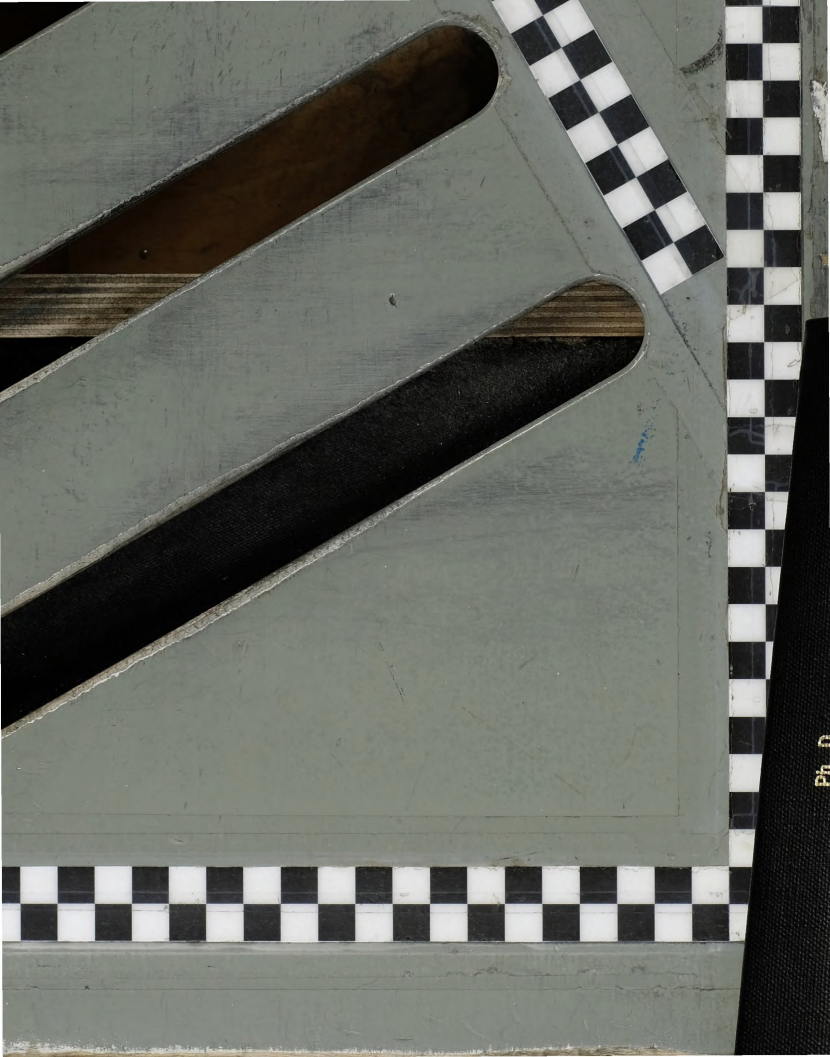


KATHLEEN J. BRAHNEY

Ph.D.





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Ph. D.



THE POETRY OF  
THIBAUT DE CHAMPAGNE:  
A THEMATIC STUDY

Dissertation for the Degree of Ph. D.  
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY  
KATHLEEN J. BRAHNEY  
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This is to certify that the  
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THE POETRY OF THIBAUT DE CHAMPAGNE:  
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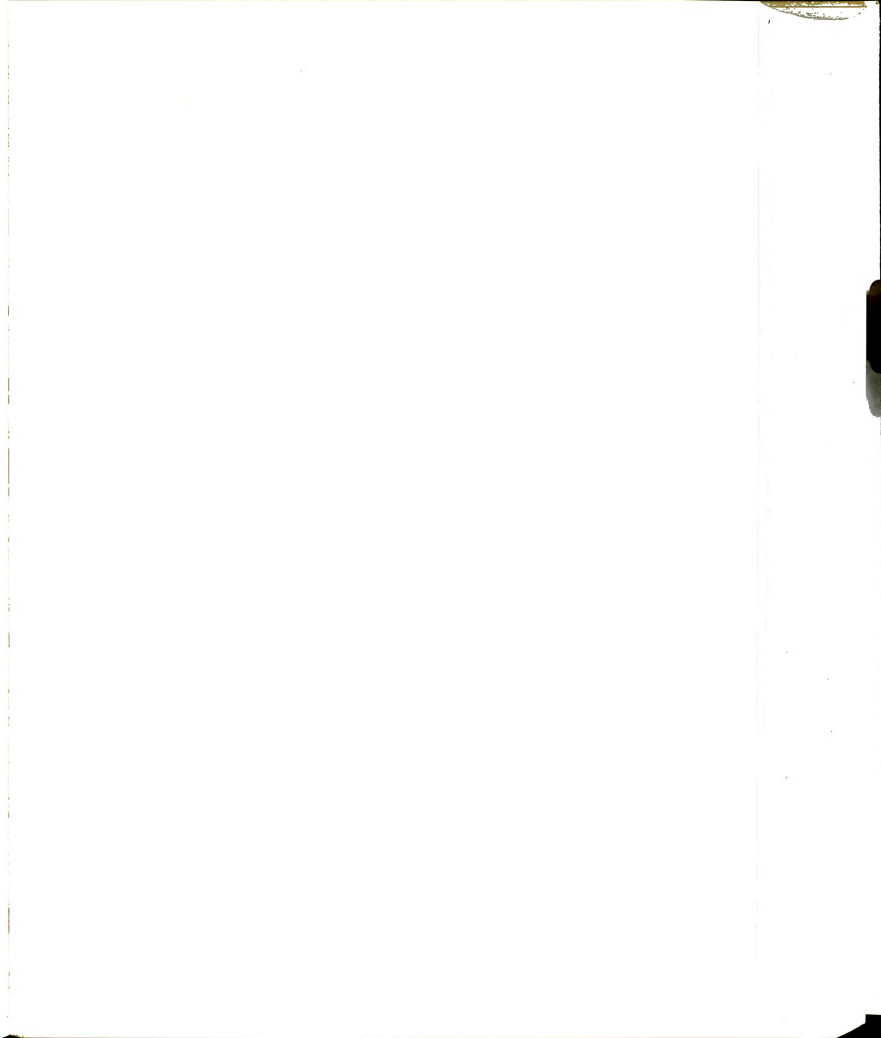
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ABSTRACT

THE POETRY OF THIBAUT DE CHAMPAGNE:  
A THEMATIC STUDY

By

Kathleen J. Brahney

The sixty-one extant poems by Thibaut de Champagne, thirteenth-century trouvère include chansons d'amour, jeux-partis, débats, and various forms of religious verse. In this study the major themes of the secular and religious poems are examined; first three themes based upon the paradoxes inherent in courtly love, then the theme of the poet-as-authority in the chansons d'amour and the dialogue poems, and finally, the thematic correlations between the chansons d'amour and religious verse.

An examination of "la douce dolors d'amors" reveals that, although Thibaut integrates into his love songs the courtly stereotype of the attendant courtly lover as outlined by Andreas Capellanus, in many poems the poet-persona strains the limitations of such narrowly defined behavior by being rebellious, defiant, and willing to challenge the authority of his sovereigns, Amors and the lady. Such responses and the use of sophisticated rhetorical devices and imagery serve to enrich the lover's ultimate reaffirmation of fidelity to the "Dame."





The equally paradoxical "douz maus du souvenir" is characterized by specific patterns and thought processes. The lover directs his thoughts to the moment when he first beheld the lady, an encounter which transformed his whole existence. Conscious recollection of the past brings both pain and solace, a heightened awareness of physical and temporal separation from the lady coupled with the exceeding delight upon recalling her beauty. Involuntary as well as voluntary remembrance leads to a timeless state of rapt contemplation which ultimately disintegrates, whereupon the lover is again confronted by the painful reality of separation.

Separation and estrangement from the beloved is directly related to the theme of the prison of love which, in Thibaut's lyrics, is a manifestation of the lover's psychological state as well. The lover's intense and unresolvable conflict, that of suffering the pains of love and yet being incapable of quitting love's service, is communicated by the personification of the lover's heart and mind and by the phenomenon of dédoublement whereby the lover and the heart each lead an independent existence. The lover remains in sad exile from the lady, the heart joyfully imprisoned with her. The prison theme affords Thibaut rich and striking metaphors of which the most well known is the Roman de la rose-like description of Amors' prison in the unicorn poem.



The poet-as-authority theme bridges both the chansons d'amour and the dialogue poems. The authoritative voice of the lover expressed through extensive use of generalized sententiae in the love songs functions equally well in the world of the jeux-partis and débats. The dialogue poems' participants, however, are freer to discuss explicitly sexual matters. In the amoebean verse the convergence of two worlds, the courtly and the actual, changing world in which the trouvères lived and created, raises deeper philosophical considerations concerning the search for ideals that are consistent with one's real life.

In Thibaut's religious verse the ideals, the feudal hierarchy of the lover as servant of a sovereign lord (Amors) and the lady, and the technical refinements of the chansons d'amour are transferred to a higher plane whereby the poet-lover pledges fealty to a divine master and celestial mistress. The poet-persona continues to play the rôle of steadfast servant and spokesperson delineating rules for the faithful to follow, taking on the more awesome rôle of prophet or that of an innocent child to prove himself worthy of heavenly reward. Again Thibaut reveals his technical virtuosity and ability to speak with many voices, effectively communicating the wide range of emotions experienced by love's servant and the servant of God.





THE POETRY OF THIBAUT DE CHAMPAGNE:

A THEMATIC STUDY

By

Kathleen J. <sup>Joanne</sup> Brahney

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to  
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in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of

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à mes parents:

Pour ce voi bien que garison n'atent,  
    Qui m'assoage,  
Fors seul de vos remirer  
Des euz du cuer en penser.



#### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I find that, like Thibaut de Champagne in the chansons d'amour, I must trust those included here to discern the sincerity of my sentiments since my words are indeed inadequate in expressing my gratitude. My thanks go first to Professor Ann Harrison, my dissertation director, for her patience, kindness, and especially for her guidance in the preparation of the translations of Thibaut's poems. My sincere appreciation goes also to Professor Frieda Brown for her careful reading of the text; to Professor Laurence Porter for his suggestions concerning further avenues of inquiry; and to Professor Kenneth Scholberg and Leonard Rahilly for affording still other points of view from which Thibaut's lyrics might be considered. I also thank Mrs. Betty McNaughton and Mrs. Pat Jeffries for providing office space and technical assistance during all stages of my work. Finally, in keeping with the courtly tenet of secrecy, I thank all those whose encouragement and inspiration are too personal to be mentioned here.

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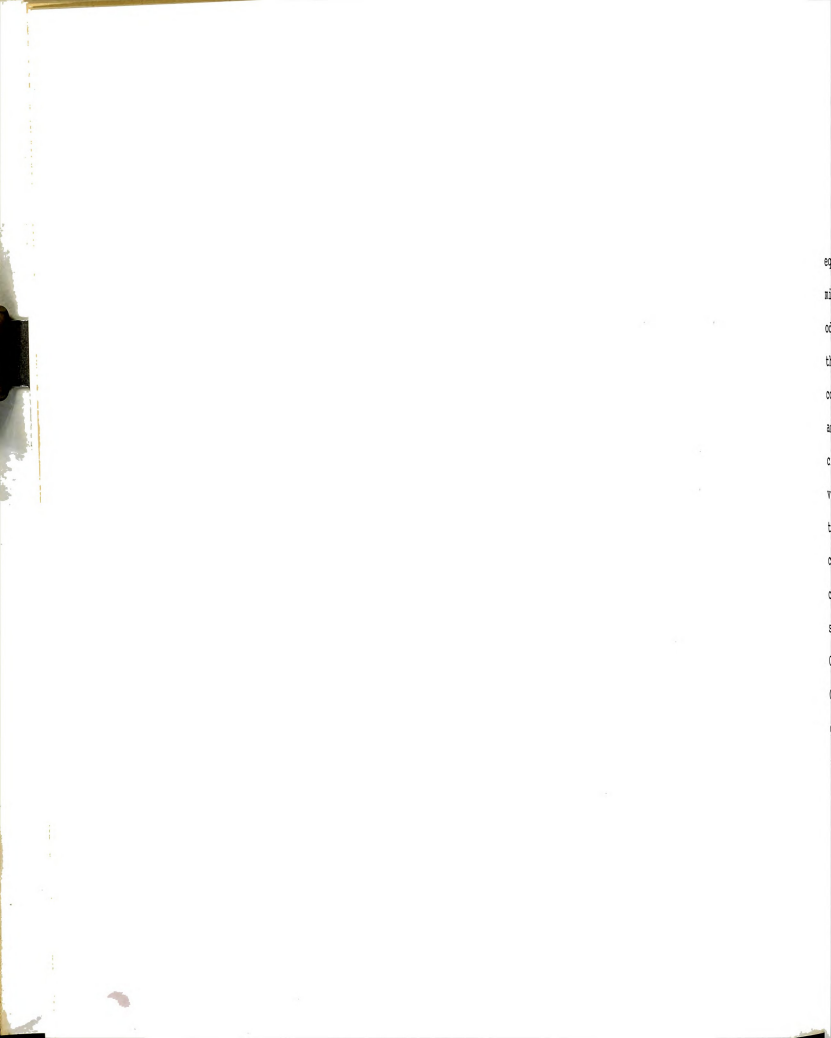
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
INTRODUCTION . . . . .	1
Chapter	
I. LA DOUCE DOLORS D'AMORS . . . . .	23
II. LI DOUZ MAUS DU SOUVENIR . . . . .	52
III. EN LA DOUCE CHARTRE EN PRISON . . . . .	80
IV. BONS ROIS THIEBAUT, SIRE, CONSEILLIEZ MOI! . .	113
V. DOUCE DAME, BIAUS SIRE DEUS, VERS VOUS ME SUI GUENCHIZ . . . . .	161
CONCLUSION . . . . .	201
APPENDIX . . . . .	206
BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	281





## INTRODUCTION

The lengthening of days anticipating the vernal equinox, the exultant song of the thrush and lark, the miracle of bush and tree bursting with new life, the heady odor of spring intoxicating the poet and causing him, like the bird-harbingers, to burst into song, are all motifs common to the tradition of medieval lyric poetry in Southern and Northern France. This body of poetry has suffered undue criticism in the past, criticism that was based upon the very preponderance of seemingly stereotyped imagery related to the renaissance of spring, season of love, with its concomitant joys and sorrows. Recent criticism,<sup>1</sup> however, has clearly demonstrated that one was asking the wrong questions, so to speak, of lyric poetry based on the courtly love theme. One sought in vain the striking image, and found only the Ovidian figure of Amors striking lovers with his arrows of gold and lead. Courtly love poetry was the literary expression of a formalized system of love, a system which poets adhered to quite closely, thus creating a body of poetry of which the imagery and figures of speech did not, indeed,

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<sup>1</sup>See especially Roger Dragonetti, La Technique poétique des trouvères dans la chanson courtoise (Bruges: De Tempel, 1960).

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vary greatly from poem to poem or from poet to poet. One's value as a troubadour or as a trouvère was not determined by one's originality but by one's ability to work within an already established system and by the degree of refinement of one's verbal technique and one's melodies. In these two areas, poetry and music, the trouvère Thibaut IV de Champagne et de Brie, roi de Navarre, has received much praise from his contemporaries and from modern critics alike. Jacques Chailley in his Histoire musicale au moyen âge calls Thibaut "le plus grand de tous. Comme musicien autant que comme poète, Thibaut mérite une place de première grandeur et celle-ci, du reste, Dante en témoigne, lui a été accordée."<sup>2</sup> The reference to Dante concerns the fact that in the De Volgari eloquentia Dante cites the Roy de Navarre as a model for the hendecasyllabic line, the perfect line length according to Dante.<sup>3</sup>

Other examples from the Middle Ages reveal that Thibaut was known and admired for his expressions of sentiment and his musical expertise. An excerpt from the Grandes chroniques de France composed by the monks of Saint Denis for the year 1236 states:

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<sup>2</sup>Jacques Chailley, Histoire musicale au moyen âge (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1969), p. 188.

<sup>3</sup>Dante Alighieri, The Latin Works, trans. by J. M. Dent, Temple Classics (London: Aldine, 1940), p. 82.



pour ce que parfondes pensées engendrent mélancolie,  
 ly fu-il loé d'aucuns sages hommes qu'il s'estudiast  
 en biaux sons de vielle et en doux chans délitables.  
 Si fist entre luy et Gace Brulé les plus belles  
 chançons et les plus délitables et mélodieuses qui  
 onques fussent oïes en chançon né en vielle.<sup>4</sup>

French critics have seen in some of Thibaut's poetry  
 the embodiment of patriotic and religious fervor as, for  
 example, in Gustave Cohen's description of one of Thibaut's  
chansons de croisade:

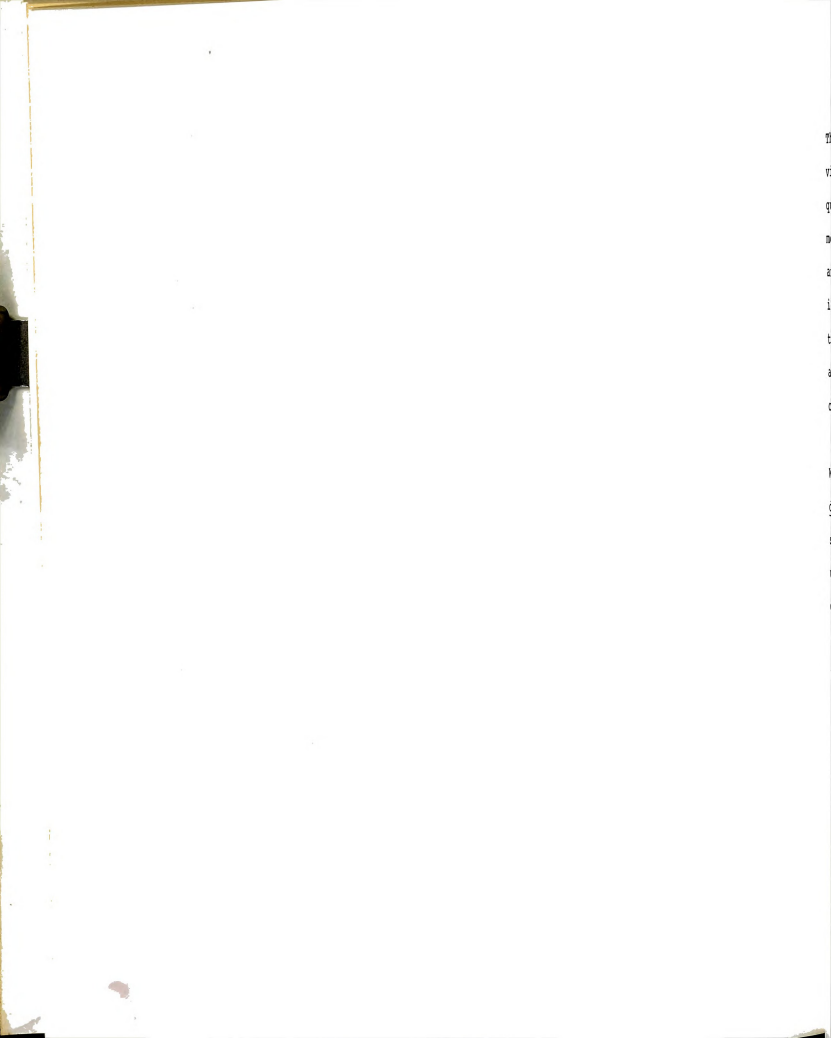
Par rang de quatre, ses chevaliers Champenois  
 [sic] et Navarrais suivent, à cheval, leur comte  
 et leur roi, et de leur mâle poitrine monte à  
 l'unisson le chant que leur maître [Thibaut]  
 composa, honnissant les lâches, les récréants.  
 les morveux et les cendreaux et appelant les braves  
 au lieu où les anges sont: Marseillaise ou plutôt  
 Champenoise de ce David médiéval, Thibaut IV, le  
 roi-chansonnier.<sup>5</sup>

Such a romanticized portrait may indeed be flattering if one  
 responds positively to the values expressed therein. It is  
 possible that our trouvère might not have endorsed the  
 reference in all its ramifications since, although Thibaut  
 did participate in the crusade of 1239-40, he differed with  
 Pope Gregory IX concerning the proper aim of the crusade and  
 displays antiwar sentiments in his serventois religieux  
 (chanson LVI), chastizing clergymen who abandon their  
 pastoral rôle in order to wage war and kill people.

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<sup>4</sup>Axel Wallensköld, ed., Les Chansons de Thibaut de  
 Champagne (Paris: Société des anciens textes français,  
 1925), xvii. All further references are to this edition.  
 Roman numerals indicate Wallensköld's numbering of the  
chansons.

<sup>5</sup>Gustave Cohen, La Poésie en France au moyen âge  
 (Paris: Richard-Masse, 1952), p. 62.



From such examples one can see that the poetry of Thibaut IV has been commented on from various points of view: medieval contemporaries and successors extracted quotations from his lyrics and praised him for his beautiful melodies; modern critics have ranked him as a great musician and as the foremost trouvère of the northern French lyric at its apogee in the first half of the thirteenth century. To the present, however, commentaries on Thibaut's poetic craft and poetic vision have been few and I will deal with them in chronological succession.

The point of departure for this discussion is the Wallensköld edition already cited, the Chansons de Thibaut de Champagne, roi de Navarre. This edition is a thorough, scholarly presentation of the 61 poems which can be attributed with certainty to Thibaut de Champagne and 8 which are of doubtful attribution. Wallensköld's work, as he states in the avant-propos, is "plus conforme aux exigences de la philologie moderne," and supplants two previous editions of the poetry of Thibaut de Champagne, that of Lesvesque de La Ravalière (1742), and Prosper Tarbé (1851). Wallensköld's intention, that of presenting a well-documented and philologically sound edition was certainly realized; he has laid the scholarly groundwork necessary for any critical study of the poetry of the roi-chansonnier. To establish the text Professor Wallensköld collated 32 manuscripts scattered throughout Europe (Introduction, xxviii-xxxviii) and has





included in his edition comparative tables of the order of chansons found in the various manuscripts.

In the section entitled "La Question d'attribution" (xxxix-lxxxii) Wallensköld presents lists which describe in summary form the versification, numbers of stanzas in each poem, the stanza- and line-length, and a discussion of the rhyme schemes used by Thibaut. After a phonological and morphological description of the language of Thibaut de Champagne, Wallensköld addresses himself to the question of attribution. The seemingly mechanical lists of rhyme schemes and stanza length are used as a tool in determining the authenticity of certain poems, some of which are excluded partly on the basis of their lack of resemblance to chansons which are authentically Thibaut's. The question of attribution is always difficult to resolve, and Wallensköld's arguments seem justifiable.

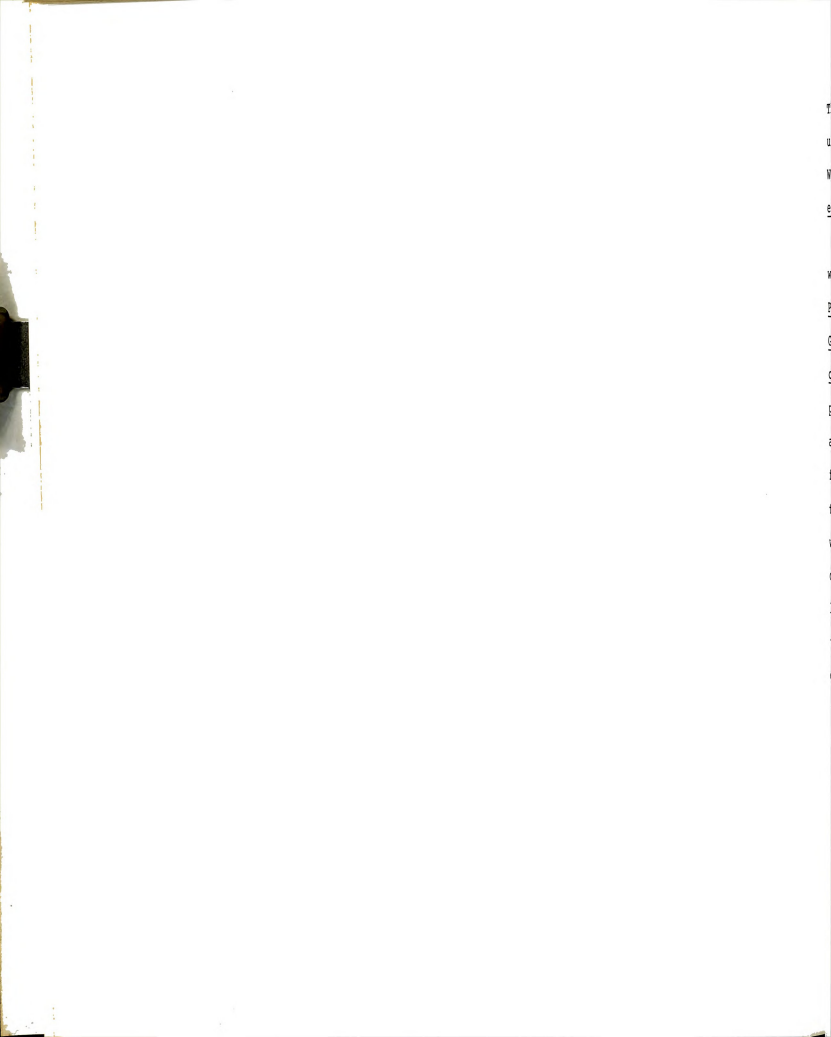
From the sections of the Introduction entitled "Vie de Thibaut de Champagne" (xi-xxvii) and "La Réputation poétique de Thibaut de Champagne" (lxxxiii-xcv), one can derive a comprehensive picture of the scope of Thibaut's influence. Besides being cited in the Grandes chroniques de France and by Dante, Thibaut is referred to by fellow poets Raoul de Soissons, Jean Bretel and Jehan de Grieveler, and by successors Matfre Ermengaut in the Perilhos tractat, and by Girart d'Amiens in Meliacin or the Cheval de Fust,



and by the German poet Wahsmuot von Mulnhusen. Wallensköld attributes the definitive establishment of Thibaut's poetic reputation to two sixteenth-century humanists, Estienne Pasquier and Claude Fauchet, who, in their respective works, the Recherches de la France, 1560, and the Recueil de l'origine de la langue et poésie françoise, 1581, underscore Thibaut's merit as a trouvère. The Roi de Navarre was henceforth included in anthologies and literary histories, acquiring the greatest public with the appearance of the nineteenth-century edition by Prosper Tarbé in 1851, and finally with Wallensköld's own edition published 74 years later. The Wallensköld edition serves as an invaluable source book; each poem is fully annotated, giving bibliographical references as well as manuscript variants and explanation of specific textual terms. The glossary and table of proper names included by Wallensköld at the end of his volume are also useful.

The chansons are conveniently divided into workable categories based upon traditional genre divisions of medieval poetry:

- 36 chansons d'amour
- 9 jeux-partis
- 5 débats
- 2 pastourelles
- 3 chansons de croisade
- 1 sirventois religieux
- 4 chansons à la Vierge
- 1 lai religieux

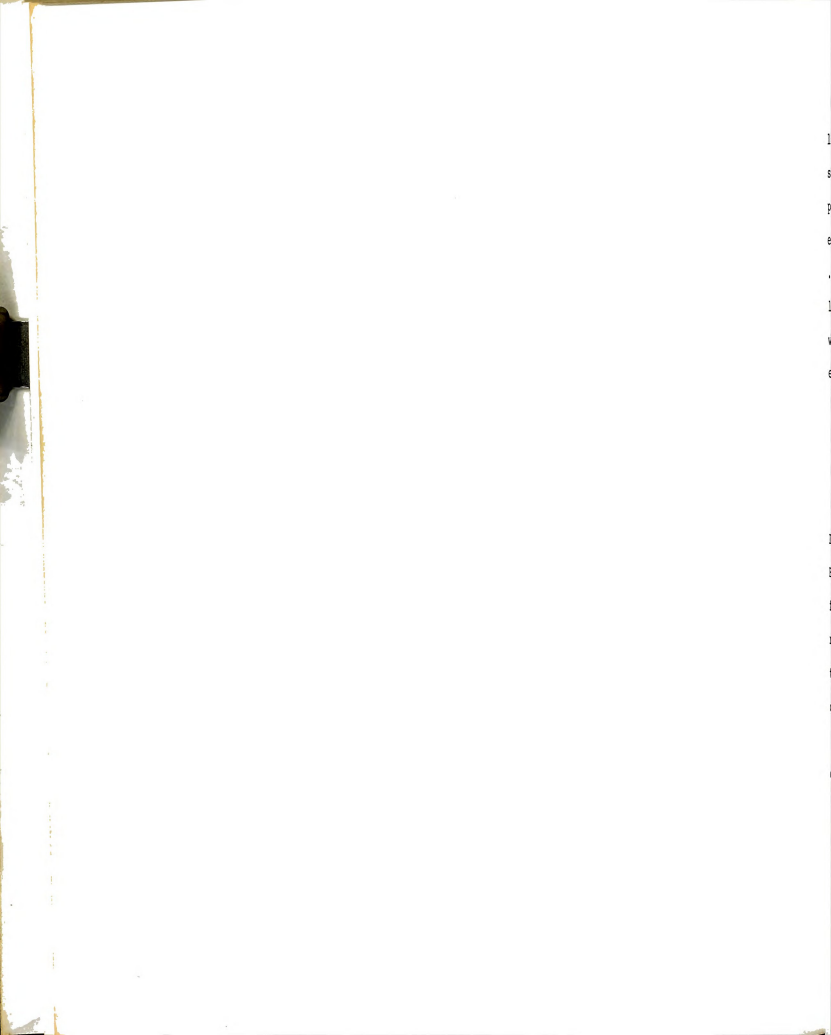


The edition thereby provides a firm basis from which to undertake a thematic study of Thibaut's study, although Wallensköld himself offers no interpretive analysis or explications de texte.

The first study to deal specifically with Thibaut's work after the appearance of the Wallensköld edition was La Préciosité et les Précieux de Thibaut de Champagne à Jean Giroudoux by René Bray.<sup>6</sup> For Bray the subject matter of the chansons--courtly love--and the use of extended metaphors, personifications, and allegory suffice to categorize Thibaut and other twelfth- and thirteenth-century trouvères as the first "précieux" of French literary tradition. Bray seeks to give a broad definition to the notion of préciosité, one which is sometimes ephemeral and mystical--"c'est un état d'âme ou un état d'esprit collectif, comme la courtoisie ou la galanterie" (p. 15)--or of which the literary manifestation "consiste surtout dans un certain abus des ressources de la rhétorique" (p. 15). In the Introduction Bray states that the "geste précieux (nous aurons à le définir) est lié à l'acte poétique. Peut-être même déborde-t-il la poésie et rejoint-il une tendance naturelle à l'esprit humain" (p. 16). This all-encompassing definition permits the critic to include most poets in his survey of littérature précieuse.

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<sup>6</sup>René Bray, La Préciosité et les Précieux de Thibaut de Champagne à Jean Giroudoux (Paris: Albin Michel, 1948), pp. 8-46.



During the Middle Ages, states Bray, the social and literary factors essential to the fostering of a précieux style of writing were well established in France: "La préciosité est fille de loisir. . . . Le milieu pour lequel elle montre sa prédilection c'est la cour, un milieu fermé . ." (p. 20). According to Bray the social milieu, the seclusion of court life, and the existence of a noble class were all prerequisite to the development of préciosité, an essential part of which was the noble game of love.

Dans les cours médiévales, c'est bien en effet souvent un jeu d'esprit: le coeur n'y a qu'une toute petite place, et parfois n'en a même pas. C'est un jeu noble: tandis que le vilain jouit ou épouse, le gentilhomme 'fait l'amour'. . . . Faire l'amour est un art, une création renouvelée [pp. 19-20].

For, as it existed in the milieu of the court was, states Bray, a game of artificial sentiment, a game which manifested itself through the gestures of language, the more refined the language, the more brilliant and effective was the gesture. Préciosité was the "servante de l'amour courtois" (p. 20).

Préciosité also requires the existence of a fully-developed literary tradition:

Une telle forme d'art n'apparaît jamais chez les primitifs. On ne s'improvise pas précieux. Il y faut l'évolution intellectuelle de tout un groupe: dans le cas qui nous occupe, il fallait que se fussent affinées à la fois la conception de l'amour et celle de la littérature [p. 21].





ay then selects Thibaut de Champagne from the list of  
 rthern trouvères and classifies him as précieux because  
 his use of numerous personifications and allegories.

La métaphore chez lui [Thibaut] paraît instinctive:  
 son esprit se joue entre figurant et figuré avec  
 sécurité et même avec naturel. Sa préciosité  
 n'est pas apprise comme une leçon d'école: elle  
 est création jaillissante [p. 22].

Bray's approach to préciosité, defining it as a  
 occlivity of the human spirit or a state of soul, allows  
 n to include in his definition elements which may not, in  
 ct, clarify the term. The fact that love as it existed  
 the courts of medieval France developed into the codified  
 stem known as "amour courtois" does not necessarily indi-  
 te that it was devoid of true sentiment; the question of  
 ncerity in troubadour and trouvère poetry is virtually  
 answerable due to the abstract and generalized nature of  
 e poets' lexicons. Furthermore, the poets themselves  
 alize that it is difficult to discern true sentiments  
 om false ones. Their poems are replete with complaints  
 t their ladies are surrounded by flatterers and false  
 ers who feign love through pretty words while the poets  
 mselves--the true lovers--are not taken seriously in  
 ir lyric endeavors. One could say that this is just  
 lever ploy on the part of the poets; it may just as  
 l be, however, a sincere expression of the poet-lover's  
 emma.



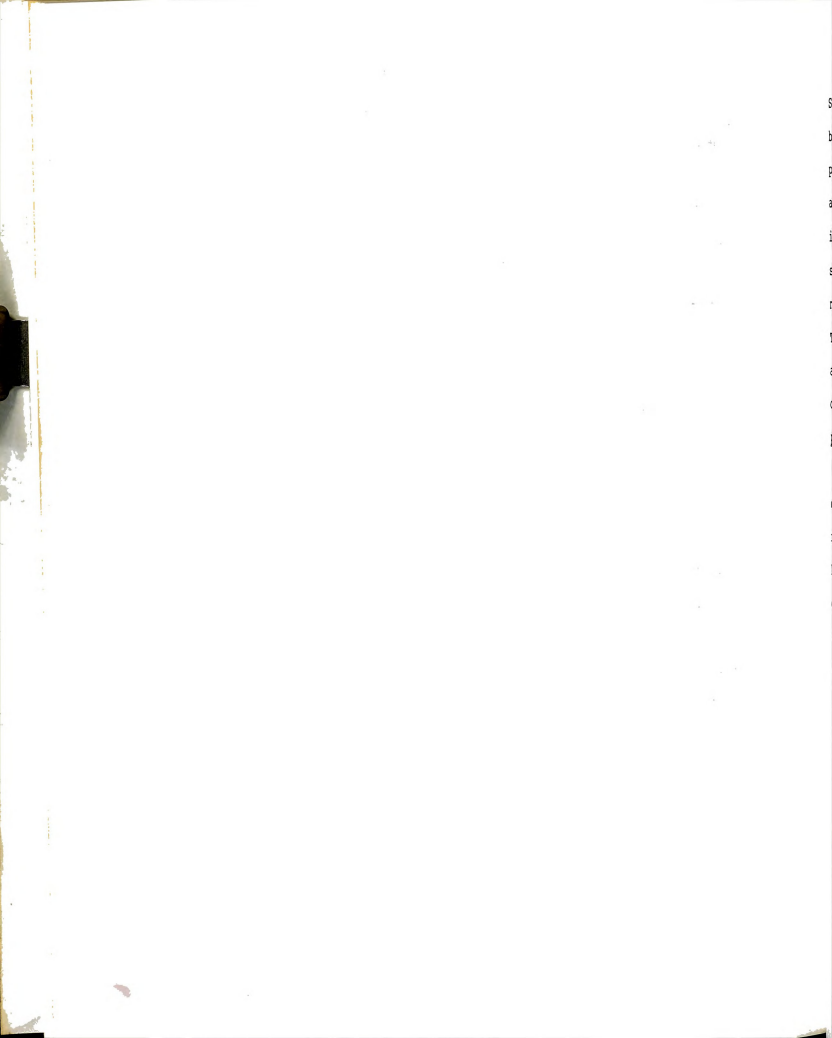
It is true that language in poetic form was a servant of the courtly lover who was not able to address his lady directly. Language was "précieux" in terms of its ultimate indispensability, but was it "précieux" in terms of its intrinsic characteristics? What is needed is a clearer, more fruitful definition of préciosité. Ferdinand Brunot offers the following criteria as modes of expression and figures of speech characteristic of préciosité:

1. antithesis
2. paraphrase
3. metaphors and allegories
4. hyperbole.<sup>7</sup>

Antithesis and hyperbole are certainly characteristic of courtly love poetry, in fact, they are inevitable. Antithesis lies at the core of the courtly love ethic whereby the lover suffers extreme joy and extreme sorrow simultaneously because of his beloved who is, hyperbolically, the most perfect being. Metaphor and allegory are also part of the courtly love system. Concentration on the refinements of one's feelings, the localization of one's sufferings in the heart and the cause of suffering as they are seen through one's eyes lead easily to the personification of the senses.

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<sup>7</sup>Ferdinand Brunot, Histoire de la langue française, t. 3, ptie. 1 (Paris: Colin, 1966), pp. 246-247.



me extended metaphors concerning the prison of love can be found in Thibaut's poems,<sup>8</sup> but such occurrences are not predominant. Thibaut more often has recourse to a simile in chanson LVI, "Deus est ensi comme li pellicanz," which introduces a short exemplary story of which the independent symbols and images reinforce one another, but which does not really constitute allegory. In terms of vocabulary Thibaut's lexicon is limited. He chooses straightforward appellation rather than paraphrase, and avoids contrived comparisons and use of long adverbs characteristic of préciosité.

In short, the problem of determining préciosité is one of degree and it must be based upon specific criteria rather than upon general impressions. If préciosité is to be interpreted as a tendency toward abstraction and artificiality, one must keep in mind that most poetry can be characterized as "artificial" when compared to the structure of prose or the spoken language. If one speaks in terms of refinement of language, Thibaut's poetry may justifiably be termed "refined." If one speaks of affected paraphrases, Thibaut must be excluded and seen simply as representative of a style of poetry which was characterized by a single theme--courtly love--and by the use of metaphor, hyperbole, and abstractions. The use of such figures of speech in

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<sup>8</sup>Chanson XXXIV.



oping with medieval artes rhetoricae was précieux neither in terms of extreme refinement nor extreme affectation.

The next critic to treat the poetry of Thibaut de Champagne at any length was Jean Frappier in La Poésie lyrique française aux XII<sup>e</sup> and XIII<sup>e</sup> siècles.<sup>9</sup> Frappier devotes 22 pages of his work to Thibaut and credits him with having prolonged the vitality of the short lyric which, according to Frappier, was beginning to become monotonous and hackneyed at the beginning of the thirteenth century. Frappier's presentation opens with a short biography of Thibaut which includes some details not found in the Hellensköld edition, notably that Thibaut's later years were marked by religious preoccupations; he seemed interested in assuring the salvation of his soul through pious endowments. This information may corroborate the notion that Thibaut wrote most of his religious verse, especially the chansons à la Vierge, toward the end of his life. The rest of Frappier's study treats the themes and images found in Thibaut's poetry; citations of Thibaut's verse interspersed with commentary make of the "cours de Sorbonne" volume a very good introduction to Thibaut's lyrics.

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<sup>9</sup>Jean Frappier, La Poésie lyrique française aux XII<sup>e</sup> et XIII<sup>e</sup> siècles (Paris: Centre de Documentation Universitaire, 1949), pp. 173-195.





Frappier considers Thibaut to be unique among the ouvères and perceives a distinct personality--that of a i-trouvère--in Thibaut's poems. Such evidence is not overwhelming; the rôle of suppliant lover seems to dominate the chansons rather than the rôle of powerful noble which Frappier would like to emphasize. Frappier does discuss in some detail most of the genre divisions indicated in the Illensköld edition, with less attention given to Thibaut's religious verse which he considers more structured and artificial than Thibaut's other poems. Frappier's admission for Thibaut is well communicated and his study of Thibaut serves as a good point of departure for further investigation.

In 1966 Thibaut de Champagne figured prominently in the articles of two critics, M. Banitt<sup>10</sup> and Paul Zumthor.<sup>11</sup> In both Thibaut's work serves as a basis for comparison with the poetry of other trouvères. The article by M. Banitt concerns the vocabulary of Colin Muset whom most critics have distinguished by saying that he is not like the poets of courtly love. Banitt has begun with this premise and has taken it one step further, showing through

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<sup>10</sup> M. Banitt, "Le Vocabulaire de Colin Muset: rapprochement sémantique avec celui d'un prince-poète, Thibaut de Champagne," Romance Philology 20 (1966): 151-167.

<sup>11</sup> Paul Zumthor, "'Roman' et 'gothique': Deux aspects de la poésie médiévale," in Studi in Onore di Italo Siciliano (Firenze: Olschki, 1966): 1223-1234.



analyses of semantic fields that the vocabulary of Colin Muset "se distingue par son caractère fonctionnel et efficient, animant sa poésie d'une qualité vibrante et anticipation" (p. 156) as opposed to the abstractions and retrospection characteristic of the poets of courtly love. Thibaut de Champagne, courtly love poet par excellence, serves as a perfect foil for Colin Muset; they are contemporaries, both Champenois, and their poetry as different as their stations in life might indicate. Colin Muset was a jongleur--some say a parasite--and his poetry reflects his daily concerns as well as a robust vie de vivre. The long-suffering martyrdom of unrequited passion is not for Colin Muset; he speaks of relishing a good meal in the meadow, prides himself on singing to his lady and to his young lady's delight, and declares his need for money, good food, and a warm fire and a roof over his head in winter. The lack of such details in courtly love poetry is obvious and has been commented on before. That which is new and worthwhile in Banitt's study is the fairly extensive examination of 96 specific lexical items in Colin Muset's vocabulary.

Banitt demonstrates that words which ordinarily convey a more or less abstract concept are used by Colin Muset to express the concrete realities of daily existence. The word "cort tenir" signifies "great expenditures," "merci"



the lady's physical gift of herself, and "savor" means "savor" rather than "taste." Colin Muset's propensity for regarding things with a practical end in mind manifests itself in other semantic transformations as well. "Haste," "roasting spit" designates "roasted meat"; "raison" is "advice"; "terre" indicates not "land" but "land revenue" (p. 157-158). Banitt does, then, what the lexicographer cannot do, he restores each item to its specific contextual meaning, thereby rendering its connotation and function more precise. It was fruitful for M. Banitt to use Thibaut de Champagne's poetry as a point of reference in his discussion and it is efficacious for scholars of Thibaut as well to examine the roi-trouvère's work in terms of that produced by other poets. The contrasts thus perceived reinforce the notion that the "universe" presented by Thibaut de Champagne and the chansons d'amour is indeed an introspective one based more upon abstractions and conceptualizations than upon the outside world. From that point one can begin one's exploration of precisely which elements convey in a particularly effective or aesthetically pleasing way the paradox and the beauty inherent in the system of courtly love.

The atmosphere in Thibaut's chansons is relatively "static": separated from the "real" world by a sort of permeable membrane which rarely, if ever, is penetrated by the vicissitudes of life of which the impoverished man



aware: rain, snow, lack of work, or the physical needs of one's dependents. Thibaut-as-lover is pierced by Amors' imaginary arrows but never bombarded by hail or snow; he suffers from the poverty of lack of response from his lady, not from an inability to provide for his wife or his children. Such are the contrasts pointed out by Paul Zumthor in his essay, "'Roman' et 'gothique': Deux aspects de la poésie médiévale."

Zumthor does not insist upon the use of the terms Roman and 'gothique', nor does he draw any comparisons between poetry and architecture. Rather than forcing the contrast between Romanesque and Gothic as an a priori classification, Zumthor limits himself to the discussion of two texts dating from approximately 1250 which reveal simultaneous but divergent "modes of expression" in what he terms the "poetic effort of the thirteenth century" (p. 1233). The texts in question are the 43-line chanson of Thibaut de Champagne, "Contre le tens qui devise," and the first 42 lines of "La Griesche d'yver" by Rutebeuf, thereby basing his comparison on two texts of equal length.

Both poets make use of motifs common to the medieval French lyric tradition. Thibaut's proclamation that he writes in honor of spring is one of the most favored opening lines used by courtly love poets. Rutebeuf's use of the spring motif is inverted--he writes in honor of winter--but





even this inversion is, according to Zumthor, possible because of a pre-existent tradition. Likewise Thibaut's love request is characteristic of poets of courtly love, as is Rutebeuf's lament on poverty in the poems of jongleurs who earned their livings from their performances. With these common traditions in mind, Zumthor compares the modes of expression of the two poets, finding differences both in syntactic and thematic composition which will lead to two paths of subsequent development in medieval French poetry.

Zumthor demonstrates that the chanson by Thibaut is characterized by a high degree of abstraction which generates a pure impression rather than a recognition of a specific event, and that the stanzas are relatively independent syntactically: there is no real progression from stanza to stanza but merely a succession of motifs related to courtly love. The poetic "je" as subject of these generalized events thus also remains highly abstract and does not communicate on a level which seems uniquely personal.

In the poem by Rutebeuf, however, the winter motif consistently reinforces the poverty theme, and the use of concrete nouns--the only abstraction is the theme word, "poverty"--create a "poem of circumstance" (p. 1233). The poetic "je" in Rutebeuf's poem has an identity and an existence which are grounded in the real world.



This is the essential point of contrast between "Romanesque" and "Gothic" poetry which Zumthor wishes to underscore. "Romanesque" is used to designate the courtly lyric, a poem in which the ahistorical "je"

s'épanouit en actions dont la cohésion tient uniquement à l'omniprésence de ce sujet. Ces actions ne portent en général que sur de pseudo-objets, de caractère si universel ou abstrait qu'ils semblent ne servir ici que de support au verbe; sur le plan des significations, tout se passe comme si l'objet de l'action n'existait pas en dehors de l'action elle-même [p. 1233].

The omnipresence of the subject, the poetic "je," is of vital importance; the poem is at once the product of and the vehicle of expression of a completely subjective, abstract world, virtually independent of any outer reality. The initial contact between the poet and a real lady is no longer evident in stylized poetry such as that of Thibaut.

Medieval French poetry which Zumthor characterizes as "Gothic," however, the isolation of the poet from his environment no longer holds true. Just as Colin Muset--

whom Zumthor would include among the authors of poésie ethique--is at the mercy of his donors' generosity, so

Rutebeuf at the mercy of external forces in the world.

Rutebeuf's poem, states Zumthor, there is the distinct expression of being "proche de la vie, de tremper en quelque manière dans une expérience" (p. 1232). It is "le poème ethique" which leads to the possibility of a meeting between the poet and the World or the poet and Life (le



Monde et la Vie, p. 1233) in all the profundity and diversity of that convergence.

The 36 chansons d'amour by Thibaut de Champagne are indeed characterized by the omnipresence of a poetic "je" whose subjectivity forms the perimeter of the universe which the songs encompass. The poet-persona or the poet-lover who speaks in these chansons--Thibaut identifies himself as poet-persona on only one occasion (chanson XVII, l. 18)--mainly communicates the suffering which he endures because of his unrequited passion for an elusive, unattainable, anonymous lady.<sup>12</sup>

This suffering which is said to be unbearable is the dominant motif of courtly love poetry. Its interior nature was clearly recognized and articulated by Andreas Capellanus in his treatise De Arte honeste amandi:

Love is a certain inborn suffering derived from the sight of and excessive meditation upon the beauty of the opposite sex, which causes each one to wish above all things the embraces of the other and by common desire to carry out all of love's precepts in the other's embrace.

That love is suffering is easy to see, for before the love becomes balanced on both sides there is no torment greater, since the lover is always in fear that his love may not gain its desire and that he is wasting his efforts. . . . To tell the truth, no one can number the fears of one single lover.

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<sup>12</sup> Only in chanson XXXVI does Thibaut express the idea that he is composing a song because he is overwhelmed by joy. Chanson XV expresses hope in the imminent attainment of joy, but the poet-persona is still à l'essai, having been chosen for service by Amors, but not yet being the recipient of the lady's favors.

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 That this suffering is inborn I shall show you clearly, because if you will look at the truth and distinguish carefully you will see that it does not arise out of any action; only from the reflection of the mind upon what it sees does this suffering come. . . . This inborn suffering comes, therefore, from seeing and meditating. Not every kind of meditation can be the cause of love, an excessive one is required; for a restrained thought does not, as a rule, return to the mind, and so love cannot arise from it.<sup>13</sup>

Such a definition of love necessitates particular behavior on the part of the lover. Certain physical manifestations of the suffering of love must be evident, such as pallor, sleeplessness or lack of appetite. He must be passive since "love does not arise out of any action," and he must be excessively introspective and preoccupied by thoughts of his beloved. The rule of secrecy stating that "when made public love rarely endures"<sup>14</sup> reinforces to an even greater extent the lover's isolation and distress. The scope of his activity seems severely limited, giving rise to the popular stereotype of the adoring suppliant constantly lamenting his fate but not actively seeking to change his situation.

This type of portrayal of the courtly lover is certainly found in many trouvère lyrics, but it does not

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<sup>13</sup> Andreas Capellanus, The Art of Courtly Love, trans. by John J. Parry (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1941), pp. 28-29.

<sup>14</sup> Rule XIII of Andreas' 31 "Rules of Love," *ibid.*, p. 185.





adequately represent the poet-lover presented in many of Thibaut's chansons. The poet-persona does manifest a major preoccupation with the beauty of the lady who is present as an interiorized vision mirrored constantly in the poet's heart. Sighs, tears, and weeping are the major physical manifestations of the lover's suffering. The motif which recurs most often, however, is the paradoxical nature of the sweet pain of love. Furthermore, the poet-persona, faced with suffering that is "sanz reson" (chanson II, l. 19), reacts in ways which may in fact represent major departures from the narrowly circumscribed mode of behavior traditionally attributed to the lovesick troubadour or trouvère.

