as both the 

That this piece was considered "moral" by its preserver is pos­
sibly indicated by the fact that it is preserved in MS. Harley 7322, 
described by Robbins as a collection of theological and moral texts 
and excerpts in Latin, "evidently for the use of some preacher, pos­
sibly a friar," which also contains 50 short English religious verses 
(XIV-XV, note 142, p. 272). Clearly, however, unquestionably secular 
verses have been preserved in stranger places.

Compare, for example, a poem of Charles d'Orleans, "Go forth 
myn hert wyth my lady" (Index 922). The exchange of hearts, which has 
been considered as it operates in songs of the departing lover, is 
found in a fifteenth-century lament of a lover who has lost the favor 
of his lady (Index 1120). The refrain, "Have all my hert & be in peys" 
is included as the last line of each stanza and also functions as the 
first line of the poem. The conceit is developed in the first four 
lines of stanza two, in which the author permits an interesting am­
biguity in we, which may refer either to the lover and his lady or to 
the lover and his heart (or both):

Hawe a l l  m y h e rt & e r e  I goo—
H e rt, body, and a l l  m y myzt.
M e fo­p o w z t  we p a r tyd  in  too,
W he n I to yow had m o st r y z t.

(XIV-XV, #135, L. 9-12, p. 136)
This lyric is printed in full in the Appendix because of its close asso­
ciation with a song having the same refrain, also a lament of a lover 
whose beloved has proven untrue (Index 3805); in the MS the lover is 
identified as Christ, although the song itself could just as well be 
sung by a secular lover. Index 3805 will be considered in Chapter 
Three.

R. L. Greene points out in his note on this carol that a longer 
and more literary poem evidently based on this carol is found in two 
MSS, Index 1957.

INDEX 2518, note 173, p. 279.

I consider "O mestres, whye" (Index 2518) of the nature of the 
virelay in the same sense as the Hoccleve poem noted by Robbins. A 
virelay is a poem in short lines, each stanza having two rhymes only; 
the rhyme of the last line of one stanza becomes the main rhyme of 
the next. In Index 2518, the poet uses two rhymes in the first two 
stanzas and three rhymes in the last two; though the rhyme does not 
link in the manner of a true virelay, there is an attempt at linking:
the a rhyme appears in stanzas one, two, and three; and the d rhyme, introduced in stanza three, also appears in stanza four.


39In his analysis of "Foweles" (pp. 18-22) Reiss also suggests that a play on words is possible in this poem between wode and wod, p. 19. He discusses the contrasts between the first two and the last three lines of the poem and finds that the poem "primarily uses contrasting elements to make its point" (p. 20). He notes the ambiguity of beste, which is central to his interpretation of the poem as deeply religious. It is ironic for man to be best of all creatures and at the same time to waxe wod, but Reiss carries his interpretation farther: "A further implication here may be that the narrator, like a scapegoat, carries on his shoulders the weight of human sin and its reluctant sorrow. Along with being fallen man, he also approximates Christ as man of sorrows. Indeed, beste as 'best' may be a more pointed reference to Christ, to him who was the best of living beings. Because of Christ and his suffering, the narrator sorrows; also, because of Christ, he has additional responsibility in that he now knows his obligations and the need for redemption" (p. 20). Reiss comments on the love-longing interpretation: "To make love-longing, which is not even clearly present, the main theme, as well as the basis for judging the success of the poem, is clearly to mishandle the work" (p. 20).

40Reiss, in his essay on this poem, pp. 67-73, notes, as I do, the incongruity of the inclusion of worms wooing in the idyllic nature scene. Reiss also notes the paralleling of the lines on women and those on worms; however, he draws a different conclusion from it: "Joined in the triad with the wormes are women who, in a parallel statement, waxeth wounder proude (32)—somewhat like Eve in the Garden. Their activity is in one sense as incongruous as that of worms [Reiss notes earlier that worms should be underground], for women, born from man's side, should be humble and be guided by the male" (p. 71). Reiss does not view the poem as a simple lover's lament. He finds in it "a general air of irony" (p. 73), and he takes the lover's threat as "humorous overstatement" (p. 73). Reiss does not note the possible play on wod/wode, nor does he suggest that the lover's final statement may be interpreted as an intention to enjoy the beauties of nature and leave the sufferings of love. Reiss finds that the poem plays with the threat of man's alienation and uses it "as a means of seduction" (p. 73).

41See, for example, Index 4209 (which combines complaint and lengthy description of the lady), Index 767 (a farewell poem with description of the lady), Index 2421 (a panegyric which contains obvious echoes from the Song of Songs, primarily terms and phrases used to describe the perfection of the bride).
Rosemary Woolf defends "In a fryht" as a traditional example of the pastourelle in her article, "The Construction of In a fryht as y con fare framede," MAE, 38 (1969), 55-59. She explains one of the incongruous arguments of the girl by suggesting that 11. 37-44 are spoken by the man; this necessitates the emendation of 1.40 to: "pah he be slowe ne myhtu him asluppe." She would explain the incongruous argument that the girl likes "gome bute gyle" by suggesting that this alliterative phrase did not carry the weight of meaning which we attribute to it, or that the girl utters the phrase with a wistfulness that she settles for less (pp. 57, 58). Woolf also offers an explanation of the difficult lines 45-46 (not mentioned in my analysis); she suggests the translation: "I cannot escape by shape-shifting: I am not a witch or sorceress" and notes an allusion to the chansons de transformations. In these forerunners to the pastourelle, a verbal game was often played in which the girl invents forms she will take to escape the lover and he invents others to show he will capture her (e.g., if she is a star, he will become a cloud), pp. 57-58.

These poems are printed by Thomas Wright, ed., Songs and Carols from a MS in the British Museum of the Fifteenth Century [Sloane MS. 2593], Warton Club Publication, IV (London: T. Richards, 1856), pp. 109-15. They are included in the Appendix with Index 1303 due to their relative inaccessibility. Wright states that he prints 'Lord Roslin's Daughter' from the following source: "... a chap-book printed in Newcastle about the beginning of the present century, but which is no doubt of much greater antiquity" (p. 109). Wright states that the prints the "Four Sisters" from Halliwell's Popular Rhymes and Nursery Tales, p. 150, and notes that Halliwell gives the verses as "current in the north of England" (p. 114).


Utley, The Crooked Rib, p. 263. Utley also notes that this device is used in a fragmentary poem attributed to Lydgate, "Vndir your hood is but oo contenaunce." The poem declares that the poet's lady is without doubleness but counters with the refrain of logical paradox, "As I goo loos, and teied am with a lyne." This particular refrain line is also used by Lydgate in a serious poem, "The more I go, the further I am behynde," which is said to be influenced by an anonymous lyric which will be discussed in Chapter Two (Index 3504). For the opinion that Lydgate borrowed the line from the anonymous lyric (ascribed to an unknown Squire Halsham) see XV, n. 171, p. 344.
A punctuation poem on priests (Index 3809) and one on the world in general (Index 2364) will be mentioned in Chapter Two.

EEC, n. 402, p. 432.

Few of the secular Middle English lyrics exist in more than one MS. The multiple preservation of this 15th-cen. lyric may be simply a result of the wider appreciation of secular verse in the 15th-cen., but it may also indicate the popularity and widespread enjoyment of the impossibilities of which it is composed. (For 16th-cen. poems on women's truth which use impossibilities, see Utley, The Crooked Rib, nos. 69, 354, 357.) Greene points out the similarity between the "particular absurdities used to elaborate the misogynic theme" in the stanzas which portray animals in human pursuits and like "grotesqueries in other medieval arts, notably sculpture and drawing" (EEC, n. 402, p. 432). For a comparison of three versions of this poem see F. L. Utley, "When Nettles in Winter Bring Forth Roses Red," PMLA, 60 (1945), 346-55. In The Crooked Rib (p. 295) Utley calls this poem "a lying song." I use the term lying song in a very narrow sense (see Part III of this chapter) because I think it obscures the distinctions between various kinds of poems: those which appear to be nonsense; those which use impossibilities and those which use the topos of the world upside down in order to make a point. All three types of poems are considered by Utley and others to be "lying songs" (see The Crooked Rib, p. 133). See Part III of this chapter for a discussion of a lying song (narrowly defined) and for impossibilities in poems whose subject is neither love nor women; see also the following note.

An early 16th-cen., 7-stanza poem (found among the State Papers of Henry VIII) makes use of similar paradoxes and a similar refrain. But while Index 3999 includes reversals in the plant and animal world only, the later poem adds stanzas which are composed of reversals in the physical rather than natural world. For example, stanzas 6-7:

When banbery castele & barwyke dothe [meet]
At blakheth to fyght with watlyng stre[et],
& fflete bryde arnyth hym to dryve the[m thens],
then put in prysetes wyffes your trust & [confyndens].

When plyneworth prowedly comyth to london brydge,
and bryngyth whytehall on hye vpon his bakk,
and charyng Crose sweryth he will end the expense,
then put in prysetes wyffes your trust & confyndence.

(11. 21-28, printed from the poem edited by Frederick J. Furnivall, Ballads from Manuscripts [London: Taylor and Co., 1868-72], I, 314-15.) Furnivall indicates the date as only "before 1539," when "The Bloody Statute" was enacted, forbidding priests and others with vows of chastity to marry or keep concubines, a "second offence" being punishable by death (Furnivall, ibid., pp. 313-14). A terminus ad quo, however, may be set at the early 16th cen. from the reference to coinage in 1. 11: "& Sheape in the coynynge howse coynyth henry pence."
Technically, both praise and blame exist in the punctuation poem on women which was included in the previous section. However, the thrust of the poem, in my opinion, is clearly satirical (note the key words associated with women's doubleness: treason, mutability, steadfastness). The two opinions regarding women in the poem seem rather to correspond to the outside-inside doubleness of women's nature, than to any true praise in the midst of blame.

The *Quia amore langueo* poems (Index 1463 and Index 1460) will be considered in Chapter Three.

In such phrases as "casten up the halter," and "knet vp the helte" (Index 1938), and "turn vp hyr haltur," the meaning seems to be "cast off all restraints," and halter may be used figuratively for the marriage bond. See *M.E.D.*, pt. GI-H5, p. 459. Oddly, the saying does not occur in any of the standard collections of proverbs, even those limited to English proverbs or early proverbs.

Seen as an ironic defense of women written to make poetic restitution for past insults or misbehavior toward them this poem has much in common with Index 3874, also preserved in Harley 2253, which is a poet's ironic recantation of the insults directed toward women in his earlier poetry.


Robert Stevick notes the sexual allusions in this poem in "The Criticism of Middle English Lyrics," MP, 64 (1966), n. 18, p. 116. Stevick does not, however, find two fully developed readings in the poem as I do. Stevick finds the poem "one of those clever poems in which the joke is on the reader: an 'obscene' meaning unmistakably develops beside an innocent one, but is denied before the catalogue of characteristics is completed, yet unmistakably indicated again in the conclusion. Its cleverness . . . derives from the structuring of expression such that it is the reader who must supply the connections among the successive statements hence the multiple meanings. In this poem the reader is induced to reach a conclusion (interpretation) which is then both denied and allowed."
For example, Peter Idley's instructions to his son, ca. 1450-75: "Euer the yonge cok croweth as the olde precheth." See M.E.D., pt. C, pp. 472-73.


In the figurative reading of the poem other words and phrases of course take on new (sexual) meanings, perhaps not established elsewhere at all. This is probably the case with spores, l. 15 (spurs or back claws of a bird), and werte-wale, l. 16, which was the native OE term for root (the Scandinavian synonym) but which has survived only in dialectal use. As such, warty-well means a loose piece of skin at the base of a fingernail, a half moon at the base of a fingernail, or a horny protuberance on the inner side of a horse's leg (see The English Dialect Dictionary, ed. Joseph Wright [1898; rpt. New York: Hacker Art Books, 1962], VI, 391). The O.E.D., using our lyric as its source, also indicates that wart-wale "apparently [is] used for: the root of a cock's spur" (O.E.D., vol. 10, pt. 2, p. 123). Wart-wale may have had no established use zoologically or popularly to refer to the anatomy of a bird; it may be postulated, though it is not at all certain, that its sexual connotations may be primary in the lyric and that the word is only secondarily applied to the description of an actual bird (a reversal of the established process of the poem), thus signalling to the audience of the time the playful sexual implications of the entire piece.

Other poems of sexual double entendre, which will not be discussed here, are two steps removed from "al nit by be rose." While the pear tree poem and "I have a gentil cook" maintain somewhat (and in the latter case, wholly) sensible meanings in their nonsexual readings, other poems, such as Index 438 and Index 2135, are almost nonsensical outside their sexual meanings and lack even the redeeming grace of the clever punning of the pear tree poem.

See EEC, n. 416, p. 436 for references to passages describing the wares of friars in satirical Middle English poetry and prose which show verbal similarities to stanza one.

Greene, EEC, n. 416, p. 436, calls attention to the O.E.D. suggestion that jelyf is perhaps an "imitation of jolif, archaic form of jolly."

The whetstone became a symbol of victory in a lying contest from the custom (once law) in the Middle Ages of tying a whetstone around the neck of a convicted liar at the pillory. See EEC, n. 471, p. 453.
73 XIV-XV, n. 115, p. 265.

74 It seems that the scribe, in an attempt to enhance the paradoxical effect of the final lines, has struck through morne in l. 9, and interlined mone above (Robbins' textual note indicates the change, XIV-XV, p. 102). Morne naturally follows the progression of time in the poem and is probably the original term; but moon introduces a new paradox, since it is impossible to see by the moon at noon. No one could perform the feat but the blind man, of course, who can see as well (not at all) by moonlight at noon or at midnight.

CHAPTER II

MORAL LYRICS

The poems to be considered in this chapter are united by a common general subject matter: transitoriness; and by a common interest in proper human conduct. Many of the poems included are didactic, either implicitly or explicitly. All of the poems are called "moral," however, not because of didacticism but because of their common concern with human conduct, broadly speaking, the ethics of human behavior. The chapter is divided into two major parts according to subject matter: the first part includes poems whose subject is the transitoriness of human virtue. The second part, by far the longer, includes poems whose subject is the transitoriness, hence vanity, of this life and of all human endeavors. This part of the chapter is divided into two major sections: didactic and nondidactic poems. The didactic poems are further subdivided into five groups: short moral sayings or poems of moral advice; poems which offer a consolation for the transitoriness of this life; poems which stress repentance; poems which recognize man's attachment to this life as a paradox; poems which urge Christian conduct which to many would appear to be paradoxical. The second major section of this part of the chapter includes analyses of a few poems whose authors recognize as paradoxical, to one degree or another, the vanity of all things or man's position in a transitory and perhaps hostile universe.

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I. The Transitoriness of Human Virtue

A. Lists of Abuses

In the anonymous lyrics the most common treatment of the transitoriness of human virtue and the degeneration of proper conduct occurs in poems which take their inspiration, ultimately, from a Latin tract, an early Irish work from the seventh or eighth century, which is variously ascribed to Cyprian, Augustine, and Origen in MSS of the ninth through eleventh centuries. This tract lists twelve abuses of the age, "Duodecim Abusiua": philosopher without labor, old man without religion, young man without obedience, rich man without alms, woman without chastity, lord without virtue, contentious Christian, proud pauper, unjust king, negligent bishop, common people without discipline, populace without principle. Some of these poems are occasional, written for particular political propaganda, and as such are outside the scope of this dissertation, in which I have included only lyrics as the term has generally been used, designating poems such as those edited by Brown, Robbins, Brook, and Greene in the standard collections. The theme of the twelve abuses, however, is obviously an ancient or traditional one and need not be attached only to occasional verse. Some non-occasional poems which treat the theme will be discussed in this part of the chapter, even though several of these poems are included not in the standard lyric collections but in the collection of occasional verse edited by R. H. Robbins, Historical Poems of the XIVth and XVth Centuries (N.Y.: Columbia U. Press, 1959). Several poems will be considered: a list of abuses (primarily judgmental paradoxes) from the English Gesta Romanorum (Index 906), a list (primarily logical
paradoxes), corresponding to those in the *Speculum Christiani* (Index 1857), a series of five abuses which appears to be closer to the Latin than are other lists, lists which employ personification (such as Index 3651), and the series known as "Merlin's Prophesy" (Index 3986, Index 3943).

Index 906, "Zeft is Domesman, & gyle is chapman," was evidently one of the most popular abuses poems (it occurs in fifteen MSS). The particular abuses listed in this poem and those in many other Middle English lyrics are not based directly on the Latin twelve abuses. The abuses in Index 906 correspond to those listed in the Middle English version of the *Gesta Romanorum* (compiled in Latin in the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century). In the Middle English *Gesta*, the abuses are listed by four philosophers, who inform a king about the causes of the misfortunes which plague him. In the lyrics, the frame has been dropped and the abuses only are made the subject of the poem. Index 906, which follows, includes all of the sixteen abuses in the *Gesta* and gives them in the *Gesta* order, with one exception:

St. John's Coll. Cambridge MS. 37
Zeft is Domesman, & gyle is chapman;
Lordys ben owtyn lawe, & chylderen ben withowtyn awe;
Wyth is trechery, & loue is lecherye;
& pley turnyt to vylanye, & holyday to glotonye.
Eld man in scornyng, wyse man in lesyng,
Ryche man in levyng, & pore man in losyng;
Sly men been blynd, & kenred is onkynd;
he ded is owtyn of mynd, for he may fynd noo frond.

Virtus Ecclesia Clerus Demon Simonia
cessat. calcatur. errat. regnat. dominatur.

Now men leuyn good thewis,
& holy chyrch is led with schrowys,
Clergie goth owt of he wey,
A variation between the *Gesta* version and the MS version quoted occurs at the last abuse which reads in the Middle English *Gesta*: "and trewthe may no man fynde." The author of the Cambridge MS version follows a Latin version slightly different from the Middle English version in the *Gesta*. It will also be noted that the translator or preserver of these abuses has added some Latin lines and other abuses which are found neither in the Latin which precedes Index 906 in the Cambridge MS nor in the Middle English *Gesta*.

Most of the abuses in Index 906 are presented as judgmental paradoxes (ll. 1-4, 9-16): guile is chapman, wise men are blind, kindred is unkind, etc. They are propositions which contradict ordinary opinions of what is natural, just, or reasonable. They are reversals of what is ordinarily expected in experience, and as such I call them examples of the *topos* of the world upside down (since they are also believed to be true). Thus this *topos* is used as a means of defining, or, more specifically, of dispraising moral decline and the transitoriness of human virtue. What should be, or the world rightside up, is, of course, implied in the poem. Thus this poem (and others which include the *topos* of the world upside down) is characterized by a particular use of contraries in which one contrary defines the other, but only the defining contrary is included in the poem.

Although judgmental paradoxes predominate in the definition of the abuses, four logical paradoxes are included (ll. 3-4). These may be considered part of the *topos* of the world upside down, even though they do represent logical impossibilities (they are not considered
impossibilita, according to my definitions, since they are believed to be true, or to represent actual happenings). The expression of the abuses as logical, even as judgmental paradoxes, is an example of poetic overstatement (as is the expression of some of the conventions in the formal love lyrics). The paradoxes are not believed to be true in the same manner that the logical paradox of the virgin birth, for example, is believed to be true; nevertheless, they represent, with a heightening effect, shocking, unusual, unexplainable, absurd occurrences, events, or phenomena which are believed, by some at least, to represent actuality. Two of the abuses represented as logical paradoxes have the form "X is Y" (where Y is the contrary, inexact, of X); an illogical proposition results, of course, if one contrary is predicated of the other. The other two abuses (1. 4) are expressed as logical impossibilities since one contrary cannot become the other, which would involve the changing of the entire nature of the contrary (it will be remembered, though, that a change can occur within a substance from one contrary to the other, if the first contrary is not a constituent property of the substance).

A series of logical and judgmental paradoxes comprise the topos of the world upside down in Index 1857, which, technically, is not within the scope of this study since it contains a specific allusion to corruption in the reign of Edward II at the beginning of the poem (II. 1-16). This first part of the poem, however, may have been an addition since, unlike the remainder of the piece, it is written in a mixture of French and English, and it does occur separately in an earlier version,
which Robbins considers the "original text," and which refers to events in the reign of Edward I. The middle section of the poem (11. 21-68) contains the judgmental and logical paradoxes. The concluding section (11. 69-96) is didactic: it recommends brotherly love, reminds the audience that for love God was born in an ox's stall and died on the cross, and it urges the love of God and the leading of a good life in the hopes of winning eternal joy. (This section not only mentions the king-in-a-stall paradox, it uses contraries in circulocation for everyone three times: olde men and zunge, riche and pore, bonde and fre.)

A framework for the world-upside-down paradoxes is provided in the poem. Four wise men are presented as recounting the evils of the age. The framework and the basic series of paradoxes (11. 27-29, 39-41, 51-53, 63-68, which will be quoted below) would no doubt have been familiar during the Middle Ages because they were incorporated as the Sexta Tabula of the Speculum Christiani, of which sixty-six MSS survive. The exact relationship of the poem to the paradoxes of the Speculum has not been established; however, the editor of the Speculum notes that ". . . the sayings in the Speculum completely agree with those in the satirical poem, except the second and third sayings of the second philosopher which occur transposed." Because the particular abuses in Index 1857 were so well-known during the period they are quoted here; surprisingly, they occur in Middle English short verse, to my knowledge, only in Index 1857, "L'en puert fere & defere":

ffor miht is riht,
Liht is niht,
And fiht is fliht.
... . . . . . . .
Both the particular paradoxes from Index 1857 (as recorded also in the Speculum Christiani) and the paradoxes in Index 906 (as recorded also in the English Gesta Romanorum) had as their ultimate source, according to Robbins, the Latin tract on the twelve abuses. Interestingly, although the two groups of paradoxes are neither formally nor substantially alike, they are both presented, in at least one version, as the sayings of four philosophers explaining the causes of misfortune. The paradoxes in Index 906 have this framework in the English Gesta, but it is dropped in the lyric; the paradoxes in Index 1857 and in the Speculum retain the frame.  

A short list of five judgmental paradoxes describing moral degener- ation was also popular during the period (it occurs in ten MSS). Index 1820 seems closest of all the Middle English poems of its type to the ultimate source of the abuses, the Latin tract:

Harley MS. 913
Bissop lorles,  
Kyng redeles,  
Zung man techles,  
Old man witles,  
Womman ssamles.  
I swer bê heuen kyng,  
þos beþ fiue liþer þing.  
(Histor, #56, p. 144)
It will be noted that all five of the Middle English paradoxes are mentioned among the Latin abuses translated at the beginning of this section of the chapter, and that each of the five evil things retains the form of the Latin abuses: a person is presented as without a quality which is ordinarily expected as a part of his character (if the quality were considered a constitutive one, the paradox would not be judgmental, it would be logical). This method of stating the abuses seems an especially effective one because, first, each judgmental paradox suggests or borders on logical paradox; and, second, because the world rightside up is so strongly suggested in the privative form of each adjective (the term counselless, for example, contains its contrary). A more lengthy poem on moral degeneration is Index 3681, which does not appear to be based on any Latin text of the abuses. It is composed simply of a twenty-line series of instances of the moral world upside down, followed by a ten-line didactic conclusion urging amendment and the forsaking of sin. The statement of the degeneration of virtue could have been made in logical paradoxes of the form "X is Y," but the author has weakened the paradoxicality of the statement by the inclusion of the word cleped. The first ten lines of the poem are representative of the following ten lines:

Vertues & good lyuinge is cleped ypocrisie; trowe & godis lawe is clepud heresie; pouert & lownes is clepud loselrie; trewe prechinge & penaunce is clepud folie. pride is clepud honeste, and coueityse wisdom. richesse is clepud worpynes, and lecherie kyndely þing, robberie good wynnynge, & glotenye but murþe.

(Histor, #57, 11. 1-10, pp. 144-45)
Another form which the series of abuses may take is illustrated by Index 2356:

MS. Bodl. 13659
Now pride ys yn pris,
Now couetyse ys wyse,
Now lechery ys schameles,
Now gloteny ys lawles,
Now slewpe ys yn seson,
In envie & wrepe ys treson;
Now hap god enchesyn
to dystrie þys worle by reson.
(Histor, p. xlii)

Each of the first six lines contains a judgmental paradox, but personification occurs in lines two through four and possibly in all six of the lines of abuses (personification also operates in Index 906). The particular abuses noted are not those in the English Gesta Romanorum (as in Index 906) or in the Speculum Christiani (as in Index 1857), nor are they a random list (as in Index 3651); rather, they are based on the seven deadly sins. Each judgmental paradox is generally formed by predicating an incongruous or unexpected adjective (twice of the -les form as in Index 1820) with the sin.9

Personification is even more developed in Index 1871, "Lex is layde and lethyrly lukys." In the first half of the poem, the author represents the virtues as being either dead, exiled, miserable, imprisoned, or in hiding; and Truth is said to be hung on a cross. The last half of the poem represents the vices as ruling the land, in a developed political analogy:

ffraus is fykyll as a fox, & reuys in þis lande,
ffuror is hys freynde, as I vndyrstande,
Decepcio is hys chamelande, halfe heire-of no dowtte
Detraccio is of his counsell--I be-schrew þat rowtte!
ffalsum Iudicium is a lordschype of hys,
As in the other poems considered in this section of the chapter, the world upside down alone is described, but the world right side up is, of course, implied. We know the one by knowing the other.

Personification and political or social analogy dominate the first part of a three-part poem on moral degeneration, Index 759:

Merton Coll. Oxford MS. 248

De falsitate
Falseness and covetyes er feris,
wil neper ope be-sweke;
lewte and pouert ar peris,
Haue þai no rithte in ys rike.
ilke man in lande no[u] leris
wyt falsedam to pinchyn and pike;
as þer no man þat þen sterys
bot heuer are vnlawis illyke.
falsenes, I vnderstande,
haues dreuen trwvte of lande,
and tort and fort as sworn þar owth
þat law sal lose is ouer-clôpe.
(XIV, #39, 11. 1-12, p. 54)

This "poem" appears to be three separate pieces joined solely by means of Latin headings similar in form. The second piece (Index 1373) is characterized by word-play and is not really of the form of an abuse:

De cupiditate
I þinge al day, I þinge of nowth,
of nowth I-set al my thowth;
nowth of owth brynkis me tyl nowth,
me wor bettyr I thowth yt nowth.
(XIV, #39, 11. 12-16, p. 54)

The third piece (Index 2145) is the most interesting since its particular judgmental paradoxes were evidently a popular expression of the degeneration of moral virtue--two other very close MS versions exist:11
De Mundo
hallas! men planys of litel trwthe;
hit ys ded and tat is rwthe;
falsedam regnis and es abowe,
and byrid es trwlove.
(XIV, #39, 11. 17-20, p. 54)

Another particular series must be included in the discussion of
the type of poem which is characterized by a list of judgmental para­
doxes representing moral degeneration. This series is known as
"Merlin's Prophesy" (Index 3986):

Trinity Coll. Dublin MS. 516
When lords wille is londes law,
Presets wylle trechery, and gyld hold soth saw,
lechery calyed pryve solace,
And robbery is hold no tresp ace--
Then schal the lond of Albion
torne in-to confusioun!
(Histor, #47, p. 121)

Index 3986 occurs in four other MSS, and the very similar Index 3943,
which differs from Index 3986 only in a reversal of the order of the
first two lines, occurs in at least fourteen MSS. 12 This series of
judgmental paradoxes expressing moral degeneration is, of course, in the
form of a prophesy: when the judgmental paradoxes occur the land of
Albeon will be turned into confusion. It is interesting to note the
similarity and difference between this use of the judgmental paradox
and the use of impossibilia in circumlocution for never, in such poems
as "Whan netilles in wynter bere Rosis rede." The impossibilia signify
never (when the impossible occurs), but the judgmental paradox implies
possibility. In fact, in "Merlin's Prophesy" it implies actuality: the
audience concludes that Albeon is in confusion because the prophesies
are being fulfilled. 13
It seems to have been a commonplace that Merlin's prophesy was already fulfilled. The author of an eighty-line series of world-upside-down paradoxes, Index 884, begins his poem in the following way: "ffulfylyd ys þe profesy for ay / þat merlyn sayd þ many on mo." The author certainly adds many more; his list shows familiarity not only with Merlin's prophesy but also with Index 2145, in his line, "ffor trouth ys sonkyn vndur þe grounde" (l. 34); and perhaps with Index 906 in his line "Truthe ys turnyd to trechery"; and with the original form of the abuses (the Latin and poems such as Index 1820) in lines such as "Ryzt gos redles .." (l. 6) and in the emphasis on orders or ranks of persons and various professions. Actually, this poem (Index 884) is outside the scope of our study since its purpose is obviously political; the last stanzas refers to the fates of Flanders and France and urge all noblemen to unite (it was written before the outbreak of the civil war). However, it is interesting since it shows a development in form of the list-type abuses poem. It is written in stanzas and contains a paradoxical refrain, "ffor now þe bysom [purblind] ledys þe blynde." It is also interesting since it makes an explicit reference to the world upside down and to the fact that the reversals mentioned are against nature:

He ys louyd þat wele can lye,
And theuys tru men honge;
To god I rede þat we cry
þat þis lyfe last not longe.
The world is turnyd up so doun among;
ffor frerys ar confessourys, ageyn a kynde,
To þe chefe ladyes of þis londe;
þerfor þe bysom ledys þe blynde.

(Histor, #49, ll. 41-48)
B. Other Types of Poems on Abuses

Not all poems whose subject is moral degeneration have the form of a list of abuses, consisting of judgmental and logical paradoxes. Other types of poems whose subject is the transitoriness of moral virtue will be considered in this section of the chapter: an antiphrase poem (Index 2805), a punctuation poem (Index 2364) and several personal reflections, Index 3420, Index 4236, Index 356, Index 3892, Index 4092 (the last four of which focus on false friendship as a particular evil).

A poem whose structure is based on contraries is Index 2805. Each of its seven stanzas lists ideals, reversals of the judgmental paradoxes familiar in the lists of abuses, but then concludes with a destroying refrain. The author seems to follow no method in the listing of ideal situations; the stanzas are collages including comments on people, virtues, vices, social structures, and classes.15

The author has defined the state of moral degeneration by its contrary: since stableness is obviously not found in attire, the other statements may be taken to be false and their contrary counterparts to be true. The author cannot resist an attack on women, so often associated with the variability which is the subject of his refrain and a characteristic of moral virtue. The last stanza of the poem concludes that attire
and everything else mentioned in the poem would "turn upside down" if women were not perfectly stable (an ironic and reverse use of the impossible sign and similar in its usage to the destroying refrain: when women are unstable then religious people will live in unholiness, etc.; in previously discussed poems the truly impossible sign was a token of women's truth).

Another poem whose subject is moral degeneration and whose structure is based on contraries (unity by contraries) is the following punctuation poem, Index 2364:

Cambridge Univ. MS. Hh. 2. 6
Nowe the lawe is ledde by clere conscience.
fful seld. Couetise hath dominacioun.
In Euery place. Right hath residence.
Neyther in towne ne feld. Similacion.
Ther is truly in euery cas. Consolacioun.
The pore peple no tyme hase. but right.
Men may fynd day ne nyght. Adulacioun.
Nowe reigneth treuth in euery mannys sight.
(XIV-XV, #111, p. 101)

In other poems considered in this part of the chapter one contrary is explicitly present in the poem; in most cases this is the abuse: however, in Index 2805, "Religious pepille leuyn in holynes,," the abuse is implied. In these poems the corresponding contrary had to be supplied by the reader. In the punctuation poem, however, both the judgmental paradox of the world upside down and the just and proper description of the world rightside up are explicitly present.16

The reflective poem, "Þe Mon þat luste to liuen in ese" (Index 3420), included in the Vernon MS, is characterized by a refrain which is a judgmental paradox: "For hos seip þe soþe, he schal be schent." The paradoxical nature of the refrain is made even more obvious when it is juxtaposed with the refrain of Index 4135, "Who-so loueth endeles rest":
"But he sey soth, he schal be schent." (Both poems occur in the Vernon companion MS, B.M. Addit. 22283). Index 3420 takes the form, initially, of advice to the man who wants to live in ease and attain worship in this world; the most important lesson he must learn is not to tell the truth:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{zif he schal kepe him from disease,} \\
\text{He mot lerne to flater and fayne} \\
\text{Hert & moule like þei ben twyene,}^\text{17} \\
\text{þei mowe not ben of on assent.} \\
\end{align*}
\]

(XIV, #103, 11. 7-10, p. 152)

That the world is upside down is made clear by the narrator in his inclusion of judgmental paradoxes: flatterers are close to kings (stanza three), men take the gloss and leave the text (stanza two), preachers who tell the truth are despised (stanza five), and "Now knowes a child boþe weole & wo, / þat sholde ben an Innocent" (stanza seven). The strongest, because most compressed, statement of judgmental paradoxes occurs in the last lines of the poem:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{þe fader trust not to þe sone} \\
\text{Ne non to oþer in no degré;} \\
\text{Falshede is called a sotilte} \\
\end{align*}
\]

(11. 91-93, p. 154)

The irony which characterizes the poem in some sections, notably in the first stanza, is not sustained. The narrator declares at one point, for example, "And al is wrong, þat dar I preue" (1. 37). He later draws the conclusion that "Seþ þe tyme þat god was born, / þis worlde was neuer so vntrewe" (11. 61-62). His description of the world is reminiscent of descriptions of the doubleness of women and the outside-inside topos: "þe peynted word þat fel bi-foren, / Be-hynde, hit is anöper
hewe" (11. 65-66). He describes this as *gyle*, a familiar word in poems against women (1. 71). Thus contraries in nonparadoxical relationship, as well as judgmental paradoxes, are used in the poem to define the nature of the world in its degeneration of virtue. In connection with poems which will be considered in the second part of this chapter, it is interesting to note that the narrator offers advice based on *Ecclesiastes*:

```
Best I hold hit, in good fay,
Let o day come, a-noper go,
And make as murie as we may,
Till eueri frend parte ofur fro.
```

(11. 75-78, p. 154)

Another poem which associates moral degeneration with the untrue or variable nature of this world is Index 4236. This poem focuses attention rather subtly on false friendship as a specific evil. It opens with a reference to the judgmental paradox that something may seem to be one thing and actually be another (which, of course, contradicts the generally held proposition that a thing is what it seems to be). As noted in discussion of some of the poems on women, this is not a logical paradox since only one nature is involved; deceit is generally implied, and the reality is presented in its true nature after the appearance fades. The author of Index 4236 expresses the "seems X, is Y" judgmental paradox in the following words:

```
Wold god þat men myzt sene
hertys whan þei bene,
for thynges þat bene vn-trew.
If yt be as I wene,
thyng þat semyth grene,
ys ofte fadyd of hew.
```

(Histor, #61, 11. 1-6, p. 148)
The second stanza of the poem continues or specifies the "seems X, is Y" paradox, although the lines echo the judgmental paradoxes which we have noted in the abuses poems. In this poem, however, the paradoxes are not used solely or even primarily in the world upside down topos to define overall moral degeneration; here they specify the deceit or appearance and reality present in the world:

```
Wyll ys tak for reson;
Trew loue ys full geson,
No man sett be shame.
Trost ys full of treson;
Eche man oderys cheson,
No man hym-seylfe wyll blame.
(11. 7-12, p. 148)
```

In observing the false friendship theme developed in the poem, from the first mention of untrue heart in stanza one, it is interesting to note that all of the judgmental paradoxes in this stanza are caused by lack of mutual love, lack of respect for others, pride, self-centeredness—all qualities of the false friend.

The poet seems to equate falseness with variability, the subject of stanza three, concluding that in a mutable world men cannot be expected to be stable. `impossibilia are used in circumlocution for `never in stanza four, to help define when we can seek peace in `lond and in mankind:

```
Whane brome wyll appolles bere,
& humlok hony in feere,
ban sek rest in lond.
With men is no pees;
No rest in hart is, no lese,
With few be see & sond.
(11. 19-24, p. 149)
```

The poet has used the variability of the universe to define or clarify the variability of men in stanzas three and four. The false
friend is further defined by the true friend in the final stanza, which ends with a prayer:

    Sythyn þer is no rest,
    I hold it for þe best,
        god to be owre frend.
    he þat ys owre lord,
    delyuer vs ouzt with hys word,
    & gravnt vs good ende!

(11. 25-30, p. 149)

While false friendship has been suggested as the specific subject of Index 4236, it could be argued that the poem presents the words of a woman whose lover has been untrue and who decides to choose Christ as her friend. Nevertheless, it cannot be argued that the author of the poem shows a particular fondness for paradox; he includes several judgmental paradoxes in stanza two and impossibilia in stanza four, all to define the nature of this world, specifically its variability and the transitoriness of virtue. Three other poems may be briefly mentioned which unquestionably focus on false friendship as a specific moral evil, and two of these poems, like Index 4236, associate the transitoriness of friendship with the transitoriness of the world in general.

Index 356 opens in the manner of a chanson d'aventure, an unusual opening for the poems considered in this chapter (though not for the religious poems considered in Chapter Three):

    As I me lend to a lend,
    I herd a schepperde makyn a schowte;
    he gronyd & seyde with sory syghyng,
        A lord, how gos þis word a-bowte!

(Histor, #60, 11. 1-4, p. 147)

The refrain of the poem (11. 4, 12, 20, 28) associates false friendship with transitoriness in general; and the association is strongly suggested in the fifth stanza which could easily describe Fortune:18
Now wel, now wo, now frend, now foo;
Now lef, now bef, now in, now out;
Now cum, now go, now to, now fro—
A lord, how gos his word a-bowte!
(11. 17-20, p. 147)

The contraries of heart and mouth (which imply the judgmental paradox of "seems X, is Y") must have been traditionally associated with deceit (see Index 3420, l. 9) and specifically associated with false friendship. These contraries are suggested in the final lines of Index 356:

but god of hem you take sum wreche,
& a-rest hem alle be rowt;
bat false arn & fayre cun speke--
A Lord, how gos his word a-bowte!
(11. 25-28, p. 148)

The same contraries are emphasized in another poem on false friendship (Index 3892), whose second and final stanza reads:

Wol god bat alle suche
had a marke lyte ober moche
bat al men myzt y-knowe
how here hert & mozt
stent as ryzt as norpe & sowpe
to pylke hy but sowe.
(XV, #174, 11. 7-12, p. 268)

They are also used to define the doubleness and deceit of friendship in Index 4092:

MS. Rawlinson D. 82
Wo hath bat conyng by wysdam or prudence
To know whether his frende be feynt or stable?
Ther ys no creature, I trow, bat hath bat science
To know his ffrende--be world ys so mutable,
And ffrenship ys double and vary disseyvable;
The mowthe seythe ane, be hert binketh anoper
Allas to say, hit ys full lementable,
Vnneneth a man now may truste his owne broper.
(XIV-XV, #109, p. 101)
In defining false friendship or the variability of friendship, then, both contraries and paradox are used. In Index 356 false friendship is described in terms parallel to those used to define fortune or transitoriness (the "now X, now Y" formula). Friends are said to be double and this is defined in a "seems X, is Y" judgmental paradox: what they seem, through the mouth, is not what they are, in the heart (Index 356, Index 3420, Index 4092). Judgmental paradoxes (such as, trust is full of treason) define the moral degeneration of the world in general, but false friendship in particular in Index 4236. This poem also uses impossibilities to define when the world and men will lack variability. The same poem uses contraries in still another way: one contrary is used to define the other. The world helps define men—inexact contraries, and the false friend helps define the true friend, God.

Judgmental and logical paradoxes are used extensively to define the general decay of moral virtue in the topos of the world upside down. Many lyrics, those considered in Section A of this part of the chapter, are composed solely of a series of such paradoxes in various combinations and arrangements. In such a series, one contrary, the abuse, is used to define the other, the ideal, which, of course, is implied in the reversal-type contrary which is characteristic of the topos of the world upside down. Three poems vary the series form somewhat: one adds a refrain, and two are characterized by a unity by contraries: the antiphrase poem (Index 2805) and the punctuation poem (Index 2364). Contraries in form or structure (unity by contraries, word-play based on contraries, circumlocution with impossibilities) are somewhat rare in poems whose subject is general moral decay or the transitoriness of virtue.
The same will be found to be true in the poems whose subject is the transitoriness, hence vanity, of earthly joys and pursuits.

II. The Transitoriness of Human Life, Joys, and Pursuits

In the first part of this chapter, the subject of the lyrics considered, the transitoriness of virtue, or moral degeneration, was defined primarily by means of judgmental and logical paradoxes. In this second part of the chapter, the subject of the lyrics is the transitoriness, hence vanity, of this life and human joys and pursuits, and (in most cases) the relationship of man's conduct to the fact of transitoriness and vanity. The subject itself is defined, generally, not by means of paradox but by contraries in nonparadoxical relationship; that is, by one contrary following the other. Judgmental paradox, however, does function explicitly in a few poems and implicitly in others, for example, to define a recommended course of action. Furthermore, judgmental paradox underlies the division of this part of the chapter into two major sections: didactic poems and nondidactic poems. The poems considered in Section A (didactic poems) are characterized by the view that this life is designed only as a preparation for the next; the course of action recommended in these poems is rejection of all things worldly (this teaching, of course, based on an emphasis on man's divine nature). Such a view and course of action would be considered to be paradoxical by the speakers in the poems analyzed in Section B (the nondidactic poems); the speakers in these poems display, in varying degrees, higher expectations of this life, attachment to worldly things, or puzzlement over man's place in the universe in view of the
transitoriness of all things. In the poems analyzed in Section B, the transitoriness and vanity of all things is not simply a fact to be accepted, it is a judgmental paradox; it contradicts the propositions, generally held, that some aspects (at least) of this life are or should be worthwhile and that man should find some peace or reward in this life (this attitude being based on an emphasis of man's human nature).

A. Didactic Poems

From the viewpoint of the authors of the didactic lyrics to be considered in the five subsections of this section of the chapter, the transitoriness, hence vanity, of all human goods, endeavors, and even human life itself is not a paradox; it is a fact, illustrated every day by experience--by the changes of fortune, by falls from high to low, and particularly by death. The didactic lyricists focus on the subject of transitoriness and the theme of vanity in order to urge their audiences to recognize vanity, perceive the nature of this life, follow common sense, repent, and perform good works. Obviously, a great need was perceived for such reminders of vanity and the resulting need for repentance and good works, as evidenced by the large number of extant lyrics with the same purpose, and by the wide preservation of many individual lyrics.

The first five subsections of this section of the chapter treat examples of didactic lyrics which make use of the theme of vanity to urge either practical conduct (section one); new actions with heaven as the goal (section two), or repentance (section three). Poems with one of these purposes but which place an emphasis on the paradoxicality (from
the lyricist's point of view) of man's refusal to reject the things of this life are included in section four. Those poems which present paradoxical courses of action to the Christian (paradoxical from his point of view, considering the earthly aspects of his nature) are considered in section five. Some of the lyrics which will be discussed in the first four subdivisions of this section of the chapter touch upon but do not pursue some of the paradoxes which their traditional teaching (give up this world for the next) creates for the ordinary Christian, in particular, that he is of the world (human nature) but must reject the things of the world (by virtue of his spiritual nature). The lyrics discussed in subsection five present in their teaching obvious judgmental paradoxes: that the Christian must not only accept changes of fortune and the transitoriness of all things, he must thank God for all sorrows which come his way; he must not only be prepared for death, he should welcome it, for death is life; he must accept his place in the universe without question, for even his disputations and efforts to understand God's workings in the universe are vanity and labor lost.

The paradox generally not recognized by the didactic poets (but which is really the remote cause of the lyrics they have written) is that of human nature itself, which may be viewed as being composed of contradictory parts, the soul and the body, the intellect and the will, or perhaps of reason and emotion. While the higher aspects of man's nature may aspire to the ideal, the lower aspects remain attached to the things of this earth.
1. Short Moral Sawes

This subsection of the chapter contains brief discussions of a few short moral sawes, or proverbial verses, and contains more detailed analyses of two such sayings. These lyrics are included because they illustrate one popular type of poem whose subject is transitoriness and whose theme is the vanity of all things. In some proverbial sayings the advice is simply practical (don't waste earthly goods), in some that advice is somewhat obliquely directed to salvation (we "have" only what we do for Christ's love).

One of the most well-known devices used to illustrate the transitory nature of the things of this life, in all types of lyrics and in other Middle English literature, is the topos of Lady Fortune, or fortune's wheel, as typically presented in the following widely preserved lyric of moral advice (Index 3408):19

Camb. Univ. MS. Oo. 7. 32
be leuedi fortune is bope frend and fo,
Of pore che makit riche, of riche pore also,
Che turnez wo al into wele, and wele al into wo,
No triste no man to his wele, be whel it turnet so.
(XIV, #42, p. 56)

The poem opens with what I have called apparent paradox, that is, a verbal paradox created by the poet but then solved within the poem. In this case the paradox consists of the designation of the Lady in the first line as both friend and foe, presumably at the same time. The paradox is solved in the following lines, where the poet presents Fortune's friendship and enmity as being directed to separate parties, not simultaneously present (she makes the poor rich, as a friend, and the rich poor, as an enemy, l. 2). Furthermore, the poet presents the
results of her friendship and enmity as alternating: the two clauses of line three may be read as specifying what has been stated in line two; that is, the first clause specifies fortune's action toward the poor and the second described her action toward the rich; however, the and also denotes a series, and thus the line represents the turning of the wheel of fortune—woe to weal to woe. (In much the same way the authors of the love lyrics considered in Chapter One sometimes solved the apparent paradox that they had created: that love consists of both joy and woe.) Thus the poet uses contraries in nonparadoxical relationship to define fortune and her power and effects. With a play on the word wele in the last line (both weal and wheel), the poet gives his advice: trust not to your benefits or to fortune in general.

The vanity of this worlde and the foolishness of trusting in fortune are pointed out in the following lyric (Index 3909), in which the author makes his observation in order to advise men to "tak heed of prodigalite," presumably, to be frugal so that they will not have to regret their extravagance in the poverty (mystery) of old age:

MS. Douce 45
What is this worlde but oonly vanyte?
Who trustith fortune sonnest hath a falle.
Ech man tak heed of prodigalite,
Weth that is past no man agayn may calle.
The grenowst wounds pat euer man had or schalle
Is to thynk on weth pat is gon and past,
And in olde age in mystery to be cast.
(XV, #168, p. 260)

Advice to the contrary is given in other short lyrics, one a thirteenth-century poem (Index 740) which simply notes that you can't take it with you:
Bodleian Library MS. Rawlinson C 22
Eueriche freman hath to ben hende,
for to be Large of bat him crist sende;
bat it es al ydon that come to ben ende,
a haues naman of his werld bot gnedeliche his Lenge.
(XIII, #57, p. 113)

A later poem offering essentially the same advice (not to hoard earthly possessions) is particularly noteworthy because its advice is expressed paradoxically (Index 3209);

Caius Coll. Cambridge MS. 261
Spende, and god schal sende;
spare, and ermor care;
non peni, non ware;
non catel, non care.
go, peni, go.
(XIV-XV, #60, p. 57)

The advice is presented in such a way that it appears to be (and in fact is) paradoxical; that is, its propositions are judgmental paradoxes: that by spending all our money we will be provided for, and that by conserving it we will have nothing but worries (this last contradicts, for example, the common-sense advice on prodigality in Index 3909). The poem may be inspired by the Biblical lesson of the lilies of the field, or it may simply present the practical observation that money and possessions inevitably bring with them cares and troubles.

The poem is especially well-constructed. The first and last words of both lines one and two rhyme with each other, making even more obvious the cause-effect relationship the poet has set up (spende/sende, spare/care), but also making more noticeable the paradoxical relationship between spending and having and sparing and not having, respectively. The last line, beginning and ending with go, reflects the circular form of the first two lines; the beginning and end of each
of these lines is joined not only by rhyme but also by almost identical words, there being, for example, only one letter's difference between spende and sende. This circular effect seems especially appropriate in the poem since it is really about the vicious circle of materialism: men gather possessions in order to better their lives but the result is often a failure to relieve (or even a heightening of) the original concern over material well-being. The proper simplification of this wasteful activity seems to be reflected in the no-nonsense cause-effect relationships presented in lines three and four. An interesting play on words also occurs in line three where ware may mean both merchandise and watchful care. If ware is understood as the latter it is parallel in meaning with care of line four, and line four may be seen as a simple repetition of line three, with the dictum: no possessions, no worries. However, if ware is interpreted as merchandise, the two lines together present the progression (or lack of it) from no money (peni) to no material goods (ware, catel) to no worries (care).

The advice of the following fifteenth-century poem (Index 3660), based on the poet's observation that "warldly Ioy is onely fantasy," seems to be directed to those who foolishly think they can determine what will happen to their worldly goods when they die:

MS. Arch. Seld. B. 24
This warldly Ioy Is onely fantasy, of quhich none erdly wicht can be content. Quho most has wit, leste suld In It affy, Quho talistis It most, most sall him repent. Quhat vallis all this richess and this rent, Sin no man wate quho sall his tresour haue? Presume nocht gevin pat god has done bot lent-- Within schort tyme the quhiche he thinkis to craue. Leaulte vault richess.
(XV, #167, p. 260)
The reminder that after our deaths others will have what we have worked for is a topos much used in the moral lyrics to illustrate the theme of the vanity of earthly goods and pursuits. This topos is joined with a more familiar one, the reminder that we come into the world naked and poor and will leave it the same way, both perhaps familiar to the lyricist through Ecclesiastes, in the following fourteenth-century poem (Index 190):

Camb. Univ. MS. Ee. 1. 5
Al it is fantam hat we mid fare.
Naked and poure hemne we shul fare,
Al shal ben ober mannès hat we fore care,
But hat we don for godes loue haue we no mare.
(XIV, #43, p. 56)

The short poems considered have two things in common: their subject is transitoriness and they offer some words of wisdom based on the fact of transitoriness, the wisdom ranging from practical to philosophical. They do not represent, however, the most common use of the subject of transitoriness, which is found in the longer didactic poems of the period. Their primary purpose is to urge a reconsideration of priorities: either the performance of good works or repentance in general, this reconsideration based upon the fact that all goods and earthly pursuits are transitory, hence vain (fantasy, fantom, vanity, in the words of the lyricists).

2. Poems Which Offer the Consolation of Heaven

In the second group of poems to be discussed in this section of the chapter, each lyric offers the Christian consolation (eventual eternal happiness) for transitoriness and vanity, but gives little attention to the fact that the vanity of all things may seem a
judgmental paradox to some men. Four poems will be considered in this subsection: Index 3151, "Sen trew vertew encrestis dignytee"; Index 4083, "While þou hast gode & getest gode"; Index 3410, "The law of god be to þe thy rest"; and Index 3310, "Uuere beþ þey biforen vs weren."

Many of the lyrics in this group make use of the contraries so natural to their purpose: true good versus false good, sorrow versus joy, this life versus the next. This is especially true of "Sen trew vertew encrestis dignytee" (Index 3151, Appendix). In the first part of the poem a contrast is implied between true and false virtue, dignity, and nobility. The use of the word encrestis in the first line may indicate that the poem is addressed to those already possessing dignytee, the upper classes, although the term may conceivably refer to simple human dignity.

That the poem was originally addressed to an aristocratic audience is further suggested by the implication in the word weill in line three that the audience possesses good fortune, by the use of French terms (dignytee, noblay, esstat, vanitee), and by the formal rhyme scheme, rhyme royale (carefully constructed so that the same three rhymes are used in each stanza). The lesson on true dignity and nobility recalls the hag's definition of gentilesse in The Wife of Bath's Tale; also reminiscent of her tale is this poem's use of homely wisdom and proverbs to convey its message to the aristocracy. Note, for example, the proverbial nature of the refrain, "And for ilk yncn he wyll quyte a spane"; part of line nineteen, "Stamp or yow slyd"; part of line fifteen, "Word is thrall and that is only free"; line twelve, "Labor in trewh quhill licht is of the day"; and line eleven, "ffor of grene gres
sone cumis wallowit hay," which in one form or another is found in many
lyrics which deal with the transitoriness of all things. Thus the poem
as a whole displays an interesting unity of contrary aristocratic and
homely qualities of style.

The theme of the worthlessness of this world is expressed initially in the implied contrasts of the first two lines. But contraries function explicitly (if sometimes less directly connected with the theme of the poem as a whole) in many lines of the lyric: floure and
rut (1. 2), a phrase used in several other lyrics notably some addressed
to the Blessed Virgin; exile and follow, vice and truth (1. 5); inch and
span (refrain); comes and passes away (1. 9); green grass and withered
hay (1. 12); word and thought, thrall and free (1. 15); stamp and slide
(1. 19). The contraries in line nine, green grass and withered hay,
express metaphorically and at the same time by example the transitori-
ness of all earthly things; and those in lines five and nineteen define
proper Christian conduct. The contraries in the refrain, "and for ilk
ynch he wyll the quyte a spane," introduce one of the traditional
theological paradoxes, that while God is all-merciful and all-just, his
mercy exceeds his justice. The refrain is also interesting as a revers-
al of the proverb concerning the man who given an inch will take a mile;
God, in contrast, will repay with a span when given only an inch.20

The lyric expresses the vanity of earthly things most clearly in
stanza two. As in other lyrics which urge the Christian consolation
to vanitee (1. 17), the word itself carries specialized connotations
dependent in part on the morality taught by the Church. It means not
only fleeting and transitory, but also vain, empty, false, devoid of
worth, unreal, untrue. The Christian solution pervades every stanza of
the poem. But there is seemingly no recognition in the lyric of any
paradoxicality of vanitee, of any conflict established due to the
relationship between man's natural desire for stability and security
and his recognition that all is transitory, or of the conflict between
his earthly attachments and the teachings that the things of this life
must be rejected for the unknown, which must be accepted solely on
faith.

Another lyric which expresses the Christian consolation for the
vanity of all things is the fifteenth-century "While thou hast gode &
getest gode" (Index 4083, Appendix). As in the poem just discussed,
there appears to be little direct recognition in this lyric of any
paradoxicality in the vanity of all things. The poem is especially
interesting because it makes its point entirely through contraries (the
point that one must reject the things of this life and do good here on
earth in order to win heaven). The author defines true good by compar­
ing and contrasting it with its contrary, earthly good, and with its con­
tradictory, lack of good (or as he once calls the contradictory in a
striking oxymoron, evil gode [1.27]). From the point of view of this
lyricist, and from the orthodox Christian viewpoint, good may be consid­
ered a logically paradoxical word, that is, a word which means one thing
but is also used to refer to its direct contradictory (this use in 1.
27): (1) true good, God, heaven, eternal reward; (2) lack of good,
evil gode as the poet puts it, generally referred to simply as evil.
But as a noun gode has five other possible meanings in the poem, the
first of which is the contrary of (1) noted above: (3) false good, such
as money, material possessions, known as goods (but never referred to in the plural in this poem); paradoxically these false goods may be used for a good end, but they become evil when enjoyed as ends in themselves; (4) earthly good, meaning less tangible blessings such as peace, happiness; (5) good deeds or right actions or human goodness, which will earn eternal rewards; (6) good in general, the adjective used as a noun to mean "that which is good"; (7) gode as the proper name, God.21 God is used not only as a noun in the seven senses noted, but also as a simple adjective, predicate adjective, and once perhaps even as an adverb (1. 40).

In its word-play the poem is reminiscent of "That hart my hart hath in suche grace" (Index 3271, Appendix), discussed in Chapter Two, but its riddling is more complex. Much of its interest lies in determining its meaning by sorting out and interpreting the meanings of gode, used sixty-four times in its forty lines. In almost all cases the meaning of gode is clear; there is, however, fruitful ambiguity in at least seven instances: line two, where gode may mean either good man or goods, or perhaps, ironically, both; the first gode in line seven and the gode in line nine where the meaning is deepened if gode is understood as both goods and good deeds; line sixteen where gode may mean both God and eternal good or reward; line twenty where the faith and good works problem (which is necessary for salvation?) is introduced in the ambiguity of gode meaning God, specifically the Redeemer, or good deeds; gode in line twenty-nine may refer to he who is good or that which is good; and the first gode in lines thirty-nine and forty may be interpreted as either goodness in general (human goodness in line
The poet delights not only in creating ambiguities but also in formulating verbal contradictions, apparent paradoxes, which are solved
within the context of the poem and of Christian theology, with a recognition of the possible meanings of *gode* in the English language. For example, in the first stanza (1.10) the poet declares that "gode wil worche be woo" (unless "pe godes grounde be gode"). It is contrary to common sense to believe that what is good causes woe; however, according to Christian teaching, earthly goods, unless rejected or used to work good, will cause eternal suffering. They are vain or false goods if they become ends in themselves. This teaching introduces into the poem a judgmental paradox associated with the vanity of all things: some false goods may indeed be good, and need not be rejected (in fact, they may help one gain salvation). Similar to the apparent paradox formed in stanza one is the paradox in line thirteen "gode was neuer gode" ("but gode pat wil man save," 1.14), which is repeated in line thirty. This statement also appears to be nonsense until its qualifiers (11.14, 29) indicate that the *gode* referred to is earthly goods which are only good if used properly.

In stanza three, the oxymoron *evil gode* is created as another apparent paradox, partially explained in line twenty-eight as the *gode* for which man lost the bliss of the garden of Eden (thereby proving itself to be an evil good). Yet this apparent paradox introduces the deeper apparent paradox involving sin and man's seemingly unnatural choice of evil over good (paradoxical from the standpoint that man, created in the image and likeness of God, should choose only good). Theologically, the paradox is solved by the idea of deception: man, deceived, sometimes chooses what appears to him to be good, but actually
may not be. Also, according to Catholic theology, evil has no existence of its own, it is simply an absence or lack of good. Thus, the poet can call the object or end of man's choice in the garden a gode, but one which was evil (lacked good), that is, one which only appeared to be good. There is also the possibility that evil gode as the choice may also refer to Satan, an evil god. Still the term is self-contradictory since god generally includes the idea of all-goodness. In the term evil gode, then, the word gode is at its most paradoxical since the totally contradictory ideas of goodness and lack of goodness must function at the same time.

At least two other somewhat nonsensical statements are dependent on multiple (though not contradictory) meanings of gode for their solution. The circular definition in line twenty-nine, "gode is þat gode doth," may mean that a good man is he who does good, or good is that which does good (referring to proper use of earthly goods). In the tautological line thirty-five, "ken þi gode & know þi gode," a variety of interpretations are possible with either instance of gode meaning God, eternal reward, earthly goods (neutral or false), or good deeds. In addition, a cause-effect relationship may or may not be implied between the two clauses.

The delicate balance which the Christian must maintain with regard to earthly possessions or other benefits is implied in the poem through contradictory assessments of the value of earthly goods. The first part of stanza three (ll. 21-26) clearly indicates that worldly possessions may be a cause of good ("To doo gode god zaf þe gode"). But the
first few lines of stanza four would indicate that all earthly goods are to be rejected:

A slipr gode is erthlī gode,
    for bat gode wil away;
goddīs gode is euer gode,
    & ober gode is fāy;
    . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
(11. 31-34)

Fāy is glossed by Carleton Brown as deadly, fatal. Erthlī gode in (1. 31) may refer to both material possessions and to the less tangible blessings. If this ober gode is fatal, man must reject it outright. Yet, how is he to maintain his own life? How can he use his goods to perform good works if he has rejected them? Are all blessings such as good health and peace also to be rejected? What exactly is the fatal earthly good and what is goddis gode? The poem only touches upon these practical problems faced by the Christian, and its teaching in this respect is by no means clear. Likewise, rather than define gode the word-play in the poem in a sense emphasizes the paradoxicality of the vanity of all things by revealing man's attachments to things of this world and his search for the permanent in this life--his language reflects that he does not make distinctions among earthly possessions, intangible blessings, proper conduct, heavenly reward, all of which he calls gode, nor does he recognize evil as such (instead he chooses it as good).

The Christian teaching to reject all earthly things is clearly expressed in the following lyric (Index 3410):
B.M. Addit. MS. 37788
The law of god be to be thy rest,
The flesh by sacrifice, be world exile,
God thi love & thi tresour best,
Hevyn þi contre thorogh every while.
Repentaunce þou take in-to þi brest
for þyn vnkynnesse & wikkidness vile,
And abide at þi selff withinne þi nest
lest vndir pite thou be trapped with gile,
Except at som-while as a hasty gest
þu stert to do good but thorogh no long mile.
Have do, glutoun, fle to this fest!
for here-In of al wynnyng lyth crosse & pile.
(XV, ¶192, p. 291)

Contraries are an important means of conveying the point of the
lyricist. In the first line the poet urges his audience to make the law
of God their rest and he explicitly urges rejection of the flesh and the
world in line two. The contraries are not explicitly expressed in lines
three and four but rather are implied in his description of God as thi
love and thi tresour and of heaven as þi contre, terms which at once
call to mind their earthly, transitory counterparts (a reflective use of
contraries). Like "While þou has gode," this poem merely hints at the
practical judgmental paradoxes which face the Christian (11. 7-10) when
it urges the audience (in a somewhat unclear passage) to care for their
own souls first but at the same time to perform good works for others.
(This passage seems to touch upon the much debated relationship among
faith, good works, and salvation.) The technique of exposition by con­
traries is continued in the final two lines. The lyricist urges the
collective audience, paradoxically, to haue do (leave their gluttony)
but at the same time to flee to a feast (1. 11). This is another
instance of the apparent paradox, easily solved when the feast is under­
stood as its otherworldly contrary, heavenly good or reward. The final
line of the poem describes heaven, previously referred to as a feast, in terms related to gambling (or at least monetary matters), a strange mixture of metaphors, but indicative of the poet's pains to show the great contrast between this world and the next. *Crosse and pile* refers to the heads and tails of a coin. The word *wynnyng* may indicate gambling, winning at a toss of a coin, or, simply, reward or gain in general. If the second possible meaning of *wynnyng* is understood, the image becomes logically paradoxical because in the toss of a coin either heads or tails must prevail. The poet may be saying that heaven is indeed paradoxical (logically or judgmentally) in terms of our finite experience and thinking. In some of the secular lyrics discussed it was pointed out that the lyricists often describe heaven or eternity as the end of alternating contraries (joy and woe, war and peace), which is judgmentally paradoxical, according to our own experience. In the poem under discussion, the poet may be understood as refining that conception somewhat by describing heaven as the place where logical paradox (contradiction from our point of view) exists, where at the toss of a coin both heads and tails prevail. Even if *wynnyng* is interpreted in a more general sense as gain the coin image presented in the line is still representative of logical paradox. The coin at once contains direct contraries (heads and tails, up and down, etc.) and as such may be intended as a visual representation of that which unites contraries, contains all things, resolves (or makes understandable to us) all paradox—a suitable, if not aesthetically appealing, image of heaven or the afterlife. The image of the coin also may bring to mind the wealth of heaven to be contrasted with the transitory
riches of this life, and as such it brings the lyric full circle, to the contraries, especially tresour (l. 3), which open the poem.

Heaven is also described as paradoxical in terms of our human experience in the sixty-line, thirteenth-century poem which, from the evidence of existing texts, was one of the more popular moral lyrics of the period: "Uuere beþ beþ biforen vs weren" (Index 3310, Appendix). Like the other lyrics considered thus far in the chapter, this poem conveys the Christian consolation for the vanity of all things through the use of contraries, especially the contraries of past and present or present and future, suffering and reward, and change or transitoriness versus eternity.

The contraries of past and present function at the beginning of the poem in what has been called the ubi sunt section. For ten lines the poet describes sympathetically the glories of those who have gone before, asking in the first line, "Uuere beþ beþ . . .?" The first stanza may be considered an expansion of the question, with specific detail presenting an aristocratic picture: they led hounds and bore hawks, they controlled fields and woods, their rich ladies with bright complexions kept gold in their treasuries. The first part of the second stanza expands the description, but not in the question form. But even though the form has changed somewhat the audience is unprepared for the concluding lines of stanza two: "And in a twincling of on eye / Hoere soules weren forloren" (ll. 11-12), juxtaposed as this moral pronouncement is with such a romantic portrayal of the temporal joys of those who went before. Line eleven serves a double purpose. Not only
does "in a twincling of on eye" function as a traditional expression used to indicate a very short interval of time, it may also describe how or why the souls were lost; that is, they were lost through the sensuous life, perhaps greed or lechery, appropriately symbolized by twinkling of the eye. In the first three lines of the third stanza the poet returns to his questioning, stanza one beginning *uvere heb* and stanza three beginning *were is*. The return to stanza one is completed in the reference to hawks and hounds in line fifteen. The questions and interpretation, which occupied two stanzas initially, are compacted into one stanza (the third), as the poet clearly indicates that the joy of the past has turned to sorrow in the present (ll. 16-18).

Past and present join with the contraries of suffering and reward in stanza four as the poet's answer to his question *ubi sunt?* becomes more specific:

> *Hoere paradis hy nomen here,*  
>   *And nou þey lien in helle I-fere.* (ll. 19-20)

Paradise on earth (rewards of the past) are contrasted with hell (punishment of the present) and the contrast is reinforced with the designations of *here* (this life, their past) and *nou* (the next life, their present). The third pair of contraries, transitoriness versus eternity, also functions in this stanza. Eternal punishment, emphasized by *heuer* (l. 21) and *neuere* (l. 24) is contrasted with the images of transitoriness presented in the preceding stanzas, but especially, it would seem, with the image of the brief "twincling of on eye." The poet seems to catch the misery of eternal punishment, unending and repetitious as it is supposed to be, in lines twenty-two and twenty-three:
Long is ay and long is ho,  
Long is wy and long is wo.

The nonsense syllables even suggest moaning. But the first and last ay meaning every, and wo meaning of course suffering and misery, also reinforce the poet's warning. The repetition of Long at the beginning of each parallel phrase also contributes to both the meaning and ominous effect of the warning.

The relationship between the enjoyment of this life and reward or punishment in the next (the subject of the first four stanzas) is clarified in the fifth stanza. Pleasure here will lead to suffering there ("wele is comen to weylaway," 1. 17), as the poet indicates in the question-answer alternation of the ubi sunt section of the poem. In stanza five the poet implies that suffering here will lead to reward there. He also introduces but dismisses promptly one of the practical judgmental paradoxes involved in Christian living as a result of traditional teaching:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Withdraw you eyes oft,} & \quad \text{(ease)} \\
\text{by you pain be own-rede,} & \\
\text{And you penke on } & \quad \text{(mede)} \\
\text{Hit sal be blinken softe.} & \\
\end{align*}
\]

(11. 27-30)

Not only must the Christian recognize the valuelessness and transitoriness of the pleasures of this life, he must deliberately withdraw from ease and choose instead severe pain (the choice supposedly made simple by the consolation of eternal reward, or, perhaps, by the thought of eternal punishment, depending on the interpretation of mede).