Thibaut's poet-persona may use the chanson as a means of easing his pain or as a vehicle to express his fidelity, humility, desperation, or indignation. When dealing with emotions that are as paradoxical as the nature of love itself, the poet-persona, simultaneously experiencing extreme grief and joy, may direct anger toward himself or toward Amors, the god of love, for having fallen in love. His anger may conflict with gratitude for having beheld la plus tres bele et la meilleur ausi (chanson IX, l. 19). He may seek to win the lady's heart through often gentle persuasion or he may voice insistence, great urgency, or disdain for the lady and for Amors.



Thibaut draws upon the richness of variation offered by the theme of love's suffering and creates a poet-persona who speaks with many voices other than that of the suppliant lover. It is precisely these modulations in tone and the ways in which the theme of suffering manifests itself that merit elaboration through close examination of the texts in which the theme unfolds.

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## CHAPTER I

### LA DOUCE DOLORS D'AMORS

The "sweet pain of love" is by far the predominant theme of Thibaut's chansons d'amour. An examination of the diverse ways in which the theme unfolds could conceivably entail 35 explications de texte since the poet-persona's moods and range of feelings are very nearly distinct in each chanson. The standard stereotype of the passive, suppliant lover presented by Andreas Capellanus is but a single response to the assaults of Amors. Thibaut does not entirely reject this portrayal of the courtly lover; in fact one can say that the rôle of the submissive lover worshipping his lady from afar is the basic, sustained attitude in several chansons. In chanson II, for example, although the poet-persona is perplexed by the paradox of the sickness of love which is both painful and pleasing, he never departs from an attitude of fidelity toward Amors and the lady. The word "maus" (sickness, evil, misfortune) recurs throughout the first half of the chanson, but it is consistently offset by its opposite, "biens" (goodness, benefits) to convey a very sustained antithesis illustrating the inherent contradictions of love, the sickness that is "douz et poignanz" (l. 3).

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The statements of the poet-persona in chanson XII also adhere closely to the dictates of love established by Andreas Capellanus. The lover dares not speak to the lady, cannot stop thinking about her, and openly states that he cherishes his suffering since the lady is well worth the torment he endures. An attitude of acceptance of suffering of an undetermined duration as a means of eventually gaining the lady's favor characterizes the entire poem. The poet-persona never indicates that this anguish is unjustifiable, on the contrary, he devotes an entire stanza (stanza V) to an explanation of the good intentions which are the basis for the torment that Amors inflicts upon those who are faithful to him. The certitude that Amors wishes to grant recompense to the patient, long-suffering lover<sup>1</sup> is not questioned in chanson XII as it is in chanson XXXV where the poet-persona states that Amors' willingness to grant joy and gladness to the lover is dependent upon chance:

Qu'Amors est de tel nature  
Que son ami maine a mort;  
Puis en a joie et deport,  
S'il est de bone aventure;  
[ll. 3-6].

The lover in chanson XXXV, in fact, despairs of ever attaining joy, for Amors and the lady are indifferent to him.

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<sup>1</sup>"Pour ce fet Amors doloir / Qu'ele veut guerredon rendre / Ceus qui bien sevent attendre / Et servir a son voloir" (ll. 37-40). For a translation of these lines and all subsequent citations of Thibaut's chansons, consult the Appendix.

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In separate chansons, then, one finds contrasting points of view, but Thibaut is also capable of changing his attitude toward Amors or the lady within a single chanson, or within a single stanza. Chanson XXIII is the best example of abrupt changes in tone communicated through extensive use of questions, exclamations, and contradictory statements. Thibaut begins with an extremely typical panegyric exordium announcing his reason for composing the chanson:<sup>2</sup> "Chançon ferai, que talenz m'en est pris. / De la meilleur qui soit en tout le mont;" (ll. 1-2). The praise offered to the lady in line two is completely negated in the following lines as the poet-persona makes his thought processes public by using the rhetorical device of rationatio. Dragonetti states that the function of rationatio is to "confier à son auditoire une espèce de débat intérieur, un trouble ou un embarras. . . ."<sup>3</sup> In this particular case, the interior debate serves not only to communicate confusion and perplexity on the part of the speaker, but also to catch the audience--or the lady--off guard by placing in question the entire premise for the composition of the chanson: "De la meilleur? Je cuist que j'ai mespris" (l. 3).

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<sup>2</sup>"Les poètes courtois . . . annoncent au public le thème et la raison de leur poème selon quelques formules telles que chançon ferai, lors chanterai, chanter m'estuet." Dragonetti, p. 144.

<sup>3</sup>Dragonetti, p. 43.

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Another ratiocinatio in the first three lines of stanza III emphasizes the poet's inability to part from the lady. Even if there is no mercy in her heart (l. 7), the lover's heart is completely within her power and he languishes unto death. Various exclamations express the lover's fidelity, resentment, and need for immediate release from his torment:

Hé, cors sanz cuer! de vos fet grant venjance  
 Cele qui m'a navré sanz defiance,  
 Et ne por quant je ne la lerai ja [ll. 37-39].

Amors, merci! ne soiez oubliee! [l. 46].

Ne me metez longuement en oubli! [l. 49].

The total effect of the chanson is one of sudden changes, whether from statements of flattery to negation of the compliment or from love requests and descriptive statements to a cry of despair. The final reference to the lady, moreover, reaffirms the original exordium which stated that the poet would write a song about the best lady in the world. He concludes by saying that she is, above all others, "la plus desirree," thereby casting aside the doubts he had expressed in the first stanza. His own situation, however, is not as equally resolved as his feeling toward the lady. The poet-lover is left with only a question: "Deus! je ne pens s'a li non. / A moi que ne pense ele donc?" (ll. 55-56).

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The shifts in tone and attitude in chanson XXIII are conveyed, to a large extent, through the use of rhetorical devices. The structural elements themselves, the repetitions of "la meilleur . . . La meilleur?" and "sanx reson . . . Sanx reson?" (ll. 2-3 and 23-24) and the use of rationcinatio reinforce the theme of the contradictions inherent in the suffering of love. The terminal question as well reflects a characteristic essential to the courtly lover; he is expected to aspire for an undetermined time, and, until "love becomes balanced on both sides," he must suffer and bear his unresolved state.

Other chansons as well reflect the poet-persona's wide variety of responses to the suffering of love within a single chanson. As in chanson XXIII, the lover speaks with a great range of expressive registers, straining the narrow limitations of the courtly stereotypes before finally adopting the stance of the passive, faithful servant. Thibaut is capable of such invention even in the shortest of his chansons, the first chanson in the Wallensköld edition.

The five stanzas of chanson I are coblas unissonans, all following the same rhyme scheme. Each stanza is only seven lines long, of which one is the three-syllable refrain, "É! é! é!" Even the line-length is concise, hectasyllabic lines alternating with three-syllable lines as follows: 7a

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3b 7a 3b 7b 7a. Thibaut's economy of composition is not, however, indicative of thematic poverty. Almost all of the major aspects of the theme of the suffering poet-lover are present in this short lyric: the pain of love, the conflict of heart and reason, the prison of love, the renown of the lady, and the fidelity of the poet-lover.

The first stanza is constructed in a manner which provides multivalent bonds with the rest of the chanson. By focusing on his suffering and on the function of the chanson, Thibaut establishes the possibility of developing multiple aspects of the theme through direct statements and through suggestion.

The opening lines, "Por conforter ma pesance / Faz un son," state in direct form that the poet sings in order to ease his suffering. The cause of the poet-persona's chagrin, however, is not indicated directly. One knows only that it is intense, for the lover's penance is greater than that of Jason, "Cil qui conquist la toison" (l. 5). The inclusion of the explanatory line is almost superfluous since the episode of Jason and the golden fleece was well known during the Middle Ages. Several works attesting to the long lasting popularity of the story are Ovid's Metamorphoses,<sup>4</sup> the Roman de Troie by Benoît de

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<sup>4</sup>Ovid Metamorphoses, trans. by Mary M. Innes (Baltimore: Penguin, 1955), pp. 155-163.

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Sainte-Maure,<sup>5</sup> and the fourteenth-century Ovide moralisé.<sup>6</sup>

The purpose of the line is not to clarify the identity of Jason but rather to imply the goal of the poet's own quest and the recompense for his penitential suffering, la toison, the implicitly golden fleece of the blonde ideal lady.<sup>7</sup>

By comparing himself to a legendary hero, the poet-persona also enhances the value of the praise of the lady which is to follow in stanzas III, IV, and V. The poet then can communicate his admiration of and fidelity to the lady not only in the guise of a humble, devoted servant, but as one who is as heroic as Jason and just as capable of great endurance and perseverance.

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<sup>5</sup>Benoît de Sainte-Maure, Le Roman de Troie, ed. Léopold Constans, I, Société des anciens textes français (Paris: Firmin Didot, 1904), pp. 38-105.

<sup>6</sup>Ovide moralisé, ed. C. de Boer, III (Wiesbaden: Sandig, 1931), pp. 15-34.

<sup>7</sup>It is interesting to note that in the Ovide moralisé, which postdates the work of Thibaut, the allegorical interpretation of the adventures of Jason and Medea states that Medea herself was the golden fleece:

"--Toute cest fable est histoire  
Et de Pelye et de Jason,  
Fors solement de la toison.  
Medee iert la toison doree  
Qui tant fu close et enserree . . .  
[ll. 690-694]."

"--This whole account, concerning  
Both Peleus and Jason, is history,  
Except only [the part] about the fleece.  
Medea was the golden fleece  
That was enclosed and locked up so well . . .  
[translation mine]."

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The poet's statements concerning the nature and function of composing the chanson are open to various interpretations. The phrase "Faz un son" can mean "I am composing a song" or "I am making a sound" which may or may not be melodic. The first interpretation offers the possibility that the creative act in itself is therapeutic for the trouvère and brings him relief from his suffering. Another connotation of the statement "I am composing a chanson" underscores the notion of the chanson-as-message, the value of which will be determined by whether or not it advances the poet, or brings him forth in terms of gaining the attention of his lady. The second translation, "I am making a melody or a sound in order to ease my pain" is not an acceptable rendering, since the refrain "E! é! é!" attests to the fact that the song itself is an expression of pain.

The two main emphases of the first stanza--the suffering of love and the function of the chanson--suggest themes which will be developed in the remaining stanzas of the poem. The lady, whose presence was indicated by the verb "avancier" and "la toison" becomes the dominant figure from stanza III to the end of the poem. The theme of suffering finds its echo in stanzas II, IV, and V, as well as in the refrain. The chanson-as-message recurs in stanza III with the statement ". . . g'i ai mis ma fiance / Jusqu'en

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son" (ll. 17-18), and in the direct address of Amors (l. 34) and of the lady (l. 37). From this wide range of possibilities, each aspect of the theme will be developed in turn as the poet-persona adopts various rôles appropriate to the true, courtly lover, until he finally assumes the boldness to address the lady directly in the envoi.

In the second stanza the poet makes more precise the nature of his torment. He is torn by an inner conflict between reason and that part of his "self" that is unable or unwilling to do what reason dictates. His state is one of immobility; he remains in a prison where ransom is of no avail. Reason, personified, declares that this is childishness, but the poet chooses imprisonment and thus has need of solace (l. 13). The poet is thereby both an active agent and one who needs to receive comfort from outside himself. He is active in that he chooses to "keep his imprisonment" (" . . . prison / Tieng . . .", ll. 11-12), just as he is assertive in singing in order to ease his pain. His need for external assistance is indicated in stanza I by his dependence upon the chanson as a means of advancement, and in the final lines of stanza II: "Si ai mestier d'alejance. / E! é! é!"

The voices of the poet as a suffering yet heroic martyr undergoing great penance and of the poet as a confused, confined child are the registers of expression of

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stanzas I and II. In stanza III is heard the voice of the poet as composer of songs in praise of his lady, and the assurance that he is her steadfast, faithful admirer. The first four lines of the stanza stress the reputation of the lady and the poet's solemn pledge (fiance, l. 17) to her in the form of the chanson. Poet-lover, craftsman, and eulogist unite in this central stanza to state humbly that a glance from the chosen lady is worth more than the gift of love from another.

Stanza IV is structurally a mirror image of the preceding stanza. The "Meus aim . . ." construction at the close of stanza III serves as the opening of stanza IV as the poet's praise of the lady becomes more exaggerated. The statement that the poet prefers a mere glance from his lady to the love of another is paralleled by an even bolder comparison whereby the poet finds the lady's company and her sweet name of more worth than the kingdom of France. As if he were spurred on by the confidence of his own assertions concerning the lady, the poet-lover utters an exclamatory condemnation of all those who would seek to reproach love "through dismay or through fear" (Por esmai ne pour dotance! l. 27). The use of the expletive "Mort Mahon!" (l. 25) conveys the tone of a self-righteous crusader declaring death not only to those who might seek to be freed from the bonds of loving, but also to that side of the poet's own self,

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reson, that sought to convince the poet to give up the prison of love.

Grounded fast in the poet's being is the image of the lady as companion. In stanza V the poet centers upon the still point of his turning universe; he may suffer and seek to alleviate his pain, he may debate with himself about the reasonableness of remaining in his situation, but his fidelity to the lady does not change and the constancy of her image is always with him. The presence of this memory touches the emotional core of his being, forcing him to cry out to Amors for mercy: "Aiez, Amors, guerredon! / Ne sosfrez ma mescheance!" (ll. 33-34). The emotional outburst is followed by the more subdued envoi in which the poet addresses the lady directly, stating that he wishes her to realize his situation, reasserting the idea that the chanson is a vehicle of communication, the poet's means of gaining the lady's favor (avancier) and an expression of great distress, "E! é! é!"

In this chanson Thibaut uses many of the themes common to the tradition of courtly love poetry and also communicates the wide range of emotional responses of which he is capable as poet-lover. The stereotyped portrayal of the lovesick trouvère is not applicable to the dynamism of Thibaut's subjective universe. His gaze is turned inward, so to speak, and he is aware of the conflict caused by the

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unreasonableness of loving. Yet the image and manner (senblance and façon, ll. 31-32) of the lady as a vision are also part of his inner existence. His response to the former is one of aggressive denial of that portion of his being which justifies the renunciation of love as a release from suffering. His response to the latter is fidelity, praise, and homage which is still not without fear and insecurity. The risk involved in pledging fealty to a lady of such renown and not knowing if he will win her favor, like the fear described by Andreas Capellanus,<sup>8</sup> causes the poet-lover to cry out to Amors for release from his perilous situation. In his address to the lady the poet-persona exerts emotional restraint and takes on the posture of the humble, self-effacing lover who only asks for her awareness of his situation and, as recompense, not love, but a mere glance from her.

This initial impression of the thematic richness of chanson I is reinforced by an examination from still another point of view, one which takes into account what Thibaut as trouvère could have said as well as what he indeed did say. Since the chanson as a genre is highly structured, one can determine rather predictable formulae

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<sup>8</sup>" . . . For before the love becomes balanced on both sides there is no torment greater, since the lover is always in fear that his love may not gain its desire and that he is wasting his efforts," p. 28.

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and characteristic features which recur from chanson to chanson. One noticeable characteristic of trouvère poetry is a predilection for the rhyme -ance in the terminal position of a line:

La plus caractéristique d'entre elles [les rimes formées au moyen des substantifs] est la rime en -ance. . . . La résonnance poétique du suffixe était toute désignée pour des rimes en chute douce dont l'euphonie charmait l'oreille des prosateurs et des poètes. . . .

Ce fait est particulièrement remarquable chez nos trouvères: comparés aux autres substantifs, notamment ceux en -or et en -on, les mots en -ance offrent ceci de curieux, qu'ils ne figurent, pour ainsi dire, jamais à l'intérieur du texte. Nul doute qu'ici, par conséquent, il s'agit d'un vocabulaire spécialisé, exclusivement réservé à des effets de rimes.<sup>9</sup>

What is perhaps even more significant is that certain words with the same rhyme endings appear over and over again, forming a standard body of clichés. Dragonetti states that:

le mode de formation des rimes chez les trouvères . . . relève d'une technique fort simple que le caractère stéréotypé du vocabulaire favorisait considérablement. Mais justement ce vocabulaire cliché et cette technique de composition assez mécanique peuvent donner à la rime une fonction importante. Puisqu'elle est pour ainsi dire donnée d'avance, du moins dans le cas de la rime commune, il s'agit pour le trouvère, beaucoup moins de créer que de faire jouer une certaine mémoire verbale.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Dragonetti, p. 406.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 415.

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One might conclude then, that in composing the five coblas unissonans of chanson I based entirely upon the rhymes -ance and -on, Thibaut chose his rhyme words from an ensemble of established stereotypes. One of the standard words of the -ance repertory is "esperance," a word which is noticeably absent from Thibaut's chanson. If Thibaut had chosen to use esperance as he does in the refrain of chanson XIII, "Dame, merci! Donez moi esperance / De joie avoir!" he could have emphasized the humility and patience of the lover who does not ask for joy or total fulfillment of his wishes but only for the hope of having joy. Such a request would reflect the willingness of the lover to persevere by placing the termination of his suffering at some undetermined point in the future.

The voice of the poet in chanson I, however, is bolder and somewhat more insistent. The poet-lover is entirely concerned with the present moment in which suffering; inner conflict and its resolution, fidelity; self-assertion; tender remembrance of the lady; and desperation all converge and the poet's cry for mercy conveys the urgent need for an immediate end to his torment. Thibaut has carefully limited the time sphere of the chanson to focus on the present, intimating that his suffering is too great to be sustained for very long, and demonstrating that his fidelity is entire and unchanging, worthy of immediate recompense from Amors and the lady.

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In chanson XXX Thibaut shows even more versatility in response to the suffering of love. The poet-lover does not renounce the rôle of the innocent martyr, weakened by the assaults of Amors. This rôle, however, is only one of many which the poet-persona adopts. He proves himself to be capable of vigorous attacks upon Amors, his rightful master, and at times acts as Amors' accuser and judge. His own capacity for manipulation surpasses that which he attributes to Amors ("Amors semble deable qui maistrie," l. 5). His suggestion that Amors is like a devil is no less audacious than the challenge with which he opens the chanson.

The structure of the first stanza consists of a rather sophisticated use of the rhetorical devices of communicatio and subiectio which convey successive tones of defiance and self-assurance. Lines 1-4 constitute the communicatio in which the poet confronts the implied audience with the paradox of Amors' name--love--and his conduct, namely the fact that he makes those who are faithful to him suffer. Within the structure of the communicatio the poet feigns an inability to explain this obvious contradiction between the name of the god of love and the manifestations of Amors' true nature.

Through the use of the subiectio, whereby a speaker gives his own answer to a question he has posed to someone else, the poet communicates that he has, in a

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sense, overcome his hesitation when faced with the paradox, and self-assuredly states that Amors' name is indeed inappropriate.

He perceives Amors as a manipulative, deceitful devil whom one can accuse of felonnie (l. 9) and vilenie (l. 15). That these charges are serious ones is substantiated by the Roman de la rose. Of the 10 portraits of personages excluded from the Garden of Deduit, two are Felonie and Vilanie.<sup>11</sup> In the Roman de la rose renunciation of vilanie is the first commandment which Amors gives to the lover when he enters Amors' service:

'Vilanie premierement,'  
Ce dist Amors, 'vueil et comant  
Que tu guerpisses senz reprendre,  
Se tu ne viaus vers moi mesprendre.  
Si maudi e escomenie  
Toz ceus qui aiment vilanie:  
Vilanie fet les vilains,  
Por ce n'est pas droiz que je l'ains.  
Vilains est fel e senz pitié,  
Senz servise e senz amitié'  
[ll. 2077-2086].<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Guillaume de Lorris, Le Roman de la rose, ed. Stephen G. Nichols (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1967), ll. 129-462. The eight other qualities are, in order of appearance, Haine, Convoitise, Tristesse, Vieillesse, Hypocrisie, Pauvreté, Avarice, and Envie.

<sup>12</sup> Translation:

"'First villainy,'  
Said Amors, 'I wish and command  
That you renounce without fail  
If you do not wish to commit misconduct  
against me.  
For I condemn and excommunicate  
All those who honor villainy:  
Villainy breeds churls,

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These general qualities, felonnie (deceit or perfidy), and vilenie, the antithesis of courtliness, are utterly unacceptable in the behavior of a lover, much less in the comportment of the god of love himself.

This harsh condemnation of Amors is tempered by the word "seems" (semble, l. 5) and by the poet's magnanimous statement that Amors' wickedness distresses him "plus que por moi cent mile tanz por li" (l. 8): he is, after all, faithful and good; it is Amors whom one can accuse of treachery. Implicit in the first stanza is an attitude of strength and superiority on the part of the speaker. The vigorous challenge, his resolution of the question and his attempt to appear unselfish all contribute to the poet-persona's air of self-assurance and command of the situation.

The lover, however, cannot maintain his selfless stance for very long. His change in attitude is clearly indicated by parallel sentences from stanzas I and II based on the same verb, se peser ("to grieve, to be burdened"). "Et poise m'en . . . / Plus que por moi cent mile tanz por li" (ll. 7-8) is transposed in stanza II to "Et me poise de son mal durement / Et en son bien cuit mon avancement (ll.

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A villain is wicked and without pity,  
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11-12). The use of the coordinating conjunction "et" instead of the conjunction "car" deemphasizes somewhat the fact that the speaker is nonetheless concerned with his own welfare, his own advancement.

The sententia-like statements which follow:

"... de seignors vient granz biens a plusors" (l. 13) and  
 "... cil sert bien son seignor qui chastie / A cui poise  
quant il fait vilanie" (ll. 14-15) are an attempt to clarify Amors' rôle as well as the lover's own. Since it would be inappropriate for the lover to be too haughty toward Amors, the poet-lover thereby acknowledges Amors as master while simultaneously demonstrating that his chastisement of Amors in stanza I was only in fulfillment of his duty as good and faithful servant. The lover has already shown his concern about Amors' evil through the use of the verb se peser. This same verb serves to link the poet-speaker to the rôle of the servant who is concerned (a cui poise) when his lord commits villainy. The change in attitude thus effected from stanza I and stanza II is the transition from self-righteous accuser to dutiful servant whose service--chastisement--goes unheeded: "Car ele a tant et veü ey oï / Que ne li chaut de rien que on li die" (ll. 17-18).

In stanza III the poet portrays himself as weak and defenseless. Amors, the antagonist, has vexed the poet-lover so much that in the lover's anger there is no more

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fear; there is only fidelity and desperation: "Ainz sui plus siens, quant plus me desespoir" (l. 21). Anger and lack of fear might be still further justifications of the poet-lover's outburst in stanza I, for he now reveals his "true" nature with a particularly graphic image, that of a sick man lying by the hearth who, not being able to defend himself physically, threatens potential attackers that he will cut them in two. The poet-persona's only solace and only defense consists of words as he awaits further assaults from Amors.

In his weakened physical state, the poet-lover's thoughts turn to the moment when he first saw his lady and the greeting which she offered him with her tender white hand. Memory and grief are closely related but there is much solace offered to the lover in reliving the experience. Both sight and touch (veoir and atochier, ll. 30 and 31) are integral aspects of the poet's memory of the lady, but the poet exhibits restraint through the use of a "mieuz aim" construction similar to those used in chanson I: "Mieuz aim la main dont me volt adaser / Que l'autre cors ou ce me fait penser" (ll. 34-35).

In relating the incident when he first met the lady, the lover begins to emphasize the positive aspects of the nature of the god of love. It was Amors who first led the poet to the lady, bringing him a moment of great joy, the

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sweetness of which the poet relives through memory. To close the stanza the lover acknowledges that Amors knows how to grant sweet comfort to his followers, marking the beginning of an attempt on the part of the lover to persuade Amors, through a sort of positive reinforcement, to reward him with "joie et secors" (l. 44).

In stanza V the lover articulates that love and hatred are closely related and that only through reference to standards established by the rules of loyalty and reason<sup>13</sup> does one purify one's love by rejecting hatred and by refusing to separate from loving. Anger and lack of fear (l. 20), even hatred, are all part of the poet-lover's experience, but he consistently rejects them in favor of qualities that are considered more positive in the courtly code: fidelity, even when it is linked to despair (l. 21), and steadfastness. Having demonstrated that he is indeed a faithful servant of Amors, and having proclaimed that largesse is part of the rôle of a lord, the poet exercises still another means of gaining his reward.

The poet-lover states that if Amors were clever, he would reward the true lover with joy and sustenance, and thereby be served and honored (ll. 44-45). Conscious of his own rôle as composer of the chanson, the poet realizes that he is free to construct his song as he wishes, and, although

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<sup>13</sup> Mais n'est pour ce loiautez ne raison (l. 39).

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ne has served Amors faithfully, he has not honored him in this particular chanson. The ties between master and servant are reciprocal. The poet-lover serves, but not without seeking a reward, and will in turn reward Amors by honoring him in song.

The renewed self-assurance of the poet is followed by an address to the lady in which the poet offers still another justification for his boldness, namely her perfumed hand which he kisses night and day (ll. 46-48). The poet-lover is completely enraptured by an illusion; the memory of the hand which the lady offered him in greeting becomes the focus of the lover's ardor, the passion he experiences makes him think that he has found mercy. The reality of Amors' treachery and indifference as presented in the first three stanzas of the poem seems to have been completely forgotten by the lover who, having recalled the privileged moment of first seeing the lady and having reaffirmed his loyalty and service, becomes entranced by the moment which has given him the greatest joy.

Once again, the poet-persona has shown a wide range of responses to the suffering of love. The attitude of defiance to and condemnation of Amors gives way to the poet's presentation of himself as totally defenseless. In conjunction with this revelation of himself at the point of greatest vulnerability, the lover is led by Amors to see

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he lady whereupon the poet-lover seems to regain vigor, finally directing a last ultimatum to Amors and declaring his passion for the lady.

Unlike chanson I which ended in a plea to Amors for mercy, the voice of the poet-persona in chanson XXX is early triumphant; the rôle of memory is strong enough to make the poet-lover think that he has found mercy. The chanson closes with a vigor of expression analogous to the opening lines of the lyric, with one important distinction; the lover is not antagonistic but captivated by the image of the lady.

The effect of memory can be both a positive and a negative force. In chanson XXX it imparts boldness to the lover and consoles him. In chanson XVII it is the cause of sweet pain (douz maus, l. 3) which makes the poet-lover lament, weep, sigh, and burn with ardor. The latter effect is by far the more common stereotype. For this reason chanson XVII opens in a manner which is deceptively familiar. The description of the psychological and physical manifestations of the pain of love do not at all deviate from the pattern already articulated by Andreas Capellanus,<sup>14</sup> and are not at all indicative of the diverse responses of the lover which are to follow. Changes in theme and imagery in chanson XVII are as abrupt and as

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<sup>14</sup> P. 29 and Rules XXIII and XXX, pp. 185-186.

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surprising as the darting of the elusive deer which Thibaut uses as the central image of a metaphorical hunt (stanzas II and III).

The poet-persona's first reaction to the suffering of love, after lamenting and weeping, is to extract a rational precept, a rule of behavior which he states in general terms: "Nus ne doit Amors traïr / Fors que garçon t ribaut" (ll. 10-11). In a logical progression from general to specific, the poet then applies the generalization to his own situation. The conclusion that he draws for his own advantage is that Amors must find him joyful and without deceit. Indeed, the portrait he has given of himself in the first stanza may be without guile or deceit, but his attitude is that of one who is distraught, beaten down and disheartened. To be baut, that is, passionate and exuberant, calls for a new image, one in which Thibaut identifies himself not as the victim but as the aggressor, the hunter who takes joy in the chase:

Mes se je puis consivir  
Le cerf, qui tant puet fouvoir,  
Nus n'est joianz a Thiebaut  
[ll. 16-18].

The memory of the lady which so haunted and tormented Thibaut in stanza I is now replaced by a metaphorical transformation of the lady into an adventuresome deer as white as snow, with tresses finer than Spanish gold. The lady-as-deer is still elusive, out of reach, dwelling in a

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retreat, the entrance of which is guarded by wolves. The hunter, the deer, and the wolves are an imaginative transformation of the triad of personages familiar to the courtly love lyric: the lover, the lady, and the losengiers. By using the metaphor of the hunt, Thibaut is able to present two aspects of his image as lover; he is the joyous and daring hunter obsessed with the object of his quest, and also potential prey to the wolves, the detractors who make life difficult for the courtly lover.

The image of the hunt which was intended to be a joyful prospect is, in fact, marred by the presence of the felon envïeus and by the realization on the part of Thibaut as poet-persona that he has loved beyond his means (ll. 34-36). This statement is preceded by a succession of unique images of imminent death and destruction, none of which, says Thibaut, is as grave as his own state:

Ainz chevaliers angoisseus  
 Qui a perdu son hernois,  
 Ne vielle qui art li feus  
 Mesons, vignes, blez et pois,  
 Ne chacierres qui prent sois  
 Ne leus qui est familleus  
 N'est avers moi dolereus . . .  
 [ll. 28-34].

This particular constellation of images seems peculiarly concrete and provides a striking point of contrast with the suffering of love described in stanza I and the metaphorical realm of the hunt in stanzas II and III. In the order of presentation of the images in stanza IV, one

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can perceive some parallels to the arrangement of the subject matter in the first three stanzas. The first image, the dying knight who has lost his armor is, in a sense, a transference of the image of the poet suffering the assaults of memory (ll. 3-6) from the abstract realm to the actual world of battle. The poet's figurative burning when he thinks of the lady (l. 9) is conveyed by the graphic image of the holocaust which devours an entire village, its houses, vineyards, and all of its crops. The next two images are drawn from the metaphor of the hunt. The hunter who originally represented Thibaut and who joyfully pursued the deer is now immobilized, caught in brambles. The wolves, who once represented a threat to the courtly lover (ll. 25-27), are also at a desperate point; they may still be threatening, but they are starving.

To state that none of these images equal his own torment is not an unwarranted exaggeration: "before love becomes equally balanced on both sides, there is no torment greater."<sup>15</sup> In this particular series of images, however, Thibaut has departed from the abstract and metaphorical realms and has expressed his point of psychological and emotional despair in terms of comparisons made with the external visual world, the summation of which still do not convey the extent of his anguish. These images also express

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<sup>15</sup> Andreas Capellanus, p. 28.

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eat tension and force. The struggle of the knight in his  
 st moments as his body resists death, the uncontrollable  
 re, the thrashing of the hunter in the briars, and the  
 ciuousness characteristic of a starving animal are all  
 eparatory to the poet's outburst in stanza V.

His state as expressed in the final stanza is not  
 e suffering, but death; the lady has it within her power  
 kill him. The poet perceives such action as a sin in  
 erty terms since he is her true lover. As if this con-  
 nation of her were not sufficient, Thibaut states his  
 re-request in terms which reveal that he is conscious  
 his own manipulative power in the "game of love." The  
 y will be infinitely happier if she keeps her true lover  
 ve, and it is on this basis that Thibaut underscores the  
 ue of mercy in the first envoi (ll. 46-48).

Having confronted the lady, the first of the triad  
 personages in the hunt metaphor, the poet-lover addresses  
 "wolves" in the second envoi. Renaut, Phelippe and  
 ent<sup>16</sup> seem to represent the felon envïeus who, through  
 sive laughter, seek to negate the effect of the poet's  
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In chanson XVII the progression of Thibaut's  
 onses to the suffering of love range from submission

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<sup>16</sup> Wallensköld states that Phelippe is "sans aucun  
 e Phelippe de Nanteuil," but that the identity of Renaut  
 of Lorent has not yet been established. P. 57, Rem. VII,

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to the pain inflicted upon him to the formulation of rational precepts, through the creation of a fantasy which brings joy and articulates the dangers he faces, and, finally, to a graphic formulation of expressive images and direct confrontation of the lady and those who oppose him at court, closing with a restatement of the sincerity of his sentiments.

The range of the poet-persona's response to the suffering of love clearly exceeds the narrow limitations commonly ascribed to the "courtly lover." The poet-persona created by Thibaut does at times adhere quite closely to the precepts articulated by Andreas Capellanus, thereby substantiating Frederick Goldin's statement that Thibaut ". . . never departs from his initial posture as an adoring suppliant. . . . Thibaut and the trouvères followed the principle of 'one genre, one ethic, one style, one voice.'"<sup>17</sup> Such a statement does indeed apply to chansons II and XII discussed at the beginning of this chapter.<sup>18</sup> In other chansons, however, as in chansons I, XVII, XXIII, XXX, and XXV, Thibaut varies his expressive register and speaks in

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<sup>17</sup>F. Goldin, Lyrics of the Troubadours and Trouvères (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Books, 1973), p. 449.

<sup>18</sup>Other "one style, one voice" chansons are chansons VII, VIII, X, XV, XVI, and XIX. I have refrained from discussing these chansons at length in chapter I because they will be examined in greater detail in subsequent chapters concerning the role of memory, the conflict of mind and art, and the theme of the prison of love.

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ways that might be considered heretical in terms of the courtly code.

It is true that in dealing with le grand chant courtois one is confronted with a highly subjective genre, "subjective" in the sense that the creation of the lyric is dependent upon the mood of the "all-pervasive je" described by Paul Zumthor. The mood of the speaker--the poet-persona or the poet-lover--cannot accurately be described by stating that he consistently portrays the adoring suppliant. Through sometimes subtle, sometimes overt verbal attacks on Amors or upon the lady's cruelty, Thibaut's poet-persona deviates from the standards usually expected of a fin amant. Thibaut's poet-persona is also highly conscious of his own function and manipulative power as creator and performer; through flattery or reproach he molds the lady's response to him.

The theme of the suffering of love, then, when seen in terms of the poet-persona's response to the anguish that he feels, proves to be rich in variations of tone and indicative of complexity rather than of the stereotyped, repetitious simplicity which has sometimes been ascribed to the courtly lyric. Love's suffering is the most pervasive theme in Thibaut's lyrics and, as such, has been the point de départ of this study. In close connection with the theme of the "douce douleurs d'amors" is the theme

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f memory and the related thought processes of meditation  
nd contemplation of the "interior vision" of the lady  
ithin the poet-lover's "darkened heart." A discussion  
f the dynamic interrelationship between the moment of  
irst seeing the beloved, the re-experience of that moment  
hrough memory, the pain and solace that remembrance brings,  
nd the transformation of the lady into an interiorized  
mage or dream vision will further illuminate the completely  
ubjective nature of the courtly lyric and the isolation  
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## CHAPTER II

### LI DOUZ MAUS DU SOUVENIR

Like the suffering of love, the experience of remembrance is perceived by the poet-persona as a sweet sickness, one that brings him both pleasure and pain, consolation, and anguish. It, too, represents a major force binding the poet-lover to his lady. Just as love's paradoxical suffering exerted a magnetic attraction upon the poet which he was unable to resist, so does remembrance serve as a temptation too great to be overcome. A preoccupation with the memory of the beloved is, furthermore, a logical outgrowth of the courtly code whereby love must be kept secret and one's lady was, of course, distant and unattainable. The physical separation from one's beloved can only be overcome by mental re-union which brings joy and solace as long as one can remain totally involved with the experience of reliving the memory. The subsequent, inevitable realization that the vision of the beloved was but a dream, a daydream, an illusion, is the source of great anguish and suffering which, in courtly poetry, is graphically represented by the imagery of sickness and of weaponry, darts, stings, and arrows.

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In Thibaut's chansons d'amour the phenomenon of remembrance is characterized by specific patterns and thought processes. The moment of first seeing the lady is clearly a turning point in the poet-lover's existence and it is most often upon that moment that the poet focuses when thinking or dreaming about his lady. Voluntary or involuntary recollection of that moment often leads to meditation upon the lady's qualities and then to a state of contemplation whereby the lady exists as a vision which the poet-lover gazes upon within his darkened heart. The sweetness and solace which the lover experiences then renders the state of "dreaming" preferable to consciousness, for it is upon "awakening" that the poet-lover is faced with the reality of being physically separated from his lady and is stricken with the fear or despair of being forgotten by her.

Not all aspects of the phenomenon of memory are present in every chanson in which Thibaut's poet-persona speaks of the "sweet pain of remembrance." The total picture can be formulated only through a discussion of the various chansons in which the theme occurs. Chanson X, however, an exception for it represents a microcosm of the essential aspects of the theme of memory.

The pretext for the creation of chanson X, as revealed in stanza II, is based upon the standard courtly

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triad, the lover, the lady, and the losengiers. Thibaut's poet-persona states that he dares not address his lady directly because he fears the "male gent" (l. 12) who, through guessing or perceiving his passion "will have caused great harm" (l. 13). The poet-persona is forced to maintain silence and even to feign loving other women in order to deceive the wicked, and it is this forced distance, silence, and misrepresentation of his true feelings which lead him to compose the chanson. At least within the context of the chanson the poet-persona can safely express his praise of the anonymous lady, and can also give free rein to his preoccupation with the lady, transforming his experience into artistic creation, just as the lady herself is transformed into an ideal dream vision.

A more important aspect of chanson X, however, is the concise articulation of the pattern associated with the phenomenon of remembrance. This pattern, clearly expressed in the opening stanza, involves a postulated "real" event which undergoes subsequent transformation in the poet-lover's mind:

Douce dame, tout autre pensement,  
 Quant pens a vous, oubli en mon corage.  
 Dès que vous vi premierement,  
 Ainz puis Amors ne fu de moi sauvage;  
 Ançois m'a plus traveillié que devant.  
 Pour ce voi bien que garison n'atent,  
     Qui m'assoage,  
 Fors seul de vos remirer  
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Thoughts of the sweet lady expel all other thoughts from the lover's heart. The moment of first seeing the lady clearly represents a turning point in the lover's existence, and the effects of that moment are paradoxical since, although Amors is no longer savage toward him, the torments which the lover suffers are even greater than before. The poet-persona's only consolation is to reactivate his cherished memories and attain a state of contemplation in which he can gaze upon the beloved "with the eyes of his heart." The use of "vous vi" in line three and the parallel imagery used in lines eight and nine afford the poet-persona with a means of contrasting what one can postulate as a real event--the moment the lover first saw the lady "with his eyes"---and that which brings him consolation, "seeing her with the eyes of his heart in thought" (ll. 8-9).

The semantically fluid word "corage" is of key importance in expressing the interplay between sight, thought, and sentiment. Godefroy renders "corage" as "intention, désir, sentiment, pensée, avis."<sup>1</sup> The inter-relationship between thought, feeling, and desire--all communicated by "corage"--make of its cognate, "cuers" ("heart"), a center of recollection and of longing. The

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<sup>1</sup>Frédéric Godefroy, Dictionnaire de l'ancienne langue française, Kraus Reprint, II (Paris, 1883), p. 296.

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transposition of the faculties of the eyes and the heart, the heart and the mind, gives rise to the metaphor whereby the poet-lover perceives his heart as an essential organ of sight and center of amorous desire.

The words "oeil" ("eyes") and "corage" are juxtaposed again in stanza III as the poet-persona calls to mind a second time the privileged moment of first seeing his beloved. He restates the fact that that moment effected a distinct change in his behavior as well as in his inner disposition:

Ha! si bel oeil riant a l'acointier  
M'i firent si mon corage changier;  
Que je soloie  
Blasmer et despire amors;  
Ore en sent mortieus dolors  
[ll. 23-27].

This recollection leads the poet-persona to a state of awe (stanza IV) as he thinks about the lady's beauty. It is, however, in stanza V that the recurring memory takes on its full significance. In this stanza, reemphasizing the effect that seeing the lady had upon him, the poet-persona states that it was like being struck with a "sweet, penetrating blow" which completely overwhelmed him. The impression which he recalls is not a vague description of her great beauty, but rather an enumeration of each of the "enemies" 1. 42) which assaulted him: "Front, bouche et nés, vis rès coloré, / Mains chief et cors et bele contenance" [ll. 40-41).

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The use of such a list accords with medieval descriptions insofar as:

La beauté est la propriété principale, mais non unique, de la femme. De là découlent plusieurs règles. Le poète, tout d'abord, doit observer la diversité de ses qualités et par conséquent multiplier les épithètes.

.....  
Puisque l'art imite la nature, le poète procèdera comme la grande Artiste. Celle-ci forme l'homme, membre par membre, depuis la tête jusqu'aux pieds.  
.....<sup>2</sup>

Furthermore, the enumeration conveys the effect of "excessive meditation upon the beauty of the opposite sex" emphasized by Andreas Capellanus in his treatise on love. Focusing on a particular moment in the past, the poet-lover in chanson X directs attention to each aspect of the lady which affected him and which brought forth simultaneous feelings of grief or pain ("m'ont grevé," l. 42), and love (l. 45).

The paradox between the negative experience of sorrow and pain and the positive statement of overwhelming love is not the only paradox associated with the theme of memory. Remembrance is also both voluntary and involuntary. The poet-lover can consciously call the beloved to mind, as he does in the opening lines of chanson X, but in doing so he becomes "lost in thought" or "lost in desire" and no longer has control of the situation. It is not always

<sup>2</sup>E. de Bruyne, Études d'esthétique médiévale, 2 Bruges: De Tempel, 1946), pp. 179-180.

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within the lover's power to summon the image of the "douce dame"; the interior vision is something which he must await (l. 6), a cure which will bring him both solace and death-dealing pains ("mortieus dolours," l. 27).

It is difficult to ascertain precisely to what degree the interior vision is a voluntary or an involuntary response to the suffering of love since the syntactic connections that Thibaut provides are often vague or imprecise. In stanza I, for example, the conjunctions "ançois" ("but," l. 5) and "pour ce" ("for this reason," l. 6) would seem to indicate a logical progression of thought, yet the content of the stanza does not reinforce the impression of cause and effect conveyed by the introductory words. To state: "Sweet lady, . . . ever since I first saw you, Amors has not been savage toward me; but he torments me more than before" is to communicate not a logical cause and effect, but a paradoxical situation. Neither is the following statement, "For this reason I await no cure, except to see you with the eyes of my heart in thought," necessarily a logical response to the torments of love, although it may be the response expected of a passive, "fin ami."

The cure which a lover might normally await would be to be once again in the lady's presence and gaze upon her beauty, a favor which would not transgress the limitations of the code of courtly love. It is plausible to

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conclude that Thibaut consciously intended to communicate the paradoxical nature of the poet-lover's experience through the use of an illogical sequence of cause and effect, although it may be argued that conjunctions and prepositions were not yet absolutely fixed in Old French, and one might overemphasize the forcefulness of these invariable parts of speech.

In relation to the voluntary or involuntary nature of memory, it is sometimes the complete absence of connective words or phrases that conveys the impression that the poet-persona unconsciously becomes absorbed in remembering the lady's beauty. There are no transition words whatsoever between stanzas III and IV of chanson X. The poet-lover experiences great pain (l. 27) and then begins to describe the marvelous beauty of the lady. The vision itself is, as it were, a gratuitous gift from God: "Ja li fist Deus por li fere merveillier / Touz ceus a qui ele veut fere joie" (ll. 30-31), and the poet-persona himself is among those who are struck with awe. The vision in this case is not something over which the poet-persona has any control; it is, rather, a gift which comes to him in the midst of his suffering.

Chanson X proves to be a rich source, conveying many important aspects of "li douz maus du souvenir." Of primary importance is the notion that seeing the lady for

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the first time effects a complete change in the lover's existence. The poet-persona returns to that precise moment in time, reliving it through voluntary or involuntary memory. Recollection causes both sorrow and joy; these dual aspects are present even as the poet-persona attains a state of "excessive meditation" upon the attributes of the beloved. Chanson X does not, however, describe the intense despair which the poet-persona experiences upon "awakening" from the meditative state. The anguish of an Orpheus reaching for the fading shade of his Eurydice, the desperation felt by the lover upon the disintegration of the interior vision of the lady, are not conveyed in this particular chanson. This does, however, represent a moment of great emotional intensity. Its significance as the inevitable, final stage in the experience of remembrance is conveyed, in part, by chansons XXXIII and XXIX.

In both chansons the poet-lover indicates that he is capable of attaining a state of extreme joy or sweetness through his own mental efforts, thereby reaffirming the voluntary nature of remembrance:

. . . quant g'i pens durement,  
De joie toz m'entroubli  
[XXXIII, ll. 20-21].

Souvent m'avient, quant je pens bien a li,  
Qu'a mes dolors une douçors me vient  
Si granz au cuer que trestouz m'entroubli  
[XXIX, ll. 33-35.

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The expressions "pens durement" and "pens bien," like the "quant pens a vous" of chanson X, suggest active contemplation on the part of the poet-persona, the goal of which is to "lose himself." His efforts are effective, since thinking about the lady leads him to a state in which he is overwhelmed. In chanson XXIX, furthermore, the post-persona's state of ecstasy is physical as well as emotional. He feels as if he were in the arms of his beloved: "Et m'est a vis qu'entre ses braz me tient" (l. 36).

In both chansons, however, the state of euphoria is finite; its end is marked by "coming to one's senses" ("quant li sens me revient," XXIX, l. 37), and feelings of self-betrayal ("Ensi m'ont mi oeil traï," XXXIII, l. 25). The poet-persona has only himself to blame for the extreme pain which he experiences upon "awakening" from this self-procured state of heightened desire and transitory, compensatory joy. He acknowledges the ultimate failure of his efforts, expressing extreme, negative reactions toward himself:

Et je voi bien qu'a tout ce ai failli,  
Lors me courrouz et ledange et maudi  
Car je sai bien que il ne l'en souvient  
[XXIX, ll. 38-40].

These negative reactions are further compounded through the use of an inverted application of the theme of memory whereby the positive aspects of the theme--remembrance of or being remembered by the lady--bring joy, but being

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forgotten by her is commensurate to death. The use of the verb "souvenir" in the negative in line 40 of chanson XXIX and in lines 29-30 of chanson XXXIII communicate this inversion: "He, las! s'il ne li souvient / De moi, morz sui sanz faillir" (XXXIII, ll. 29-30). Maintaining the lexical relationship with the theme of memory--"souvenir"--the negation of the verb underscores the disparity between the lover's preoccupation with the lady and her lack of concern for him.

This particular use of inversion represents only one means by which Thibaut demonstrates his ability to develop multiple aspects of a single theme. Another device which he uses to accent the profound effect which remembrance has upon the poet-persona is the creation of sustained metaphors in which the themes of the suffering of love and the torments and consolation of memory are juxtaposed in all their paradoxical richness.

Chanson VI affords just such a complex metaphor based upon the all-important moment when the poet-persona first sees his beloved.<sup>3</sup> This event is often described in terms appropriate to a coup de foudre insofar as the light passing through the lover's eyes to his heart marks the

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<sup>3</sup>Thibaut deals with this "privileged moment" at some length in 8 of the 36 chansons d'amour: see chansons I, ll. 1-9, 23-27; XI, ll. 29-35; XXI, ll. 15-20; XXII, ll. 13-16; XXIII, ll. 11-16; XXIV, ll. 33-40; XXX, ll. 30-33; and XXXIV, ll. 10-13.

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birth of his passion for the lady. Often the Ovidian imagery of the arrows of Amors striking the lover's heart marks the nascence of love; occasionally the arrow image is bypassed and the glance from the lady strikes the lover directly and is the source of amorous desire. In chanson Thibaut combines the latter two variations in order to convey the profound, delicate sweetness of the moment of first seeing the lady:

Ne me firent lors si oeil point d'ennui,  
Ainz me vindrent ferir si doucement  
Par mi le cuer d'un amoureux talent;  
Oncorei est li cous que j'en reçui  
[ll. 29-32].

V Li cous fu granz, il ne fet qu'enpoirier,  
Ne nus mires ne m'en porroit saner,  
Se cele non qui le dart fist lancier  
[ll. 33-35].

Mès la pointe du fer n'en puet sachier,  
Qu'ele bruisa dedanz au cop doner  
[ll. 39-40].

The extended metaphor of sickness is a variation upon the theme of remembrance since it, like calling the beloved to mind, joins the past to the present. The wound, received at some postulated moment in the past, still causes the poet-persona pain, and even grows worse.

Thibaut's metaphor draws not only upon Ovidian commonplace, but also vaguely recalls the Tristan story. In the story, the poet-persona's lady, Iseut la Blonde, the doctor ("mires," l. 34), is the only one who can cure the wounded lover. In the Ovidian tradition, however, the

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iron point of the arrow that has struck Thibaut's poet-lover disintegrates within his heart, making his sickness incurable and permanent. The implications are clear if not complex: the lover is completely dependent upon the lady-as-doctor for his very existence, and yet, since his sickness is love, he wants it to be an incurable, ongoing state.

Figurative death or joy--either the lady's rejection or acceptance of the lover--are the two absolutes with which the poet-persona is faced and, as befits the courtly code, he dares not ask boldly for ultimate joy. His recourse is to respond with due humility, commending himself to the lady by means of his chanson which he entrusts to her as a message "if she wishes to sing it" (l. 43). Attempting to engage the lady in singing the chanson is his only means of establishing communion with her. This spiritual or at least aesthetic sharing of that which is the poet's unique creation reflects the lover's like desire for physical union with the lady, suggested by the restrained references to physical contact with her:

Se de sa main i daignoit aderer,  
 Bien en porroit le coup mortel oster  
 A tout le fust, dont j'ai grant desirrier  
 [ll. 36-38].

The sweetness of the original experience, the glance from the lady which struck the lover almost imperceptibly, rings about, through transformation by time and memory,

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an anguish which is both painful and desirable, physical as well as emotional. The physical nature of the lover's pain and desire must be, however, expressed in metaphoric terms; the union of lover and beloved can only be suggested in terms of joining their voices--and heart's desire--in singing the lover's chanson d'amour.

In chanson XXI Thibaut describes precisely the same situation, the moment when the lover first sees the beloved, but the effects of first seeing the lady and subsequent remembrance are just the opposite of those found in chanson VI. Remembrance, far from causing a wound to fester and become more inflamed, is like a delicate rainfall which nurtures "good love" and brings it to fruition:

Tout autresi con l'ente fet venir  
 Li arrouers de l'eve qui chiet jus,  
 Fet bone amor nestre et croistre et florir  
 Li ramenbrers par coustume et par us  
 [ll. 1-4].

The opening simile suggests not only the gentle, ever-growing effects of memory but also the intimate union and ultimate oneness of two unlike entities, the scion and the stock. Remembrance and true love can form similar bonds between the lover and his beloved, nurturing their union so that what becomes sustenance for one is also a life-giving force for the other. Once again the poet-persona can only suggest metaphorically his desire for physical union with the lady. He recognizes that he must remain within the

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accepted limits of humility ("au desouz maintenir," l. 6)  
and express his sorrow in song.

A further examination of chanson XXI reveals still  
other points of contrast with chanson VI. The moment of  
first seeing the lady is like chanson VI only in that the  
poet-lover likens himself to Píramus and states that only  
Thisbe could cure his sickness. The effect of seeing his  
beloved was not, however, one of imperceptible sweetness,  
rather, it was like being struck by an arrow with a  
tremendous, burning impact:

Ahi, bele! con sui pour vous confus!  
Qui d'un garrel me venistes ferir,  
Espris d'ardent feu d'amor,  
Quant vos vi le premier jor.  
Li ars ne fu pas d'aubor  
Qui si trest par grant douçor  
[ll. 15-20].

The word "garrel," meaning both "arrow" and  
"lightning" is intricately related to the subsequent  
image of dawn. The morning light on the horizon is like  
the arrow's bow, and dawn, like the moment of first seeing  
the lady, marks an awakening on the part of the poet-lover,  
and symbolizes his new birth. The point of contrast between  
the images of dawn and lightning, the fact that the awaken-  
ing of passion was a flash and not a gradually deepening  
glow, underscore the effect of total transformation which  
seeing the lady had on the poet-persona's existence.

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In chanson XXIV Thibaut makes use of the arrow and light images separately. It is evident that, although falling in love with the lady is related to a distinct occurrence to which the poet-lover returns in thought, the presentation of the hypothetical "moment" is stylistically less powerful than that of chanson XXI:

Amors, qui en moi s'est mise,  
 Bien m'a droit son dart geté  
 [ll. 7-8].

Dès que je li fis priere  
 Et la pris a esgarder,  
 Me fist Amors la lumiere  
 Des euz par le cuer passer  
 [ll. 33-36].

The moment of first seeing the lady is given even more cursory treatment in chanson XXXVI; the poet-persona simply states that since the first day he saw the lady his desire to see her has been only too great. Thus, although the day he saw the lady is acknowledged as a turning point, it is not the past but the present feelings of joy and fidelity which Thibaut emphasizes in this chanson.

In chanson XI the poet-persona states his awareness of the function of remembrance on two levels. In a theoretical sense, remembering the lady has a soothing, anesthetic effect whereby a lover would neither feel pain nor seek relief from any sickness--the "sickness" of love--which might beset him: "Qui la voldroit souvent ramentevoir, / a n'avroit mal ne l'esteüst guerir" (ll. 22-23). On a

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more personal level, however,--"personal" in relation to the poet-persona--remembrance causes not the absence of pain, but feelings of deep regret and frustration. The scene which the lover calls to mind is one in which he, the lover, was overwhelmed and speechless, daring neither to speak to the lady nor to glance at her:

Souviengne vous, dame, du douz acueil  
 Qui ja fu fez par si grant desirrier,  
 Que n'orent pas tant de pouoir mi oeil  
 Que je vers vous les osasse lancier;  
 De ma bouche ne vos osai priër,  
 Ne poi dire, dame, ce que je vueil  
 [ll. 29-34].

Such behavior accords with the rules of love articulated by Andreas Capellanus, namely that the lover "regularly turns pale in the presence of his beloved" and that "when a lover suddenly catches sight of his beloved his heart palpitates."<sup>4</sup> For Thibaut's poet-persona, however, it is nonetheless a frustrating, confining situation, and he passes harsh judgment on himself with the words "coarz" and "chetis":  
"Tant fui coarz, las, chetis! q'or m'en dueil" (l. 35).

The absence of metaphor in this description of the lover's meeting with the lady lends to the incident an air of realism which is, for the most part, lacking in the chansons d'amour. Yet the suggestion that the poet-lover is reliving, through remembrance, the actual moment when he once stood face to face with his beloved and could not make use of the opportunity is offset somewhat by the description

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<sup>4</sup>Rules XV and XVI, p. 42.

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of the lady. She is described in such abstract and hyperbolic terms that she does not at all seem to be a "real" lady; she is, rather, a symbol, an unattainable ideal. The lover's description of her is that she is an almost celestial being whose beauty illumines the whole world (l. 12) and in whom are all good qualities: ". . . en sa valor sont tout li bien si grant" (l. 13). It is within the lady's power to increase the worth of all those whom she chooses to welcome, among those fortunate few is the humble, mute, poet-lover.

It must not be assumed that the transformation of the lady from "real" to "ideal" is solely a function of remembrance, for the poet-persona is perfectly capable of reconstructing a fairly vivid, detailed recollection of his own feelings at that particular moment. It is only the lady who is ethereal and who eludes individualization. The transformation that she undergoes is, rather, a function of the system of courtly love and also reflects medieval poetics whereby:

. . . la description de la beauté féminine ne vise en rien à l'objectivité, c'est-à-dire au réalisme. Inspirée par la rhétorique qui distingue trois genres de discours: le délibératif, qui vise à convaincre, le judiciaire, qui accuse ou défend, le démonstratif . . . qui loue ou blâme . . . , la description déforme sciemment la réalité en mettant en relief, dans le cas du portrait d'une belle femme, les valeurs esthétiques que le sujet doit avoir pour inspirer les sentiments que veut provoquer le discours.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup>De Bruyne, p. 178.

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By adhering to two traditions, that of classical rhetoric as well as the code of courtly love, Thibault and other trouvères as well create lyrics in which the situations described are very much removed from any semblance of actual occurrences and are placed, instead, into an abstract, idealized realm. With this in mind, the question of "sincerity" as, for example, whether or not Thibaut de Champagne was in love with Blanche of Castille,<sup>6</sup> becomes entirely inappropriate. It may well be that the trouvères had certain ladies in mind, patronesses perhaps, when they composed their lyrics, but it seems that the original "inspiratrice" was forgotten as the poet became more and more entranced by his own creation:

Le poème-symbole absorbe les éléments d'une vie, les oublie et se substitue à eux. Il y a plus d'échanges entre ce poème et la vie du poète qu'entre la vie du poète et ce poème. Montaigne dit que les Essais l'ont fait autant qu'il a fait les Essais. N'est-ce pas le secret de toute oeuvre poétique? La Cassandre d'un 'sonnet pour Cassandre' n'a jamais existé. . . . En écrivant, il songeait moins à Cassandre qu'au sonnet pour Cassandre.

. . . . .  
Toutes les inspiratrices souffrent de ces confusions. Elles se croient aimées; elles le sont sous des déguisements où on ne les reconnaît plus. . . . Dès le moment qu'on pense à des rimes, on pense en rimes et le sentiment s'égare. Qu'on essaie de le rattraper, c'est déjà trop tard, car les mots sont des tyrans.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>Alfred Glauser, Le Poème-symbole (Paris: Nizet, 1967), pp. 16-17.

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It has already been demonstrated in the discussion of chanson I (Chapter I, pp. 7-9) that Northern French poetry was characterized by a stereotyped vocabulary that afforded the trouvère a certain amount of technical facility in the composition of his chansons. In terms of the high degree of lexical repetition and recurrence of favored rhyme schemes it might well be said that the "words were tyrants." Just as the creation of rhymes brought with it a concomitant distancing of the poet from his emotions and from the lady about whom he was writing, he himself also seems to be transformed in the process. The poet-persona who speaks in the lyric is not necessarily the poet in real life; he seeks, rather, to present himself in the terms expected of the true, courtly lover and is thereby idealized just as the lady is.

The transformation of the poet-persona can be seen most clearly in the extended metaphors of chanson XXXIV, "Ausi conme unicorne sui," a chanson which is related to the theme of memory in that it also deals with the moment when the lover first beheld the lady:

Ausi conme unicorne sui  
 Qui s'esbahist en regardant,  
 Quant la pucele va mirant.  
 Tant est liee en son ennui,  
 Pasmee chiet en son giron;  
 Lors l'ocit on en traïson.  
 Et moi ont mort d'autel senblant  
 Amors et ma dame, por voir:  
 Mon cuer ont, n'en puis point ravoïr  
 [ll. 1-9].

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By comparing himself to the unicorn, the poet-persona situates his own predicament in a larger context, that of the literary tradition of symbolic animals. In the medieval bestiary tradition, the unicorn was well-established as a Christ figure. The legend of the unicorn entranced by a virgin and then slain as he lay unconscious in her lap was interpreted as a prefiguration of Christ, born of the Virgin, thereby becoming man and being sacrificed for the sins of mankind. In chanson XXXIV Thibaut does not allude to the legend in its full interpretation but chooses to exemplify only the sufferings of a mortal who is a martyr for the cause of love. Since, however, the religious connotations of the bestiary story were so firmly established, one could assume with some degree of certainty that the use of the unicorn image intensified the expression of human suffering and sacralized it, not through direct statement but through inference. The lover thereby presents himself not only as the perfect, submissive "fin amant," but as one who is completely without fault, representative of pure, chaste love and willingness to die for a higher ideal, not for the propitiation of sins, but for love of an ideal lady.

The moment of first seeing the lady marks the beginning of the imprisonment of the poet-lover's heart in a prison from which there can be no escape. It is not the poet-persona who plays a major rôle in the extended

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metaphor concerning the prison (stanzas II-IV) but rather, his heart, the symbol of his fidelity and unchanging love for the lady. Any possible actual meeting between the poet-lover and the lady is presented in terms of abstractions in such a way that--as Glauser might say--the original occurrence is disguised and no longer recognizable.

Both the heart and memory are essential to the expression of the lover's steadfastness and devotion to the lady. The heart, through a sort of symbolic dual existence, unites the lover and the lady; it is at the same time in prison and near the poet, "en la prison et de moi [the poet-persona] près" (l. 45). An equally important bond, however, between the lover and the lady is remembrance. In lines 42 and 43 the poet-persona states: "Ne m'en puis je partir pour rien/ Que je n'aie le remembrer. . . ."

By reinforcing the idea that remembrance joins him to the lady, the poet-persona reasserts his humanness, an assertion which is followed by an appropriate love-request expressing his need for the lady's help in sustaining his heavy burden. His imaginative transformation of himself-as-unicorn in the opening stanza of the chanson and the subsequent Roman de la rose-like description of Amors' prison are indeed persuasive images, but his final plea to the lady is communicated in terms devoid of metaphor, the

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candid expression of a lover who knows not how to be anything but honest with his lady. Stripped of all pretense, he states:

Dame, quant je ne sai guiler,  
 Merciz seroit de seson mès  
 De soustenir si greveus fès  
 [XXXIV, ll. 46-48].

If one feels compelled to speculate upon the actual existence of a "real" douce dame and the poet's first encounter with her as Wallensköld and earlier critics did, one must agree with Glauser that both she and the hypothetical "event" have been transformed in a positive sense, beyond all recognition. The poet-lover's final plea to the lady, stated in terms other than the metaphorical identity with which he first chose to present himself is but another effective artistic rendering of the total experience of remembrance. The unadorned, candid plea for the lady's mercy is all the more effective in its simplicity when contrasted with the eloquence of the preceding metaphor. Both pain and enchantment characterize the lover's experience; the relationship between the experience as expressed in the text and any actual "event" is irrelevant to Thibaut's artistic creation.

Discussion of a few remaining chansons will serve as a summary and restatement of the essential aspects of the theme of memory. In chanson XXX it is not the lady's heart, as in the unicorn poem, but the lady's hand which

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unites the lover and the lady. The salutation which the lady gave to the lover at their first meeting, the soft touch of her tender white hand, is an integral part of the lover's reexperience of that occurrence. In the poetic present he can still recall both seeing the lady and feeling her touch so that remembrance is a physical as well as a mental phenomenon:

La ou Amors la m'amena veoir  
 Oi je adès un tres douz atochier  
 Qu'ele me fist de sa blanche main tendre,  
 Quant par la main me prist au salu rendre  
 [ll. 30-33].

It is, in fact, the physical aspect which is dominant and which leads the poet-lover to believe that he has found mercy:

Dame, merci! La main enbausmee  
 Que nuit et jor bais cent foiz d'un estal  
 Me fait parler de vos si a cheval  
 Qu'il m'est a vis que merci as trouvee  
 [ll. 46-49].

The reason for the physical nature of the lover's experience of remembrance is made plausible by the nature of the lady's greeting. In other chansons the physical aspect of remembrance is not related to the details of a specific rencontre; it is, rather, more closely related to the notion of remembrance as essential to the attainment of a state of excessive meditation which is not without the connotations of a quasi-mystical state of contemplation in which the boundaries of time and space give way to a

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powerful "inner reality." The faculties of the five senses of the poet-persona exceed their natural functions, causing the poet-lover to exclaim:

. . . adès en li recort,  
 Deus! ce que virent mi oeil;  
 C'est sa grant biauté veraie  
 Qui en plusieurs sens m'essaie,  
 Que ce que j'ai, ce se combat a moi:  
 C'est cuers et cors et li oeil dont la voi  
 [XXXII, ll. 3-7].

In this particular case, the totality of the experience of remembrance, with its visual, emotional and physical connotations, serves as a source of consolation to the poet-persona suffering from the pains and distress of love. The healing powers of memory are directly proportional to the seriousness of the lover's condition; he is mortally wounded, having lost his heart to Amors.

The recompense afforded by the attainment of a contemplative state of joyous remembrance cannot, however, be counted upon consistently to bring healing solace to the lover. Although the poet-persona may state, as in chanson II, ll. 12-14, that remembrance of the lady's beauty is a safeguard against all sickness or evils,<sup>8</sup> these sentiments are contradicted by chanson XII which illustrates that, in the midst of his torment, remembrance only makes the lover's suffering more acute, his sickness all the more incurable:

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<sup>8</sup>"Tant me plect a remembrer / Que de touz maus  
 m'est garanz / Sa biauté a recorder" (II, ll. 12-14).

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Se je peüsse oublier  
 Sa biauté et ses bons diz  
 Et son tres douz esgarder,  
 Bien peüsse estre gueriz;  
 Mès ne m'en puis mon cuer oster,  
 Tant i pens de fin corage  
 [ll. 9-14].

In spite of the paradoxical nature of remembrance, one characteristic remains constant. Whether it is a source of pain or healing, remembrance is consistently emblematic of the poet-lover's fidelity to the lady. Even when, as in chanson XII, release from remembrance might signify a cure, the lover is unable to keep himself from thinking about the lady.

Once again the word "corage" indicates to what a profound extent thoughts of and desire for the lady have become a part of the lover's innermost self. The complex connotations of "corage" are a convenient vehicle for the expression of the convergence of contemplation, love, and the interior vision of the lady. In chanson XVIII (as in chanson X) "corage" signifies that state in which rapture, desire, and remembrance become one, and the poet-lover experiences "joyful death" upon beholding the lady's image reflected in the mirror of his heart:

De ma dame souvenir  
 Fet Amors lié mon corage,  
 Qui me fet joiant morir . . .  
 [ll. 1-3].

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Qu'adès m'estuet que la voie  
 Et que sa fresche colors  
 Soit en mon cuer mireors.  
 Deus! con s'i fet biau mirer!  
 [ll. 31-34].

Remembrance, then, signifies an immutable bond with the lady, one which temporarily defies the limitations of time, space, and separation. Through remembrance the lady--already perceived as an ideal--becomes a vision, the contemplation of which can bring supreme physical and emotional exultation or extremely acute suffering.

At times Thibaut suggests a definite pattern associated with the phenomenon of remembrance: that of having first seen the lady, then recalling that specific moment to mind, followed by contemplation of the lady's qualities--accompanied by either joy or sorrow--and the subsequent disintegration of the vision and the lover's intense despair at being separated from his beloved. Most often, however, Thibaut concentrates only upon certain aspects of the phenomenon of remembrance, thereby creating chansons which are not monotonous or repetitious; on the contrary, each can be seen as a gleaming facet, lending flashes of insight into the totality of the lover's experience.

The lover's experience conveyed in the chansons d'amour--as already clearly indicated by Zumthor--is that of a highly subjective universe dependent upon the all-pervasive "je" of the poet-persona. Such subjectivity

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is reflected in the lover's ability to transcend time and distance, at least temporarily, through a psychological process, namely, remembrance. The same transformation, accentuating the subjective reality of the lover's state rather than the physical environment that surrounds him, is reflected in the third theme expressive of great paradox in Thibaut's chansons d'amour, the theme of the prison of love. Although this theme is at least partially related to the physical constraint placed upon the lover--his inability to be in the lady's presence and address her directly--love's prison is more accurately a representation of psychological immobility on the part of the lover, a subjective prison from which he cannot escape because he is imprisoned by his own emotions.

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### CHAPTER III

#### EN LA DOUCE CHARTRE EN PRISON

In close association with the two themes previously discussed is one which also pervades the chansons d'amour through explicit as well as implicit statements and imagery, namely the prison of love theme. As it is presented in Thibaut's love lyrics, the state of imprisonment on the part of the lover is psychological as well as physical. Having once seen the lady, Thibaut's poet-persona laments that he can no longer be in her presence for fear of being spied upon by losengiers and male gent; he must remain, therefore, in a state of isolation and physical estrangement from the one to whom he directs all his thoughts and innermost desires. His sense of imprisonment, however, is also reflected in terms of a psychological immobility, paralysis of his reason and his will which are in direct and intense conflict with his heart. He wishes to put an end to a presumably endless state of suffering but his heart is in control; he continues to love despite the pain he undergoes. Thibaut conveys quite graphically the inner conflict that the lover experiences so intensely, first by personification of the lover's rational and emotional faculties--

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"resons" vs. "cuers"--and then by a phenomenon which might be termed dédoublement. The phenomenon of dédoublement carries the personification of the mind and heart one step further by establishing an opposition between the heart and the poet-persona himself as a thinking, feeling human being. Dédoublement, then represents a true dual existence; the lover and his heart, metaphorically separate, each lead an independent existence. The lover remains in painful exile from the lady; the heart is joyfully imprisoned with her.

The figurative separation of the lover and his heart and the subsequent use of imagery of imprisonment are closely associated to an event of primary importance to the process of remembrance, namely the moment when the lover first gazed upon his lady. The interrelationship between remembrance, the prison theme, as well as the concept of love as sweet suffering establishes a dynamic thematic triad, the modulations of which further illustrate the subjective, isolated world of the poet-lover. A clear delineation of the "events," thought processes and emotional responses associated with the "sweet prison of love" necessitates close examination of the chansons in which the prison theme is present through explicit description and through allusion and related imagery.

There is, for example, a fluid interrelationship between the prison theme and the dialectical opposition

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between the rational and emotional faculties of the poet-lover. This intense conflict between mind and heart or "resons" and "folie," significant to an understanding of the paradoxical nature of the sweet pain of love, is an essential aspect of the lover's self-imprisonment as well, namely his inability to be deterred from loving:

Resons me dit que g'en ost ma pensee.  
 Mès j'ai un cuer, ainz teus ne fu trouvez,  
 Touz jorz me dit: "Amez! amez! amez!";  
 N'autre reson n'iert ja par lui moustree,  
 Et j'amerai, n'en puis estre tornez  
 [XX, ll. 36-40].

The precedent for the concept of love as madness cannot be traced to Andreas Capellanus' treatise on love. He defines love as an "inborn suffering," the manifestations of which are pensiveness, sleeplessness, and excessive, innumerable fears, rather than as an "inborn conflict" of reason and emotion. Love as "folie" is an Ovidian theme, also of major importance in a work more contemporary to Thibaut, the Roman de la rose. In the Roman Reason tells Ami that the suffering of love is nothing but madness:

Ce qui te fet a dolor vivre,  
 C'est li maus qui amors a non  
 Ou il n'a si folie non  
 [ll. 3040-3042].<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Translation:

"That which makes you live in torment  
 Is the sickness that is called love,  
 In which there is nothing but madness"  
 (translation mine).

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But just as Ami remains true to the service of the god of love, so also does Thibaut's poet-persona continue to serve Love although his suffering may be for naught.

Even this incapacity on the part of the lover to renounce love and its pain is related to the prison theme. The lover is, in a sense, paralyzed, a rational prisoner of his emotions who sees that unrequited passion is indeed folly but who can do nothing but endure and remain steadfast. Even hope that aids him in his torment seems at times to be a trap as well as a refuge:

. . . en esperance ai un peu de refui.  
Li oiselez se va ferir el glui,  
Quant il ne puet trouver autre garant  
[XXIX, ll. 30-32].

Steadfastness, immobility--both are postures required of the courtly lover whose situation is characteristically one of waiting, hoping, and adoring from afar but never attaining the lady's ultimate favors. Such a situation is not without inherent tension, tension which is directly proportional to the overwhelming experience of first catching sight of the indescribably beautiful lady.

As has already been established in Chapter II, "falling in love" is, for Thibaut's poet-persona, an experience whereby the lover is literally "surprised" or overwhelmed with love for the lady. This sudden transformation of the poet-lover's heart, in a spontaneous response of sheer joy and love for the lady, leaves the

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body of the poet-persona and remains in the presence of  
the lady:

Dame, quant je devant vous fui  
Et je vous vi premierement,  
Mes cuers aloit se tressaillant  
Qu'il vous remest, quant je m'en mui  
[XXXIV, ll. 10-13].

This moment, described so often and so graphically by  
Thibaut's poet-persona marks the definitive birth of  
passion and determines the basis of love's "madness,"  
the irrational suffering which the lover will bear as he  
submits to the heart's dominance.

The poet-persona in chanson XXIII is clearly aware  
that seeing the lady was a turning point in his life and is  
also cognizant of the fact that the "reasoning" of his heart  
imposes great hardship upon his body, a sweet sickness that  
may well mean death:

Douce dame, sanz amor fui jadis,  
Quant je choisi vostre gente façon;  
Et quant je vi vostre tres biau cler vis,  
Si me raprist mes cuers autre reson:  
De vos amer me semont et justise,  
A vos en est a vostre commandise.  
Li cors remaint, qui sent felon juïse,  
Se n'en avez merci de vostre gré.  
Li douz mal dont j'atent joie  
M'ont si grevé  
Morz sui, s'ele m'i delaie  
[XXIII, ll. 11-21].

That the lover is "captivated" by a single  
experience in the past is underscored by the clear  
delineation between past and present time. The description  
of the moment of seeing the lady, its total affective

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transformation of the poet-persona as "one without love" to "one who is completely ruled by his heart" is conveyed succinctly in lines 11-14. The remainder of the stanza deals entirely with the present moment; the static pose of the poet-persona is one of suffering and waiting, his body immobile and near death. The postulated moment in the past is, in a sense, "out of time" for what has happened between the "event" and the poetic present is not accounted for and, indeed, in the lover's experience, is of little consequence, all things being subordinate to the passionate reasoning of the heart.

The term "passionate reasoning" implies, of course, an apparent contradiction in terms, namely that it is at the height of passion that reason may well cease to function. Thibaut's poet-persona is not unaware of the paradoxical nature of the reson of the heart. That this reson seems indeed quite irrational is expressed more clearly in the third stanza of chanson XXIII as the poet-persona proceeds from a rational assessment concerning the god of love to an expression of his own confusion and inability to evaluate the situation:

Mult a Amors grant force et grant pouvoir  
 Qui sanz reson fet choisir a son gré.  
 Sanz reson? Deus! je ne di pas savoir,  
 Car a mes euz en set mes cuers bon gré  
 [XXIII, ll. 22-25].

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The self-contradictions and the poet-persona's admission that the doesn't really know (ll. 23-24) are indicative of the conflict of mind and heart and foreshadow a choice which the lover is to make, namely a "go the way of [love's] madness." The last semblance of autonomy on the part of the poet-lover is expressed by the verb "vueil": "Dame, por vos vueil aler foloiant" (l. 42).<sup>2</sup>

By committing himself to the lady, the lover acknowledges that he loves not only her, but also the pain and grief that afflict him. The paradox of loving one's own suffering stems from the heart's irrational dominance, and yet the poet-persona reveals in the closing lines of the chanson that the heart itself is imprisoned: "La granz biautez . . . M'a si lacié mon cuer en sa prison" (ll. 52-54).

Within the total context of the poem, the prison image is not uncalled-for; it is but the logical summary statement of the immobility of the attendant poet-lover who has no true choice but to submit to impassioned reason. The figurative separation of the heart from the lover's body culminates in turn in the heart's submission and imprisonment by Amors, the lady, or the lady's beauty. This basic pattern--seeing the lady, dédoublement, inner conflict,

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<sup>2</sup>A possible alternative line which would indicate submissiveness rather than an active choice on the part of the poet-persona might be: "Dame, si m'estuet aler foloiant" (Lady, thus it suits me to commit folly).

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submission and imprisonment--occur in other chansons as well, occasionally with a markedly different emphasis.

The varied treatment or emphasis given to the prison theme can be best expressed in terms of medieval rhetoric. The sometimes cursory treatment of the prison image itself, as in the closing lines of chanson XXIII, differs markedly from the presentation of the same theme in a chanson such as the "unicorn poem" (XXXIV) in which the description of the prison of love is sustained for three consecutive stanzas. These two contrasting approaches to an identical theme represent two equally valid--and equally difficult--ways of developing a theme, namely, amplificatio and abbreviatio.

According to Geoffrey of Vinsauf in the Poetria

Nova:

The way continues along two routes: there will be either a wide path or narrow, either a river or a brook. You may advance at a leisurely pace or leap swiftly ahead. You may report the matter with brevity or draw it out in a lengthy discourse. The footing on either path is not without effort. . . . The material to be moulded, like the moulding of wax, is at first hard to the touch. If intense concentration enkindle native ability, the material is soon made pliant by the mind's fire, and submits to the hand in whatever way it requires, malleable to any form. The hand of the mind controls it, either to amplify or to curtail.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>Geoffrey of Vinsauf, Poetria Nova [1200-1202], trans. by Margaret F. Nims (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1967), pp. 23-24.

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The uses of abbreviatio with reference to the various aspects of the prison of love theme are numerous. In chansons I and II, for example, the inner conflict which the poet-persona experiences and the prison image are closely interrelated and, as it were, condensed into a single stanza in each chanson.<sup>4</sup> The statement made by Reason to the lover in chanson I, stanza II, like the proclamation of Dame Reason in the Roman de la rose, is that loving or "remaining in prison" is childishness since, she implies, the lover will never be ransomed. This authoritative statement, representing the lover's rational side, renders his anguish even more acute and he admits that he needs solace. In subsequent stanzas, however, the poet-persona energetically denounces that tendency within himself and others to quit Love's service, thereby reaffirming his fidelity to the lady and enhancing his own worth as a true, faithful lover. The references to the conflict between mind and heart and subsequent feelings of imprisonment are brief but effective, assuring the distant lady of his steadfastness, endurance, and wholehearted devotion to her.

The cursory treatment of the prison image and the unreasonableness of the sickness of love serve a similar function in chanson II. The lover's preference for

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<sup>4</sup>For a further discussion of chanson I, see Chapter I, pp. 28-36.

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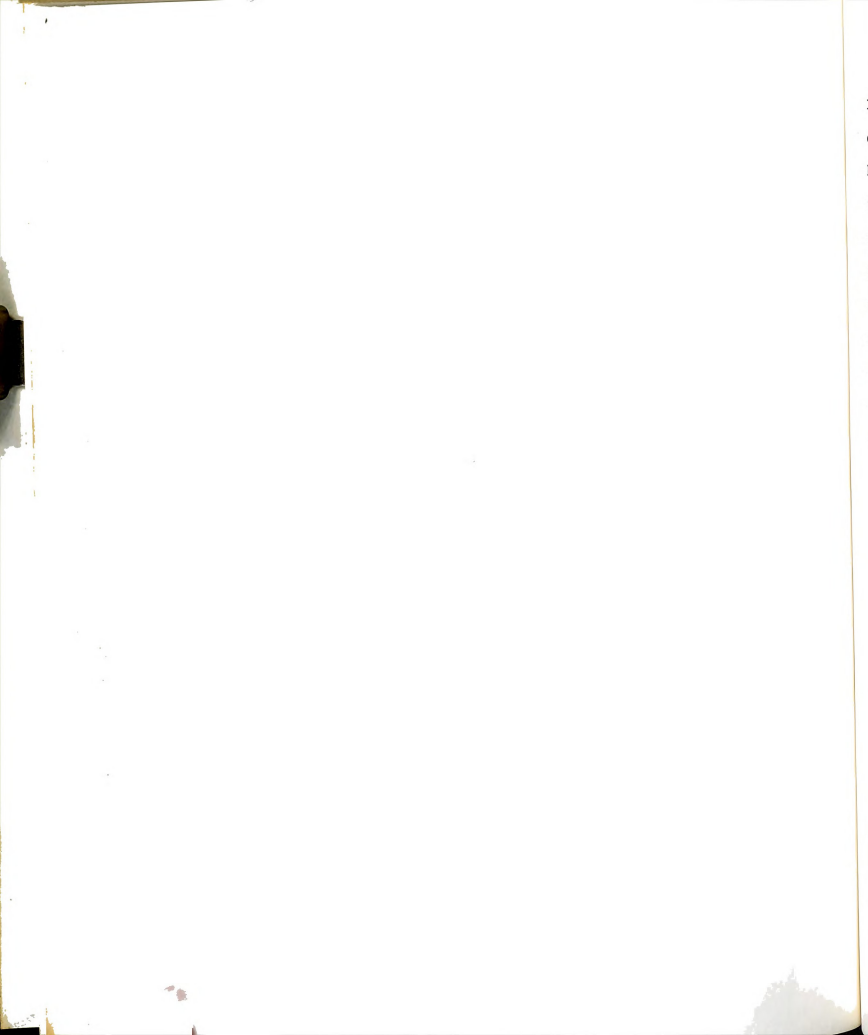
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remaining in prison and, indeed, his preference for death rather than being ransomed again underscore the lover's fidelity. The lover himself makes a rational judgment about his situation: "Tels maus est bien sanz reson" (l. 19). The sickness in question refers to both the malady of love and the lover's aberrant desire to remain imprisoned. In contrast to chanson I, the lover demonstrates no need to refute vigorously the dictates of his more rational tendencies. Instead, he chooses to live with the paradox, incorporating into it the notion that his choice and his suffering seem to make sense (" . . . me semble reson," l. 23) since the lady is so exceedingly beautiful. Once again, the conflict between mind and heart is resolved by fidelity--imprisonment--this time in expectation of seeing the lady and experiencing "joyous torment" (l. 38).

One aspect of the theme of the prison of love which does not seem to have been integrated into the concise expressions of the abbreviatio is the reference to the moment of seeing the lady as a turning point in the poet-lover's existence. Only on one occasion does Thibaut's poet-persona refer briefly to a glance from the lady and its consequence, that his heart remains "fixed" by it:

Chançon di li sanz mentir  
C'uns resgarz le cuer me tient  
Qui li vi fere au partir  
[XXXIII, ll. 36-38].



In this particular envoi the poet-persona's intent is to emphasize the bond that exists between himself and the lady; his heart remains "caught" in her glance, suspended in a timeless state, totally devoted to the lady. Thibaut is also capable, however, of using brief references to the prison theme to the advantage of the poet-persona. The envoi of chanson XXV stresses that, since the lover is perhaps an unwilling prisoner, a hostage who has given himself up only after a hard-fought battle, it is the responsibility of the lady, as keeper of the prison, to reward him who is kept there in order to induce him to stay:

Dame, qui veut son prison bien tenir  
 Et si l'a pris a si dure bataille,  
 Doner li soit le grain après la paille  
 [XXV, ll. 36-38].

The abbreviatio form of reference to the prison theme is used by Thibaut to produce still another effect, one which combines both humor and joy as the poet-persona uses to full advantage the word "lié," meaning both "bound" or "tied" and "joyful" or "happy":

Amors me lace et prent  
 Et fet lié et joiant,  
 Por ce qu'a soi m'apele  
 [XV, ll. 20-22].

The possibility for a double-entendre based upon the word "lié" is certainly present. At any rate, the light-hearted tone of these lines is in stark contrast to the rather ominous foreboding conveyed by similar lines in chanson XXVIII.

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Fort sont li laz et grant li couvertor  
 --Ce n'est pas gas--  
 En que cil est qui aime par amor  
 [XXVIII, ll. 25-27].

One certainly could not prove that Thibaut consciously patterned these lines concerning the ambush of the lover after similar passages in the Chanson de Roland:

Halt sont li pui e li val tenebros,  
 Les roches bises, li destreit merveillos  
 [ll. 814-815].

Halt sont li pui e tenebros e grant  
 Li val parfont e les ewes coranz  
 [ll. 1830-1831].<sup>5</sup>

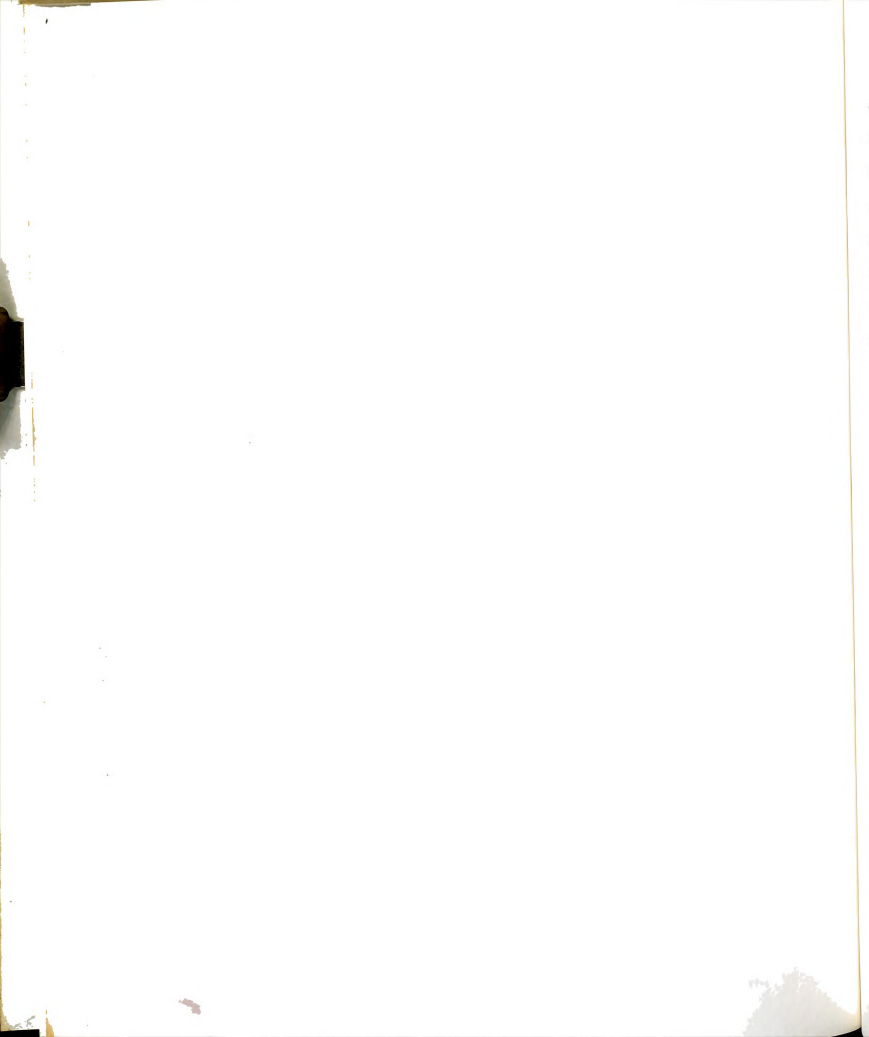
The metrical similarities between the lines in Thibaut's chanson and those of the epic as well as Thibaut's use of the word "gas," are the only internal evidence that Thibaut intentionally wished to allude to the chanson de geste. The word "gas" (boast or joke), rarely used in the courtly lyric, recalls the epic tradition in that it refers to the almost ritual boasting of the knights gathered around the campfires on the eve of battle. If Thibaut's lines awakened stirrings of association and recognition on the part of those who listened to his lyrics, the sinister implications of the lover's ensnarement would indeed be effectively

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<sup>5</sup>Translation:

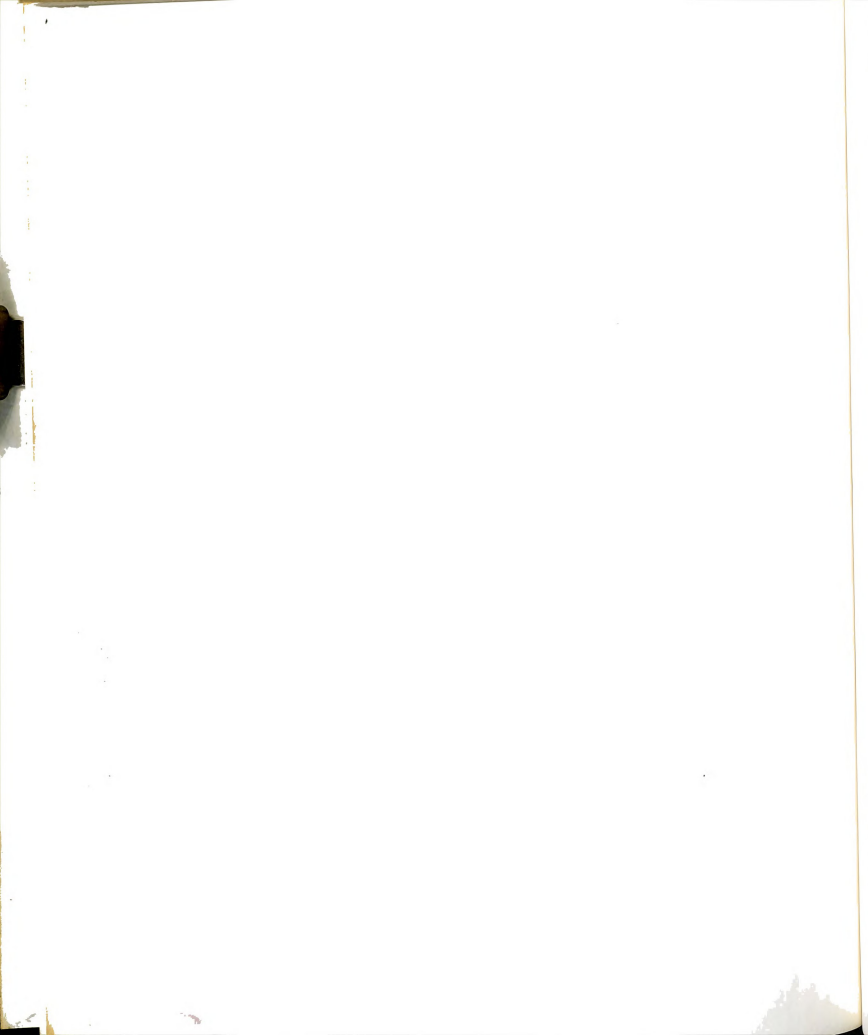
"High are the peaks, and the valleys shadowy,  
 The rocks dark, the straights awesome

High are the peaks and shadowy and grand,  
 The valleys deep and the waters swiftly flowing"  
 (translation mine).



communicated. The lines in the Roland occur when Charlemagne's anguish is particularly acute, first when he is overcome with a sense of foreboding concerning his nephew's fate and, secondly, when he sounds his trumpet in response to Roland's vain call. It is too late; Roland's death follows soon afterward. One may say that such an interpretation places the lover's suffering on too grand a scale, but Thibaut is not at all reticent about comparing the poet-persona to such figures as Jason (I, l. 4), Piramus (XXI, l. 12), and Julius Caesar (V, l. 17). In chanson XXXIV there is, in fact, an overt reference to the lover's struggle as being more difficult than the strife endured by Roland and Oliver. By allowing the fullest connotative interpretations of such references, one discovers the richness that the rhetorical device of abbreviatio has to offer when used within a highly stylized genre such as le grand chant courtois.

This dependence upon allusion and the piecing together of many chansons in order to apprehend the full ramifications of any particular theme obviously differentiates abbreviatio from its rhetorical counterpart, amplificatio. Instead of confining an entire theme to rather narrow limits, amplificatio seeks to present the theme within the context of a single poem, in all its diversity:





. . . although the meaning is one, let it not come content with one set of apparel. Let it vary its robes and assume different raiment. Let it take up again in other words what has already been said; let it reiterate, in a number of clauses, a single thought. Let one and the same thing be concealed under multiple forms--be varied and yet the same.<sup>6</sup>

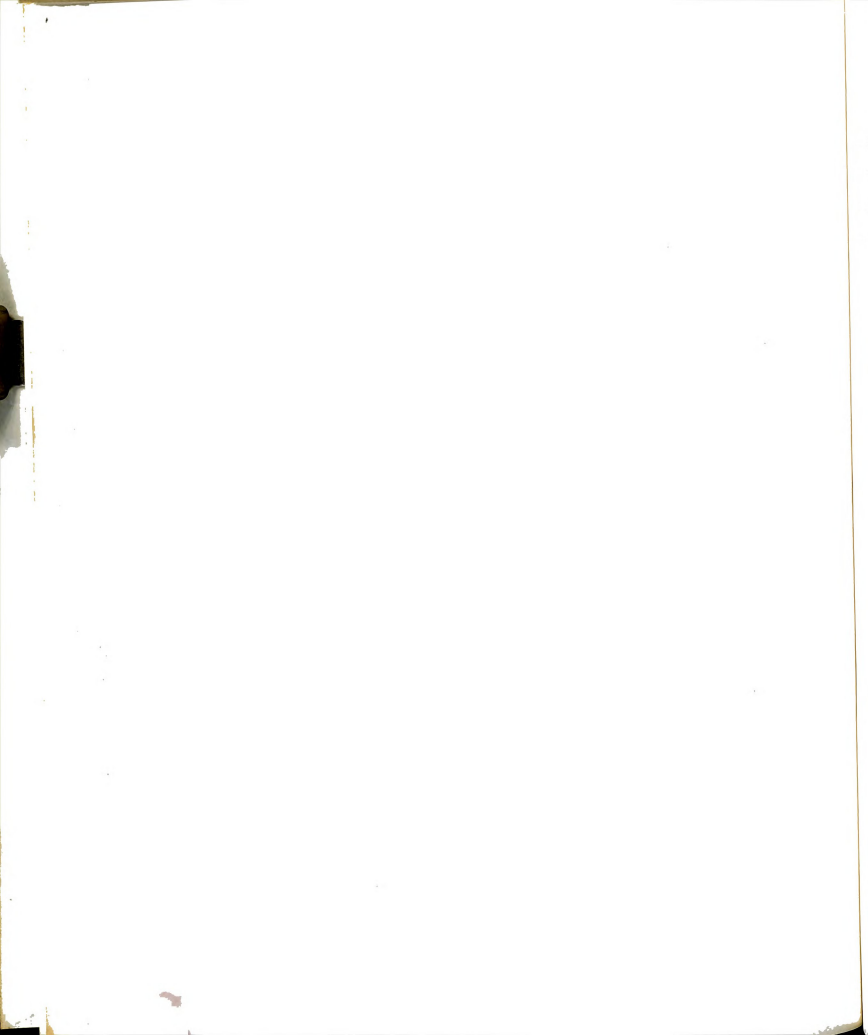
More than just a single means of amplificatio is at the poet's disposal. The above citation exhorts the poet to approach the same thought in different ways which might be supplemented by the use of periphrasis as well as by overt or hidden comparisons. The result would be a poem in which various approaches or references to the same theme recur from stanza to stanza. Still another means of amplificatio involves the use of personification and sustained metaphor whereby the theme unfolds with more continuity, each stanza growing from and expanding upon the previous one, rather than simply saying the same thing in a different way.

Two of Thibaut's chansons illustrate the above techniques with reference to the prison theme in a particularly effective way. Chanson XXXII, "Even though I lament about loving," exemplifies the former technique of reiterative amplification, and chanson XXIV,<sup>7</sup> the unicorn poem, the latter, what one might call sustained or developmental amplification.

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<sup>6</sup>Geoffrey of Vinsauf, p. 24.

<sup>7</sup>For a discussion of these chansons and their relationship to the theme of memory, see Chapter II, pp. 71-74 and 75-76.

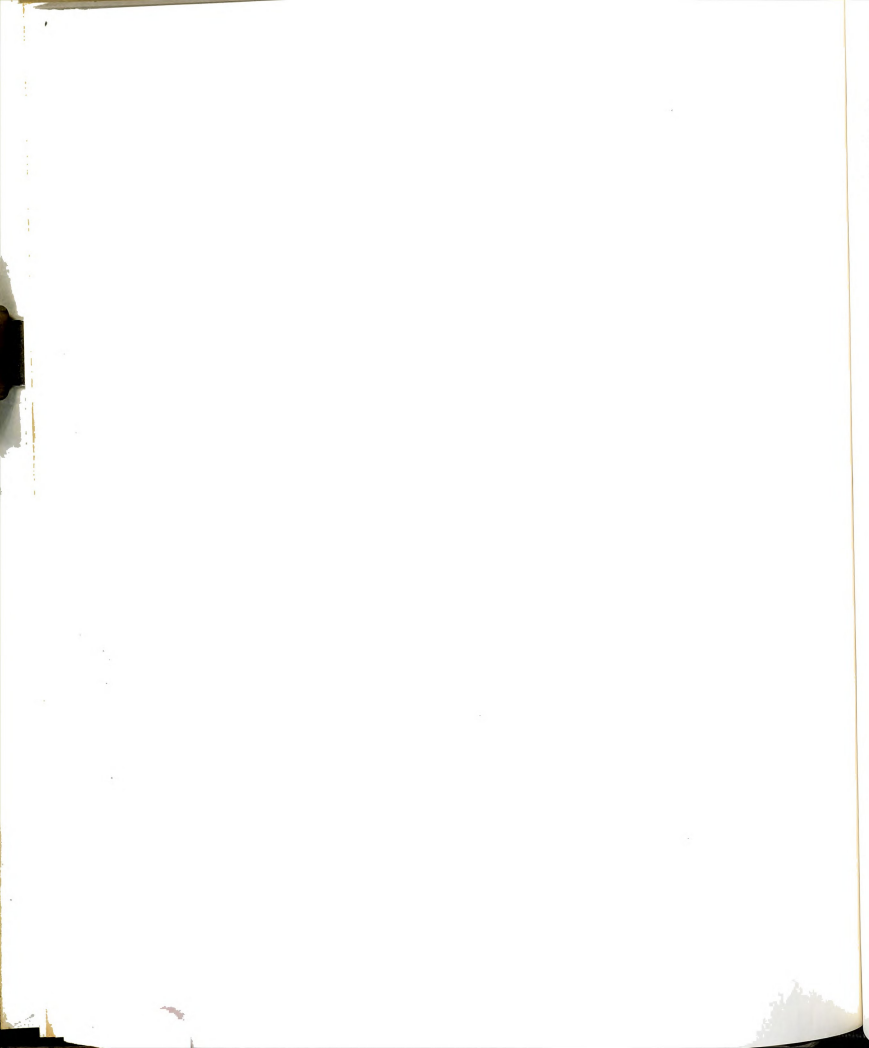


The main aspects of the prison theme which are recounted in chanson XXXII are the effect of having seen the lady, a distinct experience of dédoublement, the imprisonment of the heart and various pleas for re-union with the heart, ultimately signifying the lover's desire to be "imprisoned," in a sense, by the lady and kept in her presence as is his heart. There is a clear exposition of the major thematic components in the opening stanza:

Por ce se d'amor me dueil  
 Si ai je grant confort,  
 Car adès en li recort,  
 Deus! ce que virent mi oeil:  
 C'est sa grant beauté veraie  
 Qui en pluseurs sens m'essaie,  
 Que ce que j'ai, ce se combat a moi:  
 C'est cuers et cors et li oeil dont la voi;  
 Mès le cuer a, qu'est de greigneur pouoir,  
 Or me dont Deus les autres vueille avoir!  
 [ll. 1-10].

Seeing the lady (ll. 4-6), subsequent inner conflict (l. 7), separation from his heart, the heart's capture (ll. 8-9), and the lover's desire to be entirely "captured" by the lady (l. 10) will be reiterated in subsequent stanzas, thereby varying the form--or "raiment"--but ultimately conveying the same message.

In stanza II the separation of the lover from his heart is presented as a serious wound inflicted upon the lover by Amors. It is at this point that the notion of dédoublement is presented most distinctly: "En sa prison biau m'est quant je l'i voi" (l. 18). The poet-persona is

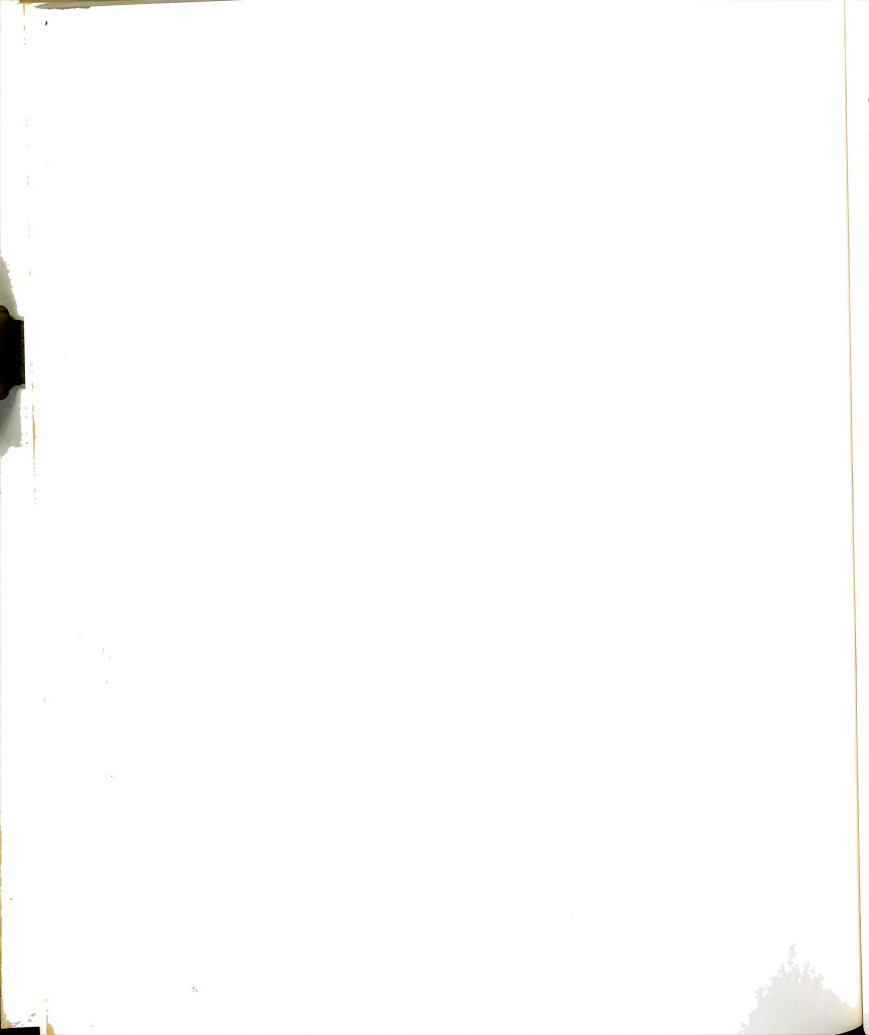


clearly separate from his heart, excluded from Amors' prison, and gazing longingly at his heart which carries on its independent existence within the prison walls. The heart is thereafter presented as being in an enviable predicament. The lover seeks not to free the heart but, rather, to be privileged to be a captive with it, and closes both stanzas I and II with similar please: "Or me dont Deus les autres vueille avoir!" (l. 10), and "Or li dont Deus garder a mon vouloir!" (l. 20).