The contraries of transitoriness and eternity again become central in stanza nine which describes that myrie londe (1. 48) which the poet
contrasts with the false or transitory *paradis* (l. 19) enjoyed on earth by those who have lost their souls:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{bere-inne is day wipouten nizt,} \\
\text{Wip-outen ende strenkpe and mizt,} \\
\text{And wreche of euerich fo,} \\
\text{Mid god him-selwen eche lif,} \\
\text{And pes and rest wipoute strif,} \\
\text{Wele wipouten wo.} \\
\end{align*}
\]

(11. 49-54)

Heaven is described as paradoxical in terms of our experience on earth, since it is customary to view earthly affairs in terms of an unending alternation of contraries. The contrast between transitoriness and eternity is made by implication in the stanza as a whole, that is, by the mere fact that the poet has chosen to describe heaven as the land where all change ceases. The poet has carefully chosen the contraries he includes in the stanza with an eye to the poem as a whole both thematically and structurally. The last line of the stanza directly recalls but contrasts directly with the earlier description of the earthly paradise where "wele is comen to weylaway" (l. 17). The phrase *Wip-outen ende strenkpe and mizt* also brings to mind the earthly paradise described at the beginning of the poem where power and riches and frenetic activity are described and where youth is implied—all of which are transitory, in contrast to the eternal vigor of the true *myrie londe*. The description of heaven in line fifty-three, "And pes and rest wipoute strif," is especially interesting since it introduces into this stanza explicitly and not solely by implication the contraries of transitoriness and eternity which are central in the poem as a whole: *strif* aptly describes the alternation or tension of contraries which characterizes this life, while peace and rest traditionally are
associated with lack of change, tranquility, timelessness, happiness, eternity.

Peace and rest without strife and strength and might without end are related to the poem as a whole in still another way. Peace, rest, strife, strength, and might are included in the vocabulary of war or battle, as are foe and avengement, also mentioned in the stanza (l. 51). Thus the stanza, while recalling in both a general and specific way the ubi sunt or beginning section of the poem, is especially appropriate following the middle section of the poem (stanzas six through eight) where battle imagery is consistently utilized to describe man's appropriate reaction to temptation. Following St. Paul, the poet, in this middle section, urges the reader to be god chaunpioun (l. 34), to take the cross as his staf (l. 37), true belief as his sheld and strengthen his hond (l. 45) to hold the devil, the fo (ll. 41, 46), at staues ord (l. 46) in order to wreck Christ (l. 42) when tempted here on earth, in the poet's words, in bat feld (l. 44). The battle imagery is continued in the final stanza of the poem when the poet asks Mary to be our sheld against the fiend.

The poem seems to fall naturally into three sections. The first or ubi sunt section is structured on the alternation of question with answer or interpretation, first between two stanzas, then within the third. Also within this section are stanzas four and five which contrast sharply with one through three in tone. The first three stanzas are reflective and conceivably melancholy, even with the final lines of stanzas two and three; however, the next two stanzas are explicitly didactic, clearly presenting Christian teaching on earthly pleasures,
the subject of the preceding stanzas. The second section, including stanzas six through eight united by battle imagery, advises men to fight temptation (symbolized by the devil). Though there is no explicit connection between these two parts of the poem (such as unity of imagery, direct verbal echoes) this section seems to make more specific and forceful the poet's urging to the audience in stanza five to withdraw from a life of ease: the withdrawal may not be simple if the fiend begins to cast one down, so direct attack, rather than simple withdrawal, may be necessary. The last section of the poem is the single stanza prayer to the Blessed Mother, asking her help in the battle. Several other moral and religious lyrics fall into three similar sections which correspond to the traditional steps of private devotion: composition of place, analysis, colloquy. Such a structure, composed of setting, reflection, prayer, reflects a natural progression of thought, and the lyrics which are so structured should not be regarded as ununified. Rather, they may be considered as reflecting a paradoxical unity, or unity by contraries.

Stanza ten, in which heaven is described in terms of an end to the alternation of contraries or the end of the transitoriness of day, strength, might, peace, and rest, the most obviously paradoxical stanza of the poem, is pivotal in the structure and meaning of the poem. Continuing the battle imagery of section two of the poem and contributing to the Christian consolation for the vanity of all things, it unites the first two sections of the poem. The stanza also serves as a transition to the prayer, which is also united to section two through battle imagery of the shield and mention of the fiend. The last line of
stanza nine, "wele wip-outen wo" (l. 54) parallels "joye wip-outen hende" (l. 60) and, as a description of heaven, seems to lead naturally into the prayer to the Blessed Mother, traditionally acclaimed as the gate to heaven. Stanza ten is also pivotal because it completes the contrast central to the poem between false paradise described in the first two stanzas and true paradise. It is thematically essential, as noted earlier, because it expresses the Christian teaching that eternal life reverses the transitoriness of this life and to an extent makes up for the loss of the pleasures available in this life, loss through natural alternation of contraries, or loss through direct rejection as the poet urges in stanza five.

In the four poems considered in this subsection we find that contraries in nonparadoxical relationship are used to define transitoriness: in Index 3151, green grass and whithered hay, comes and passes away; in Index 3310, wele and welaway. In Index 3151, God's mercy is defined through the contraries of inch and span. Proper Christian conduct is defined by means of contraries in Index 3151: stamp and slide, exile vice and follow truth. Conduct is also defined by means of paradox, for example, the judgmental paradox in Index 3310 that man should withdraw from the life of ease and that this will be easy (this corresponds to one of the judgmental paradoxes which defines the effect of love for Christ in some of the poems to be considered in Chapter Three). Another paradox which defines proper conduct is the apparent paradox in Index 3410: have done, glutton, and flee to the feast. Heaven is celebrated by means of paradox in Index 3410 (cross and pile) and in Index 3310 (day without night, etc.).
One contrary defines the other in Index 3310 in which the *ubi sunt* passage is countered by a description of the unending joys of heaven. True good, false good, evil good, earthly goods (both evil and good) define one another in Index 4083. Only one contrary is present but the other is implied in Index 3151, which defines true virtue, dignity, and nobility. One contrary is defined in language generally applied to its corresponding contrary (reflective use of contraries) in Index 3410, when the poet suggests we make God our love and treasure, and heaven our country, and in Index 3310, in which heaven is celebrated as stabilizing the change from wele to woe, from peace and rest to strife, from strength to weakness, from day to night (changes which characterize earthly transitoriness).

Finally, we find some instances of contraries in form, especially in Index 3310 with its tripartite structure, and in Index 4083 with its word-play and creation of apparent paradoxes.

3. Poems Which Stress Repentance

In the poems considered thus far in the chapter lyricists have attempted to give some consolation for the transitoriness and vanity of this life. For example, the lyricists have described heaven or the afterlife as the end of the alternating contraries of joy and woe in this life, or as the true good which will replace all transitory goods, or, in general, as the place where reward will make up for the sufferings we endure in this world. The poems have placed an emphasis on positive action on the audience's part to earn the bliss of heaven: loving God, laboring in truth, fleeing from worldly vanities, withdrawing from a
life of ease, actively fighting temptations. A second group of didactic lyrics, to be considered in this subsection of the chapter, concentrate on the transitoriness of earthly joys with no attention to the consolation of the contrary, eternal happiness: Index 563, "Bi a wode as I gon ryde"; Index 3996, "Whon Men beo muriest at heor Mele"; Index 2070, "Man mei longehim liues wene"; Index 2302, "Nou Bernes, Buirdus bolde and blype"; Index 2057, "Man, hef in mynd & mend ði mys."

These lyrics, representative of an extensive group, focus our attention on death, as the ultimate proof of the vanity of all things. In contrast to the first group of poems considered, which urge specific positive actions, these poems simply urge repentance, somewhat unspecified. Since these poems offer no rationale for the nature of man's life as they present it (generally characterized by swift and unexplained changes of fortune, and always overshadowed by the presence of the enemy, death), and even in most cases no consolation for this type of existence on earth, they might be considered by some to present an almost absurd view of human existence, judgmentally paradoxical in the sense that this type of universe contradicts what man considers to be reasonable in the abstract, as distinct from what experience tells him is true. The plea for repentance which is characteristic of these lyrics does, however, imply some relief from suffering and the existence of a presumably benevolent and rational higher power. Nevertheless, many of the didactic poems to be considered in this part of the chapter give a bleak picture of human existence, in part created by two common techniques. One is the use of long lists of sudden changes of fortune as examples of the basic fact of transitoriness of earthly things;
these examples are generally of falls from very high places or other
changes of fortune occurring to persons in high places (king, knight,
clerk), particularly death, the ultimate fall from fortune. The second
technique is the use of familiar topoi, the following deriving from
Ecclesiastes, which make vivid the fact of transitoriness and death:
that an heir is generally the recipient of a man's labors (Ecc. 2:18-
20); that man came naked and poor into the world and will leave it
naked and poor (5:14) (these first two topoi are noted also in two of
the short lyrics included at the beginning of the chapter); that man is
made of dust and to dust will return (3:20); that life may be compared
to a shadow (7:1; 12:7); that even a king often dies in want (4:14).
One of the most often used topoi, a comparison of this life's transi-
toriness to the withering of grass, or of flowers (noted in Index
4083 of subsection one) may have originally derived from Isaiah (40:
6-8).

Four MSS exist of the twelve-stanza poem beginning, "Bi a wode as I
gon ryde" (Index 563, Appendix). The poem is similar in form to "Uuere
beþ þey biforen vs weren," that is, it has a triparite structure re-
sembling somewhat the form of meditation: the first two stanzas re-
count an occurrence in the poet's life (obviously fictional), the middle
stanzas consist of reflections on the happening, and the final stanza
is a prayer, in this instance to Christ and the Blessed Mother. The
poet begins by recounting that as he was walking in a wood one day a
bird with black feathers urged him to make amends for his sins. The
first line is particularly interesting as an example of the use of
secular elements, the pastourelle opening, in nonsecular verse. The conventional opening was evidently so well-established that the poet (and conceivably the audience) takes no notice of the contradiction in action occasioned by the addition of line two:

Bi a wode as I gon ryde,
Walkynge al mi-self alone,

(11. 1-2, italics added)

The use of the bird-teacher as conscience in moral lyrics of this type was evidently common, as shown by the existence of several poems in carol form which use birds in a similar manner.26

The body of the poem, the central seven stanzas, contains the poet's skiles (l. 15) or reasons why he finds he should follow the bird's advice. Stanzas three, four, and five are actually expansions of the popular three reflections on death which find their way into many moral lyrics: first, that each man shall die; second, that he knows not when; third, that he knows not whether he will go to heaven or to hell.27 Stanzas six through nine (with the exception of stanza seven) contain generalized examples of the ultimate fall from fortune, death, followed by a moral conclusion that it is necessary to make amends. For instance, stanza six contrasts the man stout and gay today with the same man lying dead tomorrow, bi he walle (meaning, perhaps, in poverty). Stanza eight gives the example of the king who shall be as poor as he was coming into the world when a sheet shall cover his body; and stanza nine notes that the lusty man who wears rich clothes must leave it all in the end. The syntactical structure of these three stanzas is similar, with an if clause being followed by a yet clause (or nevertheless clause
with the conjunction remaining unexpressed). Thus the syntax points up the changes of fortune in a most obvious way. This form, alternation of fortune and misfortune, is common in lyrics whose theme is the transitoriness and vanity of all things, especially when this is expressed in examples of changes of fortune, be it joy to woe (both transitory) or earthly joy to physical death, as in the poem under discussion.\textsuperscript{28}

A larger syntactical pattern is also present in these stanzas and in the other stanzas of the poem (with the exception of the frame stanzas, those on the bird and the concluding prayer). This pattern consists of an example of transitoriness (generally death) followed by a conclusion consisting of advice to repent. In "Bi a wode" the word before or Forbi occurs seven times at the end of seven of the nine central stanzas to emphasize this pattern. The pattern of reflection on transitoriness followed by didactic conclusion operates in all of the lyrics of the group under consideration in this section of the chapter.

Stanza seven seems to be somewhat of an intrusion, interrupting as it does the stanzas of examples; though all versions of the poem contain this stanza it may have been added to the original poem at the height of a friar-priest competition since the stanza seems to say that a good friar will cleanse the sinner when, shamefully, the parish priest refuses to do so.\textsuperscript{29}

Stanzas ten and eleven contain general moral cautions to the fortunate man concerning treatment of his neighbor ("for synnes sake!," l. 78), evidently occasioned by the lesson of the more specific examples:
Coueyte not bi neizebor to payre
his world nis but a chirie-feire.
Nou is hit in sesun, nou wol hit slake;
To-day artou lord, to-morn is pin heire—
forefore I rede, thou amendes make.
(ll. 84-88)

The first moral sentence in this stanza (1. 84) is juxtaposed with the reflection on the transitoriness of this world and impending death, giving line eighty-five the force of a because clause; and the second moral sentence (1. 88) is also juxtaposed with the same reflection, a therefore making the causative nature of the reflection (ll. 85-87) explicit. Clearly, the lyricist urges repentance not for philosophical reasons (such as Christ's suffering, the nature of sin, our true nature as sons of God) but simply for the practical reasons expressed in the lines quoted and made more specific in the three things about death (stanzas three through five): each man must die, he knows not when, and he knows not if he will go to bale or blis (1. 36).

The conception of this world is alternating in contraries (with woe, that is death, being the ultimate fall from fortune) is evident in the above lines. The seasonal metaphor used to describe the world is common in the moral lyrics as is the reminder that an heir will inherit all possessions and titles. The description of the world as a cherry fair is one of the more original and more memorable of the metaphors which occur in the moral lyrics. Its earliest recorded occurrence is in the lyric under consideration (ca. 1390) and it appears in one other lyric. That it was a popular metaphor is indicated by the fact that it occurs twice in Gower's works (once in the form of cherry-feast). A cherry fair is a fair held in a cherry orchard for the sale of the
fruit, which was still kept up in Worcestershire, according to Halliwell, at the time of the compilation of the O.E.D. And when the English Dialect Dictionary was compiled the fair was still being held in Northampton (on the second Wednesday and Thursday in July) and a cherry-feast was still celebrated yearly in Westmoreland. As used in the poem the metaphor seems to convey three ideas: first, that the world is a place of continual alternation of joy and sorrow or happiness and the end of happiness, more specifically, of living and dying (as symbolized by the growing and fading and the continual cycles of nature, in se sum and out—as in the case of the cherry); this idea is emphasized by the example of the heir, which implies the passing of generations, or life followed by death. The fair may also be intended to bring to mind amorality or immorality, traditionally associated with Spring festivities, thus helping defend the poet's frequent urging to a-mendes make! (The O.E.D. notes that Halliwell describes the cherry-fair in Worcestershire as "often the scene of boisterous gaiety and license.") In addition, the metaphor of the fair connotes a certain degree of unreality or escape from reality, and in the context of the didactic lyric it may be intended to remind the audience that this life is indeed unreal (like a fair it is filled with pleasures and gaiety but these are short-lived and, in fact, illusory). That one must return to the "real" life, which is not to be found here on earth, is not explicitly stated but may be implied in the metaphor of the cherry-fair. If the reader supplies such a contrast between the appearances of the fair (this life) and reality (the next life) this would be the only such contrast implied or suggested in the poem. There is only one reference
to heaven (l. 95) but it is not made in connection with eternal bliss. In fact, the prayer at the end has little relationship to the poem as such and supplies no consolation. This lack of explicit consolation points up the difference between the didactic lyrics which focus on death and those which focus on a contrast between this life and the next or between false good and true good.

Another poem which focuses upon death as the proof of the vanity of this life in order to urge repentance is "Whon Men beo muriest at heor Mele" (Index 3996, Appendix). It is interesting primarily because of its exhaustive treatment of the theme, its circular and modular structure, and its tone, which reflects a total lack of recognition of any paradoxicality in the vanity of all things, including human life. One of the minor points of interest in the lyric is the use of the word zuster-day, which occurs as the final word in each of the fifteen stanzas of the poem, many times in a warning to "think about yesterday." Oddly, none of the poem's editors has pointed out that yesterday is in a sense a paradoxical word, that is, it contains (or did at one time) two contradictory denotations, one to a day in the past, the other to a day in the future. The ordinarily understood meaning, which denotes a day in the past, generally makes no sense in the poem; the word is clearly used with the more modern meaning only once (l. 84). In its other fourteen occurrences the word directs the audience's attention to a day or time in the future: old age, death, heaven, or the afterlife. A minor challenge is presented with each use of the word since it may indicate either or both of its contradictory meanings with any or several of the more general time spans or events of the future.
The structure of the poem may be seen as both circular and modular. It begins with a picture of men, merry at their meal, and the poet's reflection that at times such as these men have no interest in spiritual things and are seemingly unaware that they may quickly fall from fortune at the will of God (stanza one). The poem ends with the line which begins it, "Whon Men beo muriest at heor Mele," but adds the poet's caution that this is the time death will boldly pyke his pray (l. 178). The argument which opens the poem, that death proves the vanity of all things (stanzas two and three), is repeated at the end of the poem (stanza fifteen). The body of the poem contains several distinct sections, usually composed of two stanzas; and between these two stanzas and within each stanza the most common movement is from example to moral and didactic reflection. This movement may be seen between stanzas two and three, for example. In stanza two the poet portrays the death of Vche mon in the metaphor of day drawing to night. In stanza three the poet reflects upon this example and draws a conclusion from it:

Whose wolde þenke vpon þis
Mihte fynde a good enchesun whi
To preue þis world, al-wei I-wis
Hit nis but fantum and feiri.
þis erblþ love, þis worldly blis
Is but a fikel fantasy,
For nou hit is and nou hit nis,
þer may no mon þer-inne affy;
Hit chaungeþ so ofte & so sodeynly,
To-day is her, to-morwe a-way--
A siker ground ho wol him gy,
I rede he þenke on zuster-day.
(ll. 25-36)

The poet has expressed the transitoriness of this life in terms of contraries: hit is--hit nis, today here--tomorrow away. Line thirty-
one ("For nou hit is . . .") is an especially memorable description of transitoriness and vanity (fantum and feiri) composed as it is solely of monosyllables which, when read, give the line a halting quality which seems to reinforce the gravity of the statement. The clear bipartite construction of the line reinforces its meaning, indicating an abrupt change. And the parallelism of the two halves of the line, especially the repetition of nou and hit, serves to heighten the contrast between is and nis. The word nis contains a forcefulness which is not lacks in modern English, expressing as it does so succinctly the idea of non-being, so close and yet so far from is. The word zuster-day is also interesting in this stanza. It could be used in its more modern denotation in which case the poet is simply directing the audience's attention to the past so that they can verify the reality of change in their own lives. If zuster-day is taken as tomorrow it may be assumed that the poet is drawing the audience's attention to the after-life, eternity (lack of change), and thus that he implicitly defines one contrary by the other.

Following the stanzas on death and transitoriness is a section composed of three stanzas (four through six): stanzas four and five contain examples which reinforce the conclusion reached in the sixth, that "Toward vr ende we drawe ful fast" (1. 68). Stanzas seven and eight quote authorities, Solomon and Socrates, on the subject of transitoriness, particularly death. Stanzas nine and ten are devoted to the judgmental paradox that God permits the aged and crippled and poor to live when they cannot care for themselves (the poet uses the term merueyles, 1. 97, to describe these situations, one of the Middle English
renderings of paradox). For the poet, the existence of such suffering in a world ruled by a supposedly benevolent God is not a paradox; he explains God's reasons for permitting suffering to exist in this section (so that men may perform works of mercy and become aware of what is in store for them zester-day, that is, tomorrow). Stanzas eleven and twelve return to the general theme of the vanity of this life: first, the poet describes a situation in everyday life in which children chase shadows by candlelight, but soon discover that they cannot catch the shadows; he then likens the shadows to this world which betrays those who lead their lives by its lies. The following section, stanzas thirteen and fourteen, is similarly constructed, the first stanza being an example from human experience (preparations against a hostile neighbor) and the second using the example as an analogy to the moral life (preparations in the face of death).

The tone of the poem is matter-of-fact. The poet sets out to prove that one should think on yesterday. He goes about his proof in orderly fashion, first indicating that death shows the vanity of all things, then arguing that the vanity of all things proves that we should despise the world (l. 143) and prepare ourselves for death and the afterlife (yesterday). The poet cites examples and authority, relying on facts and respected opinion, rather than on emotional language, to prove his point. He easily dismisses what is considered to be a paradox by some: that a loving God permits suffering in this life. Most notable is his attitude toward death, reflected clearly, for example, in the last stanza:
Implicit in the poet's statements is the idea that death need be feared
or dreaded only if one is unprepared. Though this is something every
Christian has been taught, very few are able to accept the teaching
emotionally. The poet ignores the paradoxical aspects of the vanity of
all things, especially of human life, the conflicts remaining in most
men which lead them to cling to this life and the things of this life
in the face of proof by experience that everything is transitory and in
the face of the Church's teaching that the only true and lasting good
and happiness exist in the next life.

A lyric which contrasts markedly in tone with "Whon Men beo
muriest at heor Mele" is the thirteenth-century "Man mei longe him liues
wene" (Index 2070, Appendix). Though both poems focus on death as the
proof of the vanity of all things in order to urge their audiences to
rethink priorities in life, the earlier lyric (the earliest extant of
those poems in the group under discussion) does convey some sense of the
paradoxicality of the vanity of all things by introducing the notion of
trickery. This idea is introduced in the first lines of the poem:

Man mei longe him liues wene,
ac ofte him liyet be weinch;
fair weder ofte him went to rene,
an ferliche maket is blench.
bare-vore man, bu be bifenche,—
al sel valu bu grene.
(11. 1-6)
The poet's reference to the *grene* in line six seems to be a variation on the *topos* of the change of seasons (from Spring to Autumn and Winter) which is found in many other lyrics which treat the theme of transitoriness. His example of fair weather turning to rain and of sunshine being made dreadful might also be expected in a treatment of the theme which focuses on the change of fortunes. But by introducing the notion of trickery (*wreinch*, 1. 2) the poet sets his treatment apart from those which merely stress the alternation of contraries, especially the fall from good fortune to bad. (The poet does mention the traditional contraries, fall from high to low and change from *wele* to *wo* and *gle* to *wop* in lines thirty-seven through forty.) In pointing up men's expectations (for long life, health, happiness) the poet alludes to one aspect of the paradoxicality of the vanity of all things: from one viewpoint, the vanity of all things is a (judgmental) paradox since it contradicts the proposition, believed to be true and verified to a point by experience, that the world's joys are lasting and worthwhile. The world does not always convey the truth to man, it tricks him.

The poet speaks of trickery again at the beginning of the last stanza:

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Werld an wele þe ^bi-bencheth,       (deceives)
^wis hie buth þine iuo;
if þi werld mid wele þe *sliket
þat is far to do þe wo.       (flatters)
(11. 41-44)
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The word for trick, *wreinch*, which appears in line two, reappears in line fifteen of stanza two. This second stanza seems to clarify the nature of the trickery mentioned at the beginning and end of the poem. From man's point of view, the coming of death, memorably described by
poet as *deth-is wiper-clench*, is a trick, since youth and strength have 
seemed to promise him stability and happiness, and since death will not 
respond to his trusted cures: weeping, blessing, reward, craft, and 
physician's drink (11. 17-18). The stealthy nature of death is men­
tioned again in the third stanza in the domestic image of death hiding 
in one's shoe:

weyla-wey! suich wenp wel lede 
long lif and blisse under-uo, 
þar deth luteth in his swo 
to him for-do. 
(11. 27-30)

Thus the poet explicitly mentions a rationale for man's clinging 
to the things of this life: he is deceived and flattered into thinking 
that the world is his friend. Thus the poet seems to allude to the idea 
that man has been placed in a hostile universe which actively misleads 
him, that his expectations, originally upheld by the world, do not 
coincide with what is ultimately proven to him, that is, that all is 
transitory and vain. This hint of sympathy for what might be considered 
man's plight here on earth is, however, overshadowed by the poet's 
emphatically presented teaching that man is not following common sense, 
that he should realize he is nothing but dust, that all *wele* ends in 
woe (stanza four) and that man should "þar-fore let lust over-gon" (1. 
45) or else trade a few moments of bliss for eternal pain (11. 48-49). 
The teaching that this world is nothing but deceit and trickery and that 
to enjoy it will mean eternal punishment ignores the fact of man's 
attachment to this life by virtue of his human nature and presents a 
(judgmental) paradox for the ordinary Christian: that though he is of 
the world he must reject the things of the world.
The fourteenth-century poem "Nou Bernes, Buirdus bolde and blype" (Index 2302, Appendix) also focuses on death as proof of the vanity of all things in order to urge repentance. The poet presents his lesson in an unusually imaginative way (in comparison to the method which has been used in the poems considered previously in this section of the chapter: argumentation by example, reflection, and conclusion). However, his point is nonetheless obvious. In stanzas four through seven the traditional teachings are expressed: since death is inevitable and often sudden, and since man will go to either heaven or hell, he should beware and make himself ready by making amends for his sins. Some of the specific elements of warning which have been noted in the poems previously discussed are also present here: the three things concerning death (ll. 25-26), noted in much expanded form in "Bi a wode"; elements of the description of man after death, such as the fact that he is without friends, his body may lie "by the wall" (l. 34, cf. "Bi a wode," l. 44). The first two of these central stanzas (four through seven) follow the method of development noted particularly in "Whon Men beoþ muriest": example of some aspect of transitoriness followed by a reflection and conclusion to beware and repent. In stanza four, for example, the poet begins his advice to repent with "For-þi" following four lines of reflection, and in stanza five the last two lines contain an admonition, following six lines of reflection on the state of man's riches and body after death. But it is the frame stanzas, not the traditional didactic stanzas, which are particularly interesting in relationship to paradox in the poem.
The poet sets his teaching in a frame, apparently a farewell speech to his friends as he is dying. In the first two stanzas the poet (or speaker) thanks his friends for their friendship and calls upon God to bless them for their goodness to him. Following the five central stanzas of the poem in which the poet imparts his wisdom is the final framing stanza, also addressed to the friends, which begins:

Nou hauep good dai, gode men alle,
Hauep good dai, zonge and olde,
Hauep good day, bob grete and smalle,
And graunt-Merci a bousend folde!
(11. 57-60)

The framing stanzas, especially the last stanza, convey a note of gaiety, unusual in moral lyrics which focus on death. The final stanza, in fact, sounds very much like a minstrel song.

The gaiety, or, at least, absence of mourning in the poem is combined with the following refrain line repeated in the first two stanzas: "A-zeyn mi wille I take mi leue." At the conclusion of the third stanza the poet universalizes the sentiment by moving to the plural pronoun: "Azeyn vr wille we take vr leue." The poet also explicitly indicates by the conjunction of lines seventeen and eighteen and the use of al-bauz (1. 17) that he leaves against his will even though he realizes he may not always dwell here:

Azein mi wille al-bauz I wende,
I may not al-wey dwellen here;
For eueri ping schal haue an ende,
And frendes are not ay I-fere;
Be we neuer so lef and dere,
Out of bis world al schul we meue;
And whon we buske vm-to vr bere,
Azeyn vr wille we take vr leue.
(11. 17-24)
Thus the poet touches upon one of the judgmental paradoxes associated with the vanity of all things: in the face of common sense and experience man clings to the things of this life. The lack of mourning at the moment of death, conveyed by the gaiety of the frame stanzas, may be intended to exemplify a proper Christian attitude toward death; but, consciously or unconsciously, by adding the refrain line to the first three stanzas, the poet also touches upon the judgmental paradox that even the devout Christian cannot emotionally accept the Church's consolation that we should gladly accept, even embrace, death as the true beginning of life.

Typical of this group of moral lyrics, but also interesting because it brings together many of the topoi found scattered in other poems of the group, is the fifteenth-century "Man, hef in mynd & mend þi mys" (Index 2057, Appendix). This lyric clearly follows in each stanza the pattern of development noted in the other lyrics discussed: reflection on an example of transitoriness followed by didactic conclusion on the necessity of repentance. In this poem, most of the emphasis is placed upon the reflective sections of each stanza, with the result that the poem clearly appears to be more about transitoriness than about repentance. (Actually, the following lines reflect on transitoriness: 3-7, 9-15, 17-20, 25-27, 33-36; all the others are didactic.) One reason that the didacticism appears to have a minor place may be that the didactic refrain lines are in Latin and might have the effect of a meaningless chant. (The opposite could be argued, however; that is, by virtue of the Latin the lines draw attention to themselves and thus to the didacticism of the poem.)
The traditional topoi in the poem include a section on the vicissitudes of fortune (11. 5-8): "for fortonis quheill is ay turnand, / quhil to weil and quhil to wa, / quhil owp, quhil downe, I onderstand." In stanza two the poet cites the deaths of the classical heroes Hector, Achilles, and Alexander as proof of the universality of death. In stanza three he notes that man comes into the world and leaves it naked and poor, and in the fourth stanza he notes that even castles and towers and king's crown cannot save a person from death (the poet emphasizes the quick loss and ultimate uselessness of riches of this world by contrasting pis day with the inevitability of be morne).

The final reflection in the poem considers the loss of the world's dignity when a person is brought to his lang hayme in the layme (loam) and his ribs become his ruf tre. Thus the grave is referred to in language generally associated with an ordinary home, the reflective use of contraries, which gives a new outlook on both the contraries involved: the grave, which is shown to be a new habitat for the body, and the home before death, which is reduced to a mere shelter for the body. This reflection focuses on the contrast between the possessions man has in this world and those he takes with him to the grave, with the implicit conclusion, of course, that material possessions such as homes and roofs are meaningless (vanity) in the long run since they cannot prevent death and the ultimate levelling of all men, who came into the world naked and poor and leave it in the same condition regardless of the wealth they have accumulated. Thus the poet's ironic exclamation, "adew al warldis dignite!" (1. 36). The use of French terms in this
line, rare elsewhere in the poem, suggests a possible intent to mock the wealthy and aristocratic.

In this poem, Index 2057, and in all the other poems considered in this subsection of the chapter, the primary use of contraries has been to define, sometimes by example, the transitoriness of this life. In Index 563 we find the following contraries: now in season, now slake; "today X, tomorrow Y"; king or nobleman, dead by the wall. In Index 3996 we also find the "now X, now Y" construction and the use of "today X, tomorrow Y," in conjunction with specific examples of transitoriness such as the burde bright who will fade as a flower. The author of Index 2070 uses the contraries of woe from wele and wop from glee. In one poem, Index 2057, we find a reflective use of contraries when the grave is described in language generally associated with the earthly home before death. In most of the poems a contrast seems to be implied between the transitoriness of this life and the eternity of heaven.

Paradoxes are not common in these poems. In Index 3996 the poet cites as a judgmental paradox the fact that God would permit suffering in this world; this paradox he solves, citing suffering as an example of God's goodness since it reminds us all of transitoriness. One poem, Index 2302, alludes to the logical paradox that man could at the same time welcome death and cling to this life. Another poem, Index 2070, presents a judgmental paradox in its definition of proper Christian conduct: that all the things of this world must be rejected. This poem also seems to touch upon an aspect of the paradoxicality of the vanity or transitoriness of all things by introducing the notion of trickery
(poems which treat this paradoxicality are included in Section B of this part of the chapter); however, the poem stresses the teaching that man should not be tricked, and should recognize the world for what it really is.

4. Poems Which Recognize Explicitly the Paradoxicality of Man's Attachment to This Life

In the longer didactic poems considered thus far in this part of the chapter, both those whose main purpose is to encourage good works by contrasting the transitory joys of this world with the eternal rewards of the next, and those whose main purpose is to urge repentance by pointing out the transitory nature of all earthly pleasures and possessions and of human life in particular, there has been an implicit suggestion on the part of the moralists that man's attachment to the things of this life is contrary to common sense and therefore (judgmentally) paradoxical. The long lists of examples of falls from fortune (the ultimate fall being death), seen particularly in poems such as "Whon Men beo moesti at heor Mele" and even more obviously in "Bi a wode as I gon ryde," are intended to show that by common sense and experience man can recognize the transitoriness of earthly goods and blessings (and therefore should change his priorities); the stringing together of the many traditional _topoi_ used elsewhere to prove the transitoriness of all things, as in "Man, hef in mynd & mend ði mys," is obviously intended to impress the reader or audience with the fact that common sense proves the transitoriness of all things.

The authors of these poems obviously felt a need to impress their audiences with the fact that all is vanity because man, irrationally
(that is, in the face of common sense and experience) leads his life according to the nonsensical beliefs not only that worldly goods and pursuits are of intrinsic and lasting value but also that death does not exist for him. The judgmental paradox (from the moralist's viewpoint) that man remains attached to the things of this life (in the face of common sense and the teachings of the Church) is not emphasized, however, in these poems; rather, their main purpose is either to urge a good life with the Christian consolation of lasting happiness in the future, or to urge repentance by focussing on the inevitability of death and possible punishment.

A few didactic lyrics do place emphasis on the paradoxicality or absurdity (from the lyricist's viewpoint) of man's refusal to recognize the vanity of all things and act accordingly. Like the other lyrics discussed they have as their raison d'être a desire on the part of the lyricist to point out to man the error of his ways; but, by various means, they emphasize to a greater extent man's lack of common sense in his attachment to the things of this world. Five such poems will be considered in this subsection of the chapter: Index 4223, "[W]orldes blis ne last no throwe"; Index 4160, "Whi is þe world bilowed, þat fals is ðe vein"; Index 769, "Ffare well, this world I take my leve for euere"; Index 2369, "Nu þu vnseli bodi up-on bere list"; Index 4044, "Wen þe turuf is þi tuur."

The author of a thirteenth-century didactic poem of which three MSS exist, "[W]orldes blis ne last no throwe" (Index 4223), adds one stanza in the body of his work with an interesting image which explicitly questions man's refusal to act according to common sense:
Man, wi sestu þout and herte
o werldes blis þat nout ne last?
Wi þolstu þat þe *softe ismert
for þing þat is unstedefast?
þu lickest huni of þorn iwis,
þat seist þi loue o werldos blis
[for ful of bitternis hit is]38
ful sore þu mith ben of-gast,
þat hier despendest *heite a-mis,
 to ben þar-þurew in-to elle cast.
(XIII, 46A, 11. 31-40)

Aside from the addition of this stanza which explicitly questions man's lack of common sense, the poem follows the pattern of the other didactic poems considered, that is, it begins with a reflection on the transitoriness of earthly happiness (11. 1-12) from which it is concluded that man should concentrate on good works (11. 20, 27) and repent (11. 26, 56). The poem closes with the Christian consolation of the eternal bliss of heaven (11. 59-60) and it follows the argumentative method of some of the other poems considered (evidence given and conclusion drawn stanza by stanza). Only one element is added, besides the explicit reflection of man's lack of common sense, which has not been pointed out in other poems and which is somewhat unusual in the didactic moral lyrics. This is a stanza on Christ's suffering and death (11. 41-50) which simply asks man to "þinc wo dere he þe boute" (1. 43) and then to work good ("for siker helles þu art wud," 1. 50).

The paradoxicality (from the lyricist's point of view) of man's refusal to recognize the transitoriness of the things of this world and therefore give them up is emphasized in the first line of one of the most popular of the Middle English moral lyrics, a translation of the likewise popular Latin poem beginning "Cur mundus militat sub vana gloria" attributed variously to either Bernard of Clairvaux or Jacobus
de Voragine. Not all of the English versions of the poem emphasize the question which opens the Latin poem, but the version printed by Brown (XIV, #134) does, opening as follows (Index 4160, Appendix): "Whi is þe world biloued, þat fals is & vein?" 39

In its structure this poem is similar to others considered; that is, it is composed of a reflection on the transitoriness of all things and a conclusion to be drawn from the reflection. And the poem contains many of the topoi found in other lyrics considered. The poem may be seen to contain three sections: the first two (24 lines) reflection and the last (14 lines) conclusion. The first twelve lines consist of reflections on the transitoriness of this world based on comparisons of the world to obviously transitory objects (all comparisons present in the Latin text): the world is less trustworthy than letters written in ice or than the wagering wind; the world (specifically its wealth in the first case) is like a "brotgel pot, þat freisch is and gay." (The English poet's addition of "freisch and gay" indicates that he might have been mixing the Latin simile of the pot with the more familiar English topoi which uses the fading of flowers of changing of seasons as an example of transitoriness and often as a metaphor or simile to describe change in general.)

The second twelve lines make up an ubi sunt section, combining the ideas of glories of the past, as in the ubi sunt section of "Uuere beþey," with the citation of the death of even the worthiest of men, as in "Man, hef in mynd." Interestingly, the ubi sunt section here closes with the reflection (translated from the Latin) that "All þese grete princis,
wip her power so hize, / ben wanischid a-way in twinkeling of an ize"
(11. 23-24). The *ubi sunt* section in the thirteenth-century "Uere beþ ðey" contains a similar reflection, more artfully included (11. 11-12). In the last section of the poem other traditional *topoi* appear: in line twenty-five the world is compared to a short feast (cf. "The law of god be to þe thy rest"); and the poet likens the world to a shadow in line twenty-six (cf. "Whon Men beop muriest at heor Mele"); and he reminds man that he is nothing but dust and worm's meat in line thirty-three (cf. "Man, hef in mynd" and "Man mei long him leues wene"). The term *perfore* (1. 29) makes the purpose of the concluding section clear. The poet urges the audience to despise the world (1. 32) since death may come suddenly (1. 35), to do good (1. 36) and to think on the joy of heaven (1. 31).

The paradoxicality of man's attachment to this life and the things of this world is made prominent in an especially interesting lyric of the fifteenth century, "Ffare well, this world! I take my leve for euere" (Index 769, Appendix), through the use of an imagined narrative situation. The use of such a situation is unusual in a moral lyric which urges good works or repentance. All of the other poems considered thus far in the chapter have been characterized by the use of the voice of a wise poet-moralist. In two poems attempts have been made to add variety and interest to the old device; for example, in "By a wode," the poet-moralist presents himself as one who has just discovered the truth of a bird's warning through meditation; in "Nou Bernes, Buirdus bolde and blype" the wise narrator presents himself as on the verge of death bidding farewell to his friends, counselling them on the
transitoriness of all things and the resulting necessity of repentance and good works.

The imagined narrative situation in the poem under discussion is that of a person at the moment of death, or perhaps dead but not yet separated from his body, speaking for the last time to his friends (the lines which suggest either of these two situations are lines fifteen and sixteen which indicate that the narrator is actually dead, and the leave-taking lines which suggest that he is not yet dead, such as one, twenty-nine, and thirty). One aspect of the situation which contributes to the prominence in the poem of the judgmental paradox of man's attachment to this world is the fact that the speaker does not admit the error of his ways until the actual moment of death, or even after that. Also contributing to the prominence of this paradox in the poem is the emphasis the speaker himself puts on the fact that he should have been conscious of the transitoriness of this life long before he actually is. The speaker places only minor emphasis on repentance reflections.

These two factors are, of course, inseparable in the poem, since the narrator's words are spoken at the moment of death, as he constantly reminds us. Two passages in particular emphasize the speaker's consciousness that he should have been aware of the transitoriness of all things (and therefore should have acted accordingly). In stanza three, for example, the narrator exclaims:

I haue my dreme, in trust is moche treson,
ffram dethes hold feyne wold I make a lepe,
But my wysdom is turnyd into feble resoun:
[I see this worldis joye lastith but a season].
Wold to god, I had remembyrd me be-forne!

(11. 16-20)
Wysdom and feble are here evidently used ironically (the poet's reason has finally overcome the follies he once entertained, that is, that he could escape from death and continue to enjoy the world's joys). Line eighteen, which Brown punctuates with the following line (supplied from another MS of the poem), can just as well be read with the preceding line; thus both the speaker's wish to leap from death and his illusion that worldly joy is lasting are seen as folly. Stanza four in its entirety emphasizes the speaker's awareness that he should have recognized the transitoriness of all things:

This febyll world, so fals and so vnstable,  
Promoteth his louers for a lytell while,  
But at the last he yeveth hem a bable    
When his peynted [trowth is torned in-to gile].  
Experyence cawsith me pe trowth to compile,  
Thynkyng this, to late alas! that I began,  
For foly & hope disseyveth many a man.  
(11. 22-28)

The speaker admits that folly and hope (within himself) kept him from compiling the truth (of the vanity of all things) from his experience. The interesting personification of the world at the beginning of the stanza (perhaps intended to recall the traditional characterization of the fickle woman—false, unstable, double, promoting lovers only temporarily then revealing her guile) might tend to leave the impression that the speaker blames the error of his ways on trickery beyond his control; however, he admits that the deception is a result of his own folly and false hopes in the following lines. Bable is an interesting term since it suggests not only a characterization of the lover as a man satisfied with a worthless gift (man in general who permits himself to be deceived by the world) but also as a child who is satisfied with a plaything.
Peynted trowth is an especially appropriate term to describe the appearance (from the Christian viewpoint) of the things of this life which man may take for true good and happiness. Since the goods and joys of this life do in fact partake of the goodness of God they are to an extent truth; but to distinguish them from naked truth or pure truth the poet invents the oxymoronic term peynted trowth. Man ultimately realizes (at the moment of death if not before) that the world has deceived him (that he has been given a worthless bauble), and that "his [the world's] peynted trowth is torned in-to gile."

Direct reflection on the transitoriness of all things is contained in stanza two which makes use of several topos previously pointed out in other lyrics: the comparison of the world to a cherry-fair (1. 8); the example of the king (or royalty) who meets death suddenly (the speaker is the royal example, thus ryall may be intended figuratively in which case the poet would have used a traditional topos in a new way); notation of the body as worm's meat (1. 14). In stanza one there appears the only direct reference to repentance: ". . . I had leuere / Than all this world, to haue oone houre space / To make a-sythe for all my grete trespace" (ll. 3-5). As elsewhere in the poem the didacticism is implied. In fact, the closest the poet comes to direct didacticism is in one line of the last stanza: "I moste departe hens & so shall ye" (1. 30).

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of the poem is the poet's attempt to make the narrative situation realistic by attempting to suit the speaker's words to his situation. Some inconsistency here has already been noted (whether the speaker is dying or already dead). But the poet does achieve some verisimilitude by presenting an incoherence
in the speaker's thought, a characteristic which would be expected in the thoughts and words of a dying man. This may be seen, for example, in the relationship between lines six and seven and in the unexpected caution offered by the speaker at the end of stanza three: "I sey no more but be ware of ane horne!" (1. 21). The most outstanding example of the poet's attempt at verisimilitude in the setting of the scene is the line which anticipates Emily Dickinson: "Speke softe, ye folk, for I am leyd aslepe!" (1. 16).

"Ffare well, thys world!" places emphasis on the paradoxicality of man's refusal to respond to the teaching of experience concerning transitoriness and vanity not by comparing his actions to another paradox (licking honey off a thorn, as in "[W]orldes blis ne last no throwe," discussed at the beginning of this subsection), not by simply asking a question which is expected to elicit the appropriate response ("Whi is be world biloued, ḏat fals is & vein?"), but by emphasizing man's natural attachment to this world. This attachment is suggested in the poem primarily through the narrative situation; that is, the speaker is presented as not being able to admit the mistake of his attachment to this world until the actual moment of death or immediately thereafter, while confessing that he had ample opportunity to realize this mistake earlier.

The poem quoted below, and poems like it of the soul-to-body type, also place emphasis on the paradoxicality of man's response to experience, common sense, and the teaching of the Church simply through the imagined situation: the soul speaking to the dead body which refused to respond earlier to common sense but which now has been proven foolish
This "I told you so" poem (Index 2369) suggests that it is not unusual for men to fail to respond in this life to the warnings of transitoriness and death, and its implicit didacticism is directed to the certainty of retribution for one who does not recognize the vanity of all things and order his life accordingly. The poem makes use of several of the topoi pointed out previously. For example the ubi sunt topos appears in the second line. In its use it is reminiscent of the ubi sunt section of "Uuere be|ey": both poems contain the reflections that the wealthy enjoy their heaven on earth and thus lose the true joys of paradise (ll. 4, 9 above, ll. 19-20 or "Uuere be|ey"). The common comparison of this life to the short life of a leaf or flower is also found in the poem (l. 5). By addressing the words to the body of a rich man, perhaps even a royal personage (ll. 2, 6-7), the poet incorporates and uses in a new way the familiar example, pointed out in several of the other poems discussed, of the king who today sits on a throne or is dressed in purple, but tomorrow is found dead by the wall.

Specific didactic reflections in "Worldes blis" and the translation of the "Cur Mundus," and narrative setting in "Pfare well, this world!" and "Nu þu vnseli bodi" place emphasis on the paradox of man's refusal
to recognize and act upon the reality of the vanity of all things. The
same effect is achieved by conciseness and understatement in the follow­
ing poem (Index 4044):

Trinity Coll. Camb. MS 323
Wen þe turuf is þi tuur,
& þi put is þi bour,
þi wel & þi wite þrote
ssulen wormes to note.
Wat helpit þe þenne
al þe worilde wnne?
(XIII, #30, p. 54)

This short lyric follows the same method of development seen in the
longer explicitly didactic poems; that is, reflection on transitoriness
followed by a conclusion. Like several other poems it also seems to be
addressed to the wealthy in particular (the elite terms tuur, bour, and
wite þrote, often associated in poetry with heroes and heroines, suggest
this). The picturing of the grave as a new home has also been noted in
previously discussed poems, but here the shocking contrast is artfully
brought out through the use of alliteration, assonance, and consonance
which all join closely the terms turuf and tuur, and by the alliteration
of the plosive initial consonants which join put and bour. Alliteration
also connects wel and wite þrote with wormes. The aristocratic and
poetic associations carried by the words tower, bower, wealth, and white
throat contrast markedly with the domestic and sometimes unpleasant con­
notations of turf, pit, and worms. The contrary connotations of the
specific terms chosen and their juxtaposition through associations of
sound forcefully suggest the sudden and inevitable loss of wealth and
worldly dignity which other lyricists have struggled to bring to the
consciousness of the audience. The simple question of the last two lines
calls for the equally simple common sense response: nothing. The
prominence of monosyllables and the repetition of syntactical patterns
in the poem (such as the possessive pronoun plus noun which occurs six
times in the first three lines) contribute (with the obvious wisdom
expressed) to the epigrammatic and proverbial quality of the poem.40

In the poems considered in this subsection we find some scattered
occurrences of the uses of contraries and paradox which have been
found in other poems; for example, the reflective use of contraries in
Index 4044 in which the grave is described in terms of a tower and
bower; the description of the world as false and unstable, characterized
by guile, is found in Index 769; the description of heaven as lasting
bliss (the end of the contraries of joy and woe in this life) is found
in Index 4223. But the poems included here are especially interesting
because one of their explicit themes is the paradoxicality (from the
lyricist's point of view) of man's attachment to this world in the face
of its obvious transitoriness and falsity. This paradox is described in
Index 4223 by means of another paradox: man licking honey from a thorn.
The paradoxicality of man's attachment is emphasized by rhetorical ques-
tions in Index 4160 and Index 4044. The narrative situation presented
in Index 769 (a dying or dead man admits his hopes for lasting happiness
in this world were a dream) and that in Index 2369 (the soul rebuking
the corrupting body for its failure to prepare for death and its loss of
heaven) emphasizes the foolishness of man's attachment to this life
where experience should convince him of the vanity of all things.
5. Poems Which Urge Paradoxical Christian Conduct

In the poems considered thus far in this part of the chapter, the poets have urged the rejection of the things of this world, repentance, and good works (in preparation for heaven) on the basis of the argument that all earthly blessings, joys, goods, and pursuits are transitory and useless. The worthlessness of earthly goods and pursuits is a teaching which is difficult for the ordinary Christian to accept simply because he is attached by virtue of his human nature to this life. He is faced with the paradox that while he is of the world he must reject the things of the world. A few lyrics, while they do urge repentance and good works, have as their primary purpose the encouragement of courses of action for the Christian which are just as paradoxical as (perhaps more so than) the teaching to reject as worthless some of the "good" things of this life. Included in these judgmentally paradoxical teachings are the precepts that man should welcome death (Index 3567, "Thynk, man, quare-off thou art wrought"); that he should thank God for the changes of fortune and injustices which touch his life (Index 2280, "Mi word is Deo gracias" and Index 562, "By a way wandry[n]g as I went"); and that he should refrain from questioning what is to him most problematical: man's brief existence in a world of fantasy (Index 1402, "I wolde witen of sum wys wiht").

Strangely, in a period in which the teachings of the Church were so widely promulgated and in which much of the extant poetry was composed in religious houses, poems which encourage a positive attitude toward death are extremely rare. Death is one of the most popular subject matters in Middle English lyrics, but, as the examples already
considered in this chapter demonstrate, it is generally used to prove the ultimate worthlessness of the things of this life, including man's body, and the need for repentance, with fear and trembling implicit. In one poem considered, where death was treated in a matter-of-fact tone, it was viewed as the most obvious warning of transitoriness and the need for repentance, but still personified as an enemy, robbing its prey of life. In view of the Church's teachings on this life and the next the prevalence of this attitude toward death in the lyrics is itself judgmentally paradoxical. Among the few poems which urge the welcoming of death is "Thynk, man, aware-off thou art wrought" (Index 3567, Appendix).

This poem is composed of seven stanzas each of which contains four two-line statements (the first line of each statement containing four strong stresses and the second three), each statement beginning with Thynk. Each stanza ends with a two-line conclusion which repeats an O and I refrain (the first line of the conclusion containing five strong stresses and the second seven). The meter, the simple and alternating rhyme (two rhymes only used in the Thynk clauses of each stanza), the regular full clause pattern of enjambment, and the O and I refrain all combine to create a sing-song effect, which contrasts with some of the topoi included, such as the reminder of the suddenness of death (11. 4, 31-32), the reminder that the earth will wane as the wind (11. 17-18), that man is a wretched worm (1. 21), and that he entered and will leave the world poor and naked (11. 23-24). These topoi, as in other poems considered, are included as proof of the necessity of repentance and good works. The cheerful tone of the poem does coincide, however, with
the cheerful message on death contained and given prominence in the last two stanzas. In stanza six the poet urges the audience not to dread death, not only because it is a necessity but also because it is the "ende of werdes wo" (l. 54), and because except for death we may not join God. The poet concludes the stanza with a notion emotionally difficult for man to accept: "... ded sal be þi sawl frend, & erthly lyff þi ffo" (l. 60). (This is, of course, a definite reversal of earlier discussed descriptions of death where it is always seen as the foe.) It is in the seventh stanza, however, that the poet brings out the Christian teaching on death in all its paradoxicalness:

Thynk þat þou ert ded always,  
Qwyllis þat þou dwellis here;  
Thynk þi lyff be-gynnis ay,  
Qwen þou ert layd apon a bere;  
.............  
(11. 61-64)

The teaching is worded as a logical paradox: you are dead while you are alive, you are born when you die. The paradox is actually an apparent paradox, solved by an understanding of life and death in different senses (physical and spiritual). Even when the verbal logical paradox is solved, the teaching itself remains a judgmental paradox: that one should welcome death contradicts the generally held proposition that death is to be feared.

Two lines of the poem are worthy of being singled out in connection with the view that this life is full of paradoxes:

Thynk þis werld is wondirfful,  
& þat is gret Meruayll.  
(11. 41-42)

Nothing precedes or follows these lines to help clarify their meaning. As has been pointed out earlier, the terms wonder and marvel seem to have
been used in the period to render the term paradox or the notion of paradoxicalness into English. Thus the lines seem to be a rare instance, in the didactic moral lyrics, of the explicit expression of the notion that the happenings of or nature of this life may be paradoxical (1. 41), which itself, the poet seems to say, is paradoxical (1. 42). If wondirffful and Meruayll are considered here to carry their more modern connotations of good, full of happiness, etc., this conception of the world is contradictory to other evaluations expressed in the poem, for example, a statement in the second stanza, "Thynk þis werld þat wryched es / will wan o-way als wynde" (11. 17-18). If wondirffful is interpreted as carrying its modern positive connotations a truly paradoxical conception of this world would emerge in the poem: that the world is both wretched in general (as pointed out elsewhere in the poem) and excellent in general (as pointed out here); then line forty-two, "& þat is gret Meruayll" might be interpreted as the poet's explicit recognition of the logical paradox which he has presented.

The Christian consolation, that the transitory joy of this life will be remedied in the next, is presented with a different emphasis in certain Middle English lyrics which may be represented by two fourteenth-century poems, "Mí word is Deo gracias" (Index 2280) and "By a way wandry[n]g as I went" (Index 562). These poems introduce another of the judgmental paradoxes facing the Christian, that not only must he reject the good of this life and welcome death, he should in fact thank God for the transitoriness of his earthly joys, represented in these two poems as the changes of fortune. The consolation in the poems is given a minor place: part of a one-stanza prayer which concludes each poem. In Index
2280, the poet describes heaven which we may merit: "per is wele wiþ-outen wo" (l. 44); and in Index 562, the poet gives the following consolation: "In heuyne blys schal be oure stall" (l. 78). The major emphasis in the two poems is, however, on the inevitable transitoriness of earthly blessings and the vanity of all things. In Index 2280 the poet asks rhetorically, "ho may haue wele wiþ-oute wo?" (l. 39). And in each lyric transitoriness is emphasized by long series of examples (comprising the body of each poem) in stanzas which describe sudden changes of fortune (in Index 2280 inequalities of fortune are also included). These stanzas sometimes conclude with vague allusions to God's will, but always with a refrain which drives home the judgmental paradox that man should welcome changes of fortune: in Index 562 the refrain (with variations) is "And euer I þank my god of all"; and in Index 2280 the refrain (with variations) is "I se not But deo gracias." These sentiments, which express more than psychologically sound resignation—actual thankfulness for the transitoriness of earthly blessings—were popular (or at least some need was seen for their propagation) as evidenced by the fact that six other versions of Index 562 have been preserved, varying in length from ten to seventeen stanzas.45

Perhaps even more paradoxical than the teaching to welcome death and to thank God for misfortunes is the one presented in the fourteenth-century poem "I wolde witen of sum wys wiht" (Index 1402, Appendix). The poem urges that man refrain from questioning what to him seems a paradox: that he should exist in a world of fantasy. The poem falls into
three parts which reflect the poet's method of argument: the first part of the poem (to line sixty) sets forth the situation of the world and man's place in creation; the second part of the poem (ll. 61-108) expands upon the argument touched upon in the first, that man's efforts to understand God's ways and intentions are as vain as the world in which he lives; the third part (ll. 109-32) offers briefly the poet's advice on man's proper conduct, given his place in the world of fantasy. Before discussing in detail the poem as it stands, it should be pointed out that the teaching presented in the poem is obviously based on Ecclesiastes. Various topoi present in other poems discussed derive from Ecclesiastes (as was pointed out previously); but this seems to be the only extant Middle English lyric which presents the variously interpreted philosophy of Ecclesiastes. This philosophy, as understood by the poet in question, might be summarized in two main points. First, given the vicissitudes of fortune, the constant alternation of joys and sorrows in this life, and especially given the inevitability of man's own death, all labors in this life may be viewed as vanity and labor lost. (This teaching, with the topoi involved in demonstrating it, is pronounced in lyrics discussed thus far in the chapter.) Efforts to understand the ways of God or the plan of God for man are among the labors lost. Second, in view of these facts and in view of the fact that even the immortality of man is open to question, the best course of action is to enjoy the life we are given, not spend our time in ultimately useless labor and in the search for wisdom.

A possible influence of Ecclesiastes is also seen in the very first lines of the poem, which refer to the wys wiht. The poem as a whole may then be read as a wise man's words (as Brown has so punctuated it, with
a colon after the second line), just as the first verse of Ecclesiastes introduces the following text as the words of the spokesman or ecclesiastes. The first stanza consists of traditional references to sudden changes of fortune, from bench to bier, sickness to good health, pride to loss of respect. These examples are familiar from other poems considered in this chapter, but this poem's similarity to other poems ends after the first stanza. The second introduces the notion of stability in change, the somewhat logically paradoxical notion that though changes occur in the world (such as the seasons) the world itself never changes. The idea is exemplified most clearly by the poet's reference (from Ecclesiastes) to the rivers which flow constantly into the sea though never changing the size of the sea itself. The purpose of bringing up the cyclical aspect of physical nature is to contrast it with the brevity of human life, which the poet mentions at the end of the stanza: "but vche gome glut forp as a gest, / his world farep as a Fantasye" (11. 23-24). The brevity of man's stay is emphasized by the alliteration of the most appropriate verb glut with gome and with gest, the word which characterizes man both as a brief visitor and, appropriately, as one not fully at home in the stable and cyclical universe.

(The idea that the world continues unaltered regardless of man's coming and going is given emphasis in the poem since it is also central to the final stanza.)

Stanza three develops naturally from the conception of man introduced at the end of the second stanza, expanding as it does upon the idea of the passing of generations (regardless of preparaciones) and bringing up the probability that individual men will be forgotten
The ultimate insignificance of man, as proven by the inevitability of his death, is the subject of stanzas four and five.