This sense of dédoublement recurs in different forms at the close of each of the following stanzas. In stanzas II and III the poet-persona makes a rational appeal to the lady for the restoration of his heart, opening each stanza with a rather commonplace, four-line exemplum, followed by a logical application of the exemplum to his own situation. Instead of referring to himself in a somewhat grandiose manner through allusions to legendary or historical superheroes, the poet-persona draws upon ordinary circumstances which illustrate, clearly and directly, what might be termed "acceptable social behavior":

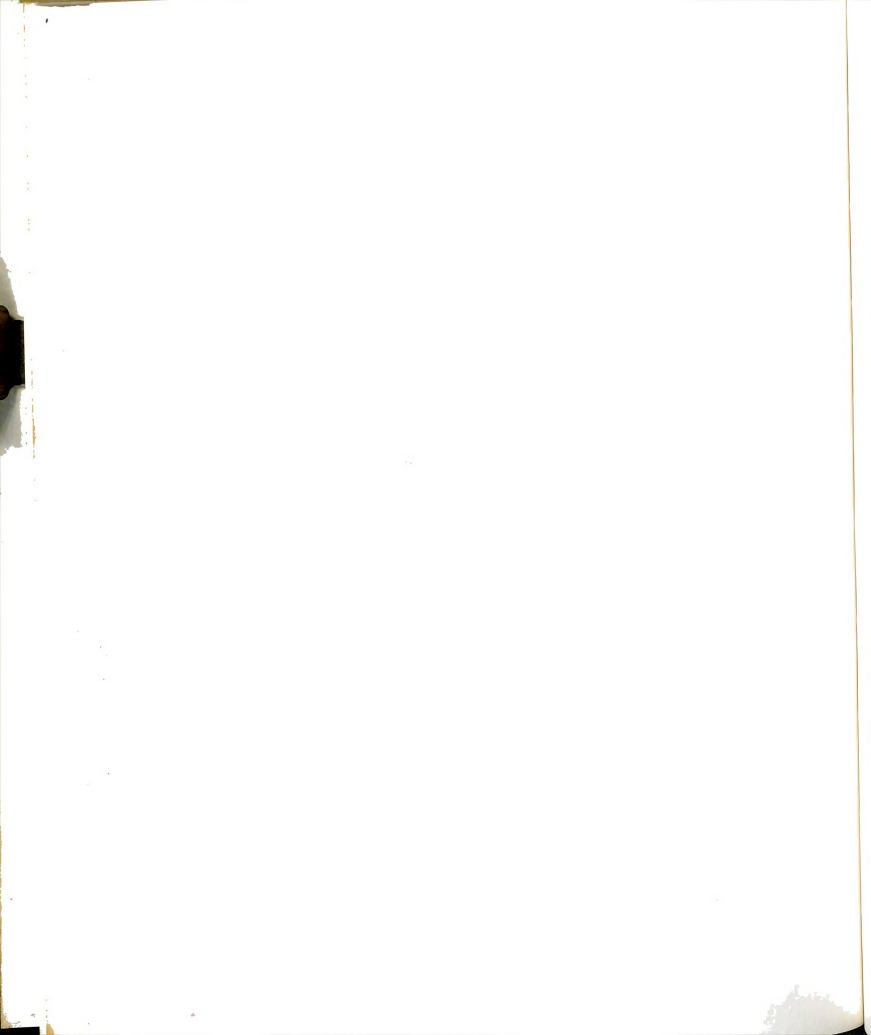
Dame, qui pert au besaing  
 Por son ami ce qu'il a,  
 Se cil le guerredon n'a,  
 Honiz en est par tesmoing  
 [11. 21-24].

Se je a un homme doing  
 --Aucuns de tels genz i a--  
 Demain autant me harra  
 Se ne li remet el poing  
 [11. 31-34].



The use of the battle reference alludes to the poet-lover's personal struggle, characterized by inner conflict and severe wounds, and yet, it is at the same time a curiously manipulative image. The poet-lover has, of course, lost that which is most vital and most precious--his heart--for the sake of his beloved amie. The appeal to the lady is both rational and emotional in this particular case; it is first of all her responsibility and to her benefit to restore the lover's heart to him. The reciprocal expectations between "friends" in battle demands it, and, in a courtly sense, she should not allow her servant to be shamed by others, for the worth [valors] or reputation of one's lover enhances one's own worth as well.

The exemplum used in stanza IV, drawn from the realm of commercial interchange, is an equally manipulative one. Through it the poet-persona establishes both his own uprightness--the assertion that he is in debt to no one--and intimates the possibility of a cessation of the relationship between the one who takes [the lady] and the one who gives. The use of the word "hate" has a double impact. Within the context of official lending of money, goods, or services, it is used in a legalistic sense. Just as the word "amer" can be used in a feudal sense to indicate those to whom one owes fealty or protection, so does "haïr" indicate the official severance of such a relationship,





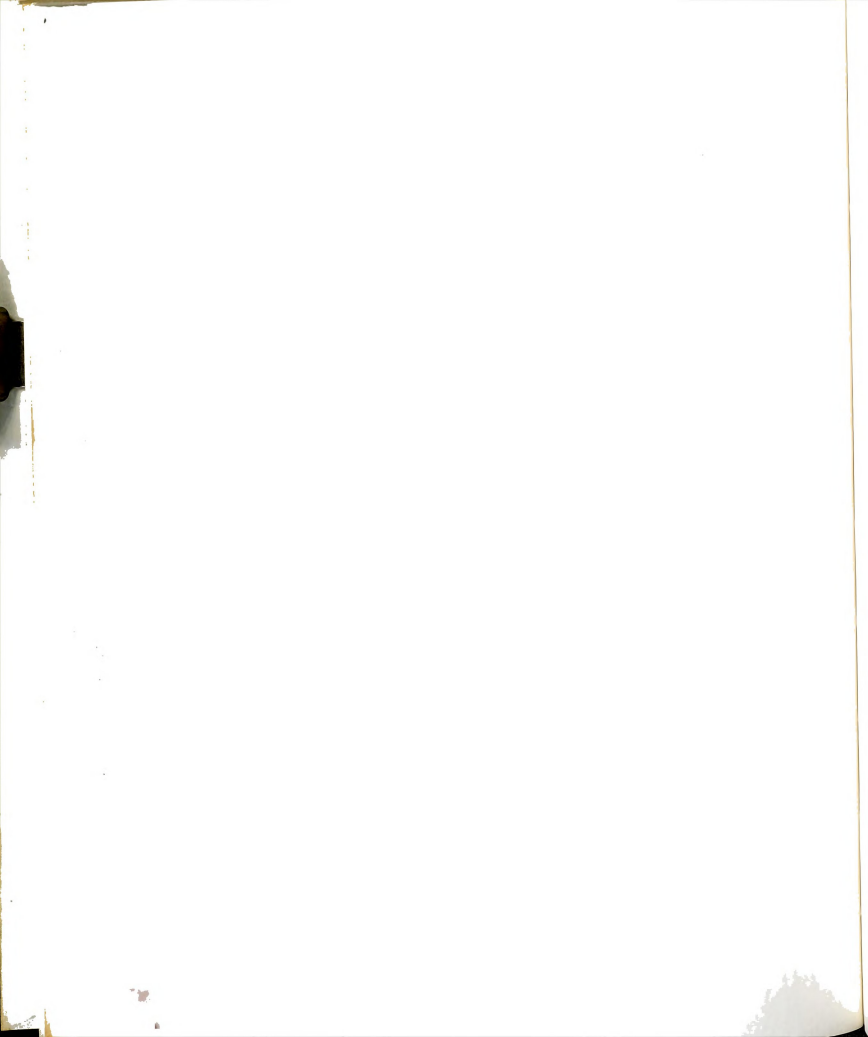
without any emotional connotations. When seen in connection with the relationship of lover and lady, however, the emotional implications are nonetheless present. It is as if the poet-persona were issuing a vague threat to the lady, a threat which is offset, however, both by his admission that, ideally, one should give without any thought of recompense<sup>8</sup> and by his address to her in the closing lines of stanza IV:

De ce qui miens deüst estre vos pri;  
Que n'espoir pas, a vostre douz senblant,  
Que la merciz me viengne au cuer devant  
[ll. 38-40].

The sweetness that the poet-lover perceives in the lady's manner sets the tone for the fifth and final stanza in which the lover speaks more humbly and uses as his point of reference not exempla and their logical ramifications but, rather, his personal experience. It is in this stanza that the phenomenon of dédoublement is used to its best advantage as a vehicle that effectively communicates simultaneously the rational thought processes of the poet-lover and the equally forceful--and ultimately more forceful--emotional experience that he is undergoing. The poet-lover is afraid; he offers to await humbly and passively any sweet favor that the lady might deign to grant and realizes, on a rational level, that there is nothing he can do as long as his heart

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<sup>8</sup>"Mult grant sens a a biau querre / Et a doner sanz requerre" (ll. 35-36).

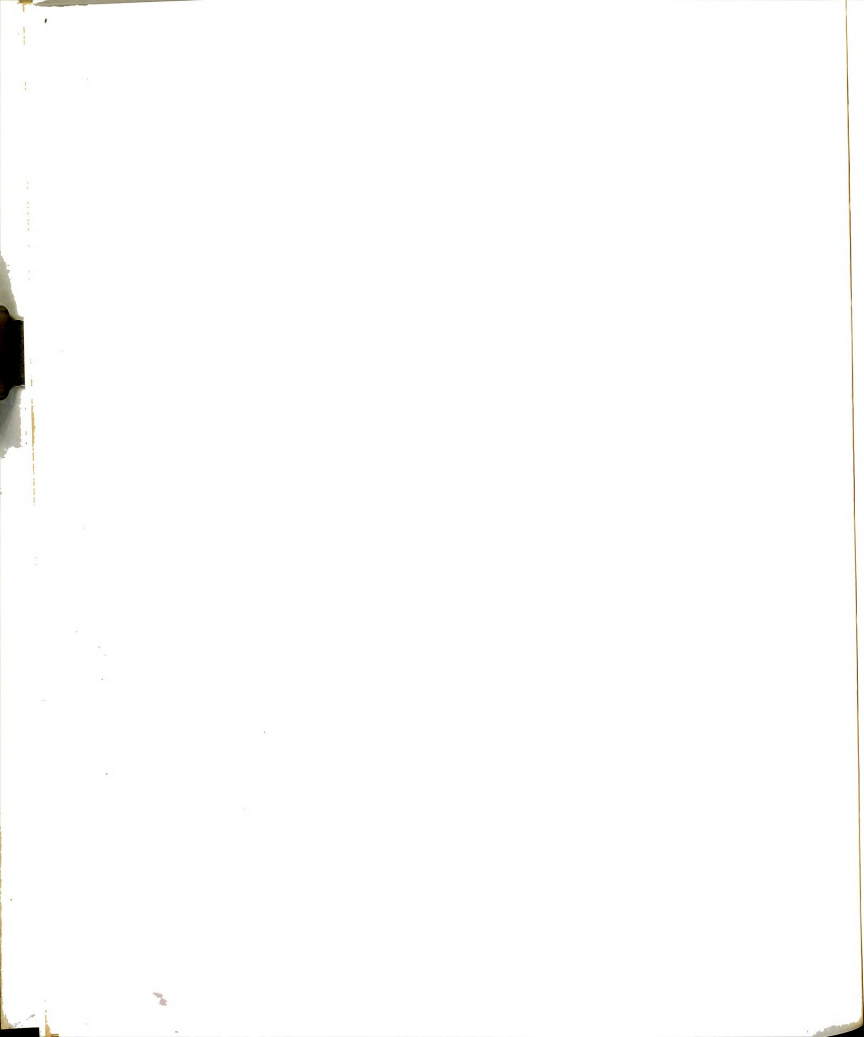


still trembles in prison. But that very prise de conscience on the part of the lover is disrupted by a more emotional outburst in which he expresses amazement at the enchantment that keeps his heart captive:

. . . le cuers en trassaille  
 En la prison, la ou vos la tenez.  
 Deus! fu ainz mès cuers si bien enchantez?  
 Nenil, certes!  
 [ll. 46-49].

This futile and, as the lover perceives it, fatal conflict between the lover's rational and emotional faculties can only be resolved by a change from the lover's present state to one which would integrate both body and heart, reason and "folie." This plea for reunion with the heart is expressed in the closing lines of stanza V just as it has been expressed, in different ways, in the closing lines of each of the previous stanzas: ". . . Mès se li cors pris fust / Avec le cuer, ja ne li despleüst" (ll. 49-50).

The love-request is not without specifically erotic overtones even though it is stated in an acceptably indirect manner. The implications are, nevertheless, that the lover would like his body as well as his heart to be one with the lady. The envoi serves as an additional compliment to the lady's beauty and reassures her that the lover is willing to suffer on her behalf, as he already has, in bearing the sweet burden of love. The chanson as a whole is a series of variations on the theme of love's prison and the



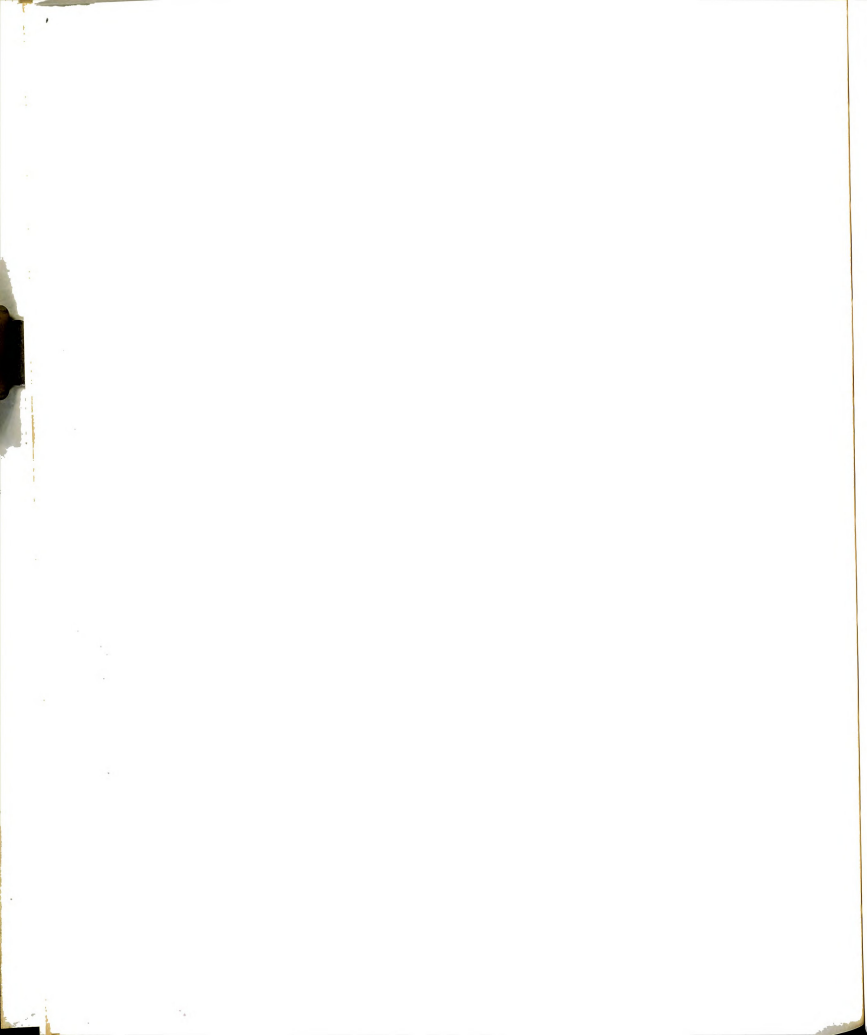
experience of dédoublement. Through the use of reiterative amplification, the poet-creator, Thibaut, varies the expression of the poet-lover's erotic request; the request itself remains constant, namely that the lover be united with his heart and with the lady.

In the unicorn poem (XXXIV) Thibaut makes use of sustained or developmental amplification of the prison theme, including all of its most essential aspects: the importance of the moment when the lover gazed upon the lady, the separation of the lover's heart from his body, and a sustained metaphor which delineates the nature of the prison of love. Absent from the unicorn poem is the notion that love is "folie" or that the lover experiences great conflict between reason and emotions. He is, on the contrary, of singleminded devotion to the lady; the dédoublement that he experiences takes on a unique character, expressed in the final lines of the last stanza.

Once again, references to medieval rhetoric will serve to clarify the structure of this chanson which deserves close analysis just as it has merited the unmitigated praise of literary historians.<sup>9</sup> Thibaut's use of sustained metaphor is consistently seen as this chanson's

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<sup>9</sup>Gustave Cohen, for example, refrains from any textual criticism, but states: "Mais des chansons d'amour, celle que je préfère est l'Unicorne," and proceeds to cite the chanson in modern French, p. 60.



most outstanding feature, but other devices as well render the poem even more effective in terms of its theme--the prison of love--and its artistry.

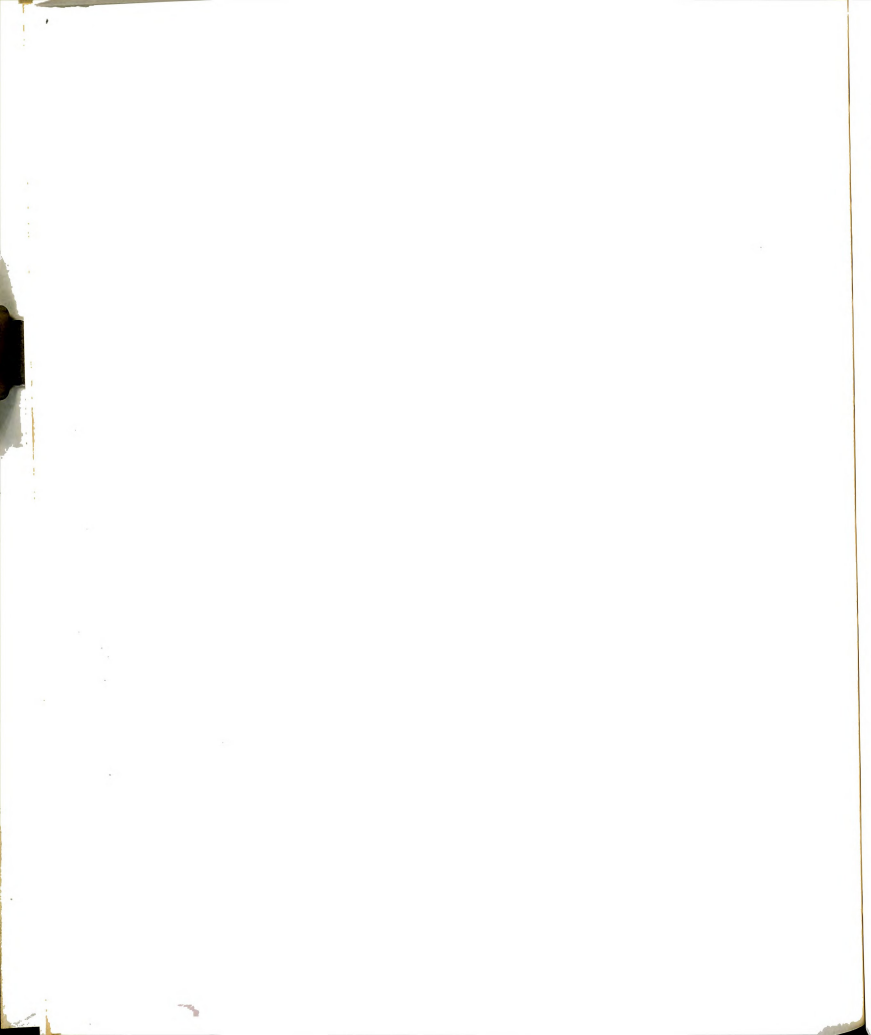
In the opening stanza Thibaut employs one of Geoffrey of Vinsauf's recommended means of amplificatio, that of an overt comparison:

A third step is comparison, made in accord with one of two laws--either in a hidden or in an overt manner. Notice that some things are joined deftly enough, but certain signs reveal the point of juncture. A comparison which is made overtly presents a resemblance which signs explicitly point out. These signs are three: the words more, less, equally.<sup>10</sup>

As has already been stated in Chapter II (pp. 71-74), the overt comparison between the lover and the unicorn has implications that go beyond the simple exposition of the unicorn story. The lover is also, by extension, a Christ figure, one who is a completely innocent victim, representing unsurpassed, selfless love. The two overt comparisons made in stanza I, "Ausi comme unicorne sui" and "Et moi ont mort d'autel senblant" also emphasize, in turn, the aspects of the theme that will be expanded in subsequent stanzas: the sight of the lady and the symbolic "death" or loss of the poet-lover's heart which is locked in Amors' prison. It may be seen, then, that through a simple exposition relating a story taken from standard bestiary

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<sup>10</sup> Geoffrey of Vinsauf, p. 25.





tradition, Thibaut draws upon comparisons that are both overt and hidden<sup>11</sup> and, at the same time, establishes the basis for the extended metaphor that is to follow.

The heart's imprisonment is directly related to the moment when the lover first gazed upon the lady. It is at that precise moment that the lover became cognizant of the phenomenon of dédoublement essential to the theme of the prison of love:

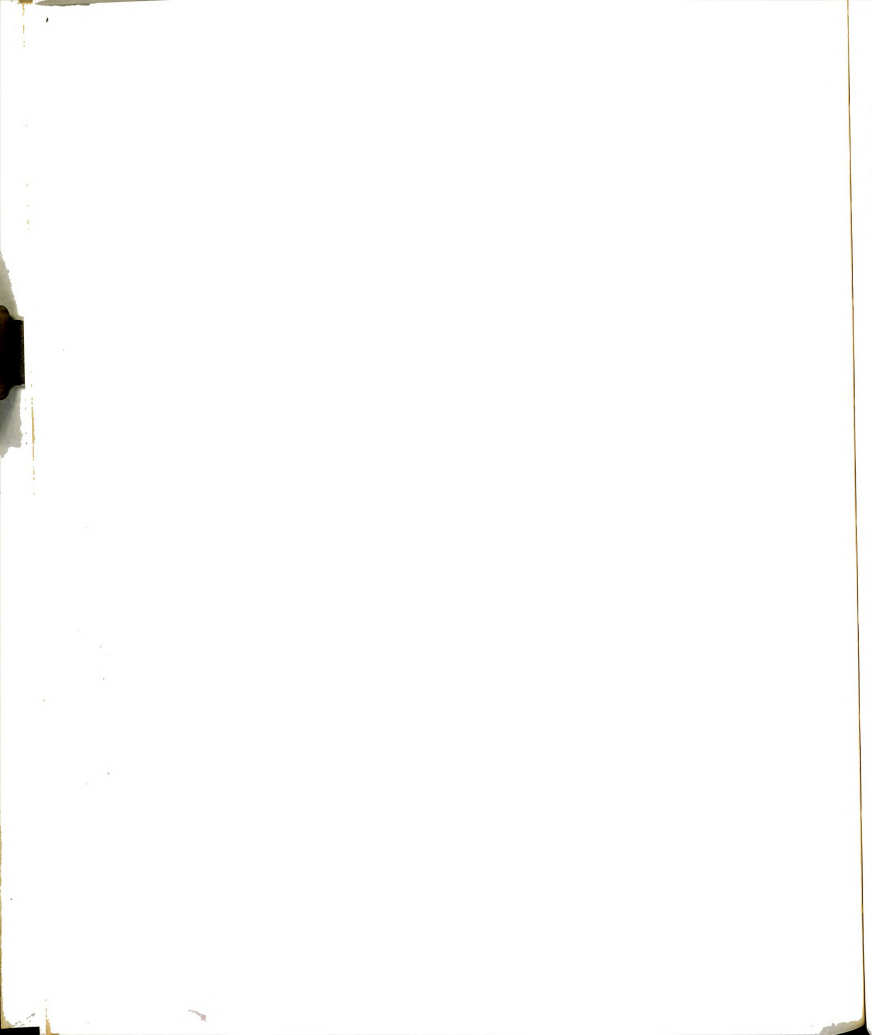
Dame, quant je devant vous fui  
Et je vous vi premierement,  
Mes cuers aloit si tressaillant  
Qu'il vous remest, quant je m'en mui.  
Lors fu menez sanz raençon  
En la douce chartre en prison . . .  
[ll. 10-15].

Sight of the lady and the lover's desire for her that was born at that moment are incorporated into the prison itself, the pillars of which are of desire ("talent," l. 16), and the doors, of beautiful sight ("biau veoir," l. 17). The chains of fair hope that bind the lover's heart suggest the sweet promise of the future as well as the lover's projected fidelity to the lady, his willingness to endure and remain steadfast for an undetermined length of time.

This brief description of the prison also conveys the paradox inherent in the courtly lover's situation. The

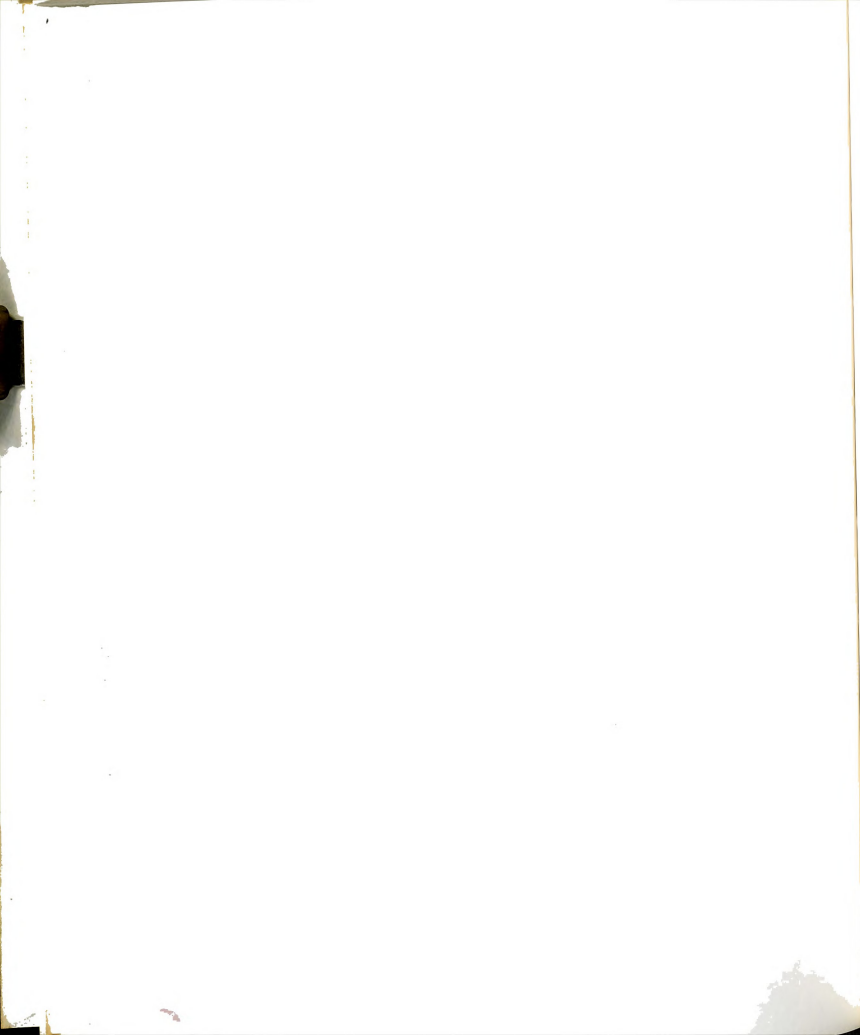
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<sup>11</sup> Geoffrey states that hidden comparisons are preferable: "This type of comparison is more artistic; its use is much more distinguished," p. 25.



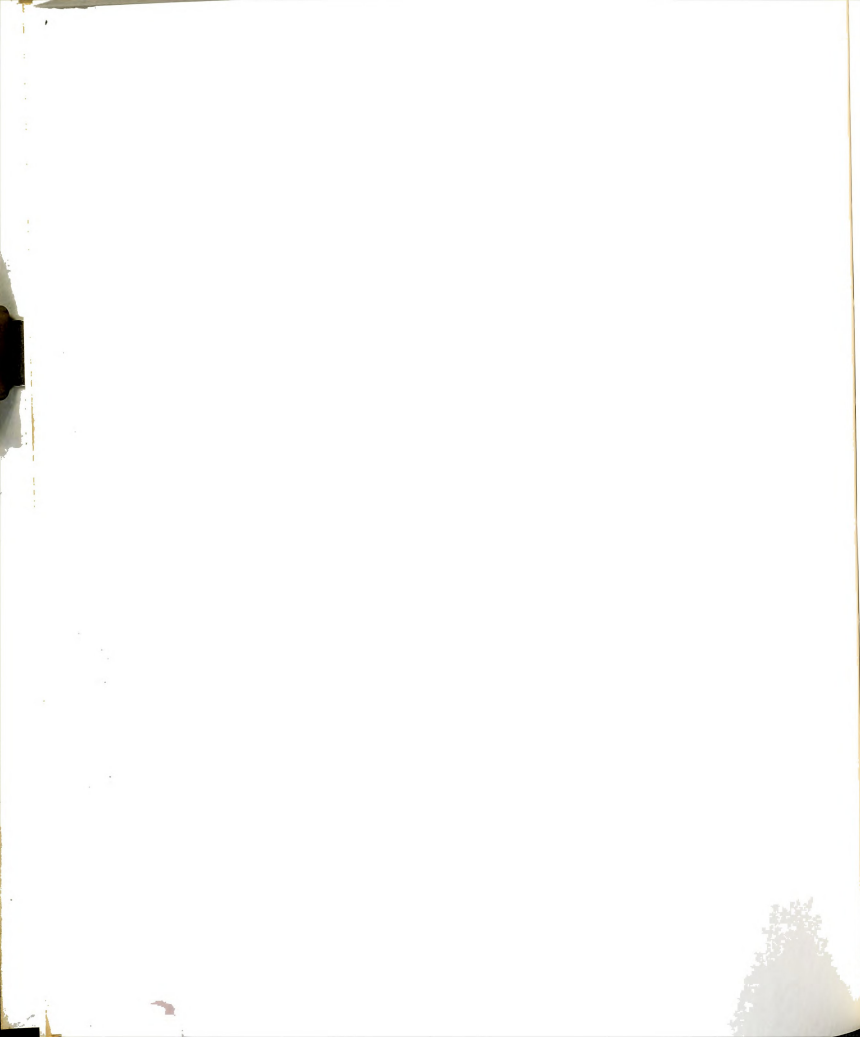
restrictive or pain-inflicting elements of the prison cell, the pillars, the heavy doors, and the chains are all tempered by qualities that compensate for the lover's suffering. The prison cell itself is sweet; its component parts are rendered less unbearable by the presence of desire, sweet sight, and hope. The quite real impact of these qualities is suggested by their reification into the concrete form of a prison and represents a transition stage from remembrance of a specific moment to withdrawal into a more subjective, private universe where the experience is transformed into a personal confrontation between the poet-lover and his emotions. As the poet-persona becomes more and more entranced by the re-experience of the moment when he first saw the lady, he perceives the prison not in terms of its concrete, structural elements--pillars, doors, and chains--but in terms of personifications that move and have distinct responsibilities and character traits. These figures, the doorkeepers of Amors' prison, dominate stanza III and reinforce the notion of paradox suggested in the second stanza:

De la chartre a la clef Amors  
 Et si i a mis trois portiers:  
 Biau Senblant a non li premiers,  
 Et Biautez cele en fet seignors;  
 Dangier a mis a l'uis devant,  
 Un ort, felon, vilain, puant  
 Qui mult est maus et pautoniers.  
 Cil troi sont et viste et hardi  
 Mult ont tost un honne saisi  
 [ll. 19-27].



In stanza III the paradox of love is suggested not by the disparity between a single item's function and its compensatory qualities [i.e., the chains that bind and yet constitute "fair" hope] but rather, by distinctions between the personified figures. The positive, desirable qualities of Biau Senblant and Biautez that suggest the moment of seeing the lady and her disposition toward the lover are offset by the much more lengthy and graphic description given to Dangier. The Dangier is presented as ort, felon, vilain, puant, maus, and pautoniers underscores the perilousness of the lover's situation. This description and the fact that even Biautez and Biau Senblant are "clever and bold" and "have seized many a man" establish thematic unity with the dramatic events of the first stanza in which the lover and the unicorn, enraptured by what they saw, suffered betrayal and death.

The ominous threat of danger, struggle, and death prevail in stanza IV as the poet-persona searches for a means of survival. Through establishment of a chiasmus-like structure composed of the theme words of the stanza, it becomes evident that, even in the face of overwhelming opposition, the poet-persona is capable of remaining steadfast, although his pose must be one of submission. The chiasmus of nouns and verbal elements is as follows:



Qui porroit sousfrir les tristors  
 Et les assauz de ces huissiers?  
 Onques Rollanz ne Oliviers  
 Ne vainquirent si granz estors;  
 Il vainquirent en combatant,  
 Mès ceus vaint on humiliant.  
Sousfrirs en est gonfanoniers;  
 [ll. 28-34].

The outer components of the chiasmus-like pattern, sousfrir and sousfrirs, enclose a battle image in which the poet-persona intimates that his case is hopeless since not even the most valiant chevaliers, Roland and Oliver, could withstand the doorkeepers' assaults. The three successive uses of vaincre--dominating the inner part of the chiasmus that receives the most emphasis--indicate a prise de conscience on the part of the lover. Vaincre in its usual, active sense, may be the way for most men--or above-average heroes like Roland and Oliver--to succeed in battle, but it is not the solution for the poet-lover. He perceives that his only recourse in his personal distress is to passivity, humility, and long-suffering. Help must come from without (merci, l. 36) rather than from his own active participation.

The poet-lover's realization and his acceptance of suffering as a standard-bearer (gonfanoniers, l. 34), in a sense, mitigate the gravely threatening nature of the three doorkeepers and dispel all fears on the part of the lover save one, that he might somehow fail in his love for the lady. It is on this subdued note of fear that the poet opens the final stanza in which the lover reaffirms his





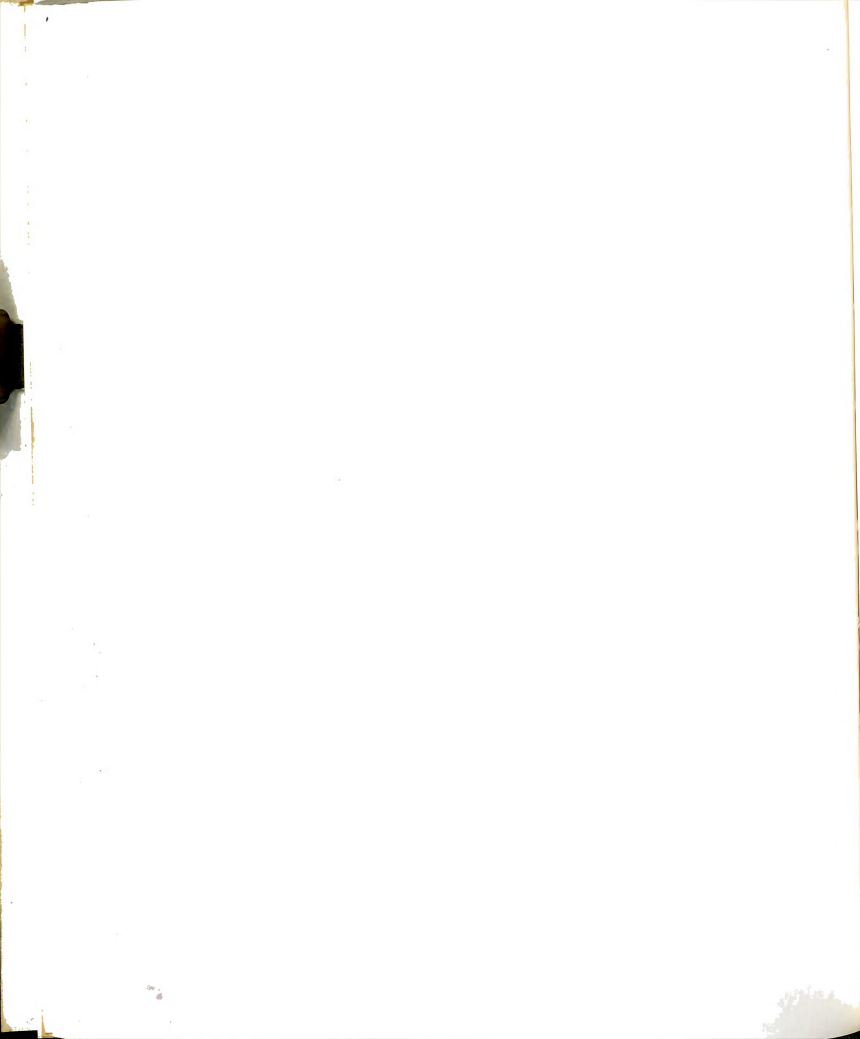
fidelity to the lady and expresses in still another way the paradox of his heart's imprisonment. The phenomenon of dédoublement takes on a unique characteristic in this chanson in that it does not indicate that the lover and his heart carry on separate, individual existences but, rather, that the heart exists simultaneously with the lady and near--or "with"--the lover. Such duality reinforces the lover's declaration of fidelity to the lady:

Ne m'en puis je partir pour rien  
 Que je n'aie le remembrer  
 Et que mes cuers ne soit adès  
 En la prison et de moi près.  
 [ll. 42-45].

The metaphor of the prison of love as a building with walls, pillars, doors, chains, and doorkeepers is replaced by the lone figure of the poet-lover, imprisoned by memory in a subjective universe where "real" existence is centered in the heart. The inability to "depart from loving," the persistence of memory, and the timelessness of the heart's imprisonment are indeed but another configuration of love's prison, one from which there is no escape save that of humbly asking for mercy, as the lover does in the envoi:

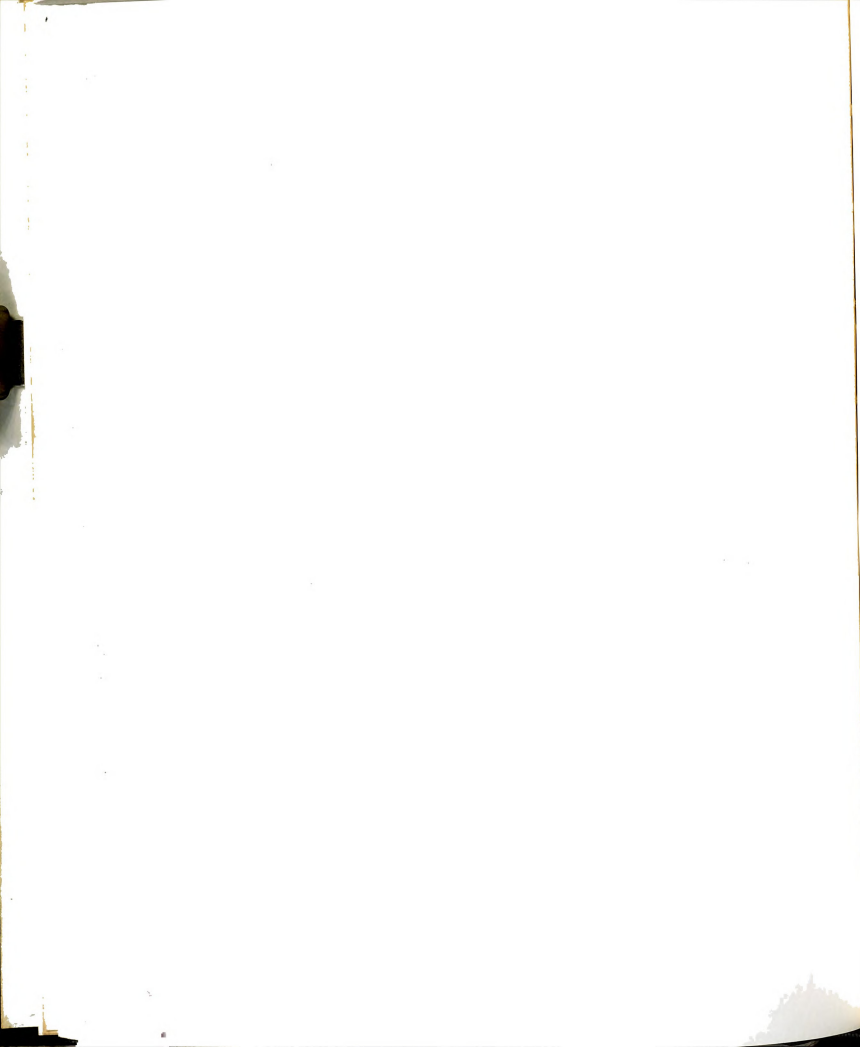
Dame, quant je ne sai guiler,  
 Merciz seroit de seson mès  
 De soustenir si greveus fès  
 [ll. 46-48].

The prison of love theme is thus amplified in a sustained manner from the first stanza of the chanson to



the last, using the unicorn legend as a point de départ. Thibaut's use of the legend incorporates the major aspects of the prison theme; the definitive change in the lover's life upon seeing the lady, the joy that he felt upon beholding her beauty, and the ultimate danger--loss of his heart, captivity, imprisonment, and "death"--inherent in such a situation. The brief description of the physical and compensatory, desirable aspects of Love's prison, the subsequent appearance of personified qualities that threaten the lover and the final realization that the poet-persona is held captive by his own desire to serve the lady and his incapacity to forget her, present the most complete and coherent development of the theme in any single chanson by Thibaut. All that can be found in any other chansons are short references to the prison theme which may serve to illustrate Thibaut's proclivity toward versatility and his tendency to develop a single theme in a multitude of ways.

As has already been stated in the opening pages of this chapter, the paralysis that the lover often experiences, his inability to overcome emotion with reason, and the notion that even hope is a trap are variations upon the theme of the prison of love. This tendency toward paralysis, a psychological manifestation of the theme of the prison of love, serves as a constant reminder that it is the lover's



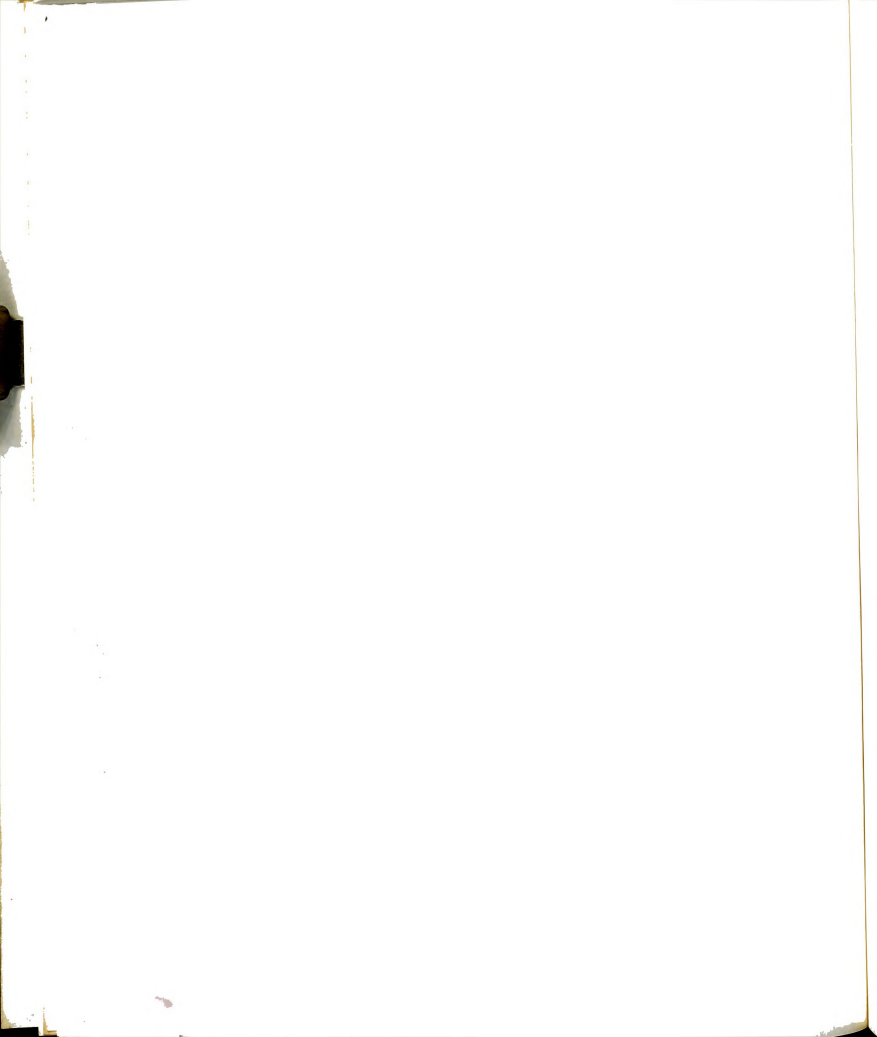
own emotions that constitute the prison walls. In chanson XXXV, speaking of the cruelty and indifference of his lady, the poet-persona states:

Puis que pitiez est faillie,  
 Bien m'en devroie partir;  
 Mes sens m'en semont et prie,  
 Mès mes cuers nel veut sousfrir,  
 Ainz me het por li servir;  
 Tant aime sa seignorie  
 [XXXV, ll. 19-24].

The conflict between mind and heart, although it does not take on the definitive aspects of dédoublement, is clearly present, as is the basic inner conflict of the poet-persona. The paralyzing, prison-like dilemma of self-deprecation and the inability to break from the lady's sovereignty cannot be resolved by the lover. Since he is further incapacitated by fear which prevents him from addressing the lady directly, the lover's only wish is to retreat from reality and take refuge in sleep and in dreams wherein he might hold his lady "all his life":

Ma grant joie en dormant iere  
 Si granz que nel puis conter.  
 En veillant ne truis maniere  
 De ma dolor conforter  
 [XXXV, ll. 37-40].

The lover's ultimate wish is, of course, that Amors would reverse the situation so that he could forget her while sleeping and be with her in his waking state, but such wishful thinking does little to alter his basic situation of unrequited desire.



Chanson VII as well is marked by feelings of powerlessness, inability to speak to the lady, and conflict between what the lover does and what he feels he ought to do. In this chanson, however, the lover does not seek refuge in dreams; he can only remain in a fixed posture of adoration, supplication, and endless waiting.

Although reason has been extinguished in his heart (. . . mon sens el cuer estaindre, l. 18), the lover's rational faculties are still operative, making his torment even greater. He realizes that one ought to rid oneself of desperate sorrow ("Dolonte desesperee / Doit on geter puer," ll. 8-9), but he is unable to do so. These lines are but one of a series of statements expressing the poet-persona's incapacity to change his situation, to alter his stance as attendant lover:

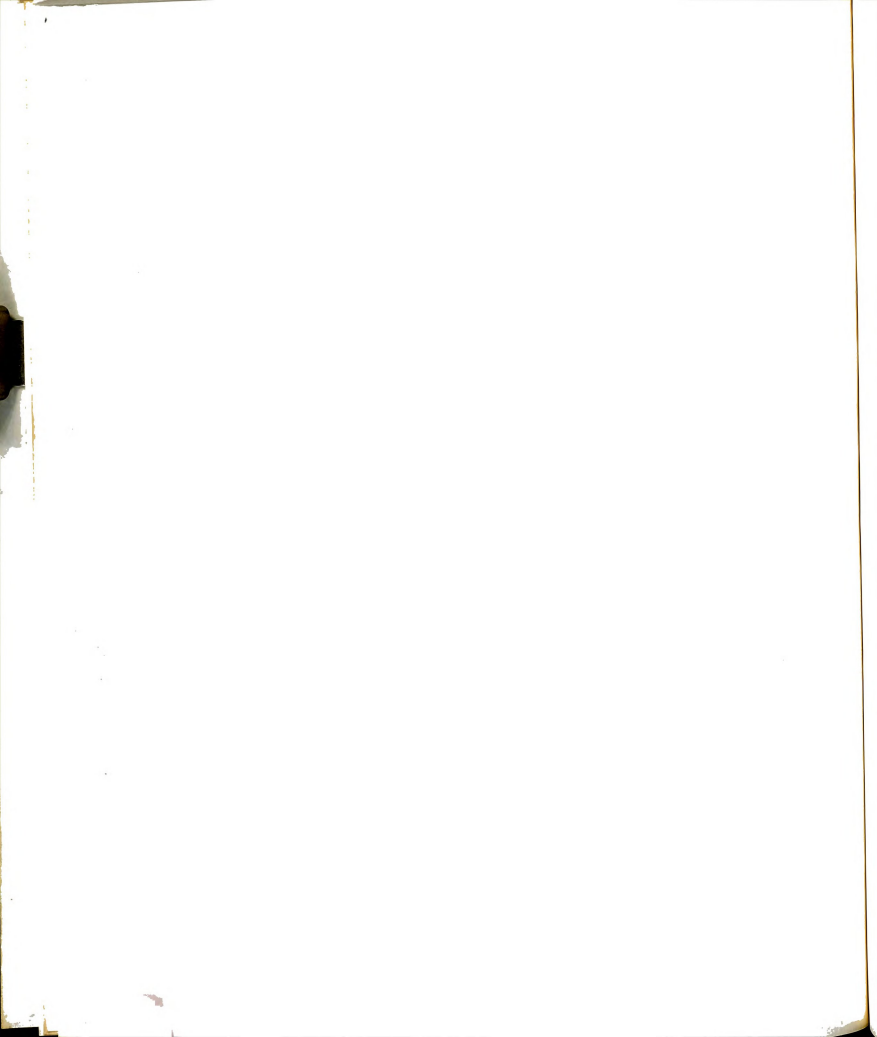
Une dolor enossee  
S'est dedenz mon cuer  
Que je ne puis oster fuer  
Por nule riens qui soit nee  
[ll. 1-4].