But unlike other poets who focus on death as a proof of the vanity of all things, the author of this poem (following *Ecclesiastes* 3:19) emphasizes the insignificance of man by comparing him to animals, and not only to animals but to gnats and moths (seemingly original comparisons on the poet's part, at least, not derived from *Ecclesiastes*):

```
Of Erpe & Eyr growep vp a gnat,
And so dop Mon whom al his souht;
Þauz mon be waxes grete and fat,
Mon melteþ a-vey so dep a mouht.
(11. 39-42)
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The only distinction the poet makes between men and beasts (who both are made of dust and return to dust) is that man is more sleyze (wise, prudent—no doubt a reference to the traditional teaching that man differs from animals by virtue of his reason). The most outstanding difference between men and animals, as traditionally taught, is that man possesses an immortal soul, while animals do not. This the poet questions:

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Ho wot zif monnes soule styze,
And bestes soules synkeþ doun? (11. 55-56)
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These lines almost echo verbatim the words of *Ecclesiastes* 3:21: "Who has the right to tell us that the spirit of man mounts upwards, and the spirit of a beast sinks down." Yet the poet's words need not be taken as echoing the pessimism concerning immortality which is often attributed to *Ecclesiastes*. The lines immediately following introduce an original and somewhat touching notion (not present in *Ecclesiastes*) perhaps suggesting that animals too may have immortal souls:
Who knowes Beestes enten西亚un,
On heor creatour how þei crie,
........................... (ll. 57-58)

The poet seemingly alludes to man's immortality and suggests that animals may also have immortal souls. The poem thus obliquely suggests the Christian consolation for the judgmental paradox of man's suffering in this world, but unlike poems considered at the beginning of this chapter, it places no emphasis at all on eternity. In fact, the poet chooses to emphasize a judgmental paradox of man's existence: he is not one with the universe, he seems to be a guest, briefly passing through this world, unlike it in that he passes quickly, suffering quick changes of fortune; moreover, he is not set apart even from the gnats, moths, and beasts. The immediate question which then arises is, "Why?" (Perhaps, "Why are we born into the world to suffer, to die, never to understand our purpose, our relationship to the seemingly stable universe never made clear to us?")

The poet does not answer this crucial question; he does not attempt even to explore this paradox of man's existence. Rather, he urges acceptance of the reality of the fact that "Wo is ende of worldes wele" (1. 81) and that this world is a fantasy (not only illusion, but also untruth), and that only God understands his own ways with man. This last truth is mentioned three times in the first part of the poem (to line sixty): when God is cited as the only one who can explain when the world will come to an end (ll. 19-20), where man will go when he dies (ll. 45-46), and if beasts cry to the Creator (1. 59). But the second section of the poem is concerned almost solely with the uselessness of man's efforts to understand any logical paradoxes (beliefs or tenets
which seem contradictory to him). In stanzas six and seven, for example, the poet points out the absurdity of sects which bicker about matters of belief (11. 68-69, 73-76) since all men must ask the same God for mercy (1. 72) and since Christ is the hope and health of all (11. 70-80). The influence of the many passages in Ecclesiastes on the ultimate vanity of human knowledge is most obvious in this section of the poem, especially in stanzas eight and nine, though the vanity of man's disputation is noted once in the first part of the poem (1. 33). The anti-intellectualism, particularly in relationship to divine paradoxes, is explicit, for example, in the following passage:

And Idel bost is forte blowe
A Mayster of diuinite.
\[\text{\$enk we lyue in eorpe her lowe,}\]
\[\text{And God an heiz in Mageste;}\]
Of Material Mortualite
\[\text{Medle we & of no more Maiustrie.}\]
\[\text{\$e more we trace \$e Trinite,}\]
\[\text{\$e more we falle in fantasye.}\]
(11. 89-96)

Obviously, the poet associates the judgmental paradox of man's existence in a hostile universe with the theological (logical) paradoxes, such as the Trinity, and with the Incarnation, which he mentions in the following stanza:

\[\text{We mowe no[t] preue bi no resoun}\]
\[\text{Hou he was born \$at al vs bouzt.}\]
(11. 99-100)

The definition of a paradox of any kind as the reverse of what is natural or reasonable is brought to mind by the lines in which the poet attributes supernatural powers and the understanding of what seems paradoxical to us only to God:
For he may turne kuyndes vpseidoun,  
bat alle kuyndes made of nouzt.  
Whon al vr bokes ben forþ brouht,  
And al vr craft of clergye,  
And al vr wittes ben þorw-out souzt,  
Zit we fareþ as a fantasye.  
(11. 103-108)

In the final section of the poem (11. 109-132), the poet advises man on his proper conduct, given the vanity of this world and the vanity of his efforts to understand it and his place in it. In addition to the expected advice to worship God (1. 112), rely on God's mercy (1. 118), and keep our conscience clear (1. 119), the poet, following Ecclesiastes, urges conduct not recommended in any of the other lengthy didactic poems considered in the chapter:

But make we murie & sle care,  

Spende vr good and luytel spare,  

And vche mon cheries o^ures cheere.  
(11. 111-14)

This advice, verging on the pagan carpe diem, introduces another judgmental paradox into the practical life of the Christian: not only must he accept without questioning his mysterious place in the universe, he should also enjoy the good things of this life while at the same time recognizing their uselessness and while remaining basically detached from them. The same paradoxical advice with an ominous warning occurs at the end of Ecclesiastes, 11:9: "While thou art young, take thy full of manhood's pride, let thy heart beat high with youth, follow where thought leads and inclination beckons, but remember that for all this God will call thee to account."

In this final subsection of the didactic poems we find contraries used, as they have been in almost all poems considered in Section A, to
define transitoriness and prove the vanity of all things. The bodies of Indices 2280 and 562 (the poems which urge thanking God for misfortunes) are composed of stanzas listing falls from fortune; the first stanza of Index 1402 (the poem based on Ecclesiastes) contains the familiar "now X, now Y" formula, with the examples of a fall from bench to bier, pride to loss of respect, and rise from sickness to health. One contrary is used to define the other in this poem in the section in which man's short life in this world is contrasted to the cyclical nature of the universe, which, paradoxically, changes but remains stable. Heaven is defined in Index 2280 in the judgmental paradox of weal without woe (familiar from poems previously considered); death is defined in Index 3567, in a judgmental paradox, as the soul's friend and life as its foe. This poem also presents the logical apparent paradox that we are dead in this life and are born at death (which, even when solved, remains a judgmental paradox, at least).

However, in the context of the dissertation, the most interesting aspect of these poems is their use of paradoxes in definition of proper Christian conduct. In poems discussed earlier, the audience is urged to reject the things of this life; but the poems in this subsection present the audience with even more obvious judgmental paradoxes as recommendations for conduct: they should welcome death (Index 3567), thank God for suffering and misfortune (Indexes 2280 and 562), accept the vanity of all things, the brevity of human life, and the logical paradoxes of Christian doctrine without question, recognize vanity and proper Christian conduct and, at the same time, enjoy life (Index 1402).
B. Nondidactic Lyrics

While other didactic poems have focused on the transitoriness of the things of this life and man himself in order to urge repentance and good works, "I wolde witen of sum wys wiht" (based on Ecclesiastes) seems to be the only surviving didactic poem which explicitly recognizes that man's very existence in such a world of transitoriness is problematical and presents judgmental paradoxes. This is not a source of distress to the poet, however. He calmly urges simple acceptance of the reality of man's position in the world and complete confidence in God and his mercy (the immortality of the human soul as a consolation, which is so central to other didactic lyrics considered in Section A of this part of the chapter, is even minimized, though not denied, in this poem). There are, however, a few nondidactic lyrics, whose subject is transitoriness, which express the bewilderment and even suffering which man experiences, in varying degrees, as he attempts to understand his place in the universe or as he recognizes that he cannot understand it (ignoring the advice of the author of "I wolde witen").

This section of the chapter deals with several poems which are not didactic, which might be considered more lyrical presentations of the theme of the vanity of all things ("lyrical" here referring to expressions of personal emotion by the poet-speakers of the poems). Evidently, to the speakers of some of these lyrics the teaching presented in the didactic lyrics (that man must reject the things of this life, accept and even welcome suffering and changes of fortune and death itself) is a judgmental paradox. These speakers are unable to accept fully the idea of a rational, provident universe (which is a part of the
philosophy which lies behind the teachings of the didactic lyrics). In fact, the speakers of some of the lyrics convey varying degrees of suffering and perplexity on account of their position in what appears to them to be a hostile universe: one where there is no release from suffering, where life seems to be merely a series of sufferings (and dust to dust), where man is faced only with hostile forces, where he must attempt to remain steadfast in the face of an everchanging universe, composed as he is himself of contradictory forces. That man seems to be placed in this universe for no other reason than to suffer and die is a judgmental paradox, that is, it seems to be absurd in consideration of man's higher aspirations, that part of his nature which hopes for and works for permanence, happiness, satisfaction, and which seeks a rationale for the workings of the universe and for his place in it.

The poems considered in this section of the chapter include Index 3462, "pe siker sope who-so seys"; Index 3969, "Wanne ich þenche þinges þre"; Index 4177, "Wynter wakeneþ al my care"; Index 2472, "O Ihu, mercy! what world is thys!"; Index 1818, "Kyndeli is now mi coming"; Index 2576, "O Vanyte off vanytes & all is vanite!"; Index 3504-3437, "The worlde so wide, th'aire so remuable"; Index 3939, "Erþe toc of erþe."

In order to express his conception of the position of man in this life, the author of the fourteenth-century poem "pe siker sope who-so seys" (Index 3462, Appendix) makes use of the traditional metaphor of the journey with man conceived of as a wanderer:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{pe siker soþe who-so seys,} \\
\text{Wþ diþ dreye we our days}
\end{align*}
\]
& walk mani wil ways
As wandrand wiztes.
(11. 1-4)

In the first stanza of the poem the poet expands this conception of
man's position in this life by picturing him not only as enduring the
disappearance of all joys but also as fighting the four foes: the world,
death, the flesh, and the fiend. The structure of the poem is somewhat
surprising since the poet has not given equal attention to reflections
on each of the foes; instead, the poem has the following nonsymmetri-
cal structure: stanzas two and three are devoted to the world and con-
sist primarily of examples of contraries or sudden changes of fortune;
stanzas four through six describe death and the uselessness of strength
and material wealth in fighting against that foe; the final stanza men-
tions the flesh, fouled by fiends, which, according to the poet, is the
most persistent of the foes (oddly he does not expand upon the power of
the final two enemies). This poem is unlike other poems which catalogue
the powers of the world, and particularly of death, since its main pur-
pose does not seem to be to urge repentance. In fact, repentance is
possibly alluded to only once in the poem: "Man, mene þou þi mis" (l.
105). (At the end of one of the stanzas on death a passage occurs which
may suggest that the author views death as punishment for evil-doing:
"Y wold be wreken of mi wrong, / zif y way wist," 11. 79-80. The use
of the verb wreken may, however, also indicate that the lines are not a
reference to satisfaction for wrong-doing, but rather that they repre-
sent a desire on the part of the author or speaker to take vengeance on
death, who, as indicated in the stanza, has taken the lives of his
friends.) The purpose of the poem then seems not to be to urge
repentance but rather to draw attention to the plight of man in a hostile universe.

In the section on the world this purpose is partly achieved through the two long catalogues of the alternating joy and woe in the world (the longest lists I have discovered in the lyrics). Not only the length but also the nature of the catalogues contributes to the effect: the lists in general are not haphazardly arranged, rather, woe to woe is emphasized (not joy to woe and woe to joy). The contraries are arranged in rhyming triplets, and each triplet ends with an example of woe (ll. 21-23, 25-27, 33-35, 37-39). The following triplet is a typical example:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Now vnder, now ouer,} \\
\text{Now cast, now couer,} \\
\text{Now plente, now pouer,} \\
\end{align*}
\]

(11. 33-35)

Under and over may be taken as referring to positions on the wheel of fortune (which is alluded to also in line forty-three); thus the triplet shows the following movement: woe, joy, woe, joy, joy, woe. The poet concludes this section of the poem with the reflection that we are turned roughly from wave to wave (1. 44) until death lays us low (the ultimate downward turn of the wheel of fortune).

The reference to death which closes the section on the first foe also introduces the second and longest section of the poem. The hostility of death is emphasized in this section. This foe is portrayed as a robber, piercing and prodding until he has unfastened the locks of life (stanza four), as a hunter, seizing his prey with a leash (stanza five), as a hostile neighbor, fetching one to a foul grave (stanza six). But in addition to the hostility of death the poet also emphasizes the
psychological state of man constantly faced with this enemy:

When y tent til him take
How schold ich anf mirpe make
Or wele in his warld wake? --
Ywis it were wonder.
(11. 61-64)

The use of the term wonder may indicate the poet's explicit recognition that man's position in a hostile universe involves paradoxes.

The poet returns to the metaphor of the journey in the final stanza of the poem (the metaphor is continued only once in the body of the poem, l. 19). Again, man is referred to not merely as a traveller through life but as a wanderer:

Trowe trusly on his,
þou no wat neuer y-wis
In world whare þou wendes
No wat *gat þatow gas. (way)
(11. 106-109)

The aimlessness and uncertainty of man is suggested in the above lines. And in the seemingly sardonic lines following these, the concluding lines of the poem, the poet suggests that not only is man trying to find his way in this life in uncertainty, but also that he is totally surrounded by a hostile universe:

þis four er redi on þi pas --
Now haue y founden þi fas,
Finde tow þi frendes!
(11. 110-112)

While the above poem emphasizes man's loneliness and aimlessness in a hostile environment, other poems stress man's sadness in his recognition of the transitoriness and vanity of all things. Such a poem is the popular puzzle-like lyric, extant in at least twelve MSS, which lists the three sorrowful things each man must face which keep him from any
happiness in this life; the three sorrowful things were mentioned earlier in more expanded form in Indices 563 and 2302. The short poem which focuses entirely on the three sorrowful things (Index 3969) is itself a fairly obvious riddle: its meaning depends upon the recognition that the seemingly paradoxical journey which must be taken (paradoxical in that it has no set time or destination) is death:

Wanne ich beneche binges pre
ne mai neure blipe be:
bat on is ich sal awe,
bat ober is ich ne wot wilk day.
bat briddes is mi mest kare,
i ne woth nevre wuder i sal fare.
(XIII, #12A, p. 19)

These same sorrowful things form the basis for the melancholy reflections in the following lyric preserved in the famous Harley MS. 2253 (Index 4177):

Wynter wakneþ al my care,
nou þis leues waxeþ bare;
ofte y sike ant mourne sare
when hit comeþ in my þoht
of þis worldes ioie hou hit geþ al to noht.

Nou hit is and nou hit nys,
also hit ner nerere ywys.
þat moni mon seip soþ hit ys:
al goþ bote Godes wille,
alle we shule deye þah vs like ylle.

Al þat greين me graueþ grene,
nou hit faleweþ al bydene;
Iesu, help þat hit be sene,
ant shild vs from helle,
for y not whider y shal ne hou longe her duelle.
(Brook, #17, p. 53)

The three sorrowful things are expressed in lines ten and fifteen. But the poet has artfully woven them unobtrusively into the lyric as reflections upon or conclusions drawn from his observations on the transitori-
ness of physical nature. The poet has taken the old topos of the changing seasons (seen so often in didactic lyrics which cite death as proof of the ultimate vanity of all things and this as proof of the need for repentance), and has used it to give form to his reflections by portraying them as occurring to him at the coming of winter.

Each stanza is constructed similarly: the first two lines state a fact or observation or reflection of the poet and the next two lines indicate the poet's reaction to the observation or reflection; the last line stands alone. The rhyme scheme of each stanza runs counter to this division (two lines, two lines, one line) with the first three lines agreeing in rhyme and the last two corresponding. Thus each stanza is a tightly intertwined unit representing the progression of observation or reflection to conclusion. Interestingly, the syntax of each stanza is such that the last line may be read as either part of the sentence beginning in line three of each stanza or as an independent sentence. In stanza one the final line may explain hit (1. 4); or, hit may refer to wynter (1. 1) and the final line may be read as an independent exclamation. In stanza two the final line may be interpreted as further explaining line nine or as a clause equal with that in line nine, both of which explain the hit in line eight; however, the final line of stanza two may also be read as an independent exclamation. In stanza three, the for which introduces the final line explicitly connects this line with the two preceding in a cause-effect relationship; however, it is interesting that by placing the causal clause last the poet has given it more emphasis than the result clause (a prayer, which would traditionally also be placed in a final position). Thus the conclusion
of the poem is not a prayer but a clause of causation which, by its position, carries the force not of dependence but of independence, the force of an exclamation.

The last line, of course, immediately attracts attention to itself by virtue of its meter: each of the first four lines of each stanza contains four strong stresses, but the last line is longer, irregular, and difficult to scan (but probably falls into two half lines, each with two strong stresses). Upon closer examination it may be noted that there is a progression in the thoughts expressed in the concluding line of each stanza. In the first stanza the poet emphasizes the effect which the change of seasons (indicating and symbolizing the transitoriness of all things) has upon him personally—sorrow; the concluding line of the stanza indicates the poet’s general reflection brought about by the changing of seasons: "of þis worldes joie hou hit geþ al to noht." The concluding line of stanza two indicates that the poet’s reflection has turned from the general observations on transitoriness to something personal, human death: "alle we shule deye þah vs like ylle." The poet’s reflection becomes even more personal in the concluding line of stanza three where he changes from the first person plural pronoun to the first person singular and expresses his own uncertainties in consideration of the transitoriness of all things: "for y not whider y shal ne hou longe her duelle." The final lines of the three stanzas are most important in conveying the meaning of the poem; in fact, the poet’s main reflections of transitoriness and vanity are contained in these three lines, which, when read alone, summarize both the poet’s observations on and his personal reaction to the reality of
transitoriness. Partly due to their length, partly to the reflections they express, and partly due to their metrical irregularity, these final lines seem to represent sighs or perhaps even moans and thus they are central in conveying the tone and mood of melancholy in the poem.

Both transitoriness and vanity are observed by the poet as characteristic of the *worldes joie*. And his observations are expressed in logically paradoxical terms (for how can a thing be and yet never be?):

\[
\text{Nou hit is ant nou hit nys,} \\
\text{also hit ner nere ywys.} \quad (11. 6-7)
\]

The first of these lines occurs also in the didactic poem "Whon Men beop muriest at heor Mele" (1. 31); it expresses only the transitoriness of worldly joys. But the second line ("also that it [wordly joy] never was, indeed") expresses the poet's realization that worldly joys are in fact vanity, that is, untruth, and that their existence as true joys is merely illusory. Thus the apparent paradox created by the poet, being and non-being at the same time—it is, is not, never was—is solved through the distinction between appearance and reality; that which appears to man as joy is simply that, an appearance. If worldly joy is merely appearance then the world is filled only with non-joy, the lack of joy, a truly melancholy conception of this world and man's position in it.

The speaker in the following poem (Index 2472), or the first speaker, since the poem may be regarded as a dialogue, expresses bewilderment over the kind of world in which he finds himself (friends faint at need, people in pain and unable to improve their situation). His opening words, calling for mercy, suggest a cry of despair, in sharp contrast to the traditional prayer for mercy which may be made with the same
words but which traditionally closes rather than opens a lyric:

MS. Tanner 407

O Ihu mercy! what world is thys!
frendys be feer and feynte at nede;
Wo is hym hath don a-mys
and lyeth in peyne and may not spede!

What fortune will haue, it schal be had
Who-so-euer will say nay;
therfor lette it passe, and be not sad;
and thynk vpon hym þat alle amende may.
(XV, #165, p. 259)

The second stanza of the poem appears to contain the consolation offered by a second speaker (although the words may be viewed as another voice of the same speaker). It presents the contrary emotion: rather than puzzlement verging on despair, this stanza urges resignation and hope for amendment. Interestingly, the second stanza ends with the advice to "thynk vpon hym þat alle amende may," a reference to the more traditional appeal to Christ for mercy. Mercy in the first line may be considered either as a cry of despair or as an appeal to Christ to bring about changes in the fortunes of this life (or perhaps both in a cry of confusion); the allusion to Christ's mercy at the end of the poem may refer to amendment of suffering in this life, but it more likely suggests the postulated end of all suffering in the after-life.

Central to the poem is the problem of man's position in a hostile universe, in a world where human loyalties are short-lived and where suffering exists without relief. The second stanza introduces as a consolation the teaching that one must accept the changes of fortune, let them pass, and "be not sad." Whether this consolation is viewed as Christian, resignation to what is ultimately God's will, or simply stoical, it nevertheless introduces the judgmental paradox which was
implicit in the didactic lyrics: that man should and, by implication, 
can overcome his human nature which is attached to the things of this 
world. If the two stanzas are interpreted as being from two voices of 
the same speaker this additional paradox is heightened; that is, a ten-
sion is presented in a single speaker between his emotional and physical 
attachment to this life by virtue of his human nature and his philosoph-
ical or common-sensical conviction that it is the nature of the joys of 
this life to pass away and, in the Christian framework, that some kind 
of amends, mysteriously alluded to in the poem, may be made for this, 
either in this life or the next, or perhaps in both.

No consolation for the suffering experienced in this life is 
offered in the following fourteenth-century poem (Index 1818):

    MS. Harley 2316
    Kyndeli is now mi coming
    in to zis [werld] wiht teres and cry;
    Litel and pouere is myn hauing,
    brizel and some i falle from hi;
    Scharp and strong is mi deying,
    i ne woth whider schal i;
    Fowl and stinkande is mi roting—
    on me, ihesu, zow haue mercy!
    (XIV, #53, p. 68)

The cry for mercy which concludes the poem may represent the speaker's 
desire for relief of suffering either in this life or else in the next. 
But regardless, the impression presented in the poem is certainly that 
human existence is nothing but a series of sufferings. It is almost an 
absurdist view, only saved from this by the belief, implicit in the 
final plea, that some outside power, presumably benevolent, can relieve 
the speaker from his suffering. The helplessness of man in the universe 
is implied in the poem: the speaker hints at no possibility of any human
relief from suffering (such as the resignation suggested in the previous poem), rather, he portrays himself as dependent solely on the mercy of an outside force, Jesus.

That the speaker is speaking not only of his own plight but also of that of all mankind is indicated in the tense of is, consistently present throughout the lyric though the poet speaks of various periods of existence in chronological order: birth, life on earth (having), dying, and rotting. This series of life's time periods (occurring in the alternating lines of the lyric) is most interesting in the interpretation of the poem. Human life as we tend to think of it, that is, time spent on the earth (having) is given a strange insignificance in the poem since it is put on an equal basis, through space devoted to it in the poem and through its association by rhyme, with events which we tend to regard as momentary—birth and death. The insignificance of life on earth is further suggested by the equal space given to having and rotting. Length of time rather than brevity is suggested. But the unsavory associations immediately brought to mind by the word rotting (miserable, useless, undignified, putrid, etc.) are put on an equal basis with any associations belonging to having, and they seem to overshadow and indeed replace anything good which having may have suggested. All of the events of human existence from birth to return of the body to dust seem to be given an insignificance by the fact that they are all designated by terms occurring at the end of lines, where they would ordinarily receive emphasis. However, it is only the feminine endings of the words denoting these stages in life which rhyme; the essential distinguishing syllables of the words are given no emphasis at all through
the rhyme scheme. It is as if coming, having, dying, and rotting are only distinguished by the type or degree of suffering which the poet attributes to them.

There seems to be a definite progression from bad to worse in the poet's presentation of the suffering endured at various stages of human existence: tears and crying occur at birth; poverty and brevity are associated with life (litel, 1. 3, I interpret here as short; however, it may also refer to poverty); death is sharp and strong; and decomposition (or, perhaps, roting refers to suffering in hell or purgatory) is foul and stinking. Such a conception of existence helps explain the use of the term Kyndeli in the first line of the poem. Although it most obviously means according to nature it carries here the additional meaning of fittingly, since an existence composed of nothing but suffering is appropriately introduced by a birth accompanied by tears and crying, of the child and of the mother. The ironically used kyndeli is given emphasis in the poem not only because it occurs as the first word but also because of the natural strong stress which accompanies such an initial word. In fact, not only does the rhyme scheme of the poem tend to equalize and minimize the importance of the stages of human existence (through the use of feminine rhyme), the metrical scheme tends to emphasize and highlight the suffering which accompanies these stages since the adjectives litel, brizel, scharp, and fowl introduce lines and carry stresses; in fact, all the negative adjectives describing the suffering of existence carry strong stresses.

All Christian consolation—even the cry for mercy which implies belief in some outside all-powerful force—is absent from a fifteenth-
century poem which opens with a direct quotation from Ecclesiastes, "O Vanyte off vanytes & all is vanite!" (Index 2576, Appendix). Unlike the poem previously discussed which is also obviously inspired by Ecclesiastes ("I wolde witen of sum wys wiht") this poem does not urge acceptance of the ways of the world and blind faith and trust in God's mercy. At least the lyricist conceives of no meaning whatsoever to man's activities here on earth since they all end in vanity—a thought which opens the poem and which concludes each stanza.

The poet introduces his theme in the first stanza with the traditional image of the wheel of fortune. The contraries of weal and woe are not pictured as merely alternating (as they are in many lyrics and in Ecclesiastes, 3:1-8), but as moving in a circular pattern from woe to wele to woe, or from wele to woe to wele (thus more accurately imitating the motion of the wheel). The wheel of fortune is explicitly mentioned in stanza eight (where the poet may also be punning on wele and wheel). The poet also introduces the more particular theme he will expand upon in the next six stanzas, "... profete, plesure, astate, ore grete degree, / The best þer-of schall ende in vanyte" (ll. 6-7). Each of the next six stanzas emphasizes the poet's contention that all worldly honors end in vanity, yet none gives a "before and after" picture or an illustration of possession then loss of these worldly goods. Instead, each stanza devotes from four to six lines to describing the benefits which accompany worldly "profet, plesure, astate, ore grete degree" and generally one line (in two stanzas three lines) to the contention that all will end in vanity. The rhetorical pattern of stanzas two through seven is apparent at a glance; each stanza (except the fourth
which is directly addressed to Ze feyre ladis and the second which begins with Zit) begins with if and either the fifth or seventh line begins with yet. The forces which will prove all to be vanity are mentioned specifically only twice in these stanzas: death (1. 34) and age (1. 41).

The last four stanzas of the poem do not follow the pattern of the preceding six. Stanza eight, which explicitly mentions the wheel of fortune, focuses on that state or rule, said to be "not bot vanyte," where fortune permits unfortone, specifically, the rule of some men against their royal kin. In stanzas nine and ten, youth and middle age are personified and death and age are again specifically mentioned as the forces which will prove the pleasure-seeking of youth and the money-gathering of middle age nothing but vanity. The final stanza is the most interesting of the final four and indeed of the entire poem. With the addition of this stanza, which is written in the voice of the working class (we) -- in particular, it seems, the voice of the farmer -- the poet has encompassed almost all classes in his audience: the poor (stanza eleven); pleasure-seeking youth and middle aged persons who are monetarily successful or working for that success (stanzas nine and ten), and those admired for their wisdom, power, beauty, birth, success, riches (stanzas two through seven). In the first and second sections of the poem (through stanza ten) the poet seems to be directly addressing the groups included (he does specifically address ze feyre ladis, 1. 22, and Thou blynd zouth, 1. 62). However, he also seems to be addressing those who wish they could enjoy the supposed blessings of power, beauty, youth, etc. (as suggested by the rhetorical pattern set up in the first
part of the poem where second, fifth, sixth, and seventh stanzas conspicuously begin with the conditional Ziff). In the final stanza the poet includes himself among the laborers (we) who, because of their position in a stanza which is not only the final one but which is the most forceful, emerge as the immediate audience to whom the poet addresses himself. Thus, the poem could be viewed as having perhaps only one intended audience (the laborers) and as including the other audiences for the vicarious participation of the laborers in these other, often admired, groups—with all of this intended to prove to the immediate audience that vanity applies to all estates.

The final stanza is designed partly to shock the reader. As has been mentioned, we is used for the first time in the poem and the poet specifically puts himself into one of his audience groups. This is all the more surprising because farmer-poets are rare if not unknown (or, at least, unrecognized) in the Middle Ages. The stanza is also surprising since it follows without transition from the preceding stanza and since it corresponds in rhetorical form to none of the other stanzas in the poem. It neither continues the youth, middle-age, age, and death personifications of the preceding two stanzas nor does it follow the form (if . . . yet) of the stanzas in the first part of the poem. Since it portrays a way of life, it shares something in common with stanzas two through seven, but while the earlier stanzas described the vanity of the honors and pleasures of the life of the rich and powerful, this stanza describes the suffering of the life of the poor. By including a class which is often neglected in the lyrics which portray vanity, the stanza contributes to universality in the poet's presentation of the
vanity of human endeavors. The stanza is unusual since it portrays continual or cyclical suffering. Other poems considered in this chapter generally concentrate on the transitoriness of blessings and goods in order to show the ultimate vanity of all things; sufferings are mentioned in these poems in connection with loss of goods and blessings originally possessed—not as a way of life in itself, as portrayed in the final stanza of this poem.

The life of the poor is presented with a forcefulness which is lacking in the style of the other stanzas of the poem. Although the poem begins forcefully, with repetition, anaphora, and parallelism as well as exclamation conveying a sense of futility and vanity, it loses force in the lengthy and detailed descriptions of the life of the rich and powerful which are characterized by little alliteration, little variation from a line with a somewhat natural middle caesura, and little variation from the "if . . . yet" rhetorical structure. Forcefulness is somewhat characteristic of stanzas nine and ten, with the use of personification, direct address, exclamation, and some slight variation in clausal construction (such as in ll. 62-63). The force of the poet's rhetoric is outstanding, however, in the final stanza:

We tyll þe erth, we tourne it to & fro,
We labour ryzht deuly with grete besynes,
We dyge, we delue, we saw, we schere also,
We geder þe corne home foroþer mens ryches,
We haue full seldome any restfull gladnes,
   Bot labour in pouerte to þe tyme þat we dyze--
Zit is oure labour not bot vanyte.
   Amen qd Rate.
(11. 71-77)

The anaphora and alliteration in the lines contribute to the portrayal of the life of the tenant farmer as monotonous; this effect is
especially pronounced in line seventy-three where the poet has combined repetition of syntactic structures, three internal caesuras, alliteration, and nine monosyllables. The turning of the earth to and fro closely relates the monotonous task of the farmer with the never-ending turning of the wheel of fortune (as does his cyclical job of digging, sowing, gathering). His work seems to be presented as a reflection of or as a microcosmic correspondence to the never-ending cycles of the universe.

The labors of the farmer, and those of the wealthy, powerful, respected, the young, and the middle-aged, are presented, however, not only as cyclical but as useless, totally in vain. The labors of the farmer reflect the futility of human pursuits in this life, since the poor are rewarded with neither respect, power, pleasure, nor money (ll. 75-76). As noted early in the discussion of this poem, the poet's conception of man's place in the universe verges on the absurd since he offers neither Christian nor heroic consolation. Since the poet says the poor labor in poverty till the time that they die yet their labor is but vanity, he might be suggesting that their labor even fails to gain them reward hereafter. In this respect, the final stanza is also shocking to the reader who perhaps expects to find a final prayer or at least an allusion to relief from suffering if not in this world then in the next. Since the reader finds no such consolation, or an allusion to one, the final "Amen" of the MS is particularly surprising. Is it a final whisper of resignation or faith, a final heroic exclamation, a consciously or unconsciously added irony, or an extraneous scribal addition?
The position of man in the universe is the general subject of a fourteen-line poem which is perhaps the most interesting of the Middle English lyrics which is considered in this chapter. The poem presents a question involving man's relationship to the universe: can man be steadfast in an ever-changing world? The poem also seems to touch upon several problems which are paradoxical in nature: the relationship of free will and predestination, the futility of man's actions which sometimes produce results in inverse proportion to man's efforts; the non-fulfillment of expectations; the nature of Providence. The vanity of all of man's efforts in this life, which was the main consideration in "O Vanyte off vanytes & all is vanite!," is only one aspect of the problematical existence of man touched upon in the following poem (Index 3504 - 3437): 58

MS. Fairfax 16
The worlde so wide, th'aire so remuable,
The sely man so litel of stature,
The grove and grounde and clothinge so mutable,
The fire so hoote and subtil of nature,
The water neuer in oon—what creature
That made is of these foure, thus flyttyng,
May stedfast be as here in his lyving?

The more I goo the ferther I am behinde,
The ferther behinde the ner my wayes ende,
The more I seche þe worse kan I fynde,
The lighter leve the lother for to wende,
The bet ðy serve the more al out of mynde.
Is thys fortune, not I, or infortune?
Though I go lowse, tyed am I with a Lune.
(XV, #171, pp. 262-63)

The first stanza of the poem presents the question, "What creature made of the four ever-changing elements, earth, air, fire, and water, may be steadfast on earth in his living?" The question may be honestly asked by the poet who is seeking an answer, or it may have the force of
a rhetorical question with the expected answer, "No one." In one sense
the second stanza provides the answer that no one is steadfast, in an­
other sense it indicates that everyone is steadfast. The question
itself may also have several meanings, partly dependent on the inter­
pretation of stedfast. It may ask what man can firmly hold onto his
health and life who is made of fleeting (transitory or ever-changing)
elements. It may ask how such a man can be firmly established in his
living, that is, not suffer the changes of fortune which are part of an
ever-changing universe. It may ask, in a moral sense, how such a man
may be steady or not given to dissipation, foolishly squandering his
earthly goods and abilities, existing aimlessly, perhaps even waste­
fully pursuing transitory pleasures instead of that which is worthwhile
(if anything); or how much a man may be faithful to any higher convic­
tions or goals (these higher convictions or aspirations being in con­
flict with his physical fleeting nature).

The conflict between movement and lack of movement (flyttyng and
stedfast in the first stanza) is continued and expanded in the second
stanza, which may be viewed as the poet's examination of the question he
has presented. Terms relating to stasis and nonstasis in the second
stanza include: goo, behinde, wayes ende, seche, fynde, leve, wende, go
lowse, tyed. Furthermore, the contraries are juxtaposed in such a way
that the second stanza consists primarily of a series of paradoxical
statements or statements of paradoxical situations (judgmentally para­
doxical). For example, the poet says that the more he goes the further
he is behind; also that the further behind he is the nearer he is to his
way's end (ll. 8-9). Each of these lines presents a separate paradox
and together they form a paradox (since according to ordinary expectations one is nearer his end when he advances not when he retreats).

Likewise, it is contrary to human expectations to be successful in finding something in inverse proportion to the effort exerted in seeking for it (l. 10, which contains an ambiguity resulting from the possibility of understanding be worse as an adverb or as the object of find). Lines eleven and twelve introduce two further paradoxes: the easier the permission, the more reluctant one is to go; the better one serves (another) the less he is remembered for it. The poet has in these four paradoxes (11. 8-9, 10, 11, 12) touched upon paradoxes which man discovers in the outcome of his own expectations both within himself, in what he personally undertakes (11. 8-11), and in his relationship with others (11. 10-11). (The paradox in line ten may be interpreted in two ways: either the speaker is the giver of the leve or permission whose expectations are not fulfilled because the receiver is more reluctant to go, and the paradox is in relationship to others; or he is the receiver of the permission and the paradox is within himself.)

What relationship do these paradoxes have to being stedfast in one's living? Certainly they illustrate that results do not always coincide with expectations and that efforts do not always bring desired results. Everything is unexpected (fortune's turning wheel); man is to an extent unsteadfast, aimless, if his actions do not produce the anticipated results. These paradoxes then seem to support the contention that the question of the first stanza is a rhetorical question, that no man may be stedfast, that each must expect and respond to the unexpected. Yet if no man is stedfast, how are we to interpret the last line of the
poem, in which the poet declares that indeed he is fast in place, in fact, tied with a lune (a leash used to tie a hawk, usually around his feet)?

In interpreting the final line of the poem it must be noted that there is the possibility that the poet does not intend to contradict his evidence that man cannot be steadfast, or, rather, that he intends the contradiction merely at the verbal level, that he intends the paradox to be solved by an interpretation of lune not finally as leash but as moon (Med. Latin luna, moon). With the traditional associations of moon (inconstancy and change) the poet may be seen as creating a paradoxical puzzle, a habit which, as has been demonstrated, is not unusual among the medieval lyricists; the reader must solve the puzzle, that is, interpret lune as moon, in order to resolve the contradiction created between the answer to the question and the final line of the poem.

Still another interpretation of lune is possible, also dependent on knowledge of the meaning of the medieval Latin luna, which was used figuratively to mean "fit of lunacy." Thus the poet may be using the term to indicate that man is dominated by fits of frenzy or various whims or humors (not steadfast). With this reading the poet's interpretation of man's reaction to his universe might be anything from participation in the fleeting and transitory (changing of humors) to insanity caused by the unfulfillment of his expectations (frenzy). The allusion to the humors which is part of an interpretation of lune as derived from Latin luna fits well with the cataloging of the four elements in the first stanza of the lyric.

Rather than resolve the paradox of the final line of the poem (loose
yet tied) and the paradox which it creates in interpreting the poem as a whole (which seems to demonstrate that man is not steadfast in any way), it is far more interesting to speculate on possible meanings if lune is indeed understood to mean a leash for a hawk. First, it may be pointed out that leashing a hawk is against its wild or physical nature; however, unless the hawk is leashed it cannot be used for purposes of hunting. Is the leashing good or bad? Is it subordinating a lower to a higher purpose? Is the lack of fulfillment of expectations, the hawk's and man's, something good or bad? Or, in the words of the poet, "Is thys fortune, not I, or infortune?" (The middle clause offers two interpretations: note I, or, know not I, the second being the more likely). The lack of the fulfillment of expectations is certainly fortune (Lady Fortune) and it is certainly infortune from another point of view. Yet, in the context of medieval philosophy Fortune was regarded as the working out of God's Providence in this world (perhaps a higher purpose both for man and for the other creature, the hawk). Thus the final line may present the philosophical paradox that what seems loose and unplanned and unrelated to the cause-effect relationship of human expectations and actions taken to carry them out, all this unsteadfastness is actually part of a plan or part of a system. Surely this coincides with the flyttyng nature of the elements of the universe (whose constant nature is to be inconstant) but it is also part of a larger constancy, God's plan for the universe or Divine Providence. (Man's actions in relationship to this Providence introduce the paradox of free will and predestination.)

The initial paradoxes with which he introduces the second stanza
strongly suggest that the poet intends to indicate a relationship between man's fumblings and unsteadfastness and some final goal to which he is irrevocably bound, though he may not be conscious at all times of his approach to it—a relationship between being loose and, at the same time, "tyed . . . with a Lune." Ways ende, seeking, and finding naturally suggest the metaphorical pilgrimage through life, leading to salvation. The poet may be suggesting that the more one tries to understand this ways ende the less he is able to do so (a hint of the anti-intellectualism which pervaded "I wolde witen"); or he may be suggesting that the further one goes in the ways of the world the less he will find the true way (traditional metaphorical expressions of the philosophical problem or paradox that man's human nature is often in conflict with his higher or spiritual nature).

What then is the poem's conception of man and his place in the universe? Is man like the fleeting universe, unsteadfast in all things? Is he lowse or changing like the universe, yet, also like the universe, is he dominated by some constancy (constant nature of inconstancy). Or, in the Christian philosophical framework, is he, like the universe, ultimately free and changing yet part of a plan; perhaps, from his viewpoint, going in circles, expectations never fulfilled, yet, from another viewpoint, still approaching a goal? Is man, like the universe, composed of contradictory elements, not only of earth, air, fire, and water, but of the warring factions of body and soul, lower and higher natures, reason and emotion? Are these elements constantly in conflict permitting no rest? Or are they somehow (paradoxically) united in some oneness or harmony beyond man's comprehension? Does the poem present
an absurdist view of man and the universe or the orthodox Christian view?

A decision is complicated by the difficulty of interpreting the single line in the poem which seems to characterize directly man and his place in the universe, line two: "The sely man so little of stature." Obviously, man is a speck in the wide universe, but "litel of stature" may have more negative connotations. Furthermore, sely at this time may mean happy, fortunate, blissful, lucky, spiritually blessed, holy, good, innocent, harmless, or deserving of pity or sympathy, pitiable, miserable, insignificant, trifling, mean, poor, feeble, crazy, and, by the sixteenth century, foolish, simple, silly. Sely in the poem may have any or all of these meanings. Whatever the desired interpretation of sely, for the poem would seem to support more than one, one thing is certain: the poem conveys in some sense the philosophy that man and his place in the universe are problematical, that the transitoriness of all things places man in a paradoxical situation.

Almost nothing is certain about the interpretation of the very popular four-line poem generally called "Earth Upon Earth" (though this exact sequence of words does not occur in the version of the poem to be considered in this chapter). The poem as it is preserved in the famous MS. Harley 2253 is probably the earliest of many much-expanded versions, though it may not be the original. The poem has much in common with two types of lyrics considered in this dissertation: the word-play poems, such as "While þou hast goðe & gestes goðe" in which one word is used in several syntactic functions, and the punctuation poems which have two
contradictory meanings. Both of these types are puzzle-like since they offer the reader a challenge which he must accept in order to understand the poem. In the puzzle-like poems considered in Chapter One it is usually a simple matter to isolate the various meanings of the poem; in the first type mentioned, one reading (based on simple syntactic signals) is obviously intended (this is the case, for example, in "That hart my hart hath in suche grace"), while in the punctuation poems the two contradictory meanings are fairly obvious. In the following poem (Index 3939), however, nothing is a simple matter:

Harley MS. 2253
Erpe toc of erpe erpe wyhf woh;
erpe oher erpe to be erpe droh;
erpe leyde erpe in erpene þroh.
þo heuede erpe of erpe erpe ynoh.
(Brook, #1, p. 29)

The challenge of interpretation is complicated by two facts: first, not only erpe but several other key terms in the poem have multiple meanings; second, the poem is so compact, it has so few syntactic signals and those which it has are often ambiguous, that several usages can be postulated for many of the key terms. Erpe, for example, has ten meanings in recorded usage during the Middle Ages, eight of which I think might apply in the poem: (1) the physical earth, compared to heaven and hell; (2) earth as the dwelling place of man and creatures and therefore a symbol of worldly things and pursuits (and thus used as a synecdoche for them); (3) the people of earth; (4) country, a land, nativeland; (5) the ground as a place of burial; (6) earth, dirt, topsoil, clay; (7) earth or dust as the substance of which God made man and to which all creatures return (which then may be used as a synecdoche for man or man's body); (8) earth as one of the four elements. Wyhf has over forty
meanings; in the Middle Ages it is generally used to express opposition
(against, towards, alongside, especially in OE), reciprocity, association,
combination or union, instrumentality or means, and attendant circumstance. Of can be used to denote motion (from, out of), change of state, origin, substance (made of), means (by, through, with), cause (because of), agent (by), concern (about, concerning, in the matter of), and, of course, possession. Droh, from drawen, may mean drew, pulled, dragged, brought, attached, conformed to, followed, moved, went; and toc, from taken, may mean caught, understood, seized, committed, rebuked, succeeded. Further complicating matters there are few syntactic signals and those which are given are often ambiguous. For example, droh and toc may be used either transitively or intransitively; it is seldom clear when erbe is used nominatively or objectively; ober may be used as either an adjective or conjunction (the syntax does preclude its possible use as a pronoun); be may be an article or a pronoun; bo may be the demonstrative pronoun plural (those), the relative pronoun plural (who, that, which), the adverb then, or the conjunction when or because (the demonstrative adjective is precluded); and ynoh may be an adverb or an adjective (it does not seem to be used as a noun).

The poem seems to offer infinite possibilities for interpretation. Some of them may be suggested by a fairly close analysis of the syntactic possibilities offered solely by the first line (for the sake of clarity—if any is possible in this undertaking—the three occurrences of erbe in the first line will be referred to according to their places in the line, as erbe #1, erbe #2, erbe #3): (a) Erbe #1 (man, dust, the grave, men, a country, etc.) toc (transitive: caught, took, seized, committed,
rebuked, etc.) of (from, by means of, etc.) erbe #2(any of earth meanings) erbe #3 (directed object, any of meanings) wyp woh (a modifying phrase for erbe #3 or for toc); (b) Erbe #1 toc (transitive) erbe #3 of (possessive) erbe #2 wyp woh (adjectival or adverbial phrase); (c) Erbe #1 toc (intransitive: succeeded) of (from) erbe #2, erbe #3 wyp woh (phrase in apposition with either erbe #1 or erbe #2); (d) Erbe #1 toc (transitive but with an "understood" object) of (from, by means of, etc.) erbe #2, erbe #3 wyp woh (phrase in apposition with erbe #1 or erbe #2).

Considering lexical with syntactic possibilities in each line the poem could be about almost anything "earthly": the danger of earthly possessions (man took the things of earth wrongfully), the end result of feuds between individuals or countries (man or country wrongfully took something from man or country), wrongful succession of an heir or the succession of an evil man. With some imagination (especially in a figurative interpretation of erbe bene broh) the poem can even be read as an ironic poem of sexual innuendo. It can also be read as a religious poem: about the first sin and fall from grace, or about the rejection of Christ by mankind. In the latter case the lines would be interpreted as follows: A man took from men, or from the earth, the evils of human nature (erbe wyp woh); human nature (the Man, or a woman) a new or other human nature brought to humans; but men laid the Man in a grave when men of earth (erbe of erbe) had enough of the Man.

Considering later expansions of these lines and the use made of them as tombstone epiteths as late as the nineteenth century, it is obvious that the most popular interpretations of the poem had to do with
death and the corruption of the human body (although in very late
preservations earth is most often interpreted as misleading worldly
possessions). One possibility is the reading of the poem as a step
by step account of what happens to the body at the time of death: Death
(a figurative use of erbe from sense #5 quoted above) took from earth
man with sin; that man other men drew or brought to the grave; these men
then laid the man in his earthen plot, then (ironically) had that man
of earth (finally) earth enough (a possible allusion to his attachment
to worldly possessions, erbe, during his life). An especially artistic
play on words is presented in the last line where the obvious meaning
is that the dead man has had enough of life on earth or has had enough
of earthly possessions; but the final words also remind us that he now
has earth as his home, food, etc., and indeed that he will finally
become earth himself. The final line may even be interpreted to read:
"Then had the earth (death, the grave) of that man possessions enough"
(his very life). The sequence erbe of erbe erbe in the final line of
the poem offers meaningful ambiguities no matter what one chooses as the
basic subject matter of the poem—inheritance, feuds, Redemption, sex,
the Fall, death.

Since the poem offers such a wide range of interpretations it is
not surprising that it can also be read as an interpretation of man's
place in the universe, and as such it may well be included with the
lyrics considered at the end of this chapter, those in which the poet
attempts to indicate some of the paradoxicality of man's existence in a
seemingly hostile or entirely vain universe. The poem may be read as
presenting the inevitable cycle of dust to dust, never, of course,
offering a rationale for the implied suffering or the implied uselessness of man's existence: Man took of earth (other men) life (or human nature) with harm or wrong (crying of the child at birth, his mother's suffering, or perhaps even original sin); man another man added to the earth's population (the third earth in this line including probably several meanings of the word: not only earth's surface but all those meanings which include the idea of bringing down—to sin, suffering, and, anticipating the future, to the grave and finally to dust; thus the whole cycle may be represented in this one erbe); this other man laid the predecessor in his earthen grave; then had the earth (grave, dirt) of this dead man abundant dust. In this reading each line represents a stage in the vicious cycle: birth, reproduction, death, annihilation.

The repetition of erbe twelve times in the four-line poem (three times in each of the four lines, which might be found significant in some interpretations) seems to emphasize the notion of transitoriness (as opposed to eternity which is immediately connoted by the use of the terms heaven or hell), as well as lowliness (dirt, grave, dust), since these two connotations are immediately associated with the word. A mental jump of a different degree must be made to interpret erbe as a synecdoche for man's body, and an even larger jump must be made to associate various occurrences with Christ or to interpret them as sexual innuendos. The deliberate measure of the lines, created by the almost exclusive use of monosyllables, and the occurrence at the end of each line of an open vowel as the rhyming sound both contribute to what might be called a serious or sorrowful tone, which is also partly
created by the reader's immediate mental associations with erbe. The use of monosyllables, the use of open-vowelled rhyming sound, and the repetition of erbe (with its immediate connotations) would seem to favor interpretations of the poem which center on the serious and sorrowful themes of transitoriness, vanity, death. What makes the lyric so interesting, however, is that other interpretations cannot be excluded. The poem means anything and everything that its words and syntax permit, with imaginative interpretation.

In this section of the chapter a judgmental paradox which is the remote cause of the didactic lyrics, that in the face of experience and common sense (which prove the transitoriness and ultimate vanity of all things) man continues to cling to the things of this life, presents itself in a different form. This judgmental paradox I have sometimes referred to vaguely as a paradoxicality associated with the vanity of all things. Since this paradoxicality takes several forms it is difficult to define, but, basically, it has to do with the contradiction between the way life is and the way men expect it to be, or the conflict between the transitoriness and ultimate vanity of all things and man's expectations for happiness and stability in this life; it has to do with man's inability to accept fully and to adjust to the moralist's teachings and the conflict established between his expectations in this life and the hostilities or evidences of vanity which he encounters in his daily life. This paradoxicality is the result of man's refusal, or, perhaps, inability, to reject the claims of his human nature.

This paradoxicality, or the simultaneous existence within man of the knowledge of transitoriness and vanity and the desire for something
better or different in this life, is really the theme of the lyrics on transitoriness which have been analyzed in this section of the chapter. While alternating contraries are an important means of defining transitoriness in these poems (as they are in the didactic lyrics), they can only express the fact of transitoriness, not its paradoxicality. Sometimes judgmental paradox is used to define man's frustrations. In Index 3462 the narrator claims that it is wonder that when he thinks of death he cannot be happy in this life (the advice given in the didactic poem based on Ecclesiastes obviously does not work for him). The narrator in Index 2576 expresses his frustration in the judgmental paradox that his work benefits other men, not himself, and he continues in the cycle of poverty. The most obvious use of paradox to express the paradoxicality of transitoriness and vanity occurs in Index 3437, Squire Halsham's poem, with its clearly-expressed paradoxes: "The more I goo the ferther I am behinde, / The ferther behinde the ner my wayes ende," etc. Sometimes, however, the paradoxicality is expressed not by contraries and paradox but by other means, such as the combination of a description of transitoriness and an exclamation to God or Christ which borders on despair (Index 4177, Index 2472); or the matter-of-fact listing of the harrowing and seemingly purposeless succession of stages of life (Index 1818, Index 3939).

The uses of contraries and paradox in Section B of the second part of the chapter are somewhat, but not entirely, representative of the major uses of contraries and paradox in the poems considered in the chapter as a whole. In the moral lyrics there is little use of contraries and paradox to define a subject in its power or effect, such as its power to effect a paradox or to change one contrary within a substance
into the corresponding contrary. This use of contraries is found though in poems which define fortune, such as Index 3408, "be leued fortune is bope frend and fo." (This use of contraries and paradox is important in the lyrics considered in Chapter One and Chapter Three.)

In Section B there is little evidence of the third use of contraries outlined in the Introduction: one contrary used to define its corresponding contrary. In the moral lyrics as a whole, however, this use of contraries is more in evidence. It is found, for example, in the group of poems analyzed in subsections two and three of part two, the didactic lyrics which offer the consolation of heaven and those which stress repentance. In this first group of poems the transitoriness of earth is contrasted with the eternal joys of heaven, and both contraries are present within the poem; in the second group only one contrary, transitoriness, is included, but eternity is implied as the reward if the things of earth are rejected. In the world-upside-down poems considered in the first part of the chapter, the world rightsid e up is implied and it must be supplied by the audience as the norm in order to define the propositions within the poems as abuses. In scattered other poems a contrast for purposes of definition is set up between the stability (within change) of the universe and man's lack of stability (Index 1402, Index 3504-3437).

Contraries in form or structure are also relatively rare in the poems considered in this chapter, in comparison to those found in Chapter One. One punctuation poem is discussed (Index 2364), one antiphrase poem (Index 2805), one riddling poem (Index 4083), and one riddle (Index 3939). Contraries in form are also noted in a few
didactic poems which have a tripartite structure: example, reflection, prayer (most notably, Index 3310). **Impossibilia** are used in circumlocution for *never* (to define when we may seek rest in *lond*) in Index 4236.

The primary function of contraries and paradox in the lyrics considered in this chapter is to define a subject for celebration or dispraise. In the first part of the chapter, alternating contraries define one of the evils of the age, false friendship (Index 356); but in Section A of the second part of the chapter (didactic lyrics) this use of contraries is particularly extensive. Alternating or successive contraries are used to define transitoriness or fortune in the majority of poems considered. The "now X, now Y" formula (where Y is the contrary of X) is especially popular (it is used, for example, in Indices 563, 3996, 2057, 1402, 3462, 4177, 2576). Contraries are also used to define subjects other than transitoriness, such as proper Christian conduct (e.g., stamp/slide, exile vice/follow truth in Index 3151).

Paradoxes are also used to define major subjects of the poems, such as the transitoriness and decay of virtue. Logical paradox is found in Index 906 (love is lechery) and Index 1857 (light is night, one is two, etc.). Judgmental paradox also defines the decline of virtue, for example, in Index 906 (gift is domesman), Index 1820 (old men witless, women shameless), and in several poems which use personification to show that virtues are exiled (even dead and buried) and vices are enthroned. These logical and judgmental paradoxes, which express reversals of what would normally be expected, make up the *topos* of the world upside down.

Judgmental paradoxes define heaven as the end of the alternation of
contraries, in Index 3310, for example. Heaven is described in the image of a logical paradox (both cross and pile) in Index 3410. Judgmental paradox defines proper Christian conduct: that we should welcome death (Index 3567), thank God for misfortunes (indexes 2280 and 562), accept without questioning the vanity of all things and our place in the universe, as well as theological paradoxes (Index 1402), that we should withdraw from a life of ease, which will be easy when we think of heaven (Index 3310).

Paradox defines man's attachment to the things of this life: licking honey from a thorn (Index 4223). Finally, a paradox underlies most of the didactic poems and becomes explicit in one group of lyrics (those considered in Section A 4 of the second part of the chapter). The lyricists view as paradoxical man's attachment to this life when experience and common sense tell him that all is vanity. If man were not attached to the things of this life no need would have existed for the numerous extant didactic poems. The paradoxicality associated with the vanity of all things, based on man's inability to accept fully the moralist's doctrine because of his human nature in general and his expectations for better things in this life in particular, becomes the subject of more lyrical, sometimes anguished, poems which are discussed in the last section of the chapter.
NOTES

1 For the Latin tract as summarized in its preface, see R. H. Robbins, Historical Poems of the XIVth and XVth Centuries (N.Y.: Columbia U. Press, 1959), n. 54, p. 324; or Carleton Brown, "The Pride of life" and the 'Twelve abuses," Archiv für das Studium der Neueren Sprachen und Literaturen, 128 (1912), p. 72. Some poems quoted in this part of the chapter are taken from the Robbins collection, hereafter abbreviated Histor.

2 Histor, n. 55, p. 327.


4 For the Latin version which precedes Index 906 in the MS see Histor, #55, p. 143.

5 Histor, n. 54, pp. 325-26.


7 It will be noted that I have always referred to the parallel of the paradoxes in Index 906 as the paradoxes in the Middle English Gesta Romanorum. Interestingly, all of the Latin MSS of the Gesta which contain the story of the four philosophers record the paradoxes as they are found in Index 1857 (one is two, etc.). The story and particular paradoxes in the Latin Gesta was evidently the source of the story and paradoxes as recorded in the Speculum Christiani. The origin of the paradoxes as recorded in the Middle English Gesta (and in Index 906) is unknown. For the texts of the two versions and a full discussion of the Middle English Gesta version, the Speculum version, texts of the Latin versions, and discussions of other Middle English translations see Herrtage, p. 360 (text), pp. 497-500; and Holmstedt, pp. 124-31 (text), clxxxv-cxc, 331-36.

8 Histor, n. 56, p. 328. Carleton Brown in his article on the abuses notes a similar Latin list which occurs in a Lydgate MS and which he used as a model for lines in "Goo forth, kyng, reule the by sapynce" (p. 74).

9 A very similar poem, Index 1791, is included with the letters of John Ball. Robbins indicates that the revolutionary character of Ball's version rests on a revision of the final line:

now raygneth pride in price,
couetise is holden wise,
lechery without shame,
gluttonie without blame,
enue raygneth with reason,
and sloth is taken in great season.
God doe bote for nowe is time.
Amen.

(Histor, §17, p. 273, and discussion, p. xlii.)

10Brown, in his note on this poem, finds the following lines from Brome MS. (15th cen) directly related to Index 1871:
Lex ys leyd adowne,
And veritas ys but small,
Amor ys out of towne
And caritas ys gon with all.
(See XV, n. 176, p. 347.)

11Brown prints the following two versions:
Men hem bimenin of litle trewthe
It is ded and zat is rewthe
Lesing livet and is above
And now is bireed trewthe and love.
(Harley MS. 2316)

Me[n hem com]pleynes of vntrewyth
la[we e]s ded and pat es Rewth
trechery es al oboue
and grauen he as trewlouf.
(Hatton MS. 107)
(See XIV, n. 39, p. 259.)

12See Histor, n. 47, p. 316; Robbins prints Index 3943 in XIV-XV, n. 45, p. 241. Interestingly, a series of Latin abuses in the form of a prophesy occurs in MS. Ashmole 59. It is printed for the first time by Carleton Brown in his article on the abuses, p. 75. The abuses in this Latin list bear no resemblance in form to those in "Merlin's Prophesy" (they are closer in form to Irish Latin tract).

13The distinctions between types of paradoxes help distinguish types of lyrics. *Impossibilia*, for example, are used in circumlocution for never in poems with various subjects, but when they are used exclusively the poems becomes nonsense, or a lying song. Judgmental paradoxes in a series may constitute an abuse poem. Logical paradoxes, not of the *impossibilia* type, and judgmental paradoxes may be used for definition in a theological poem. Only apparent paradox characterizes the riddle or riddling poem. Such distinctions are not made by Robbins, for example, who finds the paradoxes in the following poems to be similar "impossible situations": (1) "I haue a zong suster" (1303), which I find is characterized by apparent paradox used to define love; (2) "I saw iiij hedles playen at a ball" (1354), which uses *impossibilia* and which I call a lying or nonsense song (Robbins calls it a "riddling tag," which, by my definitions, would have to use apparent paradox); (3) "For a man pat is almost blynd" (813), which I call a mock, satiric poem using *impossibilia* and which Robbins calls a nonsense poem; (4) "Whan netilis
in wynter bere Rosis rede" (3999), which I call a satire on women using
impossibilia and which Robbins calls a nonsense poem; (5) "The krychet
& be greshope wentyn here to fyzght" (3324), which Robbins calls a
nonsense poem and which I would also call a nonsense or lying song;
(6) "Byhalde merueyles: a mayde ys moder" (496), which I call, in Chap­
ter Three, a poem celebrating theological mystery by means of logical
paradox and which Robbins calls a riddle; (7) "Merlin's Prophesy"
(3943), which Robbins groups with all the above poems, but which, unlike
any of them, makes use of judgmental paradox to express moral degenera­
tion. For Robbins' grouping of these distinctly different poems and
different kinds of paradox, see XIV-XV, n. 45, pp. 240-41.

14Histor, n. 49, l. 73, p. 320.

15Robbins (Histor, n. 63, p. 331) lists several correspondences
between the ideals listed in this poem and the judgmental paradoxes of
Index 884, which is characterized by the refrain, "ffor now pe bysom
ledys pe blynde." These correspondences, however, are very general and
none show verbal similarities which would indicate that either author
was necessarily familiar with the other's work or that there was a com­
mon inspiration for the poems. Both 884 and 2805 are characterized by a
seemingly haphazard listing of abuses and lack of abuses, respectively.

16A punctuation poem whose subject is, specifically, the moral
degeneration of priests is printed in XIV-XV, #110, p. 101 (Index 3809).

17The citation of the distance between heart and mouth is a common­
place in the lyrics which will be noted in two other poems to be dis­
cussed in this part of the chapter.

18Poems or parts of poems which describe transitoriness in similar
terms will be mentioned in Part II of the chapter. Such definitions of
fortune are, of course, a commonplace of the period. G. R. Owst, for
example, in Literature and the Pulpit in Medieval England, 2nd ed. rev.
(Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1961), cites instances of such definitions
from the sermons (p. 239).

19For several independent versions and the many MSS of the Fascicu­lus Morum which contain this lyric see Carleton Brown and R. H. Robbins,
The Index of Middle English Verse (N.Y.: Columbia U. Press, 1943),
Index 3408. See also preceding note. These four lines are included with
slight variation in Index 2025, ll. 19-22.

20Actually, the proverb regarding the man who given an inch will
take a mile is not recorded until the middle of the sixteenth century,
although it could, of course, have circulated orally previous to this.
During the sixteenth century and after it is quite popular. The revers­
al of the proverb (given an inch to requite a span) occurs only once
(in the lyric under consideration). This would suggest, but not prove,
that the more popular form, as it appears in the sixteenth century,
represents the original form of the saying. See Bartlett Jere Whiting
and Helen Wescott Whiting, eds., Proverbs, Sentences, and Proverbial Phrases from English Writings Mainly Before 1500 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard U. Press, 1968), pp. 304–05; other proverbial expressions using the contraries inch and span (or ell) are I 28 (As good is an inch as an ell), I 31 (Of an inch to make a large span), I 32 (To set more by an inch of one's will than an ell of his thrift).

21In Middle English God was pronounced with a short vowel (OE: god); good was pronounced with a long vowel (OE: göd). Thus the play on words between God and good must depend on visual identity of the two words as orthographically represented in the period rather than on phonetic identity. The O.E.D. lists three instances of God represented as gode (vol. 4, pt. 2): 1297 R. Glouc (Rolls) 7000, and 13 Sir Veues (A) 1098 (meaning 13, p. 269); a1300 Cursor M 29205 (meaning 16b, p. 269). Two fifteenth-century lyrics also represent God as gode: Index 344, 11. 49-50: "The clerke vnsward & sayd, 'in bokys I fynde / That gode made women for mannys reliefe . . . '" (XIV-XV, #181); Index 933, 11. 13-14: ". . . then gode was greabyll / To answer for man (for man was not abyll)."

22This lyric stands as a separate poem in MS. Digby 86 and the Auchinleck MS. In three other MSS the lyric (or large parts of it) is annexed to or incorporated in the "Sayings of St. Bernard." See XIII, n. 48, pp. 202-3. I think the analysis demonstrates that the poem as it stands in Digby and Auchinleck may be considered complete at least from an aesthetic viewpoint.

23The expression "in a twinkling of an eye" occurs in the very popular fourteenth-century poem "Whi is þe world biloued, þat fals is & vein" (Index 4160), a translation of the famous Latin poem, "Cur Mundus Militat."

24Christ is described as day without night in another poem preserved in MS. Digby 86, "Swete ihesu, king of blisse" (Index 3236), 1. 6. The rhyming phrase "strengþe and eke mizt" follows in 1. 7, as it does in "Uuere beþ þey," 1. 50; however, in the ubi sunt poem the poet indicates another paradoxical quality of heaven when he uses the phrase, by declaring that in heaven is found strength and might without end, while in "Swete ihesu" the phrase merely indicates what Christ gives to men (the "without end" being excluded). The phrase day without night is also used to describe Christ in the thirteenth-century poem commonly referred to as "Friar Thomas of Hales' Love Rune," which begins "A Mayde cristes me bit yorne" (Index 66).

25Poems with this structure might be interpreted along the lines suggested in D. W. Robertson, A Preface to Chaucer (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton U. Press, 1962). The ubi sunt section, portraying the passing of earthly joys might be said to be interpreted allegorically by the poet in stanza four: earthly joys change to suffering in hell, the taking of heaven on earth leads to hell in the afterlife. The ubi sunt is interpreted tropologically in stanzas 5-8 in which the poet advises a
withdrawal from the life of ease and direct battle with the devil if we are to pass from this life to heaven. The anagogical interpretation is found in stanza 9, in which heaven is shown to be the reverse of the transitory joys presented in the ubi sunt section. The religious interpretation of the secular scene appropriately, then, concludes with a prayer.

26 See, for example, EEC, #370, #378.

27 See discussion of "Nou Bernes, Buirdus holde and blyþe" (Index 2302) in Section A 3 of this part of the chapter, and of "Wanne ich þenche þinges þre" (Index 3969) and "Wynter wakeneþ al my care" (Index 4177) in Section B of this part.

28 In another poem, "O Vanyte off vanytes & all is vanite!" (Index 2576), which will be discussed in Section B of this part of the chapter, the "zif . . . zit" construction is used almost exclusively in the first part of the poem.

29 In the Vernon MS. version of this poem, included in the Appendix, stanza seven interrupts the three stanzas of examples. However, in the other two versions of the poem a rearrangement of stanzas places stanza seven after these three stanzas, which themselves are reordered. See Brown, XIV, n. 117, p. 282.

30 The metaphor of the world as a cherry fair is found in "Ffare well, this world! I take my leve for euer" (Index 769), 1. 8, which will be discussed in Section A 4 of this part of the chapter.


32 E.D., vol. 1, p. 578.


34 According to the O.E.D., the word could be used to mean tomorrow in Gothic and O.N.; the O.E.D. points out: "The twofold meaning exhibited in the above forms and in OHG egéstern is day before yesterday, day after tomorrow, indicates that the original application of the word was to a day preceding or following that present." However, the dictionary indicates only one "isolated" example of the term used in English to mean tomorrow: More's Apol, 1. 201 (1533).

35 This line occurs also in the poem "Wynter wakeneþ al my care" (Index 4177) which will be treated in Section V of this chapter.


37 This topos is used, for example in several poems which will not be considered in this dissertation. In the thirteenth-century poem "pene latemest dai wenne we sulen farren" (Index 3517) the following
lines occur: "pin hus is sone ibuld þer þu salt wonien inne, / bo þe wirst [ceiling] & þe roulf sal ligggen upon þin chinne;" (11. 29-30). The topos also occurs in versions of the "Earth Upon Earth" poem and in various fragments of the twelfth-century "Dialogue of the Soul to the Body" (see relevant sections quoted by Hilda M. R. Murray in The Middle English Poem Erthe upon erthe, Printed from Twenty-four Manuscripts, EETS, O.S. 141 [London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., Ltd., 1911], p. xxx). The topos also occurs in the thirteenth-century "Wanna mine eyhnen misten" (Index 3998), printed by Brown, XIII, #71, p. 130, the last lines of which read:

\begin{verbatim}
þanne y schel fflutte
ffrom bedde te fflore,
ffrom fflore to *here    (shroud)
ffrom here to bere,
ffrom bere to putte,
and te putt *ffor-dut.   (shut up)
þanne lyd min hus vppe min nose,
off al þis world ne gyffe ihc a pese.
\end{verbatim}

(11. 15-22)

Added to the poem noted above, these lines, separately, form one version of one of the most popular gnomic sayings of the period (given Index numbers 1422, 4129, 3201, 3219). The version quoted above is unique in its final lines, which usually contain a more general statement to the effect that never would man commit a sin (if he thought often about the going from bed to floor, etc.). Brown titles one version of this saying (XIII, #13, pp. 19-20) "Memorare Novissima Tua." This title points up the close relationship between the didactic purposes of the popular gnomic saying and the poem under discussion, "Man, hef in mynd & mend þi mys," which contains the refrain "Memor esto nouissima." The teaching contained in all of the versions of this popular saying and in many poems considered in this chapter (that death proves the vanity of all things and that if man thought about this often enough he would reject sin and the things of this world) was obviously promoted extensively, which indicates a wide belief (on the part of lyricists and preservers of lyrics) in the paradoxicality of man's attachment to the things of this life, and at the same time a widely perceived need to remind men of this.

\begin{footnote}
38 This line, omitted from the version quoted, I have supplied from Brown's edition of the poem from Bodl. MS. Rawlinson G. 18 (XIII, #46B). The Arundel version is quoted since it is considered to be closest to the original (see XIII, n. 46, p. 201).

39 There are five Latin versions of the "Cur Mundus." Brown gives references to their editions in XIV, n. 134, p. 287. The version from Camb. Univ. Lib. Ms. 4.41, fol. 137r, printed in Henry A. Person, ed., Cambridge Middle English Lyrics (Seattle: U. of Wash. Press, 1953), is considered by the editor to be the text upon which the English translations are based. The translation included in the Appendix (Index 4160) follows the Cambridge Latin version closely according to my comparisons, introducing no new images or topos and including all those in the Latin.
\end{footnote}
The last two couplets in the English version are, however, original (replacing the last stanza of the Latin). They appear to be tacked onto the poem and indicate by their content that the poem may have been thus modified to give a particular lesson to a powerful lord. (Two couplets replace each of the ten stanzas of the Latin which, in four versions, rhymes aaaa, and in one version of three-line stanzas, aaa. All but one of the English versions is written in couplets.)

Brown in his note to this poem (XIII, n. 30, p. 191) quotes the "Latin original of these lines . . . written in the MS. directly above the English text." The English version is more than a translation, however, since the poem displays what have been considered some of the best qualities of Middle English verse: artistic use of alliteration, assonance, consonance, plus conciseness and epigrammatic quality. Edmund Reiss also notes the excellence of this lyric in his detailed analysis in The Art of the Middle English Lyric: Essays in Criticism (Athens, Ga.: U. of Ga. Press, 1972). Reiss' analysis parallels my own in the notation of some of the terms of the poem as courtly and sensuous. Reiss proposes several emendations in the poem: bi (1. 2) to be, to parallel line one and save the personal possessives for the final three lines (pp. 84-85); note (1. 4) to wote (to know, guard, defend). He also draws attention to the symbolic associations of throat (gluttony, grave): "The white throat may thus function as both an ironic reference to the grave and a transition to the question of the last couplet, which relates the death and destruction seen in the first four lines to those specifically concerned with wanne (gain)" (p. 87).

"Whon Men beo muriest" (Index 3996), ll. 157-80, discussed in this part of the chapter, Section A 3.

Short poems which illustrate an extreme of the somewhat morbid view of death include the very popular poems on the signs of death ("Proprietares Mortis"). One example is Index 3998, the last lines of which belong to a separate tradition, quoted above in note 16. The beginning lines of the poem are as follows (XIII, #71, p. 130):

Wanne mine eyhnen misten,
and mine heren sissen
and mi nose koldet,
and mi tunge ffoldet,
and mi rude slaket,
And mine lippes blaken,
and mi muþ grennet,
and mi spotel rinnen,
and min her riset,
and min hertle griset,
and mine honden bluven,
and mine ffet sttvien,
al to late, al to late,
wanne þe bere ys ate gate.
(11. 1-14)

Reference to several other catalogues of the signs of death is found in
XIII, n. 71, pp. 220-22. Also of this somewhat morbid group is the following later poem which is unusual since it concentrates attention only on death itself and contains no explicit or implicit moral urging or didacticism (Index 2519):

O mors mordens aspere, yn ygle þou haste noo pere,
Nam sanos in prespere, Thow bryngyst to the bere,
Et tua sentencia, ffallyt bothe yonge and olde,
Et fallax potencia, Thow makyst all vnboolde.

(XV, #157, p. 248)

Another instance of explicit reference to some of the happenings of this life as paradoxical is found in "Whom Men beot> muriest" (Index 3996, Appendix), ll. 97-120. But here the existence of suffering in this world is explained by the poet in the poem. Recognition of vanity, or of the nature of this life (or of man's place in the universe) as paradoxical is central to "The worlde so wide" (Index 3504) and other poems which will be considered at the end of this part of the chapter, Section B.

The best-known example in Middle English verse of the unusual sentiment welcoming death is Index 1254:

Howe cometh al ye That ben y-brought
In bondes,—full of bitter besynesse
of erthly luste, abydynge in your thought?
Here ys the reste of all your besynesse,
Here ys the porte of peese, & resstfulnesse
to them that stondeth In stormes of dys[e]se,
only refuge to wrecches In dystrese,
and all conforte of myschefe & mys[e]se.

(XV, #164, p. 259)

Though these eight lines occur detached in Royal MS. 9. C. ii, they are actually from Walton's translation of Boethius (III.m.x), as pointed out by R. L. Greene, "'The Port of Peace': Not Death But God," MLN, 69 (1954), 307-09.

The form of "By a way" (Index 562) is interesting since the poem begins somewhat in the manner of the secular pastorelle with the poet recounting what happened to him in his wanderings one day. In this poem the poet indicates that he finds a "lettre de loue" written on a wall. Presumably the body of the poem, containing examples of changes of fortune and the refrain "And euer I þank my god of a ll," represents the contents of the letter but it is difficult to tell where, if ever, the letter ceases and the poet's voice returns. This pastorelle opening (suddenly dropped) in a moral lyric links "By a way" with "Bi a wode" (Index 563) previously considered.

The poet's teaching that our disputations are vanity is based on the following sections of Ecclesiastes (among others): 1:8, 3:11, 6:11, 7:1, 8:16.
The poet's teaching that we should enjoy life is based on the following sections of Ecclesiastes: 3:12, 5:17, 8:15, 11:7-10. Only one article has been written linking this poem with Ecclesiastes, Dom Gerard Sitwell's "A Fourteenth-Century English Poem on Ecclesiastes," Dominican Studies, 3 (1950), 285-90. Oddly, neither Brown in his notes to the poem nor Sitwell in his article recognize the pervasiveness of the influence of Ecclesiastes on this poem. The major teachings of the poem are among the major teachings of Ecclesiastes, yet Sitwell limits his list of correspondences to obvious topoi of the poem borrowed from Ecclesiastes. He fails to mention the influence of the central passages which I have noted above (though he does note that stanza six may be influenced by the notion of the vanity of seeking God's privity in Ecc. 6:11; actually more in the poem than stanza six may be traced to passages such as 6:11). The following obvious correspondences between the poem and Ecclesiastes are mentioned in the text of Sitwell's article: 11. 13-14, Ecc. 1:5; 11. 15-16 = 1:7; 1. 25 = 1:4; 11. 27-30 = 2:16; 11. 37-48 = 9:5, 12:7; 11. 49-60 = 3:19, 21; 11. 61-72 = 6:11, 7:30; 1. 81 - general theme of Ecc., the end of world's wele is wo; 11. 109-12 = 8:15; 1. 115 = 5:14. Brown adds one correspondence: 11. 29-30 = Ecc. 1:11 (XIV, n. 106, p. 279). One minor correspondence which could also be pointed out is between 1. 35 and Ecc. 2:12 (which point out the futility of man's striving to imitate the Creator).

Translations from Ecclesiastes are from the Latin Vulgate as translated by Ronald Knox in light of Hebrew and Greek originals (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1944).

According to Sitwell the unusual stanza (six) which urges a premature ecumenism and a disregard of useless disputation may indicate that the poem was written about the time of certain theological disputes such as that on free will and foreknowledge. In 1344, as Sitwell notes, Thomas Bradwardine published his well-known opinions (see Nun's Priest's Tale, frag. VII, 3234-42) on free will and foreknowledge. Though both MSS of the poem under consideration were written c. 1380-1400 an E. Midlands original has been postulated for ca. 1325-50.

Though I have quoted Index 3969, essentially the same poem with slightly different first lines is recorded under the following Index numbers: 3711, 695, 1615, 3712, 3713.

In his detailed analysis of this poem, Edmund Reiss also points out this factor of construction, the linking of the a-rhymed and b-rhymed lines (p. 81). Others parallels in our interpretations will be noted.

Reiss considers these lines to be prose, noting the precedent for alternating verse and prose established in Boethius' Consolation of Philosophy (p. 79).

Reiss also concludes, "These final long lines of his poem may be seen containing the truths of each stanza" (p. 80).
Reiss does not mention the logical paradoxicality of these lines. He suggests the following meanings for line 7: "As though it never were certain' (or 'certainly')..."; and "Also it were not nearly certain" (p. 77).

Reiss points out two interesting aspects of this poem which relate to contraries and paradox. He notes that a contrast is set up in stanza 2 between sob and the eternal nature of God's will and the falsity and transitoriness of this world (thus one is known through the other), p. 77. He also notes that the verbs in stanza one are used "paradoxically": wakeneth is associated with winter (when everything usually sleeps), and waxeth is associated with bareness rather than growth, pp. 75-76. I would disagree with Reiss in his basic interpretation of the poem. He finds it different from Index 3996, "Wanne ich benche pinges þere," because its point is not to state the helplessness of man in a transitory and vain universe: "... this longer poem is doing more than stating the frightening facts of death and uncertainty. It illustrates them, presents them in metaphorical language, and uses them as a basis for a further action—the final prayer to Christ" (p. 75). The final prayer seems to me more of an exclamation, a cry for help, than it does a prayer of resignation to God's will; and the poem does end with a strong statement of the narrator's helplessness: "For y not whider y shall, ne hou longe her duelle!"