Dame, ainz ne m'osai conplaindre . . .  
[l. 15].

. . . n'ai pouvoir  
De vous dire mon voloir [ll. 19-20].

Bien voi que n'i puis ataindre  
Par nule mandement  
N'en qier, voir, parler avant  
Ne aillors ne m'en vueil plaindre;  
[ll. 22-25].

N'os entrer en son repaire [l. 29].





Such reiterations are consistently followed by a recognition on the part of the poet-lover that his only true recourse is passivity and waiting, a posture adopted also by the victim-lover of the unicorn poem whose standard-bearer in love's battle was suffering. Although it does not culminate in an explicit formulation of the prison of love theme, the articulation of the lover's immobility in chanson VII is but a modulation of that very theme. The suffering of love, dolors d'amors is, in a sense, inseparable from the notion that love is a prison from which the ideal courtly lover cannot escape, even though at times reason tells him that love is folly.

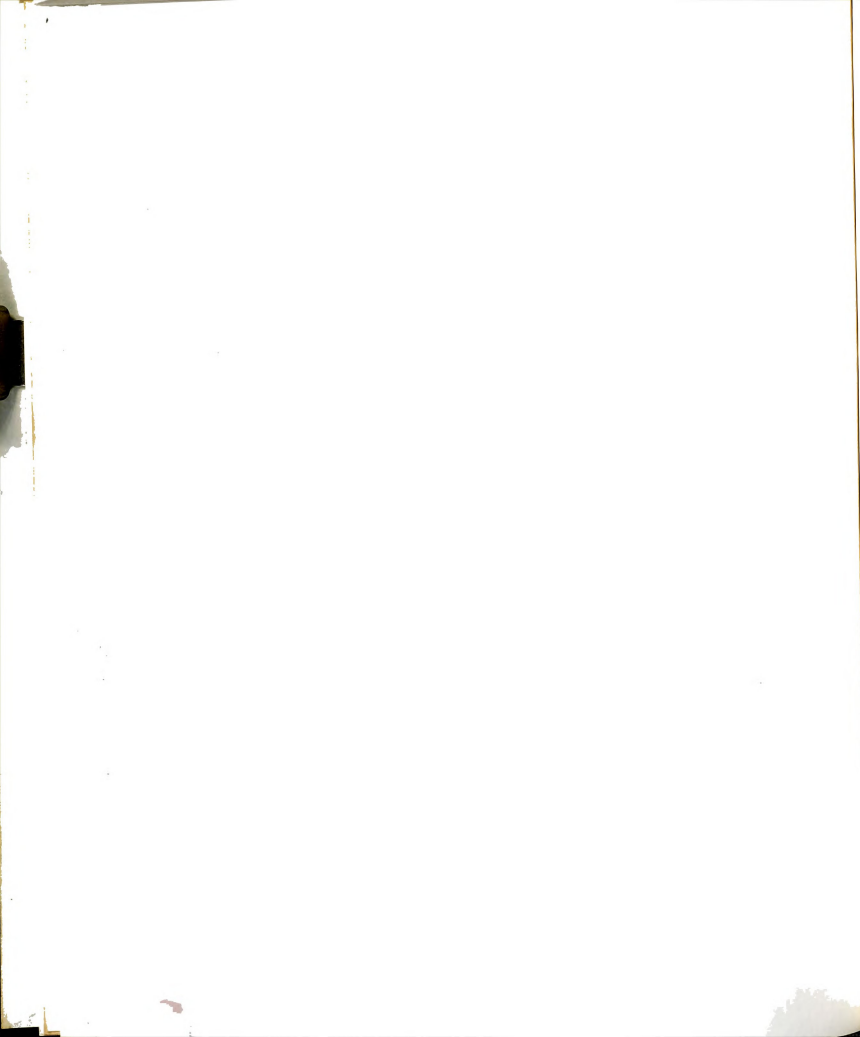
Still another variation of the imprisoned lover is the portrayal of him as a bird in a trap:

Enviz prent nus nul oiselet au broi  
 Q'il ne mehaint ou ocie ou afole,  
 Et Amors prent tout autretel conroi  
 De mult de ceus qu'ele tient a s'escole  
 [XIV, ll. 33-36].

It is not only the lover, however, who is or should be like a snared bird. In another chanson the poet-persona, addressing his jongleur in the envoi, asks him to sing as persistently--and presumably as loud--as a bird in a trap:

Chançon va t'en droit a Raoul noncier  
 Qu'il serve Amors et face bel acueil  
 Et chant souvent com oiselez en breuil  
 [XI, ll. 39-41].

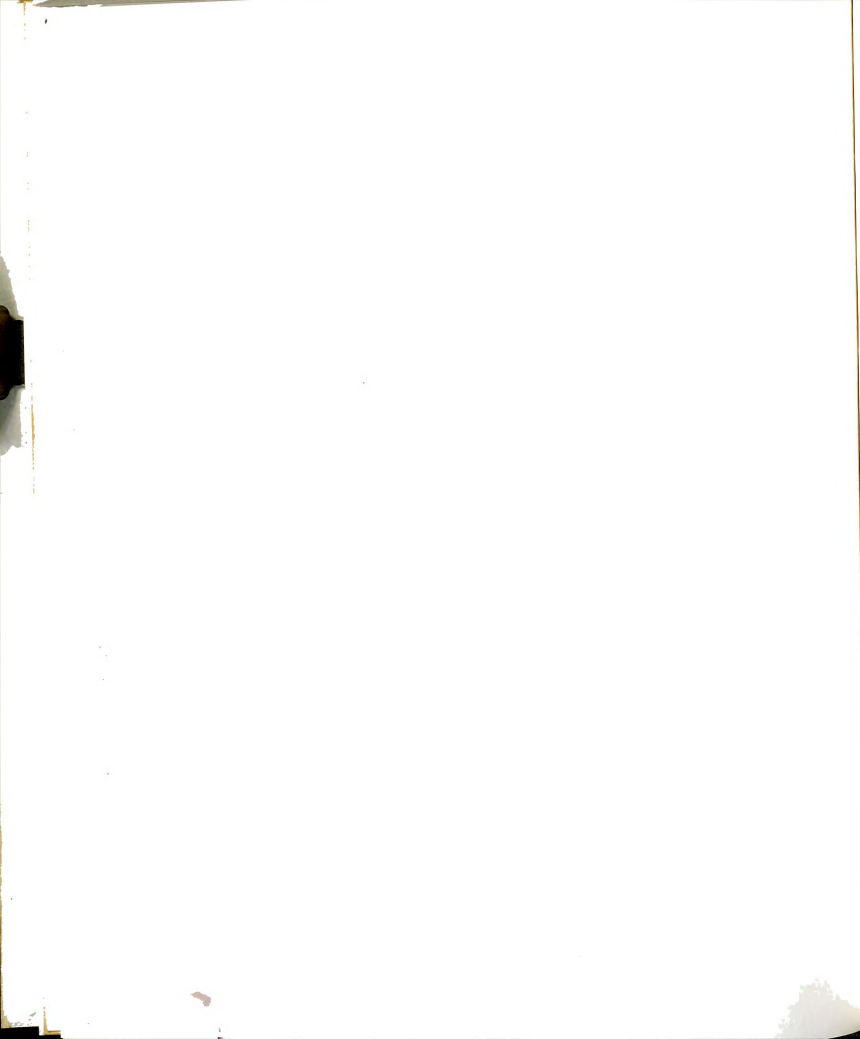
These two minor variations upon the prison theme, although interesting, are not as insightful as Thibaut's



more manipulative uses of the theme of the prison. Not only does Thibaut stress the lady's responsibility toward her prisoner, he also at times implies that the lady herself is, in a sense, imprisoned. In chanson XVII the lady, described as a beautiful white deer, dwells in a retreat that is guarded by wolves, the "felon envïeus," who cause great hardship for the courtly. This chanson indeed contains the most striking images of hardship for the courtly lover found in Thibaut's repertoire, images whose function is dual. The burning village, the dying knight, the desperate hunter and the starving wolf all graphically convey the intense despair experienced by the rejected lover. Implicit also is the notion that the lady-as-deer may also be faced with imminent death, surrounded by her ferocious natural enemies, the wolf-losengiers. Would it not be to her advantage to rescue her true lover and thereby protect herself from ultimate betrayal and destruction by the deceitful courtiers who have only false love to offer her?

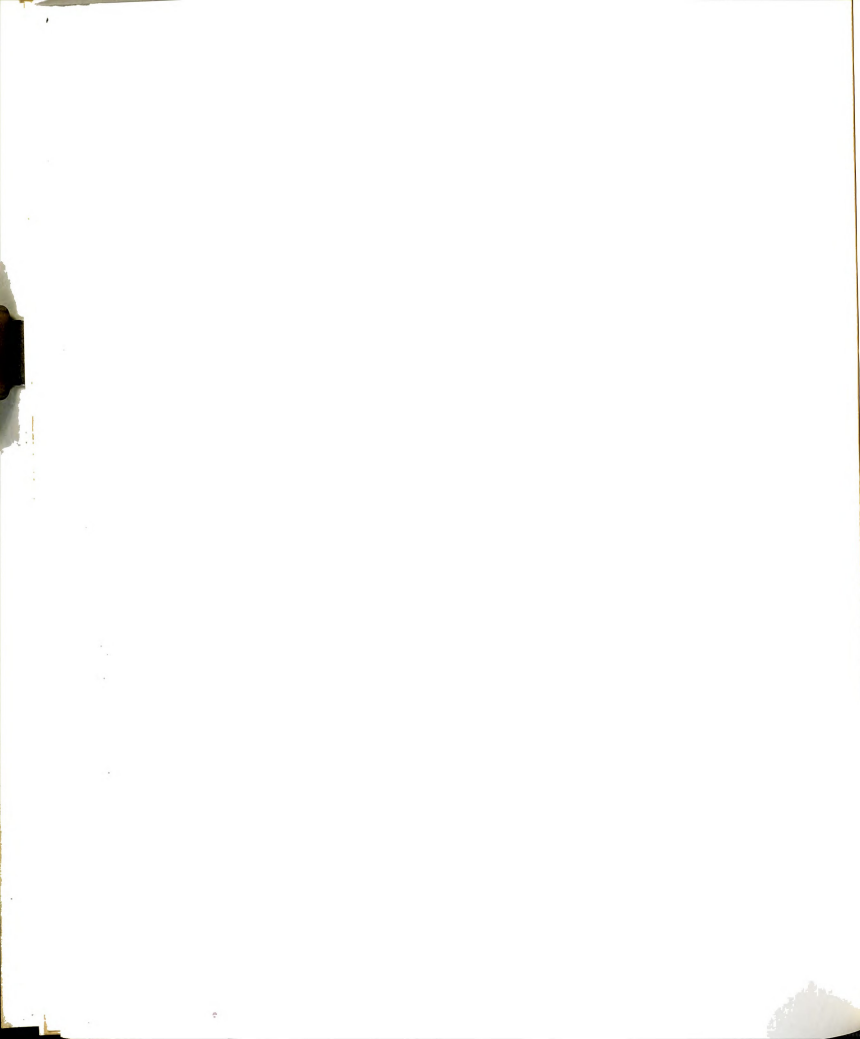
The implication that the lady may suffer from her own sort of isolation is even clearer in chanson X:

Se je ne puis vers vos aler souvent,  
 Ne vos poist pas, bele, cortoise et sage,  
 Que je me dot forment de male gent  
 Qui devinant avront fait maint damage;  
 Et si je faz d'ailleurs amer senblant,  
 Sachiez que c'est sanz cuer et sanz talent  
 [X, ll. 10-15].



The situation created in this stanza suggests a reversal of the usual rôles of lover and lady. Once again it is the villainous male gent that prevent the lover from seeing the lady, but the suggestion that this separation is painful for the lady as well as for the lover is novel and unique among the chansons of Thibaut. Implicit also is that the lover has the freedom to "faire senblant d'amer ailleurs" even though, of course, his sole motivation for doing so is to deceive the losengiers. Reassurances of his fidelity to the lady serve to offset somewhat the suggestion that--Amors forbid!--the lover can take advantage of superficial liaisons in the guise of a higher ideal, that of distracting those who might wish to slander him or the lady. Such a declaration on the part of the poet-lover emphasizes nonetheless that the lady might do well to grant him mercy and reward his unfailing fidelity to her.

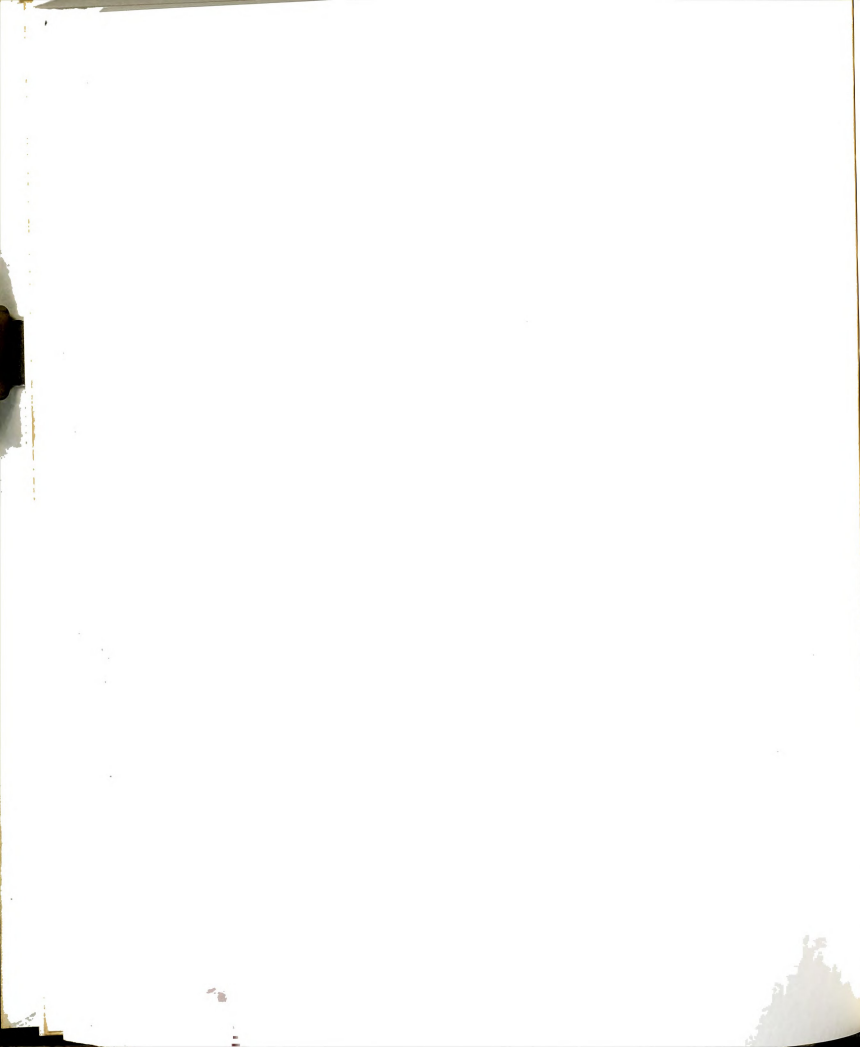
The suggestion of manipulation on the part of the poet-persona, however subtle it might be, is yet another manifestation of what might once have been considered atypical of the grand chant courtois. Passivity, steadfastness, fidelity and long-suffering--characteristics attributed to the stereotyped courtly lover--indeed constitute the lover's prison but Thibaut's poet-persona is also capable of a reverse application of the prison theme.



This reverse application constitutes still another modulation of the prison of love theme but, more importantly, reveals the somewhat protean nature of the poet-persona created by Thibaut. This persona, whether or not he represents an extension of Thibaut himself, is nevertheless quite similar to Frappier's description of the poet: "En somme, la personnalité de Thibaut de Champagne se révèle complexe, un peu énigmatique, difficile à saisir."<sup>12</sup> The poet-persona as well is at times "difficult to grasp"; refusing to be consistently the one who is imprisoned, he seeks to give the lady a different perspective on her own situation. This element of persuasiveness--manipulation if you will--is indicative of that which characterizes another major portion of Thibaut's work, his debats and jeux-partis. The authoritative voice of Thibaut as a poet, interacting with fellow trouvères and fictitious personages as well, will be traced first in the chansons d'amour and then in the above-mentioned forms of amoebean verse.

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<sup>12</sup> J. Frappier, La Poésie lyrique en France aux XII<sup>e</sup> et XIII<sup>e</sup> siècles (Paris: C.D.U., 1966), p. 175.



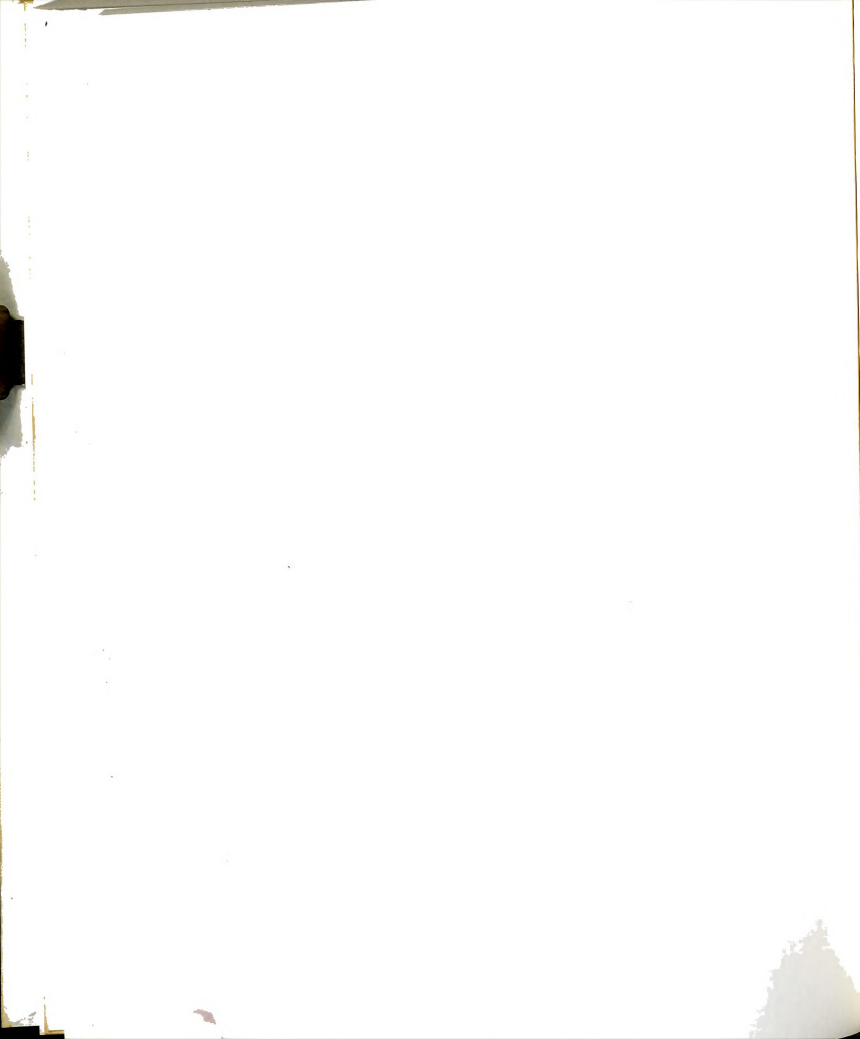


#### CHAPTER IV

##### BONS ROIS THIEBAUT, SIRE, CONSEILLIEZ MOI

The voice of Thibaut's poet-persona in the chansons d'amour has, at times, taken on an insistent tone that ranges from one of gentle persuasion to outright defiance and manipulation. This assertive tone is also evident in the chansons through the presence of an extensive series of statements that might be called "the precepts of love according to Thibaut." The authoritative nature of these statements, along with some of the bolder expressions of the poet-lover already discussed in previous chapters, serve to unite medieval genres which are usually considered quite distinct from one another, the chansons and the poems in dialogue form, the jeux-partis and débats. When one considers that the self-assuredness exhibited by the rois Thiebaut of the amoebean verse is but an amplification of the occasional assertiveness exerted by the poet-persona of the chansons, one finds that the major distinction between the genres is only their respective subject matter.

The poet-persona of the chansons, for the most part, never deviates from the norms of acceptable courtly behavior. He functions within the established limits, tempering his



more daring statements with reassurance of fidelity, steadfastness, and love for the lady. The erotic love request is couched in acceptable metaphorical terms. In the game of the jeux-partis, however, explicit discussions of sex and the joys of physical embraces are fair play; the lady no longer is a distant, unattainable ideal. In the jeux-partis and in the débats Thibaut speaks with self-confident authority, a tone which should not seem surprising or incongruent with that of the poet-persona of the chansons who, as faithful servant of Amors, outlines what one must do to prove himself worthy to remain in Love's service.

It is interesting to note that in the Southern troubadour lyric the distinctions between what was acceptable subject matter for the canso (the Southern equivalent of the Northern chanson) and the joc partit (jeu-parti) did not bear the same differentiation as later developments in the North. As René Nelli has pointed out, many troubadour lyrics reflect sentiments that are much more explicitly erotic than those of the refined courtly lyric. He terms such sentiments as "amour chevalresque," the kind of love

qui semble avoir été pratiqué, dans la vie réelle, par les princes et leurs nobles amies. . . . Bien que ses démarches fussent 'idéalisés', c'est-à-dire rattachés de quelque manière à la Valeur, il demeurerait fort réaliste.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>René Nelli, L'Érotique des troubadours (Toulouse: Privat, 1963), p. 63.



Such love, Nelli states, is "relativement chaste--dans la mesure où il est fidélité à une seule femme--mais non point continent."<sup>2</sup>

Evidence of amour chevalresque in the canso or love lyric dates back as far as the time of Guillaume IX d'Aquitaine (1071-1127). In the poetry of "le premier troubadour" one finds expressions of both idealized, courtly love and of desire which is explicitly sexual. In the canso "Companho, tant ai agutz d'avols conres" ("Companions, I have had so much miserable fare"), the authoritative voice of the poet-persona is heard proclaiming the notorious "leis de con":

Pero dirai vos de con cals es sa leis,  
Com sel hom que mal n'a fait e peitz n'a pres:  
si c'autra res en merma qui.n pana, e cons e creis  
[ll. 10-12].<sup>3</sup>

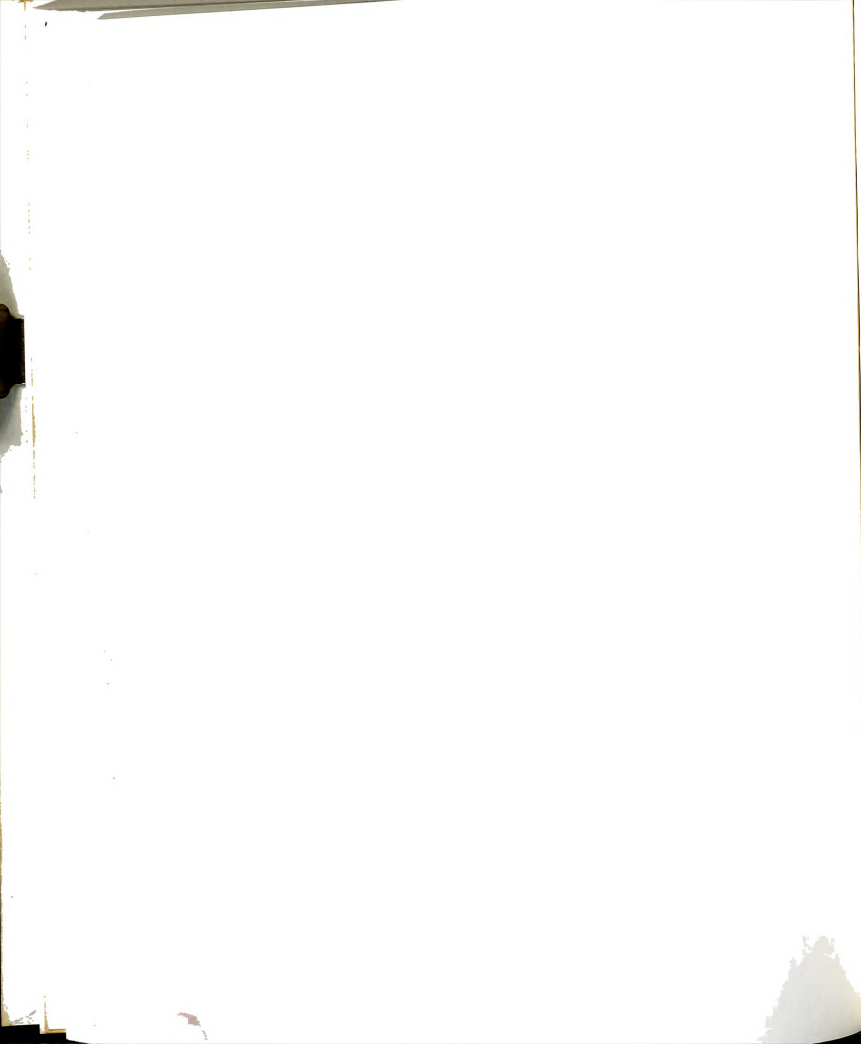
In other cansos by Guillaume, women are portrayed as horses to be mounted or as creatures of insatiable sexual appetite,<sup>4</sup> and love is a dice game at which the poet-persona never loses. He proclaims to be an old reliable master at this particular game of chance, knowing "how to play, on a

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<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 64.

<sup>3</sup>Translation: "But I shall tell you about cunt, what its law is, / as one who has done badly in this matter and suffered worse: / as other things diminish when you take from them, cunt increases. F. Goldin, Lyrics of the Troubadours and Trouvères (Garden City, N.J.: Anchor-Doubleday, 1973), pp. 22-23.

<sup>4</sup>See cansos 1 and 4 in Goldin, pp. 20-23 and 26-33.



cushion, every winning roll."<sup>5</sup> Although the lady challenges her "opponent" in terms that are both enticing and unnerving, he does not fail to rise to the occasion:

Mas elha.m dis un reprovier:  
 'Don, vostre dat son menudier,  
 et ieu revit vos a doblhier.'  
 Dis ieu: 'Qui.m dava Monpeslier,  
 non er laissatz.'  
 E leviey un pauc son taulier  
 ab ams mos bratz.

E quant l'aic levat to taulier  
 empeis los datz,  
 el'h duy foron cairavallier  
 e.l terz plombatz.

E fi'ls ferir al toulier  
 E fon joguatz  
 [ll. 50-62].<sup>6</sup>

Both in terms of subject matter--the "leis de con" and the sexual game of dice--and in the portrayal of women as steeds to be tamed, Guillaume's cansos present material that is

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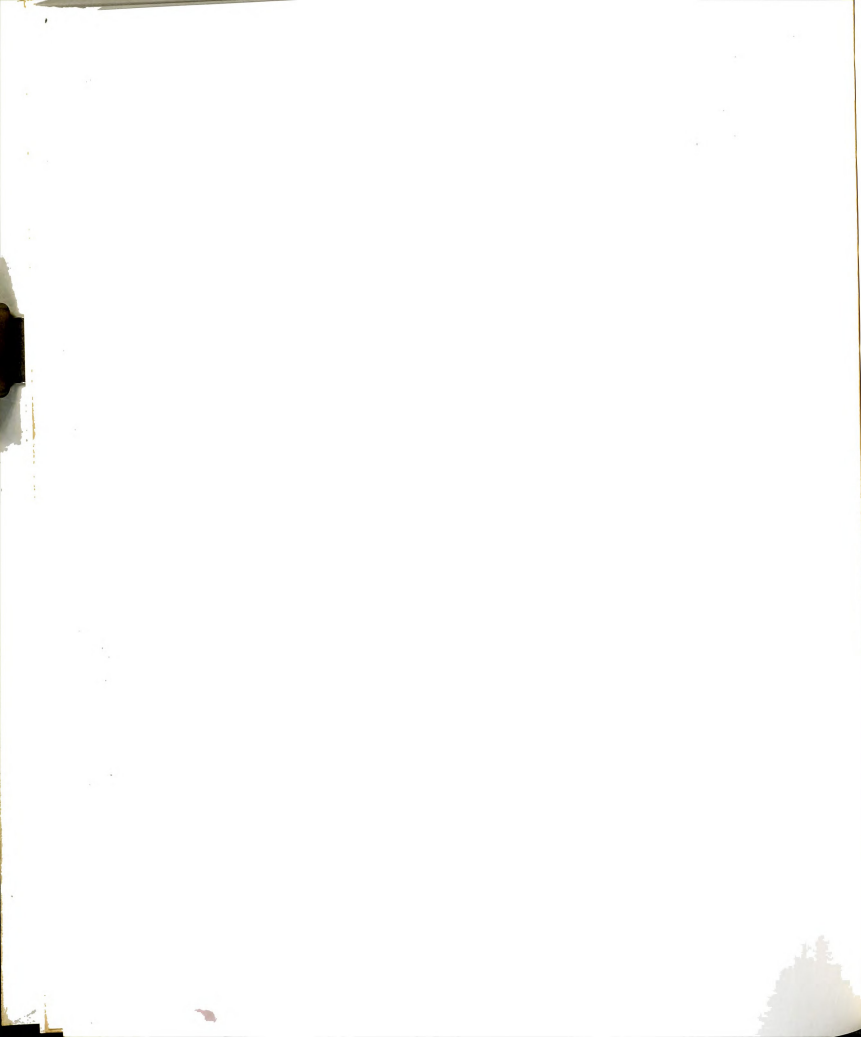
<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 35, l. 25.

<sup>6</sup>Translation:

"But she gave me this reproach:  
 'My Lord, your dice are too small,  
 I challenge you to start again.'  
 I said, 'If they gave me Montpellier,  
 I shall not fail.'  
 And I raised her gaming table a little  
 with my two arms.

And when I had raised the gaming table  
 I threw the dice,  
 and two of them rolled,  
 and the third sank.

and I made them strike that table hard,  
 and it was played" (ibid., pp. 36-37).





entirely foreign to the corresponding lyrics (chansons) by Thibaut. It is only the latter's jeux-partis that explicitly sexual matters are discussed and women are seen not as unattainable but as creatures of flesh and blood who are far from being untouchable.

In L'Érotique des troubadours Nelli accounts for the contrasting points of view expressed in Guillaume's cansos by explaining that the more chevalresque attitude toward women and sexual matters corresponded to the actual life style of the Southern haute société:

Au temps de Guillaume IX, la haute société ne paraissait faire grand cas ni des vertus pré-nuptiales . . . ni, surtout, des vertus conjugales: les maris trompaient leurs femmes et les femmes, leurs maris, soit au nom d'un franc naturalisme barbare, soit, ce qui est plus grave, au nom de certains principes chevalresques à peine élaborés. . . . L'adultère--sans aucune trace d'idéalisation--était passé dans les moeurs aristocratiques.<sup>7</sup>

This point of view is substantiated by Goldin's study revealing that Guillaume's more bawdy cansos are composed with their performance in front of his audience of fellow chevaliers in mind.<sup>8</sup>

What Nelli views as the more courtly side of Guillaume IX--the lyrics in which love is less physical in nature and in which the poet willingly submits to the

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<sup>7</sup>Nelli, p. 81.

<sup>8</sup>Goldin, pp. 5-19.



lady's sovereignty--is explained, he states, by the influence of Arabic sources upon the Southern poets. Only in the Spanish Arabic lyrics, Nelli asserts, is it acceptable for men of high social status to submit themselves to a woman's dominance. Since no direct Arabic influence upon Guillaume can be documented, Nelli suggests that

Guillaume IX aurait donc pu ignorer la poésie arabe, n'avoir jamais entendu chanter de poèmes d'amour: une seule expédition en Espagne, le simple récit d'un voyageur, aurait suffi à le renseigner sur la façon dont les princes arabes entendaient l'amour, et à lui révéler que d'aussi grands seigneurs que lui se gardaient bien de traiter leurs maîtresses comme des 'cavales', mais qu'ils affectaient, au contraire, de les servir comme s'ils eussent été leurs esclaves.<sup>9</sup>

However tenuous such an explanation might be, the fact remains that both chevalresque and courtly tendencies may be found in Guillaume's lyrics, but in subsequent developments the idea of love expressed in the canso reflects courtly ideals to a greater and greater extent, and love which is seen as a chevalric, sexual sport gradually becomes the domain of those forms of poetry which are designed purely for amusement, the joc partit or jeu-parti and the débat.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>Nelli, pp. 101-102.

<sup>10</sup> The gradual elimination of chevalresque sentiments from the Southern canso is discussed in Nelli and Lavaud, Les Troubadours, t. II (Bruges: Desclée de Brouwer, 1966), pp. 19-23. An examination of the Recueil general des jeux-partis français reveals that, although courtly themes are

100-10-11  
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In Thibaut's chansons the authoritative voice of the poet-persona is heard proclaiming not the "leis de con" but the precepts of true love, "bone amor." Through the use of generalized sententiae<sup>11</sup> and statements that are more limited, applicable only to the particular situation of the poet-lover, Thibaut's work might be seen as one in which, as in the Roman de la rose, "l'art d'Amors est toute enclose." Besides expressing the rules for true lovers, the authoritative statements made by Thibaut's poet-persona often serve as an effort toward rationalizing irrational suffering, or toward convincing the lady that she also should act according to certain rules, namely that her proper rôle is to reward the true lover for his suffering. Still another function of the authoritative statement in Thibaut's poetry is to delineate models of comportment by

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discussed and courtly behavior is advocated by many participants in the jeux, many deal with alternatives that are specifically uncourtly or bawdy and, in fact, two of the jeux are labeled by the editors as "jeux-partis orduriers" (nos. CLXXIV and CLXXV). Such subject matter would never be admissible in the Northern chanson of Thibaut's epoch. See A. Langfors, A. Jeanroy, and L. Brandin, Recueil général des jeux-partis français, tt. I and II (Paris: S.A.T.F., 1926).

<sup>11</sup> Sententiae are of two types: "It may mean, first, an authoritative pronouncement on some general issue, in the form of a duly acknowledged quotation from a recognized auctor. . . . Alternatively, sententia may mean a 'pointed, terse saying, embodying a general truth in a few words.'" P. Boyde, Dante's Style in His Lyric Poetry (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), pp. 306-307. The sententiae in Thibaut's lyrics are of the latter classification.

Author  
Title  
Subject  
Date  
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which the true lover may be distinguished from the false,  
a problem that plagued both troubadours and trouvères since:

courtliness as a moral condition is invisible;  
as a form of behavior it can be aped by anyone,  
including those rivals from whom the poet wants  
to be distinguished. The poet and his enemies  
all talk and act alike; and these enemies are,  
by birth, entitled to enter the lady's field of  
vision and pay homage to her. How can she,  
judging from the distance of her perfection,  
distinguish the one sincere Tweedeldum from all  
those phony Tweedledees? It would be hard to  
do in any circumstance, but it is nearly impos-  
sible when all one has to judge by is the poet's  
song. For the conventions of the troubadour lyric  
were not such as to encourage what we would call a  
personal style.<sup>12</sup>

Thibaut, however, seems to have been the target of  
a rather specific accusation that did not apply to poets of  
more humble origins, namely that his lady is surrounded by  
men who constantly tell her: "Dame, on vos veut guiler; /  
Ja par amors n'amera riches hom" (XXIX, ll. 13-14).  
Thibaut's response consists of a quick denunciation of such  
"losengier felon" and the assertion that, on the contrary,  
"he who has more must be more careful in love" ("qui plus  
a, melz doit amer garder," l. 16). The problem still  
remains, however; the lady is surrounded by many who, unlike  
the poet-lover, entreat her "boldly, with false hearts."  
The poet-persona, even though he is a "riches hom" of high  
status, dares not act in such an audacious manner; such is

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<sup>12</sup> Goldin, p. 109.





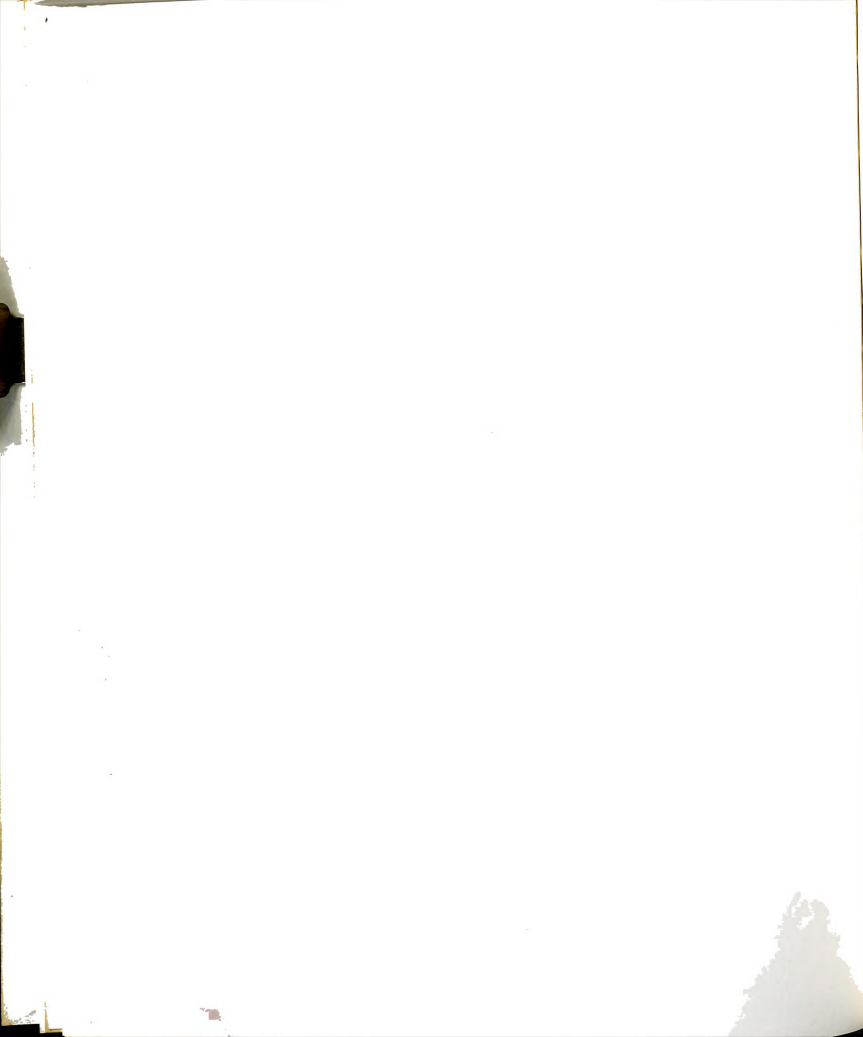
not the way for a fin ami. He has only his song to offer and the hope that the lady will recognize that he sings and loves with a true and loyal heart.

In the face of such a predicament it seems likely--and is indeed true--that many of the precepts of love found in Thibaut's lyrics have to do with distinguishing true lovers from the "vilain" and the "truant" and emphasize as well the superior order of nobility bestowed by Amors that supersedes all earthly titles and wealth.

The contrast between feudal authority and the power wielded by Amors is clearly defined in chanson XXVII:

Empereor ne roi n'ont nul pouvoir  
 Envers Amors, ice vous vueil prouver:  
 Il puënt bien doner de leur avoir,  
 Terres et fiez, et mesfez pardonner,  
 Mès Amors puet honme de mort garder  
     Et doner joie qui dure,  
     Plaine de bone aventure  
 [ll. 1-7].

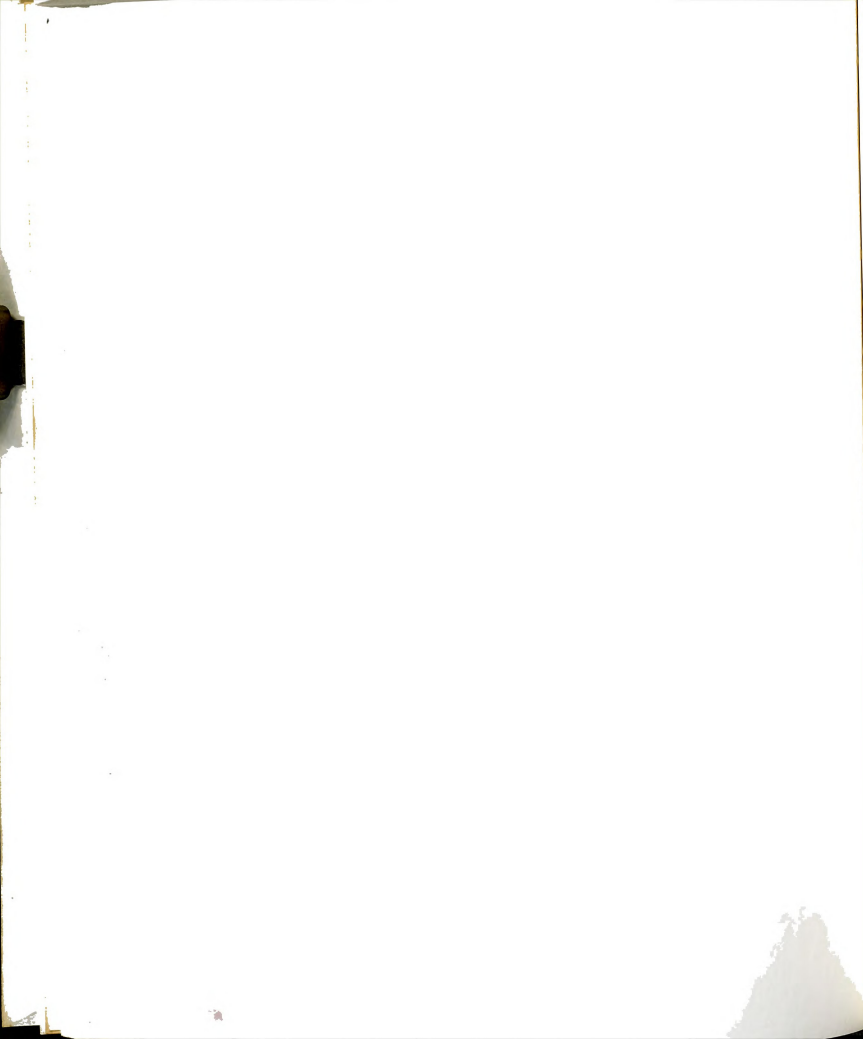
Through a reference to the trouvère Raoul de Soissons in the envoi of the poem, Wallensköld has established that chanson XXVII was probably written some time after Thibaut became heir to the throne of Navarre in 1234. If so, then the "proof" demonstrated by the poet is doubly effective; he speaks as an initiate to the ways of love and as one who himself carries the title of king and can discount it as worthless.



Amors' power over figurative death--the emotional death of being excluded from love's service and rejected by the lady--and Amors' ability to grant the greatest good of all, everlasting joy, indicates that the true lover must adopt a radically new system of values or way of viewing the world if he is to prove himself worthy. He must distinguish himself from the "vilaine gent" in many ways, but particularly by realizing that Amors is the supreme lord and that only Amors:

. . . fet bien un homme melz valoir,  
 Que nus fors li ne porroit amender;  
 Le grant desir done du douz vouloir  
 Tel que nus hons ne puet autre penser.  
 Seur toute riens doit on Amors amer  
 [ll. 8-12].

Amors is, in a sense, the sovereign lord of a new nobility, one in which he bestows, not lands and fiefs, but joy, desire, and sweet inclination that is so delightful that it displaces all other thought. The maxim "Seur toute riens doit on Amors amer" makes use of the dual meaning of "amer" to convey both the nature of this new order of nobility and the reciprocal relationship it implies. The new hierarchy is based on loving (amer) and upon service, for the word "amer", in a feudal sense, indicates the reciprocal relationship of service and protection promised by vassal and lord respectively. It is the latter application of amer that justifies the lover's subsequent accusation that his



lord, Amors, does not grant the recompense that he owes  
his lawful vassal:

S'Amors vosist guerredoner autant  
Conme ele puet, mult fust ses nons a droit,  
Mès el ne veut, dont j'ai le cuer dolent,  
Qu'ensi me tient sanz guerredon destroit;  
Et je sui cil, quels que la fins en soit,  
Qui a li servir s'otroie,  
Empris l'ai, n'en recrerroie  
[ll. 15-21].<sup>13</sup>

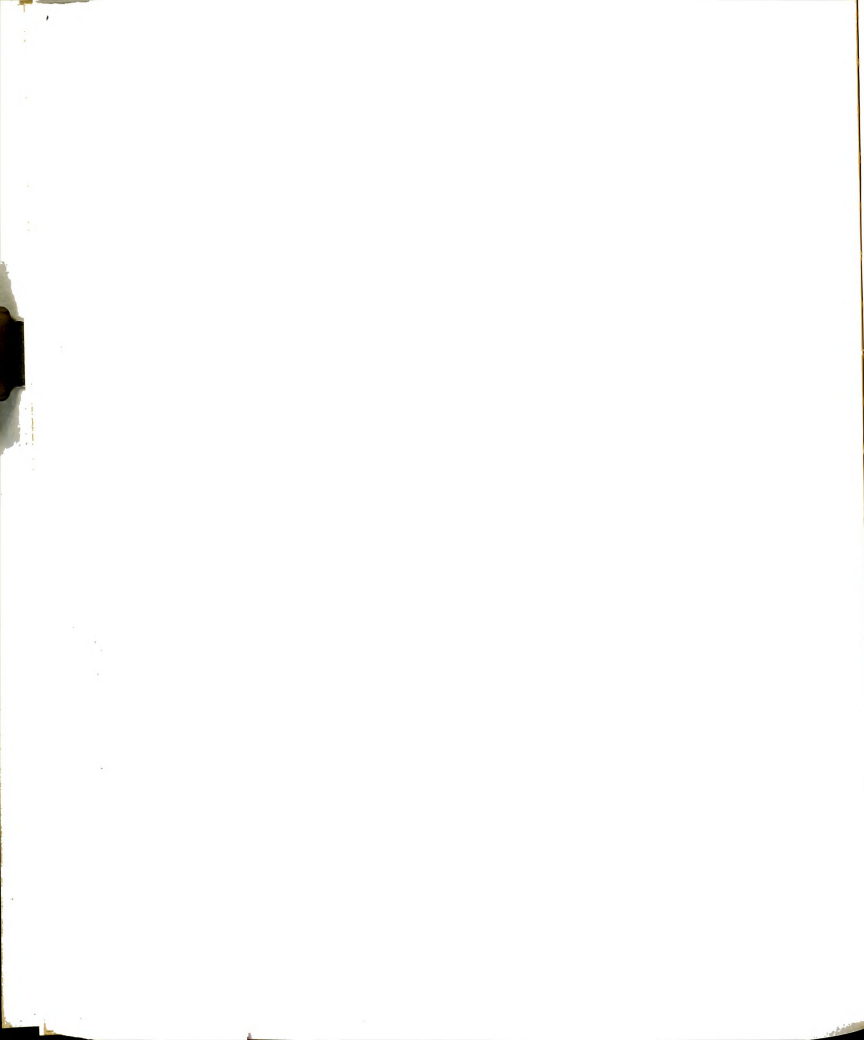
In other chansons the notion of a new nobility established by Amors continues but the poet-persona adopts a more humble stance, passively awaiting Amors' recompense rather than insisting that he deserves it. His attitude toward those who are insensitive to the worth of being clothed in the invisible robes of Amors' magnificence is reminiscent of the judgment passed upon the Pharisees who adorned themselves with rich outer garments but within were just rattling bones. Such as those will never gain entrance to Amors' kingdom, for the rewards granted by the god of love are gratuitous:

Tel chevauchent mult acemeement  
Qui ne sevent leur grant honor atendre.  
En Amors a maint guerredon a prendre  
Dont el puet bien son dru faire joiant  
[XIV, ll. 21-24].