The ages of man, or various time periods of life, was a medieval commonplace. Its popularity in the Middle English sermons is noted by Owst (p. 534), who points out that the ages could be 3, 4, 7, or 10 in number. See Owst, fn. 2, p. 534, for specific references to the ages in "The Parlement of the Thre Ages," in "Pricke of Conscience," and in "Ratis Raving." The Index of Middle English Verse lists the following poems as containing the ages theme: 1587 (4 ages); 2282 (7 ages); 3858 (10 ages); and 4277 (10 ages). The lyric under discussion (1818) is not related to the ages theme in the Index. In most cases the ages are used in explicitly didactic literature, and generally, the ages are not presented as bleakly as they are in Index 1818, a nondidactic poem. The only lyric treatment I have found which parallels Index 1818 in tone is Index 3858, "waich & wreschede þou art in sith."

In these two stanzas the personification is detailed to the extent that it suggests the poet may have been inspired by a morality play. We can picture the action especially in stanza nine (see Appendix).

"Rate" which appears after the "Amen" in the sole MS of this poem is referred by Brown as a "signature." It also appears after two other poems in the same MS, one a poem of moral instruction and the other a morning prayer. The sentiments expressed in the poem under consideration, that is, the lack of Christian consolation and the emphasis on the futility of human endeavors, seems oddly at variance with the traditional sentiments of faith expressed in the other two poems supposedly signed by "Rate." Brown also notes that "Rate" may be mentioned at the end of
Another poem which shows concern for the poor, written from the viewpoint of the poor, is the following short thirteenth-century lyric which begins with an apparent paradox (that weole is a cursed thing) but then goes on to explain the seemingly illogical assertion (Index 3873):

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Weole, } & \text{Bu art a waried bing,} \\
\text{vn-euene constu dele;} \\
\text{Bu yeuest a wrecche weole y-nouh,} \\
\text{noht burh his hele.} \\
\text{Wyp freomen } & \text{Bu art ferly feid} \\
\text{wip sauhte } & \text{make heom sele;} \\
\text{pe poure i londe nauep no lot} \\
\text{wip riche for to mele.}
\end{align*}
\]

(XIII, #40, p. 65)

58 These two stanzas appear together in four MSS (see Brown, XV, n. 171, p. 343-44) and I believe my analysis shows that the stanzas form an integrated poem. Since the stanzas do appear separately (Lydgate, for example, includes the first in his "Pageant of Knowledge" and the second in "Tyed with a Lyne") and there is some question concerning the supposition that the two stanzas were composed by a certain "Halsham" (XV, n. 171, p. 344), they are regarded by some as separate poems. In fact, each stanza has a separate Index number, the first 3504, the second, 3437.

59 See O.E.D., vol. 6, p. 1, p. 503. In MHG lune was used to mean whim, humor; and by 1611 in English the plural form lunes is recorded indicating fits of frenzy or lunacy.


61 For a discussion of the relationship of the many versions of this poem see Hilda M. R. Murray's edition, referred to in footnote 37 of this chapter, pp. ix-xxxviii. For the popularity of the lyric see the same discussion, where it is pointed out that related epithets were used on grave stones into the nineteenth century. R. H. Robbins also notes the popularity of this piece in "Popular Prayers in Middle English Verse," MP, 36 (1939), p. 340, n. 13, where he cites "Earth Upon Earth" as the most popular of the gnomic sayings of the period.


65 O.E.D., vol. 9, pt. 2, pp. 36-43.

66 For tombstone inscriptions which generally include references to gold, castles, and towers which ultimately turn to dust, see Murray, pp. xxxvi-viii.
In his interpretation of this poem (pp. 51-56), Reiss also emphasizes the ambiguity of the terms; however, he does not recognize as many possible meanings for the key terms as I have noted. Reiss devotes a major part of his analysis to proving the statement that "the harsh sounds, heavy stresses, and irregular meter . . . all work to emphasize the inherent unpleasantness of the subject" (p. 53). While Reiss allows that the poem may have several interpretations, they all hinge on transitoriness and death: "'Erthe toc of erthe' is brutally harsh and, for all its ambiguities, quite frank in its message. No one listening to it—even if he did not know Middle English—could fail to sense the disgust, contempt, and bitterness inherent in it. Perhaps ultimately to be seen in the contemptus mundi tradition, it nevertheless fails to move to anything above or beyond the dirt and the grave" (pp. 55-56).
CHAPTER III

RELIGIOUS LYRICS

The lyrics which will be considered in this chapter may be divided into several categories: (1) prayers (direct addresses to God, the Blessed Mother, the Trinity) of adoration, thanksgiving, contrition, or supplication; (2) songs or hymns in celebration or commemoration of a particular event in the life of Christ or Mary or of a mystery of the faith; (3) meditations, which may culminate in prayers, calls to prayer, expressions of repentance, or expressions of the desire for unity with Christ; (4) instructions in verse on a particular theological mystery or problem in the faith; (5) direct appeals to man in the voice of Christ; (6) dialogues between Christ and the Blessed Mother or between Christ and man; (7) riddles; (8) Marian laments. As in the other chapters of this dissertation, poems belonging to these genres will be discussed under various subject divisions. The subjects, of course, are the major ones treated by the authors of Middle English religious lyrics. Some of the subjects are themselves paradoxes; others are expressed or celebrated by means of paradoxes and contraries which are associated with them.

The first part of the chapter will deal with poems whose subject is God or the Blessed Mother. The poems in this part belong exclusively to the genre of prayers or poems of praise, adoration, and sometimes petition. Many of them simply proclaim in catalogue fashion the paradoxical
attributes of their subjects (such as the virginity and motherhood of Mary) and their theme might be stated simply: we should adore such worthy (and wonder-ful) beings. Most of the Middle English poems which focus attention on Christ deal with a particular aspect of his life on earth and they will be considered in other sections of this chapter. Conversely, a large number of Middle English lyrics have as their subject Mary, the person, according to belief the only perfect human being ever born, conceived without original sin and possessing other miraculous, logically paradoxical attributes, such as simultaneous virginity and motherhood. The use of contraries and paradox in these poems will be considered in the first part of this chapter. A particularly interesting group of poems in praise of the Blessed Mother are the courtly lyrics, which will be taken up in the second section of part one. Though they do not focus attention on paradoxical attributes of their subject, these poems are important in the context of this dissertation because they illustrate what I have called contraries in form or structure, in this case not an alternation of thematic contraries (as in the debate) or a bipartite or tripartite construction according to subject, tone, or voice, but a blending of two contrary literary traditions, one secular and the other religious.

The poems which will be discussed in the second part of this chapter are not as homogeneous in genre as are the poems whose subject is either God or the Blessed Mother. They may be prayers, songs of celebration or commemoration, instructions, or riddles. Their purpose may be to adore, to celebrate, to instruct, or to call attention to the paradoxical aspects of their subjects, particular doctrines containing
paradoxes (that which seems unreasonable or contradictory but is, according to belief, true): the Redemption, the Incarnation; the Eucharist; an all-just and at the same time all-merciful God. The subject matter of some poems may be more than one of the mysteries of the faith, and some of these poems include special counseling on the relationship of faith and reason to the acceptance of paradoxical tenets.

The subject matter of the poems to be considered in the third part of this chapter is the suffering of Christ and of Mary in anticipation of and during the Passion, and the suffering of Mary in reflection upon the Passion. While the matter of these poems is not in itself immediately recognized as paradoxical (in contrast to the subjects of the poems in part two), there is a judgmentally paradoxical situation underlying at least some of the lyrics: that Christ, who is himself the all-powerful God, should have to dread the thought of future suffering, or indeed, experience suffering of any kind if he does not wish to do so. This judgmental paradox is made explicit in some lyrics and a distinction is made between God's willing and Christ's wishing, but, of course, this distinction leaves unresolved the logically paradoxical relationship between Christ's divine and human natures. The lyrics in this section were probably written not as prayers or as commemoration poems, but as reminders of the actual suffering of Christ and of Mary. Their purpose seems to be to bring the audience, by means of pity, to some kind of response such as repentance or adoration; however, they are also instructional, bringing to the audience's attention some of the judgmental paradoxes associated with their subject matter: that the innocent God suffered for the guilty man, that one should actually be glad about the
suffering of Christ. The categories represented in this part of the chapter include what I will call cradle poems (dialogues between Christ in the manger and his mother, many of which are in the form of carols with lullaby refrains), on-the-cross poems (dialogues between Christ on the cross and his mother), and Marian laments.

The poems to be considered in the fourth part are those whose subject is Christ's love of man, man's love of Christ, and man's response to Christ's love as evidenced in the Passion. Each of the three groups of lyrics into which the part is divided presents an interesting use of contraries or paradox or both. The third group, which includes meditations on the Passion and pleas by Christ to man, is characterized by the theme that man's response to Christ is judgmentally paradoxical: Christ suffered and died for the love of man but man repays Christ with disregard or lack of love. The first group in this part consists of poems whose subject is man's love of Christ, the proper response to Christ's love. These poems are particularly interesting in the context of this dissertation for their unity by contraries: in the tradition of the mystics, the authors express their desire to be united with Christ in language which is also used to express passionate human love. Some other poems scattered throughout the parts of this chapter also are characterized by this unity by contraries, which will itself be discussed in relation to the individual poems as they are presented.
I. Praise of God or Mary

A. General Hymns of Praise

The use of contraries and paradox in simple poems of praise to God (which are few in number in comparison to those addressed to Mary) may be illustrated in two lyrics. One, Index 3676, praises God with particular reference to the person of Christ (and ends in a petition), and the other, Index 2484, is simply a song of praise addressed to all three persons of the Trinity. The use of contraries and paradox in general hymns of praise whose subject is Mary will be illustrated in Middle English translations of the four seasonal antiphons to Mary ("Alma redemptoris mater," "Ave regina," "Regina coeli laetare," and "Salve regina"), in translations of the popular hymn "Ave maris stella," and in a few miscellaneous poems of praise: Index 2645, "For on bat is so feir ant brist / velud maris stella"; Index 1077, "Hail! quene of hevin & steren of blis"; Index 3700, "pou wommon boute wre"; Index 1914, "Lyth and lystyn, both old and yng."

One poem in praise of Christ is the fourteenth-century hymn "pou kyng of woele and blisse" (Index 3676), which is a close translation by Friar William Herebert of verses fourteen through twenty of the famous "Te Deum laudamus." Each of the first four stanzas of the poem proclaims a miraculous attribute of Christ. In stanza one, for example, he is hailed as the king of a kingdom which will never end (a paradox from our point of view). The second and third stanzas proclaim perhaps more startling paradoxes: the logical paradox that the creator became man, the judgmental paradox that would be born of a meek maid in order to save man, and the logical paradox that Christ overcame death (opening the
gates of heaven by his actions):

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{þou, uor to sauue monkunne} \\
\text{þat þou haddest whout,} \\
\text{A Moeke maydes wombe} \\
\text{þou ne shoneested nouht;}
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{þou þat overcome} \\
\text{þe bitter dethes stunchg,} \\
\text{þou openedest hoeuene-ryche} \\
\text{to ryth byleues þunchg;}
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
\ldots \ldots \ldots \ldots \ldots
\end{align*}
\]

(XIV, #22, 11. 5-12, p. 24)

The two attributes of God which might be viewed as contrary, his power as creator and his love as human Redeemer, are appealed to in the last stanza in a prayer for help:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{þe þoenne woe byddeth help ous} \\
\text{wham þou hauest y-wrouth,} \\
\text{Whom wyp þy doerewourþe blod} \\
\text{on rode hauest y-bouth.}
\end{align*}
\]

(11. 17-20, italics added)

The list of paradoxical powers or attributes is also characteristic of a fifteenth-century carol by James Ryman, "O Lorde, by whome al thing is wrought" (Index 2484). The refrain draws attention to the paradox of three persons in one God: "Honoure to the alone, / That art bothe iii and One." The mystery of the Trinity is given prominence also in the fourth through seventh (and last) stanzas. In the fourth and fifth, the first three lines are addressed to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost respectively, and each line mentions special attributes of the person to whom it is addressed. But the sixth and seven stanzas proclaim the logical paradox of the Trinity itself (as both three in one and three and one):
The two poems discussed thus illustrate the use of paradoxes, cited in almost catalogue fashion, to celebrate something (in this case, God) which is by its very nature paradoxical. The hymn to the Trinity also illustrates the use of contraries for circumlocution (lest and moost, 1. 27, above), whereby contraries of a certain kind (referring to people, time, the universe, the planets) are used to express such all-inclusive terms as always, everywhere, everybody. In addition, stanza two of the hymn to the Trinity displays the use of contraries in continuum relationship for praise of the Creator:

0, whiche haast made bothe day and nyght,
The firmament and sterres bright,
The sonne and mone to yeve vs light,
Honour to the alone.
(11. 5-8, p. 199)

The listing of products of God's creation (light and darkness, earth and stars, the heavenly bodies which light our days and nights) serves to concretize the poet's basis for praise; moreover, the poet shows that God has not made a random assortment of the things we know, he has made everything in each category which might be named (since the contraries cover everything which might be included, they complete each category of creation).

The use of contraries and paradox in songs and poems of praise and supplication whose subject is the Blessed Mother is similar to that
found in poems whose subject is God. We find contraries used for
circumlocution, paradoxes of Mary's nature cited in catalogue fashion
which seem to be included both to help define the subject of adoration
and to praise such a marvelous subject, and examples of Mary's power
cited (for praise or justification of the supplication) in terms of
contraries (for example, she brought day out of night by bearing Jesus
Christ). Such uses of contraries and paradox may be found, for example,
in translations and adaptations of all four of the seasonal antiphons to
Mary: "Alma redemptoris mater," "Ave regina," "Regina coeli laetare,"
and "Salve regina."

In the following close translation of the "Alma redemptoris mater"
(Index 1232), two of Mary's traditional titles, Star of the Sea and
Gate of Heaven, are chosen as salutations, perhaps in consideration of
the contraries as queen of earth and heaven and thus of all places in a
use of contraries in continuum relationship. Lines seven and eight
praise the logical paradoxes of Mary's being mother to her own father
and of her continued virginity after the birth of Christ, and line nine
makes an explicit reference to these occurrences as paradoxes:

Phillipps 8336

Holy moder, þat bere cryst
buggere of monkunde,
þou art zat of heuene blisse
þat prest wey zyfst and bunde.
þou sterre of se, rer op þe uolk
þat rysing haueht in munde.
in þe þou bere þyn holy uader,
þat mayden were after and raper,
Whar–of so wondreth kunde
Of gabrielles mouþe / þou ȝunge þylke 'Aue';
Lesne ous of sunne nouþe, / so woe bisecheth þe.
Amen.
(XIV, #19, p. 22, italics added)
A fifteenth-century adaptation of the "Ave regina coelorum" (Index 2610) twice mentions Mary's continued virginity (ll. 25, 33) and once her Immaculate Conception (l. 28), but the poem is most notable for its extensive use of contraries for circumlocution: Mary is said to be made of flesh, blood, and bone (l. 4, in which the poem combines the contraries noted elsewhere of blood and bone, flesh and bone, flesh and blood), to be queen of all and some (l. 70), and to be most comely far and near (l. 38). The following pairs of contraries are used in circumlocutions with reference to mankind: all and some (ll. 10, 82), free and bond (l. 66), one and all (l. 76), and most and least (l. 83). Contraries in continuum relationship are also used to praise Mary: she is said to be empress of hell and heaven (l. 54) and both rose and lily (l. 48). The use of the two opposite symbols of perfection, one generally associated with love or passion and one with purity, would seem to suggest that the poet wishes to praise Mary by all symbols of perfection.

Adaptations of the simple four-line "Regina coeli laetare" expand the mentions of the two paradoxes found in the Latin: Mary's bearing of Christ, and Christ's Resurrection. A fifteenth-century adaptation (Index 2802), for example, devotes one stanza to each of the Latin lines, using the Latin as the first line of each stanza. The Latin simply mentions Mary's bearing of Christ and his Resurrection:

Regina coeli laetare, alleluja,
Quia quia quem meruisti portare, alleluja,
Resurrexit, sicut dixit, alleluja,
Ora pro nobis Deum, alleluja.
(Traditional)

The English adaptation mentions Mary's bearing of god & man (stanza one), that Mary is moder & mayden clene and that she "neuer was ffyled in
flesche ne ffele" (stanza two). In alluding to the logical paradox of the Immaculate Conception in praise of Mary, the poet has used a device also very common in the Middle English lyrics, the combination of synonyms (here, flesh and skin) in an and or nor phrase. While the device sometimes looks like an example of contraries used for circumlocution, it is not used for expression universality; instead, it is used for emphasis (and, perhaps, simply for creating or completing an alliterative phrase). In expanding line three of the Latin in stanza three, the English poem specifically praises the logical paradox of Christ's lying dead in a stone (1. 18) and rising from deth to lyth (1. 19).

In a fifteenth-century adaptation of the fourth traditional antiphon to Mary, "Salve regina," Index 1073, in which each of the Latin words of the antiphon has been expanded into a line of English, we find examples of all three uses of contraries and paradox mentioned earlier. Contraries in continuum relationship are found in an expansion of regina (1. 2): "qwhene of heuen & emprys of helle." Contraries in the citation of a paradox for definition and praise are found in an expansion of dulcedo (1. 6): "Swetness, þu art both moder & mayde." An example of her power is cited in terms of the contraries before and after a change. This example occurs in the three lines which expand the Latin phrase in hac lacrimarum valle:

In hac  In bis derknes oure tyme we spende;
Lacrimarum  Of teres þe commorth is a swete rayne,
Valle  In þe wayle of grace it will discende.

(XV, #26, 11. 18-20, p. 48, italics added)

The expansion changes the emphasis from a valley of tears to one which is changed from tears to grace. None of the pairs of contraries which appear in the thirty-nine-line English expansion occur in the Latin.
A further illustration of the use of contraries and paradox in poems whose subject is the Blessed Mother may be found in both miscellaneous songs of praise and in English versions of popular Latin hymns such as the "Ave maris stella" and the poems which praise Mary by means of citation of her five joys. Several English translations of the Latin "Ave maris stella," for example, have been preserved. While all of them mention in some way the paradoxes and contraries which are suggested in the Latin original, one poet seems especially careful in his translation (Index 1054, Appendix) to include all the contraries and paradoxes of the original and, in one instance, he uses the rhetorical device of polyptoton to emphasize the contraries. This particular hymn is interesting not only because of the individual contraries and paradoxes which will be pointed out, but also because the praise for Mary seems to be based upon an underlying contrast between Eve, who led man into sin, and Mary, who brings man out of sin and into grace through her role as gate of heaven. Praise of Mary as portal or gate is a part of most of the poems of praise and supplication of which she is the subject. The reference may be understood in two ways: since Mary is mediatrix of all petitions to Christ, and as such is responsible for bestowing grace, she is the gate of heaven; in the physical sense, as mother of Christ, she may also be regarded as the gate of heaven, the portal through which grace and salvation entered the world. Both of these attributes of Mary as gate of heaven are developed in Index 1054.

The first stanza of the English version praises Mary in her miraculous nature as physical portal of heaven but also as "Mayden euer vurst and late" (1.3). The contraries utilized here to repeat the idea
of _euer_ are functional in the sense that they make explicit the time period before and after the birth of Christ. Mary's role as introducer of grace into the world is praised in the second stanza when the poet translates and incorporates the notion that Mary "turnst abakward eues nome" (l. 8). Reference to Mary as the second Eve is popular in both the Latin and Middle English hymns to Mary and is often conveyed through the contrast between Gabriel's _ave_ (which implied Mary's stature as full of grace) and the name of Eve (Latin: _Evae_), traditionally associated with the fall from grace. In and through Mary, _evae_ became _ave_. Mary's power to effect a change from one contrary to another is praised in the third stanza, which contains the clearest use of contraries in the poem:

_Gulty monnes bond vnbynd,_
_Bryng lyht tył hoem þat boeth blynd,_
_Put vrom ous oure sunne_
_And ern ous alle wynne._

(11. 9-12, italics added)

Thus contraries define the effect which Mary's power will have. The device of _polyptoton_ in line nine (the use of two words from the same root, here to express contraries) draws attention to the contrast between the two states of man (before and after Mary's grace) to a degree not attempted in the Latin original, in other Middle English versions, or in Modern English versions. The figurative description of the change which may be brought about by Mary, noted in line ten (light to the blind), is present in the Latin but oddly excluded from one other Middle English version, Index 1034.5, whose author elsewhere seems particularly attentive to contraries and paradox. The contraries expressed in the last two lines of the stanza quoted (state of sin to state of blessedness)
are not made particularly explicit in the Middle English version under discussion; however, the and which introduces the last line does make an explicit connection between the two lines. While in other Middle English versions the syntax also makes clear that the two lines are to be understood together, the same is not true of the syntax of some Modern English translations. This may suggest a kind of subconscious attention to contraries in the Middle English period.\(^4\) (The same contrast between the two states with the same use of the and construction occurs in the last two lines of stanza five, ll. 19-20, which also praises the paradox of Mary's continued virginity, l. 17.)

Another Middle English translator of the "Ave maris stella," the author of Index 1034.5, mentioned above, uses only four stanza of that hymn but adds a translation of stanza five and six of the "Quem terra" (ll. 16-24) and a ten-line translation of the "Alma redemptoris mater" (ll. 25-34). The predominance of contraries and paradox in the lines added to the "Ave maris stella" suggests that perhaps the translator in Index 1034.5 had a special fascination with them:

Gladsum lewedy, mykel of myth,  
Rayseed a-bowen ðe sternys bryth,  
he ðat ðe mad doryg gode for-syth,  
he soked [p]yn pappis ðat wor ful rith.  
ðat sorwful eue bare away  
ðow yeldus vs ðor[w] ði haly birth.  
Lat in ðe wepan[d] as ster of day,  
als tow art wyndow of hewen mirth.  
haly moder, fair and gode,  
of ym ðat bowth vs wyt is blod,  
vate of hewen, ster of se,  
ðat we ne fall howre help ðow be!  
leche of folke, mary myld,  
wyt ferly kynd ðow bare ði chyld,  
maden was and euer sal be,  
has ðe angel tald to ðe
Explicit reference to Mary's continued virginity is made in line thirty (ferly kynd) and the contrast between Mary's role and Eve's role is developed in lines twenty-one through twenty-four with the contraries of bearing away and yielding, weeping and window of mirth (probably another reference to the appellation Gate of Heaven). While these elements are also present in the "Ave maris stella," the translator's inclusion of the "Quem terra" section introduces a new paradox: that Mary suckled the God who made her (11. 19-20), a paradox which is mentioned more frequently in the Nativity songs which will be considered in the second section of this chapter.

The contraries which formed the basis for the praise of Mary in the translations of the "Ave maris stella," Mary's role in relationship to Eve's role, or the contrast between man's state after Eve and after Mary, also form the basis for the praise of Mary in a native English macaronic song beginning "For on bat is so feir and brist / velud maris stella" (Index 2645, Appendix). It will be noted that this hymn also shares with the one just discussed the salutation of Mary as maris stella in the initial lines. The thirteenth-century song itself and presumarly its use of contraries and paradox to praise the unique nature of Mary were quite popular, as evidence by the adaptation of this poem in the fifteenth century as a carol. In the first stanza Mary is hailed as both parens & puella (in English in stanza two, 1. 17), and also, paradoxically, bristore ben be dai-is list (11. 3-4). The salutation of Mary in the second stanza as rosa sine spina (1. 11) is a traditional
reference to the Immaculate Conception. Mary's ability to effect the change from sin to grace is praised in the third stanza ("to alle weri þou art rest," l. 21) and again in the fourth where eva and aue, peccatrice and genitrice, and night and day are contrasted. The contraries of sin and grace seem also to be suggested in the final stanza by blis / superni and put / inferni (11. 42-45).

We have noted the use of the paradox of Mary's continued virginity and her Immaculate Conception in poems of supplication and praise. Also used to praise Mary and define her nature are the contrast between her role and that of Eve, and the contraries which express the change she brings about (unbinding the bond, turning night to day). Two logical paradoxes function extensively in poems in which Mary is the subject: first, that Mary's son is also her father (this paradox was noted in a somewhat different form—without the mention of the terms father and mother—in the "Quem terra" translation added to the "Ave maris stella" in Index 1034.5, in which the poet notes that Mary suckled her creator); and second, that she is both the crop and root of all virtue (presumably referring to her as the epitome of virtue in her own person, considering the Immaculate Conception, and as the root of all virtue since she is the mother of Christ). One short fifteenth-century poem (Index 1077) states these two paradoxes simply, without expansion, in its praise of the unique character of Mary:

Arundel MS. 285
Haill! quene of hevin & steren of blis;
Sen þat þi sone þi fader Is,
How suld he ony thing þe warn,
And thou his mothir and he þi barne?
Hail! fresche fontane that springis new,
The rute and crope of all vertu,
Thou polist gem without offence,
Thou bair þe Lambe of Innocence.

(XV, #21, p. 37)

The paradoxical relationship of Christ and Mary and their relationship to man seems to have fascinated one fourteenth-century lyricist who expounds upon it in the first part of his fifty-six-line poem (Index 3700): 6

Þou wommon boute uere
þyn oune uader bere.
Gret wonder þys was
þat on wommon was moder
To uader and hyre broþer—
So neuer ðeper nas.

Þou my suster and moder
And by sone my broþer—
Who shulde þonne drede?
Who-so haueþ þe kyng to broder
And ek þe quene to moder
Wel ahte uor to spede.

Dame, suster and moder,
Say þy sone my broþer,
þat ys domes-mon,
þat uor þe þat hym bere,
To me boe debonere—
My robe he haueth opon.

(XIV, #16, 11. 1-18, pp. 18-19)

Note too the explicit reference to these relationships as paradoxical (l. 3). In this poem the citation of the paradoxical relationships functions not only in praising Mary's nature but also in specifying the close relationships among Christ, Mary, and man, which makes the poet confident that his prayer will be heard. 7 These paradoxical relationships function in several other poems to be considered in this chapter.

The crop and root contraries are mentioned in a fifteenth-century carol with the refrain, "Of a rose, a louely rose, / Of a rose I syng a
song" (Index 1914, Appendix). Since the carol is ostensibly about a flower, the crop and root contraries are especially appropriate. Being traditionally included in songs of praise to Mary they are also appropriate since the carol is, of course, a song of celebration of Mary, who is traditionally associated with the rose (a symbol of perfection). The carol celebrates Mary's nature by listing her five joys. The five joys poems were especially popular during the medieval period, as indicated by the survival of many distinct versions each praising Mary and her five joys. The joys praised in these poems include five of the following: the Annunciation, the birth of Christ, the appearance of the Star of Bethlehem (sometimes included with the birth of Christ, sometimes included separately, perhaps as a symbol of the birth since Christ was proclaimed the Star of David), the Epiphany (sometimes combined with or symbolized by the appearance of the Star), the Resurrection, Christ's descent into hell to release the souls of the just, the Ascension, the Assumption, the Coronation. Each of the joys by its very nature contains contraries and paradoxes. The birth of Christ, to take one example presents several (logical and judgmental) paradoxes: God becomes man, a king is born to a maid, the event is accompanied by the appearance of a star which shone round the world, a king is born in an ox's stall, the birth is not accompanied by pain and suffering, the birth has no effect on the eternal virginity of Mary. Any or several of these paradoxes may be mentioned in the citation of the Nativity as a joy of the Blessed Mother. Obviously, in poems which catalogue these paradoxical joys in order to praise Mary we find reference to several paradoxes and contraries (in paradoxical relationship to each other, rather than alternating
or succeeding one another).

In the carol with the "Of a rose" refrain we find not only a citation of the five joys but also a somewhat judgmentally and logically paradoxical use of the rose as a symbol for Mary. Ordinarily we think of the perfect blossom as symbolic of Mary. However, in the carol under discussion, a rose bush is the symbol; furthermore, the symbol is specified in such a way that the descriptions defy common sense. The poet indicates, for example, that the five branches spring out of Mary's bosom (1. 8). Thus we can picture Mary as either the stem of the five-branched rose bush or as the entire bush itself. (Mary is specifically made the stem of the bush in a sixteenth-century version of the same carol.) Regardless of whether we picture Mary as the stem or the entire bush, as the lyric progresses we are presented with descriptions developing the symbolism which defy all logic.

The first branch (stanza three) is a branch of honor, since Mary bore the flower which would break the devil's bond (here the poet develops slightly the flower imagery of the poem). The poet tells us that the second branch "was gret of myght, / That sprung vpon Cristmes nyght" (stanza four), obviously a reference to Mary's joy at the birth of Christ. The third branch (stanza five) must be the star of Bethlehem which led the three kings to Mary's childbirth (although this is confused by a to in the second line of the stanza which might be emended to the or this). In stanza five we find that the star branch, paradoxically, leads to its source (Mary as the stem of the rose bush) or to itself (Mary as the bush). With the fifth stanza the development of the rose symbol becomes progressively more illogical as the poet changes the
vague designations of the branches from honor and might (stanzas three
and four) to more specific ones: either as a thing (stanza five, the
star) or as a person (stanza six, Christ), both of which are obviously
distinct from Mary the person, who is being symbolized by the rose.
The fourth branch (stanza six) "sprong to hell," as the poet says, to
fell the devil's power. This branch, of course, must be Christ himself
(a branch of Mary, the rose, or simply one of her five joys?).

Finally, in stanza seven, all logic in development of the symbol
breaks down. The first two branches have been justly pictured vaguely
as joys, springing when certain events took place; the second two
branches, a star and Christ himself, change the nature of the develop­
ment: they themselves spring to someplace. The fifth branch also springs
someplace to heaven, both "croppe and rote / In euery ball to ben owr
bott" (stanza seven), a reference to either the Ascension of Christ
body and soul into heaven or to the Assumption of Mary body and soul
into heaven. Since crop and root is elsewhere used to designate the
virtue of Mary and since she is elsewhere designated as a medicine for
man, this stanza may be interpreted as referring to the Assumption, and
the branch, therefore, is Mary. (This interpretation seems more fitting
since a carol of the five joys should focus more attention on Mary than
it does on Christ.) But the poem still ends with a paradox in the
development of its symbolism: a part equals the whole, one of the five
branches is identical to the entire rose bush or to the stem of the
bush.
B. Poems in Praise of Mary: Those Characterized by Use of Secular Poetic Elements

A few observations on the general nature of secular elements in Middle English religious verse and of religious elements in Middle English secular verse would seem to be in order before we proceed to a discussion of the particular poems which are included in this section of part one. Reviewing the uses of religious elements in the secular poetry discussed in Chapter One, from elevated courtly poems discussed in the text to bawdy popular songs mentioned in footnotes, we might classify the elements into four categories: (1) conventions from religious poetry (such as general extravagant praises of the lady's purity, beauty, or human perfection which could easily describe the Blessed Virgin; or, more specifically, catalogues, characterized by anaphora, or gems or flowers which the lady is said to be or to surpass in perfection, which are found in Latin poems to Mary); (2) overt references to Church ritual, such as the Mass or the sacraments; (3) overt comparisons of a physical experience to a spiritual one (such as the poet's assertion that his lady's company is like heaven); (4) the less overt paralleling of a physical situation with a spiritual one (this would include the parallel between the lover longing for unity with the lady and the longing of the soul for unity with God, as well as other parallels between human passion and spiritual love).

This last usage of religious elements in secular poetry deserves further comment, since, if recognized as such, it is the most pervasive and subtle of all the religious elements in secular Middle English poetry. Although a discussion of the sources or origin of the courtly
love poetic conventions is not within the scope of this dissertation, a few general observations about the problem must be made in connection with this last-mentioned usage of religious elements in secular Middle English poetry. The Middle Ages was heir to at least two traditions which could have influenced the poetic conception of human love, one from Ovid and one from the *Song of Songs*. In their descriptions of human love these two traditions have elements in common. In both, for example, love is described as a wound, and it is accompanied by sorrowing, sighing, suffering. However, the traditions differ on a key point: in the Ovidian system love is seen as an evil and the cure for the disease of love is to cease loving; but in the exegetical tradition of the *Song* love is viewed as a good with the ultimate cure being eternal unity with the object of the love. In the exegetical tradition, of course, the human love relationship is subordinated entirely to the allegorical interpretation of the *Song* (the languishing Bride is the Blessed Virgin or the human soul and the languishing Bridegroom is Christ or the Church). Because love in courtly love lyrics is viewed as a good and because the ultimate desire of the lover is to be united with his Lady, the basic situation presented in the courtly love lyrics seems to be more akin to the situation in the *Song* than to that in Ovid. This is not to suggest, however, that courtly love lyrics are to be read as allegories, the lady representing God and the lover representing either the Virgin or the human soul. However, it does suggest that the allegorical interpretation of the *Song* may be reverberating in very subtle ways in the conventions of the courtly love lyrics (for various purposes). Specific lexical items characteristic of Middle English courtly
love lyrics, such as servant, mercy, and grace, for example, suggests the relationship of a subservient soul to the perfect being with whom it desires unity. Because courtly love poetry has developed many conventions of its own and has perhaps become a genre entirely separated from its source traditions before the first courtly lyrics are written in Middle English, it is difficult, if not impossible, to judge what reverberations of a spiritual relationship between the soul and God, if any, are intended in any particular lyric.10

While it is generally impossible to judge whether the courtly situation is intended to parallel a spiritual one and if so for what purpose, it is possible to determine why more obvious religious references or religious poetic conventions are included in secular Middle English poetry. One purpose is related to the use of contraries to celebrate or define: secular love or the secular lady is elevated by comparison to religious counterparts. This is the effect, for example, when a courtly lady is described in language and poetic style also used in poems to the Blessed Virgin. The second reason that religious elements are included in secular poetry may be simply to ridicule the religious, by means of astounding word plays and parallels (the demeaning effect on the religious, generally ritualistic, elements is found, for example, in the Alysoun / Kyrie-eleison poem mentioned in a footnote in Chapter One).11

While religious elements in secular Middle English poetry were defined as either conventions from religious poetry or elements of Church ritual, the secular elements in Middle English religious verse may be defined as conventions deriving from secular poetry and may be divided
into three categories: (1) conventional elements from Provençal and later French poetry, such as openings identical to those in chansons d'aventure; (2) the overt paralleling of a religious or spiritual situation with a conventional courtly one, even the entire expression of the spiritual relationship in courtly terms (regardless of the relationship of the courtly conventions and the spiritual relationships allegorized from the Song of Songs, the courtly conventions found in Middle English religious lyrics seem to be purely secular, derived through Provençal and French secular poetry); (3) specific language and even entire lines which indicate the adoption or adaptation of the love-longing situations from the Song (these elements are in a sense paradoxical; since they were so fully allegorized by the medieval exegetes they carried simultaneously both secular and religious connotations, degrees of which are perhaps impossible to determine for any individual poem). 12

The reason for including the secular elements in religious verse parallels the reason for including religious elements in secular Middle English verse: either to define or celebrate by means of contraries, or to astound in a kind of poetic game. Even when the second purpose seems to be indicated the contraries still function to define or celebrate. By developing an analogy between the Blessed Virgin and a courtly lady and between a penitent and a courtly lover, for example, the poet may bring about a fuller understanding of man's relationship to the Blessed Virgin, while, at the same time, creating wonder and admiration at his creativity. (When this creativity has become conventional the poet may seem to go to extremes to bring forth new parallels.) In the noncourtly
poems which have borrowed from the **Song**, erotic elements and situations are used in the method of the exegetes, to clarify the nature of divine love, or of man's desire to be united with God, or to praise spiritual perfection. In a few poems I find that the contrary religious and secular elements have a truly reflective function; that is, one sheds light on the other: not only do the secular elements help us to understand the religious situation or relationship, but the particular use of the secular elements puts the secular parallels in a new perspective.

There are many poems to be considered in this chapter which make use of secular poetic conventions and situations. Not all of them will be taken up in this section, which is devoted primarily to poems in praise of the Blessed Mother. Several poems which deal with our response to God and which utilize primarily the third category of secular elements (those directly derived from the **Song**) will be considered in part four of this chapter.¹³ Two thirteenth-century poems will be considered in this section, "Cristes milde moder seynte marie" (Index 631), and "On hire is al mi lif ylong" (Index 2687); three fourteenth-century poems, "Ase y me rod þis ender day" (Index 359), "Nou skrinkeþ rose ant lylie-flour" (Index 2359), and "Of alle floures feirest fall on" (Index 2607); and six fifteenth-century poems, "O Sterne so brycht" (Index 2557), "Vpon a lady my loue ys lente" (Index 3836), "I haue nowe sett myne herte so hye" (Index 1310), "Goe, lytyll byll, & doe me recommende" (Index 927), "Ryht godeyly, fressh flour of womanhode" (Index 2824), and "[E]very man deleytly hyle in hys degree" (Index 742).

The use of secular elements in religious poetry is a convention which evidently had been a part of Middle English poetic practice from
the first appearance of native verse. It is found, for example, in one of the earliest extant hymns in praise of Mary, "Cristes milde moder seynte marie" (Index 631), from a MS of the first half of the thirteenth century. Apart from the secular elements found in the poem one of the most interesting things about it is the evidence it contains of its early origin. The self-consciousness of the author, writing in a new literary language, is evidenced in the final lines of the poem (note too that the author is a monk, which reminds us that the conventions of secular poetry were freely used by the religious authors of Middle English verse):

And alle mine ureondmen þe bet beo nu to-dai
þet ich habbe i-sungen þe thesne englissce lai.
And nu ich þe bische vor thire holinesse
þet þu bringe þene Munuch to þire glednesse
þet funde thesne song bi the, mi looue leafde,
Cristes milde moder seinte marie. amen.
(XIII, #3, 11. 166-71, p. 8)

That the poet's reference to the language of his lai is not to be construed as evidence of his foreign origin is indicated by the familiarity he shows with native English tradition. His choice of detail to describe the paradise where Mary reigns, for example, reflects the native English habit of portraying winter's frost and snow as great evils and perils in this life. In his description of heaven he states:

þer bloweth inne blisse blostmen hwite & reade,
þer ham neuer ne mei snou ne worst iureden,
þer ne mei non ualuwen, uor þer is eche sumer,

(11. 37-39, p. 4)

The detail which most clearly reflects the poet's familiarity with native English traditions is his description of Mary's role in paradise as a giver of gold bracelets and rings:
Alle þíne ureondes þu makest riche kings,
þu ham ziuæst kinescrud, beiles & gold ringes;
(11. 33-34, p. 4)

The author-speaker of the poem has portrayed his relationship to
the Blessed Mother as that of a courtly subject singing a lovesong.\(^\text{14}\)

He addresses her as his lady several times in the poem (11. 2, 17) and
he indicates his complete dependence on her love. This is suggested,
for example, in short phrases used throughout the poem such as Mines
liues leome (1. 2). However, this dependence on the lady's love, and
the suffering accompanying the love, are most forcefully suggested in
one particular section of the poem which, as Brown points out, parallels sections of secular love poems:\(^\text{15}\)

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Vor o þe is al ilong mi lif & eke min heale.} \\
\text{Vor þíne luue i swinke & sike wel ilome,} \\
\text{Vor þíne luue ich ham ibrouht in-to þeoudome, (thrallldom)} \\
\text{Vor þíne luue ich uorsoc al þet me leof was} \\
\text{And zef the al mi suluen, looue lif, iþench þu þes.} \\
\end{align*}
\]

(11. 96-100, pp. 5-6)

Finally, throughout the poem the poet prays for the lady's milce & ore
(1. 102). The poem as a whole can be divided into sections (alternating
with no regularity) which parallel those of a courtly lyric: praise of
the lady, statement of the poet's devotion and dependence, petition for
mercy and aid.

In several instances the poet has introduced elements which almost,
but not quite, parallel the courtly situation. It is where these ele-
ments differ from the courtly counterparts that the contraries of re-
ligious and secular (particularly, human lady versus divine source of
mercy) display a reflecting quality; that is, while the secular elements
help clarify Mary's role, they are also shown to be either limited or
less significant than their religious counterparts. While the poet indicates that he has been wounded (l. 124), for example, he makes it clear that his wounds have been made by vice and by the enemy of all mankind, the devil. Thus, while the lady is heralded as the cure of the poet's suffering, she is not the cause of it; the cause here is serious and deadly. When speaking of his lady's mercy, the poet makes a point of indicating that each man who beseeches the lady is given her mercy and help immediately (ll. 78-86); implied here is a contrast to the uncertainty of obtaining the mercy of a courtly lady. Since the lady's mercy is available at all times, the poet can make an assertion of possession of the lady which runs counter to the uncertainty characteristic of the courtly servant, and which reflects upon the difference between the two ladies, one courtly and one divine:

mi lif is þin, mi luue is þin, mine heorte blod is þin, and zif ich der seggen, mi leoue leafdi, þu ert min.
(ll. 157-158, p. 7)

Thus in the poem the secular contraries, courtly poetic elements, help define the poet's relationship to the Blessed Mother as one of a suffering servant, whose life is dependent on her mercy, and they also help clarify and celebrate Mary's nature as a powerful and perfect superior. We also find a reflective use of contraries, between the secular and religious, since Mary's power and mercy reflect unfavorably on the limited capacities of the courtly lady. Other contraries also function in the poem, for circumlocution and for definition or celebration. Circumlocution by contraries occurs four times in the poem: day and night (ll. 8, 50), now and ever more (ll. 113), and within and without (ll. 91). Contraries celebrate the unique nature of Mary as maiden and mother.
(11. 67, 69) and "so read so rose, so hwit so þelilie" (l. 53, indicating that she has the perfection of both ideal flowers, the rose and the lily, symbolizing love and chastity respectively, a paradoxical union unless the love is understood as charity). Her power is defined by the change she can bring about from one contrary to the other:

Vor þu me hauest iholpen a ueole kunne wise
And ibrouht of helle in-to paradise,

Contraries define not only the nature of the Blessed Virgin but also the nature of heaven. First, heaven is described in somewhat negative terms in a passage partially quoted: it contains no snow or frost, no death or sorrowfulness, no fading (aging or seasonal changes); that is, heaven is described as the contrary of earth. This is a reflective use of contraries since one thing is described in terms which are generally applied to its contrary, and what results is a description not only of heaven but also of earth. The same double-descriptive effect occurs in a later passage on heaven, this passage opening with the negative description but then also utilizing examples of alternating contraries which occur on earth but which are resolved in heaven (a technique familiar through its usage in poems considered in Chapter Two):

No beoth heo neuer i-dreaued mid winde ne mid reine;
Mid ham is euer more dei withute nihte,
Song with-ute seoruwe & sib with-ute uihte;
Mid ham is muruht moniuold with-ute teone & treie,

The courtly elements included in another thirteenth-century lyric "On hire is al mi life ylong" (Index 2687, Appendix) seem intended merely to frame two penitential stanzas and one stanza in praise of the Blessed
Mother; the use of courtly elements is perhaps an attention-attracting device. The first three lines could refer to a secular lady, but the bote she brings is for more than one person, as line four indicates. In lines five through seven the identity of the lady is made plain: through her child-bearing she has brought us from hell pain to bliss (a celebration of her power in terms of contraries).

The correspondences between the Blessed Mother and a courtly lady are not developed in the body of the poem, although one line might apply to a courtly lady as well as to Mary (l. 31). But even this line is qualified by the next, which indicates that the lady helps all mankind (the only possible reflective use of the courtly-religious contraries in the poem). In the concluding stanza the poet addresses Mary as lauedi and lauedi brit, and the last line of the poem could just as well conclude a courtly complaint: lauedi merci. The plea of the concluding stanza is obviously for mercy for the speaker's soul, not for his benefit in this life. In fact, the only correspondences mentioned in the poem between the secular lady and the Blessed Mother are worthiness as an object of praise and the ability to grant mercy. These two correspondences are perhaps the basis for the linking of the courtly and the Christian systems in poems of praise to the Blessed Mother. It should be pointed out that although the author of this poem does not utilize the correspondences between the two systems to the extent that the author of Index 631 does, and although he limits the courtly elements to the framing stanzas of the poem, he has produced a more courtly lyric in one sense. The basic lady-servant relationship is brought out in the urgency of the final stanza, the poet displaying none of the
assurance and confidence in receiving mercy which characterized the stance of the other thirteenth-century author.

Three other uses of contraries, in addition to the secular-religious, may be pointed out in the poem. The first two stanzas contain contraries, although these are not made prominent by the use of parallelism and antithesis. It has already been pointed out that Mary's power is characterized in terms of contraries (ll. 5-6); this is further evidenced in the final lines of the first stanza where it is stated that she can give us god hendinke though we do wrong (ll. 9-10). In stanza two the poet contrasts this world and God's bliss to urge a value judgment on the part of the audience. Finally, this same use of contraries, to define both and urge the choice of one over the other, is found in stanza four, in which Mary's role is clearly contrasted to Eve's through the use of parallelism and antithesis:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{bu brutis us day and eue nith,} & \\
\text{heo brout wou, bu brout rid,} & \\
\text{bu almesse and heo sunne.} & \\
\end{align*}
\]

(ll. 35-37)

While perfection and ability to grant mercy function in Index 2687 as the basis for the joining of the secular and religious, in another poem whose subject is the Blessed Mother, "Ase y me rod pis ender day" (Index 359), perfection is the basis for the inclusion of secular conventions. This difference is logical when the purposes of the two poems are considered. Index 2687, while a poem of praise of the Blessed Mother, is also a penitential lyric; hence, mercy is a key element. Index 359, however, is a simple song of praise; therefore, the poet does not even mention mercy (except in a purely religious context in the
final stanza, and when he alludes to Mary's power as mediatrice of grace, ll. 9-10). This poem illustrates yet another degree of the usage of the secular in the religious. The poem has a clear bipartite construction with the courtly elements limited solely to the first four stanzas of the poem. The final six stanzas praise the five joys and no courtly vocabulary is used at all in these stanzas.

The poem opens in the manner of a chanson d'aventure, with no indication at all in the first stanza that this is to be a religious lyric:

Ase y me rod þis ender day
by grene wode to seche play,
mid herte y þohte al on a MAY,
suetest of alle þinge.
Lybe, ant icht ou telie may
al of þat suete þinge.
(Brook, #27, ll. 1-6, pp. 65-66)

In fact, no indication is given that the subject is the Blessed Mother until line eight (the reference to Mary as mediatrice and mother of Jesus). Stanza three is entirely secular, with the poet asserting (using circumlocution by contraries) that the lady is his solas night and day, his joy and best play, and the object of his love-longing. Stanza four opens in a secular fashion (again with circumlocution by contraries) with the poet's statement that he loves the lady above all things and that she is his day's bliss and night's rest. This stanza concludes, however, with the noncourtly assertion that the lady helps both old and young and that the poet will now sing of her five joys (like the reference to Christ in stanza two this is a clear indication of the identity of the lady). Thus there is a clear alternation of secular and religious elements in the first four stanzas of the poem. The
religious clarifications which identify the lady are made at the ends of stanzas two and four and both of them focus on the lady's ability to help a number of people. The lady, then, is contrasted pointedly with the courtly lady from whom only one person hopes to obtain help. This would indicate that the courtly elements in the poem have a reflective function. That is, while the secular elements help concretize the perfection of the Blessed Mother and the speaker's devotion to her through a human parallel, the elements which set this lady apart (which appear between the secular sections of the first four stanzas and have a central position in the final six stanzas on the five joys) cannot help but draw attention to the superiority of Mary over any earthly maiden. The resulting judgment might be that she alone qualifies for the high praise and for the devotion lavished elsewhere on simple maidens, in courtly language such as that used in this lyric.

Another Harley lyric, Index 2359, "Nou skrinke rose and lylie-flour," seems to utilize secular elements for the same reflective purpose: to highlight the uniqueness of the Blessed Mother and to show the superiority of her power to that of secular ladies who may also be praised in superlatives. In order to do this the poet focuses on Mary's medicine and its power (with resulting aspersions on the medicine of ordinary ladies). Using contraries, the poet describes the power of her medicine which makes free that which was  

pral (l. 44). Using (judgmental) paradox, the poet notes the unearthly nature of this leche, who will heal men without any payment of gold or treasure (ll. 37-40). The praise of the Blessed Mother in terms of her medicine comprises the central lines of the poem (ll. 27-50).
The poem seems to have two beginnings. The second stanza contains a *chanson d'aventure* opening. The first stanza, which initially seems out of place in the lyric, contains a reflection on the transitoriness of all things, but focuses on women *bryht in bour* with the warning that death will not glide by them. The poet returns to this reflection in the last stanza, making the connection explicit by a reference to flowers in both the first and last stanzas (ll. 1, 57). Actually, these framing references which at first seem tacked on are integral to the poem and function in the same reflective manner as do the secular courtly elements of the poem. That is, the uniqueness of Mary is highlighted by her implicit comparison with other ladies, and, of course, the fading and transitory ladies fall short in comparison to Mary. Another connection between the framing stanzas and the body of the poem is made through the implied necessity for penitence in the face of the transitoriness of all things (in the framing stanzas) and Mary's *medicine* which will bring all to bliss.

The framing stanzas are also important in judging the purpose of the secular poetic elements in the poem. Because of the pointed moralizing tone of this lyric, produced especially by the framing references to transitoriness, it is perhaps safe to assume that the poet's use of secular poetic conventions is not merely reflective, i.e., that the poet is not merely casting mild aspersions on the poetic superlatives used to describe earthly ladies and their powers. The use of secular poetic conventions seems to carry even more critical weight. The poet's criticism is directed not only at abstract poetic conventions, it is explicitly directed to beautiful women (the subjects of the courtly praises)
at the end of the poem:

Wymon, wip bi iolyfte,
bou bench on Godes shoures.

pah pou be whyt ant bryht on ble,

falewen shule py fioures.

(Brook, #23, 11. 53-56, p. 62)

As I have pointed out, there are two correspondences between the courtly lady and the Blessed Mother which probably form the basis for comparisons and contrasts which may be made between them: both ladies are characterized by perfection and unique qualities which may be described by superlatives and they both have the power to grant mercy to their servants, relieving them of suffering. While the lady's perfection exists in her alone, her mercy exists only in her relationship to another person, her servant, who seeks it. From the religious lyrics analyzed thus far in this section it is apparent that these poems follow their secular counterparts in that they place varying degrees of emphasis on one or the other of the lady's qualities, perfection or mercy. Generally speaking, when a religious poem which uses secular poetic conventions focuses on perfection it is about Mary; when it focuses on mercy, it is also about the suffering of the penitent servant who is in need of the mercy. Most of the poems, of course, combine the two, incorporating elements of two secular genres: panegyric and complaint for mercy.

In the first poem considered in this section of part one of the chapter (Index 631), about equal attention is paid to praise of Mary and to the complaint for mercy; however, most of the courtly elements (including possible direct echoes from secular poetry) are confined to the poet's description of his suffering and need for mercy. The other
thirteenth-century poem analyzed (Index 2687) devotes only a few lines to praise of the Blessed Mother (comparing her with Eve, not using courtly language); the poem is primarily a plea for mercy, but only the final plea (ll. 41-49) is written in the courtly idiom. (This plea differs markedly from that in Index 631 which is characterized by confidence; the plea in Index 2687 is urgent and the poet shows no confidence.) The five-joys poem from the Harley MS (Index 359) is exclusively a song of praise, the first half written in courtly terms and the second half, enumerating the five joys, written without courtly terminology. Mercy is mentioned only once in this poem (l. 57) and the poet's attention to his own need for mercy is limited to a vague reference to his louelongyne (l. 16). A similar relationship between praise and a plea for mercy exists in the other Harley poem considered, Index 2359, where an explicit plea is made only in the last lines, and that plea is made to Jesus, not Mary. However, it is interesting that in this lyric the praise of Mary is limited almost exclusively to her ability to bestow mercy and to the character of that mercy (her medicine). This poem also suggests pointedly, by means of the framing stanzas on transitoriness, an adverse judgment on the praise of a secular lady which had been only implied in the other lyrics through the reflective use of secular conventions (which merely suggest the limited nature of the secular counterparts to an audience familiar with them).

The relationship of the secular and religious elements and the balance between panegyric and complaint in the poems already analyzed must be kept in mind in order to appreciate the unique character of one of the Vernon lyrics, "Of alle floures feirest fall on" (Index 2607, Appendix).
The poem stands out in its usage of secular poetic conventions in two respects. The ability of the lady to bestow mercy is the basic correspondence which underlies the usage of secular conventions to express the poet's statement of his position and his plea, in this as in poems previously considered. However, in this poem the poet expresses his desire for mercy specifically as a desire to see the lady (a courtly correspondence). There is good reason to develop this correspondence between the secular and the religious since, in the Christian framework, seeing Mary would mean obtaining heaven, having received mercy for sins. No other Middle English poem I have read which is addressed to the Blessed Mother (using secular poetic conventions) is characterized by such an emphasis on the lovelonging and the intense desire of the poet to be in the presence of the beloved (Mary). While this poem contains no directly traceable influences from the Song (specific lines or images) the situation which is presented in the lyric is somewhat reminiscent of that in the Song, according to traditional exegesis. That is, the poet represents his desire to attain heaven as a desire to see his beloved. In the poem, of course, allegory is not consistently maintained (as it was in the Song, according to the exegetes); there is never any doubt that the beloved is Mary and that desire for forgiveness for sins is being represented in terms of desire for mercy in a courtly sense. The situation presented in the poem is different from that in the traditional exegesis of the Song because the beloved is Mary, not Christ. Nevertheless, this poem may be viewed as the counterpart, in poems addressed to Mary, of the lovelonging poems addressed to Christ which will be considered in the fourth section of this chapter (and which do show direct influence of the Song).
The second characteristic of this poem which sets it apart from earlier examples treated in this section of the chapter is that it does not rely only on the reflective possibilities of the use of secular elements in religious poetry to put secular love in perspective; instead, it contains explicit comparisons between earthly love and the love of Mary and explicit judgments on the value of each. Because these judgments are made explicit (and are not merely suggested by the reflective possibilities of the secular conventions) this poem reveals more clearly than the others the ironic result of the use of situations and conventional poetic language associated with secular love to describe spiritual love and at the same time to condemn the secular: the poet intends the mind to be elevated from the secular to the religious but he keeps the secular always before the reader. The same ironic result is not obtained in other reflective uses of contraries, as, for example, when the poet describes heaven in terms associated with the things of earth (peace without war, etc.) because the differences between the contraries of earth and heaven are emphasized, not the similarities between earthly and spiritual love and perfection, and because while man finds earthly love desirable he does not find desirable the contraries of fortune in this life.

The terminology and conventions from secular love poetry are so intermingled in the poem, that, unlike the other poems considered, it cannot easily be divided into secular and religious sections. As in the first poem analyzed in this section, there is no illusion about the true identity of the poet's beloved: the second line reveals that it is Marie, Moder fre. Referring also to Jesus in each of the first two
stanzas, the poet sets up the courtly situation: he has a **love-liking**
to serve Mary in his degree. He asserts that his thought is set heartily
on the **buyrde of buyrdes best** even though he has never seen her (a fact
which becomes central in the body and conclusion of the poem).

Stanzas three through five are addressed to Mary whom the poet
calls Marie Moder, *swete*, and *swete may*. The poet specifically asks
Mary to intercede for him with her son so that he will not become **be
fendes bral**. An explicit denial of the value of secular love (presumably
directed to any object) occurs in the fourth stanza where the poet
says that whoever thinks on Mary's goodness and grace "he luste to loue
in oter place." Also in the fourth stanza the poet continues his em-
phasis on seeing Mary's face:

> In hope to seo zor blessed face,
> And dwele wip zou at myn endynge,
> And haue relese of all trespace,
> Ladi, þauz I mourne, I synge.
> (11. 29-32)

As elsewhere in the poem the poet obviously describes a spiritual desire,
but the recurring courtly terminology, such as *Ladi* here, brings the
secular to mind. Note here that the author portrays himself as both
mourning and singing; like a courtly lover he is joyful and sorrowful at
the same time. (He represents himself as joyful in stanza six, sorrow-
ful in stanza seven.) The fifth stanza contains further judgments on the
worthlessness of the secular: "þis world nis no-þing as I wende," and
"þis world is fals and þat I feel." The stanza opens with a reference to
*Lentun-dayes*, which here is made to refer to the penitential season, but
may also be used to designate the season of love, *Spring.*

This most clearly moral stanza of the poem (stanza five) is followed
immediately by four stanzas in which the poet describes his love-longing in sustained courtly terms. Of these thirty-two lines, the most impassioned of the poem, only one line hints that the object of the love-longing is not a secular courtly lady: "zif heo neore, we neore but lore." If the plural pronoun were replaced by the singular this line too could be used to describe a secular lady, in the custom of courtly overstatement. The courtly conventions are obviously used reflectively here, that is, partly as a means of conveying in understandable human terms the nature of the poet's love of Mary and her excellence, and partly to indicate the failings of human ladies and human love when compared to Mary and to spiritual love. When the poet indicates, for example, that Mary "coupe neuere gabbe ne glose" (1. 52) and that "begiled heo neuer no wiht" (1. 54), the audience may contrast the courtly lady who may be praised for such excellence but who also causes many poets to complain of her falseness. Through his detailed paralleling of courtly poetic conventions with the religious situation the poet has created a kind of game in which the audience must transfer the secular references into the spiritual framework. The conventions are used not for exaggeration, but literally. The excellence of the lady, for example, as Emperys, princesse, peerles of pryse, Rose, are literally true (since, in the Catholic tradition, the human Mary was conceived without original sin, and the glorified Mary, body and soul in heaven, is queen of heaven). The dependence of the poet on the lady is also to be taken literally; when he says that without her love his joy will turn to strife (1. 43) he is referring literally to the loss of his soul.

The last four stanzas of the poem return to the method of the first
five stanzas by mingling of the secular and religious conventions. Another characteristic of the final stanzas is the change in the stance of the speaker of the poem: first he addresses Mary (11. 73-80), then the audience indirectly (in the general method of personal reflection of the poem, 11. 81-84), then the lady (11. 85-88), the audience directly (11. 97-100), louse (1. 101), and finally Marie Mooler, Mayden cleene and Ladi (11. 102-04). In these stanzas we find elements we would expect to find in a religious lyric addressed to Mary: the poet greets her with five Aves (1. 75), hails her as mother and maiden (1. 102), appeals to her on account of her son (1. 85). We also find secular poetic conventions which the poet challenges us to apply literally: his appeal to the king of love and simply to love (11. 90, 101) and his citation of Mary as Rose in May (1. 96, where we must convert the secular sexual symbolism to the symbol of spiritual perfection). We also find an instance where the poet himself explicitly converts a secular poetic convention to his own purposes. Like the courtly poet he expresses doubt as to whether the lady will trust his love; however, he explains her possible lack of trust as an effect of the frele and wylde nature of Monkuynde. Finally, we find that the poet does not rely on the reflective possibilities of the use of secular conventions in a religious lyric to make a point about the value of earthly love. Juxtaposed with his appeal to the king of love and preceding his citation of his lady as the Rose in May, we find the following moral reflection:

In eorply louse is luytel store,  
For al þat nis but vanyte  

(11. 91-92)
The poem ends with the appeal which unifies the poem (ll. 11, 29, 62), that the poet may have a sight of his lady (here specified as In heuene, l. 103).

In the genre under discussion, poems addressed to Mary which make use of conventions from secular love poetry, major changes occur in the fifteenth century. A few poems are preserved which make only passing use of some of the titles applied to secular ladies. In "O Sterne so brycht, ŭat gyfys lycht" (Index 2557) Mary is hailed in numerous titles related to her grace-giving role, and the poet clearly asks for Mary's intercession with Christ for the forgiveness of sins. Though the religious purpose of the plea is plain, the poet never mentions Mary by name. Among the other titles he uses is lady. He once refers to himself as her seruitour. But the refrain of the four-stanza poem contains most of the language which is associated with secular love poetry, as well as an unmistakable religious title:

O fairest lady, o svetast lady,
o blisful lady, hewynnys quheyne.
(XV, #320, ll. 25-26, p. 37)

Most of the fifteenth-century religious lyrics addressed to Mary which utilize courtly conventions, however, do not do so casually. In fact, the courtly idiom is generally maintained throughout the poems, which contain few unambiguous religious references. It almost appears that a new genre has been created in the fifteenth century: a courtly-religious tour de force in which the object seems to be to maintain an entirely ambivalent language of praise and petition so that it is difficult, if not impossible, to determine for certain (up to a certain clue, or even throughout the poem) whether the person being praised is a
courtly lady or the Blessed Mother. If we compare these poems with those previously analyzed the following points may be made. First, the tone of the poems is formal, unemotional; we find none of the urgent pleas such as are found in the last stanza of Index 2687, or the eighth stanza of Index 2607. Second, the language is characterized by extensive borrowing from French and Latin. Third, the poems are characterized more by panegyric than by complaint; that is, there is little emphasis placed on the love-longing of the poet. Fourth, there are often no clear indications in the poem that it is addressed to the Blessed Mother and that spiritual love is the subject. 18

This last, of course, is the cause of the ambivalence of the lyrics. They never mention the name of Mary and rarely mention any of her personal titles or spiritual roles; they contain no explicit moralizing sections or explicit comparisons between spiritual and secular love. They contain no explicitly religious extensions of courtly conventions, as are found, for example, in Index 2607, where the poet wonders if Mary will trust his love, considering the frailty of all mankind; and they do not contain variations on the secular conventions which indicate a reflective purpose in the use of them (such as an assertion that the lady will help all mankind). Sometimes, after the poet has given us a clue as to the identity of the lady being praised, the reader may find other hints in the poem which confirm her identity as Mary. Sometimes the clue itself is ambivalent and it seems impossible to determine if the lyric is secular or religious. Because of the obvious effort of the authors of these poems to maintain a totally ambivalent song of praise up to the point that the clue is presented (if it is given at all) it seems
that their purpose in using the secular courtly conventions is not primarily to make the most of their reflective possibilities. The purpose of the poets is perhaps to astound the reader, to impress the audience with their art, with the degree to which ambivalence can be maintained.

However, we cannot discount all reflective effect of the use of secular conventions in these religious poems. I do not think that the use of secular conventions helps the reader or audience to perceive more clearly the nature of the excellence of Mary or the nature of the spiritual relationship between Mary and man. I base this judgment on the fact that little if any attention is given in these lyrics to the dependence of the poet on the lady, and on the fact that the praise of the lady is so formal and stylized that it tells us little about any lady, secular or religious. While the courtly elements seem to reflect very little, if at all, on the religious correspondences, the religious application does put the secular conventions in some perspective since the superlative praises are applied justly only to Mary (according to the Christian system). When the clue to the identity of the lady is given, the reader or audience may then be expected to acknowledge that such superlative praise belongs in reality only to Mary. In individual lyrics, however, it seems impossible to judge whether the poet has chosen to combine the courtly and religious for their possible reflective effect, or simply, as a game. Regardless of the poets' purpose in combining the secular and the religious, it is useful to compare the degrees of ambivalence which have been maintained in some of these poems.

In a few poems the identity of the lady is ultimately made obvious. In Index 3836, "Vpon a lady my loue ys lente," the lady is described as a
conventional courtly lady in the first eight lines; but in the remainder of the twenty-eight lines of the poem, many characteristics are mentioned which do not apply to a courtly lady: the poet desires to have her as his spouse (1. 9); he calls her mother of all (1. 14); he says she is ready day and night to hear the prayers of man, woman, and child (11. 17-20). Finally, in the last stanza of the poem he drops all pretense of hiding the lady's true identity:

Pray we to bys lady bryzth,
In be worshyp of be trinite,
To brynge vs alle to heuen lyzth—
Amen, say we, for charyte.
(XV, #48, 11. 25-28, p. 78)

In Index 1310, "I haue nowe sett myne herte so hye," the poet makes the identity of the lady clear (in my opinion) through the use of Latinate vocabulary and liturgical echoes. The poem remains ambivalent, however, in a very strict sense, since Latinate vocabulary and the particular elements of praise from Latin hymns to Mary which are used in this poem might be (and some are) used in fifteenth-century courtly poems in praise of secular ladies. In the first eight lines of the poem typical courtly language is used (except that the poet says he chooses the lady for chastite). Then we find Latinate diction ("Hyr dulcede is indeсинente," 1. 9) and even Latin words (Tota pulcra, 1. 13, which may echo a line of the Latin antiphon for Vespers of the Assumption). The poet describes the lady in language which appears both in Latin hymns to Mary and in courtly poetry of the fifteenth century: Castell of clennes (1. 15), Clene as clere crystall (1. 17).

The most consistently ambivalent of the fifteenth-century courtly poems in praise of Mary is Index 927 (Appendix), "Goe, lytyll byll, &
As the first line indicates, the poem is in the form of a love letter, a courtly genre of the fifteenth century. Ambivalence is very subtly maintained for the first twenty-six of the forty lines of the poem. Any elements which might suggest that the identity of the lady is Mary could just as readily be found in typical courtly lyrics. In the first stanza, for example, the poet describes his lady as having godely countynance and he says that he desires to rest in her bosom because he loves her best. In the second stanza he describes her as lylly off redolence and rose off conffydence (Mary, of course, is traditionally praised as both rose and lily, and a courtly lady may also be praised in these terms). In the third stanza, the poet says that his lady is imprinted with inexplicable gifts of nature and eke of grace incomparable (l. 21).

The fourth stanza contains the only unquestionable clue to the identity of the lady: the poet calls her Most souerayne medyatryce (l. 27), a title applied strictly to the Blessed Mother. In the remainder of the poem, the praises and petition which occur apply most aptly to the Blessed Mother, but, nevertheless, they might also be found in a secular courtly lyric. Thus, except for the clue, mediatrice, ambivalence is artfully maintained in the poem. The fifth stanza, for example, opens with the following lines: "Her bewte holy to dyscryve / Who is she that may ssuffyce?" Holy may modify beauty (and clearly indicate a spiritual quality); however, holy may also be an orthographical representation of wholly, in which case ambivalence would be maintained. In the same stanza the poet answers his own question: no clerk alive may describe her beauty since "She is only withowtyn vyce." This is an obvious allusion
to the Immaculate Conception, but ambivalence is maintained because such a statement would not be extraordinary in the elevated praise of a secular courtly lyric. Ambivalence is also maintained in the last stanza of the poem, in which the poet asks to be put in the lady's grace if she will disregard an old trespass.

Finally, two poems must be mentioned which Brown includes in his edition of religious lyrics but which could be entirely secular. In the first, Index 2824, I find nothing to indicate that the poem is intended as a song of praise to Mary:

Royal MS. 6. B. ix
Ryht godehly, freseh flour of womanhode,
My lyues Ioy, myn hertes plesance,
Example of trouth and rote of godehlyhode,
And verayle my lyues sustenance --
And, with al þe hool, feythful obeisance
That servuant can thenk or deuyse,
To you þat haue myn herte in guernance,
Me recemande in all my best wyse.
Quod H. Bowesper.
(XV, #40, p. 72)21

A longer poem which is called a prayer (l. 13) and which ends with Amen and includes another Amen after the second stanza, Index 742 (Appendix), may also be entirely secular. It may, however, like Index 2824 just quoted, be included with the puzzle-like poems to the Blessed Mother, if one believes that it can be assigned as a religious lyric without the appearance of an unambiguous clue (as in Index 927) or without the overwhelming presence of ambiguous ones (as in Index 1310). The fact that Index 742 is called a prayer and includes two Amens does not set it apart as religious. These conventions occur, for example, in an unquestionably secular lyric, Index 1120 (not analyzed in this dissertation). The praises of the lady in the poem are all ambiguous, even
souereyn off all (1. 30) and my soule leche (1. 24, since soule is an acceptable orthographical representation of sole, meaning only\(^22\)). The petition, likewise, is ambiguous, referring simply to coming into the lady's presence and receiving mercy for an offense (11. 27-28). It may never be entirely clear whether or not poets intended totally ambivalent poems, such as the two just discussed, as religious songs of praise.

The nature of the use of secular poetic elements in religious verse and of religious elements (such as the Amen) in secular verse would permit some entirely secular poems to be interpreted as religious. That copyists regarded what appear to be purely secular lyrics as religious is apparent by an instance discussed later in this chapter in which a MS heading identifies what appears to be a secular lyric as a complaint of Christ for man's soul.\(^23\)

All of the poems considered in this second section of the first part of the chapter are characterized by a use of contraries in form or structure. In some of the poems, notably Index 359, the secular and religious conventions alternate in the poem, or the secular conventions frame religious ones. In other poems, there is a mingling of the poetic conventions; sometimes the religious predominates (as in Index 2607), sometimes the secular (as in Indices 3836, 1310, 927, where one or more clues indicate that the lady being praised is Mary). In a few poems, represented here by Index 2824 and Index 742, only conventions which might apply to either a secular or religious situation are included; the result is a lyric which is totally ambivalent. This type of lyric, as well as the clue poem developed in the fifteenth century, is possible only within the tradition established in the thirteenth and especially
in the fourteenth centuries in which secular poetic conventions were included for reflective purposes in poems in praise of Mary (to illuminate both the secular and religious situation). Elsewhere in this part of the chapter the use of contraries in overall form or structure is rare, but is found in the alternating Latin and Middle English form of Index 2645. Circumlocution by contraries, a specific use of contraries in form, is frequent in many poems analyzed.

Contraries and paradox are often used to celebrate or define the power of God or of the Blessed Mother. In Index 2484 the power of the creator is defined in terms of the products of creation, listed as contraries in continuum relationship. Mary is celebrated for her power to effect a change from one contrary to the other: to unbind bonds (Index 1054), bring rest to the weary (Index 2645), bring man from hell to paradise (Index 631), make the thrall free (Index 2359); and, she is praised in her ability to effect a paradox, for example, in Index 1054, where she is said to bring light to the blind. Contraries in continuum relationship define Mary in several poems; for example, as queen of heaven and empress of hell in Index 1073, as star of the sea and gate of heaven in Index 1232. Contraries in paradoxical relationship define Mary in Index 2645, parens et puella, and in Index 1077, crop and root of all virtue. (They also define the Trinity in Index 2484, three in one and three and one.) Other paradoxes are common in poems of praise of Mary, notably her paradoxical relationship to God: she suckled her creator (Index 1034.5), she was mother to her father (Index 1077 and Index 1232), she was mother to her father and brother (Index 3700). Paradoxes less directly related to Mary's own nature but which nevertheless frequently
occur in poems of which she is the subject (contiguous paradoxes) are found especially in the five-joys poems (the Incarnation, Resurrection, Ascension).

In poems analyzed in this first part of the chapter we also find one contrary defined by means of the other. The most frequent contraries are Mary and Eve (Indices 1054, 1034.5, 2645, 2687). The reflective use of contraries, by which one contrary is defined in language and poetic conventions generally applied to the other contrary, is found, of course, in various degrees, in all the poems considered in the second section of this part of the chapter, where the bases of comparison and contrast between Mary and the courtly lady are perfection and ability to grant mercy.

II. Particular Paradoxes of the Faith

A few of the poems considered in the first part of this chapter focus on a particular paradox in order to celebrate the nature of their subject. For example, a hymn in honor of God centers its praise almost entirely on the mystery of three in one. Certain hymns in honor of Mary praise her by devoting attention to one of the paradoxical characteristics of her nature, such as her virginity and motherhood (especially, hymns celebrating the Annunciation). The general subject of these lyrics, however, is God or Mary, not the particular paradox singled out for praise or celebration. Some lyrics do have as their subject one or more of the paradoxes of traditional Catholic belief, and some of these lyrics will be considered in this part of the chapter. Poems to be discussed whose subject is Mary's virgin conception of Christ include Index
353 and Index 651. Poems on the Eucharist include Indices 1640, 2076, 3583, and 2681. The paradoxical subject of one lyric, Index 2604, is the relationship between God's mercy and his justice. Several poems are included whose subject is the Incarnation. These are discussed in three groups: those which focus attention on Christ (Indices 3585, 78, 3619, 2644), those which focus attention on both Christ and Mary (Indices 3334, 34, 998, 3659), and those which also devote attention to the Redemption. Finally, a few lyrics are included whose subject is more than one of the paradoxes of the faith, such as the Virgin Birth, the Incarnation, the Resurrection; most of these poems contain an admonition to leave reason and embrace faith.

One paradox which is the subject of several lyrics is Mary's conception of Christ even though she knew no man. One fourteenth-century lyric on this subject, "Als i lay vp-on a nith" (Index 353), presents a narrative situation in which the speaker recounts that he beheld such a lovely and sweet maiden, holding a child, that he could not believe she was anything other than a virgin ("Sche hadde don mankindde vnrith, / but zif sche were a mayde," 11. 11-12). An aged sergeant sitting by the maiden tells the narrator that he too wondered until it was revealed to him that the father of the child was the king of heaven, that the child was God and man and his mother is moder mayde. The maiden is so perfect, in fact, that Joseph (the sergeant) states it would be a greater paradox than the virgin conception if Mary were found to be untrue to her husband:

\begin{verbatim}
þat ræbere a maiden sulde
With-outen man conceyue,
þan marie mis-don wolde
& so Ioseph deceyue.
\end{verbatim}

(XIV, #58, 11. 41-44, p. 79)
The paradoxicality of the virgin conception of Jesus is the subject of what Greene calls "a theological argument addressed to doubting man" in the late fifteenth-century carol, Index 651. The refrain restates the basic paradox though only the first two of the four stanzas of the poem mention it: "Mervell nothyng, Joseph, thaz mary be with child. / she hath conceyved verre god & man & yet she vndefiled." In the first stanza the poet gives the basic reason why we should not marvel: God made man out of nothing (above all reasons may refer to the inability of human reason to understand creation, or it may indicate that God's creation of man is the primary reason we should not marvel). In the second stanza the poet argues that since God made human reason it is only natural that human reason could be begyld by God's works. In the third stanza the poet reminds us that the earth, air, sun, moon, fire, water, and every star are beyond our comprehension (reason) and that it is unreasonable to reason with the creator of our reason. The poet reminds us in the fourth stanza of the contraries existing simultaneously in the Eucharist (as another example of the beguiling of our reason):

The hye and holy sacrament in verrey forme of bred
1s God and man, flesshe and blode, he that was quyck and ded. (EEC, 0260, 11. 13-14, p. 186)

Only God and man, quick and dead are, by definition, (logical) paradox-producing contraries. Flesh and blood are contraries generally used for circumlocution to designate entirety. However, here they might be considered to add to the paradox of the bread since it alone—apart from the wine—is considered to be the whole Christ.

The poet finally concludes in stanza five that reason can determine
that God, angels, souls, and the devil do exist, but what they be reason
cannot define; therefore, "mervell no more but fast beleue, Mary was
maide with child" (1. 20). The word-play on reason throughout the lyric
(repeated with various usages eighteen times) may serve to deprecate the
term. Since reason becomes so tiresome, the reader seems to welcome the
advice in the final line, to fast beleue.25

The contraries which are associated with the Eucharist (already
pointed out in Index 651) seem to have been an especially popular sub-
ject in Middle English verse. R. H. Robbins lists the following "tag"
(with two variants) as one of the most popular prayers of the period:26

Hyt semes quite, and is red:
Hyt is quike and semes dede:
Hyt is fleshe and semes bred:
Hyt is one and semes too:
Hyt is God body and no more.

This "tag" (Index 1640), which takes the form of riddle plus answer,
presents one of the clearest uses of contraries to celebrate the nature
of a paradoxical subject: while the Eucharist seems to be one thing, it
is the contrary of that thing (a judgmental paradox).

A sixteenth-century carol (Index 2076) explicitly recognizes the
Eucharist as a logical paradox in its refrain: "Mirabile misterium: / In
forme of bred ys Codes Son." The logically paradoxical belief that the
bread is God is apparent in other lines of the carol. The poet states,
for example, that "God made hymself at hys soper" (1. 4); further identifi-
cation of God with the bread occurs when the poet states that "Thys
bred ys brokyn for you and me"(1. 9), which refers both to the cruci-
fixon of Christ and to the breaking of the bread after the consecration
and before the administering of Communion. As in the tag quoted above,
God is explicitly identified with the bread by means of contraries in judgmentally paradoxical relationship (seems/is); then the poet adds the logical paradox that the bread is the crucified Christ:

```
Though yt seme whit, yt ys rede;
Yt ys fleshe, yt semeyth bred;
Yt ys God in his manhed,
    As he hong vpon a tre.
    (EEC, #319, 11. 5-8, p. 220)
```

In a fifteenth-century carol (Index 3583) which incorporates a version of the tag, a new logically paradoxical thought is added to the lines celebrating the contraries contained within the Eucharist:

```
It semeth white, yet it is rede,
And it is quik and semeth dede,
For it is God in fourme of brede;
    Ete ye it so ye be not ded.
    (EEC, #318, 11. 5-8, p. 219)
```

The notion that eating bread will save us from death (even God in the form of bread) is logically paradoxical. Yet it is an apparent paradox, according to traditional belief, because death is not to be understood as physical death but as spiritual death, the loss of the soul. Physical death is, after all, the beginning of true life. This truly paradoxical belief is central to the carol. Every stanza ends with the same line, and the refrain incorporates it: "Ete ye this brede, ete ye this brede, / And ete it so ye be not dede."

The total identification of the bread with Christ leads to some unusual (paradoxical) images in the carols. In Index 3583, for example, the poet declares, "In virgyne Mary this brede was bake" (l. 17). Christ becomes identified, by extension, with the wheat flour, of which the host is made, called corn in Index 2681. The author of Index 2681 develops as many parallels between the corn and Christ as he can think of: "On
352
cristes day, I understond, / An ere of whet of mayd sprongs" (ll. 1-2); "This corn was repyn and layd to grownd, / Full sore beten and faste bownd" (ll. 5-6); "This corn was repyn with gret envye / Upon the mownt of Caluary" (ll. 9-10).27

Another logical paradox which is the central subject of at least one lyric is the relationship between God's mercy and his justice: while both are equal one exceeds the other. Index 2604, "Of a mon Matheu þohte," which is preserved in the Harley MS, is particularly interesting not simply because it is about the paradoxical relationship between God's mercy and his justice but because the author of the poem seems not to be aware of the traditional Catholic paradox that, while God is all just and all merciful, his mercy exceeds his justice (as it is interpreted from the parable of the laborers in the vineyard). The first four stanzas of the poem recount the parable in which the owner of a vineyard hires men in the morning and at various times during the day and agrees to pay each a penny for the day's work. When the pay period arrives, those who worked all day grumble because they have not received more wages than those who worked only a few hours. The poet ends the narration of the parable with the owner's words rebuking those who worked the longest and are grumbling:

Away, þou art unwis!
Yet y may betere beode
to mi latere leode,
to leue nam y nout lees;28
(Brook, #10, ll. 40-45, p. 43)

The last stanza contains the poet's personal reflection on the parable:
Obviously, the parable is a source of distress to the poet: it causes him to reflect on how the world works him woe. He sets up an effect and cause relationship between his uncertainty about how he is to atone for his sins (1. 54) and the increasing sinfulness of men who doubt the existence of the devil (11. 52-53). What he seems to be saying is that he fears that he who attempts to atone for his sins will receive exactly what the greater sinners receive (even though they have worked less than he), or, worse yet, they may be treated _beter_ (1. 43) than he. He seems to have forgotten that, according to traditional teaching, while each person who deserves reward will receive it fully, others may receive it through God's mercy; and each will be satisfied with his reward. He seems to have forgotten that all the workers in the parable received the full reward for which they agreed to work and each was paid justly. This is indicated when he calls the penny _so bref_ (1. 56), and when, during the recounting of the parable, he asserts that those who worked longer deserve more than the others:

```
for ryht were bat me raht
be mon bat al day vraht
be more mede anyht.
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(11. 34-36, p. 42)
Two words in the final stanza of the poem merit special comment in light of my theory that the poet sympathizes with the grumbling workers and does not understand why they were not more fully rewarded than the others. Frely in line fifty-seven, complimentarily describing the grumblers of the parable, makes no sense unless we assume that the poet has misinterpreted the lesson on God's mercy and justice. Brooke, in his gloss on frely in this line, tries to explain its occurrence by asserting that it is usedironically. But if the poet has not misinterpreted the parable and does not sympathize with the grumbling workers, there is no reason for the concern he expresses in the final stanza.

The narrator's use of the word synnend (l. 58) in the passage quoted above is also important in my interpretation since it means not only to yearn or desire, but to desire or ask for in justice.29

The theological paradox which is celebrated most often in Middle English verse is the Incarnation, understandably so since the commemoration of the birth of Christ was (and still is) one of the greatest feasts of the Church. While some songs celebrating the Incarnation are primarily narrative, recounting the events of the Christmas season such as the Nativity, the angel's announcement to the shepherds, or the Epiphany, others proclaim the paradoxes (logical and judgmental) which are closely associated with the Incarnation: that God has become man; that the Lord would be born in the humble surroundings of an ox's stall; that the Lord would be born of a humble maiden; that his mother remained a virgin; that she bore a child without pain and suffering. One other paradox celebrated in Christmas songs is that the child could free enslaved man by his blood; thus, some songs which proclaim the Incarnation, also
celebrate the Redemption. The poems might be divided into those which focus attention on the paradoxes associated with primarily Christ or with Mary, those which mention both, and those which cite paradoxes of the Redemption. Many of the poems to be considered explicitly recognize the paradoxes as such by using such terms to describe them as *mirabile mysterium*, or wonder, or marvel. None of the poems, however, is intended as a theological discussion or exposition of a mystery of the faith. The paradoxes are cited for the purpose of celebrating and praising the wonderful and marvelous nature of the Incarnation.

Among the Incarnation poems which focuses attention primarily on Christ is the following short lyric, Index 542, the only surviving Middle English lyric, to my knowledge, which celebrates the Incarnation solely by means of logical paradox:

Hereford Cath. MS. O. IV. 14
Blodles & bonles, blod has nou bon;
Fadur had fadur ũt ffadur has non;
Be werk & werkmon, hoe ben al on;
He ũt neuer ne *ede, ffyrryste had y-gon.30 *went

Stephen Manning points out that these lines, which are interpreted by Brown and Robbins in *Index of Middle English Verse* as referring to the host, actually celebrate the Incarnation.31 The lines proclaim the logical paradoxes of spirit becoming flesh, of the fatherless one (God the Father) having a (human) father, of the Creator and creature (man) becoming one, of the coming down from heaven of one who is omnipresent.32 Three of the paradoxes (ll. 1, 2, 4) take the general form "that which is not is"; the fourth paradox is of the form "X is Y" (l. 3).

A fifteenth-century carol by James Ryman with the refrain "Ther is a chielde, a heuenly childe, / Iborne this nyght of Marie myelde" (Index
simply lists, in two-line stanzas, some of the paradoxes of the child's nature. The child is one God in three persons, God and man, his father is God and his mother is a virgin, he saved mankind by shedding his blood (this described by the contraries of thralldom and freedom), he rose from the dead, he ascended into heaven. The logical paradox that God became man and the judgmental paradox that he was born in humble circumstances are expressed in unusual terms in the first stanza of another carol (Index 78), which highlights the logical paradox with the refrain, "Mirabilem mysterium: / The Son of God ys man becum":

A mervelus thyng I hafe musyd in my mynde:      
Howe that Veritas spronge owghte of the grounde. 
And Justicia for all mankynde,          
From heuen to erthe he cam adowne.        
(EEC, #94, 11. 1-4, p. 60)

The two paradoxes are suggested in the term Grounde, which not only means earth (the planet, the dust from which man is formed), but also connotes that which is lowly, insignificant.

The narrative detail most frequently used to express the paradox of the lowly birth of the Lord of all things is that he was born in an ox's stall, or laid between an ox and an ass. This judgmental paradox is cited, along with the judgmental paradox that the Lord of all had a simple maiden as his mother, in the first two stanzas of another carol (Index 3619). The remaining two stanzas of the carol reflect upon these paradoxes:

Ay Y wonder this in my mynde:  
That he that alle may loose and bynde  
Wolde be layde by beestis vnkynde  
This day.
He is a lorde, and by nature
A maydnys breest he soke ful pure;
Heuen and erthe beth in his cure
This day.

(EEC, #32, 11. 9-16, p. 23)

The paradox of Christ's humble birth is memorably recorded in
three lines (Index 2644) which are composed entirely of contraries:
royal accoutrements (halle, kenestol, burnes) and those of Christ who,
though a king, rejected the things of a king:

Trinity Coll. Camb. MS. 323
Of one stable was is halle
is kenestol on occe stalle
sente marie is burnes alle.

(XIII, note 30, p. 192)

In another carol by James Ryman (Index 3334), the refrain and the
first stanza celebrate the basic (logical) paradox of the Incarnation,
that God has become man. (The refrain is almost identical to that of
Index 78, previously mentioned; it contains an added "Mirabile.") How­
ever, the body of the poem celebrates the continued virginity of Mary.
The Annunciation is recounted in stanzas two and three and the poet con­
cludes in stanza four:

And so withowten manys sede,
By vertu of the Holy Cost,
Sche hath conceyuyd and born indede
The Sone of God of myghtes most.
Mirabile.

(EEC. #56, 11. 20-25, p. 36)

In stanza five the poet uses the familiar figure of the sun shining
through glass in a new way. It is generally used to indicate that as the
glass is unharmed by the sun so Mary remains pure after the conception or
birth of Christ. Ryman states that as the glass through which the sun
shines is more pure, so is Mary after the birth of Christ (a deepening of
the paradoxicalness of Mary's nature). Stanzas six and seven cite Biblical (logical) paradoxes which were taken to prefigure the virgin conception of Christ: the flowering of Aaron's rod and the stone cut out of a hill without the help of man.

The author of another carol in celebration of the Incarnation (Index 34) devotes four stanzas to recounting the events of the Nativity, but opens his poem with two stanzas citing the paradox of the perpetual virginity of Mary ("Ivys, it was a wonder thyng," 1. 5), and the paradox that she was able to bear Christ without pain ("A farly thyng it schuld bfall, / But God hath all women thrall / In peynes to ber her chyldern all," 11. 15-17).

The judgmental paradox of Mary's painless child-bearing becomes the refrain of another carol (Index 998), this poem an example of a celebration of the Incarnation which cites both the logical paradox of Mary's virginity and the judgmental paradox of Christ's lowly birth. The first stanza proclaims the maiden-mother paradox; the second, that the Lord of Heaven has become our servant; the third, that the "Lord that bought fre and thrall" is found in an ass's stall. (The contraries of free and thrall are used here as a circumlocution for everyone; ordinarily, they are used to describe Christ's power or to define the Redemption.) Like other carols, Index 998 combines narration with the citation of paradoxes. The fourth and fifth stanzas recount the coming of the shepherds and the three kings; but in each of the first three stanzas the poet has drawn attention to the paradoxes by including the line, "A wonder thyng it is to see," or "A wonder thyng is fall."
In another carol (Index 3659) a subtle union of the two paradoxes which were highlighted in Index 998 is achieved (the paradoxes of Mary's virgin-motherhood and Christ's lowly birth of a simple maiden). The second paradox is celebrated in stanza four by the citation of the prophecy that "Truthe sholde be erthe growynge" (erthe meaning humanity and carrying low connotations); the first paradox is celebrated in stanzas two and three. But the opening of the poem combines the two: "This worlde wondreth of al thynge / Howe a maide conceyued a kynge." A contrast is set up between maid and king and maid and conceived (lowly birth and virgin birth).

Among those songs which celebrate the Incarnation by focusing attention on the Redemption is Index 29. The opening line indicates a Christmas song: "A child is bornen amo[n]gest man." The refrain indicates both a Christmas song (by the call to joy, characteristic of many Christmas carols) and a celebration of the Redemption:

Honnd by honnd we schulle ous take,  
And joye and blisse schulle we make,  
For the deuel of elle man haght forsake,  
And Godes Sone ys maked oure make.  

(EEC, #12, refrain, p. 9)

The poet has defined the Redemption as the forsaking of man by the devil and the marriage of man to Christ (the rhyming of for-sake and maked oure make highlight the contraries). The first stanza celebrates several logical paradoxes of the Incarnation (Christ's lack of sin though he has a human nature, the hypostatic union, that our life began with his life):

A child is bornen a-mo[n]ges man,  
And in that child was no wam;  
That child ys God, that child is man,  
And in that child oure lif bygan.  

(ll. 1-4)
The second stanza artfully continues the marriage imagery by the repetition of "by peys ys grad," *grad* having the specific usage of proclaiming or publishing the banns of marriage. The third stanza calls for joy, proclaiming and defining the effects of the Redemption with contraries: "Senful man be *blipe* & bold, / for euene ys bope bozt & sold" (ll. 18-19, italics added).

The contraries more often used to described the effects of the Redemption, free and thrall, are used in a Nativity carol with the refrain, "I-Blessid be *bat* lord in mageste / qui natus fuit hodie" (Index 3283). First, the poet praises the mission of Christ (making free what was thrall), then he suggests that we praise the fulfillment of that mission (since thrall is now free). The reversal of the contraries governs the rhyme scheme of the first two stanzas:

That lord *bat* lay in asse stalle
Cam to dye for vs alle,
To mak vs fre that erst were thralle,
Qui natus fuit hodie.

Wel mowe we glad and mery bee,
Sith we were thralle and nowe be free;
The fende oure foo he made to flee
Qui natus [fuit hodie].

(EEC, #34, ll. 1-8, pp. 23-24)

One poem must be mentioned since it combines, in celebration of that great paradox of the Incarnation, almost all the other paradoxes scattered throughout the carols already discussed. John Audelay's carol has the refrain, "What tythyngis bryngst vs, messangere, / Of Cristis borth this New Eris Day?" (Index 21, Appendix). Each of the five stanzas of the poem cites a paradox associated with Christ's birth. Stanza one proclaims the hypostatic union: "Seche wonder tythyntis ye may here: / That
God and mon is hon in fere." Stanza two calls it a *semle selcouth* that
the *burd* who conceived the child "maydyn is as was beforne." Stanza
three proclaims the paradox of Christ's humble birth (using contraries in
continuum relationship to concretize the might of the Creator and
emphasize the paradox):

\begin{quote}
A wonder thyng is now befall:
That Lord that mad both se and sun,
Heuen and erth and angelis al,
In monkynde ys now becumme.
\end{quote}

(11. 15-21)

Stanza four introduces the resulting paradoxical relationships:

\begin{quote}
These louvele lade can grete her chylde:
'Hayle, Sun, haile, Broder, haile, Fader dere!'
'Haile, doghter, haile, suster, haile, moder myld!'
\end{quote}

(11. 22-24)

Stanza four introduces also a reference to the Redemption expressed in
contraries ("mans pyne hit turnyd to play"), which itself becomes the
paradox celebrated in stanza five (the blood of the Creator brought man
from *bale* to *blys*). The fact that each stanza mentions a paradox in
celebration of the Incarnation is highlighted by the recurring line,
"Sech wonder tythyngis ye may here" (11. 4, 12, 26, 33).

A poem which is not a Christmas carol celebrates the Incarnation as
the joining of *two in one*, and the Redemption as the *setting at one* of
God and man (Index 933). The poet's expression of the paradoxes in their
essential terms (God, man, woman, two, one) creates ambiguities which
make the poem perhaps the most interesting to interpret of all the poems
considered in this second part of the chapter:

\begin{quote}
Helmingham Hall MS. LJ. I. 10
A C\®rolle
By resone of ij and powur of one,
This tyme god [s] mane were sett at one.
\end{quote}
In the second stanza of the poem the poet explores the question of the salvation of the angels. Contrasting the contrary situations, God finds that "... man hade mocyon [prompting] & angell hade none; / Wherfore god and man shulde be sett at one" (ll. 14-15). But it is the refrain and the first stanza of the poem which are particularly interesting for their use of contraries and paradox. The "three things against nature" (logical paradoxes) cited by the poet are the creation of man out of nothing (man without man), the creation of woman from Adam's rib (woman without woman out of man), and Mary's virgin conception (man without man in woman). (These are explicitly referred to as wonders in a later version of the poem.37) The poet has constructed his lines to make the wonders seem as paradoxical as possible: by the repetitions of man and woman, and, at the same time, by phrasing the wonders in such a way that they seem similar, thus, careful study is necessary to understand just what paradoxes the poet refers to. Note, for example,
the similarity in phrasing in man without man, woman without woman of 
man, and man without man in woman. After the phrase man without man is 
introduced in line two, it is varied by the substitution of woman for 
man and the addition of the of-phrase in line three. But then in line 
four, man is substituted for each occurrence of woman (in line three) 
and woman is substituted for each occurrence of man (in line three). 
This makes line four similar both to two, with man without man, and to 
three, with the prepositional phrase.

Line four, which refers to the virgin conception of Christ, also 
alludes to the Incarnation, God's becoming man, and to the hypostatic 
union, the union of both human and divine natures in Christ. Both of 
these paradoxes may be alluded to in lines five and six: "thus god and 
man to-gether be-gane / As ij, to yoyne to-gethyre in one" (God and man, 
separate and contrary in nature were joined in one, the person of 
Christ). But the thus seems to connect line five with line four (where 
the virgin conception is mentioned), so perhaps the two joining in one 
may also be taken to refer to the union of God and Blessed Mother which 
produced Christ. The refrain also seems to refer to the Incarnation and 
Redemption, resone of ij to the two natures of Christ or to the union of 
God and Mary, powur of one to the redemptive power of Christ, or to the 
power of God in the conception of Christ. Sett at one in line seven and 
in the refrain would seem to refer to the reconciliation of God and man 
in the Redemption (undoubtedly this is the case in stanza two where the 
phrase is repeated with the following line, "That thus lefte angell and 
sauyde mane").

While these indications point to the Incarnation and Redemption as
the subjects of stanza one, the last six lines of the stanza might also
be interpreted as referring simply to creation and reproduction (with the
same terminology being then applied to the Redemption in stanza two).
The refrain could be interpreted both ways: By resone of ij meaning God
and man, powur of one meaning the Creator, this tyme and sett at one
alluding to the original harmony of Eden. Interpreting the final lines
of stanza one in this way we find that line five may stand alone, line
six may refer to the joining of two in one flesh, line seven to the one-
ness of Adam and Eve or their unity with God which resulted in the har-
mony of Eden. The limitation of the stanza primarily to the subject of
Creation (except for line four) makes more sense of the final two lines,
which seem tacked on if the stanza's subject is the Incarnation and
Redemption. Furthermore, with the harmony of Eden as the subject of the
last part of the first stanza, an interesting contrast is set up between
the two stanzas since the second obviously refers to the second setting
at one, in the Redemption.

In this part of the chapter lyrics have been examined which have as
their subject one of the paradoxes of traditional belief: Mary's virgin
conception of Jesus, the Eucharist, God's mercy and justice, the Incar-
nation (which is celebrated by the proclamation of paradoxes associated
with it). Finally, a few poems must be mentioned which celebrate more
than one paradox of traditional belief. In fact, their general subject
seems to be logical paradoxes of the faith. The following short poem
(Index 496) specifically designates these items of belief as
merueylis:
Byhalde merueylis: a mayde ys moder,
her sone her fader ys & broder.
lyfe fauzt with depe & depe is slayne;
Most hiz was lowe: he styze agayne.

(XIV-XV, note 45, p. 241)

The method used by this poet to signal the paradox in most instances is to identify one thing with its contrary: maid is mother, son is father (and brother), high is low. This method is combined with (1) a reversal in the last line, in which low is said to become high again (making the line an alternation of contraries: high, low, high), and (2) the opposition of contraries in line three. In this line the contraries of life and death are opposed, but the interesting paradox resides in the last half of the line where "depe is slayne." This is paradoxical first, because it is contrary to human experience, in which the reverse is true (death slays life), second, because the notion of death excludes the idea of life so completely that it is difficult to imagine death as slain or robbed of life, third, because even when the riddle is solved and each line given its theological application, we can understand the demise of death not in the physical world, but only in the spiritual world where eternal life for the soul is possible. Death, then, is personified here, but not in the ordinary way (as physical death in the morality plays, for example); death in this lyric personifies inevitable eternal damnation.40

Most of the poems whose subject is the paradoxes of the faith are not entirely celebratory; they are partly instructional, advising the faithful on the limitations of reason and the uselessness of questioning the truth of such paradoxes. One fifteenth-century carol (Index 4000)
cites several paradoxes: the Trinity, the creation of all things with the word *Fiat*, the ruling of all things by the planets, the answering of the stones to Bede's sermon, the omnipresence of God ("her and at Rome and in every cost"). After each citation (one in each stanza) the poet repeats the following assertion of belief and the following refrain:

> What is this why?
> To frayn why I hold but foly;
> It is non other sertenly
> But virtus verbi D[omi]ni.

> Why, why, what is this why
> But virtus verbi Domini?

(EEC, #334, 11.4-7, 11-14, 18-21, 25-28, 32-35, 39-42; and refrain, p. 229)

In another carol with a very similar refrain (Index 4001) the poet cites several paradoxes (the Trinity, the creation from nothing, the Incarnation, the paradox of Christ's lowly birth, the Virgin Birth) but he seems to single out a paradox related to the Incarnation: that the human Christ, *Lord of sufferantte* died on a tree. This itself is a logical paradox, but the poet adds another: human nature is *corrypptybull*, so how is it possible that he (Christ, perhaps any man) shall live forever "as sayeth the Bybull." The poet concludes with two stanzas directly addressed to the audience in which he asserts the finite capacity of man's comprehension and cites the ultimate authority:

> God hymselfe byddyt vs by his senttens
> To lovfe owre reson and owre efydens
> And to his wordys yef wholl credens.

(EEC, #335, 11.25-27, pp. 229-30)

In one twelve-line fifteenth-century lyric (Index 37) four of the most obvious logical paradoxes of traditional belief are expressed succinctly, in a manner reminiscent of the four-line poem just considered
(Index 496) in which one contrary was said to be the other (maid-mother, son-father, high-low). By the use of the word yet in citing two paradoxes (hypostatic union, maiden-mother) the author of the longer poem makes clear that the two contraries exist at the same time (ll. 1-2).

In citing the other two paradoxes (death of Christ, Resurrection) the poet uses a different method: he asserts that someone is what, by definition, he is not (ll. 5-6). Of course, the first method is a variation on the second: to say that one thing is its contrary is another way of saying that it is what it is not by definition. Like the author of the carol just mentioned (Index 4001), this poet cites God's authority in urging belief and continued wonder:

MS. Rawlinson B. 332
A God and yet a man?
A mayde and yet a mother?
Witt wonders what witt Can
Conceave this or the other.

A god, and Can he die?
A dead man, can he live?
What witt can well replie?
What reason reason give?

God, truth itselfe, doth teach it;
Mans witt senckis too farr vnder
By reasons power to reach it.
Beleeve and leave to wonder!
(XV, #120, p. 187)

It should also be noted that in this poem the logical paradoxicalness of the hypostatic union, the virgin-mother, the death of Christ, and the Resurrection is heightened by the use of rhetorical questions.

The most memorable expression of the theme of Index 37 occurs in four lines, attributed to Reginal Pecock, Index 4181. The verses comprise one of the four most popular gnomic sayings of the period (as
judged by surviving copies). 41

Sloane MS. 3534
Witte hath wondir that resoun ne telle kan,
How maidene is modir, and God is man.
Leve thy resoun and bileve in the wondir,
For feith is aboven and reson is undir.
(XV, #119, p. 186)

Three things seem to make the verses so memorable: the succinct expression of the paradoxes (one contrary is another), the succinct expression of the instruction, also by means of contraries and apparent contraries (leave-believe, reason-wonder [i.e., paradox], faith-reason, above-under), and the word-play on wonder, used in hath wondir to signify marvel, be amazed, and also (in line three) to signify paradox. I have used the term apparent contraries to describe the relationship of some of the terms used in the last two lines of the poem. Leave (disbelieve) and believe, above and under are contraries, but the other two sets of terms are not. Reason (a function of the intellect) and wonder, meaning paradox, are not contraries; but reason and wonder, meaning to marvel, might be contraries. So the poet seems, at first glance, to have set up a relationship between contraries. Faith and reason are definitely not contraries; if they were they could not exist at the same time, except in paradoxical relationship (and they can exist simultaneously according to traditional teaching). While the poet appears to place them in contradictory relationship he actually carefully places them in a superior-inferior relationship. They appear to be set up as contraries because of the contraries aboven and undir used in conjunction with faith and reason. Actually, however, a thing which is above and a thing which is under are only in contrary relationship if they are above and under a third thing.
In the poem just considered, Index 4181, contraries are used to define a proper course of action for the Christian, leave reason and believe in the paradox, and also to express the relationship between faith and reason (above and under). Contraries in paradoxical relationship are also important in the poem, to define or celebrate the virgin birth and the Incarnation or hypostatic union. This latter use of contraries exemplifies their primary purpose in poems considered in this second part of the chapter. Contraries in paradoxical relationship and other forms of paradoxes are used in the poems considered to define or celebrate one of the paradoxes of the faith, especially the Eucharist, the Incarnation, the virgin birth (in poems of which the virgin conception is the subject, in Incarnation poems, and in poems whose subject is several paradoxes of the faith), the Redemption (in Incarnation poems), and the Resurrection (in poems whose subject is several paradoxes). In the Eucharist poems (Indices 1640, 2076, 3583) the "seems X is Y" type of judgmental paradox predominates, with the contraries white-red, dead-quick, bread-flesh, one-two. In the Incarnation poems we find not only the logical paradox of God becoming man, defining the Incarnation in a strict sense, but also several contiguous paradoxes, logical or judgmental in nature, which are closely associated with the celebration of the birth of Christ, especially the virgin birth (Indices 3619, 3334, 34, 998, 3659) and the king-in-stall paradox (Indices 78, 3619, 2644, 3659). Perhaps the most outstanding feature of the poems considered in this part of the chapter is that so many of them are characterized by succinct definition of the paradoxes which are their subjects (placing contraries in paradoxical relationship). Several poems make use of the
III. The Sufferings of Christ and of Mary

The poems to be discussed in this part of the chapter fall generally into three genres: Marian laments, dialogues between Christ on the Cross and his mother (on-the-cross poems), dialogues between Christ in the cradle and his mother (cradle poems, many of which are lullaby carols). Each of these genres will be considered in a separate section of this third part of the chapter. The purpose of all of the poems to be considered seems to be to portray or celebrate the sufferings of Christ and Mary in order to move the audience to pity, adoration, or, perhaps, repentance. A few poems whose subject is Christ's Passion close with his statement that all his suffering will mean nothing to him if man will only return his love. For the most part, however, the poems in this part of the chapter simply present a dramatic situation which is intended to make an impression on the audience. Poems which focus on the Passion of Christ, but which also deal specifically with man's response to him, will be considered in part four of this chapter.

The poems analyzed in this part of the chapter are perhaps intended not only to be celebratory, but also to be instructional since they bring to the audience's attention some of the paradoxes associated with the Redemption. These paradoxes are often presented as the reason for the suffering which is portrayed. In one of the Marian laments, for example, the paradox that the Creator is killed by his creatures becomes central. Mary cites it as one of the causes of her suffering. In some on-the-cross poems in which Mary mourns over Christ's crucifixion, the
central paradox is that we should be glad about Christ's suffering and death. In the cradle poems a variety of paradoxes associated with the Redemption are brought to the audience's attention: the familiar king-in-stall paradox, the paradox that the creator must die, that the Redeemer is killed by those he saves, the paradoxical redemptive process whereby one innocent man's death expiates the sins of all mankind. An underlying judgmental paradox of many of the lullaby carols is that Christ is weeping or mourning over one of the Redemption paradoxes when, considering his divine nature, everything is within his power. This paradox, of course, is related to another, the nature of Christ, both divine and human. From another point of view, however, Christ's weeping is not at all (judgmentally) paradoxical, considering his human nature and the agony he knows is to come. In three poems which will be considered at the end of the third section of this part of the chapter this paradox—nonparadox is brought out through the use of two voices: Christ's, giving reasons to support his weeping, and Mary's, reminding Christ of his divine nature.

The various uses of contraries in the poems will be pointed out as each poem is discussed; however, in general, contraries are used for expressing and highlighting some of the paradoxes within the lyrics, for circumlocution, and for giving form to the argument presented in some of the lyrics (contraries in form or structure: alternating opinions or stances within the poem).
A. Marian Laments

Contraries and paradox function prominently in the two fifteenth-century poems which Carleton Brown praises as representing the height of the Marian lament, and in a lyric which is a combination Marion lament and on-the-cross poem. These three poems are considered in this section of part three of the chapter: "As Reson Rywlyde my Rechyles mynde" (Index 404), "Off alle women þat euer were borne" (Index 2619), and "There stood besyde the crosse of Ihu" (Index 3543).

In Index 404 (Appendix), a narrator introduces the words of a mayde in an allegorical opening (in which he tells us that he finds the maid at the end of a solemn city after his mind had been guided by ways and wilderness). Contraries help express the acute suffering of the maid. Several times she mentions her past joy as a contrast to the present sorrow: in stanza one, in the midst of her lament, she recalls that "I lullyd hym, y lapped him, y wolde him fede" (1. 19); in stanza five she characterizes herself as forsaken and exclaims, "Gabriel, þu dedeste calle me full of grace; / nowe full of sorowe þe me seyste!" (11. 57–58). An implicit contrast is made in stanza eleven between Mary full of grace and Mary as she characterizes herself after the death of her son, "howe y may walke in þis falce worlde / as a wrecchy wyzte þat wantyth grace" (11. 123–24).

Mary proclaims the cruel and pitiful death of her only son as the cause of her sorrowing. She attributes the acuteness of her mourning to several causes, one being that her son was the son of the king, as the concluding line of each stanza reminds us ("ffor filius Regis Mortuus est"). Some of the paradoxes we have noted in other poems are also cited
by Mary as causes of what might otherwise be regarded as excessive mourning. In the third stanza, for example, she mentions her virgin conception as a justification for her sorrowing; it gives her, over all mothers, most cause to mourn (in somewhat unclear logic):  

And y, þat knywe neuer of man-is kynde,  
y bare him in my body, cleene maybe as y was.  
such be þer no mo as clerkis canne fynde;  
þan am y sche þat mooste cause has.  
(11. 29-32)

In another passage Mary declares that she has been left utterly alone, citing the paradoxical relationship between herself and Christ (even, seemingly, giving him the role of mother):  

my fadur, my broþer, my spouse he was,  
Myne helpe, myne socour and all my chere.  
nowe without broþer and spowse y moste hens pas,  
fadurles & modurles y am lafte here,  

(11. 52-55)

As another cause of her mourning she cites one of the judgmental paradoxes of the Redemption, that Christ was killed though he was innocent of any crime (a paradox in the sense that the reasonable cause-effect relationship, guilt and punishment, is violated). This paradox is mentioned in stanzas three and nine, but is expressed in contraries in stanza seven:  

He was euer meke & myld of mode,  
Nowe lieth he wounded like a best. (11. 81-82, italics added)

The gravity of the cause for mourning is also supported by Mary's citation of the paradoxical occurrences of nature which accompanied the death of the king's son: the sun and clouds changed and mourned, the earth quaked, the planets changed and made dolowre. In citing these paradoxes the poet combines elements from the traditional account of the disturbances
in nature at the death of Christ and the poetic *topos*, in eulogy, of the mourning of nature.

The most interesting use of paradox in the poem occurs in stanzas seven through ten, in which Mary condemns as her foes the creations of God which had a part in the crucifixion of her son: the earth which received the *gentill blod*, the stone which served as mortise for the cross, the tree which became the cross, the scourge which beat her son, who is called the *maker* (thus heightening the paradox) in these stanzas (11. 75, 86, 101). Not only did the creatures turn on their maker, the Jews turned on their Savior, and Mary predicts they will curse (presumably, themselves) on account of their punishment (11. 109-12).

The second Marian lament to be discussed (Index 2619, Appendix) is structured almost entirely on contraries. Nearly every stanza contrasts an ordinary mother and her healthy child with the Blessed Mother and her bleeding son. Contraries are used in this poem to highlight the sufferings of Mary and of Jesus and to create pity in the audience. The actions of a mother with her tortured and dead son are most pathetic when directly compared to the ordinary happy actions of a mother with her healthy child. In the first stanza, for example, Mary addresses all women who have borne children (this direct address being continued throughout the poem), asking them to behold her dead child on her knee while "your chilur ze dawmse upon your kne / With lazyng, kyssyng and mery chere" (11. 5-6). In the second stanza, Mary contrasts her own actions of picking thorns from her son's head with the actions of a mother picking her son's hair and beholding his face as she puts on his cap. While the ordinary mother pins on her child's chaplet with *gret*
solas, Mary, with sore wepyng finds that her son's chaplet is of thorns (stanza three). While some mothers kiss their children's breasts, Mary must kiss her son's breast with blody lippys because of the large gap and many swappys (stanza four). Stroking hands and bleeding hands, dancing feet and bleeding feet are contrasted in stanzas five and six, with one line succinctly expressing the contraries: "When þu makes myrth gret sorow I make" (1. 39; and similarly, 1. 83).

Drawing a conclusion in stanza seven (which opens, Therefor), Mary asks all women to think of her son when they behold their own children's hands, breasts, bodies, and feet. The contraries are summarized with antitheses between two lines and then, more forcefully, within each of two lines:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{þu hase þi son full holl and sounde}, \\
\text{And myn is ded vpon my kne;} \\
\text{thy childe is lawse and myn is bonde;} \\
\text{Thy childe is an life & myn ded is he—} \\
\ldots \ldots \ldots \ldots \ldots \ldots \ldots \ldots \ldots \ldots \ldots \ldots \ldots \\
\text{(ll. 57-60)}
\end{align*}
\]

Mary also introduces several paradoxes in the concluding stanzas of the poem: that her son died for others, for he never trespassed here (ll. 61-62), and that, even so, "for my son wepe ze neuer a del" (1. 69). Christ's death for others is expressed paradoxically when Mary asserts that "My childe is youres" (1. 66). This is an apparent paradox, presumably to be understood in the sense, "my child belongs to you, or has given himself to you," not in the sense, "my child is your child." Finally, an interchange between the contraries is proposed:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{To luf my son and ze be fayne} \\
\text{I wille luff yours with hert entere,} \\
\text{And he shall brynge your childur and yow sertayne} \\
\text{To blisse wher is my dere son, dere.} \\
\text{(ll. 85-88)}
\end{align*}
\]
Another poem, "There stood besyde the corsse of Ihu" (Index 3543), is a combination of Marian lament and on-the-cross poem (since its setting is the scene of the crucifixion). In addition to Mary's voice this poem also contains the voice of a narrator who introduces the scene, recounts Christ's words to Mary when he places her in the care of John, makes judgments on the lament of Mary, draws a moral conclusion from Mary's suffering (that if she suffered we should not presume to be free from trials in this life), and ends the poem with a prayer which hints at the purpose of the poem: "Let neuer bat sorow renne fro oure mynde" (1. 111). As in the first lament considered, the contraries of past joy (when Christ was a child) and present sorrow function in this poem to highlight the acuteness of the mourning (stanzas five, six, and eight); but in this poem the contraries of present sorrow and future joy are also presented in a justification of Mary's mourning since she thinks it full long until she can be united with her son (stanza two). Mary explicitly asks that we do not blame her for her mourning, expressing her powerlessness in contraries:

Wyte me nat bough I be wo,
For I may neyther bynde ne lause.
(XV, #97, 11. 87-88, p. 147)

The narrator also asks that we "blame her nat, hit was but kynde" (1. 75), indicating that it would have been paradoxical had she not lamented over Christ's death even though, as the narrator relates, "she wyst that he shuld ryse agayne" (1. 77).

Three logical paradoxes are mentioned incidentally in the poem: Mary's conception of both her son and god of myght (stanza four), the paradox that the maker of both man and beste and heuyn & erthe should
suffer death (stanza seven), and the paradox of the creation of all
things from nothing (stanza twelve). Contraries are used for circum-
locution in stanza seven and elsewhere in the poem: day & nyght (l. 116),
flesshe & blood (l. 98), Heuen and erthe, wode and vaste (l. 91), the
final instance serving also to concretize by enumeration the power of
the creator.

B. On-The-Cross Poems

Depictions in poetic form of Mary's sorrow at the cross (and
Christ's suffering) were evidently popular in the period, judging from
the many poems of this type which have been preserved. Three such poems
are considered in this section: "þu sikest sore," (Index 3691), "A sone!
tak hede to me whas sone þou was," (Index 14), and "Stond wel, moder,
vnder rode" (index 3211).

One depiction of the scene is also a meditation on it (Index 3691).
This poem is especially interesting because of its unusual refrain,
possibly derived from a secular lyric: "Lu[u]eli ter of loueli eyze, qui
dostu me so wo? / Sorful ter of sorful eyze, þu brekst myn herte a-to."
The refrain may be read as the words of the narrator reflecting either
on the suffering of Christ or the mourning of Mary (which are both de-
picted in the poem), or as the words of Mary as she beholds the Crucif-
ixion, or even as the words of Christ as he sees his mother suffering
(the theme that Mary's sorrow increased the suffering of Christ is prom-
inent in other lyrics which will be considered in this section of the
chapter). In one stanza of the twenty-four line poem the narrator re-
fects on paradoxes of the Redemption, clearly expressed by means of
contraries:
A fourteenth-century depiction of the scene at the cross which focuses on the sorrow of Mary is Index 14. This poem is also characterized by contraries used in antithesis:

Balliol Coll. Oxford MS. 149
A sone! take hede to me whas sone þou was,
and set me with þe opon þi crosse.
Me, here to leue, & þu hennys þus go,
hit is to me gret care & endeles wo.
stynt now, sone, to be harde to þi moder,
þu þat were euer godliche to al oþir.

Contraries are used to express Mary's cause for mourning (1. 3) and in her appeal to Christ to show that she thinks his treatment of her is uncharacteristically cruel (11. 5-6). Contraries are used in Christ's speech to point out the completion of his role as Savior. The new relationship between Mary and St. John is expressed paradoxically. That the author of these lines has a particular fondness for contraries and their natural accompaniment, parallelism, is also indicated by the repetition of the phrase stynt now (son or mother) in both speeches, at the end of the first and the beginning of the second to link the two. Also interesting is the judgmentally paradoxical notion, introduced in this
poem, that Mary should actually be glad about the death of her son since it marks the completion of the Redemptive process. The two speeches are thus contrary and paralleled: the first gives reasons for sorrowing, the second gives reasons for joy.

The paradox that Mary should be glad at her son’s crucifixion is central to a thirteenth-century dialogue poem which evidently gained some popularity (it is preserved in four MSS, one of which is MS. Harley 2253), "Stond wel, moder, vnder rode" (Index 3211, Appendix). In each of the first six stanzas of this eleven-stanza poem Christ addresses his mother directly and asks her to be glade and blype, generally indicating that she should be happy because he is fulfilling his mission. In the second half of each stanza Mary responds, directly addressing her son, either restating her sorrow, enumerating his wounds, or, in one instance, replying that it is mi kinde to mourn (that it would be paradoxical if she did not mourn). Christ continually reiterates that he is dying for mankind and that without his death all mankind would go to hell (stanzas two, four, five, and six). Thus through the alternating dialogue form of the poem the poet presents, without giving preference to either, the rational and emotional reactions to Christ’s passion and crucifixion.

The remainder of the poem (stanzas seven through eleven) might be divided into four distinct sections. Christ reminds Mary of the paradox that she never suffered pain at childbirth and that she is now experiencing the suffering other mothers know, and Mary replies by restating her present suffering (stanzas seven and eight). Christ bids farewell to his mother, and she replies that she too is dying of his wounds
(stanza nine). The narrator recounts the Resurrection and indicates that Mary's mood changed from one of sorrow to one of joy (stanza ten). The narrator prays to Mary for her intercession for man (stanza eleven). Thus the exploration of the paradox that we should be glad about Christ's suffering is discontinued in the final part of the poem. Strangely, the final five stanzas of the poem parallel almost exactly the final six stanzas of a Latin hymn, "Stabat iuxta Christi crucem" (whose first line is also the first line of the English poem), while the first half of the dialogue explores a paradox which is not even mentioned in the Latin hymn.45

C. Cradle Poems

In addition to the Marian laments (which depict Mary's suffering after the death of Christ) and the on-the-cross poems (which depict the suffering of Christ and Mary at the scene of the Crucifixion), a third group of poems whose subject is the suffering of Christ and Mary (and which contain paradoxes associated with the Redemption) is to be considered. These poems depict the suffering of Christ in the manger, often in anticipation of the passion. Many of these cradle poems are lullaby carols, that is, poems in carol form which incorporate either a refrain of lullaby consolation or incorporate a lullaby consolation in the body of the poem.46 Some of the cradle poems, however, are not carols and some do not contain specific lullaby consolations. The poems discussed in this section include Indices 1847, 361, 3596, 2023, 2024, 364, 1264, 3284.

There is an underlying logical paradox inherent in the given situation presented in all of the poems considered here: that a child in the
cradle would be aware not only of his present but also of his future sufferings, and, indeed, would be able to discuss them with his mother, this, of course, being part of the logical paradox of Christ's human and divine nature. Most of the poems to be considered emphasize the weeping, grieving, or mourning of Christ in anticipation of his suffering. Christ's grieving may be considered an underlying judgmental paradox since, as God, Christ could change or control his suffering (this is also related to the logical paradox of Christ's human and divine natures).

The second of these underlying paradoxes is avoided in one poem, "Ler to louen as i loue þe" (Index 1847). Christ is not portrayed as mourning or grieving; he merely asks man, in the opening stanza, to behold his suffering in the cradle ("Hou sore þei [my limes] quaken for colde") and to love him as he loves man. The basic logical paradox of the Redemption is the paradox brought out in this lyric: that one person can, and must, suffer and atone for the sins of many. Christ's paradoxical mission is mentioned by Mary (who speaks in the remaining four stanzas of the poem):

Cold þe taket, i may wel se.
For loue of man it mot be
þe to suffren wo,
For bet it is þu suffre þis
þan man for-bere heuene blis—
þu most him bizen þer-to.
(XIV, #75, 11. 19-24, p. 91)

The second and third stanzas of the poem are also devoted to the celebration of judgmental paradoxes, those most closely related to the scene which is depicted. Mary bemoans the fact that Jesus's cradle is als a bere and that ox and ass are his fere, and she mourns that Jesus's feet must be warmed by her breast because she has neither clut ne cloth.

(The judgmental paradoxes of the manner of Christ's coming into the world
would have been heightened had the poet referred to Christ not as Ihesu but as the creator, king, sovereign, lord, etc.)

In one of the lullay carols (Index 361) the refrain refers to Christ's langovr: "Modyr, whyt os lyly flowr, / Yowr lullyng lessyth my langovr." In the poem itself, however, Mary's mourning, not Christ's, is the subject (in the final stanza the poet apologizes for his inability to tell the mourning of the maiden in this howr, and insists that we should be merry and glad for our Savior). Two paradoxes associated with the Redemption are brought out in the course of the mourning: that "owr Hevyn Kyng / Shuld shed hys b[lo]d with gret delowr" (stanza four); and that we should be glad for without Christ's death we should be lost (stanza five). While Christ's mourning is minimized in Index 361, it is central to Index 3596, another lullay carol. In fact, Christ's voice is the major voice of this poem. For eight stanzas he recounts the reasons for his weeping. The narrator's voice introduces the poem and interrupts once (stanza three); Mary's voice is present only in the refrain. In this poem, while Christ weeps, Mary's is the voice of reason, reminding Christ of his divine nature, that his father is king of bliss (this title underlining the judgmental paradoxicality of his mourning), and that Christ's role is God's will:

Lullay, my chyld, and wepe no more,  
Slepe and be now styll;  
The kyng of Blys thi Fader ys,  
And it was hys wyll.  
(EEC, #151, refrain, p. 110)

The reasons for Christ's weeping include the judgmental paradoxes of his birth and the Redemption. In stanza three he asks, "In crybbe why am I layd?"; in stanza four he reminds Mary that he was born and laid
before ox and ass even though he had a divine father; and in stanza eight he recounts that he will suffer for deeds he has not done. In stanzas four and five Christ is even made to sound resentful of his role:

I was borne
And layd beforne
   Bestys, both ox and asse;
My mother myld,
I am thi chyld,
   But he my Fader was.

Adams gylt
This mane had spylt;
   That syn grevyt me sore;
Man, for the
Her shal I be
   Thyrty wynter and mor.
(11. 19-30, p. 110)

The judgmental paradox that Christ must suffer on account of other men's sins and through no fault of his own is one of several mentioned in Index 3596. It is central, however, to two poems, "Lullay, lullay litel child, child reste be a prow" (Index 2023) and the carol "Lullay, lullay, litel child, / Thou that were so sterne and wild" (Index 2024). In Index 2023 (Appendix) the judgmental paradox that Christ should be made to suffer and should die for other men's sins is brought out forcefully by a narrative voice, which also sings lullay to the little child. In this poem we are not confronted by the paradox of Christ weeping over the suffering he knows is to come yet could avoid; rather, we are left to imagine that the child is weeping simply because of his uncomfortable natural surroundings. However, the narrator, paradoxically, is aware of the child's role (the narrator is evidently not Mary since he includes himself in the ranks of the sinners for whom Christ will suffer, stanza five).
The poem opens with the expression of Christ's coming into the world in terms of the contraries high and low (1. 2), and with the statement of the judgmental paradox of Christ's humble birth, poor and little, unknown, "as tu were for-sake" (1. 6). The third stanza combines a reflection on this world as a weeping dale with the judgmental paradox that Christ had to suffer poverty and cold at birth as if he were begotten in sin:

Child, it is a weeping dale ṭat ṭu art comen inne, ṭi pore clutes it prouen wel, ṭi bed mad in ṭe binne; Cold & hunger ṭu must ṭolen as ṭu were geten in senn, & after deyzen on ṭe tre for loue of al man-kenne.
(11. 14-16)

The judgmental paradox that Christ had to suffer death on account of other men's guilt is mentioned in the last stanza, but the paradox is heightened in stanza four where the narrator says that Christ suffered not simply for man but for his fo to whom he was bound in love-longing:

Lullai, l[ullay] litel child, it is al for ṭi fo, ṭe harde bond of loue longging ṭat ṭe hat bunden so.
(11. 23-24)

The paradox that Christ must die through no fault of his own but for other men's sins is the central theme of the lullay carol (Index 2024) which is characterized by the refrain: "Lullay, lullay, litel child, / Qui wepest thou so sore?" The body of the lyric is devoted to answering this question. Adam is the speaker, which makes this lullay carol unique (the speakers in all other lullay carols include a narrator, Christ, Mary, and occasionally St. Joseph). The logical paradox of the all-powerful God becoming a simple man is expressed in the first stanza by means of the contraries sterne and wild and meke and mild. Adam then confesses that he knows why Christ is suffering: it is for his [Adam's]
sin, taking the apple from the tree (stanzas two through four). The (judgmentally) paradoxical response of man to God (turning against the creator and then against the Savior, the subject of poems to be considered in section four of this chapter) is alluded to in stanza five:

Mankindde is cause of thi marning,
That thou hast loued so yore.
(EEC, #155, 11. 22-23, p. 115)

Finally, the poet enumerates the paradoxical powers of Christ's passion (what I have elsewhere called the basic logical paradox of the Redemption):

That peine vs make of senne fre;
That peine vs bringge, Jesu, to the;
That peine vs helpe ay to fie
The wikkede fended lore.
(ll. 28-31, p. 115)

Another variation of the poem of mourning or weeping of the Christ Child is that in which Mary becomes a foil for Christ's explanations of his suffering. In the two poems just considered Mary's voice is not present at all. In Index 1847 it was Mary who pointed out the paradoxes of Christ's birth and the effects of his Redemption. In Index 361 Mary's weeping and mourning overshadow that of Christ, and in Index 3596 Mary functions as the voice of reason, reminding Christ that his suffering is the will of the king of bliss (while Christ enumerates the paradoxes of his birth and passion). In the three poems in which Mary becomes a foil, she is presented as understanding neither why Christ is now weeping nor why he must suffer in the future.

The refrain and the first stanza of Index 364 could very well belong to a secular lyric:

Alone, alone, alone, alone; Here I sitt alone, alas! alone.
As I walked me this endurs day
  to be grene wode for to play
& al heyness to put away
  my-self alone.
(XV, #2, refrain and ll. 1-4, pp. 2-3)

But the narrator finds a fair maiden who is later obviously identified as
the Blessed Mother, and a child, who is obviously Christ. A contrast is
set up immediately in the second stanza between the maiden, who is singing
and laughing (1. 7) and the child who is weeping alone (1. 8), and to
whom, evidently, the refrain belongs. In the second stanza the maiden
addresses her son, saying that she has borne him to save mankind that
was forlorn (using contraries to express the nature of his role) and
that therfor (1.11) he should not mourn. In the fourth stanza the son
addresses his mother and, also using contraries (paired by alliteration), he points out the incongruity between his role and man's re-
response to him (the judgmental paradox of the savior rejected by those
he has come to save):

'Moder, me thynkith it is ryzt ill
that men [me] sekyth for to spill.
for them to saue it is my will;
    Therfor I cam hither alone.'
(11. 13-16, p. 3)

Mary again expresses her misunderstanding of the implications of
Christ's role in the final stanza of the poem:

'Sone,' she sayd, 'let it be In þi thought,
for manny's gilt is not with-sought,
for þu art he þat hath all wrought,
  & I þi moder alone.'
(11. 17-20, p. 3)

The interpretation of line eighteen poses a problem since with-sought is
not contained in the O.E.D. Brown glosses it as pursued, persecuted, but
this makes little sense in the line. When this line is combined with line nineteen, however, Mary's overall meaning seems clear: as the creator of all things, you may do what you will. In the tradition of the two other poems which will be considered in which Christ tries to explain to Mary the reasons for his suffering, the reader might expect more argumentation. However, we are left abruptly with the paradox of Christ's human and divine natures presented by the poem as a whole: Christ weeps over what, as Mary reminds us, he has the power to change.

The conflict between the two natures of Christ is made even more plain in a fifteenth-century lullaby carol (Index 1264, Appendix). Again, Mary functions as the foil, her admonitions in an attempt to still Christ merely giving him the opportunity to explain the cause of his weeping. Since Mary's voice is presented only in the refrain, the refrain is essential in the structure of the lyric (which is not the case in the majority of carols). The refrain is essential to the structure and theme of the poem not only because in it Mary urges Christ to be still, but also because in the refrain Mary reminds us of the truth that Christ (as God) may have his will, whatever it is:

'Lullay, lullay, my lityl chyld,
Slepe and be now styll;
If thou be a lyttill chyld,
Yitt may thou haue thi wyll.'
(refrain)

Christ responds, echoing Mary's refrain at the end of each of the four stanzas of the poem. He knows that he may as well sleep and be still and that the pains he suffers are according to his Father's will (note the parallel phrasing, but the important change from thi wyll to my Fader wyll):
Bot well I wate, as well I may
Slepe and be now styll,
Suffre the paynes that I may,
It is my Fader wyll.
(11. 8-12, 21-24, 33-36, 45-48)

The crucial change from thi wyll to my Fader wyll points up the conflict within Christ between his human and divine natures, his human and divine will. Another conflict, that within Christ's human will, is pointed up within each stanza. Each begins with Christ's response to Mary that he is unable to rest and sleep either because of the suffering he is now enduring or because of the suffering he anticipates; however, a change occurs in the last four lines of each stanza when Christ admits that he might as well resign himself to God's will (in the lines quoted above). This change is clearly indicated in three instances out of four by the occurrence of Bot. (For, which occurs in one instance, seems to destroy the contrast being set up between Christ's weak human nature and his moral determination to resign himself to God's will.)

In justification of his weeping, Christ points out the judgmental paradox that he must die for the sake of sinful man (stanza three). He also mentions the lowliness of his birth (stanza one). The judgmental paradox of his birth is expressed especially forcefully in stanza two by the use of contraries:

For he that mad both nyght and day,
Cold, and also hette,
Now layd I am in a wispe of hay;
I can noder go nor crepe.
(11. 5-8)

While night and day and cold and heat are used in circumlocution to indicate everything, their citation also functions here to concretize the power of the creator which is then more effectively contrasted to his
present position (in a mere whisp of hay). The familiar contraries of
day and night are twice used simply as a circumlocution for constantly
in the second stanza of the poem. God's creative might is also con­
trasted in this passage with his immobility as an infant (from mad to
layd he goes from an active to a passive role).

Contraries are also used at the beginning of the first stanza to
express the contrast between Mary's urging and what Christ thinks more
appropriate in view of the circumstances. Here the contrast is especi­
ally prominent since only the last parts of the relevant lines contain
the contraries; the first parts are identical:

'Should I now, thou faire may,
Fall apon a slepe?
Better me thanke that I may
Fall apon and wepe.
(11. 1-4)

In the lyric just considered, the alternation between the voices of
Christ and Mary was effected by means of the refrain, occurring at the
beginning of the poem and before each of the stanzas attributed to Christ.
A late fifteenth-century carol, "That meyden mylde here childe did kepe"
(Index 3284), composed by James Ryman, shows a very similar
structure of alternation. Mary attempts to console the Christ Child by
singing lullay and asking him to sleep and be still (stanzas two and
four); Christ explains the reasons for his weeping (pointing out some of
the paradoxes of the Redemption). As the poem proceeds, however, Mary
ceases her role of consolation and enters into an argument with Christ,
which helps point out paradoxes of the redemptive process. Mary's active
role in argumentation makes this poem clearer than any other cradle poem
in its presentation of the paradoxes associated with the Redemption, and
specifically the judgmental paradox of the weeping Christ (who had all within his power).

Ryman so clearly presents the reasons why Christ does weep and the reasons he should not weep (in the argumentation of Christ and Mary) that it is probable the carol was written, on the model of other cradle poems and carols, primarily to emphasize the paradoxes which are suggested, but not as clearly, in the other poems. The other poems were written for other purposes, as suggested, for example, in the dialogue poem just considered, Index 1264 (which, next to Ryman's carol, contains the clearest presentation of the Redemption paradoxes). In Index 1264 the last stanza contains an appeal to mankind to be true to Christ, who says if mankind were true he would not mind all the suffering he endures. That Ryman was familiar with Index 1264 is suggested by his incorporation of the phrase sleep and be still and by his adoption of the form of alternation of voices. That he was familiar with Index 364 (the dialogue poem with the secular refrain and chanson d'aventure opening which left us abruptly with a paradox) is suggested by his use of alone as the concluding word of each stanza and signal for the refrain (identically used in Index 364).

The poem opens with the voice of the narrator, who recounts that a maiden kept her child who wept "For synfull man alone" (1. 4). In the second stanza Mary asks Christ why he weeps. Christ replies in stanza three with a judgmental paradox, that he shall be slain and suffer death with woeful pain even though he never committed a sin (death and suffering being punishment for sin, according to traditional teaching). Mary asks Christ to stop mourning, pointing out that "alle thyng is
atte thyn own will / In heuen and erthe alone" (stanza four). In stanza five Christ simply repeats that he shall die and for this reason is unable to stop mourning. Mary then asks Christ why he should die since the king of bliss knows he has never done amiss (stanza six). Christ replies (stanza seven) by explaining that he was born to save mankind with his blood (basic logical paradox of the Redemption, specifically, the paradox of the effect of Christ's death).

Mary then points out another judgmental paradox of the Redemption, the wonder that Christ, equal to God, would die for lowly mankind, using the contraries of in trone and so thrall:

'Dere Sonne,' she sayde, 'thou art equall To God, thatt ys in trone; For man, therfore, thatt is so thrall, Why shuldist thou dye alone?'

(EEC, #154, 11. 29-32, p. 115)

Christ does not answer this specifically (stanza nine); he merely explains that he must fulfill his father's will since (paradoxically)
"my Faders will / And myn, they be butte one." The expression "my will is God's will" may familiarly be understood as a statement of one's determination to follow God's will, to make one's will accord with God's will. However, in this lyric, the unity of the two wills also, of course, alludes to the logical paradox of Christ's human and divine natures. Thus in this stanza Christ affirms that he is not only equal to God but is God himself.

In stanza ten Mary asks that "Yff it may be" Christ not forsake her. Christ is then given the opportunity to explain (stanza eleven) that he must pay the ransom for man, who has gone to hell (the [logically] paradoxical effect of Christ's death). Mary objects that if Christ dies
she, and by extension all mankind, will live in care and woe without comfort (stanza twelve). Christ then assures her that, paradoxically, he will rise again on the third day and thereafter be her comfort (stanzas thirteen and fourteen).

Having now examined the use of paradox in the Marian laments, the on-the-cross poems, and the cradle poems (the basic subject of all three genres being the sufferings of Christ and Mary) we may conclude that paradoxes are included in the poems generally for two reasons: to explain or serve as causes for the suffering portrayed, and, at the same time, to arouse sympathy and thankfulness on the part of the audience. The speaker(s) of the poems, for example, often bring up the major or basic (logical) paradox of the Redemption as the reason for Christ's physical suffering: that he suffers in order to free mankind from sin, that his death will bring life. Other (judgmental) paradoxes, associated with the Redemptive process, are also brought out as sources of wonder to Christ and Mary and as reasons for the mental anguish of Mary or of Christ, who anticipates his physical suffering: that Christ, who is all-innocent, must suffer and die (when these punishments are reserved for us as a result of sin or evil), that the creator is turned on by his creatures, that the savior is rejected by those he saves. These paradoxes are often accompanied by others which seem designed especially to arouse wonder at the Redemption: that God became man (and accepted a humble birth, etc.) and that God shed his blood for man. That Christ weeps is viewed as a judgmental paradox in some of the lyrics (in which Mary's voice constantly reminds us of his divine nature); however, in other poems his weeping is accepted as a normal human emotion.
explained by his knowledge of the suffering he must face.

Contraries are used most obviously to define some of the paradoxes included in the lyrics (some paradoxes are expressed without specific contraries). Contraries are also used to highlight the suffering of Christ and Mary (such as the contrast between past joy and present sorrow, and the contrast set up between a human mother and Mary in one of the Marian laments). In some poems two contrary positions are presented in order to advance an argument, or simply give form to an exposition (when one speaker's ignorance or wonder calls forth a response from the other), or to demonstrate two natural responses to a given situation. In some of the on-the-cross poems, for example, Mary takes a sorrowful position and Christ urges her to be joyful (thus portraying emotional and reasonable reactions to the Passion). In some cradle poems, on the other hand, Mary takes a joyful position and Christ takes a sorrowful one, with Mary bringing up Christ's divine nature and Christ demonstrating his human nature.

IV. Christ's Love for Man and Man's Love for Christ

The poems to be considered in this part of the chapter may be divided into three sections: (A) poems whose subject is man's love for Christ; (B) those whose subject is Christ's love for man; and (C) those whose subject is Christ's love and man's love in return. In the first two groups it will be shown that contraries are used to describe the nature of divine love and of man's love for Christ: both kinds of love are shown to be contrary to earthly love, and because they do not correspond to the ordinary notions of love they are shown to be
(judgmentally) paradoxical in nature. There is an underlying paradox in some of these lyrics, those which use the conventions of secular love poetry or the language of passionate love: while divine love and love of Christ are described as contrary to earthly love, they are at the same time described in terms of and in the language of secular love, often in passages echoing the Song of Songs, in the mystical tradition of love-longing for Jesus. (As noted in part one of this chapter, since the Song was consistently interpreted allegorically during the period, secular or passionate elements from it carried not only secular denotations but also strong religious connotations.) Thus in poems discussed in the first two sections contraries and paradox are used for celebrating and defining the love of Christ for man and the love of man for Christ. In poems whose subject is Christ's love for man and man's love in return (considered in the third section) a basic paradox is explored: man's unnatural (paradoxical) response (lack of love) to the love of Christ as evidenced in his passion and death for man. Contraries are used in many instances to point up the unnatural relationship between love and lack of love.

A. Man's Love for Christ

Five poems are included in this section of part four of the chapter: "[L]uf es lyf þat lastes ay, þar it in criste es feste" (Index 2007); "Ihesu, god sone, lord of mageste" (Index 1715); "Ihu, for þe mourne I may" (Index 1700); "I hafe set my hert so hye" (Index 1311); "Ihesu þat hast me dere I-boght" (Index 1761).

One fourteenth-century lyric of the school of Richard Rolle (Index 2007) opens with a seemingly paradoxical statement, qualified by the
adjoining clause: "[L]uf es lyf þat lastes ay, þar it in criste es feste." In the first four stanzas (sixteen lines) of the poem the poet describes this love for Christ. First, he declares the power of this love by its ability to change one thing into its contrary (and, of course, the beneficial nature of the power is indicated by the nature of the change):

For wele ne wa it chaunge may, als wryten has men wyseste.  
þe nyght it tournes in-ti1 day, þì travel in-tyll reste.  
(XIV, #84, 11. 1-2, p. 102)

The lines also indicate that this love has the power to end the alternation of contraries which we experience in this life. Love for Christ is directly compared to a paradox, a fire which nothing may extinguish (1. 6), and it is given paradoxical powers (of joining two contraries) in line twelve: "luf copuls god & manne." (In the tradition of describing spiritual love in terms of human passionate love, the poet uses the word copuls, which, at this time, carried its sexual meaning.50) An implicit contrast is made in this first section of the poem between earthly love and love for Christ when the spiritual love is described in terms which reflect on traditional characterizations of secular love, as when the poet declares that this spiritual love may none deceive (1. 13). The contrast is made explicit in the last line of this section: "I wate na lust it lyke" (1. 16).

After sixteen lines in which the poet addresses Christ, he returns to his definitions (11. 33-60).51 He makes explicit his contrast of spiritual love for Christ with earthly love and joy, comparing earthly joy to hay which "now es fayre & grene and now wytes awaye" (1. 34), and comparing earthly love to the flower in May which lasts only an hour (11.
57-58), in a manner reminiscent of some of the moral lyrics discussed in Chapter Two. Using the same methods as pointed out in part one of this chapter, implicit contrast to traditional conceptions of earthly love, the poet continues to define love for Christ by its power to change one contrary to the other, by its power to unite contraries, and by its power to overcome the alternation of contraries: "be kynd of luv es his, par it es trayst and trew, / To stand styll in stabylnes & chaunge it for na new" (ll. 41-42); "Fra kare it tornes bat kyend & lendes in myrth & glew" (1. 44); "Lufe es with-owten pyne, . . ." (1. 50); ". . . lufe byndes blode & bane" (1. 54); "For me & my lufyng lufe makes bath be ane" (1. 56).

In the last section of the poem (ll. 61-96), the poet describes his own love-longing for Jesus, accompanied by the traditional sorrow for which he gives a novel explanation: "Na wonder gyf I syghand be, & sithen in sorow be sette, / Ihesu was nayled apon be tre & al blody for-bette" (ll. 85-86). Finally, echoing the first lines of the poem, the poet describes Jesus in the same paradoxical terms as he described the love for Jesus: "Ihesu es lufe bat lastes ay, til hym es owre langyng; Ihesu be nyght turnses to be day, be dawyn in-til spring" (ll. 92-93).

The actual longing of the poet to be united with Christ is given a minor place in Index 2007, just considered. In Index 1715, however, the love-longing of the speaker of the poem becomes central. The poem illustrates well the particular use of contraries whereby one thing is defined and celebrated in language traditionally used to describe its contrary. In this poem an explicit contrast is made at the outset
between worldly love and love for Christ, when the poet, praying directly to Jesus, asks: "Reue me lykyng of þis land, my lufe þat þou may be" (1. 3). But the spiritual desire to be united with Christ is described in terms which also apply to physical love-longing. (No allegory is maintained in the poem; the object of the poet's love is made clear at the outset, in the first words "Ihesu, god sone.") Parallels include a love wound (but the poet asks to be wounded, he has not already been wounded, 11. 6, 13), and the sorrowing and languishing of the lover who is not yet united with his loved one. Some lines could be used either in a secular lyric or in a spiritual lyric using the secular conventions:

My sang es in syghyng, whil I dwel in þis way;
My lyfe es in langyng, þat byndes me nyght & day.
(XIV, #83, 11. 21-22, p. 100)

The poet ends the poem with four stanzas describing the passion of Christ (although he makes no connection between the parts as does the author of Index 2007, who says that Christ's passion, rather than the desire for unity, is the cause of his sorrowing). He uses logical paradox to describe the Redemption:

Lyf was slayne & rase agayn, in faire-hede may we fare;
And ded es broght til litel or noght, & kasten in endles kare;
(11. 45-46, p. 101)

The close association between secular and religious poetic conventions is illustrated in two short lyrics. In the first, as in Index 1715, just discussed, there are actually no clear-cut influences from the Song; that is, the secular elements found in the religious poems are paralleled both in the Song (with its long-accepted religious allegory) and in secular courtly poetry. In the following lyric (Index 1700), for
example, the faithful *turtel* mentioned in line two is found both in the *Song* and in secular Middle English poetry. That the love-longing is to be interpreted as in the *Song* (desire for spiritual unity) is indicated clearly in the second stanza; phrases such as *mourn me I may* and *myrbe & pley* recall specific language of secular Middle English poems:

> Trinity College Dublin MS. 155
> 
> Ihu, for *be* mourn *me I may*
> As *turtel* *bat* longe *bope* nyzt & day
> for her loue is gone hyr froo,
> for aftur *be*, lorde, me *longe* *ay*;
> And *bat* is al *myrbe & pley*,
> Where *I sitte* or goo.
>
> *berfore*, lord, *bou* rewe on me
> And *helpe* me *sone*, *bat* I *may see
> *be* feyerhe[d] of *be* face
> With *angelys* *bat* *byn* bryzt & clere
> And *holy soules* *bat* *bou* bouztes dere
> Into *holy place*.
> (XV, #68, pp. 102-03)

(Note too the use of contraries for circumlocution in 11. 2, 6.)

While the turtle and the desire for unity expressed in the above lyric suggest the influence of the *Song* and its exegesis (perhaps through the mystical tradition) the secular elements in the following poem (Index 1311) seem to be derived solely from the courtly tradition:

> MS. Douce 381
> I hafe set *my hert* so hye,
> me likyt no loue *bat* lowere ys;
> And *alle* *be* paynes *bat* I *may drye,
> me *bën* hyt do me good y-wys.
>
> For on *that* lorde *bat* louid vs alle,
> So hertely haue I set *my houzt,*
> *zt* ys *my* Ilove on hym to calle,
> for loue *me* hap in balus browzt.
> Me *bën* yt do [me good] Iwys.
> (XIV, #129, p. 229)

Unlike the other love-longing songs, this poem does not make clear the object of the love until the poem is well under way, the beginning of
the second stanza. In fact, the entire first stanza might just as well appear in a secular lyric; the judgmentally paradoxical convention of the pain of love doing one good is common in the secular lyrics, as noted in Chapter One. The secular conventions may be seen to have a reflective value in this lyric; that is, the secular conventions not only help describe the spiritual love, their application in the religious poem may also suggest the shallowness of their secular use. The reader is caught by surprise to find that the high object of love is not a secular lady, but is Christ, who truly deserves the poet's love and can truly reward suffering with good. The poem is also interesting as a rare example of a love song (or song of praise) to Christ written solely in the courtly convention (with no indication of influence from exegesis of the Song). The scarcity of such songs contrasts markedly to the large number of courtly songs in praise of Mary, some of which were discussed in the first part of this chapter.

The clearest and most extensive use of contraries and paradox to describe and celebrate man's love for Christ occurs in one of the most popular prayers of the period, ten MSS of which are extant, "Ihesu par hast me dere I-boght" (Index 1761). A paradoxical conceit is carried through the first part of the poem, in which the poet asks Christ to write on his heart, as hard as stone, with nail and spear, recounting there the details of his passion. The details are related by means of contraries in order to point up the meekness and the love of Christ: in conjunction with the narration of atrocities the poet recounts Christ's sweet and lovely looks and unhateful attitude toward his foes. The relation of the love and suffering of Christ leads the narrator to a
reflection on the love he owes to Christ (l. 76) and finally to an extended description (11. 91-124) of what the love for Christ is like.

The narrator begins his description by asking Christ to make him glad to be "Sympil & pouer for loue of he" (l. 92), a judgmental paradox in the eyes of the world. Using language of the Song, the poet asks Jesus, the husband of his soul, to teach his soul (the wife) to love Jesus best. He then explicitly contrasts the love for Christ to other bliss and joy:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{For oper blesse & oper beaute} \\
\text{Be hit foule & sorow to see;} \\
\text{For oper ioy & oper blisse} \\
\text{Woo & sorow for-soth hit is,} \\
\text{\ldots \ldots \ldots \ldots \ldots \ldots} \\
\end{align*}
\]

(XIV, #91, 11. 99-102, p. 117)

Paradoxically, other bliss and beauty is foul and sorrow, and other joy and bliss is in reality woe and sorrow.

Love for Christ makes sorrow joyful and the wound of love is a remedy:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{[Ihesu] let me fele what ioy hit be} \\
\text{To suffyre wo for loue of he,} \\
\text{how myry hit is for to wepe,} \\
\text{how softe in hard clohes to slepe.} \\
\text{lat now loue his bow bende} \\
\text{& loue arowes to my hert send,} \\
\text{bat hit now percen to he roote,} \\
\text{For suche woundes shold be my bote.} \\
\end{align*}
\]

(11. 115-12, p. 118)

The power of the love for Christ is thus described as transforming one contrary into the other; this is made even clearer in the formula "X is Y" used in the following stanza:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{When I am loue for by loue} \\
\text{bat am I moste at myn aboue,} \\
\text{Fastynge is feest, murnynge is blis,} \\
\text{For by loue pouert is richesse.} \\
\text{be hard here shold be more of pris}
\end{align*}
\]
The poet summarizes the effects of his love for Christ, which to the world are paradoxical:54

When I am with whom I be-stadde
For by loue I am I glad;
To suffre scornys & grete despite
For loue of he is my de lite.
(ll. 121-24, p. 118)

B. Christ's Love for Man

Christ's love for man, like man's love for Christ, is described in several lyrics by means of contraries and paradox. Such lyrics, included in this section of the fourth part of the chapter, include "Al oper loue is lych þe mone" (Index 196); "A mayde cristes me bit yorne" (Index 66, "The Love-Rune")5 "Crist makib to man a fair present" (Index 611); "Trewloue trewe, on you I tru ste" (Index 3805); "M1 loue is falle vp-on a may" (Index 2260).

In the first stanza of a twenty-eight-line poem, Index 196, the love that rests in heaven's king (Christ's love, as made clear in the third stanza) is described by contrast to al oper loue:

Al oper loue is lych þe mone
þat wext and wanet as flour in plein,
as flour þat fayret and fawyt sone,
as day þat scwet and endt in rein.

Al oper loue bigint bi blissee,
in wep and wo mak is hendying:
no loue þer nis þat oure halle lysse,
[bot] wat areste in evene kyng,
· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·
(XIV, #49, 11. 1-8, p. 65)

Christ's love is described, indirectly, as containing no alternation of
contraries (movement from joy to sorrow as in the transitory universe) since it is described as contrary to all other love which does wax and wane, bloom and fade, etc. Continuing the comparison to flowers and to the moon, the poet describes Christ's love directly in the first two lines of the third stanza. He concludes the stanza with a direct statement of the lack of contraries and alternation in Christ's love, saying that it is endless and a-ring (continuous):

\[
\text{Wos loue ys . . . & euer grene,} \\
\text{and eure ful wyth-oute wanyng;} \\
\text{is loue suetyth wyth-oute tene,} \\
\text{is loue is hendles and a-ring.} \\
\text{(11. 9-12, p. 65)}
\]

In other words, Christ's love is paradoxical in terms of the human experience of love. The poem illustrates the contrasting of two contraries (earthly love, Christ's love) in order to celebrate one of the contraries as a choice over the other. In this case, the two contraries are described in terms of a third reference, flowers and the moon, which illustrate the alternation of contraries in the transitory universe.

Contraries have three major functions in a popular devotional prayer of the period, the thirteenth-century "A mayde cristes me bit yorne" (Index 66), commonly called "Friar Thomas of Hales' Love Rune." As the first stanza of the poem tells us, it was written to instruct a nun in taking a true lefmon (Christ). The following ten stanzas (11. 9-88) describe his worldes luue, and the lovers of the world, immediately characterized by the poet as bute o res (only a fit of distraction). Unlike the author of Index 196, just discussed, Friar Thomas does not then describe Christ's love in parallel but contrasting terms; rather, the contrast with Christ's love is to be understood in the poem, implicit
in the description of earthly love. Thus one contrary is described in order to encourage its rejection and a choice of its contrary. (A parallel use of contraries was noted in the moral lyrics in which detailed descriptions of the transitoriness of this world are made with no explicit contrast drawn between this world and the next even though the obvious purpose of the lyric is to urge a choice of the next life over this one.)

A second, and likewise familiar, use of contraries occurs in the poet's description of earthly love and earthly lovers. The poet makes use of the topoi noted in the moral lyrics: thanes glide away like the wind, they fade away like the meadow grass, even rich men experience sudden changes of fortune, the world is like a shadow (stanzas two through four). The poet summarizes these ideas in stanza five, using contraries to express transitoriness and changes of fortune:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{his world fare} & \text{ hwilynde—} \\
\text{hwenne on cume} & \text{ an-} \text{o} \text{per go} \text{p;} \\
\text{pat wes bi} \text{-} \text{fore } & \text{nv is bi} \text{hynde,} \\
\text{pat er was leof } & \text{nv hit is lop.} \\
\text{For} & \text{p\ he do} \text{p as } \text{be blynde} \\
\text{pat in } & \text{his world his luue do} \text{p;} \\
\text{Ye mowen iseo } & \text{be world aswynde—} \\
\text{pat wouh gob for} & \text{p, abak } \text{pat sop.} \\
\end{align*}
\]

(In the last line of this stanza the poet uses contraries in a different way in describing the nature of this world: they indicate the reverse of a natural or good order in which truth advances.) The poet again uses the alternation of contraries to describe the nature of the human lover:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Monnes luue nys buten o stunde:} \\
\text{nv he luue} & \text{b, nv he is sad,} \\
\text{Nu he cume} & \text{b, nv wile he funde,} \\
\text{nv he is wro} & \text{b, nv he is gled.} \\
\text{His luue is her } & \text{\& ek a-lunde,} \\
\text{nv he luue} & \text{b sum } \text{pat he er bed;} \\
\end{align*}
\]
At the end of the stanza, Friar Thomas states that even a man is powerful as King Henry loses his pride, but he offers to tell the maid of Christ about the one true king. It is in this section of the poem (ll. 89-144) that we find the third use of contraries: one contrary (the true king) is described in terms generally applied to the other (earthly king). In this case, the true king is described as outdoing his counterpart. First, the poet declares that if the maid will become this king’s leouemon, he will give her clothes such as no other king or kaiser has (probably representing grace). Second, the true king will give her a bolde (dwelling) fairer than that wrought by Solomon of gold and precious stones (probably heaven). The bolde is described as outdoing a feudal castle:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Hit stont vpon a treowe mote} \\
\text{þar hit neuer *truke ne schaie;} \quad \text{(fail)} \\
\text{Ne may no *Mynur hire *vnderwrote} \quad \text{(miner, burrow under)} \\
\text{ne neuer false þene grundwal.} \\
\end{align*}
\]

Furthermore, the poet declares that in this bolde there is no false friendship, none lose their rights, and there is no hate, wrath, or pride. These details not only describe the ideal nature of the dwelling of the true king, they also indicate what the poet considers the weaknesses of the earthly kingdom.

The last section of the "Love Rune" advises the maiden about the gemstone (virginity) with which she has been entrusted, declaring at one point that the stone is full of fyn amur. But at the end of the poem the
The poet makes clear his purpose in describing the two contraries of earthly love and Christ's love:

Ne doþ he, mayde, on vuere dede,
bat maye choos of two bat one,
& he wile wiþvte neode
take þet wurse, þe betere let gon?
(11. 189-92, p. 74)

Christ's love for man is described in an unusual way in another fourteenth-century poem, "Crist makþ to man a faireshent" (Index 611, Appendix). Contraries are not used in the familiar way, demonstrated in the "Love Rune." Rather, in order to describe Christ's love the poet has invented a logically paradoxical conceit, expressed in contraries: love has become wrath. The terrible effects of love become the subject of the poem. Christ's bloody body has been kindled with love, love has torn the lovely hands, stretched the arms, bared the breast, and bent the body (stanzas one and two). The poet refuses to see any good results of Christ's love: "for wrong hþ wonne & rizt is schent" (1. 10). Everything is upside down. This idea is continued in the third stanza where the poet declares that, paradoxically, love has slain the lord of love:

þi myke boones loue hþ to-drawe,
þe naylis þi feet han al to-gnawe;
þe lord of loue loue hþ now slawe--
Whane loue is strong it hþ no lawe.
(11. 11-14)

Having shown the terrible effects love has wrought on Christ's body, hands, arms, breast, bones, and feet, the poet focuses attention on Christ's heart, "clefte for treuþe of loue," whose blood then fed our souls (stanza five and six). Stanza four, which interrupts the catalogue of love's effects on Christ's body, is obviously not a part of the
original poem (though it occurs also in the two other MSS). It mentions Christ's rent heart (the subject of the following two stanzas) and his bent body (the same description occurring in line nine of this poem), and in this sense the stanza corresponds with ideas expressed throughout the poem. However, the last two lines totally contradict the conceit being developed in the poem as a whole (that love has become wrath, that love's effects are evil): "Wrong is went, / þe deuel is schent, / Crist, þurz þe myzt of þee" (ll. 17-18). Note the direct contradiction between wrong is went (l. 17) and wrong haf wonne in line ten. Furthermore, the rhyme scheme of the stanza does not correspond to that of the rest of the poem; in fact, the stanza seems to be lifted intact from a poem previously considered, Index 3691, which contains the refrain, "Lu[u]eli ter of louéi eyze, qui dostu me so wo?"57

A new conceit is introduced in stanza seven, after the description of the rending of Christ's heart: that love is now homeless since Christ's heart was its home, and now Christ is dead. The stanza closes with an apostrophe to love in which the poet complains of what love has brought about: "Loue, loue, whi dostou so? / Loue, þou brekist myn herte a-two" (ll. 31-32). Then the poet returns (in stanza eight) to his complaint on the ill effects of love:

```
Loue hæp scewish his greet myzt,
For loue hæp maad of day þe nyzt;
For loue hæp slawe þe kyng of ryzt,
And loue hæp endid þe strong fízt.
```

(ll. 33-36)

The two central lines of the stanza express clearly the basic theme of the poem, that everything is upside down, that love has become wrath, that love has slain the king of love, that wrong has won and right is
vanquished. Line thirty-four is especially interesting as a reversal of the common day and night contraries traditionally associated with Christ and with heaven (day without night). In fact, in Index 2007, the first poem considered in the first section of this part of the chapter, traditional wording is included at the conclusion of the poem: "Ihesu þe nyght turnes to þe day" (l. 94). The traditional idea and wording were evidently so strongly rooted in the minds of the preservers of this lyric that in the other two MSS of this poem the wording has been changed (destroying, of course, the basic conceit of this poem). The other MSS record that love has made day of the night.\textsuperscript{58}

The poem ends with the paradoxical convention from secular love poetry of the exchange of hearts, succinctly expressed with the rhetorical device of antithemabolé: "Loue makip, crist þin herte myn, / So makip loue myn herte þin" (ll. 41-42). The use of the language and situations of human passionate love in poems about Christ's love for man will be considered in the group of poems which will be discussed at the conclusion of this part of the chapter, the poems which are about both Christ's love for man and man's love of Christ in return. However, two poems must be mentioned here which (some have thought) utilize the conventions of secular courtly love poetry to express Christ's love for man. One incorporates the convention of the exchange of hearts, "Trewlove trewe, on you I trust" (Index 3805, Appendix), and also incorporates a line from a clearly secular lyric: "haue alle myne herte & beon yn pees" (l. 9; compare to the refrain line of Index 1120, Appendix, a complaint of a jilted lover). The preserver of the lyric interpreted it as expressing the love of Christ for man, as evidenced by the Latin
line which he makes its heading in the MS: "Querimonia XI languentis pro amore." There are no hints within the poem, however, to indicate that it is not entirely secular (as is the case in some courtly songs which have been interpreted as poems in praise of the Blessed Mother, considered in the first part of this chapter).

But in this poem I find lines which seem totally incongruous if the speaker of the poem is supposed to be Christ, especially the following: "Wolde god ye wyste as wele as I" (1. 12), and the concluding lines of the poem, "Therefore, I morne ryght ofte I-wys, / & so doeth oher loveris mo" (ll. 31-32). It seems to me that either the author of this poem has attempted to write about the love of Christ in the language and conventions of courtly love poetry and has failed to put the conventions to any reflective use (even including lines which are totally incongruous if the speaker is intended to be Christ), or the preserver of the lyric has unsuccessfully attempted, simply by the addition of a Latin heading, to convert a secular courtly lyric to a religious one.

The close association of religious and secular poetic conventions is demonstrated in the following lyric (Index 2260) which Brown has interpreted as a poem about Christ's love for man in the courtly idiom. However, I find no reason why this poem should not be considered a secular love lyric:

Advocates Lib. 18. 7. 21
Mi loue is falle vp-on a may,
For loue of hire i defende þis day.
Loue *aunterus no man for-saket, (adventurous)
It woundet sore wan it him taket;
Loue anterus may hauen no reste,
Quare thouth is newe þer loue is faste;
Loue anterus with wo is bouth,
þer loue is trewe it flittetz nouth.

(XIV, #73, p. 90)
C. Christ's Love for Man and Man's Response

In this last section of part four of the chapter, several poems are considered whose subject is the judgmental paradox that Christ has shown his love for man by giving his life, but man responds with lack of love. Complaints of Christ or dialogues between man and Christ point out man's unkindness in his lack of love: "Vndo þi dore, my spuse dere" (Index 3825); "O man vnkynde / hafe in mynde" (Index 2504); "Vnkinde man, take hede of mee!" (Index 3827); "Man, þus on rode I hyng for þe" (Index 2080); "Late as I wente one myne pleynge" (Index 1841); "Beholde me, I pray þe, with all thyne hole reson" (Index 497). One meditation and prayer of penitence is considered on the same theme, "A Ihesu, þi sweetnes wha may it se" (Index 1781). Finally, four complaints of Christ are analyzed which, by various means, point out especially clearly and often forcefully the contraries of Christ's love and man's lack of love in response: two Middle English translations of the "Improperia" (Indices 2240, 2241); "Ihesus doþ him bymene" (Index 1699); and "In the vaile of restles mynd" (Index 1463).

The conventions of courtly secular love poetry are put to little, if any, use in the poems we have considered about the love of Christ for man (with the possible exceptions of Indices 3805 and 2260). However, in the third group of lyrics to be considered in this part of the chapter, those whose subject is Christ's love and man's response to it, the love-longing situation from the Song and the language of the Song are often used to express Christ's love for man or man's for Christ. In the opening lines of one fourteenth-century complaint of Christ, Index 3825, for example, Christ's words echo those of the bridegroom in the Song:
Vndo þi dore, my spuse dere,
Allas! wy stond i loken out here?
fre am i þi make
(XIV, #68, 1l. 1-3, p. 86)

These words introduce the judgmental paradox which is central to this poem, and to all the poems in this last group of the chapter: Christ has given his love to man (which is conveyed in the lyrics either by the portrayal of Christ as the husband of the soul or by a portrayal of his passion on the cross) and yet man does not respond with love as he should. In his response man acts unnaturally, is unkind as the lyricists say. The contraries of love and lack of love, or of giving and not giving, are explicitly and forcefully expressed in many ways in some poems. In another large group of lyrics, however, the contraries are merely suggested by references to unkindness on man's part and by descriptions of Christ's love as expressed in his passion. Index 3825, for example, which opens with words from the Song spoken by Christ (quoted above), continues with Christ's description of his bloody body. The second part of the poem is composed of the words of man, confessing that he has been unkind, or unnatural, in response to Christ: "Min herte i þerlede zef i wer kende, / þi suete loue to hauen in mende" (11. 19-20). (The two piercings, one in Christ's passion and the other in entrance of Christ's love into the heart of man, are commonly represented in poems whose subject is Christ's love and man's response.)

A fifteenth-century poem (Index 2504) also represents Christ's love and man's response by means of two speakers. In this case Christ specifically accuses man of unkindness in response to his love:
O man vnkynde / hafe in mynde
    My paynes smert!
Beholde & see, / but is for be
    Percyd, my hert.

(XV, #108, ll. 1-4, p. 168)

But the most common representation of Christ's accusation against man is
in English versions of the "Homo vide quid pro te patior," seven Latin
lines written in the thirteenth century by a Parisian Chancellor,
Philippe de Grève. The following fifteenth-century version (Index 3827)
clearly contrasts man's unkindness (represented by his sinfulness) with
the love of Christ, manifested in his suffering and death (on account of
our sins); but one point of the poem is the additional judgmental paradox
that Christ suffers more for man's unkindness than he does for his
physical pains:

    Harley MS. 4012 (written as prose)
    Vnkinde man, take hede of mee!
    Loke, what payne I suffer for the.
    sinfull man, to the I crie,
    only for the I die.
    beholde, the bloode of my handis downe renneth,
    not for my gilte but for youre sinnes,
    fote and hande with nailes so ben faste,
    that sinoes and vaines alto-berste.
    The blood of myne hert rote,
    Loke, how hit stremyth downe by my fote.
    Ouer all theeis paines but I suffer so sore,
    With myne herte hit greuith me more,
    but I vnkindnes finde in the
    bat for thi loue hangid vpon a tree.

(XV, #104, p. 158, italics added)65

Christ is portrayed as incredulous about man's lack of love or un-
kindness to him in several poems. In the fourteenth-century Index 2080,
for example, Christ wonders why man has not given love in response to
the love he showed in his passion:
The love of Christ for man involves more than his passion, as another poem makes clear (Index 1841). In this one hundred and twelve-line poem an incredulous Christ recounts all the favors he has bestowed on man, including not only his suffering for man's sins, but also his very creation of man, the creation of the stars, moon, and planets for man's plesaunce, his ordination of penance to release man from sin, and his giving of mercy. Christ's total love for man is emphasized in the last line of every stanza with the refrain (echoing line twelve of the poem just quoted): "Quid ultra debui facere" (What more ought I to do?).

The question of the refrain line emphasizes the paradox of man's lack of love in return. This is also emphasized by questions which recur in the text of the poem, characterizing man as Christ's foe, or, at the least, as unkind to Christ: "Why art þu, mane, vnkynde to me?" (1. 6); "I haue not trespasid, why art þu me foe?" (1. 105; see also 11. 20, 94, 100).

In another complaint of Christ, "Beholde me, I pray þe, with all thyne hole reson," (Index 497), the refrain line of Index 1841 is echoed: "What myght I suffer more / þen I haue sufferde, man, for þe" (11. 25-26). This poem is particularly interesting since in it Christ
addresses man as if man were his beloved (although he calls him *Dere brother* in one instance). Man's sin is not mentioned in the poem (although his soul is mentioned, 1. 3); rather, an emphasis is placed on Christ's suffering for the love of man. Christ accuses man of treating him unkindly (1. 5), he asks that man give him his heart as a reward (1, 29), and in one line he echoes the words of the bridegroom of the *Song*: "I loue þe, þenne loue me. Why slepist þu, awake!" (1. 11). The refrain of the poem illustrates an especially artful use of the word *araide*:

```
Wofully araide,
My blode, man, ffor the ran,
hit may not be naide,
My body blo and wannae,
Wofully araide.
```

(XV, #103, refrain, p. 56)

_Araide_ may refer to Christ's position, condition, even dress; it may be used, ironically, referring to the _dressing_ (thrashing, drubbing, de-filement, disfigurement) experienced by Christ (and catalogued in the poem); and it may refer to the plight, trouble, or affliction experienced by Christ. In this last sense the word often referred to a love plight or affliction during the Middle Ages and is thus especially appropriate in the poem, considering the emphasis on Christ's love for man, represented in somewhat secular terms.

Man's paradoxical response to Christ's love is the subject of types of poems other than complaints of Christ. It is the subject, for example, of a fourteenth-century prayer of love and penitence, "A Ihesu, þi swetnes wha may it se" (Index 1781). In the first part of the poem (stanzas one through seven) the narrator asks Christ to teach him to
have longing after Christ's love (contrasting this longing with the bitter lust of earth, 11. 2-3). Using language in the tradition of mystical poetry (ultimately derived from the Song), the poet describes Christ as both God and spouse (1. 43) and as king of love (1. 12), and he confesses that he owes Christ love: "Wele agh特 me, wryche, to luf him dere" (1. 44). The poet celebrates the love Christ has shown him by describing the Passion, in the second part of the poem (stanzas eight through twelve), using the convention, noted earlier, of the two piercings (Christ's heart and the poet's heart). In this section the poet also describes Christ in secular terms, in this instance as a knight in battle, desiring "Trewluf for his trauail" (1. 88). The recounting of Christ's suffering and love leads the poet to a conclusion about his natural debt to Christ:

\[
\text{Bot luf him lely I suld þarfore,} \\
\text{And wirk his will with wordes ryght,} \\
\text{þat he lered with lufly lare.} \\
\text{His lufly lare with hert full fyll} \\
\text{Wele agh特 me wirk if I war kynde,} \\
\text{Night & day to do his will} \\
\text{And euermare haue him in mynde;} \\
\text{(XIV, #48, 11. 94-100, p. 64)}
\]

(Note the use of contraries for circumlocution in the above lines; the contraries of thrall and free and of life and death are also used in the poem, to describe the effects of Christ's love in the Redemption.)

The paradoxicality of man's response to Christ's love is somewhat weakened in this poem by the conclusion, which explains why the poet responds unkindly: gasty faes and frele flesch make the poet blynd. (Because of his human frailty the poet concludes the poem with an appeal to Christ's mercy.) The judgmental paradoxicality of man's response to
Christ's love is heightened, however, in three poems, which do more than simply state the fact of man's unkindness in response to the love Christ has demonstrated. The paradox is brought out in these poems by means of contraries, direct juxtapositions of instances or examples of Christ's love and man's response.

While most of the poems we have considered in this section of the chapter illustrate Christ's love by describing his passion, English versions of the liturgical responsorium for the fourth Sunday of Lent, "Popule meus quid feci tibi" (called the "Improperia" or "Reproaches"), illustrate his love by examples of his kindness to Israel; man's response of lack of love is illustrated by his treatment of Christ at the Crucifixion. An incredulous Christ is the speaker of the poem; and he asks the question which has appeared in so many of the other lyrics which treat the same subject, worded as follows in one version, from a fourteenth-century commonplace book (Index 2240):

Mi folk, nou ansuere me,
an sey wat is my gilth;
wat mitht i mor ha don for þe,
þat i ne haue fulfilth?
(XIV, #72, 11. 1-4, p. 88)

In this particular Middle English version, Christ then catalogues his kindnesses to man (as related in the stories of the Old Testament) in the first two lines of each of the following four-line stanzas; and in the second two lines he recounts one of man's unkind responses (an element of the Crucifixion). While this pattern is not maintained so precisely in the English version by William Herebert (which contains two, three, and even four-line stanzas, not all of which are bipartite), the Herebert version (Index 2241, Appendix) maintains more parallelism
between God's actions and man's response. This may be demonstrated by a comparison of the second stanzas of the two versions of the poem:

Herebert
Vor vrom eygpte ich ladde þe þou me ledest to rode troe. My volk, what habbe y do þe, &c. (ll. 4-6, italics added)

Other
Out of Egipte i broughte þe þer þu wer in þi wo; & wikkedliche þu nome me, als i hadde ben þi fo. (XIV, #72, 11, 5-8, p. 89)

Parallelism is maintained in the Herebert version when the speaker says he led the people with a beam of cloud, and they led him to Pilate (stanza eight), he gave them water from a stone and they gave him gall to drink (stanza ten), he smote the kings of Canaan for them and they beat him with rods (stanza eleven), he gave them the crown of a kingdom and they crowned him with thorns (stanza thirteen). The contrast is understated in the final stanza of the poem:

Ich muchel worshype doede to þe; And þou me hongest on rode troe. My volk, &c. (ll. 33-34)

The paradox of man's response is given emphasis in the Herebert poem not only by the parallelism which is maintained, and by the occurrence of the familiar question, "What more shulde ich hauen y-don / þat þou ne hauest nouth under-uon?" (ll. 11-12), but also by the refrain, whose repetition is indicated after every stanza:

My volk, what habbe y do þe Øber in what þyng toened þe? Gyn nouþe and onswere þou me. (ll. 1-3 and refrain)

In "Ihesus dop him bymeene" (Index 1699, Appendix) Christ's love is illustrated by examples of his passion, and man's response is illustrated by examples of his attachment to the vanities of this world.67 This is explicitly pointed out by Christ, the speaker of the poem, in one stanza
which contrasts man's positioned arms in a dance with Christ's outstretched arms on the cross:

A-cros þou berest þyn armes,
when þou dancest narewe;
To me hastou non awe,
but to worldes glorie:
Myne for þe on rode,
whip þe iewe wode,
whip grete ropis to-draw.
(11. 11-17)

Stanza one contrasts man's garland of green with Christ's garland of sharp thorns; stanza two contrasts man's gloved hands, white and clean, with Christ's pierced hands (and feet); and stanza five contrasts man's side slit long and wide ("for ueyn glorie & pride") and his long knife (references to the fashion of the times) with Christ's scourged body and side, pierced to the heart. The poem ends with Christ's reminder that he suffered pains for love of man and that he only asks for love in return.

The juxtaposition of the contraries of Christ's love and man's response functions in the last poems to be considered not only to concretize the judgmental paradox of man's response to Christ, but also to emphasize Christ's faithfulness as a lover of man. Christ is characterized as a lover, the bridegroom of the Song, in Index 1463, Appendix, "In the vaile of restles mynde," one of the several poems of the period which makes use of the language and imagery of the Song, most notably in the refrain, "Quia amore langueo." The poem begins with an unusual (allegorical) variation on the chanson d'aventure opening:

In the vaile of restles mynde
I soughtet in mownteyn & in mede,
trustynge a trelofe for to fynde:

(11. 1-3)
The narrator recounts in stanza two that he finds a wounded man sitting under a tree (the cross?) who is bleeding his heart's blood. The man appears to be a king. When the narrator asks the cause of his pain, he replies, "Quia amore langueo." Christ speaks for the remainder of the poem (stanzas three through sixteen) sometimes addressing the narrator, sometimes his beloved directly. Allegory is not consistently maintained in the poem, however, since the king (Christ) immediately identifies the cause of his love-longing as my sistur, mannys soule (1. 18).

The third stanza of the poem describes God's love for man allegorically, mentioning first God's love in becoming man, then his love in giving man his original state of grace which merited heaven, then his love in saving man, after the fall, by means of his passion and death. With the fourth stanza begins the interesting use of contraries in the poem. Christ recounts his kindness to man's soul and man's hatred in return, represented by man's actions to Christ in the crucifixion. (Man's disregard for Christ is represented by man's crucifixion of Christ in two senses: The actual crucifixion demonstrated that particular men rejected Christ; according to traditional teaching, however, Christ suffered not simply because of the actions of a few men, those who actually crucified him, but because of the sinfulness of all men, past, present, and future. Christ is therefore crucified by all men.)

Contrary actions are introduced in stanza four, but are more clearly juxtaposed in stanza five, where a clear pattern of contraries is repeated in the first four lines (I [verb] her [X]; she [verb understood] me [X's contrary]):
My faire love and my spouse bryght,
    I saue hyr fro betynge / and she hath me bett;
I clothed hyr in grace and heuenly lyght,
    this blody surcote she hath on me sett;
for langyng love, I will not lett,
    sweete strokys be thes, loo;
I haf loued euer als I hett,
    Quia amore langueuo.

I crownyd hyr with blysse / and she me with thorne,
    I led hyr to chambre / and she me to dye;
I browght hyr to worship / and she me to skorne,
    I dyd hyr reuerence / and she me velanye.
to love that loueth / is no maistrye,
    hyr hate made neuer my love hyr foo;
aks than no moo questions whye,
    but Quia amore langueuo.

(11. 26-40)

(The oxymoron swete strokys [1. 30] seems to refer to the pains of languishing in love and thus to the paradox of simultaneous joy and suffering in love. The strokys could even refer to the beatings given by the beloved, representing the scourging before the crucifixion, which are sweet because they are suffered for the sake of love.)

In stanzas six and seven the narrator continues his practice of merely alluding to his passion (the most specific reference to this point is to the crowning of thorns). The piercing of Christ's hands is alluded to in stanza six, figuratively, and this is contrasted with Christ's use of his hands to woo and fight for man's soul:

Loke vnto myn handys, man!
    thes gloues were geuen me / when I hyr sowght;
they be nat white / but rede and wan,
    embrodred with blode / my spouse them bowght;
they wyll not of / I lefe them nowght,
    I wowe hyr / with them / where euer she goo;
thes handes fyll frendly for hyr fowght,
    Quia amore langueuo.

(11. 41-48)

The parallelism between man's actions and Christ's is not as clear in
stanza seven. Christ recounts that his love shod him, buckled his feet with nails, while he has opened all his members to her, giving his body as her hertys baite.

Christ's faithfulness is clearly contrasted with the fickleness of his spouse in stanza nine:

I will abide / till she be redy,
    I will to hyr send / or she sey nay;
If she be rechelesse / I will be redy,
    If she be dawngerouse / I will hyr pray.
    If she do wepe / than byd I nay;

(11. 65-69)

In stanza ten the fickleness of the spouse is expressed by means of contraries: "now rynne she awayward, now cummyth she narre" (l. 75). And the faithfulness (protectiveness) of Christ is also expressed by contraries, the unusual nature of Christ's actions highlighted by a contrast to the actions of an ordinary hunter with his prey: "sum waite ther pray, to make hyr fle, / I rynne to fore to chastise hyr foo" (11. 77-78).

Stanzas twelve and thirteen allude to the judgmental paradoxicality of man's disregard for Christ. In stanza thirteen Christ mourns, if only his spouse would look out of her house of fleshly affections and uncleanness through the windows of kyndnesse (l. 103). In stanza twelve, Christ specifically accuses the spouse of vnkyndnes, indicating his bewilderment in a variation of the familiar question, "What more can I do?":

yf thow be fowle / I shall make [thee] clene,
    if thow be seke, I shall the hele;
yf thow owght morne / I shall be-mene,
    spouse, why will thow owght with me dele?
    thow fowndyst neuer / love so lele;
    what wilt thow, sowle / that I shall do?
I may / of vnkyndnes the appelle,
    Quia amore langueo

(11. 89-96)
(Note the use in the first three lines of the stanza of contraries to describe the power of Christ: he can effect a change from one contrary to the other.) The poem closes with a somewhat surprising consolation for the suffering experienced in this life, the judgmentally paradoxical consolation that Christ reigns more abundantly in tribulation than in disport. Christ, using contraries for circumlocution, assures man's soul of his continued faithfulness (the major theme of the poem) and promises a reward if man's soul returns his faithfulness.

One obvious instance of contraries in the poem is, of course, the use of the sensual language and love-longing situation from the Song to describe Christ's love for man's soul (this being part of the traditional allegory assigned to the sensual poem of the Old Testament). It seems somewhat incongruous to express spiritual love in the passionate language of human physical love; but the incongruity is heightened, I think, when the allegory is not maintained, that is, when Christ speaks allegorically as the bridegroom and, in the same poem (or even the same stanza) as the human Christ (God). In one stanza, for example, Christ speaks in these two persons, and also in the person of the bride of the Song (or perhaps of a human mother):

My spouse is in chambre, hald zowre pease!  
make no noyse / but lat hyr slepe;  
my babe shall sofre noo disease,  
I may not here my dere childe wepe.  
for with my pappe I shall hyr kepe;  
no wondyr / though I tend hyr to,  
thys hoole in m y side had neuer ben so depe,  
but Quia amore langueo.  
(11. 113-120)

This "Quia amore langueo" poem, then, of the poems which comprise the third group of lyrics considered in this last part of the chapter,
makes the most extensive use of contraries to express the incongruity between Christ's love and man's response to it, the paradox of man's response, his unkindness. Like the poems of the two groups analyzed in the first two sections of the chapter, it also makes use of contraries to describe or celebrate the nature of Christ's love for man and man's love for Christ, not by contrasting Christ to a human lover (as in Index 196) or by describing the contraries in earthly love (as in Index 66), but by expressing the divine love and man's response in terms of human, passionate love (in the language of the Song).

Reviewing the functions of contraries and paradox in the lyrics included in this chapter as a whole, we find that they are parallel to those discovered in the secular and moral lyrics. First, contraries and paradox are used to define or celebrate the nature of something in its power or effect. In one poem considered in this last part of the chapter, for example, love for Christ is described as changing night into day and as coupling God and man (Index 2007). Love for Christ is said to bring about judgmental paradoxes in Index 1761: to the lover, other bliss is sorrow, fasting is feast, it is a joy to be simple and poor (in some instances in this poem the judgmentally paradoxical effect of love for Christ is expressed as logical paradox, "X is Y"). In poems analyzed in the second part of the chapter, the effects of the Redemption are defined in terms of contraries: the devil is forsake and God is made man's make (Index 29); those who were thrall are now free (Index 3283); man's pain is turned to play and his bale to bliss (Index 21). The effect of Mary's grace is defined in similar and, in one instance, identical contraries in some poems considered in the first part of the chapter: she
unbinds bonds (Index 1054), brings rest to the weary (Index 2645), brings man from hell to paradise (Index 631), and makes thrall free (Index 2359).

Contraries and paradox are used to define or celebrate the nature of a third thing, which may itself be a paradox. In poems which praise Mary, for example, her virginity and motherhood are almost invariably cited as proof of her uniqueness and worthiness of praise, as is her paradoxical relationship to Christ: mother, daughter, and sister simultaneously (Indices 1232, 1034.5, 1077, 3700). Paradoxes are catalogued to praise another paradox (which serves as the subject of the poem) in some of the poems analyzed in the second part of this chapter, such as the songs in honor of the Incarnation. These poems commonly cite the judgmental paradox of the humble birth of the creator of all things (the king-in-a-stall paradox) and the logical paradox of the continued virginity of Mary (Indices 3619, 3659). Logical paradox clearly defines the Incarnation in Index 542, "Blodles & bonles, blod has nou bon." Contraries in judgmentally paradoxical relationship function to define a paradox which is the subject of the poem in the many lyrics about the Eucharist, also discussed in part two of the chapter (it is red but seems white).

In some poems about the suffering of Christ and Mary, paradoxes such as the necessity of the suffering of the innocent, the teaching that one can atone for the sins of many (often expressed by obvious contraries) are ostensibly cited as reasons for the suffering; actually, they function to celebrate the nature of the Redemption and, at the same time, to create sympathy and repentant spirit in the audience. In the
poems analyzed in the final part of this chapter, contraries are clearly used to define the judgmental paradox that man responds to Christ's love with lack of love. In some poems the paradox is heightened simply by Christ's position of incredulity ("What more could I have done?"); but, in the last four poems considered, the contraries of Christ's (God's) acts of love and man's fickleness or total lack of response are clearly juxtaposed (in the translations of the "Improperia," in Index 1699, which contrasts Christ's arms and side with man's, and in Index 1463, the "quia amore languo" poem). Other poems considered in the final part of the chapter are also noteworthy for their use of contraries and paradox in celebrating Christ's love for man or man's for Christ. Index 66, the "Love Rune," for example, defines human love, the contrary of Christ's love, in the "now . . . now . . ." formula, so familiar from the definitions of fortune and the transitoriness of this life found in the moral lyrics. Index 611 defines the ultimate act of Christ's love (his Passion) in a paradoxical conceit: love has slain the king of love.

In some poems analyzed in this chapter contraries are defined by contrasting them to each other, the purpose being to celebrate one of the contraries and often to urge the rejection of the other. In several of the poems in praise of Mary, for example, Mary is celebrated and her role defined by contrasting her with Eve (Indices 1054, 1034.5, 2645, 2687). In one of the Marian laments, Mary's sorrow as she holds Christ on her lap after the crucifixion is heightened by its contrast to the actions of an ordinary mother, happily holding her healthy child (Index 2619). In Index 196, Christ's love and human love are defined by contrasting them to one another, in this case, by means of demonstrating that one is like
and the other different from transitory, fading things of this world.

In another poem (Index 66) whose subject is the love of Christ from man, Christ's love is contrasted implicitly with its contrary, earthly love (earthly love receives most of the attention, being described by means of contraries, but it is obviously described in order to be rejected for its contrary).

One contrary is defined in terms of the other—in some poems often in the very language associated with the other contrary. While one contrary is being defined, there is the possibility of a reflective type of definition of the other. In the lyric just mentioned about Christ's love for man (Index 66), for example, Christ is described as if he were a secular king, but oudoing the secular king: he gives clothing, but richer; he has a castle or fortress, but stronger. This usage of contraries is most commonly found in the poems in this chapter which borrow the language and conventions of courtly love poetry to praise Mary or to describe Christ's love for man (in parts two and four of the chapter), and in poems which make use of the language or secular love-longing situation from the Song to describe man's desire for grace and unity with God or to express Christ's love for man (for example, Indices 1715, 1463).

Contraries in form or structure are perhaps not as striking in poems considered in this chapter as they are in the lyrics analyzed in Chapter One, especially. The riddle, for example, which makes use of apparent paradox, is represented here only by a few of the Eucharist poems (which, however, are more complex in their paradoxicality since even when the riddle is "solved," as it generally is in the Eucharist poems, the
essential paradox of the Eucharist itself remains). Oxymorons and word-play which depends on contraries, so common in the secular lyrics, especially those whose subject is love, are practically nonexistent in the religious lyrics (the only oxymoron which occurs in the religious lyrics of this chapter is *swete strokys* in Index 1463). Circumlocution by contraries is, however, common, as is antithesis of words and phrases. In addition, three paradoxical conceits are worthy of being pointed out in poems considered in the chapter: the representation of Christ as corn or wheat in Index 2681, the conceit of love becoming wrath, developed in Index 611, and the conceit of Christ writing on man's heart with the spear and nails, presented in the first part of Index 1761.

While unity by contraries may not be as obvious in poems considered in this chapter as it is, for example, in the love debates and punctuation poems mentioned in Chapter One, it is extensive. The mingling or blending of contraries occurs in some poems in which Mary is praised in terms also applied to a secular lady (for example, Index 2607), in which courtly language describes love for Christ (Indices 1700, 1311), and in which the erotic and sensual language of the *Song* describes man's love for Christ (Index 1715) or Christ's love for man (Index 1463). In some lyrics the blending may have been so artfully accomplished that the poem may now be interpreted as either a secular or religious lyric, depending on the subject: secular lady or Mary, secular loved one or mankind (Indices 2824, 742, 3805, 2260). The juxtaposition of contraries, in a frame or alternation pattern, is also common in the religious lyrics, occurring, for example, in several courtly poems addressed to Mary from
the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, in the dialogue poems between Mary and Christ (on-the-cross and cradle poems), in one Marian lament in which each of Mary's actions toward her dead son is contrasted to the ordinary loving actions of a mother, in the translations of the "Improperia," and in two poems in which Christ accuses man of lack of love and man responds (Indices 3825, 2504).
NOTES

1 The contraries in Mary's titles are made more explicit in the Latin by juxtaposition, equal numbers of syllables, alliteration, and consonance: *Porta manes et stella maris*.

2 The phrases *all* and *some* and *one* and *all* would seem to be composed of correlative opposites (one implies the other; we would say "one of all" or "some of all"). The phrases *free* and *bond* and *most* and *least* are composed of contraries as strictly defined. See Introduction, IA.

3 Of all the opposites in the Middle English version (Index 2610) only the contraries of *rose* and *lily* occur in the Latin.

4 To support the comparisons made in the text, the following versions and the Latin original of the third stanza of the "Ave maris stella" are presented:

Solve vincla reis,
Profer lumen caecis,
Mala nostra pelle,
Bona cuncta posce. (Traditional)

Vnles bandes of sinful kinde,
Þou bring forth liht vn-to be blind,
Oure iuels put þou alle bi-hinde,
Akline gode þat ve mowe finde. (Index 1082, XIV, #45, 11. 9-12)

onely maden þorw godis gast,
of alle wemen meked mast,
vs of syn þow lees in aste,
and make vs bope mylde and chast. (Index 1034.5, XIV, #41, 11.9-12)

Break the sinners' fetters,
Light to blind restoring,
All our ills dispelling,
Every boon imploring. (version one)

Free the worldly minded
Luminate the blinded.
Every ill repressing,
Win us every blessing. (version two)

The first Mod. English version was made by Athelstan Riley, the second by G. R. Woodward; both are printed in Matthew Britt, *ed.*, *The Hymns of the Breviary and Missal*, rev. ed. (New York: Benziger Bros., 1936), pp. 317-19.

5 See Brown, XIII, n. 17, p. 179, and EEC, #191.

6 Paradoxical family relationships are the subject of a fifteenth-century nonreligious riddle published for the first time by Edward

7 In his note on this poem (XIV, n. 16, p. 249), Brown indicates that the introductory stanzas, those quoted in this dissertation, include phrases "appropriated without essential change from such hymns as Virgo guade speciosa." A close examination of the verses of this hymn, quoted by Brown (vv. 13-22) and of the stanzas of the English poem reveals, however, that the English poet has capitalized upon the traditional paradoxical relationships (as the Latin poet has not), making the first part of his poem a tour de force in order to reveal every paradoxical aspect of the relationships.