The refrain of chanson XVIII underscores the notion that earthly riches matter not to the true lover and, indeed,

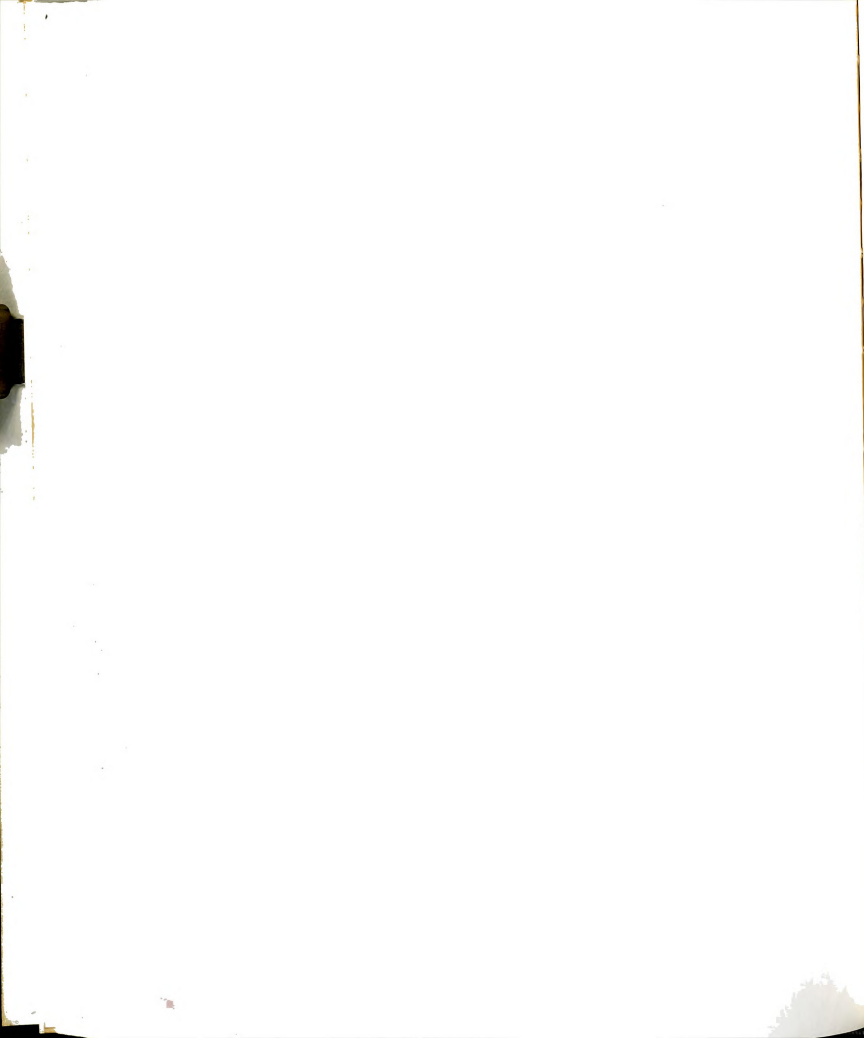
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<sup>13</sup> The attitude of the poet-persona in chanson XXVII is quite similar to that of chanson XXX, "Savez por quoi Amors a non Amors?" including the questioning of the appropriateness of Amors' name. See Chapter I, pp. 37-44.



are worthless. All the territory and revenues controlled by the "riches hom," Thibaut de Champagne and king of Navarre, have no real power. The goods bestowed by Amors, delight and joy that surpass all, cannot be bought: "Nus ne puet trop acheter / Les biens qu'Amors set doner." The reiteration of such a maxim, coupled with the poet-persona's personal statement that he can do nothing but await solace from on high (l. 24) reinforce the notion that, however rich he might be, the lover can do nothing to earn what he most desires. Such powerlessness leads to frustration; humble submission on the part of the poet-lover often gives way to subdued rage or confusion. Generalized statements, proclaimed with an air of authority, are sometimes contradictory. Amors can seem to be a manipulative devil who seduces and betrays those who trust him (XXX, ll. 5-6), or a schoolmaster who makes his followers so happy that they think they are flying (XIV, ll. 37-38). In Amors there is both fortune and misfortune (XX, l. 10), and he is "of exceeding power, doing good and ill as it suits him" (XX, ll. 33-34). Not only does Amors appear to be omnipotent, his actions are unpredictable and cannot be grasped by one's reason: "Mult a Amors grant force et grant pouoir / Qui sanz reson fet choisir a son gré" (XXIII, ll. 22-23).

One could say, moreover, that not only is Amors prone to sudden changes and free to choose at will, but





also is the lady inconstant and sometimes cruel or suspicious, raising once again the problem of distinguishing true lovers from false. As stated before, the marks of the true lover are invisible since they are determined by one's inner disposition. Thibaut's rules of love state that access to the ranks of love's nobility has as a prerequisite undergoing the sufferings of love:

Sens et honor ne puet nus maintenir,  
S'il n'a en soi senti les maus d'amer.  
N'a grant valor ne puet pour riens monter,  
N'onques oncor nel vit nus avenir  
[XIX, ll. 9-12].

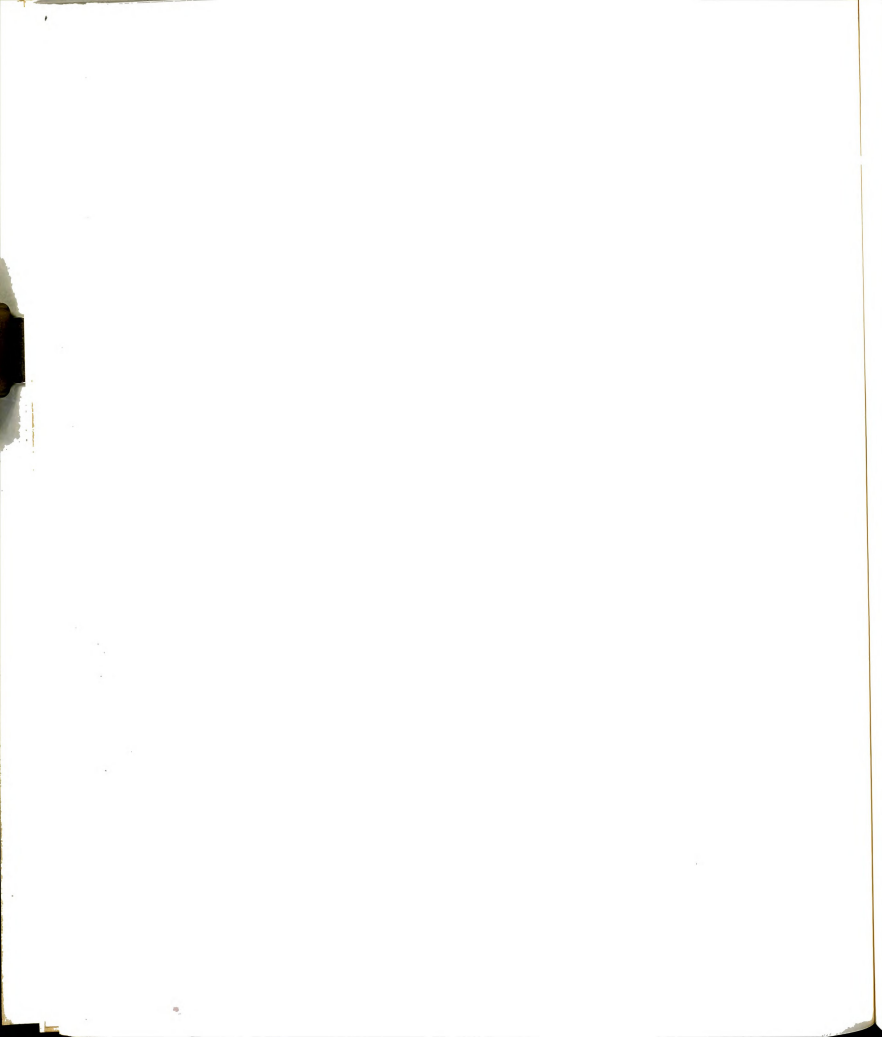
But such verbal protestations are worthless since everyone says that he loves "more than anyone ever has before" (V, ll. 8-9).

Ce fet les amanz confus  
Que trop mentent li truant;  
Mès dame doit conoistre a leur faus diz  
Que de toz biens s'est leur faus cuers partiz  
[V, ll. 10-13].

The poet-lover can only hope that the lady's power of discernment is equal to her surpassing beauty and worth so that she might distinguish the true lover's "fin corage."

Ultimately the lover as poet must rely on his craft, and upon the elusive inspiration that comes only from the heart: "De bien amer ne puet nus enseigner / Fors que li cuers, qui done li talent" (IV, ll. 37-38).

According to Pierre Guiraud, the relationship between love and poetic composition is such that the two



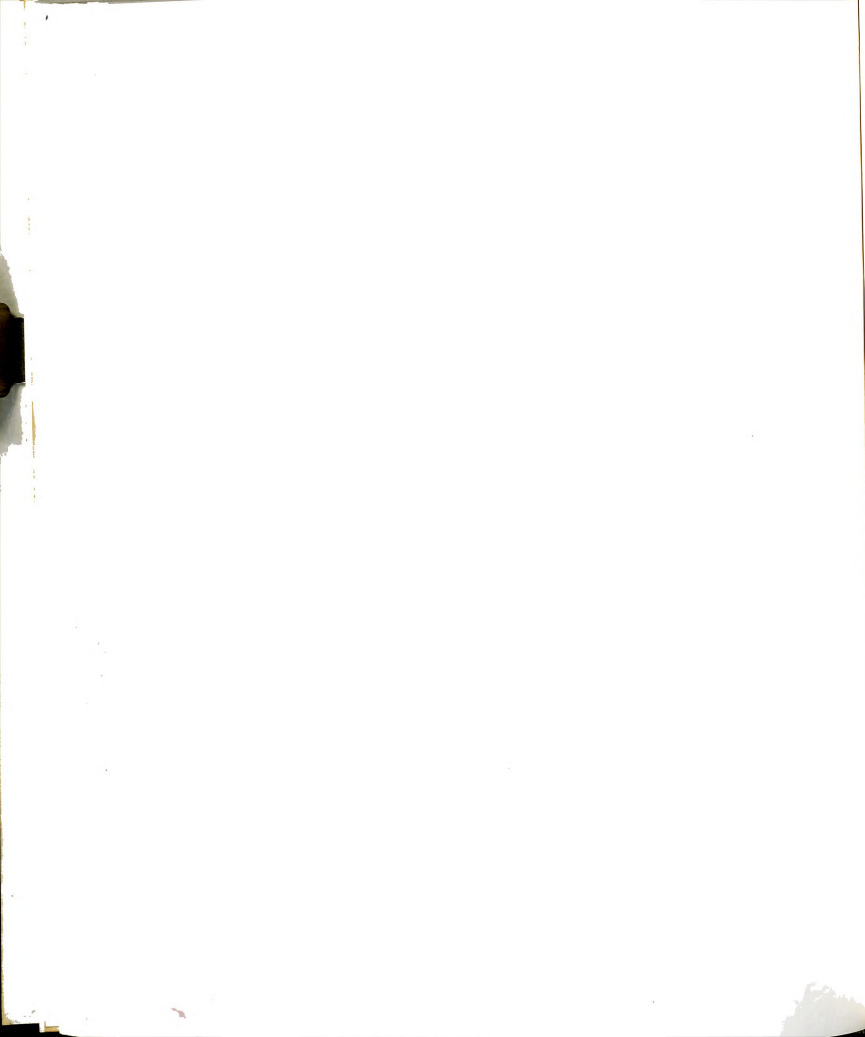
terms are interchangeable; the heart may indeed be seen as the source of inspiration for both true love and perfection in poetry: ". . . dans une perspective plus large, la fin' amors apparaît bien comme un amour poétisé, un amour inséparable de la poésie et dans lequel amour et poésie se confondent."<sup>14</sup> Just as love and poetry are interrelated, so are, again according to Guiraud, the sincerity of the poet-lover's emotions and the quality of his chansons. Guiraud maintains that "le poète amoureux demande à la perfection de la forme de garantir la naïveté du contenu. C'est d'ailleurs un des thèmes de la chanson d'affirmer, à la fois, la perfection des sentiments amoureux et celle de la technique poétique."<sup>15</sup>

Consciousness of his own rôle as poet and craftsman is indeed evident in Thibaut's chansons as he rejects stereotypes or inverts standard motifs to suit his own purposes. The use of the springtime motif to open a chanson or canço, a technique used sometimes to excess in the courtly lyrics, is one which Thibaut holds in low esteem. He rejects it, saying that such motifs are the mark of uninspired poets who are capable of pleasing only the vilaine gent:

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<sup>14</sup> Pierre Guiraud, "Les Structures étymologiques du 'Trobar,'" Poétique 8 (1971): 418.

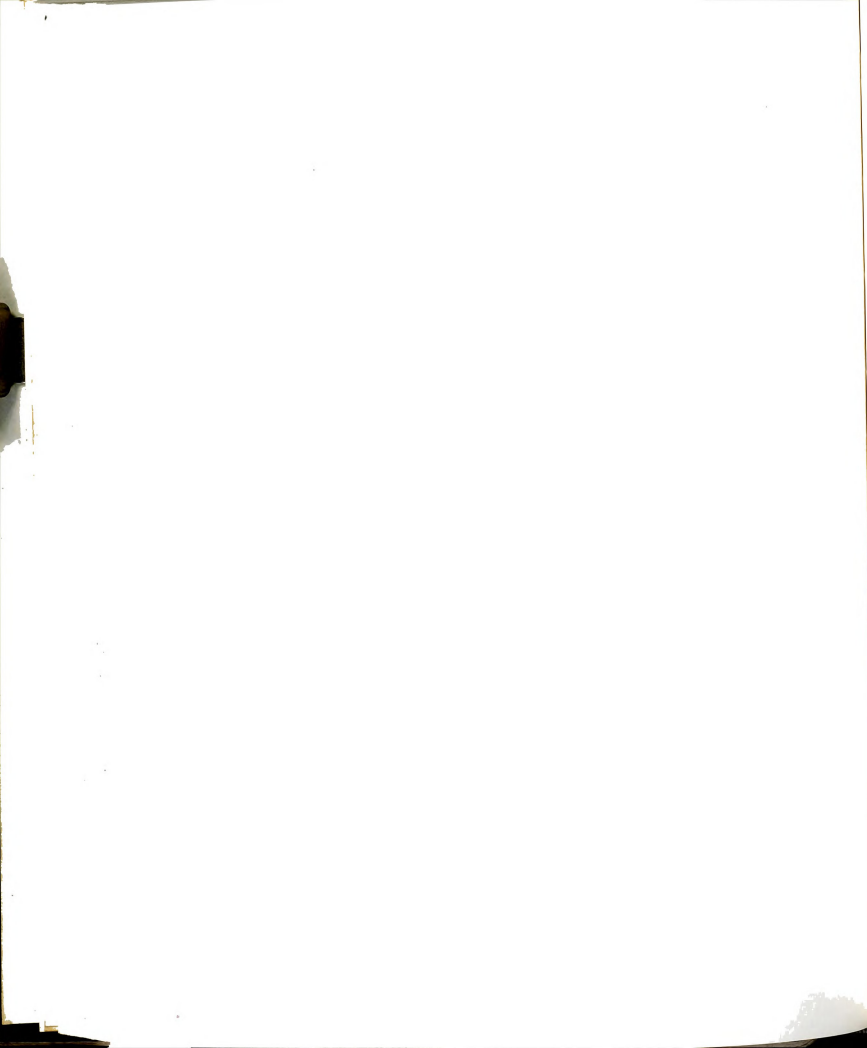
<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 424.



Fueille ne flor ne vaut riens en chantant  
 Que por default, sanz plus, de rimoiier  
 Et por fere solaz vilaine gent  
 Qui mauvès moz font souvent aboier.  
 Je ne chant pas por aus esbanoier,  
 Mès por mon cuer fere un pou plus joiant  
 [IV, 11. 1-6].

The implications of such a declaration are twofold. Not only does the poet use his craft to verify his worthiness to enter the ranks of love's chosen ones--for everyone knows that the vilains are excluded from love's garden--he also flatters the one to whom the song is destined, the lady who, in this chanson, shows herself to be skeptical of the lover's true intentions. The lover asks only to be believed and hopes that his credibility will be restored through the quality of his song which is, he insists, far superior to the crude, mauvès moz of other singers in the court.

The words of the discouraged poet-persona in chanson XIV express the same hope that somehow the truth of the assertions of the fins amis, the speaker, will be distinguishable from the false supplications of deceitful suitors. Thibaut's means of seeking to stand out from all the rest is, once again, to play upon stereotypes and conventions in all their richness and diverse connotations. He begins by using the springtime motif as the basis for a unique simile. The poet-persona expresses the hope that with the coming of spring, the season of love, it will be



revealed that the words of false lovers are of no more lasting nature than snow or ice; such words ought indeed to melt away as the worth of true lovers shines forth in the radiant season of new birth:

Tout autresi con fraint nois et yvers,  
Que vient estez, que li douz tens repaire,  
Deüst fraindre li faus prierres sers  
Et fins amis amender son affaire;  
Et je dot mult q'il ne me soit divers,  
Se il touz est aus autres debonaire;  
Mès tant me fi la ou biautez repaire,  
Q'aÿmanz sui, se tout n'est vers moi fers  
[XIV, ll. 1-8].

The poet-lover, authoritative in what ought to be as concerns true lovers, also speaks assertively about his own steadfastness, making use of the well-chosen metaphor of the magnet. According to medieval lapidaries, the qualities of the aÿmanz (magnet) and those of the diamond were confused, signifying both the physical properties of attraction as well as the indestructible hardness of the diamond which was believed to overcome all things.<sup>16</sup>

As the chanson continues, the qualities of steadfastness and endurance are emphasized by the poet-persona through the use of sententiae communicating that the outcome of suffering will be the consoling wisdom that comes to those initiated to the ways of love. The poet-lover

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<sup>16</sup> "Diamond and magnet," in F. McCullough, Medieval Latin and French Bestiaries, University of North Carolina Studies in the Romance Languages and Literatures, no. 33 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1960), pp. 109-110.





advocates acceptance of suffering, for its recompense, joy, negates all things (ll. 17-18), and the renunciation of one's own will; one must be selfless if one is to be above reproach in matters of love (ll. 19-20).

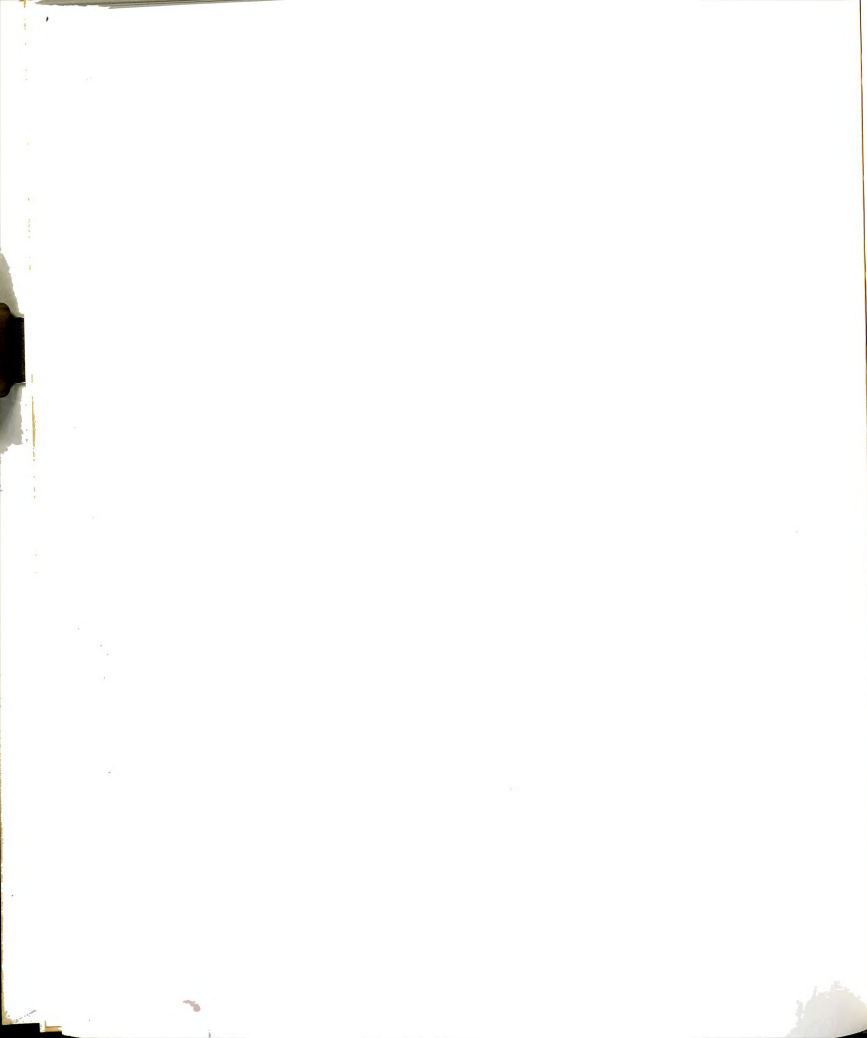
The question of renunciation of one's will is, according to Thibaut, part of Amors' refinement process, transforming one from vilain to fin ami:

Qui touz jorz fet son vouloir  
A poine ert ja fins amis.  
Pour ce fet Amors doloir  
Qu'ele veut guerredon rendre  
Ceus qui bien sevent atendre  
Et servir a son vouloir  
[XII, ll. 35-40].

The guidelines for being a fin ami and the manner in which they are expressed are not without paradox. In the above exhortation, the admonition that one must be selfless is tempered by the indication that there is a rationale behind Amors' apparently cruel treatment of the lover and, moreover, there is the promise of reward at the end of one's suffering. In the same chanson, however, the poet-persona states:

"N'aim pas a droit qui bee / Q'il en porroit avenir"

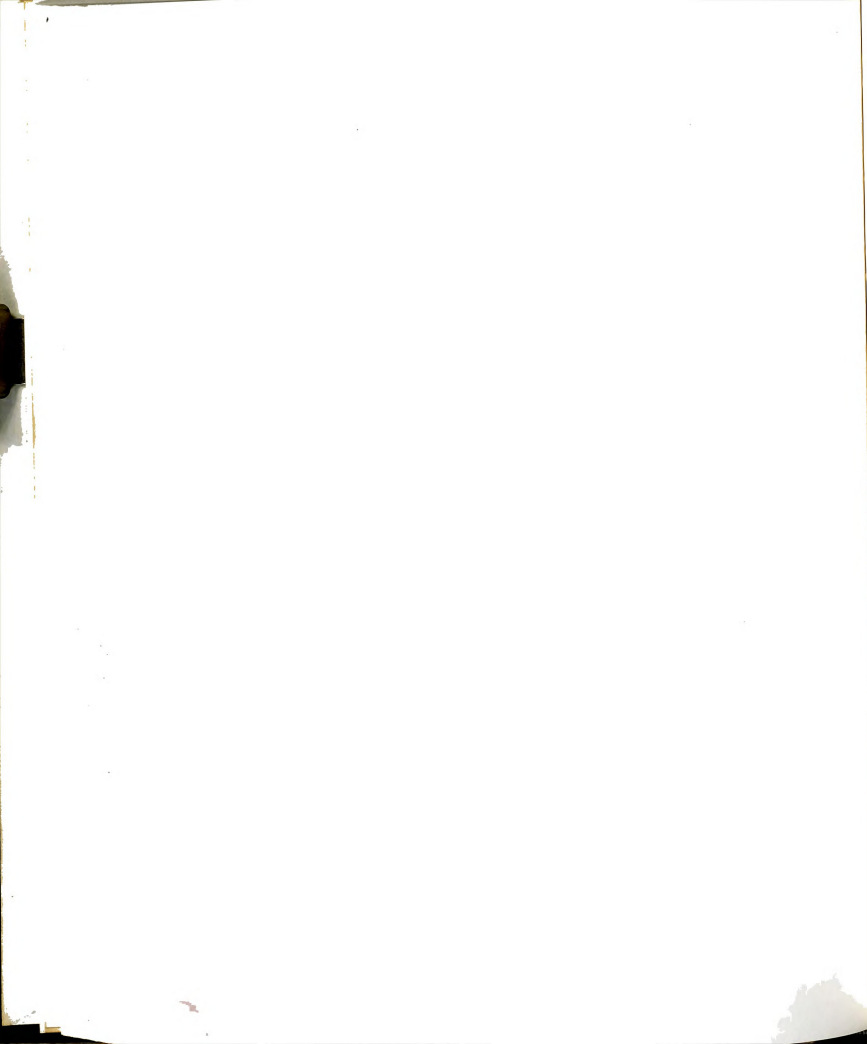
(ll. 23-24). Neither recognition of this contradiction nor resolution of the two modes of behavior is offered by the poet-persona. At best, he might say that love is "folie" and he cannot be reproached for such statements, as he does in chanson III:



. . . se je di folement  
 En ma chançon de ce que je voudroie,  
 Ne m'en doit on reprendre malemant.  
 Grant pechié fet qui fin ami repret,  
 N'il n'aime pas qui pour diz se chastoie;  
 Et la coustume est tels de fin amant:  
 Plus pense a li, et il plus se desroie  
 [III, ll. 6-12].

The conviction that it is not only a mistake but a "grant pechié" to criticize a true lover indicates the vehemence with which Thibaut's poet-persona often confronts those who challenge his integrity. In chanson V, after deploring the fact that it has become a commonplace superlative for everyone to say that he loves more than anyone ever has before, the poet-persona calls upon God and all the saints on high to attest to the veracity of his own assertion that no one could love more than he (ll. 22-25).

Self-defense on the part of the poet-persona is also related to the question of secrecy in love, one of Andreas Capellanus' rules of love, and one which is adopted by Thibaut's poet-persona as well: "Celer dit on que mult vaut a ami" (XXVI, l. 33). But then, moving from the generalized statement to the particular, the poet-persona states that in his own situation, concealment of his emotional state only creates torment, for he sees others tease and provoke their ladies openly and receive immediate recompense.



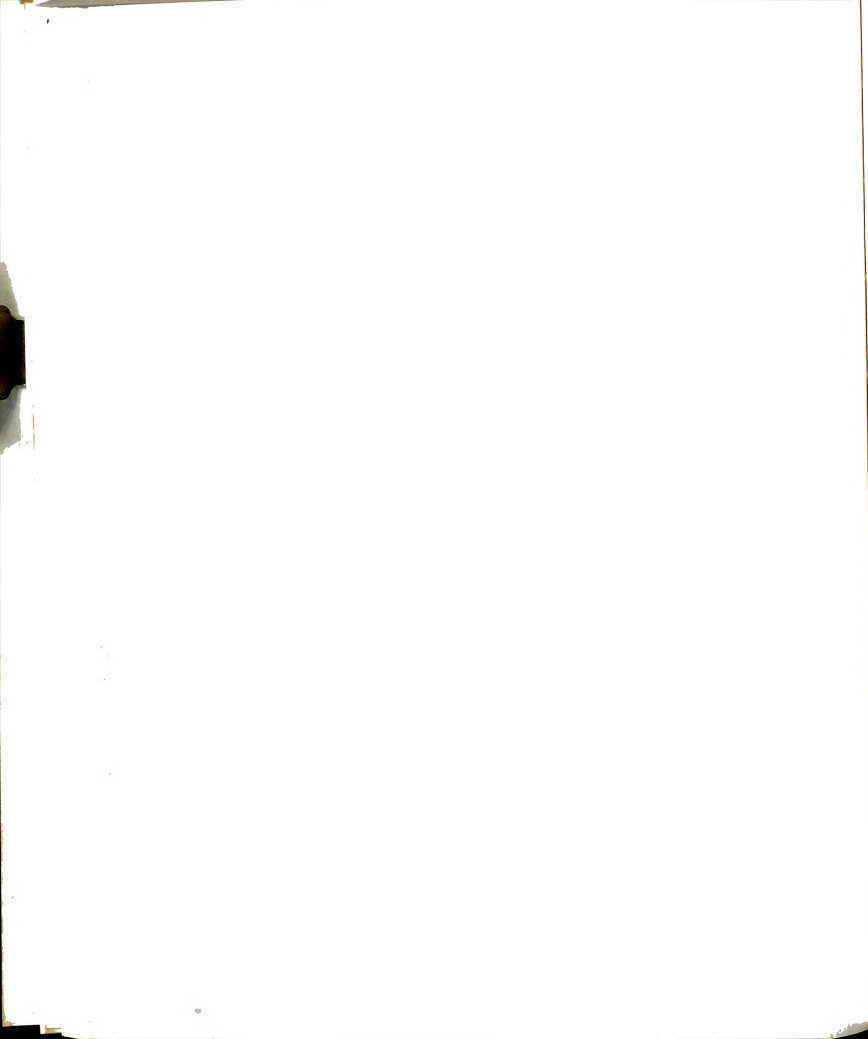
The questionable merits of observing the rule of secrecy become even more crucial when the poet-persona explains--most likely in a self-congratulatory manner--that he undergoes criticism for adhering to this principle:

"Aucuns i a qui me suelent blasmer / Quant je ne di a qui je sui amis" (XIII, ll. 28-29). He then seeks to evade total concealment by addressing his thoughts to the anonymous lady, again trusting in her perception to discern his heart's true devotion to her.

Such an address to the lady might be considered, in a sense, a transgression of the rule of concealment, and the poet-lover consistently expresses feelings of fear and dread upon doing so. If one is to establish a hierarchy of values, however, being attentive to one's lady takes precedence over some of the restrictive rules of courtly love:

Chançon, va t'en a celi que bien sé  
Et si li di por poor ai chanté  
Et en doutance;  
Mes droiz est que fins amis  
Soit a sa dame ententis  
[X, ll. 46-50].

The establishment of a hierarchy, then, can be seen to be of major importance in many of Thibaut's sententiae. The precepts of love endorse a hierarchy of nobility based upon love's service rather than service to earthly lords; the wealth bestowed by love takes precedence over worldly riches. In love's service, one's true feelings sometimes supersede more formalistic demands--that of keeping silence,



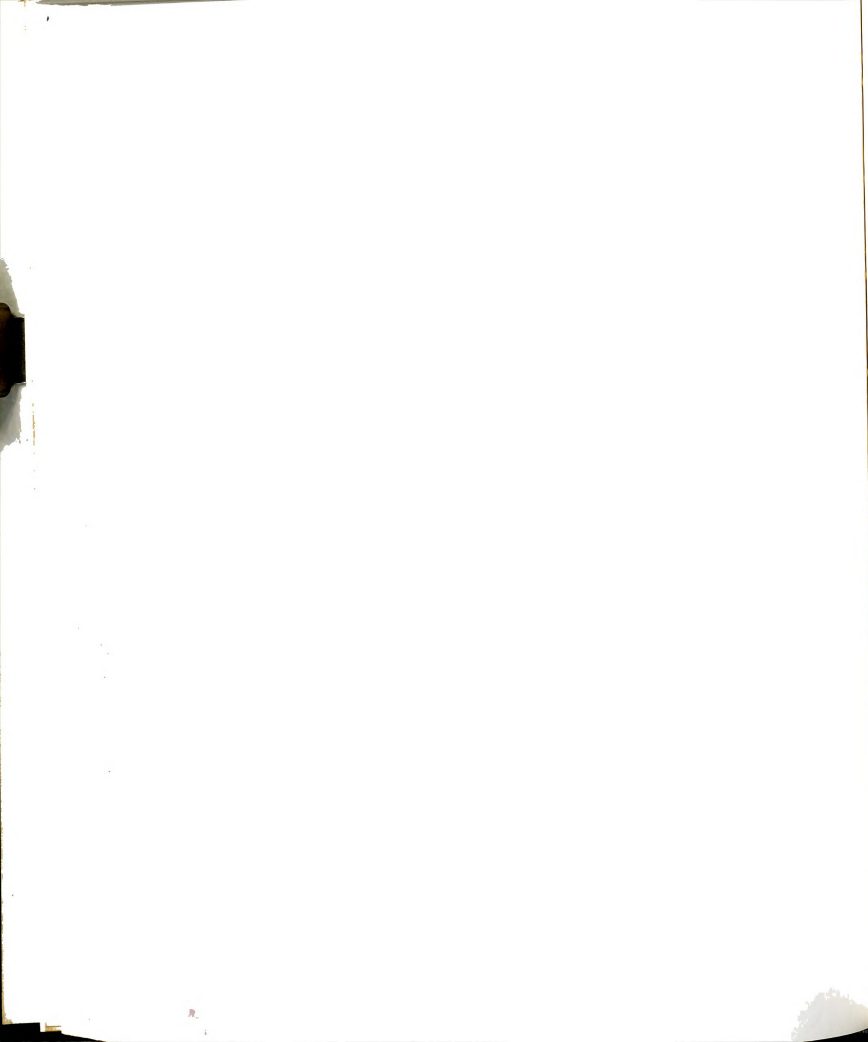
for example--and still another set of sententiae concern the merits of folie over sens in matters of love.

The conflict between heart and mind and the ultimate victory of the heart already discussed in previous chapters is recognized and expressed succinctly by the poet-persona in the form of a sententia. Ironically enough, "folie" is presented as a reasonable state of being which the true lover must come to accept: "S'est il resons, qui a amer entent, / Q'il ne dout mort ne paine ne folie" (XX, ll. 19-20).

Madness and danger are again associated with love's service in chanson XXXI. The peril of loving loyally lies in the isolation and vulnerability of the lover who succumbs to the sweet, burning pains of love. The condensed antithesis of the opening stanza--the "douces dolors" and "li mal plesant [qui] sont douz et cuisant" indicate the irresolvable conflicts that will beset the lover; the sententiae constitute both a general warning and a reflection on the lover's personal situation:

Les douces dolors  
Et li mal plesant  
Qui viennent d'amors  
Sont douz et cuisant,  
Et qui fet fol hardement  
A paines avra secors.  
G'en fis un dont la poors  
Me tient el cors que g'en sent.

Bien est grant folors  
D'amer loiaument  
[XXXI, ll. 1-10].





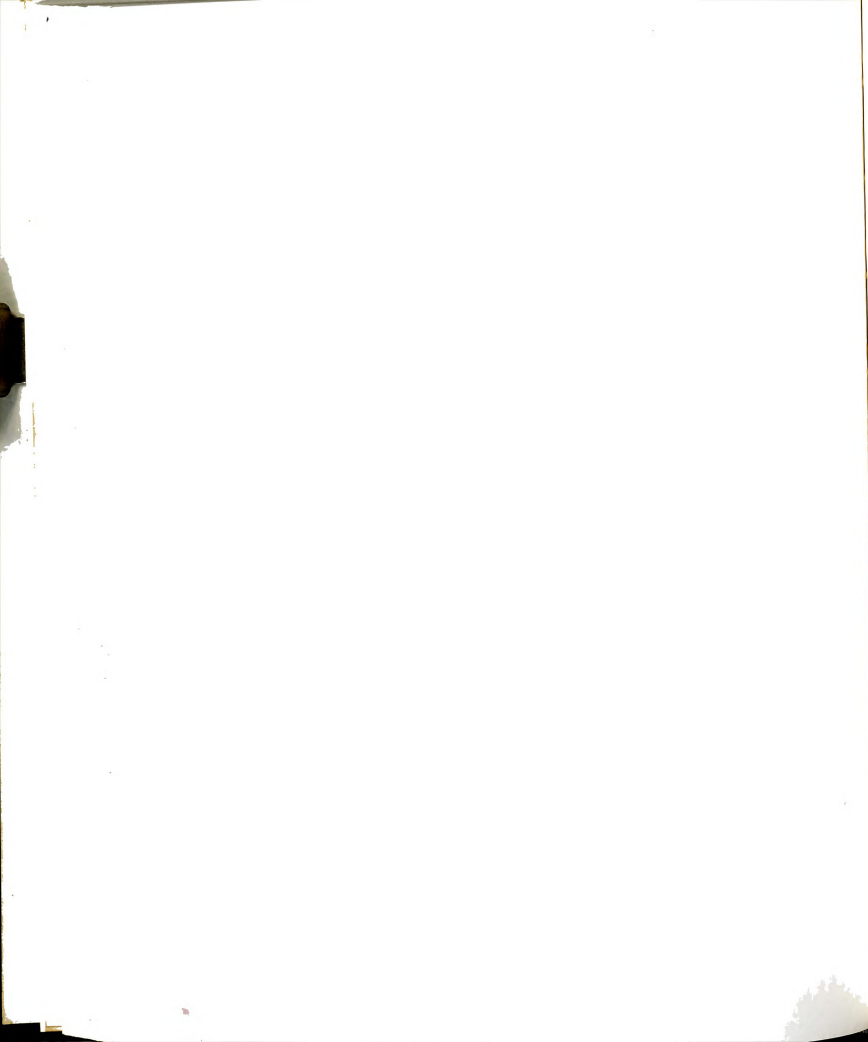
Although the lover labels love as "folie" and suffers great apprehension at being, in a sense, abandoned and beyond help in his state of unrequited desire, he nevertheless perceives madness as preferable to sens (reason) and, in other sententiae, discounts the rational faculties as worthless in matters of love:

. . . mes fous cuers me fet cuidier guerir;  
S'il fust sages, il me feïst morir  
Pour ce fet bon de la folie avoir  
Qu'en trop grant sens puet il bien meschoir  
[XI, ll. 18-21].

Qui plus aim de fin cuer loiaument,  
Cil en set plus et mains s'en set aidier.  
[IV, ll. 39-40].

And so, although the knowledge and wisdom of the heart are the only reliable guides in this strange, disorienting "country of love's madness" (IX, l. 40), the poet-persona repeatedly makes use of logic and reason to formulate precepts, sometimes proceeding from generalized statements to his particular situation, sometimes, as above (chanson XI), moving from his personal experiences to the formulation of the sententia.

The sententiae used by Thibaut's poet-persona are not always directed only toward himself and other attendant lovers. At times the poet-persona directs such statements toward the lady and uses them to try to persuade her to grant him mercy. The tone of the sententiae is such that matters are seen in absolute terms. Dragonetti has pointed out that:



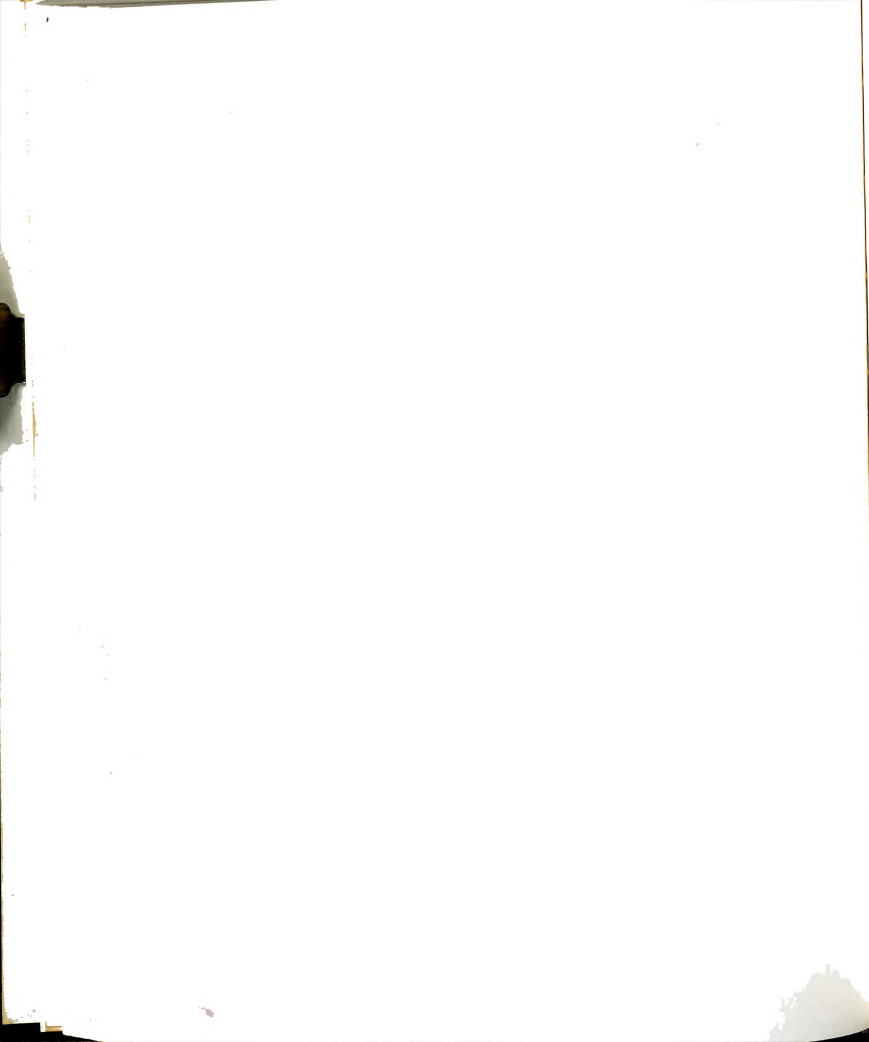
. . . la fréquence des tournures sentencieuses dans la chanson courtoise s'explique par la matière même du genre. Celle-ci porte en effet sur une rhétorique de l'amour dont l'apprentissage n'est pas séparable d'une certaine connaissance doctrinale. . . . Cet aspect didactique de l'amour n'est pas séparable de la chanson courtoise. . . . Parfois même il [le trouvère] s'attribue un rôle de moraliste. . . .<sup>17</sup>

The moralistic tone, already seen in connection with the lover's self-defense stating that anyone who reproaches a true lover commits a mortal sin, is adopted again in the lover's address to the lady. He poses to her the question whether or not it is a sin to put one's true lover to death, and emphatically resolves the question himself, stating "Oïl, voir! bien le sachiez!" (XVII, l. 40). Manipulative logic follows as he tells her that she will be far more happy if she keeps him alive, the question of figurative life or death refers, of course, to whether or not the lady grants or withholds her love.

The posing of such choices in absolute terms--life or death--stems from the very nature of the lover's declared passion; it is total and all-consuming. The lover continuously upholds the position that his whole existence depends upon the lady, and such assertions may lead to gentle yet desperate pleading, expressed as a personal entreaty within the context of a general truth:

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<sup>17</sup> Dragonetti, p. 46.

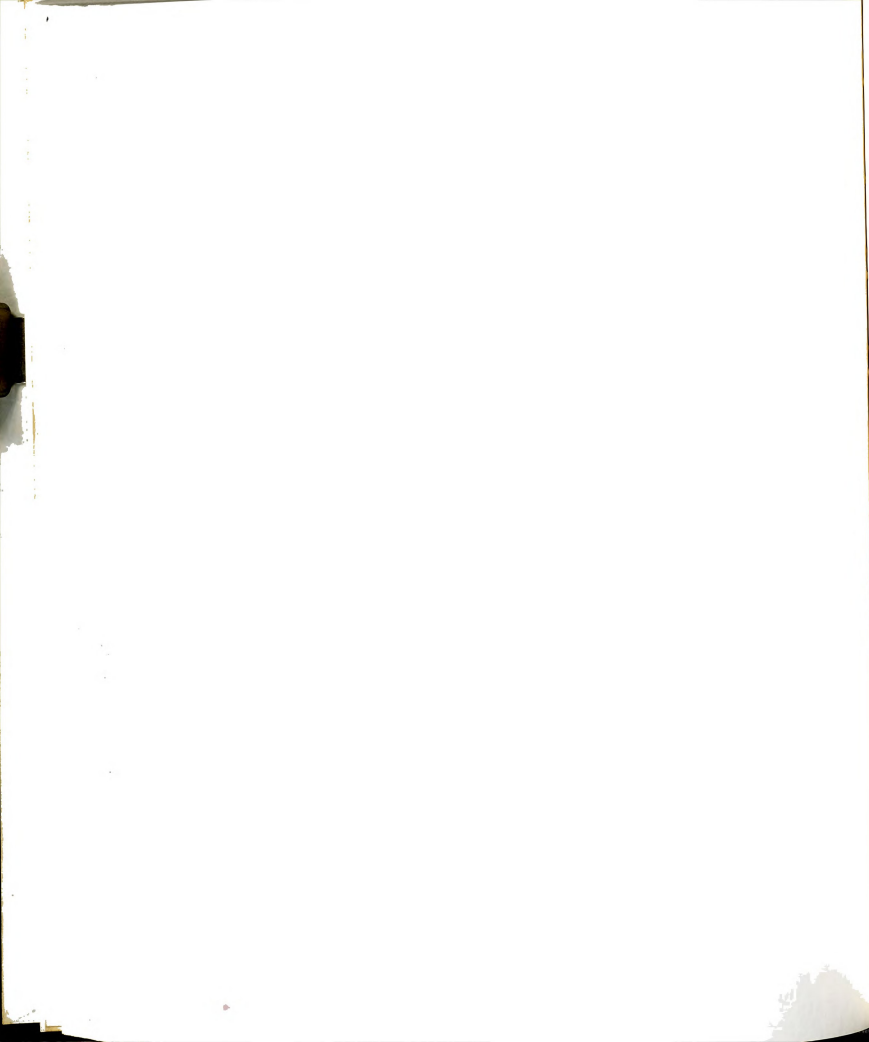


Por Dieu, ne m'ocïez mie!  
 La our fins cuers s'umilie  
 Doit on trouver  
 Merci et aïe  
 Por conforter.  
 Valara!  
 [VIII, ll. 19-24].

The poet-persona as authority in matters of love is also capable of seeking to influence the lady more directly, using a sententia that implies that she herself will never attain joy if she does not love: "Amors, merci! Fetes li a savoir; / Cuers qui n'ainme ne puet grant joie avoir" (XI, ll. 27-28).

The precepts of love expressed in Thibaut's chansons generally underscore those rules usually associated with courtly love; fidelity and steadfastness, renunciation of one's own will to that of the god of love, the preeminence of the heart over reason. The tenets of love are, however, not without paradox as, for example, the statements that true lovers do not seek rewards coupled with the lover's insistence that Amors or the lady as his sovereigns have certain reciprocal responsibilities toward their servant. Perhaps the greatest paradox lies in the discrepancy between the lover's supposed reliance upon his heart to the detriment of reason in matters of love and his use of logic and reasonable argument to gain the lady's favors.

Many sententiae deal with the poet-persona's relationship to other suitors, his rivals, the false



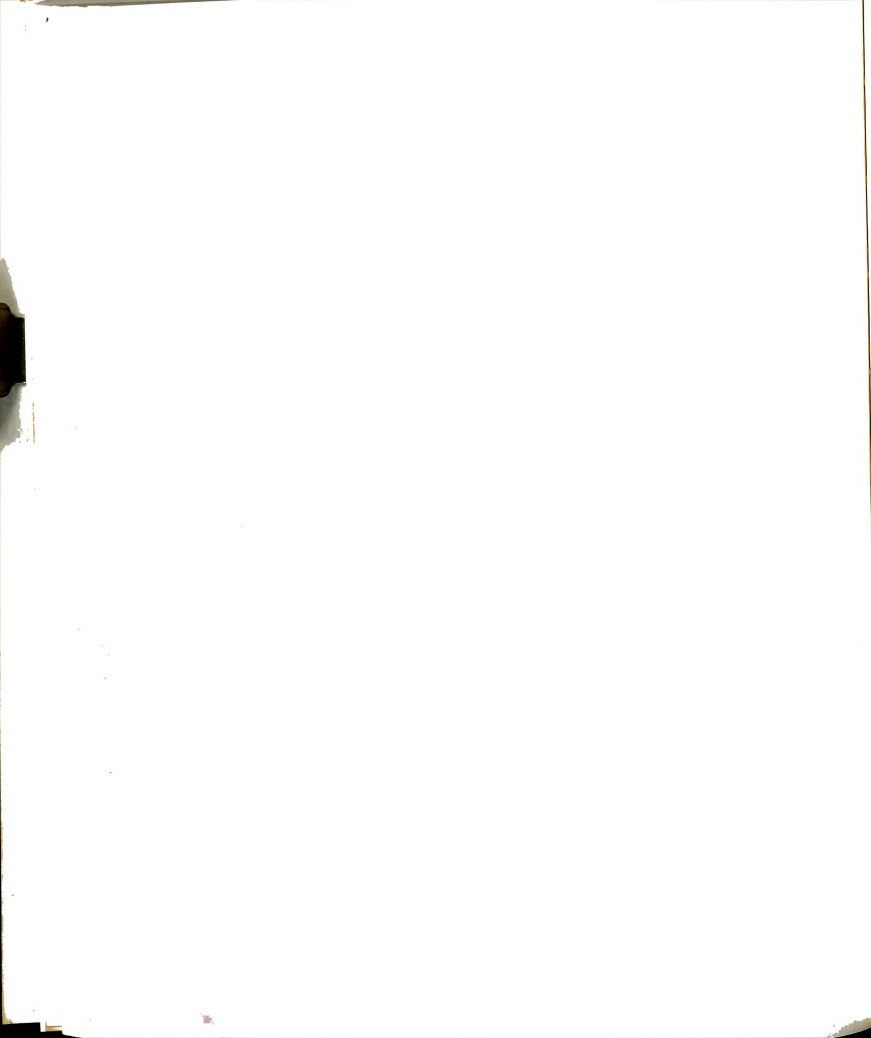
lovers and losengiers, who, in their songs, seek to discredit him and win the heart of the lady. The response of Thibaut's poet-persona is, at times, to lament over the situation or, at other times, to denounce them and their base, dishonest tactics. In the chansons, the poet-lover's best defense is his craftsmanship, his ability to write chansons whose perfection and originality within the stereotypes attest to the perfection of the composer's love for the lady. In the jeux-partis and in a closely related genre, the débat, Thibaut himself steps forward, entering wholeheartedly into the game of love's casuistry, a game that can be played with unabashed lustiness, unfettered by the confines of abstract, idealized love, although the values of a courtly--as opposed to a more chevalresque or physical--relationship are often upheld by one of the participants.

The rules of the jeu-parti and the débat pertain more to form than to content:

Le jeu-parti, dans son type normal, est une pièce lyrique de six couplets suivis de deux envois: dans le premier couplet, l'un des deux partenaires propose à l'autre une question dilemmatique et, celui-ci ayant fait son choix, soutient lui-même l'alternative restée disponible. Dans les deux envois, chacun des deux partenaires nomme un juge. Il n'y a dans les textes aucune trace d'un jugement que ceux-ci auraient proposé.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Arthur Langfors, A. Jeanroy, and L. Brandin, Recueil général des jeux-partis français (Paris: S.A.T.F., 1926), pp. v-vi.