8 The branch is obviously Christ, and the event, therefore, the Ascension, in the sixteenth-century version of this carol, whose seventh stanza reads:

```
The fifth branch was fayer in fote,  
That sprong to hevyn, tope and rote,  
Ther to dwell and be owr bote,  
And yt ys sene in preestes hondes.
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(EEC, #175b, 11. 25-28)

The last line (changed from the vague "So blessedly yet sprong" in the 15th-cen. poem) is an obvious reference to the Eucharist, and its introduces a new paradox into the poem: Christ is in heaven and Christ is in priest's hands here on earth. Thus the fifth branch is Christ. This later version does, however, return to a focus on Mary, the subject of the poem, in an additional stanza. This stanza introduces a sixth branch which, even more strangely "ys the v joyes of myld Mary." Thus, one branch is now the other five; or, the whole exists separated from its parts.

9 Leo Spitzer, in his analysis of this poem, concludes that the poet has juxtaposed two types of trees: the genealogical tree and the moral tree (in which, for example, from the root of charity a huge tree would be shown to spring with branches showing logical relationships; a device used in Latin and Provencal literature, according to Spitzer). Spitzer would evidently disagree with my evaluation of the poem: "To the medieval mind these two types of trees were basically of the same nature (and equally visualizable); our own poet has taken the bold step (bold to us, perhaps not to him) of juxtaposing the two trees into an 'unnatural' but dogmatically satisfying unit." See, Leo Spitzer, "Explication de texte Applied to Three Great Middle English Poems," Archivium Linguisticum, 3 (1951), p. 147.

10 Some interesting observations on the survival of allegorical elements from the Song in Middle English poetry are made by Constance Storey Wright, "The Influence of the 'Song of Songs' on the Secular and Religious Love Lyrics of MS. Harley 2253," Diss. U. of Calif. at Berkeley 1966. Miss Wright does not suggest that any of the secular love lyrics be read as allegories of the love-longing of the soul for God. However, she does point out that many specific poetic practices
from the Song (familiar through exegesis of it) do survive in the Harley lyrics (such as description of the sweetness of the lady in terms of spices); and she suggests that in some cases the physical descriptions of perfection are intended to represent the spiritual perfection of the lady described (that erotic imagery is intended to represent the spiritual, in the tradition of exegesis of the Song). See, for example, her analysis of "Ichot a burde in boure bryht," pp. 240-46.

11 I commented on the possible sacrilegious intentions of the first troubadour, William IX of Aquitaine, in note 12 to Chapter One. It is interesting to speculate that the use of religious elements in secular courtly poetry, which later became a serious poetic technique, was originally intended to parody and ridicule an earlier literary convention. That convention was the use of the obviously secular and sensual images from the Song and from Ovid to describe spiritual perfection and platonic admiration. With total disregard for literal sensuality, the mind was expected to move from the physical to the spiritual level. This was conventional usage, for example, in the influential Venantius Fortunatus (540-ca. 600), the court poet and later bishop of Poitiers, in poems addressed to the queen, Radegunde, later a saint. The conventions are reversed (i.e., used to describe physical perfection and desires, ironically, their literal use in the Song and, of course, original use in Ovid) by the anonymous Latin poets whose works are preserved in the Carmina Burana. For brief analyses of some of the poetry of the Latin writers mentioned, with reference to elements which derive from exegesis of the Song, see Wright, pp. 88-159.

12 The origin of the use of secular poetic conventions in Middle English religious verse is an interesting problem which is not treated in this dissertation. G. R. Owst in Literature and the Pulpit in Medieval England, 2nd ed. rev. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1961), proposes the theory that the praising of Mary's beauty, sweetness, and plenitude in the thirteenth-century lyrics "may well have been a direct product of homiletic fervor, rather than a mild imitation of worldly love songs." He also suggests that "we have a right to claim it as our first triumphant example in post-Conquest England of the influence of preaching upon literature" (pp. 16-17). This praise of Mary was based especially on Song, vii. 6, which was traditionally interpreted as referring to Mary. According to Owst, as the popularity of troubadour and trouvère secular songs grew, the use of secular conventions in praise of Mary was definitely fostered by the mendicants (p. 17); and in the fourteenth century a new impetus was added with the influence of the mystics and their use of the Song. The origin of a particular type of use of secular elements in religious verse, the extended allegory of secular conventions which resulted in poems which could be interpreted either as religious or secular, is traced by Rosemary Woolf to the allegorizing of totally secular verse especially in the sermons (see The English Religious Lyric in the Middle Ages [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968], p. 191). According to Woolf, France probably influenced the culmination of this allegorizing convention in England in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, since earlier examples existed in France of a secular poem providing the literal
level of allegory, the verse form, structure, and actual lines of a religious poem (p. 191). Woolf also examines the sources of the themes of Christ as a lover-knight and Christ as a courtly wooer in the lyrics. The source for both themes is the medieval interpretations of the Song, with an intermediary being Hugh of St. Victor's De artha animae, in which Christ is praised as the wisest, truest, richest lover. Other sources include Hosia ii, 1-20, Ezekiel xvi, and the new development from twelfth-century romance, the combination of fighting and love. See Religious Lyric, pp. 45-66, or "The Theme of Christ as the Lover-Knight in Medieval English Literature," RES, N.S. 13 (1962), 1-16.

The influence of the Song in poems whose subject is the Blessed Mother seems to be limited to poems written in honor of the Coronation or Assumption (presumably because of the obvious reminder of the Coronation in the "veni coronaberis" of the Song). One 15th-cen. lyric, Index 3225, is presented as Christ's call to Mary to join him in heaven. Christ is represented as the bridegroom and Mary as the bride of the Song, although no allegory is maintained). The sensual language (some appropriated directly from the Song) seems especially incongruous in the poem, since Christ repeatedly addresses Mary as his modur:

Vox tua to me was full swete
Whene bu me badde, 'babe be styrle'.
ffull goodly gone our eyppes mete,
Wyth bryzte braunches, as blosme on hyll.
ffaus distillans pat wente wyth wylle
Out of eyppes whene we dede kysse.
Therefore, modure, bys ys my skylly,
Veni [coronaberis].

(XV, #37, 11. 41-48, p. 66)

In another 15th-cen. coronation poem, Index 3391, the narrator addresses the Virgin in sensual language derived from the Song:

Tota pulcra, to the litle like,
She was set with the saphures celestiall;
The odour of her mouth the aromatike
Dyd coumford the world vniversall

(XV, #38, 11. 9-12, p. 68)

The use of secular, sensual titles, descriptions, and images from the Song does not seem to be included in these poems for any of the purposes mentioned in my discussion of the use of secular elements in religious poetry. Probably the identification of the Virgin with the bride of the Song has become so conventional that elements from the Song are not even considered as secular.

The poet calls his poem a lossong (1. 14). The term must be interpreted not as lovesong, however, but as hymn, song of praise, due to the early date and the Southern provenance of the poem. Elements to be discussed in the poem make it, nevertheless, a lovesong to Mary.

Brown (XIII, n. 3, p. 166) compares these lines with 11. 77-84 of Index 1395, one of the Harley lyrics, "Ichot a burde in boure bryt":

13

14

15
For hire loue y carke ant care,
for hire loue y droupne ant dare,
for hire loue my blissse is bare,
and al ich waxe won;
for hire loue in slep y slake,
for hire loue al nyht ich wake,
for hire loue mournyng y make
more pen eny mon.
(Brook, #14, p. 50)

16 Note the similarity of the opening line of this poem with 11. 96 and 114 of the lyric just considered (Index 631).

17See Index 1861, "Lenten ys come wip loue to toune."

18Rosemary Woolf in Religious Lyric notes the formal quality of poems, whose subject is Mary, which were written in the secular style of the 15th cen. She finds in all 15th cen. religious lyrics a tendency to heighten the style to fit the subject matter with "the inevitable exclusion of the reader from sympathetic involvement," which, however, "did not appear a blemish." She attributes this to the tradition in which the poet's aim was to exercise his art in honor of the Virgin (which had been encouraged by festivals such as the puys), and to the decline of medieval devotion (p. 279).

19This antiphon printed by Brown, XV, n. 37, pp. 305-06.


21In Brown's Register of Middle English Verse (Oxford: University Press, 1920), II, 360, Brown seems to make the first assignation of this poem to the Blessed Mother: "[On the fly-leaf, in XV-cent. hand, a single 8-line stanza ___? addressed to the B.V. At the end: 'quod H. Bowesper'.]"


23See discussion of Index 3805 in the second group of poems analyzed in part four of this chapter.

24EEC, n. 260, p. 400.

25In marked contrast to the "theological argument" presented in the poem whose subject is the virgin conception of Christ by Mary is the simple celebration of another paradox, the felix culpa, in Index 117:
Adam lay I-bowndyn, bowndyn in a bond,
fowre bowsand wynter bowt he not to long;
And al was for an appil, an appil hat he tok,
As clerkis fyndyn wretyn in here book.

Ne hadde þe appil take ben, þe appil taken ben,
ne hadde neuer our lady a ben heuene quen;
Blyssid be þe tyme þat appil take was,
þer-fore we mown syngyn, 'deo gracias!'

(XV, #83, p. 120)

Rosemary Woolf (Religious Lyric, p. 290) points out that the new paradox, the felix culpa, from the liturgical exultet becomes very popular in poetry of the 15th cen., but it is given a "Marian twist." In the liturgy the fortunate aspect of the Fall was that man was given a Redeemer. In relation to Index 117 (p. 291), Woolf concludes that "This assumption of naivete show [sic] the imaginative skill of a sophisticated poet."

Robbins also prints a version from Durham Cathedral V i 12:

Hit semeth whyzth and hit is reed:
Hit is quyk and semeth deed:
Hit is flessh and semeth breed:
And verey God in His Godhed.

And another version from Copenhagen Royal Library 29264:
He is quycke that semyth dede:
And also flecsh that semyth brede:
He is one that semyth moo:
And very God that semyth nott soo.

27One of the most popular private prayers, according to R. H. Robbins in "Private Prayers in Middle English Verse," SP, 36 (1939), 465-75, is Index 3883, a prayer to be said at the elevation in celebration of the Eucharist. This poem emphasizes the contraries which are associated with the nature of the Eucharist by hailing it in a series of epithets as God, God's son, Holy Ghost, King, blossom, fruit, flower, knight, man, prince, duke, emperor, governor, flesh, blood, rose—all in fourme of Bred.

28Brook glosses this line "I am not to be believed to be unjust" (n. 10, l. 45, p. 80).

29O.E.D., vol. 10, pt. 2, p. 30. Yearn is so used, for example, in the following Biblical verse: "Swa hvaet swa ze zynede biddathzelyfath þaet ze hit onfoth" (ca. 1000, Ags. Gospel, Mark XI. 24).


32Manning interprets the difficult final line as referring to God's omnipresence and departure from heaven (p. 145).

33The image of truth growing up from the ground comes from Ps. 84. 12, which was taken to prefigure the incarnation.
The ox and ass in the stable come from the Pseudo-Gospel of Matthew, XIV.

These lines are an adaptation of a Latin quotation which immediately precedes them in the MS: "Bernardus clamat: Si rex es, vbi est aula regis, vbi tronus, vbi curiae regalis frequencia? aula est stabulum, tronus est presepium, curiae regalis frequencia marie presencia." See Brown, XIII, n. 30, p. 192. By omitting the question in the Latin passage, the Middle English poet gives his lines more the form of a riddle. The king who possessed such unusual hallæ, kenestol, and burnes is obvious, of course.

The stanzas quoted are from the Helmingham Hall MS. L.I. 10, early 16th-cen., printed in XV, #118, pp. 185-86. A late 16th-cen. version (from Cotton Vespasian A. XXV) is printed in EEC, #95, pp. 60-61. The first line of the Cotton version reads: "God against nature thre wonders haitth wrought." This version is included in the Appendix.

That the poem might be intended to present a progression of events from the harmony of Eden through the fall and Redemption is suggested by the later 16th-cen. version which includes five additional stanzas. After the fall of the angels (st. 2) the poet treats the fall of man, specifically, Adam's blaming of God for his fall (st. 4), the rift between Adam and Eve (st. 5), the reconciliation between man and woman in Mary's conception of the redeemer (st. 5), Mary's reconciliation of the roles of maiden, mother, and wife (st. 6). Brown concludes that the earlier version of two stanzas seems to be complete (XV, n. 118, p. 330). I think, however, that the explicit reference to the beginning of creation in ll. 8-9 of stanza one (and the possibility of interpreting the whole of stanza one, except for line four, as referring to the Eden situation) suggests the linear treatment of "setting at one" which is begun in the stanza on the angels, and continued in the other stanzas of the longer version. Instances of word play and delight in paradox (exemplified in stanza one) are found in other stanzas of the longer poem, especially stanza three where internal rhyming is prominent. An examination of the longer version (Appendix) shows the poet's keen interest in contraries. Every stanza is built on contraries; some are reconciled and some are not: angel and man (st. 2), devil and God (st. 3), God and man (st. 4), man and woman (st. 5), widowhood, wedlock, and virginity (st. 6), poor and rich (st. 7). This interest seems to overshadow that in the overall meaning of the poem, since stanzas six and seven have little to do with the subject of creation, fall, and redemption (stanza seven seems to serve no purpose at all).
In the poem, the slaying of death may refer not only to the Redemption, but simply to Christ's obvious conquest of his own physical death at his resurrection.


In conjunction with a Middle English translation of "O vos omnes," Rosemary Woolf points out that one of the arguments advanced by St. Bernard for the unparalleled suffering of Christ is conditio parentis: since his body was perfect his physical and mental suffering was more acute (Religious Lyric, p. 42). In the poem under consideration this argument may have been transferred to Mary.

A paradox also concludes the poem, in one of the four MSS (the MS version printed in the Appendix). This occurs in a consolation to Mary in which the narrator recounts that a voice from heaven proclaims the Resurrection: "ffilius Regis is a-lyue et non mortuus est."

The relationship between this dialogue (Index 3211) and the Latin hymn "Stabat iuxta Christi crucem" is not properly noted by the editors of Index 3211: Brown (XIII, #49) and Brook (#20). Brown refers to the dialogue as a "sequence" and fails to mention the Latin hymn in his note (XIII, n. 49, pp. 203-04), although he does print an incomplete text of the dialogue in his note which has the MS heading "Stabat iuxta Christi crucem." (Perhaps Brown refers to the dialogue as a "sequence" simply because of the alternating nature of the dialogue.) Oddly, Brown cites as the ultimate source of the dialogue a Latin prose narrative of the passion, represented as spoken by the Virgin to St. Anselm or to St. Bernard (n. 49, p. 204). Brook correctly cites the source of the dialogue as the "Stabat iuxta Christi crucem," however, he seems to regard the poem as a translation of the "Stabat," and, probably picking up Brown's reference to the poem as a "sequence," he incorrectly calls the poem an "English version of the Sequence Stabat iuxta Christi crucem" (n. 20, p. 84). Brook probably confuses the "Stabat iuxta" hymn with the famous Latin sequence "Stabat mater dolorosa."

It should be made clear that while there are close English translations of the "Stabat iuxta" (Index 1697), the dialogue poem mentioned in the text is an adaptation. The major emphasis of the Latin hymn (followed in Index 1697) is entirely changed in Index 3211, the dialogue poem. The Latin hymn and translations are about Mary's sorrow, but are written on the following pattern: description of Mary's sorrow (by means of narration of the Passion), then description of her joy when Christ arose. The dialogue, as pointed out in the text, is about why Mary should be glad at the Passion.

Several other on-the-cross poems exist, all of which, like the dialogue version of the "Stabat iuxta," the original hymn, and its close translations (and other nondramatic poems) are based ultimately on the Latin prose narration of the passion. (See Brown's notes: XIV, n. 67, n. 128, n. 60, and XIII, n. 49.)
Not all of the lullaby carols contain paradoxes associated with the Redemption. Some are Christmas songs (EEC #150, 143, 144); some use the lullaby device merely as a framework for a narration of Christ's passion, with little emphasis on his suffering in anticipation (EEC #148), or for a narration of Christ's entire life (EEC #149).

A similar carol, in that Christ's mourning is central, is Index 22 (EEC #152). The carol is also similar to the one discussed in the text since Mary asks Christ to leave his weeping because his father is king of bliss. However, after she hears why Christ is mourning, she too begins to weep and in the final stanza Christ asks Mary to stop weeping. None of the paradoxes of Christ's birth or redemption of man are brought out in this carol. Christ simply reflects on his wounds (not on his innocence, role as redeemer of men, or even humble birth).

There is obviously an error in this stanza which reads, at the crucial line, "For dedys that i haue done." Another MS of the poem, MS. Addit. 5666, printed as text B in EEC, contains the appropriate reading: "For the dede that man has done."

This stanza is unique among the stanzas of the lullay poems in its reflection on the nature of this world. The nature of the reflection (that this world is a vale of sorrow) would seem to lend support to Brown's observation (XIV, n. 28, p. 255) that this poem seems to be a direct adaptation of Index 2025, "Lollai, l[ollai], litel child, whi wepist ou so sore?" (Appendix), a lullay song of a human mother consoling her child who is born into a world of wickedness and woe. This secular lullay song is the earliest example of a lullay song and although Brown does not suggest it, this may be the source for all other lullay poems. If so, this is another example of a nonreligious lyric (and one which presents a bleak picture of human existence with no consolation of the afterlife) being turned to religious purposes. (See note 60 of this chapter.) The irrationality and injustice (if one wishes to view it as such) of man's existence in a hostile world applies particularly to the case of Christ, who did not even have the guilt of original sin (used to explain the suffering of mankind in the secular lullay song). Thus, the transition from the secular lullay to the religious song could easily be made.

The first 60 lines of this poem are direct translations of passages in Rolle's Incendium Amoris. See Brown, XIV, n. 84, p. 270. Rosemary Woolf (Religious Lyric, p. 170) points out that the definition of love in this lyric is akin to that in the Roman de la Rose and the Digby MS. definition, considered in Chapter One. Miss Woolf finds this poem in its compactness, coherence, and sustained intensity, perhaps the finest of Rolle's lyrics (p. 171).

The parallelism of the last line is destroyed by the use of dawyng (dawn) which is not a contrary to Spring. Perhaps the scribe erroneously transcribed another term such as deynge (dying).
Robbins, "Private Prayers," p. 471. According to Rosemary Woolf (Religious Lyric, pp. 162-63), the type of paradox which is characteristic of this poem and of other Middle English mystical lyrics (e.g., "Lyf was slayne") derives from the Philomena, a 2,252-line Latin poem written by John of Howden in the 12th cen.. Woolf notes that a fine Middle English version of this poem dates from the mid 14th cen. and is edited by Charlotte d'Evelyn, Meditations on the Life and Passion of Christ, EETS, O.S. 158 (Oxford: Oxford U. Press, 1921); and a comparison of the Latin and Middle English versions is made by Miss d'Evelyn in "Meditations on the Life and Passion of Christ," in Essays and Studies in Honor of Carleton Brown (New York, 1940), 79-90. Woolf notes that the conceit of Christ's writing on the lover's heart in this poem is a variation on the love wound, derived from Song, ii, 5 (p. 164).

The theme that the love for Christ manifests itself in actions which are paradoxical to the world is central to two short lyrics (Indices 1002 and 2471). In Index 2471, "O, Ihu, let me neuer forgett thy byttur passion," the poet declares that Christ's wounds are the school which will teach him to be called a fool in this world; and he asks that the "wysdom of the worlde" be completely gone from him. Index 1002 is especially interesting in its utilization of the theme:

Gold & al þis werdis wyn
Is mouth but cristis rode;
I wolde ben clad in cristes skyn,
þat ran so longe on blod,
& gon t'is herte & taken myn In--
þer is a fulsum fode.
þan zef i litel of kith or kin,
For þer is alle gode. Amen.
(XIV, #71, p. 88)

The first two lines can be interpreted several ways: that gold and the world's joys are nothing except for Christ's cross, that they are Christ's cross in the sense that he died because of sin and materialism, that they are Christ's cross (or Christ's face?) because, in the sense of the last line, all good (and God) is Christ. The speaker's actions of being clad in Christ's skin, taking his heart into Christ's, considering Christ his food, and rejecting kith or kin are paradoxical according to the wisdom of the world, where good and false good are often confused.

Although only one MS of the poem is preserved, Brown points out that it is "one of the few English poems of the thirteenth cen. which was still remembered and imitated as late as the end of the fourteenth cen."

In another poem about Christ's love for man, love is portrayed as the slayer of Christ, but also, paradoxically, love is called his creator, nourisher, and his peace. The first two stanzas of the eighteen-line poem are quoted below (Index 2012):

Loue me brouthe,
& loue me wrouthe,
Man, to be þi fere.
Loue me fedde,
& loue me ledde,
& loue me lettet here.

Loue me slou,
& loue me drou,
& loue me leyde on bere.
Loue is my pes,
For loue i ches,
Man to byzen dere.

(XIV, #66, 11. 1-12, p. 84)

In Brown's note on this poem (XIV, n. 66, p. 266) he includes a quatrain, copied twice elsewhere in the same MS, which also demonstrates a play on the word love (which might be specified as God, God's mercy, God's love for man). But in the quatrain (Index 2011) the roles assigned to love are not necessarily contradictory as they are in Index 2012 (above) and Index 611 (text). Rosemary Woolf observes that Index 611 is written wholly within the tradition of the theme of the domination of love, a favorite with the mystics, ultimately derived from Song, ii, 5. The domination of love over Christ is first fully elaborated by Hugh of St. Victor in the De laude caritatis (see quotations and translation, Religious Lyric, p. 166 and n. 3). Woolf also states that Index 611, more than any other poem, is indebted to the Philomena and catches the impassioned tone of the Latin better than the longer English translation; see n. 53 of this chapter.

57 The presence of this stanza in the poem is not questioned by Brown in his notes (XIV, n. 90, pp. 273-74), nor is it questioned by Stephen Manning in his interpretation of the poem (Wisdom and Number, p. 149).

58 XIV, n. 90, p. 273.

59 Rosemary Woolf (Religious Lyric) comments that it seems certain of these lines began as a secular appeal for love, but that the central image, "have my heart," is equally appropriate in secular or religious poetry. She also suggests that the copyist could have misinterpreted the poem either deliberately or unintentionally (p. 187).

60 I have suggested the possibility of a more successful attempt with Index 1311, "I hafe set my hert so hye," considered in this section of the chapter, a lyric which uses the conventions of courtly love poetry to express man's love for Christ. A religious song written to a known secular tune, the "Maiden on the Moor," is preserved in the Red Book of Ossory (see Richard L. Greene, "The Maid of the Moor" in the Red Book of Ossory, Speculum, 27 (1952), 504-06). A possible instance of a religious poem written on the model of a secular one involves two poems from MS. Harley 2253, both written in the same meter and having the same first lines, Index 1921 (called "The Way of Woman's Love") and Index 1922 ("The Way of Christ's Love"). For discussion of the relationship between the two poems see Brook, n. 31, pp. 87-88, and Brown, XIII, n. 90, p. 236.
Carleton Brown interprets this poem (Index 2260) as a religious poem about Christ's love for man's soul in the original Register, II, 504. He reconstructs a MS heading: *In parasceue* (italics, Brown). *Parasceve* means "the day before the Sabbath." It is possible, therefore, that the preserver of this lyric interpreted it (or wished to transform it) as a religious poem. All of the poems surrounding Index 2260 in the MS are religious. Nevertheless, the poem itself gives no hint of a religious interpretation.

The paradox that even though Christ suffered death for man man does not return Christ's love was given as one of the reasons for Christ's weeping in a few of the cradle poems considered in the previous section of this chapter.

Rosemary Woolf (*Religious Lyric*, p. 48) discusses the use of the word *unkind* in the lover-knight lyrics (as the contrary to the *mercy* of the lady). She notes that it becomes a key word in the 14th cen. lyrics and that "it has the evocativeness peculiar to negative adjectives, in that it suggests emotionally the qualities of the positive, whilst at the same time stating their rejection."


Other English versions of the "*Homo vide quid pro te patior*" include Index 3826 and Index 3109. A version which also shows the influence of a Latin meditation, "*Respice in faciem Christi tui*" (printed in XIV, n. 4, p. 242), is Index 2042. The "*Respice,*" of which there are numerous Middle English versions, focuses solely on the suffering of Christ, while the "*Homo vide*" includes a reflection on man's unkind response to that suffering. Rosemary Woolf (*Religious Lyric*, p. 39) comments that the English versions of the "*Homo vide*" are "feeble" in their attempt to reproduce the logical tightness and paradox of the Latin: "Paradox and antithesis are more likely to generate astonishment than love, and it may be for this reason only that vernacular writers avoided them. But it is also possible that they were aware of the limitations of the language they used."

Rosemary Woolf (*Religious Lyric*, p. 41) observes that this poem "shows a quite striking ability to control paradoxical antithesis." She also points out that it is based on a passage attributed to St. Bernard. For the passage from the *Summa praedicantium* and translation see p. 41, and n. 4.

In this chapter I have given examples of the use of the language and love-longing situation of the *Song* in three types of poems: those in praise of the Blessed Mother which merely describe her in terms applied to the bride of the *Song*, and long applied to Mary in exegesis of the *Song* (see note 13 in this chapter); poems which have been influenced by
the mystical tradition, in which man's desire for grace or unity with God is expressed as love-longing (again derived from exegesis of the Song in which the bride was interpreted as man's soul); poems whose subject is the love of God for man (Christ is represented as the bride-groom, again from exegesis of the Song). A poem which shows influence of the Song but which has not been considered in this dissertation is the more famous "Quia amore langueo" poem in which Mary is represented as languishing in love for man's soul. The subject of the poem is Mary as well of grace, and its purpose is to draw men away from sin and to grace. As far as I know, the representation of Mary as languishing for man's soul is not based on exegetical interpretation of the Song. Thus the poem (Index 1460, "In a tabernacle of a toure") may represent an original use of material from the Song.

I would disagree with Rosemary Woolf's assessment (Religious Lyric, p. 191) that we tend to accept the incongruities in the poem because they are logically related to the nonallegorical meaning of the poem, that is, Christ's demonstration of love in the passion, and because of the sustained intensity of tone in the poem. According to Woolf, these factors convince the reader that "the incongruities are not lapses in craftsmanship but a fine poetical expression of the complexity and variety of love."
CONCLUSION

Having made his way through the preceding material, the reader may suspect that he or she has been exposed to nearly every extant Middle English lyric, and may therefore conclude that contraries and paradox are essential to the entire body of short Middle English verse.

Actually, many types of poems are included in the standard lyric collections which have neither contraries and paradox as their subject matter, nor develop their subjects by means of contraries and paradox (although circumlocution by contraries may be found even in these poems).

Many of these types are collected by R. H. Robbins in Secular Lyrics of the XIVth and XVth Centuries under the heading "Practical Verse."

We find, for example, a charm by the Holy Rood (Index 1182):

Stockholm Kungl. Biblioteket MS. x. 90
Helpe, crosse, fayrest of tymbris three,
In braunnchys berynge both frute & flowr!
Helpe, banere beste my fon to doo flee,
Staf & strenchynge full of socowr!
On londe, on see, where pat I be,
Fro fyir brennynge be me by-forne,
Now Cristis tree, sygne of pyte,
Helpe me euir I be nowght lorne.
(XIV-XV, #61, p. 58)

We also find mnemonic verse to assist the audience in remembering the number of days in each month (Index 3571), the number of months, weeks, and days in the year (Index 1396), how to find Easter (Index 1502), how many teeth, bones, and veins are in the human body (Index 3572), the characteristics of the four complexions (Indices 3157, 2624). Further-
more, we find versified book plates warning users of the book's value or asking prayers for its owners (Indices 1165, 3580, 1007), versified medical information (Indices 1810, 3848), and prognostications, such as the following for St. Paul's Day (Index 1423):

Dunrobin MS.
Giff sanct Paullis day be fair and cleir,
Than sal be-tyd ane happie yeir.
Gif it chances to snav or rane,
Than sal be deir all kynde of grayne.
and giff þe wind be hie on loft,
Than weir sal vi þe kingdome oft.
and gif þe cloudis mak darke þe skye,
Boith nowte and foull that yeir sail dye.

(XIV-XV, #71, p. 63)

In addition to the genres of practical verse I find three other types of Middle English short poetry which, in general, are not characterized by the use of contraries and paradox as subject matter, for definition, or in form and structure: convivial songs, narratives, and poems which are closely connected to their folk origins. Convivial songs include those about eating and drinking, many of which are in carol form (EEC, #418-#423). One of the most famous drinking songs, which is not characterized by contraries and paradox, is the carol with the refrain, "Bryng vs in good ale, & bryng vs in good ale" (Index 549). Other well-known, though not numerous, convivial songs are the "Boar's Head Carols" (EEC, #132-#135). The following lively, nonparadoxical invitation to Christmas festivity was probably sung by a minstrel:

B.M. Addit. MS. 14997
hay, ay, hay, ay,
make we mere as we may.

Now ys zole comyn with gentyll chere,
Of merthe & gomyn he has no pere;
In euery londe where he comys nere
Is merthe & gomyn, I dar wele say.
Now ys comyn a messyngere  
Of zonelonde, ser nu zere,  
Byddes vs all be mere here  
And make as mere as we may.

Therefore euer mon that ys here  
Synge a caroll on hys manere;  
Yf he con non we schall hym lere,  
So hat we be mere allway.

Whosoeuer makes heve chere,  
Were he neuer to me dere,  
In a dyche I wolde he were,  
To dry hys clothes tyll hyt were day.

Mende the fyre, & make gud chere!  
ffyll pe cuppe, ser botelere!  
let euer mon drynke to hys fere!  
thys endes my caroll with care awaye.  
(XIV-XV, #3, pp. 3-4)

Minstrel songs are not necessarily devoid of contraries and paradox, as witnessed by the poem which Robbins titles "The Minstrel and his Wares," discussed in part three of Chapter One, Index 3864, "We bern abowtyn non cattes skynnes," and by the sexual double-entendre poems, probably sung by minstrels, which are also discussed in that section. And, technically speaking, even some drinking and other convivial songs are characterized not only by contraries in circumlocution but also by unity by contraries, since they often combine two or more languages (as is the case in the boar's head carols) and often include liturgical phrases. The following (Index 795) is an example:

MS. Arch. Selden B. 26  
Verbum caro factum est  
Et habituit in nobis.  
Fetys bel chere,  
Drynk to thi fere,  
Verse le bauere,  
& syngne nowwell!  
(XIV-XV, #10, p. 8)

Short narrative poems, which have been classified as lyrics, are
also, generally, devoid of contraries and paradox of the type discussed in this dissertation. In some cases, however, contraries are used for circumlocution, or a Latin refrain is added, or a paradox is included because it is essential to the narrative. The latter is found, for example, in the following carol which tells of St. Stephen's martyrdom:

_Huntington Library_
Christmas carolles newly Inprynted (Richard Kele)_
Blessyd Stephan, we the praye,
Pro nobis preces funde.

I shall you tell this ylke nyght
Of Saynt Stephan, Goddes knyght:  
He tolde the Jewes that it was ryght
    That "Cryst was borne of a mayde.

Then sayd the Jewes with grete scorne
That Goddes Sone myght not be borne;
Stephan sayd, 'Ye be forlorn, 
    And all that blyeueth on that lay.'

This Stephan, whan he was most perfyte,  
In Crystes lawe illumynate,  
The Jewes hym toke with grete dyspyte  
Without the towne to lapide.

The cursyd Jewes at the last,  
Stones at Stephan they gan cast;  
They bette hym and bounde hym fast  
And made his body in foule aray.  
(EEC, #101b, p. 65)

Narratives are preserved on many subjects, from the fox and the goose (Index 3328), to the Passion, Christmas (especially the story of the shepherds), and the Epiphany. The Christmas narratives mention paradoxes, of course, since they are part of the Christmas story, but the paradoxes are not used specifically to define the event as an object of praise or wonder (see, for example, "Oute of youre slepe arryse and wake," EEC, #74, p. 46). The vast majority of poems whose subject is Christmas (or any of the several feasts of the Church) use contraries
and paradox to define the event as an object of wonder and praise.

The fourth type of Middle English verse which I find generally outside the scope of the dissertation includes lyrics which are actually recorded forms of folk poetry, or those which are written in imitation of folk poetry. It is often difficult, of course, to distinguish between the two. One of the most famous such poems is the "Cuckoo Song," or "Sumer is icumen in," generally agreed to be an artistic adaptation of a folk *reverdie*. Other familiar folk-type lyrics are the drinking song mentioned earlier, "Bryng vs in good ale," and the fragment known as "The Irish Dancer" (Index 1008):

```
Ms. Rawlinson D. 913
ICH AM OF IRLAUNDE,
ANT OF THE HOLY LONDE
OF IRLANDE.

CODE SIRE, PRAY ICH BE,
FOR OF SAYNTE CHARITE,
COME ANT DANCE WYT ME
IN IRLAUNDE.