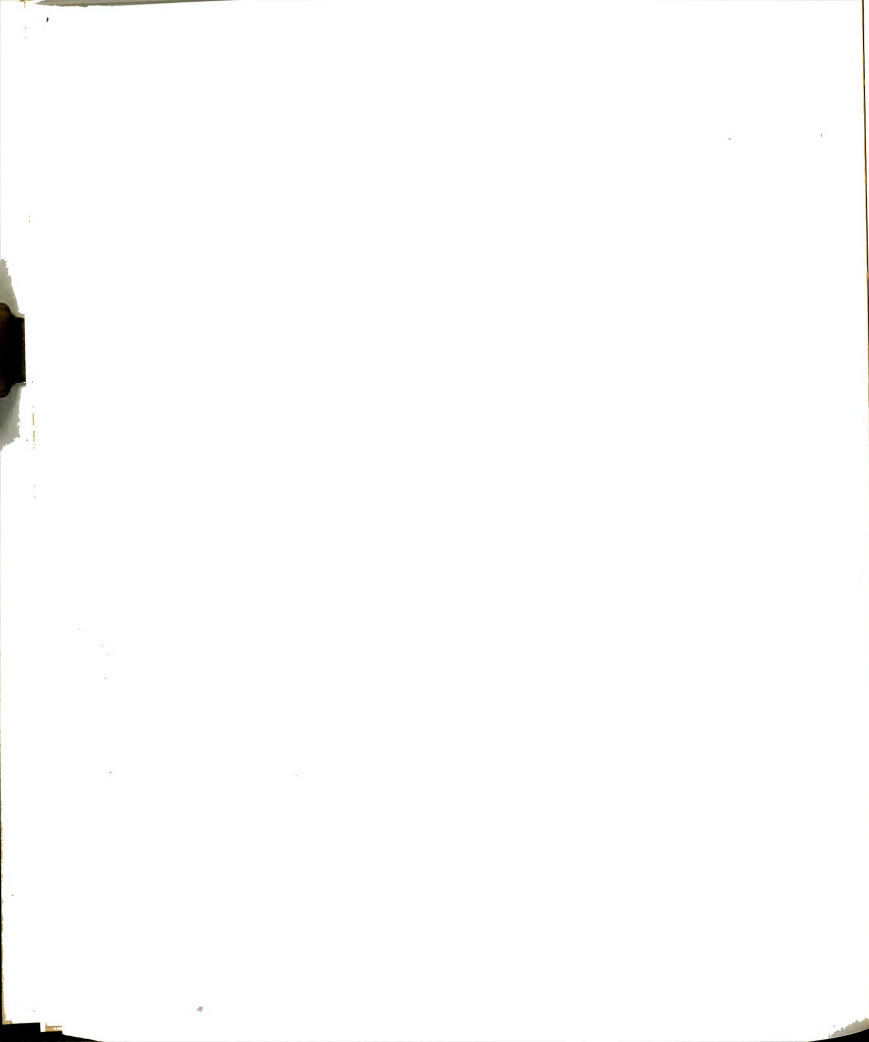


The partner proposing the jeu in the first stanza establishes the meter and rhyme scheme that his opponent must follow, so that the question of technical virtuosity is of importance in this contest between poets. Partners often choose to defend conflicting positions in separate jeux-partis, although it should be kept in mind that the poet who proposes the jeu has no choice but to defend whatever alternative is left to him, therefore no great personal commitment to a certain point of view should be attributed to him in such cases.<sup>19</sup>

The débat differs from the jeu-parti in that the poet of the first stanza usually poses a more open-ended question for discussion and the opponents are not forced into a heated defense of diametrically opposed points of view. The subject matter of the débats, like that of the jeux-partis, is not limited to purely courtly themes, although such themes are not excluded. The participants in the débats are usually poets, but two of Thibaut's five débats are unique in that the discussion is a dialogue

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<sup>19</sup>Wallensköld, for example, expresses astonishment that Thibaut upholds conflicting points of view in different situations, even though, in the jeu-parti in question, Thibaut has no choice but to uphold beauty as opposed to courtliness as a valid reason for loving a woman: "Le fait que c'est à Thibaut qu'incombe la défense de la beauté nous étonne un peu, puisque, dans le jeu-parti entre Jean Bretel et Grievellier (668) . . . dont nous avons parlé ci-dessus (p. lxxxiv), on fait allusion à Thibaut comme le défenseur du 'grand sens,'" p. 127, n. III.



between Thibaut and a "real" lady and between Thibaut and Amors.

As Långfors has noted, the subjects of the jeux-partis are rather homogeneous; "ce sont presque toujours des 'demandes d'amour.'"<sup>20</sup> This element of the casuistry of love has already been seen in the chanson d'amour in that the rules of love were sometimes questioned by the despairing lover who felt that his service to Amors and his adherence to the precepts of love only brought him more suffering. At one point, the poet-persona calls out for assistance in a way that strikingly resembles the format of the jeu-parti:

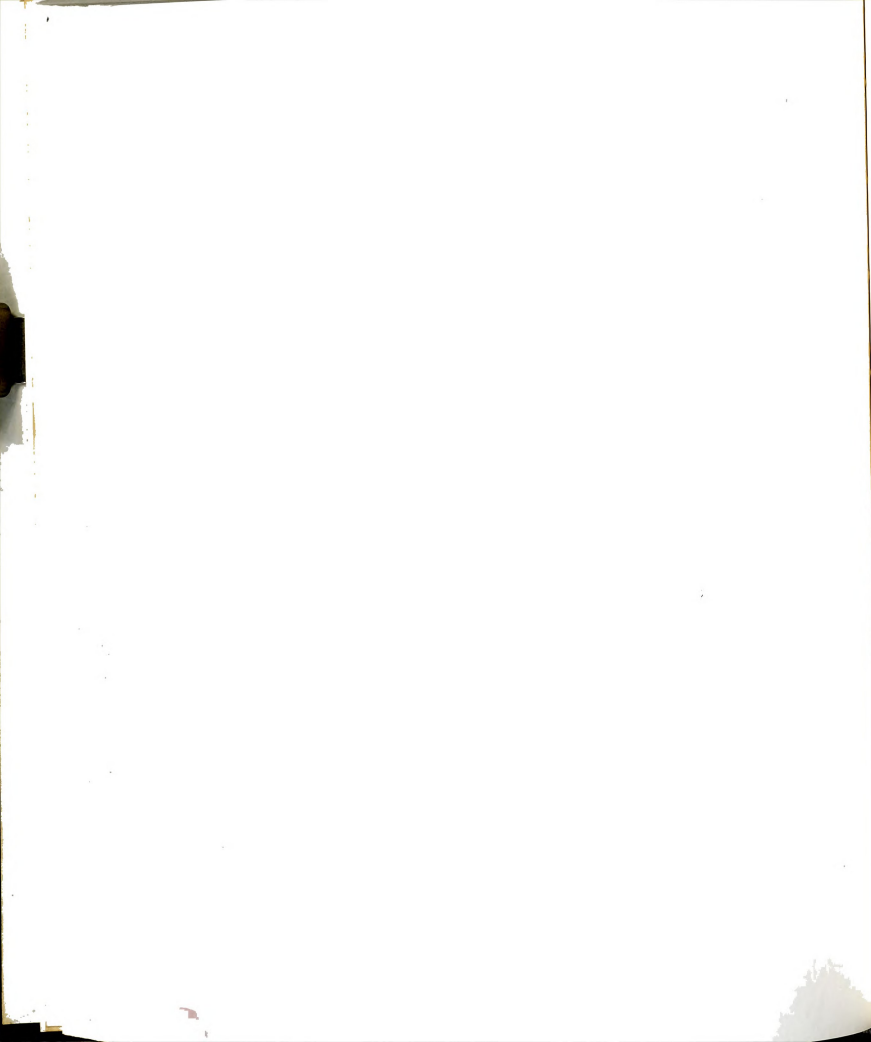
Se je li di: "Dame, je vous aim tant,"  
 Ele dira je la vueil enguingnier.  
 Que ferai je? Conseilliez moi, amant!  
 Li quels vaut melz, ou parler ou lessier?  
 [IV, ll. 25-26, 31-32].

In a jeu-parti, the relative merits of both sides of the question would each receive due consideration. Within the context of the chanson, however, the poet-persona predictably chooses the courtly solution, to wit, that he has not the boldness to confront the lady, nor could he find the words since his heart, source of amorous eloquence, is held captive by the lady.

The same question, whether to conceal or to disclose one's true feelings, is posed to the "bons rois Thiebaut" by

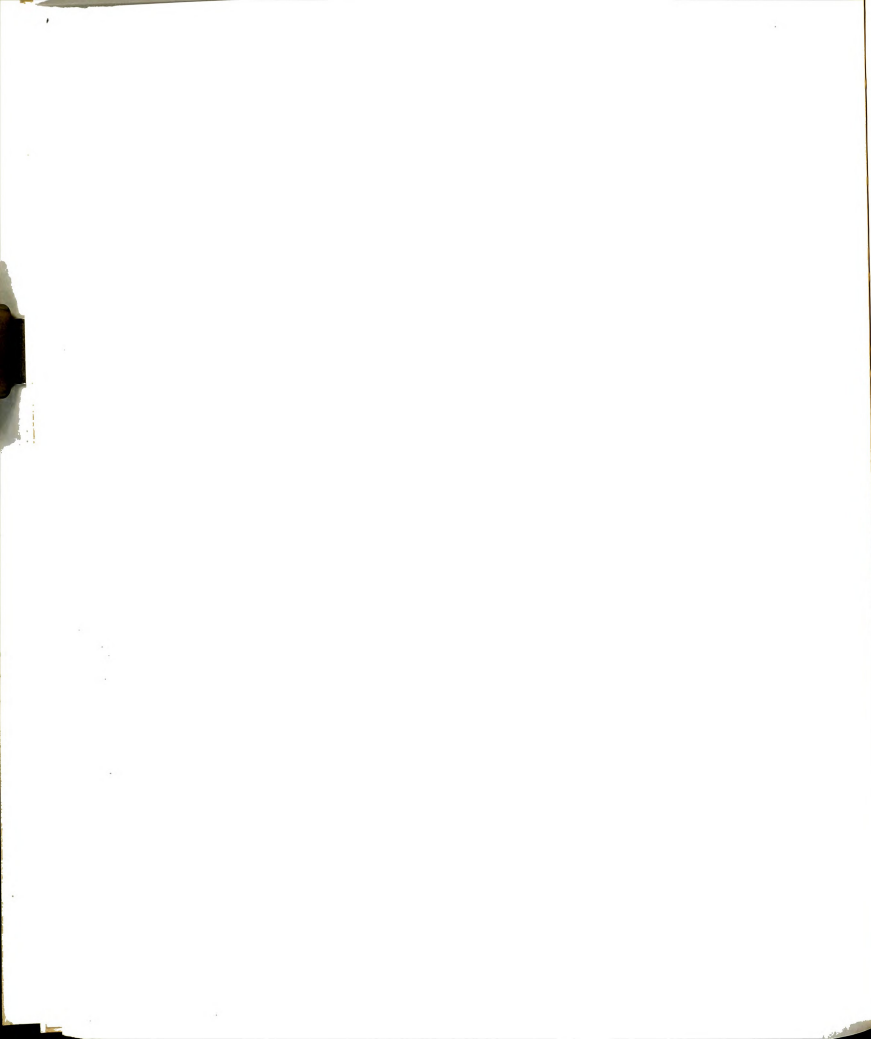
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<sup>20</sup> Långfors, p. ix.



an anonymous cleric in jeu-parti XLIV. What proves interesting to examine in this and in other jeux-partis and débats is not only the specific question involved but also the manner in which the poets deal with their opponents. In the chanson, the poet-persona resolves the question of secrecy by sublimating his own particular distress and formulating generalizations which emphasize the power of the heart over the mind, thereby rationalizing his inability to speak. By reiterating what he considers universal truths concerning the proper behavior or state of being--suffering and distress--for the ideal courtly lover, the poet-persona places his personal situation in a much larger context which serves as self-justification and self-consolation as well.

In the jeu-parti in question and in others as well, the opponents often phrase their defense in sententia form, using terse statements embodying a general truth. The interplay between jouers, however, does not always remain on the abstract level of generalizations, and one can find many forms of argumentation that range from rigorous use of logic to twisting the words of one's opponents and even the use of some rather coarse personal insults. In the jeu-parti between Thibaut and the lovesick cleric, many of the above tactics are put to use, ultimately to Thibaut's credit for it is he who outwits the anonymous clers in this jeu.



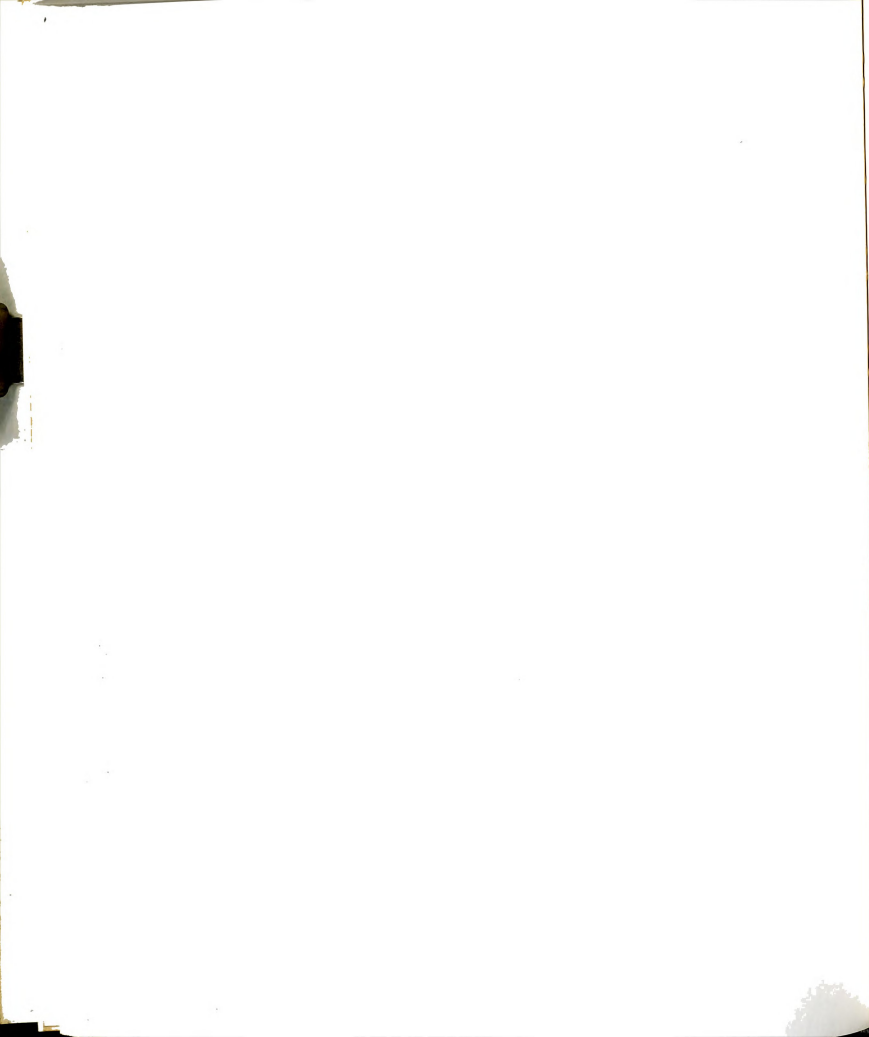
The very phrasing of the cleric's question elicits a response expressed in sententia-like generalizations. The cleric, who has loved a certain lady for a long time "with a loyal heart" and "in good faith" wishes to reveal his love to her, thus relieving himself of the great burden of secrecy. His question, his dilemma, is this:

Dites, sire, qu'en font li fin amant?  
 Suesfrent il tuit ausi si grant dolor,  
 Ou dient le mal q'il ont d'amor?  
 [XLIV, ll. 7-9].

Thibaut responds in terms similar to those of chanson IV in which the poet-persona was confronted with the same extreme pain and the same temptation. The poet-persona's response was to set aside the solution that would alleviate his pain and choose instead to remain steadfast and silent. Thibaut's answer to the cleric is to keep silence and, by using disguised words and covert signs, be patient and rely upon the lady's perception to discern her servant's true feelings. He reinforces his advice to the cleric through the use of the sententia. "Que par servir est mainte amor donee" (l. 14), and with the longer generalization:

Par moz couverz et par cointe senblant  
 Et par signes doit on moustre avant,  
 Qu'ele sache le mal et la dolor  
 Que fins amanz tret pour li nuit et jor  
 [ll. 15-18].

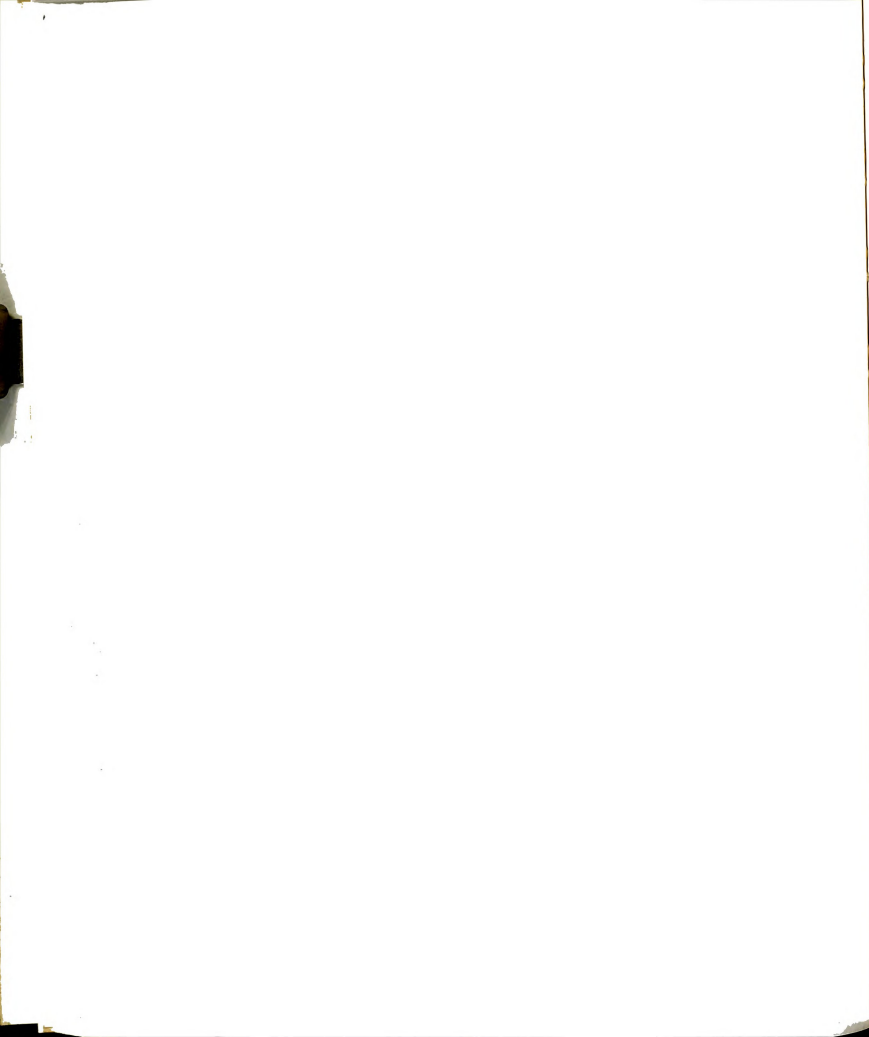
Thibaut's conception of the fin amant--at least in this particular jeu--accords with the standards of the





courtly ideal but does not offer much consolation to the cleric. Although he has no choice but to defend vigorously the position that it is better to reveal one's feelings, one might surmise, from his initial statements, that he would personally prefer to do so. His reaction to Thibaut's advice is, moreover, an outcry against the added suffering he would incur by adhering to Thibaut's high standards. Self-defense follows. The cleric, using Thibaut's own words, tries to prove that those who are adept at using mot couvert and signes are those who are given to false love and deception. The cleric's own sententia, certainly not drawn from the standard courtly repertoire, is that "a true friend (lover) cannot hide his pain / Nor keep from expressing that which his heart recalls / Through the anguish it undergoes" (ll. 25-27).

It is at this point that the argument no longer remains one of only abstract generalizations and manipulation of words but takes on elements of personal insults which underscore the dichotomy between the cleric's behavior and that to which he claims to aspire, the comportment of the ideal, true lover. In the two stanzas that remain to him (IV and VI) and in the envoi, Thibaut states that the cleric's haste to declare his sentiments openly is quite understandable since "clerics are not capable of abstinence" (l. 29), and that the "crown" ("tonsure") suits him well

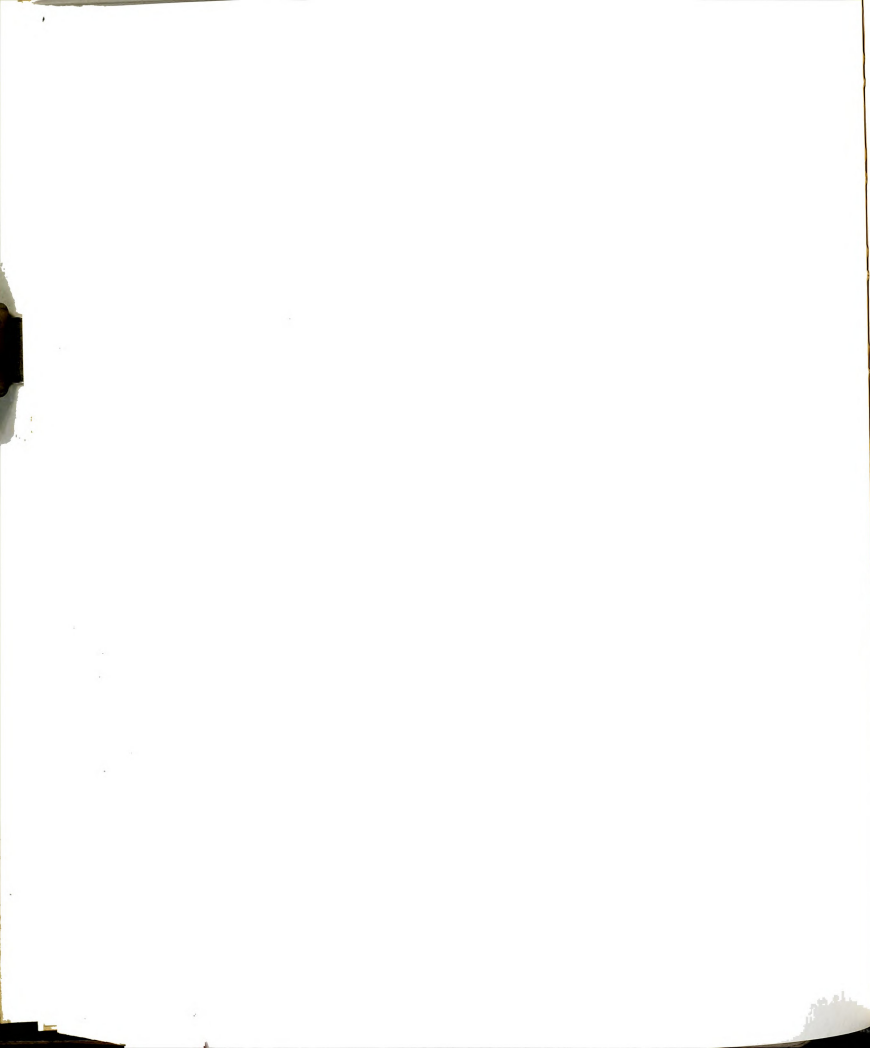


since the cleric is so anxious to pray to the lady. His anxiousness to pray is not, however, inspired by devotion that comes from the heart; it is, rather, says Thibaut, the "suffering of the glands" that is the source of the cleric's inspiration. Thibaut then offers new advice to his opponent, advice tinged with sarcasm:

Dites li tost, quant si vous angoissiez;  
Ou tost l'aiez, ou vous tost la lessiez,  
Car bien puet on a voz diz parcevoir  
Qu'aillors voulez changier vostre voloir  
[ll. 51-54].

. . . li dites tout le vostre voloir;  
El vous crerra, et ce sera bien voir  
[ll. 63-64].

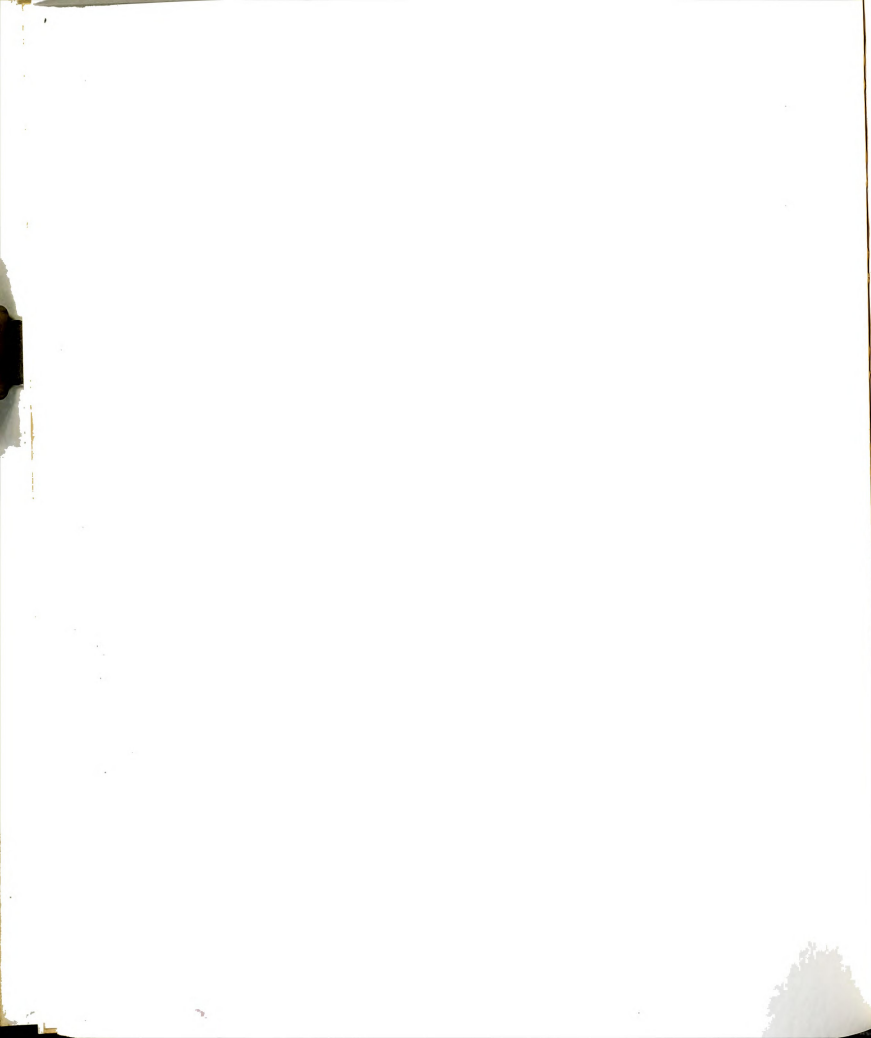
The cleric's defense, also consisting of personal attacks and self-styled adaptations of the rules of love is, nonetheless, ineffective. The remarks that he directs to Thibaut are that the roi-chansonier could hardly have felt the pains of love or he would never advocate the position of secrecy. He states, moreover, that Thibaut has a deceptive heart, suggesting that Thibaut prescribes disguised words and signs because he is of the school of the false lovers. The cleric's interpretation of Amors' behavior, namely that "Amors makes the friend suffer so that he, the friend, might confess the truth about his suffering" (ll. 44-45) is less than convincing, since the audience would recognize that the cleric who has, in the first stanza, declared his desire to conduct himself as a



fin amant is inventing a rule which is not representative of those who are in Amors' service. The discrepancy between the cleric's intentions and his statements is revealed by Thibaut's generalizations that accord with the behavior expected of a fin amant and Thibaut's accusations and interpretations of the cleric's words.

The interplay of generalizations, arguments that wield only abstract statements and those based upon personal attacks and insults varies throughout the jeux-partis and débats. One cannot say that Thibaut reveals himself to be more prone to using personal invective, but he is certainly not averse to resorting to such tactics even when his opponent maintains a level of argumentation based upon abstractions and generalizations.

Such is the case in jeu-parti XXXVIII between Thibaut and a certain Baudoÿn, probably the trouvère, Baudouin d'Aire. Thibaut proposes the question: "if a lady at long last bids her lover to come to her, should he first kiss her mouth or her feet?" The question implies a choice between courtly and more chevalresque love; the ideal courtly lover would, in accordance with the humility and self-effacement expected of him, choose to kiss the lady's feet. Baudouin's choice is, however, to kiss the lady's lips and, although this is the more audacious and more explicitly sexual choice, he expresses it in such a

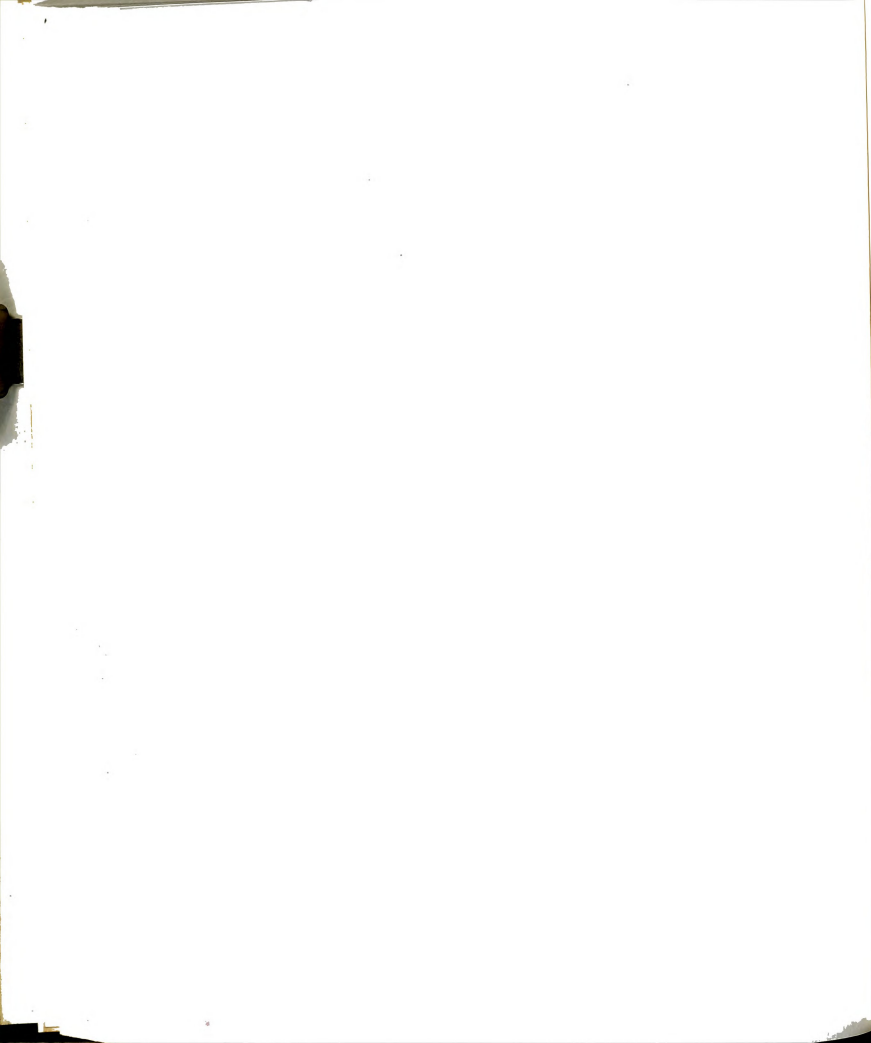


way as to render it more acceptable to a courtly audience. Such an action, he states, would bring sublime joy to both lover and lady, and is the fitting culmination of mutual love that has withstood the test of time. He describes this "joy" not in terms of physical passion or lust, but, rather, as a joy that brings sweetness to the heart. The kiss itself brings "to completion the great desire with which they love one another" (ll. 13-14). At this point in the jeu no further favors are implied and Baudouin seems to have expressed his somewhat audacious choice in acceptable terms.

Thibaut's reaction, however, is one of self-righteous indignation and personal insults directed toward Baudouin:

--Baudouïn, voir! je n'en mentiral ja:  
 Qui sa dame veut tout avant baisier  
 En la bouche, de cuer onques n'ama;  
 Qu'ainsi baise on la fille a un bergier  
 [ll. 19-22].

Thibaut's attack is twofold. The generalization of lines 20-21 discredits Baudouin's position that his choice is inspired by a true, loyal heart. The declaration that such is the way one would kiss the daughter of a shepherd implies that such an action would reveal coarseness on the part of both Baudouin and the lady; no courtly lady would permit such a bold move. Thibaut then turns to the realm of abstractions, culminating his argument with the

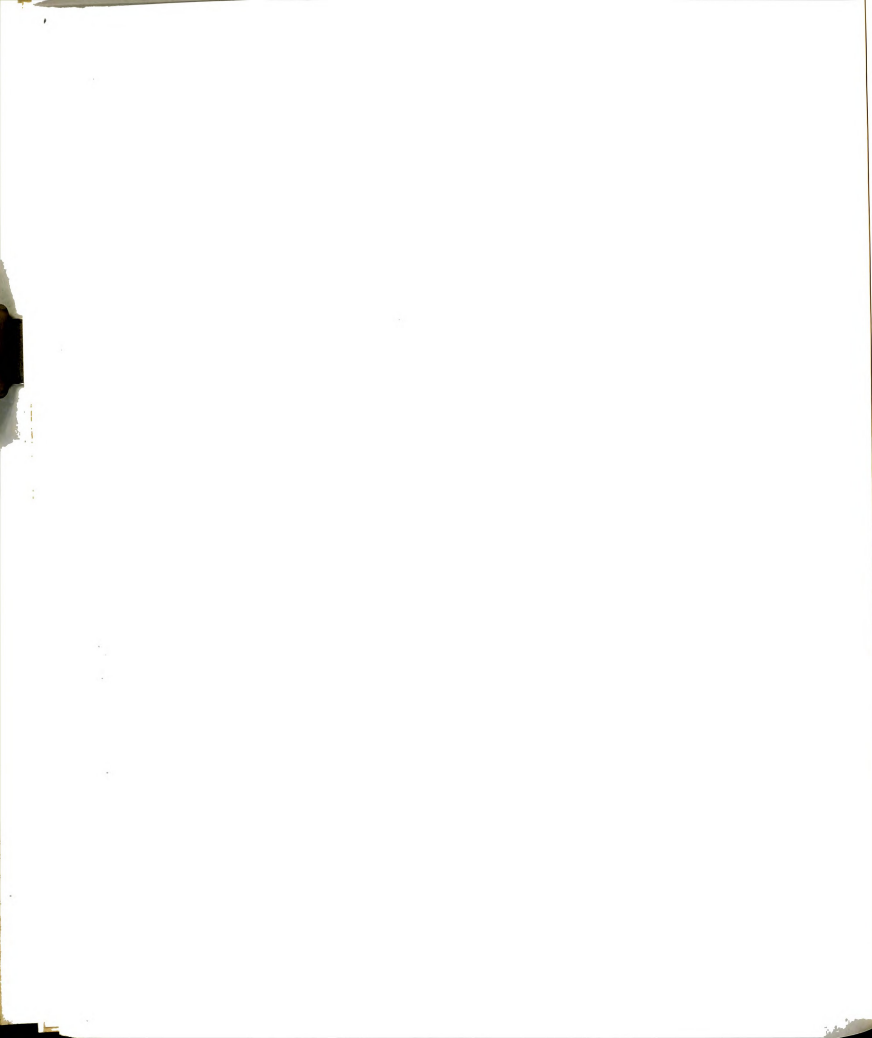




generalization that "great humility makes one worthy of being loved more."

The ensuing interplay between the two trouvères is characterized by each playing upon the words of the other, and by a growing emphasis upon a minor detail of the original question, namely, "what should one do first ("tot avant")? The ordering of events, so to speak, becomes of prime importance; Thibaut's position, as it turns out, does not at all exclude kissing the lady's lips. He would, in fact, after kissing her feet, kiss her mouth "to his heart's desire / And her body, which no one considers to be evil . . ." (ll. 39-41). Stating his true preference, Thibaut again insults Baudouin: "Mais vos estes bauz et desmesurez / Si semble bien que pou d'amour savez" (ll. 44-45).

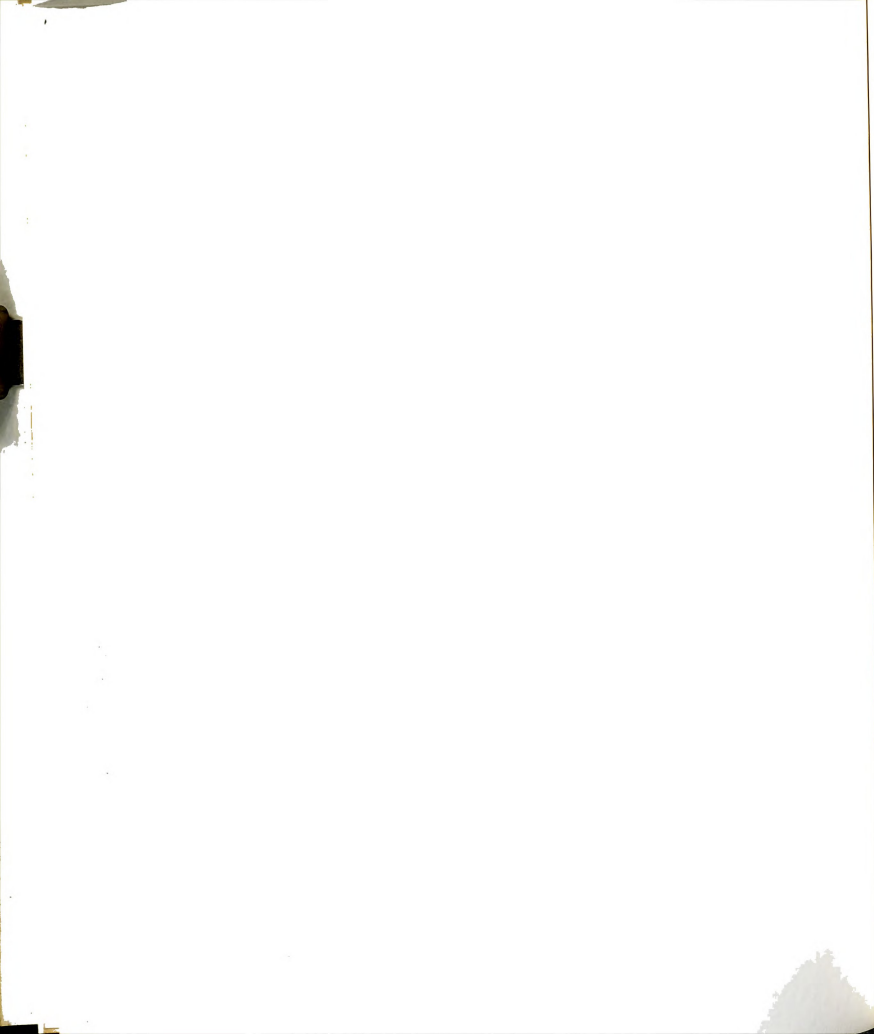
Baudouin, however, never resorts to personal diatribe directed against Thibaut. He consistently replies with generalized statements, ignoring even Thibaut's final accusation that one who chooses to act as Baudouin is a mad devil ("deables forsennez," l. 58). Instead of replying in like manner, Baudouin states only that he who is under Amors' influence cannot help but choose the lady's lips. Does that mean that Thibaut's choice would violate Amors' dictates? One cannot say, and according to the structure of the jeu, Baudouin has the last word, giving his argument



an air of finality and victory. The conclusion of this particular jeu is less open-ended than the standard jeu-parti in which each participant calls upon a supposedly sympathetic juge to pass judgment upon or to uphold the position maintained by the trouvère. In this and in several other jeux in which Thibaut participates, the opponents use the envois as an opportunity to express their own convictions concerning the rightness of their argument.

In terms of subject matter, it is interesting to note that what may appear to be a discussion aimed at determining correct courtly behavior often takes on a much more realistic tone as abstract questions or idealized ladies are dealt with in specific terms. The timeless world of the chanson where the lover waits indefinitely for the unchanging, always superlatively beautiful lady is not often the world of the jeu-parti or the débat. The poets of the jeux may speak in abstractions and generalizations, but the awareness of specific situations is not long absent and--as in the above jeu-parti--the lady that one discusses is not the perfect, unapproachable creature of the chansons but, rather, one who is approachable and human, thereby subject to change and imperfection.

In jeu-parti XXXVII, for example, Thibaut and Baudouin are discussing the relative merits of valors and



cortoisie or grant beauté as a valid basis for loving a lady. As courtly tradition has it, the choice should clearly be that the true lover loves his lady because of her worth (valors) and courtliness, although one must admit that great beauty is consistently the quality that overwhelms the trouvère in the chansons d'amour. What appears to be the opening of an intellectualized debate is not, however, discussed in purely abstract terms. As one might expect, Baudouin maintains a consistent argument, making use of generalizations to support his position that the true lover loves the lady because of her moral qualities and her comportment:

. . . bon enseignement  
 . . . cortoisie et grant honors  
 Plaisent plus a leal ami  
 Que beautez ne fresche colors  
 Ou il n'a pitié ne merci  
 [ll. 11, 13-16].

It is Thibaut that turns the discussion from the abstract to the "real" world, stating that "old ladies, uglier than dogs, might have courtesy and great wisdom but are worth nothing in bed" (ll. 33-36). Only beauty, maintains Thibaut, can drive a man mad and have such power over him that he perceives all that she does or says to him as beautiful.

Baudouin is sorely pressed to maintain his position. One cannot refute specific realities with general rules, rules that are framed in terms of unchanging abstractions.

In fact, Baudouin feels called upon to defend himself against the implication that he himself might be in love with a lady who is of high virtue but who is, perhaps, old and ugly:

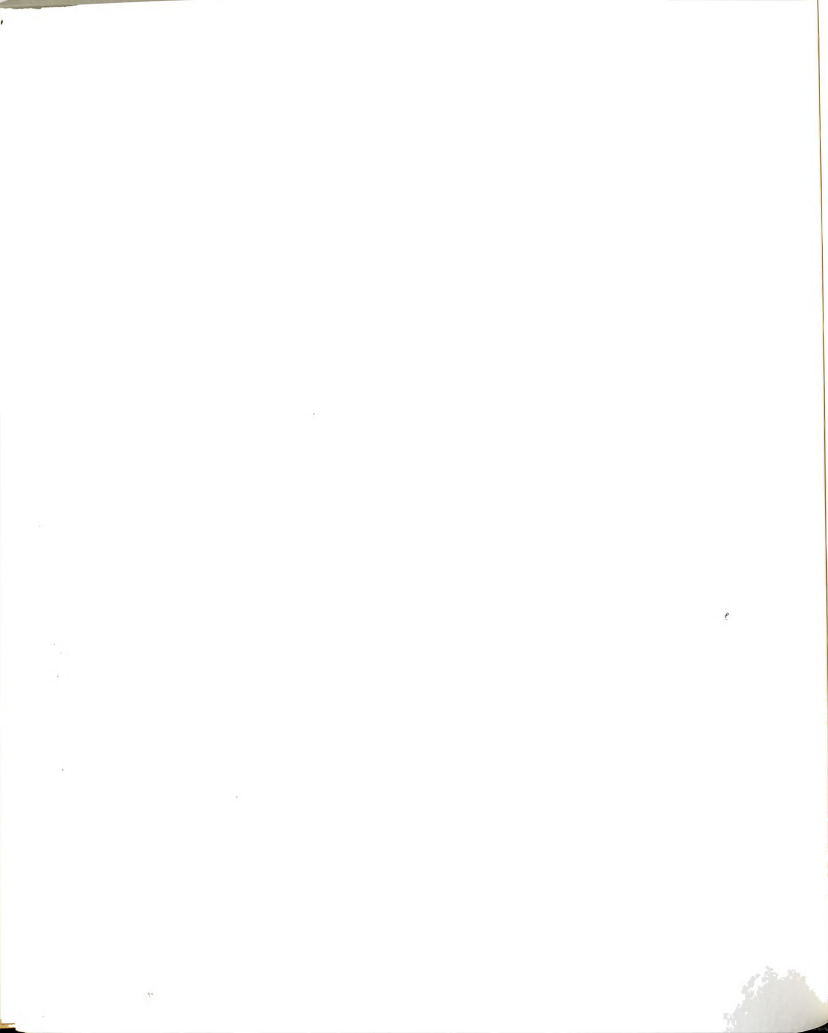
Sire, je ne dirai oian  
 Qu'a vielle soie, ne ja siens  
 Ne serai mais, si con j'entent  
 [ll. 41-43].

His own denial negates his position; beauty and youth are integral factors in one's attraction to a lady and, although Baudouin continues to try to corroborate his argument, for such are the rules of the jeu, he can do so only in terms of the abstract world, that of the chanson rather than the jeu-parti. His final statement is, in fact, based upon one of the major thematic elements of chanson tradition, the prison of love:

--Sire, li miens cuer remuër  
 Ne se veut de cele qui l'a.  
 Valors l'a fait emprisoner  
 Qui courtoisie li dona  
 [ll. 53-56].

To emphasize those values for which one should love, Baudouin makes Merit and Courtesy the keepers of the prison and he himself adopts the static pose, typical of the poet-lover of the chanson, swearing never to stray from his chosen lady.

Thibaut's conclusion, in contrast, emphasizes the relativity and transient nature of the real world in which the lover, himself subject to change, is confronted by



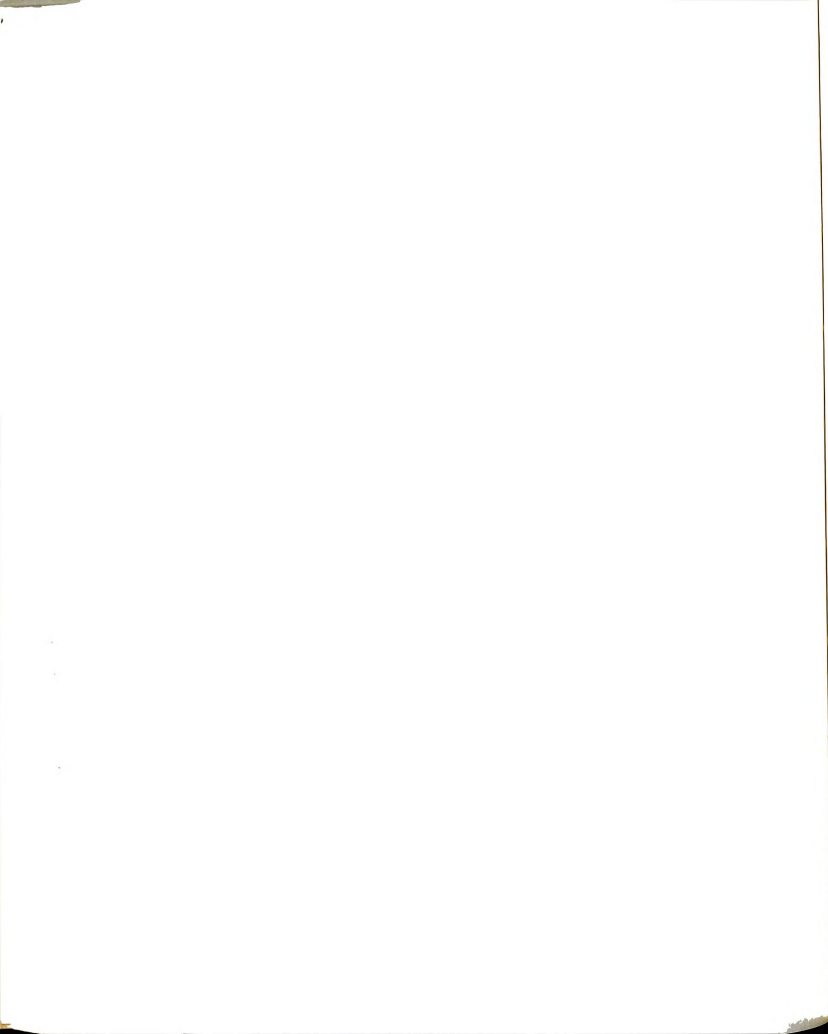
ladies of varying degrees of beauty, and where what a lady offers is of relative, not absolute, value:

--Baudoÿn, soul d'un resgarder  
 Ou d'un ris, quant le me fera,  
 La bele que je n'os nonmer  
 Vaut quanque la laide donra  
 [ll. 49-52].

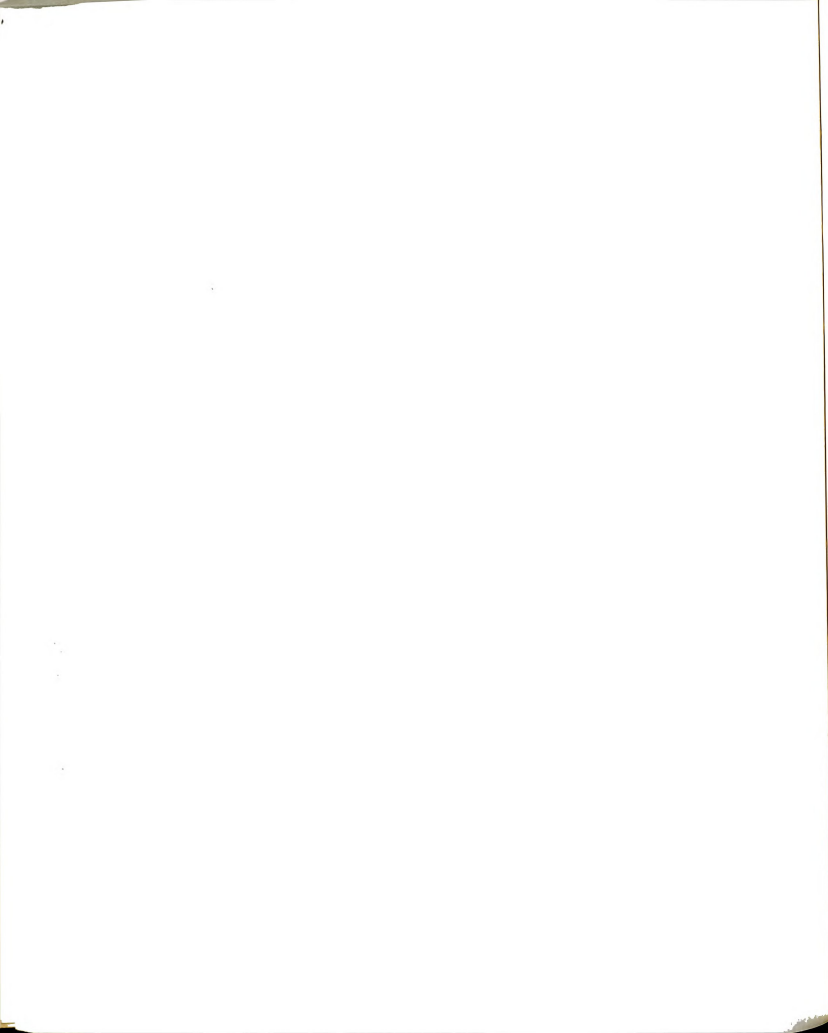
Ugliness and beauty are but two points on a continuum, qualities that are not fixed but that change over time. The previous mention of ugly old women and Baudouin's strong reaction against the implication that he might be in love with an ugly old woman suggests the realization, on the part of both participants, that the lady one loves will not always remain beautiful and young. Since it cannot be effectively denied that beauty is not the most important factor determining one's love for a lady, the ideal of courtly behavior--serving steadfastly without hope of recompense--is called into question and shown to be a course of action that is not viable for the lover in real life.