(XIV-XV, #15, p. 11)
```

Folk-type lyrics are characterized by simple vocabulary, simple structure (often narrative or chronological progression with much repetition), and what we consider folk sentiments, such as a celebration of a maiden's activities on a holiday. Greene considers the following carols to be actual folk songs or close to folk songs: "And by a chapell as Y came," "All this day ic han sou[ght]," "Ladd Y the daunce a Myssomur Day," "Ale mak many a mane to styk at a brere," and "Tyll home sull Wylehyn, this joly gentyl schepe" (EEC, pp. xcv-xcvii). Other folk-type lyrics (noncarols) are "Dronken . . . dronken" (Index *24), "Of everykune tre -- / of everykune tre --," and "Maiden in the mor lay -- / in the mor lay --." Not all lyrics which are close to folk
literature are devoid of contraries and paradox, however, as proven by
the holly and ivy carols, based on the oldest pair of contraries—male
and female, and by the poem considered in Chapter One, "I haue a zong
suster / fer be-zondyn þe se" of which oral analogues were collected
in the nineteenth century. (It could be argued that this literary
poem was the source of folk literature.)

It will be noted that many of the poems I have singled out as non-
paradoxical are carols, which, it is generally agreed, are popular by
destination (intended for a popular audience, though composed by
individual artists, i.e., not the written product of oral folk litera-
ture). The question naturally arises then, whether or not the
prominence of contraries and paradox in the lyrics might be dependent
upon intended audience, popular or courtly. Contradictory evidence
presents itself on this question. Practical, nonparadoxical verse, for
example, while certainly useful for the popular audience, was also
appreciated by the more sophisticated (Lydgate's dietary, Index 824, is
exceeded in number of extant MSS only by the Prick of Conscience,
Canterbury Tales, Piers Plowman, and Confessio Amantis). About one-
quarter of the carols collected by Greene celebrate the nativity, and
most of these, with the exception of a few narratives, could have been
discussed in Chapter Three. Many other nonreligious lyrics which I
discuss in the dissertation are generally agreed to be popular by
destination: the rose riddle, the pear tree poem, minstrel wares, "I am
sory for her sake, / yc may wel eete & drynke," the anti-phrase carol with
the refrain, cuius contrarium verum est (all classified by Robbins in
XIV-XIV as "Popular Songs"); furthermore, many of the moral lyrics
discussed in Chapter Two are, no doubt, intended for a popular audience. On the other hand, a larger percentage of lyrics included in the dissertation are influenced by the courtly tradition and were, no doubt, intended for a more sophisticated audience. The degree of paradoxicalness of a poem might be determined in part by intended audience: certainly Squire Halsham's poem on transitoriness would appeal only to a relatively sophisticated audience, but it is difficult to decide on an audience level for poems such as "Earth Upon Earth" and the sexual double-entendre poems and riddles.

Audience, then, does not seem to be the determining factor in the use of contraries and paradox in Middle English lyrics, and neither is date. Of the ninety-one lyrics included in Brown's English Lyrics of the XIIIth Century, for example, I have analyzed twenty-seven in the dissertation, and I could have included forty-two others. The percentages are similar in the collections of fourteenth and fifteenth-century lyrics. While I have not done an exact statistical study and while the study I have made is based primarily on lyrics preserved in the major collections, I think it can be tentatively concluded that the first determining factor in the use of contraries and paradox in Middle English lyrics is subject matter. Certain subjects naturally and traditionally have lent themselves to treatment by means of contraries and paradox. These subjects, moreover, are of primary interest to the medieval English lyricists, that is, more poems seem to be written on these subjects than on any others: love, women, transitoriness and death, the degeneration of virtue, the Blessed Virgin, feasts of the
Church, paradoxes of the faith, the suffering of Christ and Mary, Christ's love and man's response to it.

The philosophical interest in contraries and paradox and the practical training every school boy received in the scholastic method, as discussed in the Introduction, certainly contributed to the use of contraries and paradox in the lyrics. But who is to say whether poets chose their subject matters and the form that their poems would take because they liked or were trained to work with contraries and paradox or because of overriding philosophical or practical considerations (such as the moral need for didactic poems on transitoriness, the literary taste in courtly love, the religious need for poems in celebration of Church feasts, the need for religious poems in the secular mode to counteract the popularity of "pagan" works, the popular demand for riddles and word-play)? Obviously, various factors worked together to produce the abundance of Middle English lyrics which are characterized by contraries and paradox: poet and audience, or, individual interest and talent, public demand, general ideology and training, and practical exigencies.

Such factors must be taken into consideration to explain why, even excluding particular types of poems such as practical verse, convivial songs, narratives, and poems modeled on folk genres, we cannot say that all lyrics whose subjects are love, women, transitoriness, etc., are characterized by the use of contraries and paradox. Many examples could be produced which are not within the scope of this dissertation and are not excluded because they belong to one of the four types discussed. The following poem presents straight-forward praise of women combined
with sympathy for their lot, with no undertones of disapproval (though feminists would protest the roles assigned to women):

Harley MS. 4294

I am as lyght as any roe
To preyse wemen wher that I goo.

To onpreyse wemen yt were a shame,
For a woman was thy dame;
Our blessyd lady beryth the name
of all women wher that they goo.

A woman ys a worthy thyng --
they do the washe and do the wrynge;
'lullay, lullay,' she dothe the syngle
And yet she hath but care and woo.

A woman ys a worthy wyght,
she seruyth a man both daye and night,
thereto she puttyth all her myght,
And yet she hathe bot care and woo.

(XIV-XV, #34, p. 31)

Many poems on the suffering of Christ, such as the following one, are characterized not by contraries and paradox but simply by love and human compassion:

St. John's Coll. Camb. MS. 62

Loverd þi passion,
Who þe þenchet arist þaron,
teres hit tollet,
and eyen hit bollet,
nebes hit wetet,
and hertes hit swetet.

(XIII, #56b, p. 113)

Exceptions could be multiplied, of course, as could examples of single poems on miscellaneous subjects which do not use contraries and paradox and which are neither practical verse, convivial songs, narratives, nor poems based on folk genres: poems on loving holy Church and priests, on chattering in church, on the evils of the tongue, on the ten commandments, on the deadly sins; poems which are simple prayers or
series of ejaculations; and secular occasional poems such as the following:

Arundel MS. 292
Swarte smekyd smefes, smateryd wyth smoke,
dryue me to deth wyth den of here dyntes!
Swech noys on nyghtes ne herd men neuer:
What knauene cry, & clateryling of knockes!
\(\textbf{\textit{he}}\) cammede kongons dryen after 'col, col!' & blowen here bellewys \(\textbf{\textit{bat}}\) al here brayn brestes.
'huf, puf!' seyth \(\textbf{\textit{bat}}\) on. 'haf, paf!' \(\textbf{\textit{bat}}\) ouer
\(\textbf{\textit{bei}}\) spyttn & spraulyyn & spellyn many spelles,
\(\textbf{\textit{bei}}\) gnauen & gnauchen, \(\textbf{\textit{bei}}\) gronys togydere,
and holdyn hem hote wyth here hard hamers.
of a bole hyde ben here barm-fellys,
here schankes ben schakeled for \(\textbf{\textit{bei}}\) fere-flunderys;
heuy hamerys \(\textbf{\textit{bei}}\) han \(\textbf{\textit{pat}}\) hard ben handled,
stark strokes \(\textbf{\textit{bei}}\) stryken on a stelyd stokke.
'lus, bus! las, das!' rowtyn be rowe --
sweche dolful a dreme \(\textbf{\textit{bei}}\) deuyl it todryue;
\(\textbf{\textit{bei}}\) mayster longith a lityl & laischeth a lesse,
swyneth hem tweyn, and towchith a treble.
'tik, tak! hic, hac! titket, taket! tyk, tak!
lus, bus! lus, das!' -- swych lyf \(\textbf{\textit{bei}}\) ledyn!
Alle clo\(\textbf{\textit{p}}\)emerys cryst hem gyue sorwe,
may no man for brenwaterys on nyght han hys rest!
(XIV-XV, #118, pp. 106-07)

In addition, it must be pointed out that not all lyrics, or types of lyrics, which do make use of contraries and paradox have been included in this dissertation. Perhaps a special section could be added containing miscellaneous moral sawes which do not have transitoriness as their subject, but which, nevertheless, make extensive use of contraries and paradox, which are so congenial to their epigrammatic form. Examples of such sawes are the couplet on youth and honor: "He that in yowth no vertu wyll yowes, / in aege all honor shall hym refuse" (XIV-XV, #86, p. 81); and the double couplet on "nothing":

Corpus Christi Coll. Oxford MS. 237
He that spendes mych & getes nothing,
And owthe myche & hathe nothing,
And lokes in his porse & fyndes nothing,
He may be sorry and saie nothing.
Quothe K.L.
(XIV-XV, #86, p. 81)

More lengthy examples include epitaphs (such as Index 237) and the following thirteenth-century piece on will and wit:

Cotton MS. Caligula A. ix

Hwenne-so wil wit ofer-stieth
Hwenne is wil and wit for-lore,
Hwenne-so wil his hete hieth
Hwenne-so wil his nowiht wit icore.
Ofte wil to seorze s特长,
Bute zif hit him wite to-fore,
Ac hwenne-so wil to wene *wrieth, (turn aside)
He *ofo of wisdom is to-tore. (coif, head covering)
(XIII, #39, p. 65)

On the extent or prominence of contraries and paradox in extant anonymous Middle English lyrics, then, the following general observations may be made. Some subjects which are chosen by the lyricists as objects of praise (or dispraise) by their very nature demand the use of contraries and paradox to one degree or another. These are paradoxes of the faith per se: the Eucharist, Trinity, Resurrection, or several of these. Some Middle English lyrics do not make use of contraries and paradox, even though their subjects—love, women, transitoriness and death, Mary, Church feasts, Christ's suffering—could be and are elsewhere treated by means of contraries and paradox. Furthermore, several moral sawes (and perhaps other types of poems) are preserved on miscellaneous subjects (not the major subjects treated in Middle English short verse) which are notable for their use of contraries and paradox. Other poems on miscellaneous subjects contain neither contraries nor paradox. Some whole groups of poems may be singled out as not characterized by contraries and paradox (except, perhaps, for circumlocution): practical
verse, convivial verse, narratives, and folk-type poetry. Nevertheless, the number of poems treated in this dissertation and the number which could also have been included confirm the thesis that contraries and paradox are essential to medieval short poetry. In the majority of the poems printed in representative collections of Middle English lyrics, contraries and paradox function as subject matter, as a means of developing the subject matter as an object of praise or dispraise, and as a device in structure and form.
PLEAS NOTE:

Print on pages 453-484 and 489-490 is extremely small as received. Filmed in the best possible way.

UNIVERSITY MICROFILMS.
APPENDIX I

Index 21

Bod. Lib. MS Douce 302

What tythynge bryngest vs, messange,
Of Cristis borth this New Eris Day?

1 A babe was born of hye cawere,
A Prince of Pese that ever schal be;
Off heuen and eurch and angelis al,
In monksynde ye now becume.

What tythynge bryngest vs, messange?
A fawnt that was born of onyere
But as ben and schul be sy.

5 That Lord that al thyng mad of night
Is mon becume for mon lioue,
Fowr with his blood he schul he bught
From bale to blys that is above.

2 A seele selcouth hit is to se:
The burd that had this borne borne
And maydyn is as wes beforene.
Seche wondur tythynget ye now here: 12
That mayden and moner ye won yfeste
And lady vs of bye array.

4 These lounde ladde con gretre her chylde:
'Mayle, Sun, halle, Broder, halle, Yader dere!'
'Halle, daughter, halle, suster, halle, moder myldi!' 24
This brynyng was on cync manere.
Sech wo[n]der tythynget [ye may here:]
This gretynge was of so he cherche
That many pros he turnyd to pley. 28

Index 105

Harley MS. 2253

1 A wayle whyt see whalliss bon,
A grate in goldie pat goudly shou,
A tortle pat min herte is on,
In toones trewe.

2 When heo is glad,
of al þis wold namore ye bad
þen heo wip hire synn onon bistad,
wipoute stri,þe care þat íches ye yhred
y wyte a wyf.

5 Hyre heere hauwel wounded se wywse,
hire bende browen, þat brenghe bilasse;
hire cowlly mouthe þat nihte cunse
In suche mype he were;
y wolde change syn for his
þat is here fere.

6 Wolde hyre fere heo so freo
aþ wyrpes were þat þo myhte beo,
aþ for on y wolde rewe þeþ,
wipoute cheþ;
from helyne to henee and swene to see
snys non se zeeþ
me hale so freo.
Whose wolde of lioue be trewe, do lyynge me.

7 Herekne me, y ou telle,
in inuch wondryng for wo y wyllie,
yne no fyr so hot in halle
al to mon
þat louue derne ant dar nout telle
what heym ye on.

8 Ich vnon hire wel ant heo me wo;
yches hire freud ant heo my fo;
þe þunchep min herte wol breke atwo
for scoorw ant myke.
In Codis greting note heo go,
þat wayle whyte.
All women have virtues noble & excellent
Who can perceive that they do offend
daily they please God with good intent.
Seldom they displeaseth her husband to their lives end.
Always to please them they do intend;
never any found in them such conditions they have more or less.

What man can perceive that women be evil
any man that hatethwyf/grejtly will the prayer
for wyfes they abhorre wth all thevy wyl
prudence and advertiseth they vse always
fooly wrayte & crueltie they hate as men say
mewes & all vertue they pratyse over
sin to avoyde vertues they do procure.

Sum men spake much evil women
truly therfore they be to blame
nothing. A man say chekk in them
hastoundently. they have of grace & good fame
Lakyng, few vertues to a good name
in them fynd ye. All constantees
they lack perfyt. all shrewdnes a I gesse.

Three men speak much evil women
truly therfore they are to blame
nothing. A man say chekk in them
hastoundently. they have of grace & good fame
Lakyng, few vertues to a good name
in them fynd ye. All constantees
they lack perfyt. all shrewdnes a I gesse.

In fortunate
That. wo to my fate,
That, wo to my fate,
Oute of mesure
My lyfe I hate;
Thus desperate;
In suche pore estate
Do I endure.

Of other Cure
Am I not sure
Thus to endure
To hard, certain;
Suche ye my wyf he,
I woe esure
What creature
May have more pyn? (x)

But in substante,
Moyn allegiance
Of my greuance
Can I nat fynde;
Right so my chaunce
With displeasance
Doth me suauce;
And thus an ende.
Explicit.

XIV-XV, #173, pp. 162-63.
As I walked me this endure day
to be grene wode for to play
& all hapyness to put away
my-self alone.

Ther was neuer modur bac hedde s ayne
therefor I pray the, son, ne morne,
but be still alone."

'Son,' she sayd, 'I have be borne
to saue mankynd that was forlorne;
therefor I pray the, son, ne morne,
but be still alone.'

'Son,' she sayd, 'let it be in thai thought,
for manye gile is not with-sought;
for thy art he be hath all wroght,
& I wonder alone.'

'Son,' she sayd, 'let it be in thai thought,
for manye gile is not with-sought;
for thy art he be hath all wroght,
& I wonder alone.'

B.M. Addit. MS. 5645
Alone, alone, alone, alone, alone;
Here I sit alone, alas! alone.

1 As I walked me this endure day
to be grene wode for to play
& all hapyness to put away
my-self alone.

2 As I walkyd vndir grene wode bowe
I sawe a maide feyre l-now;
& child she happid, she song, she lough--
& child wepid alone.

3 'Son,' she sayd, 'I have be borne
to saue mankynd that was forlorne;
therefor I pray the, son, ne morne,
but be still alone.'

4 'Moder, me thynkith it is cyrr ill
that men [me] sekyth for to spill,
for then to save it is my will;
therefor I can hitter alone.'

5 'Son,' she sayd, 'let it be in thai thought,
for manye gile is not with-sought;
for thy art he be hath all wroght,
& I wonder alone.'

MS Douce 78
(Sum. Catalog. No. 21652)

1 As Reason rylyde my Becheles synde,
by weyse & wyldernes as y haddo wente,
a solemne cite fortyngd me to fynne;
to turne her-to weys myne entente.

2 'The kyngis sonne,' echas saido, 'is dede,
and kyng of kyngis his fadur is,
y y o his modur, he loll in rede.
my son is go, my lyo & my blys.

3 Ther was neuer modur þat lyfte suche a gode be-hynge,
so pethely alowyne without trewe;
bethe wolde hace laste hur mynde,
and ofte tymes have creyde 'alas!'

4 ffilus Regis, myne cume dere childe,
y lokyde on hym and hym behynde.
y sonde, as þi modur, a solut yse.
y soonde, I tyll done in þe teilde,
y wolde have spekdyne mystre.

5 I criède þo dide myne owne sone dere;
I swette, y soowze, y saido 'alas!'
y soner bowe ye carefull ware--
y mydor, my broer, my spoune ye was.
y wyne help, myne scour and all my dere,
nowe without broper and spowce y moothe hem pas,

6 'I lokyde upp on-to my childe,
y criede one þe true & bade hange
þe moder by þe childe þat neuer was fylyde.
ob orde, a-lasse! þu doyste me wrange!
y myne þu slyeste, alasse þe whylle!

7 Thou sth, thou crosse, howe durst thou be
The Instrument to hong thy maker vou?
Voto his fadere [y] may appelle the.

8 Thou tree, thou crosse, howe durst thou be
The Instrument to hong thy maker vou?
The sth that thou receavedest that gentill bloud
Voto his fadere [y] may appelle the.

9 Thou sth, thou crosse, howe durst thou be
The Instrument to hong thy maker vou?
Thou were the cause of my sones woe--
No cause, but help that it so be.

10 Thou sth, thou crosse, howe durst thou be
The Instrument to hong thy maker vou?
Thou were the cause of my sones woe--
No cause, but help that it so be.

11 Thou sth, thou crosse, howe durst thou be
The Instrument to hong thy maker vou?
Thou were the cause of my sones woe--
No cause, but help that it so be.

12 Thou sth, thou crosse, howe durst thou be
The Instrument to hong thy maker vou?
Thou were the cause of my sones woe--
No cause, but help that it so be.

13 Thou sth, thou crosse, howe durst thou be
The Instrument to hong thy maker vou?
Thou were the cause of my sones woe--
No cause, but help that it so be.

14 Thou sth, thou crosse, howe durst thou be
The Instrument to hong thy maker vou?
Thou were the cause of my sones woe--
No cause, but help that it so be.

15 Thou sth, thou crosse, howe durst thou be
The Instrument to hong thy maker vou?
Thou were the cause of my sones woe--
No cause, but help that it so be.

16 Thou sth, thou crosse, howe durst thou be
The Instrument to hong thy maker vou?
Thou were the cause of my sones woe--
No cause, but help that it so be.

17 Thou sth, thou crosse, howe durst thou be
The Instrument to hong thy maker vou?
Thou were the cause of my sones woe--
No cause, but help that it so be.

18 Thou sth, thou crosse, howe durst thou be
The Instrument to hong thy maker vou?
Thou were the cause of my sones woe--
No cause, but help that it so be.

19 Thou sth, thou crosse, howe durst thou be
The Instrument to hong thy maker vou?
Thou were the cause of my sones woe--
No cause, but help that it so be.
Mortuus est my sovereign lord,
In index 404—Continued

Index 404—Continued

9 Thou scourge, with cordes thou brak the skyne
With hard knolling, I cry vpone thes
Ye bete my somne that never did synne;
Why bete thou hym & spare me?
Mote he not the? thou woldest not byne,
Thou terest hym skyne & wold not lett.
Thou myght not sett the poynt of a pyne
Upone bole skyne, so thou hym bett.
All bloody was the brightnes of his bles
Thou medist it blak or thou woldest sett.
ffeder, one thi somne have pety,
Sfor filius Regis mortuus est.

10 Curyd Iowes, why dye ye ?ukses?
How durate ye ale yeore savynoure?
When he schall deme þen schall ye curse;
Ye casste not hyde you from his scherpe schoure.
All oþer creatureþo þey ar petesvene;
þe some, þe clowdez, for his doloure,
yn tokenyng þei changyd & murtryd yll vasse
When ye dyde hym þis dynonoure.
The ærche quakyd, boche temple & towre,
þat here you synful provde & þrete.
þe planetis changed & uned doloure—
filius Regis mortuus est.

11 Mortuus est my soverene lordes,
ded is my dere childe, alasal
Nowe you may wake
Thou lassest it blak or thou woldest sette.
ffeder, one thi somne have pety,
Sfor filius Regis mortuus est.

12 Nowe, sadur of heurns & celesstalle leche,
y comende all my gyandace to þi grete myyte,
þi grace and powere, hertely
ome or þat y dre, of my swete som to have
þo somnyde a voice from heuen in fay,
yne þat vertuys virginys breoste,
"þo schalte se þi swete none and say,
filius Regis in a lyve ec non mortuus est."
Explicit.

Harley MS 2253

1 Bytwe ne Marsh ant Auerll
when spraye biginnere to spryngye,
þe lutele fole hep hire yl
on hyre lud to synge.
Ich libbe in lowe-longinge
for semelost of alle syre;
he may me blisse bringe;
icham in hire baundoun.
An bendy hep ichhaue yhent,
ichet from heuene it is me set;
from alle wymen mi lowe is leste,
and lyht on Alpoum.

2 On beu hire her is fayr ynoh,
hire browe browne, hire eye blake;
þe fayr is me lole, þe middel smale ant vel wynake.
Bot he me wolde to hire take
forte buene hire owen make
longe to lyuen schulle forsmake
ant fayre fallen adon.
An bendy hap, &c.

3 Whistes when y vende ant wake,
for þi wynge wynge vyns uue;
leued, al for þine maka
longinge is ylent on om.
In world yu se so wyte mon
þat el hire bounte telle con;
hire eyre is whitore þen þe evyn,
ant feyrreast may in toune.
An bendy, &c.

4 Icham for woyng al forwake,
very se water in worre,
lest eyy reue me my make
ychable yzyred sorre.
Retere is bolen wyyle sorre
þen mornyng euermore.
Gynest vnder grez,
herkene to my roum.

An bendy, &c.
Brook, #4, p. 33.

Index 515

1 Bytwe ne Marsh ant Auerll
when spraye biginnere to spryngye,
þe lutele fole hep hire yl
on hyre lud to synge.
Ich libbe in lowe-longinge
for semelost of alle syre;
he may me blisse bringe;
icham in hire baundoun.
An bendy hep ichhaue yhent,
ichet from heuene it is me set;
from alle wymen mi lowe is leste,
and lyht on Alpoum.

2 On beu hire her is fayr ynoh,
hire browe browne, hire eye blake;
þe fayr is me lole, þe middel smale ant vel wynake.
Bot he me wolde to hire take
forte buene hire owen make
longe to lyuen schulle forsmake
ant fayre fallen adon.
An bendy hap, &c.

3 Whistes when y vende ant wake,
for þi wynge wynge vyns uue;
leued, al for þine maka
longinge is ylent on om.
In world yu se so wyte mon
þat el hire bounte telle con;
hire eyre is whitore þen þe evyn,
ant feyrreast may in toune.
An bendy, &c.

4 Icham for woyng al forwake,
very se water in worre,
lest eyy reue me my make
ychable yzyred sorre.
Retere is bolen wyyle sorre
þen mornyng evermore.
Gynest vnder grez,
herkene to my roum.

An bendy, &c.

Index 563

1 Bi a wode as i gon ryde,
Walkynge al mi-self alone,
A boke of briddes bad me abyde,
Bl-cause þer songe me þen one,
Amonge þe famoues eurchonone,
To on gret heede I gan tak,
For he seyde with rerdful same,
'For þi synnes a-Mendes make!'"
3 ye bridde sible vol do be vo
When yow lokesent tis els;
Whom bi lyf is clese l-go,
Yow wast here whoder to bale or bils.
I tynde no clerck on telle me bis;
Perfore seerse b-s-sinner to make.
Whom yow Pentext to doun es-
Nowe mynde of his & amende make!

7 zif yow hawe don a dally symme
where-bow bi soulde scholde be schent,
Al ye ser yow wolt lese her-inne
In derfens til hit beo lent;
D a Frese yow wolt hent,
Bi pariich prest for schame for-sakke.
Of alle sune doles, verasment,
I rede bi beo wys, & amender make.

11 Loke yow bare be fair and euen,
Bwax yow be lord, Bayli, onet Neire,
For ofte man meten at vm-set steven;
Comynte not bi materon to payere.
Bis world bis but a chirie-feire,
Now is hit in sewen, now vol hit haile;
To-day arct lord, to-worn is bin herse-
Perfore I rede, you amender make.

Index 361--Continued

5 Ensamplwe may sen al day,
As crist schewes a-wong ve ele;
To-day zif yow be stout and gay,
To-wern yow lust ded bi p-ze wallie.
Mert becom to crite and calle,
Hit is to late bi leue to take,
Be war of folye et yow faille,
And for bi synnes amender make!

8 zif you be kyng and crowne here,
And al bis world be ar bi wul.
Sitz schalltou be pore as yow was ear,
And yat you knowest bi puser skyl:
A schette schal bi body buls,
And huyde bi corrs for synnes sake.
Perfore repence, yow hast do ille,
And for bi synnes amender make!

10 Bwax you haue riches grete plente,
In world while yow liuent here,
God make bi mitsebun as well as ee,
And haurst zou hove l-fithe dere;
Bwax be bi mouzt bi worlides pere,
Do biw no wrong, for synnes sake!
To mouzt shal curete bi proude chere:
Perfore I rede, you amender make.

Index 611

1 Crist maketh to man a faire present,
Biis blyde body wip loue brent;
bat billeful body biis lyf haf lent,
Per loue of man bat symne haf blent.
O loue, loue, what haf yow met?
Me plinket bat loue to wript is west.

3 bi myldes bomeis loue haf to-drave,
Be myldes biis feet han al to-drave;
Bi lord of loue loue haf now slaine--
Whane loue is strong it haf no lave.

5 For pes bat herte is leyd to wede;
Mysch was be loue bat herte ve kede,
bat Neve herte, bat harte hledde--
bat herte blude more souls feele.

7 Loue, loue, where schalt you wone?
Bi wonyng-tede is bee bi-name,
For criete herte bat was bi boome--
Biis in deed, now baste you noome.
Lowe, loue, whil dolat you so;
Lowe, bow brekkit syn herte a-two.

9 So Inclitche loue was newere noon;
Bat utip vel marie & loon,
And also witen bat everytichon,
Bat loue wip hym is mad at oon.
Hymn for Lady and her lady's grace
And say for me—
That which I bow down—
With humble heart a-lyse.

And her mercy, & her-won a-syde
Unto thee do set a-syde.

[Note:副会长's type]

That y' shall be blessed in every manner place
And not for any man's desire
That y' shall be comforted & purchase
Your goodly body in every degree

Hymn for Lady and her lady's grace
And say for me—
That which I bow down—
With humble heart a-lyse.

And her mercy, & her-won a-syde
Unto thee do set a-syde.

[Note:副会长's type]
In dey 769
Trinity Coll. Camb. MS. 1157

1 Fare well, this world! I take my love for euer,
I am arrested to sperre at goddes face.
O myghtyfull god, ye knowest that I had loue
Than all this world, to have one houre space
To make a-syche for all my grete trespase.
My hart, alas! is broken for that sorowe,
[son be this day that shall not be to-morrow]

2 This lyfe, I see, is but a cherey feyre;
All thyngis passe and so most I aligare.
To-day I eat full sylay in a cherynt,
Tyll sometil she knocyed at my gate,
And on-sawyed he sayd to me, chek-mate!
I lo! how sorely he makest a duresse—
And wormys to fede, he hath here leyd my corne.

3 Speke softe, ye folk, for I am leyd asleep!
I hawe my dreame, in trust is moche treson.
ffrom thes hold feynye wold I make a lepe,
But my wysdom is turnyd into fehle resoun:
I see this worlds joye lastich but a season.
Wold to god, I had remembyrd me before
I say no more but be ware of a horse!

4 This febyll world, so fals and so unsteadie,
Promethe his lowes for a lyclif whyle,
But at the last he yeveth hem a bable.
Whene his permynt [trowch is torned in-to gile].
Experience cauthch me he trouch to compose,
Thynkyng this, to lace alas! that I began.
For foly & hope diseeyeth many a man.

5 Farewell, my frendys! the tide ablyth no man:
I motest departe here & so shall ye,
But in this passage the bestes song but I can
Is Requiem Eternam—I pray God grant it me!
When I haue endid all my aduere, Grame me in paradise to haue a mancyon,
That shee dyed his blode for my redemption.
Seate more quic in domino meriturum
Hunllatus sum vermis.

Text within brackets supplied from Balliol Coll. MS. 354,
XV, #149, pp. 236-37.

Index 769

1 Go, lyttel byll, & doe me recommende
No-to my lady with godelye courteysye;
ffor, trusty messenger, I the sende.
Pray her that sche make puruyance;
ffor my love, through her sufferance,
In her Bosome desyreth to reste,
wyth off all women I love her beste.

2 sahe ye lyly off redolence,
Mych only may doe me pleasure;
she is the rose off confyndence,
Most conffortyg to my nature.
I wyll but love and seeuer me—
Goe, lyttel byll, and sey hur so.

3 shee rested in my remembrance,
Day other nyght ther-so I be;
It ye my specyall desyre
for to remembyr hur betwee;
she is empoyndy in ych degree
With yffity of nature incomparable,
And eke of grace incomparable.

4 The cause befor, yf she wyll wytt,
Wyll I presume on such a flowre
easy,off hur, for ye ye l-wytt,
she is be feyrest paramour
And to man in ych langour
Most souerayne medrtye.
Ther-ffor I love but flowre of pryce.

5 Her betwee holy to dyscrye
Who is she that may esuffyce?
ffor-ffor no clerk bat is on lyse,
wyth she is only withoutyn wyce;
Her flavour excettith the filowr-olycye.
Afore all flowres I have hur choise
Entertelye in syn herte to close.

6 Hyr I beseche, seth I not feyne
But only put me in hur grace,
That offe me she not dydeune,
Takynge regarde at old trespase;
seth syn entent in every place
shall be to doe hur obeysance
And hur to love saunce varyance.

MS Douce 310
(Sum. Catal. No. 21900)

1 Go, lyttel byll, & doe me recommende
No-to my lady with godelye courteysye;
ffor, trusty messenger, I the sende.
Pray her that sche make puruyance;
ffor my love, through her sufferance,
In her Bosome desyreth to reste,
wyth off all women I love her beste.

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I wyll but love and seeuer me—
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Day other nyght ther-so I be;
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But only put me in hur grace,
That offe me she not dydeune,
Takynge regarde at old trespase;
seth syn entent in every place
shall be to doe hur obeysance
And hur to love saunce varyance.
By reason of two and poore of one
This tyme God and man was set at one.

1 God against nature the three wonders halthe wrought;
   First of the vile earthe the mad man without man,
   Then woman without woman of man maid of nought,
   And so man without man in woman than.
   Thus, lo, God and man together began;
   As two for to joinen together in one.
   As at this good tyme to be sett at one;
   Thus God began.
   This world for to forme and to increase man

2 Angell in heaven for offence was dammed,
   And man also for beinge variable;
   Whether should be saved was examined.
   Man or yet angell; then God was greble
   To answer for man, for man was not able,
   And said man had wonyon and angell had none,
   Wherefore God and man shulde be set at one.
   Thanke we his than

3 The devill clamed man by bargain as this:
   For an appel, he said, man was bought and solde;20
   God answered and said the bargain was his:
   'Withe myne to be thyn how durst thoue be so bolde?
   Han syne, syne thyn; wherefore thos art now told
   Thos bought nought; then takle nought; thi
   Bargain is [don;]
   Wherefore God and man shal be set at one.'
   Nowe blessed be he,
   For we that are bounde, loe, nowe are maid free.

4 Betwene God and man ther was great disteunce
   For man said that God shulde haue kep him vpryght,
   And God said man maid al the variance,
   For th'apple to sett his commandement so ligght;
   Wherefore, of his mercye spartinge the ryght.
   He thought God and man shulde be set at one.
   Seing that God and man was set at one,
   What kinde was this,
   To agree with man and the fault not his!

5 Withe man and woman ther was great travers:
   Man eald to the woman, 'Woe myght thou b e !'
   'May,' quod th the woman, 'Why d o st thoue revers e ?
   For womans entlinge woe be to thee.
   For God [made] man the heade and ruler of me .
   Thus God sawe man and woman were not at one;
   He thought In a woman to sett thame at one
   To oure solace;
   His mercye he granted for our trespass.

6 Of womanhede, lo, ther degrees thare b e :
   Widowheede, wedlocke, and virginitie.
   Widoweheede clamed heauen; her title is this:
   By oppressions that makalle suffretche she,
   And wedlocke by generation heauen hires
   should be,
   And virgine clame by chastete alone.
   Then God thought a woman shulde set them
   at one
   And cease ther strike,
   For Marie was maken, widow, and wife.

    --

    Hey, lewde, se-stereere bryght,
    Goddes moder, etty wyght,
    Mayden ever wyrst and late
    Of heuwerichely sly rate.
    Brylk aus pat bau woman in spel
    Of ðe angels moub kald Gabriel.
    In gryht ouw settte and syblyd wron shone,
    ðat turnt abackward eres none,
    Guilty women bond vyhynd.
    Bryng lyth tyl boem pat boeth bylynd,
    Put wroc ouw oure suyne
    And eru ouw alle wyne.
    Show þat þou art moder one,
    And he wor þe taker oure buse
    þat vor ouw þby child by-com
    And of þe oure londe non.
    Mayde one þou were myd chylde
    Among alle so myld;
    Of sinne ouw quite on hante
    And make ouw seake and chaste,
    Lyf þou zyf ouu close,
    Hey syker ouw zarke and len
    þat we lesum y-soe
    And ever baseline.

    To under, cryt and holy gos p by þone and herlynges;
    To þro persons and o god, o menake and worsyhpynge.

    --

    XIV, 117, pp. 20-21.
I have all my her heart.

2 Have all my her heart where-euyre I goo—
     Hert, body, and all my myzt.

3 Hit ye a pinke bat me can nye,
   But if ye hold bat me have hyst;
   ffor trescore toge, avyli not pi thee,
   I say to yow, snye swyt wytz!

   For all my hert and be in peye.

   Sufre be paynes bat I may; it is my fader wyll.

   Sufre be paynes bat I may; it is my fader wyll.

   Sufre be paynes bat I may; it is my fader wyll.

   Sufre be paynes bat I may; it is my fader wyll.

   Sufre be paynes pat I may; it is my fader will.

   Sufre be paynes pat I may; it is my fader will.

   Sufre be paynes pat I may; it is my fader will.

   Sufre be paynes pat I may; it is my fader will.

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   Sufre be paynes pat I may; it is my fader will.

   Sufre be paynes pat I may; it is my fader will.
I have a new garden,  
& new be begun;  
suich an offer garden  
know I not under sunne.

I have a song sweet  
fer be sondyn be se,  
man be be drawryis  
bat the sente me.

3 she sente me be brer  
with-outyn any ynde,  
she bed me loue my leman  
with-out longyn.

5 how xuld any brer  
ben with-outyn ynde?  
how xuld y loue my leman  
with-out longyn?

7 Quan be brer was on-bred,  
pan hadde it non ynde,  
quan be maydyn beth bat che louit,  
che le with-out longying.

Index 1303

Sloane MS. 2593

1 I have a new garden,  
& new be begun;  
suich an offer garden  
know I not under sunne.

2 Quan I hadde hem griffid  
alle at her wille,  
pe wyn & pe ale  
che deede in fille.

3 Quan be brer was on-bred,  
pan hadde it non ynde,  
quan be maydyn beth bat che louit,  
che le with-out longying.

5 I griffid her  
yrst vp in her home;  
& be hat day xx wokkes  
it was quyk in her womb.

6 bat day twelfs month,  
bat maybe I mette;  
che sayd it was a per robert,  
but non per Ione.

Quan fee cherey was a flour,  
pan hadde it non ston.  
quan fee dowes was an ey,  
pan hadde it non ben.

I'm walking here alone, she says,  
Amang my father's trees,  
And you may let me walk alone,  
Kind sir, now, if you please.

He said unto his servant man,  
Were it not against the law,  
I would take her to my own bed,  
And lay her next the va'.

He says, My pretty lady,  
I pray lend me your hand,  
And you'll have drum and trumpets  
Always at your command.

And fifty men to guard you with,  
That well their swords can draw,  
And we'll hatch lie in me bed,  
And thou's ly next the va'.

Then said the pretty lady,  
I pray, tell me your name.  
My name is Captain Wdderburn,  
A servant to the king.

Tho' thy father and his men were here,  
Of him I'd not stand in we;  
But wou'd take thee into my bed,  
And lay the next the va'.
He took her to his lodging house,  
His landlady look beauty—
Since many pretty ladies  
In Edinburgh I've seen;  
But such a pretty face as thine  
In it I never saw.
Go make her up a down bed,  
And lay her near the wa'.

O, I must have to my supper  
A cherry without a stone;  
And I must have to my supper  
A chicken without a bone;  
And I must have to my supper  
A bird without a ga';  
Before that I lie in your bed,  
Either at stock or wa'.'

Hold away from me, kind sir,  
I pray you give me o'er;  
For I will not go till your bed,  
Till you answer me questions four.
Questions four you must tell me,  
And that is two and two,  
Or I will not lie in your bed,  
Neither at stock or wa'.

What is greater than the grass?  
What's higher than the trees?  
And what is worse than woman's voice?  
What's deeper than the seas?  
A sparrow's horn, a priest unborn,  
This night to join us twa;  
Before that I lie into your bed,  
Either at stock or wa'.

The priest he's standing at the door,  
Just ready to come in,  
No man can say that he was born,  
No man without a sin;
A hole cut in his mother's side,  
He from the same did fa';  
So we will both lie in an bed,  
And thou's lie next the wa'.

I have four sisters beyond the sea,  
Para-mara, dictum, done.  
And they did send four presents to me,  
Para-mara, quatum, paradise, tempus.
Para-mara, dictum, done.

How can there be a bird without e'er a bone?  
Para-mara, dictum, 4c.  
How can there be a cherry without e'er a stone?  
Para-mara, quatum, 4c.

Hold away from me, kind sir,  
I pray you let me be;  
For I will not go to your bed  
Till you dress me dishes three.
Dishes three you must do to me,  
If I should eat them a',  
Before that I lie in your bed,  
Either at stock or wa'.

When the cherry is in the bloom,  
I am sure it has no stone;  
And when the chicken's in the shell,  
I'm sure it has no bone;  
The dove is a gentle bird,  
It flies without a ga';  
And we'll lie both within an bed,  
And thou's lie next the wa'.

You must get me some winter fruit  
That in December grew;  
And I must have a silk mantle,  
That raft was ne'er ca'd throw;  
What bird sings best and wood buds first,  
That dew doth on them fa';  
And then I'll lie into your bed,  
Either at stock or wa'.

Hold away from me, kind sir,  
And do not me perplex;  
For I'll not lie into your bed  
Till you answer me questions six;
Questions six you must tell me,  
And that is four and two,  
Before that I lie into your bed,  
Either at stock or wa'.

Death is greater than the grass;  
Sky is higher than the trees;  
The devil's worse than woman's voice,  
Hell's deeper than the seas;  
A sparrow's horn you may well get  
There's one on llike pa';  
And two upon the gab of it,  
And you shall have them a'.

O, little did the lady think,  
That morning when she rase,  
That it was to be the last night  
Of her maiden days;  
But there is not in the king's realm  
To be found a blyther tva;  
And now they both lie in one bed,  
And she lies next the wa'.

I pray you let me be;  
For I will not go to your bed  
Till you dress me dishes three.
Dishes three you must do to me,  
If I should eat them a',  
Before that I lie in your bed,  
Either at stock or wa'.

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That in December grew;  
And I must have a silk mantle,  
That raft was ne'er ca'd throw;  
What bird sings best and wood buds first,  
That dew doth on them fa';  
And then I'll lie into your bed,  
Either at stock or wa'.

Hold away from me, kind sir,  
And do not me perplex;  
For I'll not lie into your bed  
Till you answer me questions six;
Questions six you must tell me,  
And that is four and two,  
Before that I lie into your bed,  
Either at stock or wa'.

Death is greater than the grass;  
Sky is higher than the trees;  
The devil's worse than woman's voice,  
Hell's deeper than the seas;  
A sparrow's horn you may well get  
There's one on llike pa';  
And two upon the gab of it,  
And you shall have them a'.

O, little did the lady think,  
That morning when she rase,  
That it was to be the last night  
Of her maiden days;  
But there is not in the king's realm  
To be found a blyther tva;  
And now they both lie in one bed,  
And she lies next the wa'.

The first it was a bird without e'er a bone;  
Para-mara, dictum, 4c.
The second it was a cherry without e'er a stone;  
Partum, quatum, 4c.
The third it was a blanket without e'er a thread;  
Para-mara, dictum, 4c.
The fourth it was a book which no man could read;  
Partum, quatum, 4c.

How can there be a blanket without e'er a thread?  
Para-mara, dictum, 4c.
How can there be a book which no man can read?  
Partum, quatum, 4c.
Index 1303 (Analogue)—Continued

When the bird's in the shell, there is no bone;
Para-mars, dictum, &c.
When the cherry's in the bud, there is no stone;
Para-mars, dictum, &c.
When the blanket's in the fleece, there is no thread;
Para-mars, dictum, &c.
When the book's in the press, no man can read;
Para-mars, dictum, &c.


Index 1402

1 I wolde witen of sum wys wyhte
   Witterly what his world were:
   Hit fare b a foules fith,
   Now is hit hene, now is hit here,
   He he never so muche of min,
   Now he be on benche, nou he be on here;
   And he be never so war and wight,
   Now he se, now heo we fere,
   Now is on proud wip-outen peere,
   Now is he sele l-sect not by;
   And whom wol alle bing hertily here,
   His world fare as a fantasy.
   2 his monnes curs, we may wel kenne,
   Aroysep fat and gep down west;
   Be byrnes to-to be see beiot renne;
   And hit is never be more al-mant;
   Wyndes Rosehep her and henne,
   In enous and enys is non ariet;
   Whom his wol stunte, ho wot or whenne,
   But only god in grounde greut;
   Be corre in ou in euer greut,
   Now bi-droppet, now al druize;
   But eche gone gite forp as a gest,
   His world fare as a fantasy.
   3 Kunredes com, & kunredes gon,
   As loyseb generaciones;
   But alle bee passeb euerichon,
   For all hear preparaciones;
   Sum are for-rate close as bon
   A-wong alle maner naccious;
   So schul men benteke ve no-ping on
   Bot sou bon be ocupaciones;
   And alle bese disputacions
   Idelyche all ve occupe,
   For crist makepe be creations,
   And his world fare as a fantasy.
   4 Which is Mou, ho wot, and what,
   Whapber bat he be out or nought?
   Of Erpe & Eyr growe p vp a gent,
   And so dop Non whom al his scouth;
   baux mon be waxen gret and falt,
   Non melchep a-tey do dop a moht;
   Monnes mih t his worp a Hat,
   But nuyzep bis-salt and turnep to mout.
   Ho wot, saue he bat al bab wrouet,
   Wher mon bi-comet whom he schal dye?
   Ho knowe bi dode oute boce bi bount!
   For his world farep as a fantasy.
   5 Dypb mon, and beastes dye,
   And al is on Occaston;
   And alle a dep be on bope drye,
   And han on Incarnation;
   Save bat be peep meere eleyze,
   As ile b companyon.
   Ho wot sit monnes soute steyze,
   And bestes souls synketh down?
   Who knowe Beastes entencium,
   On hear creatour how pei criye,
   Save only god bat knowep here soue?
   For his world ferep as a fantasy.
   6 Vche secte hopep to be save,
   Baldely bi heore bi-leceu;
   And vchon vppon God hoo cruwee—
   Whi schuldus God wi h hem hreue?
   Vhon tollweb bat opur Raue,
   But alle heo chespep God for cheve,
   And hope in God vchone pei have,
   And bi berve wic horeche vorching greue.
   His monn maters men don meue,
   Sechen hear witten hou and why;
   But Godes Herli ve alle bi-heuw[bp],
   For his world farep as a fantasy.
   7 For buu monen stubbale & aere heore wiitre,
   And meuep mats mony and feele;
   Summe leuep on hou, sum leuep on hit,
   As children learnep for to spele.
   But non seep non bat a-bit,
   Whom stilly de wol on hym stele.
   For he bat best hewe to sit,
   He is he help and hope of hele;
   For we is ende of worlde wele,--
   Vche lyf lake wher bat I ly—
   His world is fala, fikel and feele,
   And farep bot as a fantasy.
   8 Whap-to wilne we forte knowe
   Be pouyates of Godes priuete
   More ben hime lustes forte schowe
   We schulde not knowe in no dege;
   And Idel beost in forte blowe
   A Mastuer of diuinit.
   benk we lyue in forse her lowe,
   And God an heiz in Mageete;
   Of Material Mortualite
   Medie we & of no more Matuerie.
   Be more we trace be Trinite,
   Be more we faile in fantasy.
   84
In d ex 1402—C ontinued

9 But leu we vre dispuclousm, 
And leuwe on him pat al haj wrouzt; 
Ve move no[1] preue bi no resoun 
Hou he was born pat al ve boute; 
Worshippe we him in herte & boust, 
For he may turne kyndes vpsadoun, 
Pat alle kyndes made of nouzt. 
Whon al ve bokes ben forp brouht, 
And al ve craft of clergey, 
And al ve wites ben born-out nouzt, 
sit ve fereby as a fantasye.

10 Of fantasye in al ve fere, 
Olde & songe and alle fere; 
But make we mure & sle care, 
And worschipe we god whil ve ben here; 
Spendes ve good and loyral wpre, 
And vche non cherties opures cheere. 
Ve he was boren fat aly vpsadoun, 
Pate alle kyndes made of nouzt. 
Whon a l ve bokea ben forp brouht, 
And a l ve craft of clergey, 
And a l ve wites ben born-out nouzt, 
sit ve fereby as a fantasye.

11 Bi esample men may se, 
A grete tree groweth out of þe gronde; 
No þing a-badeth þe serpe wol be 
þan hit be hagge, grete, and rounde. 
Ribt þer wol Ronote þe selme tre, 
Whon elles hap naad his kynode asrounde; 
þan þere wroure rote suchere þre, 
þan serpe wol not encrece a pounde. 
þan wap þþ wanlep Non, hora, & hounde, 
From moun to moun þe wþe þenne we hit; 
And he wþe stunteþ but a stounde, 
For þis wþorld is but fantasye.

In d ex 1449

1 In a freh as y con fere fremede 
y founde a wel fey ofe fere; 
Heo gelysene as goode, 
Mene ne v.* ne gladly on gere. 
Ye wolde yse in world who hire kene, 
Þe burde bryght, set hire wil voare. 
Heo me bed go my gates lest hire gremede; 
Ne kepþe heo ne benyng here.

2 'Clopes y huue on fote caste, 
Sche as y may vore wip wynne; 
Butere is ben huymne boute laste 
Þen syde robes an syneke into wynne. 
Hawe ne y wil, ze yse pe voreaste; 
Afterwârd of þeke be hyane; 
Butere is make forevârden laste 
Þen afterwârd to vore an syneke.'

3 Of menyng ne munte you namore; 
Of menake þou were warpe, by my nyhte; 
You take an hond to holde þat y hote 
of all þat þe hauue blyght. 
Why þat y lop to leuven on cy lory; 
Lanorg þen my love were on þat lory? 
Anþere myhte arme þe so sore 
Þat nodle þe noht rede no ryht.'

4 Beter is taken a comeliche y clope 
In armes to causet anct to cluppe 
Þen a wroeghe yvedded so wroge 
Þah he me showe me nyhtþ his atcluppe. 
Þe batte red þat y con to ve bode 
Þat þou me take set þe toward huppe; 
Þah y shoure by treuþe anct oþe, 
Þat God hap shayed mey non atcluppe.

5 Such reed me wyhte speyclehy rewe 
When al yre to were me straht; 
Sone þou wolest vachen an neve, 
And take anoþer wiplane styte naht. 
Þenne michi benfren on bove, 
In vch an hyrd ben hasted ant forhâght, 
And ben ycastred from alle þat þe knowe, 
And bote cleveyen þer y hade claih.
1. In the vale of restles wynd
My spouse in chambre, ha! ha! ha!
I woode in my fayr lande,
A tree I sene, a buste was there,
I sene the buste, a tree was there,
A tree was there, a buste was there,
A buste was there, a tree was there,
A tree was there, a buste was there,
A buste was there, a tree was there,
A tree was there, a buste was there,
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A buste was there, a tree was there,
A tree was there, a buste was there,
A buste was there, a tree was there,
A tree was there, a buste was there,
Index 1504

1 In May hit murgub when hit dwayne
  in dwayne wiph pis duke's sleaves,
  and laf is lyht on lynde;
  bloemes broden on pis boxers,
  al pis wylde wythes wowses,
  so wel ych ynderlynde.
  Y not now so freseli flour
  see ladies bat bep bryht in bbour,
  wiph louse who sitche hem bynde;
  so worly wymmen are by west;
  one of hem ich berie best
  from Irlond into Ynde.

2 Wymen ware pis beree king
  bat shupoure here heurwe kyng,
  zef feole false nere,
  hau beob to red vpon heurwe red
  to louse yer me hem lasstes bed
  when heo shule frague fare.
  Lut in londe are to louse,
  þah me hem trewe trewe zene,
  for tricherie to zere;
  when trichbour heb is trewe yplhyt,
  byswyken he hæ þat suete wyht,
  þah he hire ðepe swere.

Index 1699

1 Theus doph hym bymes,
  and spakyn to synful mon:
  þi garlant is of grene,
  of floures many on;
  Myn of sharpe bernes,
  mrine hem it sikeb wone.

2 *pyn hondes stretez gloewd,
  white & close kep;
  Myn wip natles borle,
  on rode 6 eke my feet.

3 A-cro swou kesse styn amzes,
  when swou d充足est marwe;
  To me hastou non aw.
  but to worldez glorie:
  swyne for þe on rod,
  wiph þe leve wode,
  wiph grete tropis to-draw.

4 *oppyn þou hast þi syde,
  spakyn longe 6 wike,
  for swyn glorie 6 pride,
  and þi longe knyf-s-troucze--
  þou er of þe gat route:
  Myn wip sere sharpe
  y-stongen to þe herze;
  My body wip scowges swere
  hit-swongen al aboute.

5 al þat y polede on rode þe uere;
  To me wase shyme 6 serwe;
  Wel litel þou lowest me,
  and laese þou benest on me,
  an nurse 6 eke a-nowe.

6 *Sweze brojer, wel mytþou ase
  þiu paynes strouge in rode i two
  hause y þoled for lowe of þe;
  þat þat have wrouzt it me
  wai symghe wijne;
  be þou kynde pur charite,
  let þ þyme 6 lowe þou me,
  heurwe bilasse y shal swæ þe,
  þat lasteþ wy 6 co.'

Harley MS. 2253

1 Wymen ware þe berte þing
  bat shupoure here heurwe kyng,
  zef feole falsa nere,
  hau beob to red vpon heurwe red
  to louse yer me hem lasstes bed
  when heo shule frague fare.
  Lut in londe are to louse,
  þah me hem trewe trewe zene,
  for tricherie to zere;
  when trichbour heb is trewe yplhyt,
  byswyken he hæ þat suete wyht,
  þah he hire ðepe swere.

2 *pyn hondes stretez gloewd,
  white & close kep;
  Myn wip natles borle,
  on rode 6 eke my feet.

3 A-cro swou kesse styn amzes,
  when swou d充足est marwe;
  To me hastou non aw.
  but to worldez glorie:
  swyne for þe on rod,
  wiph þe leve wode,
  wiph grete tropis to-draw.

4 *oppyn þou hast þi syde,
  spakyn longe 6 wike,
  for swyn glorie 6 pride,
  and þi longe knyf-s-troucze--
  þou er of þe gat route:
  Myn wip sere sharpe
  y-stongen to þe herze;
  My body wip scowges swere
  hit-swongen al aboute.

5 al þat y polede on rode þe uere;
  To me wase shyme 6 serwe;
  Wel litel þou lowest me,
  and laese þou benest on me,
  an nurse 6 eke a-nowe.

6 *Sweze brojer, wel mytþou ase
  þiu paynes strouge in rode i two
  hause y þoled for lowe of þe;
  þat þat have wrouzt it me
  wai symghe wijne;
  be þou kynde pur charite,
  let þ þyme 6 lowe þou me,
  heurwe bilasse y shal swæ þe,
  þat lasteþ wy 6 co.'

Index 1861

1 Lesten ye come wip love to tounes,  
Wip blesse antic wip briddes rounes,  
He al his blisse brynghe.  
Dayesens in his dales,  
Notes suete of nyhtegales,  
Wch foul song singhe.  
He prestel of him pretepyt oo;  
Away in huer wynter wo  
When modestus springhe.  
His foules singhe ferly fele,  
Ant robotic on huer wynter wele,  
He al his gode ringhe.

2 He rose reycle his rode,  
He leues on he lyhte wode  
Waxes al his wille.  
He moone mundep hire bleo,  
He litle is losson to seeo,  
He fenyl ant he fille.  
Women his wilde drakes;  
Miles murgae huer neken,  
ase strem par strikep stille.  
Mody menepe, so dob mo;  
Ichor ycham on of po,  
For love par likes tille.

3 He mone munde hire lyht;  
So dob he seflu some bright,  
When briddes singe brene.  
Deuves donepe he doune;  
Deares wip huer dorne rounes,  
Dones forte deme;  
Worms wonepe yder cloude,  
Wynnen waxy powner groud,  
So wel hit wol hem sene.  
Sei ne shal woste wille of on  
His wanne wole y Wolfe forgou  
Ant wyht in wode be glewe.  
Brook, fl. pp. 43-44.

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Index 1914

1 Lyth and lytyne, both old and yung,  
Now the rose begane to sprenge;  
A fayrer rose to ov larlikyn  
Sprong ther newer in kynges lond.

2 W branchis of that rose ther ben,  
Of a madyn, Yary, hevyn queene;  
Oght of hyr tre[l]um the branch sprenge.  

3 Theo[ne] branch was of gret honoure:  
That bypyesd Mary shuld ber the flour,  
Ther cam an angell oght hevyn toure  
To breke the devilies bond;

4 The second branch was gret of nyght  
That sprong vpon Cristmes nyght;  
That sterre shone and leneghly nyght,  
That man schulde se it both day and nyght.  

5 The thrid branch gan spoyng and spred;  
il kynges tham to branch gan led  
Theo to Our lady in hure chylfled;

6 The fourth branch. It sprong to hell,  
The devilies powr for to fell,  
That no sove therin shuld dwell;  
The branch so blessedfully sprong.

6 The fifth branch, it was so mote,  
Yt spoyng to hevyn, both cropp and rote,  
In euery ball to ben ov our bot,  
So blessedly yt sprong.

7 The fün branch, It was so mote,  
Yt spoyng to hevyn, both cropp and rote,  
In euery ball to ben ov our bot,  
So blessedly yt sprong.

EEC, #175, pp. 131-32.

Index 1944

1 Loke well about, ye that louverh;  
Let nat your lustes leede yow to dotage;  
Be not easeryd on all thyng that ye se--  
Sampson the fort and Salomon the sage

2 I mene, of wesen, for all theyre cheres queynst,  
Trust ben nat to moche--theyre trouth ys but season;  
The feyteyn owerdwell can they peynt,  
Theyre stedfastness enduseth but a season;  
ffor they feyne frendlynes a wochen treson.  
And for they ar changeabylly naturally,

Decyudy were, for all theyre gret correge;  
Men deme hit ryhts that they see with ey;  
Beware, therefore: the blinde steth many a fly.

Trinity Coll. Cambridge MS. 599
Loue is soft, love is ever, love is good were.

Loue is muche tene, love is muchel kere.

Loue is blesse, love is bot zare.

Loue is wondred and wo, wip for to fare.

Loue is stalewe, and strong to striden on steede.

Loue is hard and hot as glo缚ide glede.

Loue makep nol sat wip teres to vede.

Loue is the softeste ping in herte ou alepe.

Loue is craft, love is good wip kere to kepe.

Loue is lea, love is lef, love is longinge.

Loue is fol, love is fast, love is frovinge.

Loue is welle, love is wo, love is gledede.

Loue is lif, love is leb, love sal houe fede.

Loue lae, love is wele, love is woe, love is good wip kere to kepe.

Loue makep in pe loond moni houre wip tele.

Loue I is fast, love I is longinge.

Loue I is fete, love I is hard langede.

Loue I is blesse, love I is bot zare.

Loue I is wele, love I is woe, love I is good wip kere to kepe.

Loue I is lea, love I is lef, love I is longinge.

Loue I is fol, love I is fast, love I is frovinge.

Loue I is humbled, love I is wele, love I is woe, love I is good wip kere to kepe.

Loue I is lea, love I is lef, love I is longinge.

Loue I is fol, love I is fast, love I is frovinge.

Loue I is fete, love I is hard langede.

Loue I is blesse, love I is bot zare.

Loue I is wele, love I is woe, love I is good wip kere to kepe.

Loue I is lea, love I is lef, love I is longinge.

Loue I is fol, love I is fast, love I is frovinge.

Loue I is humbled, love I is wele, love I is woe, love I is good wip kere to kepe.

Loue I is lea, love I is lef, love I is longinge.

Loue I is fol, love I is fast, love I is frovinge.

Loue I is fete, love I is hard langede.

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Loue I is fol, love I is fast, love I is frovinge.

Loue I is fete, love I is hard langede.

Loue I is blesse, love I is bot zare.

Loue I is wele, love I is woe, love I is good wip kere to kepe.

Loue I is lea, love I is lef, love I is longinge.

Loue I is fol, love I is fast, love I is frovinge.

Loue I is humbled, love I is wele, love I is woe, love I is good wip kere to kepe.

Loue I is lea, love I is lef, love I is longinge.

Loue I is fol, love I is fast, love I is frovinge.

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Loue I is lea, love I is lef, love I is longinge.

Loue I is fol, love I is fast, love I is frovinge.

Loue I is humbled, love I is wele, love I is woe, love I is good wip kere to kepe.

Loue I is lea, love I is lef, love I is longinge.
In de Ex 2025
Lollai, lollaij, litit child, whi werpstou as more?
ms. harley 91
Lollai, lollaij, litit child, child lollai lollow.
Lollai, lollaij, litit child, child lollai lollow.

In to wncael world icomen so errow!

Child, if be-tilid be of sael prime and be,
whan be comost, when be art, and what sael
be of be.
Lollai, lollaij, litit child, child lollaij, lollaij;

Wip sorrow be into ples world, wip sorrow
sael sael.

Child, be pet a pilgrim in wikkidis shor,
be wandreit in ples false world, be luke be bi-for;
deth sael wip wip a blast vic of a vel die horre,
adam-te kin done to cast, him stif hib ido
be-for.
Lollai, lollaij, litit child, so wo be worp
adam,
in be lend of paradise his wickednes of Satan.

Memor esto nouisima.

XIV, #28, pp. 35-36.

Index 2057

Univ. of Edinburgh MS. Laing 149

1 Man, bef in mynd & mend bi mye,
quhilt be arct hair is lyf lyffand;
and think upon his waldis lyke,
so oft-mysle is var伊斯.
for fortuns quhirl is er turnand,
quhilt to weel and quhilt to wa,
quhill owp, quhill downe, I understand.
memor esto nouisima.
3 liider be of com nakit and bary,
wi bampyn man of kyth & kyne;
so be behuffis bype to fary.
for al be ryches be of wyme
be a defens, be craft na gyme,
bat na defend be fra bi fa,
bot chertice be be within.
memor esto nouisima.
5 Quhen be arct ded & laid in layme,
and bi ribbes ar bi rut tre,
be arct bat brocht bi to lang hayne—
sow al waldis digit;
tham is to loit foroucht, think me,
quhen wormys ginlayye be to 4 fra,
sow mynd bi mye in al degre.
memor esto nouisima.

2 beestie & hos foules, be finises in be flode,
and euch saef alues, insakd of bone and blode,
when hi coomip to be world bi dop han stilf sum
gode—
Al bot be wrech brod bat is of adam-te blode.
Lollai, lollaij, litit child, to kar ercou
bemette,
be quhen for eir byls we is sete.

4 Ne tristou to his world, hit sa bi ful vo,
be rich be makip pourer, be pore rich al so;
Hit turneb w to vnel and ek wel to woe—
Ne trist sa man to his world, whil hit turnib so.
Lollai, lollaij, litit child, be fote is in
be woole;
be quhen whodor turne to wo ower woole.

6 Child, be pet a pilgrim but an wncube gist,
bi daves ben loid, bi turneb be lcast,
whoder be sael wend nore ower est,
be he sael be-tide wip bitter bale in brest.
Lollaij, lollaij, litit child(d), pis wo
adam be wroct,
Wham be of he appil ete, and eue hit bim be-
tacht.

XIV, #28, pp. 35-36.
12

2 Do bi salomon es rede.
Man, and so bu selch wel do.
Do al so he be tochte and sede
what his endish be brinch to,
Ne selto, neure mis-do.
Sore bu mith he a-drede,
wele-weyl sulch wap wel lade
long liff and blisse under-wo,
byr deth luteh in hos evo
to him for-do.

4 Man fli neiltu he bi-benchen?
Man fli neiltu he blesen?
of felthe he fitt esowe,
weirnes mete he sel ben.
her naues tu blisse dese bye,
al hit liff he driht in wowe;
wele-weyl deth he sal dunbrown
par he wenesse here ste.
In wole sal he wole enden,
in wop he gle.

5 Welld en wele he bi-pecheth,
Inda, heoth hine luo;
If bi werld mid wele he alikef
hat is far to do he wo.
Bir-fore let lust cuir-gon,
man, and eft it sal he liken.
Wele-weyl hu sore him alikef
par in one stunde ober too
wuthe he pyn euere-wo.
ne do man swoel
xIII, #10a, pp. 15-16.

1 'My dep y lone, my lyf ich hate, for a leudly shene,
heo is bryht no daies licht, bat is on me wel sene;
al y falswe no dep he let in nover when hit is grene.
set at boht helppe he noht, to wham shal y ne men?

2 Sorewe ant syke ant drewe and byndep me so faste
y y vene to walke wod set hit me lengore laste;
my serewe, my care, al wip a word he myhte avey caste.
what helppe he, my suete leemon, my lyf buforte gaste?'

3 'Do wey, bu cler, buo art a fol, buo art bydde ynoht chyde;
shalt buo neuer lyue hat day al love par buo shalt byde.
set buo in my bours art take, shane he may bityde;
he is bettere on fote gen pem wycked hors to ryde.'

4 'Weylawey! whi seist pou so? pou rew on me, py man!
pou art euer in my boht in londe wher ich bu.
saf y dese for bi lone, hit is he sylkel shan;
pou lete me lyue ant be b luef ant pou my suete lemon.'

5 'Be stille, pou fol, y calle be rith; cost buo neuer bylyme?
pou art wayted day ant nyht wip fader ant al ny kynne.
Bu pou in al boure ytyke, lete pey for so syne
me to holde ant he to elon, he dep so pou maht wyme!'

6 'Suete ledy, pou wend bi sol, sorewe pou wolt me kyhe.
Ich am al so sorry own so ich was whylum blyhe.
In a wondou ber we stod we cuite ve sycy sypc;
fair biheate makep sony mon al is suereus mythe.'

7 'Weylawey! whi seist pou so? Mi serewe pou makest newe.
Y louede a clerk al par amours, of love he was ful trewe;
he nauel of blype neuer a day bene he me some seex.
Ich louede him betere phen my lyf, what bote is hit to leze!'
In d e x  2236—C ontinued

8 'Whil y wes a cler in scule, wel muchel y couple of lore;
ych haue bole for by loue woundes fele more,
fer from hon ant eke from men vnder y pe wode-gore.
Suete ledy, thou rewe of me; nou may y no more!'

9 'pou sement wel to ben a cler, for pou spekest so stille;
shalte pou neuer for ni loue woundes pole grylle;
fader, onder, ant al my kun ne shal me holde so stille
pat y nam ant thou art wyn, to sym al bi wilte.'
Brook, #24, pp. 62-63.

Index 2241

1 My volk, what habbe y do pe
Obere in what byng towe pe?
Byng noupe and onswere pou me:

3 borou wylderness i ch ladde pe,
And unuty zer shadle pe,
And mungles bred i zaf to pe,
And in to reste i bronde pe.
My volk, what habbe y do pe ec.

5 Ic pe wedde and shrude pe;
And pou wyth eyrel dinket to me,
And wyth spre apegnest me. My volk, what ec.

7 Ic dele pe see our pe,
And pharazan drepyme our pe;
And pou to princez suelst pe. My volk, ec.

9 Wyth amuglame mete i chedde pe;
And pou bufedest and courgest me. My volk, ec.

11 Kynges of chanaan i ch our pe heest;
And pou betest wyn heved wyb rored. My volk, ec.

Index 2307

1 Nou Barnes, Buidus bolde and blyche,
To blessee ou her nou an I bounde;
I bende zume alle a bywUnd albe,
And pref god swee zou hul and sounde;
Wher-uer ze go, on gras or grounde,
He ou gourne ov-wotent grene;
For frendsches pe hat i here haue founde,
A-seyn wille I take mi leve.

3 Asen mi ville al-þewe I vende,
I may not al-wy dwellen here;
For eueri bling schel haue an ende,
And frendes are not ay-terzere;
Be we neuer so let and dere,
Out of þis world al schul we neve;
And whon we buseke vn-to vr here,
Asenm vr ville we take vr leve.

5 Whon þat vr lyf his leve hafe lauth,
Vr bodi lich haunden bie þe wone,
Vr richesses alle from vs hen raft,
In clothes colde vr cors in þrome;
Wher are þi frendes ho vol þe knowe?
Lett se ou hol bie soule releue.
I rede þe, mon, ar þou ly love,
Beng redi ay to take þi leve.

2 For vron egpyte ich ladde þe,
þou me ledest te rode tree.
My volk, what habbe y do þe? ec.

4 What more shulde ich haue y-don
þat pou ne hauest south under-un?
My volk, what habbe y do þe?

6 Ich egpyte boeth ur þe,
And bony tu y shlow ur þe. My volk, ec.

8 In ben of cloudie ich ladde þe;
And to syylate þou ledest me. My volk, ec.

10 Of þe ston ich dromk to þe;
And þou wyth galie dinket to me. My volk, ec.

12 Ich zaf the crowne of kynedon;
And þou me syyst a crowne of þorn. My volk,ec.

13 Ich michel worhype doode þe;
And þou me hongest on rode tree. My volk, ec.
XIV, #15, pp. 17-18.

3 For frendsche þat for ziftez goode,
For Mete þat Drinke so grete plente,
He lord þat raust was on þo haode,
He kep þi comeli campyne;
On see or lond wher þat ze þe,
He gourne ov wyb-wotent grene.
So good disport ze han mad me,
Asen my wille I take my leve.

8 For freschippe þat for ziftez goode,
For fete & Drinke so gret plente,
He lord þat raust was on þo haode,
He kep þi comeli campyne;
On see or lond wher þat ze þe,
He gourne ov wyb-wotent grene.
So good disport ze han mad me,
Asen my wille I take my leve.

16 For fende wroch us schulse,
I wet teuer whennen,
He whordenward þat we schul fare;
But endless blisse or ay to breyne,
To eueri mon is zarked sare.
For-þi I rede wch mon he-ware,
And lete vr werk vr wordes preye,
So þat no sunne vr soule forfare
Whom þat vr lyf haf taken his leve.

28 For fende wroch us schulse,
I wet teuer whennen,
He whordenward þat we schul fare;
But endless blisse or ay to breyne,
To eueri mon is zarked sare.
For-þi I rede wch mon he-ware,
And lete vr werk vr wordes preye,
So þat no sunne vr soule forfare
Whom þat vr lyf haf taken his leve.

32 For fende wroch us schulse,
I wet teuer whennen,
He whordenward þat we schul fare;
But endless blisse or ay to breyne,
To eueri mon is zarked sare.
For-þi I rede wch mon he-ware,
And lete vr werk vr wordes preye,
So þat no sunne vr soule forfare
Whom þat vr lyf haf taken his leve.

44 For fende wroch us schulse,
I wet teuer whennen,
He whordenward þat we schul fare;
But endless blisse or ay to breyne,
To eueri mon is zarked sare.
For-þi I rede wch mon he-ware,
And lete vr werk vr wordes preye,
So þat no sunne vr soule forfare
Whom þat vr lyf haf taken his leve.
11 We tell be erth, we tounce it to & frin,
We labour ryht deuly with grete besynes,
We dyke, we delowe, we sowe, we shewe also,
We gede beorne home fore ober sene ryches,
We have full selowe any restfull sladness,
Bot labour in pouere to be tyme but we dyse—76
Siz is our labour not bot vanye.
Amen qd Rate.
XV, #151, pp. 238-40.
Of all flowers fairest fall on,
And yet in Marie, Moder fee,
That bar be child of flesh and bone.
Thesu, Codus some in Maleste.
A loute-likeyn is come to me
To serve this ladi, quen of blis,
As better and better in my degree,
Be lenger but I live, I-wis.

Sawe, sawe, on you is al
Hys helpynge at myn endynge-dye;
That I be not for bended pry,
Marie, to sor wene se suye.
How schal I do, my swete sy,
But sif I louwe sourenly?
Elles mhte men boldly hit me say,
Deamer and vanishingly.

Lestun-dayes, that ben longe,
And now weare good cyme to soneyde
That we be-faren hem de wronge.
This world als no-bing as I wende;
In sorc cyme my lyf is spend;
This world is fals and that I feel.
But Marie moder me soneyde,
A-Mis I fare and nothing vel.

I love me haf in Bales brount
For on such that I suppose,
That is so studiast in hire bount,
That couope souere ne gabe se gloss;
Hose hire loue be schal not loose,
For sif be-giled heo neuer so wite.
I like that ladi to be bese—
I-blessed beo that Buttride bright!

A lovelye lyf to loken vp-on,
So is my ladi, that Esperys;
If lyf I dar love ber-roppe,
That princesses is peersie of pry;
So feir, so clene, so good, so wye,
And berto crewe as any steele,
Per nis no such to my dayes—
Lor God, that I louwe wel.

This is the remansant of my lust,
That I not wheber my ladi syde
To my louwe hous inly trust
Because Konkynde is frele and wynde.
But, ladi, for auere blisful childye,
Sibben al my louwe is leyd on be,
In heuese help me a boute to bylde,
Ladi, sif thi wille be.

Howe lust not loue, let huy be-lewe
For I wol holde that I have hibit;
That lust schal no smone from me rewe,
That I nul louwe my ladi bryht.
Love, love, do me rih,
Marie Noorder, Hayden clene,
In heuese of pe to have a sht—
Ladi, to be my nose I seue!

So hertly I have I-seet my hount
Uppon that buyrdes of buyrdes hounst;
For al-bauh I see hire noutst,
Min herte schal fully wip hire be fest.
Thesu, that seik milk of hire brest,
To you holpe I be-hete,
Min loue schal holly wip you rest,
That I be not wrapt on mete.

Basse bependz bim, I-wis,
Of sor gear goodnesse and sor grace.
He scholde neuer wilne to don a-nis,
Ne luste to louwe in oher place.
In hope to see sor blessed face,
And dwelle wip you in myn endynge,
And hause relese of all trespass,
Ladi, that I mon of cyme.

But that swee worpbi wyf,
Hire goodly loue that I may gete,
Al my lov wol turne to scrif,
And I may syke with vonges wete.
Whom that I peke on that swete,
Me pekkey hit is so good a hount,
I say to euer mon that I mete:
'Gode, go wy, and let me nowst!'

Ma longen souere so sore, so sore,
To see my louelie ladi deare;
Sif heo souere, we neere but lere,
That ladi lounsum most of lere,
And wilt hit wel wip-ovent weere,
Whom I pecke on hire souere sad,
That vol no wyne mon blame se here,
That that I go mure and glad.

This newe ser, my ladi sweete,
Wip al myn herte in good entent,
Wip eyue Amew I on grete,
And praye ou take this feire present,
And schape so that I beo no schent,
Seben of zou Merci guen springes.
For al my louwe is on zou lent,
[Sweete] sweetest of alles-kunmes binges!

This newe ser, I have zeorned sore,
That kng of louwe grant hit wel
In warly loue in loytel store,
And felle in louwe his charite.
For al that mis but vanye,
When I schal evere bauh day I-se
To please my ladi ones to pay?
Helo is of colour and beute
As fresh as is this Rose In May.
Off all women that ever were borne
That berys chilour, abyde and se
How my son liggis me beforene
Upon my knye, takyn tre tre.
Your chilour ze dawnes upon your kne
With lisyng, kysyng and mery chere;
Re-bolde my chilour, be-holde now me,
For now liggis ded my dere son, dere.

O woman, a chaplet choosyn þu hast
Thy childe to weare, hit ddee þe get likyng,
þu pynyn hit on with get solde;
And I sitte with my son sore weyng.
His chaplet is thorny sore plynkyng,
His mouth I hym with a carful chere—
I sitte weyng and þu pynyn,
For now liggis ded my dere son, dere.

Therefor, women, be towne & strete
Your chilour handys when þe holde,—
Thy brest, þiere body and þiere face—
Then gode hit were on my son thynk ze wolde,
Now care has made my herte full colde
To sce my son, with þe sypp and sperre,
With soruye and thorny smony-folde,
Woundit and ded, my dere son, dere.

Wepe with me, both man and wyfe,
My childe is youres & loves you wele.
If your childe had lost his life
Ze wolde wepe at euer mele;
But for your son wepe ze nahere a del.
If þe luf youres, þyne has no pere;
He sendis youris both hap and hele
And for you dyed my dere son, dere.

Afer-wel, woman, I may no more
For dorsole of deth rehearse his payne.
Ze may laȝ when ze list & I wepe sore.
That may ze se and ze loke to me agayme.
To luf my son and ze be fayme
I willen luff yours with hert entere,
And he shall bryngye your chilour & your berteayne
To lyses whan to my dere son, dere.

Explicit fabula

For on þat is me feir ant brist
Sed marisarella,
sed amon þe dai-ís liye,
Garen e puella,
I cri þe grace of þe,
Laudis, pris þe some for me
tam pis,
but I more come to þe,
maris.

Laudis, best of all þing,
Rose alce spica,
þe bere theu, heue-se-king,
Grate diuina,
of alle þou berest þat pris,
hale quen in parae
elctra,
moder wilde ant maide ec
spectra.
In car ant conseil þou art best, 24
felix tacita; 24
to alle weri þou art rest, 24
mater honora;
bi-fold þou him wid mild and 40
þat for us alle use de in blind 16
in cruce;
hilde we meten come to him 40
in loco.

5 Vuel þou west he is þi sone 40
ventre quem portasti;
be nul nout verne þe þi bone 44
parum quem lactasti;
so god ant so mild e is, 44
he bringer us alle in-to is blis
supersti;
hauent 1-dut þe foule put 44
inferi.

XIII, #7a, pp. 24-25.

Index 2687

1 On hire is al mi lif ylong 2
Of vem ic wil le singen, 8
And herten him þer-among, 8
þad gyn us bitte bringen
Of belle-pine þat is strong, 16
and bruc us blisse þat is so long
Al þurts hire childe rike
We biddit hire in ure song,
by ef us god handinke
þu we don wrong.

2 Al þis world hit sal al ygeon 12
Wyd serue and wyd sorne,
and al þis blisse ic not for-gon
Hit blyndit me so sore.
þis world mis bote ure fo,
par-fere ic wille hemne gon
and learm goðis lorn;
þis worldis blis mis vrd a slo—
I bide, goð, þis hore,
nu and hauer-more.

3 To lounge ic abbe sot then, 20
ful sore y me a-rede;
ylound ic abbe gomin and gle
and heurl fayre welde.
Al þad mis nout, ful wel ic seo,
þer-fere we sulin or sunnis flen
and ure sozhede.
We biddit hire us to seo,
þad con wiscin and redin,
þat is so fre.

4 Neo is hele and lif umt lichte 28
and helpt al moneceune;
Ho us haunt ful vel iditt,
and ef us felte and wunne.
þu bruct us day and eue nith,
heo brouct wou, þu brouct rîd,
þu alswase and heo sunne.
þu do us merci, laewd brit,
weze we sulin hemne—
ful vel þu mit.

5 Agult ic haun, waylavay! 36
Sunful ic am a vreche;
þu do me merci, lae uid brit,
ar det me hemne veche.
yf me þi love, ic am red;
let me liue and ameni,
thad fende me ne letten;
of mine sunnin ic am sorri,
of my lif ic ne recche,
læwde merci.

XIII, #32a, pp. 56-57.

Index 3151

1 Seu trew trewe ensesias digytees, 8
and vertyr flourde and rut is of noblay,
Of any welle, of quhat saestat yow be,
His steppis sew, and dreid the non affray;
Fesil all wyce and folow treuche al-way:
Luf moat thi god, that lyset thi lorn begane.
And for ilk ynych he wyll the quyte a spane.
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i

In d e x 3151— C on tin u ed
3

Sen Word i s t h r a l l and th o t l a o n ly f r e e ,
fcov d a n t t h l tv n g e , t h a t p o v a r h a s & n ay .
16
Thow s e t th i n e Ene f r a v a r l d l y v a n ! t e e ;
r e s t r e n t h l l u s t , and h ark y n e q u h a t I s a y :
S tram p o r yow s l y d , and c re p f u rc h one th e way;
Kep t h i b e h e s t o n e - to t h l l o r d , and th a n e
20
f f o r e I l k ynch he v y l l th e q u y t a s p a n e .
L in e s 8 -1 4 a r e s u p p lie d from t h e B annatyne MS., f o l . 58v° , a s p r i n t e d i n th e S c o t t l s T e x t S o c. e d .» 1 1 . 145.
XV, 11 9 1 , p p . 2 9 0 -9 1 .

In d e x 3211
B.M. MS. R oyal 12 E. I
1

3

5

7

9

11

'S to o d w e l, m oder, v o d er r o d e ,
b l h o l d t>i c h i l d v y th g la d e n o d e,
b ly b e n o d e r m l ttu b e n . '
'S v n e , quu nay b l l b e s to n d e n ?
h i s e t>in f e e t , h i s e t>in h onden,
n a y l e d t o be h a rd e t r e . ’

'M o d e r, do v e y b i v e p ln g e ;
h i b ° l e bi® ded f o r mannes th l n g e —
f o r ov en g l l t e b o l l n o n .'
'S v n e , h i f e i e be dede s tu n d e ,
b e s v e r d I s a t mln h e r t e g ru n d e ,
b a t me b y h y tte sy m eo n .'

'M o d e r, r e u vpon b i b e r n t
t>u w asse awey bo b l o d l t e r e n ,
I t don me v e r s e b en m l d e d . '
'S u n e , hu m i t t i t e r e s v e rn e n ?
hy s e b ° b lo d l f lo d e s h e rn e n
h u th o f b ln h e r t e t o mln f e e . '

'M o d e r, n u y may b e s e y n ,
b e t t e r s i s b e t l c o ne deye
b a n a l m an-kyn t o h e l l e g o . '
'S u n e , y s e b l b o d i sv n g en ,
b l b r e s t , p in h o n d , b l i ° c b u r “®tu n g e n —
n o s e l l l b °u me b e v o . '

'M o d e r, I f y d a r be t e l l e n ,
y l f y ne deye (m g o s t to h e l l e ;
h i b o le bi® ded f o r b ia e s a k e . '
'S u n e , bu b e s t “ e 80 m inde,
w ith me n o u t; I t I s m l k ln d e
b a t y f o r be s o ry e m a k e .’
'M o d e r, m i t a r s t bu m lth l a r e n
v a t p in e b ° l en b e t c h i l d r e b e re n
v a t s o r v e hauen b e t c h i l d f o r - g o n .
'S u n e , y v o t y kan be t e l l e n ,
b u te i t be be p in e o f h e l l e
m ore s o rv e ne v o th y n o n .'
'M o d e r, y may no [ le n g e r ] d u e l l e n ,
b e tim e I s cunen y f a r e t o h e l l e ,
t>e I b r ld d e d ay ] y r i s e u p o n .'
'S u n e , y v y le v l ' t h e fu n d e n ,
y [d ey e y v ls ] o f b in e v n d en ,
ao r e u f u l ded was n e u e (r e n o n ] . '

16

'M o d e r, m e rc lt l e t me d ey e n ,
f o r adam u t o f h e l l e b e y n ,
an d a l m ankln b e t I s I 'o r - l o r e n . '
'S u n e , v a t s a l me t o red e?
b i p in e p in e d me to d ed e ,
l e t me deyn b e b i - f o r e n . '

28

'M o d e r, r e u o f moder k a r e l
nu b u v o s t o f moder f a r e ,
b o u b u b e d e n e mayden m [ a n ] .'
'S u n e , h e lp a l l e a t n ed e ,
a l l e bo b e t to me g re d e n —
m [a y ]d e n , v y f and f o l v y m a n .'

40

10
52

[When] h e ro s b en f e l b l e o r v e ,
b e b l i s s e s p r [ o n g b e b ri<*de m orew e],
v e n b l l b e moder v e r b u b°*
M o d [er, f o r b e t l i k e b l i s s e ] ,
b ls e c h v r e god, v r e s ln n e s l e a s e ,
b u b e h u r e c h e l ayen h u re f o .

8

12

20

24

32

36

44

48

56

60

B ll s c e d be b u , quen o f h e u e n e ,
b r i n g u s u t o f h e l l e le u e n e
b u r t h b i d e re s u n e s m lth .
M oder, f o r b e t h i t h e b lo d e
b a t h e sadde vpon be ro d e ,
le d u s i n - t o heuene l i t h .
AmeN.
X I I I , #49b, p p . 8 9 -9 1 .

In d e x 3271
C a n te rb u ry C a t h e d r a l. C h r is t C hurch L e t t e r s , V o l. I I , No. 174
For [ v e le o r v jo o I v y l l n o t f i e
To lo v e t h a t h a r t t h a t lo v y th me.
That h a rt
T hat of
T hat h a r t
To lo u e

my h a r t h a th I n auche g ra c e
to o h a r t e s one h a r t make v e ;
h a th b ro u g h t ay h a r t in c a se
t h a t h a r t t h a t lo v y th me.

Uhyche c a u se g y v eth c a u se t o me and
myne
To s e r v e t h a t h a r t o f s u f e r e n t e ,
And s t y l l t o syng t h i s l a t e r ly n e :
To lo v e t h a t h a r t [ t h a t lo v y th m e.]

F o r o n e t h a t ly k e v n to t h a t h a r t
N ev er was n o r y s n o r n e v e r s h a l l b e .
Nor n e v e r ly k e c a v se s e t t h i s a p a r t
To lo v e t h a t h a r t t h a t lo v y th me.

12

W h atev er I s a y , w h a te v e r I s y n g .
W hatever 1 d o , t h a t h a r t s h a l l s e
T h a t I s h a l l s e r u e w ith h a r t lo v y ln g
T h at lo v y n g h a r t [ t h a t lo v y th m e.]

16


Thys knot thus knyt who shall vntyne,  
Syns we that knyt yt do agree  
To lose nor elyp, but both encyne  
To love that hart [that loveth me]

Farwell, of harte that hart most fyne,  
Farwell, dere hart, hastily to the,  
And kepe this hart of myne for thynne  
As hart for hart for lovyng me.

Index 3271—Continued

5 Thyse knot thus knyt who shall untynne,  
Syns we that knyt yt do agree  
To lose nor elyp, but both encyne  
To love that hart [that loveth me]

Farwell, of harte that hart most fyne,  
Farwell, dere hart, hastily to the,  
And kepe this hart of myne for thynne  
As hart for hart for lovyng me.

Index 3310

1 Where be thy hiforen we weren,  
Houndes ladden and haukes ben,  
And hadden feld and wode,  
Be richesse in houre bour,  
Be ware ded gold in houre tresour  
Wip hoere brytticke rode;

Where is thy laving and thy song,  
Thy trayling and thy proudes song,  
Be haukes and be houndes?  
Al that lye in was away,  
That wele is cozen te wylaway,  
To masie barde asoundes.

5 Deyxy here, man, beynne if thou wilt  
A laitil pite tbat me be bit,  
Wyldrawe blie eyes offe,  
Be tbat pice be oune-rede;  
And thou bende ou tbat mede  
Hit sall be blynten softe.

7 Thou take this rode to this staf,  
And beak on him this bereonne zat  
Hit liff bat wex ou lef.  
He hit zaf for be, thou selde hit him  
Asen hit foro;  
That staf thou nym  
And wrak hit of this bref.

9 Bere-Isun in day wip-bouten mist,  
Wip-bouten ende strende and mist,  
And wreche of euerich fo,  
Mid god him-selven eche liff,  
And pez and rent wipoute streif,  
Wale wip-bouten wo.

10 Mayden moder, heuene quene,  
Be ou nym and const and over to bene  
Oure shield asen pe fende;  
Help ow ay now ou to flen,  
Bat we meten bi some I-sen  
In lye wip-bouten hende. Amen.

Advocate: Lib. 17. 2. 1 ('Auchinleck MS.')

Index 3461

1 Be eicher sope who-so eys,  
Wip diol dreye we our dayes  
6 walk mani wile wyes,  
As wamrend wistes.  
Al our games ouz ages,  
So mani tene oue wez  
Our fleche is fouled wip pe fende—  
Be w we finde a false frende—  
Bat be bunon up her hende  
Bat no bold nourt her blites,  
Bat e er baer er yr,  
Stete be ser is our fa,  
Dem bat dereb ouz awa  
A dainely ouz ditte.

2 Bis world wip-lip wun, y war,  
Purch falschesip of fair hat;  
Where we go bi ent gat  
Wip hale hou heates.  
Now knitte, now care,  
Now sm, now sare,  
Now sounde, now sate,  
Now song, now sithes,  
Now nourt, now y-nour,  
Now wele, now vouz,  
Now is in lounge bat lous,  
Bat o bis liff lites;  
Now geten, now gan—  
Y tel it bot a lenc lan,  
When al bi wip of our wan  
Wun away wistes.
Now wonder, now ouere,
Now casse, now ouere,
Now plente, now ouere,
Now feble, now seere,
Now swift, now seere,
Now smelle, now alme,
Now count, now y vois,
Now fale, now zon —
From wave to wave,
Til we be broyden in a braid,
But our lickham in layd
In a graue, but is grayd
Vnder lerne lawe.

When dene deries ous sete,
A makes sum wongs wete —
But nis no liff bat he wil lete
To lache when his lisc.
When he is loopen out of les,
No pry pry no man after pes,
For non gifts bat ges
Het no man til his trist.
Our gode frendes has he foci,
4 & put he pouer to be pot,
& ouer his y-knot his knott,
Vnder his clay lisc.
Dene deph, o-pon he zong
Wip he to strike it.
Y wold be wrenken of mi wrong,
Zif y way wist.

When byr y no murther vnder the sky,
Hatpynge, lustynge, nor no very dance,
That may put out my owen lady
All fro my daly Remembrance.
Ybe the birde of ali Pleasance,
My lady gent with lowne imbrante,
ffull consly ys yourte countesse—
Be trow, lady, for I you truste.

3 When derue deph ous halp ydyst,
But he no solles his in fist,
As fire does in tunder.
But nis no letting at lite
But he no tittes til hit tite,
But he halp sammed in site
Some til be sundert.
Norber he actinste no stokes,
Bot ay pricke & prokes
Til he vechnueri al he lokes
But liff ligges vnder.
When ye tent til hit cake
How schould ich sae mirpe make
Or wele in his word wake?—
Twis it were wonder.

4 When thou has gadard & y-glened,
Long lyowne & lened,
Sparely bi gode spended
When he is loopen out of les,
But that he be notlent y-vird
Hie prysent ous warp word
Wip vangest ful wete.

6 When she ceste nethi ourse;
That she caste not hire fro me;—
And yel wolde ay no stakeli he;
Ye no to loze for any beste,
Thane shul ous leyfis in kislite—
By trow, lady, for I you truste.

7 Seffon font ous fra filly vesche,
Our fa hauze founde us our fleache,
Wip ant fondinges & fresche
& four-sum of fensed.
Is nan so yra of hem ire
But na merres has me,
Hier nan bat
To bring ous on benede.
Man, none thou bi me,
Trowe truety on his,
But nes wauet ye-wis
In world where pou wended
No wav gat þæcow gas.
His foure as reid on þæ pas—
Now hau ye founden þi fas,
Finde toub þi frendes!

I have not by no gret tresore,
Monye, goldes, nor warylly fe.
So of my lady that I be sure
That she caste not hire fro me;
And yel wolde ay no stakeli he;
Ye no to loze for any beste,
Thane shul ous leyfis in kislite—
By trow, lady, for I you truste.

3 Seyne beastes that be with-out reason
Came lune with-out eye variance.
Therfor my herc, now for this season.
Put not your lune vnto sore gavana,
Wher-trought gret care ought so enhance,
And mak my herc lyk for to brusthe,
Sfor of all women yreluely the dance—
By trow, lady, for I you truste.

4 Seyne beastes that be with-out reason
Came lune with-out eye variance.
Therfor my herc, now for this season.
Put not your lune vnto sore gavana,
Wher-trought gret care ought so enhance,
And mak my herc lyk for to brusthe,
Sfor of all women yreluely the dance—
By trow, lady, for I you truste.
5 Loue ys strange in all dege,
Therfore to dowe, lady, yt causis me,
Layf, that yie shuld fro me foylid,
And fals lound me thine kepe in bold,
Then wolde my swor-----
With fals lound ys ye be not to bolde--
By trow, lady, for I you truste.

6 Yin are the salyfe ynto my sore,
And medesyme to wyse inspirite;
My tonge can not express therfor
The secunde partes of your grace:
Yer ye no suerance that may hurte me,
Nor no sorrow but I shall sayste,
When I think upon your love so tre-
By trow, lady, for I you truste.

Index 3524—Continued

Index 3567
Cambridge Univ. MS. Cg. 1. 32

1 Thynk, man, quere-off thou art wrought,
as art so wick in wede;
Thynk how thou art hedry brought,
& of thyn end take heed;
Thynk thou dere god hast pe bought,
With blyeef ful blyde to blyde;
Thynk for his gyft was it noct,
bot, man, for hys syn-de-
With an .0. & an .1., thynk on pm, .1. rede,
as wrought pis wrold to phe-bowe, & hean to
thys made.

3 Thynk we vrichid wronys ar,
& lette no sym pe schend;
Thynk bat thou was born ful bare,
as sald thou hen wend;
Thynk to be ar bat shone fare,
& self of soule frens;
Thynk & trayset off na man mate
& of phe noyshmen end;
With an .0. & an .1., do so or pou wend,
bat pou may fynde it eftterward, quere pou sal
longest lend.

5 Thynk le pis wrold is vondirfful,
& bat in gret Menysylyl;
Thynk lek pou may noyght stant a pull,
quen dede pe mil asylyl;
Thynk pe mekyl smil & mull
pe sen pey pe noyght ass-yallyl;
Thynk pou wondre quedyge god wul,
& to ryst or to transylyl.
With an .0. & an .1., per-way ne-thyns a-s-wayly,
bat hewe hase wrought wranglyly, him-self to
wraithehylye.

7 Thynk bat pou art ded alway,
quyllys bat pou dwele here;
Thynk pe lyff be-gyntys ay,
quen pou art lyesd apon a here;
Thynk & seere bat princys to pay,
pe kyng of kyng, bat hase na pere;
Thynk I rede, bothe nyth & day,
on blynd bat bought pe so dere.
With an .0. and an .1., thynk quyet & pe lete,
iff pou wil bat solace se pe seynys aytces aere.

XV; #163, pp. 256-58.
Whon men beo mur besode to firmware, 
Elyse wolde my herte ym soundir brest,
But I wolde love ym exyprant.

2) Hete ym chere change for no chaunce,
We hepe noone ym shrow see;
If I may not do you plesance,
Myne herte hath holly noone but ye.

3) Therfore, haue ale myne herte & beo ym pess, 
& ymke I love you souerane—
forbat I may hit is no loose—
Wolde god ye ymste as ym.

4) For vele I se, bothe day & nyght
That trew love ymle me neuer cease.
Hawe mercy on me, worthy nyght.
Hawe all my herte & be ym pess.

5) Ya haue all myne herte where-er ym go,
Herte, body & all ym riche;
I am bot deede & ym go me fro,
There van neuer ymke I lampd so moche.

6) Therfore, dere herte, loke ye be trewe, 
& ymne me ymle withouten lice;
I wyll neuer change you for no neue,
Hawe all myne herte & be ym pess.

7) ffor where I love ym can not love,
Ofte tymes hit doeth myne herte got we;
A preusey payme hit is to ypreue
To ymne & ymke longe ym-nef-fro.

8) Therfore, I morne ryght ofte ym-wys, 
& so doeth other lover we.

9) My herte hath noone but ym yn folde;
Al dere herte, whan dyde yl ylle,
But ever wrought ryght as ym wolde,
Or ever was ymtruye you tylle?

Index 3864
We ben chapmen lyzt of fote,
be owle wayes for to fly.

1) We ben shoulym non cattes skylyns,
purseis, pecles, ylyer penmis,
smale wympes for ladys chynys;
demeale, be ym wanate of me.

2) I have a poket for ym onys,
berine beo tymowe prescyvet stonyes;
demeale, haede be se aseyd hem onys,
se xule be rapere youn with me.

3) I have a lelly of goodes sonde,
Withouten yf it can stonde;
It can waytyn & hast men honde;
Ryd yourself quyt it may be.

4) I have a powder for to selie,
Quat it is can I not telle
For I love tham wyll ym no lye. 

Index 3996
Vernon MS.

1) Whon men beo muriest ac heor Hale,
[w]hove woraship & with worldilich vele,
peu haue no dogynge for to dele
With binges peu ben druoogel made;
peu wenne heor honoure & heore hele
Schal euer laste & neuer dissipade;
But in heore hertes I wolde peu hede,
Whon peu gonn richest man on array,
How some peu god hem may de-grade,
And sum tymhe peyn on zuster-day.

2) Bis day, as leef we may be lyght,
Wip al pe neurer but men may wis,
To bepane wip peu bairdes brith.
Vche non gayest on hem gyse;
At pe last hit drawep to nhit,
peu alyp wone make hit Myawtrime.
Whan peu be hab I-kud hit nhit,
peu more he bokes up to rye,
pen al drawep hem to fantasye.
When he is bi-come, non no mon ney—
And stif heo wanted peu were ful wyse—
For al is torned to zester-day.

3) Whose wolde peyne vpon peu
Hithe fynde a good enchean whi
To preue peu world, al-wel l-yes,
Hit nis but factum and te-tri.
peu eryl love, peu worldly lyes
is but a finel fantasy.
For non hit is and non hit nis,
peu may no mon peu-ine affy;
Hit chaungspe so ofte & so endymy-
To-day in her, to-mowe away—
A eiker ground he vol hit gy,
I rede he peyne on zuster-day.

4) For peu nis non so strong in eytor,
Pro tyme peu be ful waxen be;
From peu day forpe, swer-vech an hour;
Of hit strenghe he louat a quantite.
Me no buyde so brith in burny,
Of beiti wynter, I eneure be,
peu hae me schal fade as a flour.
Luute and luute lescon hire beute—
peu sope se may zor-self l-se
Reo zor eldres in good fay.
Whon me beennent in zour degre,
I rede pe peyne on yesterday.
I have wist, sin I cuphe meen,  
that children haf bi candel light  
neuer schadewe on we loor,  
And Romeo be-fore al be mif;  
Slay outhe bi hal ben  
To cacchen hit with al heure miht;  
And when we cacchen hit best wolde wene,  
Sammet hit schet ouf of hiere miht;  
He schadewe cacchen we miht,  
For no lynes we bei boupe ley.  
We schewe I miinne a-siht  
To his world and zuster-day.  

To make zou benke of zuster-day.  

11 I have wist, sin I cuphe meen,  
that children haf bi candel light  
neuer schadewe on we loor,  
And Romeo be-fore al be mif;  
Slay outhe bi hal ben  
To cacchen hit with al heure miht;  
And when we cacchen hit best wolde wene,  
Sammet hit schet ouf of hiere miht;  
He schadewe cacchen we miht,  
For no lynes we bei boupe ley.  
We schewe I miinne a-siht  
To his world and zuster-day.  

12 In-to this world whan we be brount,  
We schul be tempt to couetye,  
And al bi wit schul be boun-wont  
To more good we hou may suffye.  
Whan we fleskest best in bi pount  
On Richesone felrite regne and rye,  
Al bi toune turnep to nout,  
For undesly on dep we dyse.  
Bi lyf we hou hast t-laid wip lyres,  
So this wolde gom be be-tray;  
Perfore we rede we hou dispye,  
And sum tyne benke on zuster-day.  

13 Men, zif bi astibeber we Manne,  
Opur to calle or to bote;  
I knowe me siker in he cas  
hat velt drede de ne krobes prete,  
And newer a day de dore to pas  
Whif oute siker defense and grete,  
And ben puryed in voh a plae  
Of sikernees and help to gete.  
Whin empy wolcote gat for-zeze  
But ay ben a-fart of his affray.  
Eesample he-or of we wol ou trete,  
To make zou benke of zuster-day.  

14 Whan we hou wint wip-outen fayle  
hat dey hap manast he to dey,  
But whan we hou we e-sayle,  
hat wout we met, we nevet may syse.  
Whif we hou wolt de my cousaye,  
Whif siker defense beo ay rede;  
For siker defense to his batyle  
In cleene lyf, paryst and trye;  
Put he trust in Godes Mercye,  
Hit he benste at al essay,  
And ever a-mong we e-nuye  
In-to this world and zuster-day.
Index 3996—Continued

15 Sum men selp <b>bat</b> <b>d</b>e in a <b>b</b>ef,
   And a yeawed wol on hys stela,
   And a sey nay, and make a pref,
   bat <b>d</b>e is strudelast, trewe, and lese,
   And warne, wol no <b>son</b> of his greef,
   bat he wol a day <b>wit</b> <b>him</b> dele.
   <b>He</b> wol sou rewe, and eke 176
   bid poutray sey no son him <b>repel</b>,
   He crump se baldely to pyke his pray—
   When men kep bountege at heur <b>Mele</b>,
   I rede se <b>henke</b> on zuster-day.
   XIV, Flol, pp. 143-148.

Index 4083

1 Whi I se w orld b <b>blo</b>u e d, feat f <b>as</b> is A  <b>v</b> ein?
   Slfeen feat h <b>ls</b> e  w elfeie ben v <b>ne</b> rte <b>ln</b>.
3 Tru <b>s</b>te  ze rafelr to <b>l</b> e <b>t</b> l r s  w rite n <b>i</b> f <b>e</b>ls ,
   fean t o feis w recch id  w o rld , feat f u l  o f synne i s .
5 I t  l a  rafeer to  b i l e u e  fee v a g e rln g e  w lynd,
   fean fee chaungeable w o rld , feat makife men bo blynd.
7 T e lle  me where is  ealam on, sumcyme a kln g e ric h e ?
   o r  sampson in  h i s  atren  k efee, to  whom was no man
   lic h e ?
9 Where I se blcome c e s a r , feat lo r d  was o f a l?
   o r fee r ic h e  atan cloifed i n  purp u r and In  p al?
11 Where b en  feese w orlfel feat <b>weren</b> h e re  to -f o r e n —
   boifee k ln g ls  A  b ls c h o p i s , h e r power i s  a l  lo re n .
13 fee l o l e  o f  feis w re c c h id  w orld i s  a s c h o r t f e e s te ;
   i t  l a  llk n e d  to  a schadew e feat abldlfe le e s t e ;
15 C a l l e  no felng felt owen p e r f o r e , feat feou m alat
   h e r  le s e ;
   feat fee w orld hafe l e n t feee, e f t  he w olde I t  c a s e .

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1 Whi I s  fee w orld b llo u e d, feat f <b>as</b> is A  <b>v</b> ein?
   Slepeneu sel p h i e v e lis h e v e n c e r t e .
3 Tru <b>s</b>te  ze rafelr to  fect r a w e n h i s  <b>b</b> f <b>te</b> f e s he r s  w rite n  h i s  w rechid  w o rld,  h u  f u l  o f s y m e  i s .
5 I t  l a  rafeer to  b i l e u e  fee v a g e rln g e  w lynd,
   fean fee chaungeable w o rld , feat makife men bo blynd.
7 T e lle  me where is  ealam on, sumcyme a kln g e ric h e ?
   o r  sampson in  h i s  atren  k efee, to  whom was no man
   lic h e ?
9 Where I se blcome c e s a r , feat lo r d  was o f a l?
   o r fee r ic h e  atan cloifed i n  purp u r and In  p al?
11 Where b en  feese w orlfel feat <b>weren</b> h e re  to -f o r e n —
   boifee k ln g ls  A  b ls c h o p i s , h e r power i s  a l  lo re n .
13 fee l o l e  o f  feis w re c c h id  w orld i s  a s c h o r t f e e s te ;
   i t  l a  llk n e d  to  a schadew e feat abldlfe le e s t e ;
15 C a l l e  no felng felt owen p e r f o r e , feat feou m alat
   h e r  le s e ;
   feat fee w orld hafe l e n t feee, e f t  he w olde I t  c a s e .

Index 4289

1 Whi I s  fee w orld b llo u e d, feat f <b>as</b> is A  <b>v</b> ein?
   Slepeneu sel p h i e v e lis h e v e n c e r t e .
3 Tru <b>s</b>te  ze rafelr to  fect r a w e n h i s  <b>b</b> f <b>te</b> f e s he r s  w rite n  h i s  w rechid  w o rld,  h u  f u l  o f s y m e  i s .
5 I t  l a  rafeer to  b i l e u e  fee v a g e rln g e  w lynd,
   fean fee chaungeable w o rld , feat makife men bo blynd.
7 T e lle  me where is  ealam on, sumcyme a kln g e ric h e ?
   o r  sampson in  h i s  atren  k efee, to  whom was no man
   lic h e ?
9 Where I se blcome c e s a r , feat lo r d  was o f a l?
   o r fee r ic h e  atan cloifed i n  purp u r and In  p al?
11 Where b en  feese w orlfel feat <b>weren</b> h e re  to -f o r e n —
   boifee k ln g ls  A  b ls c h o p i s , h e r power i s  a l  lo re n .
13 fee l o l e  o f  feis w re c c h id  w orld i s  a s c h o r t f e e s te ;
   i t  l a  llk n e d  to  a schadew e feat abldlfe le e s t e ;
15 C a l l e  no felng felt owen p e r f o r e , feat feou m alat
   h e r  le s e ;
   feat fee w orld hafe l e n t feee, e f t  he w olde I t  c a s e .

Oxford MS. 33

1 That I se w orld b llo u e d, feat f <b>as</b> is A  <b>v</b> ein?
   Slepeneu sel p h i e v e lis h e v e n c e r t e .
2 A l so cume <b>sel</b>p his power away
   as dop a brokku pot, bat freisch is and say .  4
4 It is <b>fa</b>ls in his b h e s e , and rsc discesuele;
   it hap biglied manle men, it is so <b>un</b>stable.  6
6 Whkip you slepe <b>oper</b> wake, you schal fynde it fals,
   hope in his b innessis & in his lu <b>c</b> tus a .  12
8 Or be <b>fa</b>ir man <b>bo</b> w el, m e ru e llo u s in  c h e re ,
   o r be duke <b>to</b> r <b>se</b>e, a weel <b>blo</b>u e d f e r e ?  16
10 T e lle  me where is  tullus in elcquenc e so swece?
   o r a r i s t o t e l be <b>fil</b>les fro w his wit so <b>gre</b>te?  20
12 All <b>be</b>as <b>gre</b>te princts, wip her power to h <b>ise</b>,
   he menischid a-way in twinkelinge o f an irre .  24
14 And it <b>draw</b>th man from heuen-riche b l <b>is</b>,
   and ofte <b>t</b>yme makib hu to syme & o d-s <b>ays</b> .  28
16 Sette <b>his</b> herte in <b>he</b>uen abowe, 6 <b>benke</b> what <b>fole</b> is <b>here</b>,
   4 bus to dispise <b>he</b> world, I rede <b>bat</b> poup <b>ler</b>e.32
Index 4160—Continued

17 But art but worms mete, pouder, & dust, to enhance thy silly in pride, sette not thy lust.

18 For thou woot not to-day that thou shalt lyve to-morrow; therefore do thou euer weal, & benne acht thou not sorely.

19 If were ful soiful & sweete lordship to have, if so nat lordship wyzite a man fro deep smear;

20 But for as miche a man muste die at be laste, it is no wership, but a charge, lordship to taste. XIV, #134, pp. 237-39.
APPENDIX II

The table on the following pages lists the schemes and tropes with which the medieval English lyricist would probably be familiar, and attention is called, by underlining, to those which are associated with contraries and paradox in the lyrics.

According to the latest studies by James J. Murphy ("Literary Implications of Instruction in the Verbal Arts in Fourteenth-Century England, Leeds Studies in English, 1 [1967], 119-35), Geoffrey of Vinsauf was not taught in England until the fifteenth century and until that time schemes and tropes were taught in the lower schools with the Barbarismus of Donatus (the third part of his Ars grammatica, ca. 350 A.D.) and with the Graecismus of Eberhard of Bethune (beg. thirteenth century); in the universities, the schemes and tropes were taught from Priscian's Institutionum grammaticarum, libri XVIII (ca. 350 A.D.) and from the Doctrinale of Alexander of Villedieu (beg. thirteenth century). On the assumption that the schemes and tropes as known by Geoffrey of Vinsauf (from the pseudo-Ciceronian Rhetorica ad Herennium) were known in England in the fifteenth century, and perhaps earlier by those educated on the continent, the chart contains an outline of the figures from the Rhetorica ad Herennium. The Rhetorica series, almost in the exact same order, occurs in the continental poetic treatises: Geoffrey of Vinsauf's Poetria nova, Documentum de modo et arte dictandi et versificandi, Summa de coloribus rhetoricis, Eberhard the German's Laborintus, and John of
Garland's *Poetria*, and others. (For a chart of elements in the continental treatises which are derived from the *Rhetorica*, see Edmond Faral, *Les Arts Poétiques de XIIe et du XIIIe Siècle*, Bibliothèque de l'École des Hautes Études, vol. 238 [Paris: Librarie Ancienne Honoré Champion, 1924], pp. 52-53.)

In the following chart, the figures from the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* are compared to those found in Donatus and in the *Doctrinale* (which were definitely known in England). It will be noted that a wide divergence occurs between the figures (especially the "schemes") as listed in the *Rhetorica* and those listed in Donatus (and followed in the medieval *Doctrinale*). The divergence obviously is due to the fact that the *Rhetorica* is a classical rhetorical treatise and Donatus' work a classical grammatical treatise. In the Middle Ages, of course, poetry manuals on the whole were influenced more by the rhetorical tradition than by the grammatical in their listing of the figures, schemes and tropes (see Faral's chart). One continental work, however, Matthew of Vendome's *Ars versificatoria*, combines the grammatical and rhetorical. His interesting and somewhat confusing combination is included in the chart.

In consideration of the various rhetorical devices associated with contraries and paradox in the lyrics we would expect to find and do find the following: (1) *antiphrasis*, or saying exactly the opposite of what is meant (which is combined with a destroying refrain in some of the lyrics), is recommended in the *Rhetorica* and in Donatus and the *Doctrinale*; (2) *aenigma*, which, according to examples given, corresponds to what I call *apparent paradox*, is discussed as a form of allegory in the grammatical handbooks; (3) *adnominatio* or *paronomasia*, the use of words which sound
alike or look alike because of similar prefixes or suffixes, is recommended in both the grammatical and rhetorical traditions; (4) polyptoton, or the use of two or more words with the same root, is recommended in the grammar treatises. (The last two devices are distinct; but Atkins, in the definitions recommended at the end of the following chart, confuses the two.)

What occurs in the lyrics is, however, not in the least adequately explained by the ornaments of style which are recommended. We do not find, for example, any doctrines which urge the definition of a subject by means of contraries and paradox. One of the lesser-known rhetorical tracts, Ars versificaria by Gervais of Melkley, does give special attention to contraries by dividing the ornaments of style into their sources: identity, similitude, and contrary. Under contrary he groups the following devices: allegoria (ironia, antifrasis, carientismos, sarcasmos), entimema (contrarium, conversio, adversitas, metathesis, contentio, antitenum), paroemia. (Faral, p. 329.)

Circumlocution by contraries, so common in the lyrics, is nowhere mentioned, though other kinds of periphrasis are. The use of secular poetic conventions in religious lyrics might be attributed in part to an exercise of the device of allegoria or permutatio per similitudinem, but this is by no means certain. Two devices which do occur in the lyrics, commutatio (antimetabole) and contentio (antithesis) are only listed in the rhetorical tracts, supposedly not known in England until the fifteenth century. Interestingly, Matthew adds antithesis to his list of tropes (though it is not present in his source) and he treats it in some detail, listing its kinds as antithesis in phrases, adjectives,
Finally, **oxymoron**, a distinctive use of contraries in the definitions of love (though not as popular in the Middle English definitions as in the Roman definition) is mentioned in neither the major rhetorical tracts, nor in the grammatical treatises. The only poetic treatise in which oxymoron is mentioned, to my knowledge, is the *Laborintus* of Evrard the German (Faral, p. 236 f.). Evrard lists the alliance of contraries as one of the devices in distinguished elocution, and gives the following examples:

"Dives avarus" eget, lucrique "labore quiescit";
Congregat; est vita "sordida munda" sibi.
(vv. 351-52, Faral, p. 348).
### Comparison of Ornaments of Style Between the Rhetorical and the Grammatical Traditions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rhetorica ad Herennium, Geoffrey, et al.</th>
<th>Donatus</th>
<th>Doctrinale</th>
<th>Matthew</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Repetitio</td>
<td>Anaphora</td>
<td>Anaphora</td>
<td>Anaphora</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Conversio</td>
<td>Epanalepsis</td>
<td>Epanalepsis</td>
<td>Epanalepsis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Complectio</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Traducitio</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Contentio</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Exclamatio</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Interrogatio</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Ratiocinatio</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Sententia</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Contrarium</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>11. Membrum</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Articulatio</td>
<td>Sceles omonaton</td>
<td>Sceles omonaton</td>
<td>Sceles omonaton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Continuatio</td>
<td>x</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Conpar</td>
<td>x</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Similiter cadenas</td>
<td>Homoeoteleuton</td>
<td>Homoeoteleuton</td>
<td>Homoeoteleuton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Similiter desinenes</td>
<td>Homoptoton</td>
<td>Homoptoton</td>
<td>Homoptoton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Adnominao</td>
<td>Paronomasia</td>
<td>Paronomasia</td>
<td>Paronomasia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Subjectio</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Gradatio</td>
<td>Anadiplosis</td>
<td>Anadiplosis</td>
<td>Anadiplosis</td>
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<tr>
<td>20. Definitio</td>
<td>x</td>
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<tr>
<td>21. Tresitio</td>
<td>x</td>
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<tr>
<td>22. Correctio</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>23. Occupatio</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. Disjunctio</td>
<td>x</td>
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<tr>
<td>25. Conjunctio</td>
<td>x</td>
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<tr>
<td>26. Adjunctio</td>
<td>x</td>
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<tr>
<td>27. Conduplicatio</td>
<td>Epizeuxis</td>
<td>Epizeuxis</td>
<td>Epizeuxis</td>
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<tr>
<td>28. Interpretatio</td>
<td>x</td>
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<tr>
<td>29. Compositio</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>30. Pernamale</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>31. Dubitatio</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>32. Expeditio</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33. Dissoleucio</td>
<td>Dialytton</td>
<td>Dialytton</td>
<td>Dialytton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34. Pracusitio</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35. Conclusio</td>
<td>Polypoton</td>
<td>Polypoton</td>
<td>Polypoton</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N.B. Matthew in *Ars Vernificatoria* lists not only the 35 simple ornaments but also the ornaments as he finds them in Donatus (through Isadore of Seville) and he comments on the parallelism between some of the "colors" and the schemes and tropes (see below) as he lists them (section 45 of *Ars*).
2. "Figures of Speech," "Tropes," "Difficult Ornaments"

1. Nominatio
   - Onomatopoeia

2. Pronominalio
   - Antonomasia

3. Denominatio
   - Metonomy

4. Circuito
   - Periphrasis

5. Tresagmo
   - Hyperbaton

6. Superlatio
   - Hyperbole

7. Intellactio
   - Synecdoche

8. Absusio
   - Catachresis

9. Traesalatio
   - Metaphora

10. Permutatio
    - Allegoria

    per similitudinem
    - 1) antiphrasis

    per contrarium
    - 2) irony

    - 3) charientesmos

    - 4) paroemia

    - 5) sarcasmos

    - 6) assiasmos

    - 7) aenigma

Metalepsis
 - Metalpsis

Ephelaton
 - Epitheto

Homoeosis
 - Homoeoasis

3. "Figures of Thought"

The following figures are noted in the Eorticus and by Geoffrey and others, but are not mentioned in Donatus, the Doctrinae, or in Matthew.

Distributio, Licentia, Distinctio, Descriptio, Divides, Frequettatio, Expeditio, Conmoratio, Contentio, Similitudo, Exemplum, Image, Efficitio, Notatio, Sermoesto, Conformatio, Similitudo (per eumbrationem, per aequiutum, per consequential, per aequationem, per similitudem), Brevitas, Demonstratio.


The list of ornaments from the Eorticus ad Herennium and continental poetic treatises is taken from Faral (pp. 52-54). The schemes and tropes from Matthew are also taken from Faral (pp. 107-08). Donatus' list is from his Ars Grammatica in Grammatici Latinli, ed. Henry Keil (1857; rpt. Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1961), IV, 397-402. Alexander of Villlevicc's list is from his Doctrinale, ed. Dietrich Reichling, Monumenta Germaniae Paedagogica, vol. 12 (Berlin: A. Hofmann and Co., 1893), pp. 163-73.
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