The notion of mutability and change and deterioration over time is, then, an integral part of the world of the jeux-partis and débats. Although such questions were of major philosophical importance during the Middle Ages, it is not with such serious intent that these matters are dealt with in the dialogue poems. The idea that the world is not as good as it used to be--the "ubi sunt" topos--





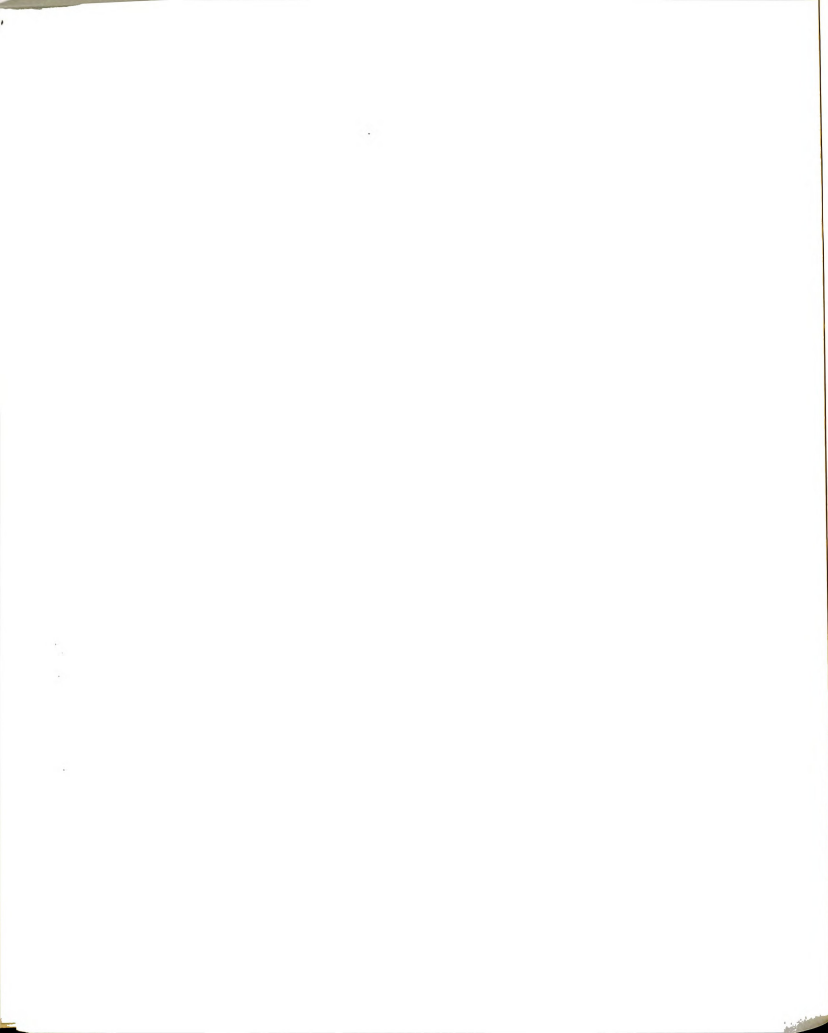
appears in only one chanson and in a débat between Phelipe and Thibaut. In neither type of poem is it the subject of serious philosophical speculation, but a comparison of the two reveals that the modes of behavior advocated in the chanson are functional only in the abstract, ideal world of the refined, grand chant courtois. In chanson III the poet-persona, like Phelipe and Thibaut in débat XLVI, perceives that the world around him has changed and no one readily "plays or sings or makes merry anymore" (ll. 1-3). He uses this observation as justification for his own behavior, namely that he too has given up singing for a while, and also as a reason to talk about anything he chooses. He chooses, predictably enough, to talk of the folly of love but, through a series of generalizations and sententiae, reaffirms his fidelity to Amors and the lady, and swears to remain faithful even unto death. Such affirmations are typical of the chanson and, if one takes the body of chansons as a whole, an integral part of an idealized, abstract system. Such a system is static and, although it allows for varying emotional responses from the suffering lover, it does not allow for any real change on the part of either the lover or the lady. Even the lover's opening statement that "no one sings anymore" is expressed in such general terms that it appears to be no more than a pretext for composition of the chanson and for his



reaffirmation of his own steadfastness in the midst of what he perceives to be a deteriorating world.

In the débat, however, the question "what has become of love?" serves as the basis of a discussion in which, through specific references to the real world of the participants, the inviability of the courtly ideal becomes more and more apparent. The partners in the débat maintain their authoritative air, using sententiae to uphold the ideals of love. A series of insightful observations of the world around them, however, makes it clear that theirs is a vain effort to reaffirm unchanging, abstract ideals in an unstable world in which knights die in tourneys, women become old, husbands become cruel, and still others busy themselves with the acquisition of material goods instead of being solely preoccupied with refining their love for a perfect lady.

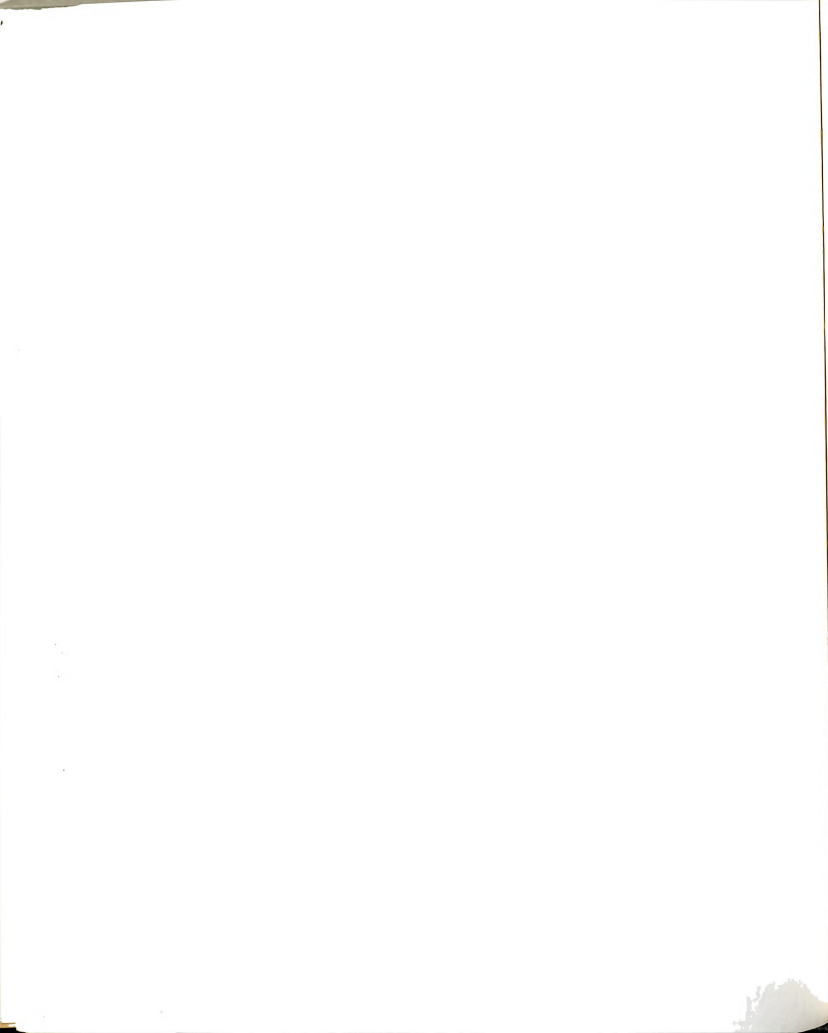
As stated earlier, the débats are less structured than the jeux-partis, and the poets are not forced to defend strictly limited points of view. Instead of having to maintain two separate, logically developed arguments, the participants in a débat are freer to explore various answers to the question being discussed and to compromise with their opponents, and are less apt to attack one another personally.



In the débat concerning the decline of love, Thibaut and Philip do indeed consider various explanations for the phenomenon. Philip states that it is probably not because of old women and cruel husbands, as some have claimed, but for lack of lovers (ameors) that "joy, merit, and tournaments decline" (ll. 11-13). Philip's choice of words, "ameors," "joie," and "valors" indicates that they are discussing the courtly ideal of love, love whose rewards are not physical but emotional--"joie"--and moral, an increase in one's worth or merit. Philip equates lovers and knights, and concludes that love is declining for lack of chevaliers.

The juxtaposition of love, valor, and joy with mention of tournaments places the discussion of the abstract ideal in the context of the "real" world, and it is Thibaut who points out that the ladies put their knights in positions of overwhelming danger in the tourneys taking place at court festivals. Thibaut accedes that love declines for lack of knights, but that can be accounted for, not through abstract reasoning, but through a specific situation:

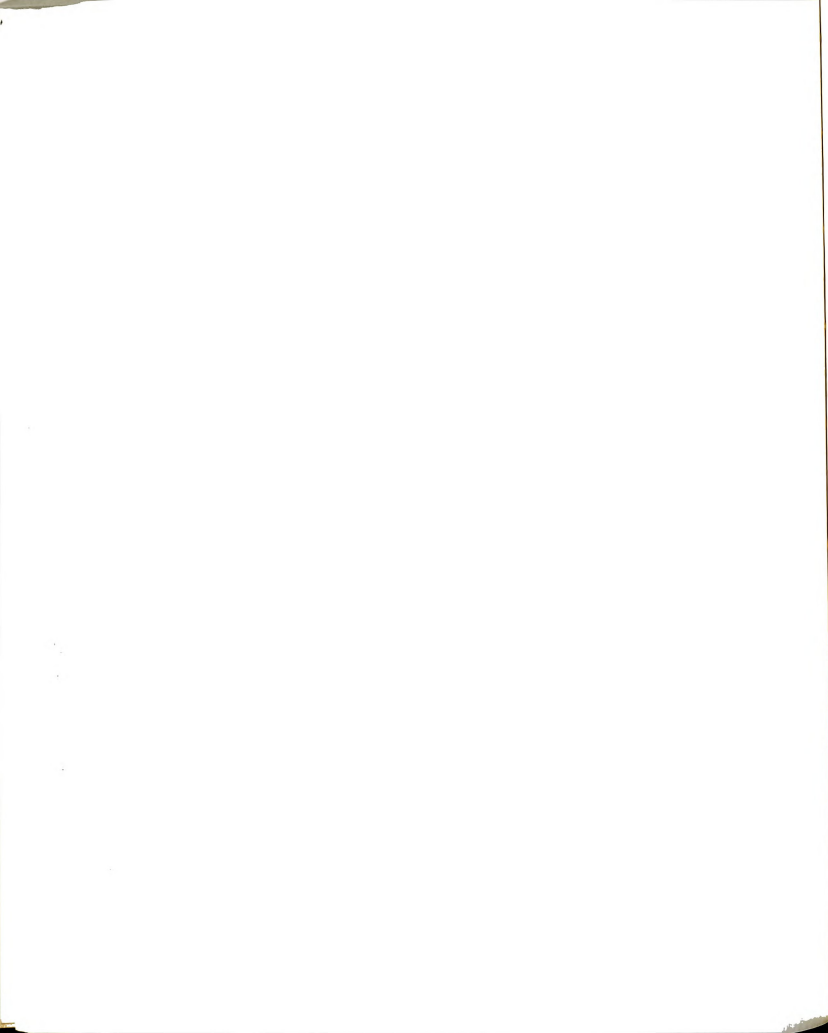
Mès tout ce fet li dangiers  
 Que dames mainent tant fort.  
 Quant il sont jusqu'a la mort,  
 Lors lor metent achesons.  
     Bons respons  
     N'i puënt trouver,  
 S'en font maint desesperer  
 [ll. 22-27].



The figurative death of the lover often spoken of in the chansons has its counterpart in real life, the dangers to which knights expose themselves in tourneys. The tests to which their ladies put them are indeed, states Thibaut, capable of driving any man to despair. One is reminded of the question sometimes raised by Thibaut's poet-persona, "Cuidiez vous que soit pechiez / D'occire son vrai amant?" (XVII, ll. 37-38); within the context of the débat, such a sin would be a serious one indeed.

Philip responds by advocating ideal behavior phrased in absolute terms: "--Sire, il s'en partent a tort / Et s'en plaignent volontiers" (ll. 28-29). He finds that the activities of knights in the everyday world fall far short of the courtly ideal; they are more concerned with acquiring property through seizure and with building houses. Such behavior is certainly not in accord with that of the true lover, but then, interjects Thibaut, it is understandable since the ladies are so cruel. Far from entirely rejecting the high ideals of courtly love, Thibaut contends that it is fitting that ladies be demanding since, by making their lovers aspire more ardently, the lovers' merit increases. Thibaut's position is, however, more moderate than Philip's, who would have the lovers languish indefinitely for their ladies who "make the world worthwhile" (l. 58). In the world view of Thibaut, however, lovers are





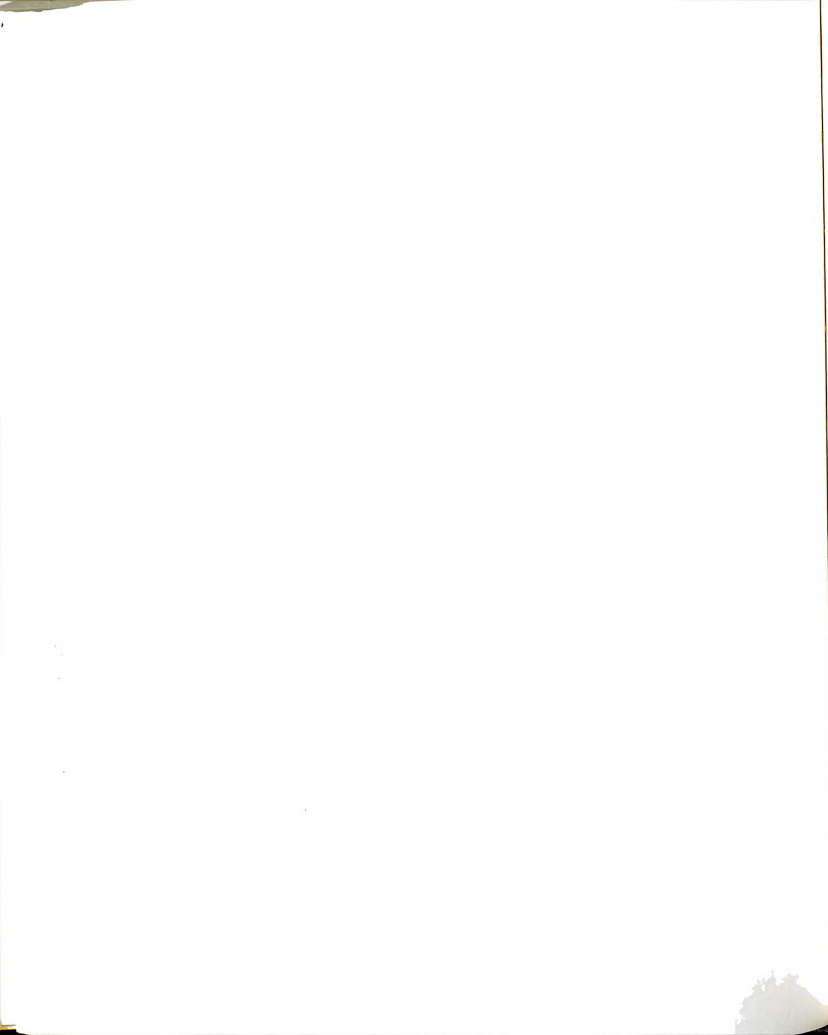
subject to human frailties and their limitations preclude such interminable service. Neither poet seems willing to renounce high courtly ideals completely, but in a world where material concerns prevail and, more importantly, where knights must face real dangers to their lives, such ideals can hardly be maintained as realistic in spite of the authoritative statements proclaimed by both trouvères.

In fact, the débat (XLVIII) in which courtly ideals are supported with the highest degree of conviction is one which is set, not in the real world, but in a dream; the dialogue is an exchange between Thibaut and Amors, the goddess<sup>21</sup> of love. Once again, as in the chansons, the characters function in a static world that does not allow for change and in which human frailties are not accepted.

Such weaknesses as inconsistency, levity, and the desire to do one's own will are, moreover, considered to be great crimes for which the poet-persona trembles in terror before Amors, his sovereign and his judge. The lover, as has been evident in so many chansons, emphasizes the lord-vassal relationship, suggesting that since Amors has not fulfilled her rightful obligations to her servant, he wishes to formally quit her service and divorce himself from her entourage ("gent," l. 15). Love, however, is an

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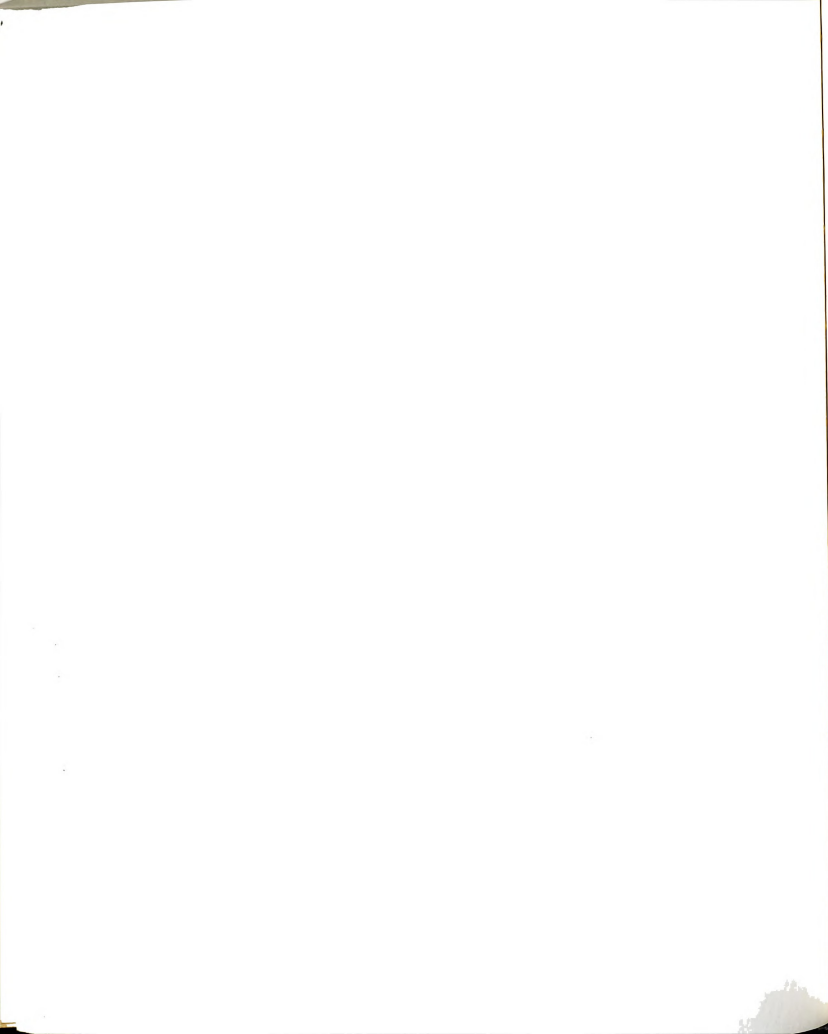
<sup>21</sup> Amors, usually considered the god of love, a masculine figure, is clearly considered feminine in this débat; Thibaut addresses her as "Dame" in l. 11.



overpowering, irresistible mistress and, moreover, one whose rewards and largesse are infinite; the lover cannot help but swear everlasting fidelity to her, humbly placing his body and his life at her command.

The turmoil, peril, and fear experienced by the poet-persona in the opening stanzas when faced with his courtly shortcomings, his human weaknesses, suggest the imbalance created when the "human" and "ideal" worlds are juxtaposed. That which is imperfect and subject to change must be refined through renunciation of self and steadfast service; only through the swearing of undying fidelity, a pledge that the real lover could not possibly fulfill, is balance restored in this débat. In an attitude of unfulfilled hope and desire, the lover bows before the goddess to renew his fealty, once again reaffirming the values and attitudes appropriate to the world of the chanson, the dream world which envisions perfection and supreme joy.

The joys envisioned in the jeux-partis, as has already been suggested, are much less ethereal in nature and the love questions do not center upon the reswearing of interminable bonds of fealty. Love's recompense and the casuistry of love are tied to very specific and often quite problematical questions. Questions that have no clearly defined, satisfactory answer are often described by the opponents as "mauvès gieu" and in such cases, the



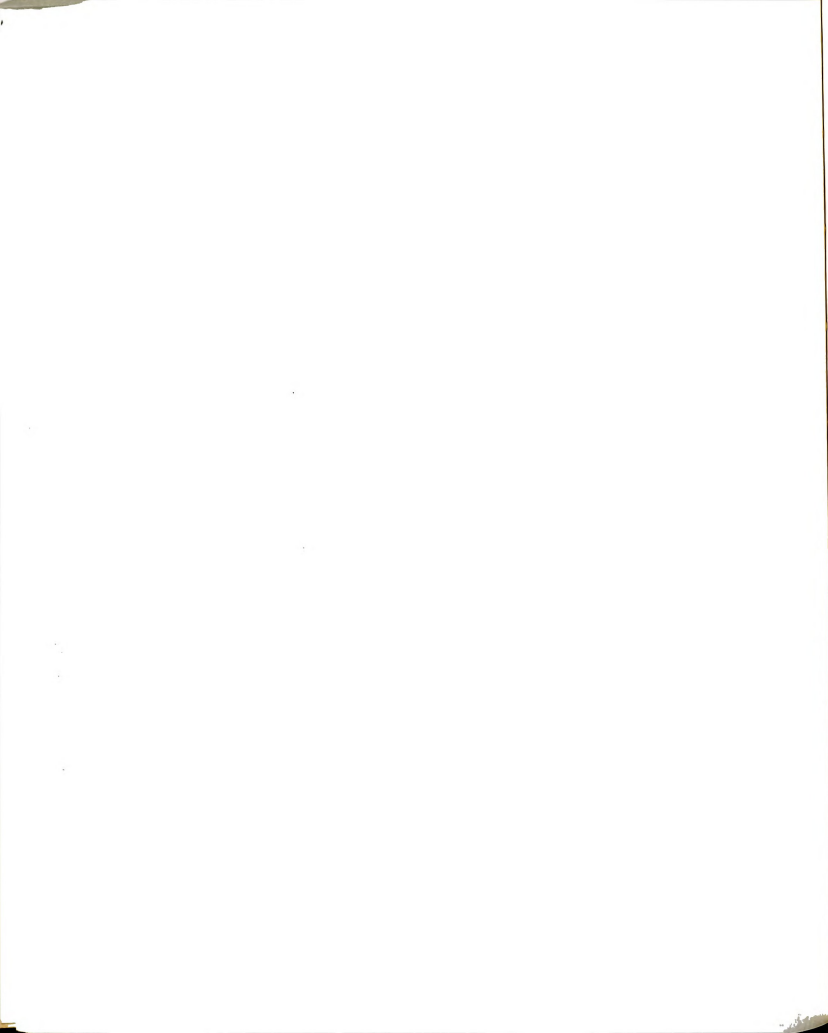
adversaries are sometimes prone to using biting personal insults as part of their defense in a particular point of view. One such dilemma is the question posed by Raoul in jeu-parti XLIII:

--Sire, loëz moi a choisir  
 D'un gieu! Li quels doit melz valoir:  
 Ou souvent s'amie sentir  
 Besier, acoler, sanz veoir,  
 Sanz parler et sanz plus avoir  
 A touz jorz mès de ses amors,  
 Ou parler et veoir touz jorz,  
 Sanz sentir et sanz atouchier?

[Dites] du quel la joie est plus granz  
 [ll. 1-8, 10].

Thibaut's efforts to uphold the more courtly position of gazing upon the lady and exchanging sweet words of love are countered by Raoul's accusation that Thibaut's choice is not based upon refined intentions but upon the fact that Thibaut's fat, stuffed stomach would keep him from enjoying the lady's embraces. Unlike Baudouin of previous jeux, Thibaut does not simply continue to reaffirm courtly values, but chooses instead to adopt Raoul's method of argumentation, stating that Raoul would be sorely distressed if, in the dark, the lady took hold of Raoul's staff in the midst of an embrace.

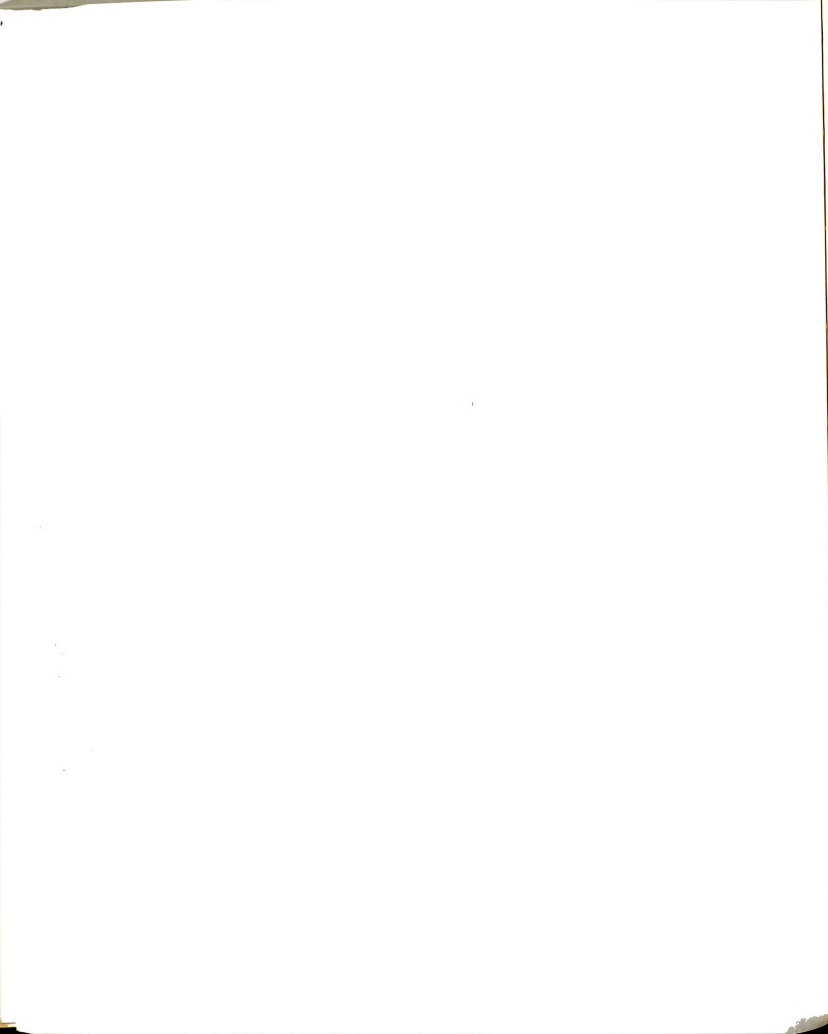
It is difficult to determine whether Thibaut is referring to a type of cane or crutch that Raoul used in order to walk, or whether Thibaut is making a derogatory comment about part of Raoul's anatomy. It seems obvious,



though, from Raoul's strong reaction that the remark is taken quite personally. Raoul's response is to call Thibaut a lowly cur who is not above biting the staff with which he, Raoul, supports himself--or "leans upon" depending upon one's interpretation of "aloit apuiant" (l. 48). Given an opportunity, however, Raoul states that he could give up his staff, therefore meaning his "crutch," more easily than Thibaut could rid himself of his fat stomach.

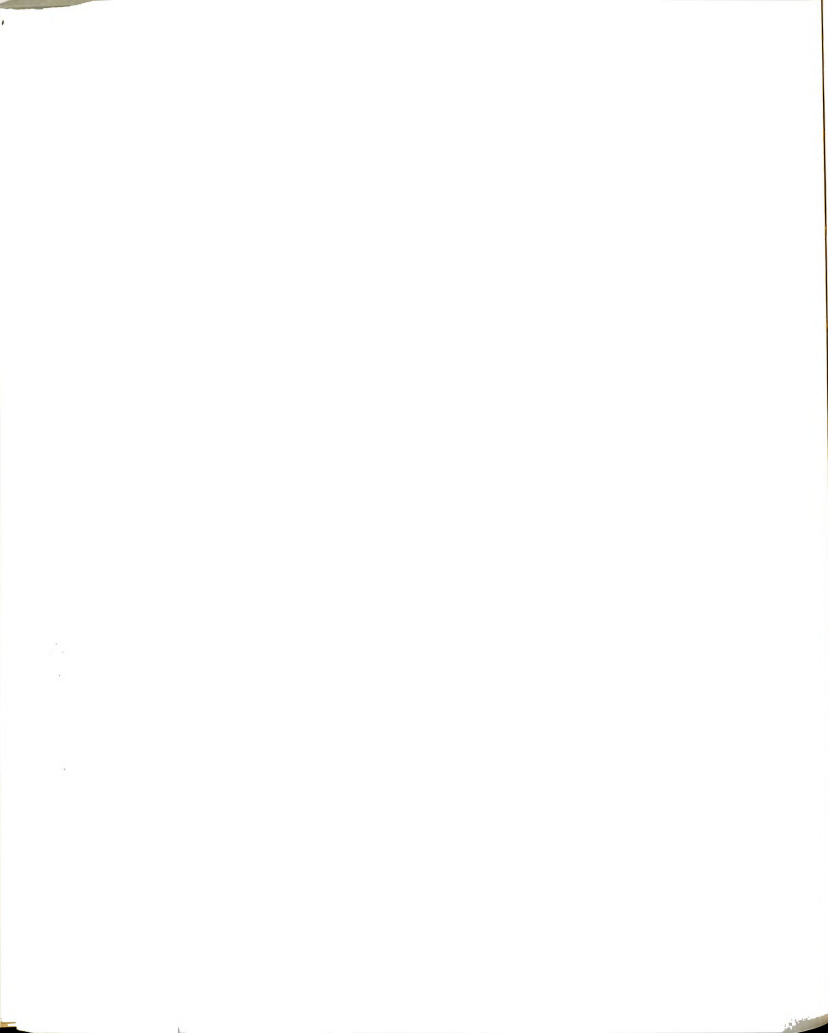
Thibaut seeks to restore the discussion to a more elevated level in the final stanza, stating that such an exchange between the two poets would only amuse corrupt or common people, as indeed it probably would. The inference that the jeu appeals to the baser instincts appropriate to the vilaine gent is another indication that the world of the jeu is distinct from that of the aristocratic chanson. Within the context of the jeu-parti and the débat there is room for both courtly and chevalresque points of view. The performers, be they kings, counts, clerics, or trouvères of common birth, uphold either standard at will; authoritative statements, generalizations, and sententiae are used in defense of each. The juxtaposition of the two distinctly divergent points of view and the unpredictability of the poets' choices and attitudes are the source of laughter and, on a more reflective level, the distinct realization that courtly ideals are not practicable in a world subject to change and the mutations of time.



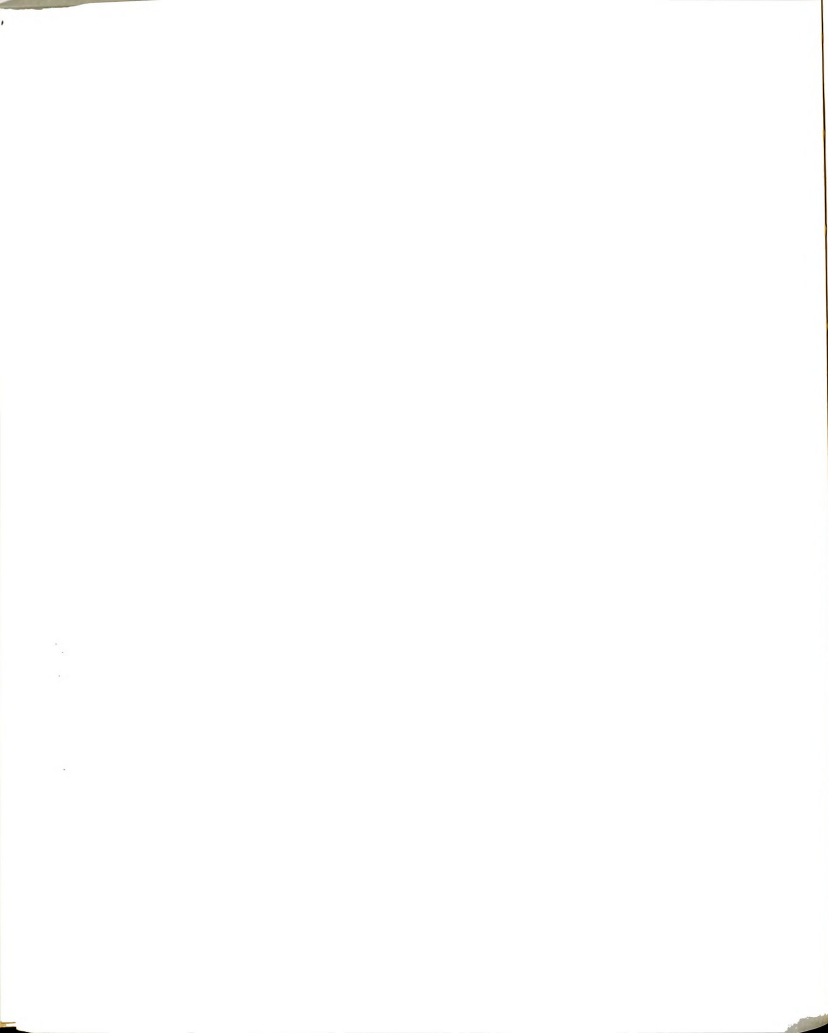


It should be pointed out that the major elements of the jeux-partis and débats--their entertainment value as humor, their subject matter, and a major portion of the argumentation in the form of sententiae--are dependent upon the preexisting tradition of the chanson d'amour. The subject matter of the chanson, its attitudes and ideals, are never far from the minds of the medieval audience, the same audience who hears the plump Thibaut speak of the torments of love that he suffers from the "Dame," his partner in débat XLVII. Thibaut's preoccupation with death, a variation on the mort-par-amour motif of the chanson, is countered by the lady's remark that he hardly seems to be pining away. The subsequent reply by the roi-chansonnier is, itself, a contradiction of the standard courtly stereotype that one who is in love grows thin through loss of sleep and lack of appetite. Thibaut states that a sense of well-being derived from loving the lady has caused him to grow corpulent.

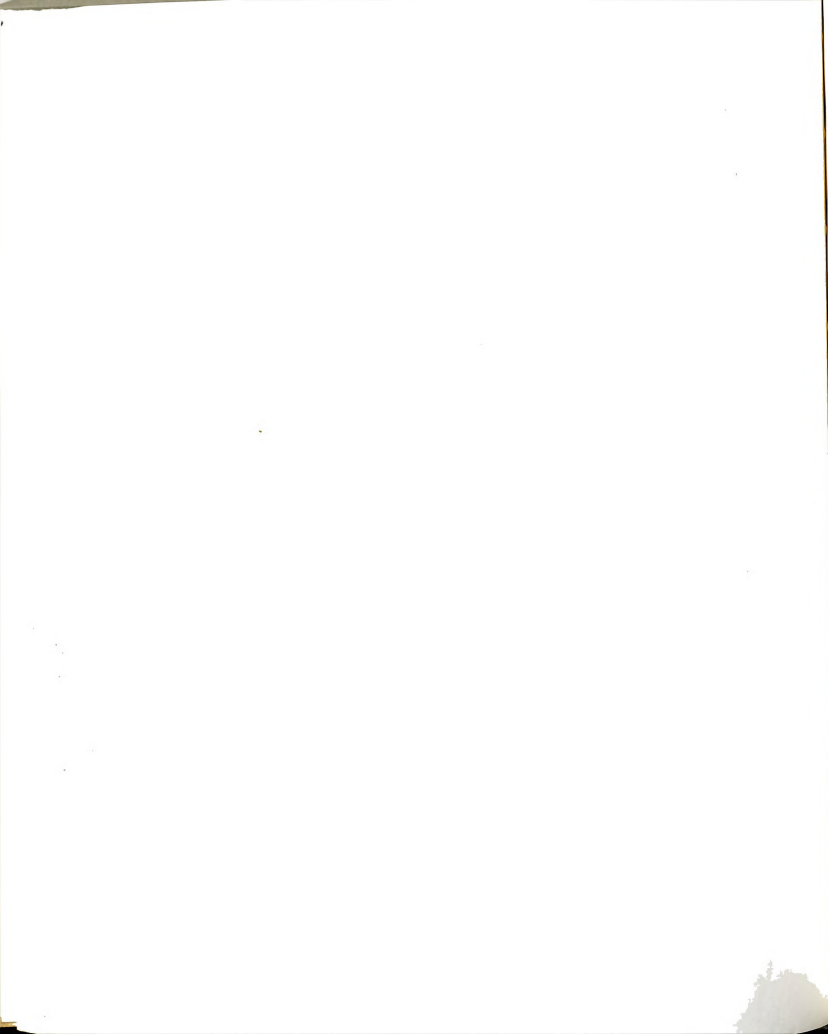
Humor arises also from the juxtaposition, explicit or implicit, of courtly and chevalresque sententiae. In addition to examples already cited, one finds Thibaut declaring that one who does not take his lady directly to bed knows little about love (XLI, ll. 33-34), that, far from being the ideal master, Amors is mad and no one should follow his will (XLIX, ll. 28-29), and that, occasionally, one must choose to do one's own will instead of fulfilling the lady's wishes.



Such proclamations are counterbalanced by sententiae defending courtly values drawn from the well-established, well-integrated system of the chanson. One might assume that the collision of the two systems--justifiably termed a collision since the values expressed therein are incompatible--was intentionally designed only to amuse. On a deeper level, however, it is difficult to determine to what an extent courtly clichés are mouthed with an intent to ridicule them and, on the other hand, to what degree the poets are expressing a truly felt nostalgia for the highly structured, ideal world where, even though the lover was kept waiting indefinitely, infinite joy was promised to him at the end of his service. Which voice is stronger in the jeux, the one that wishes to sustain the deeply-rooted, idealized vision or the one that declares that love really is more physical than spiritual, that faithful service is absurd, and that there really are no transcendent values for which to strive? The difficulty in such a determination is that both are argued for with the same insistence and, moreover, with the same modes of argument, excluding, of course, the more personal invective weighed between adversaries in the jeux. One can only say with certainty that the tone of authority is consistent from poet-lover to joueur in the dialogue poems. Only its application has changed, from one which pledges fidelity



to an ideal, to one which maintains at will and with equal conviction that either type of relationship, courtois or chevalresque, is valid.



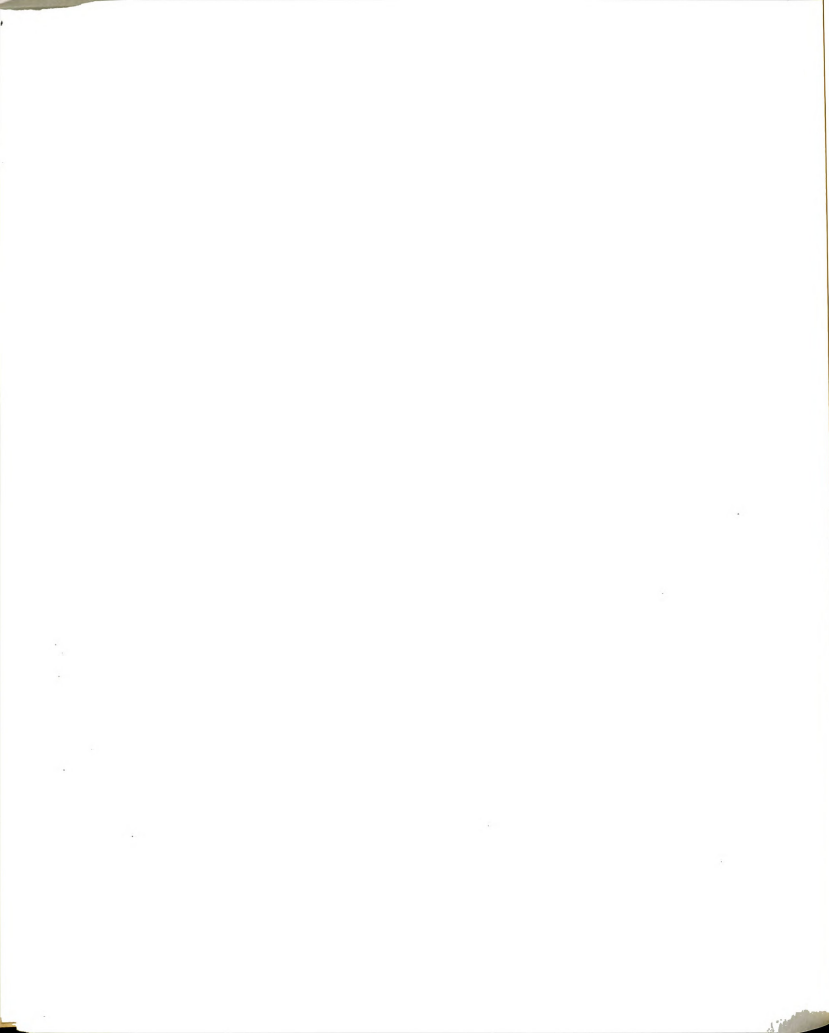
## CHAPTER V

DOUCE DAME, BIAUS SIRE DEUS, VERS

VOUS ME SUI GUENCHIZ

With the exception of the chansons de croisade dating from the years 1238-1239, Thibaut's religious verse is believed to have been composed near the end of his life. As such, it may rightly be considered the culmination of his poetic achievement, a continuation and refinement of themes, imagery, stylistic devices and attitudes evident in the two major bodies of poetry previously discussed, the chansons d'amour and the dialogue poems. Certainly the tone of authority used sporadically by the assertive yet humble poet-lover of the chansons and consistently by the spirited Thibaut in his debates with other poets, characterizes the more polemical religious poems as well, the chansons de croisade and the serventois religieux. The religious verse, however, shares an even stronger bond with the chanson tradition: both bodies of poetry reveal a common aspiration toward a higher ideal--one secular, the other religious--and common modes of expression, refined imagery and extended metaphors. There is, moreover, a commonality of hierarchical relationships evident in both the chansons d'amour and

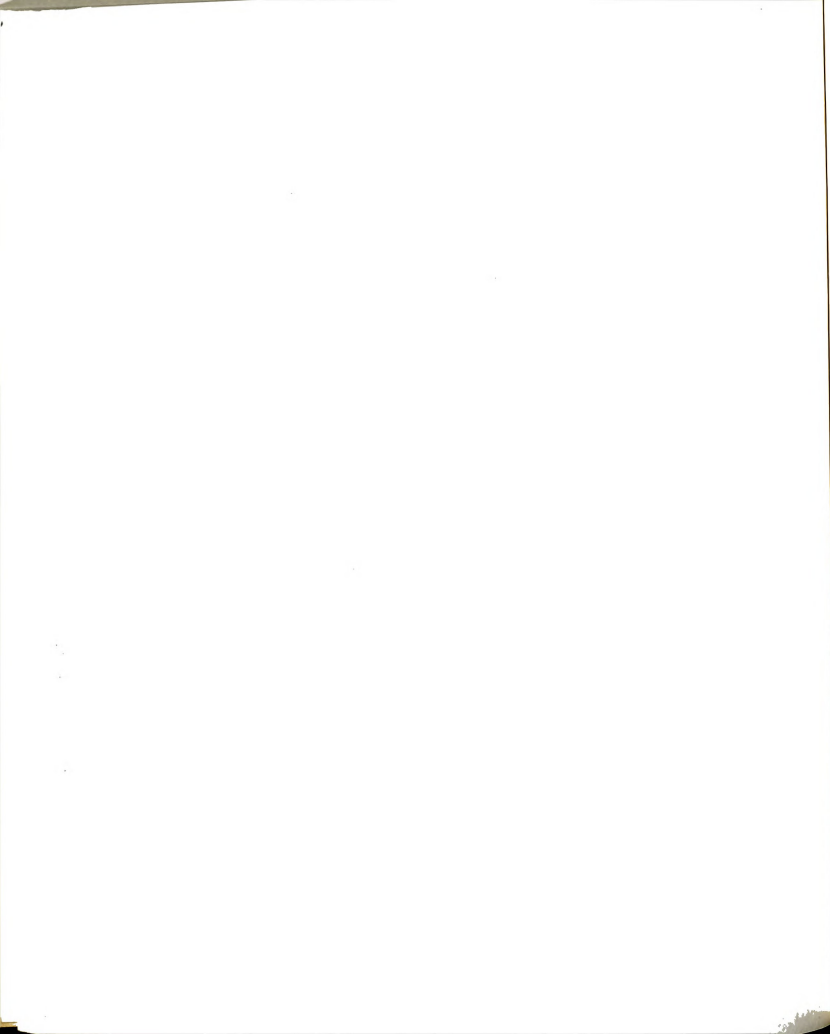




the religious verse. The feudal relationship implicit in the chansons, the lover's subservience to his lord, Amors, and to his ideal lady, is easily adapted to a religious context, transposed, as it were, to a higher plane whereby the poet-polemicist and humble servant of God pledges fealty to his divine master, worshipping as well the ideal lady par excellence, the sinless, chaste, virgin mother of God.

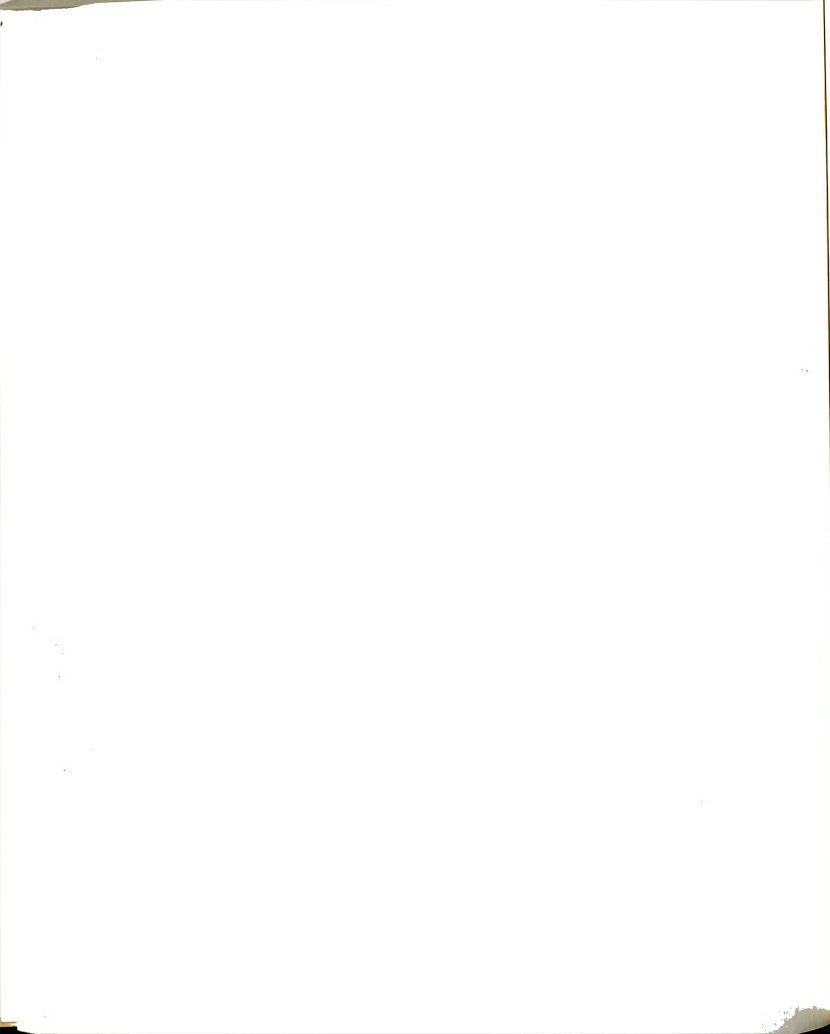
Other parallels between the chansons and religious verse include the rôle and stance required of the poet-persona. Just as the courtly lover often functions as spokesperson for his master, Amors, the poet-persona of the religious chansons acts as interpreter of God's will on earth to those who might not share the speaker's privileged vision. Both courtly and religious verse call upon those initiated to the higher realities of love and divine service to transcend their imperfect human nature either by actively combatting evil in a fallen world, or by refining the imperfections within themselves by consistently striving to pattern their behavior in terms of a higher ideal. Since the ideal is unattainable in both cases, the poet-persona can only hope to restate his intentions, and through such reiterations, maintain the steadfast stance required of the true servant of Amors or of a celestial lord.

Although the religious verse reveals itself to be deeply rooted in the chanson tradition both stylistically



and thematically, there are, nevertheless, points of divergence between the secular and religious realms. The notion of paradise and the concept of folie, for example, take on new significance when placed within a religious context. The characteristics attributed to the courtly and celestial sovereigns--Amors and the lady versus Deus and the Blessed Virgin--also serve as a major point of contrast between the secular and religious verse for, although the respective hierarchical relationships are structurally identical, the personages functioning within the relationships are not. The poet-persona's choice, whether to seek to win the love of an earthly lady who is "ideal" in her own way or whether to renounce Amors' service entirely and strive for a still higher ideal is clearly not without conflict, for his attitude toward the courtly lady is one of reverence as toward a celestial being. An examination of the lover's statements in the chansons and in the religious verse reveals the intricacies and difficulties of such a choice, and, at times when the ambiguities are resolved, dogmatic rigidity--the "voice of authority" at its strongest.

In the chansons d'amour, it is evident that the lover perceives his relationship to the lady within a religious context. Although the suffering of love seems to be a heavy penance ("penitance," I, l. 6) imposed upon



him, the lover, nonetheless roundly condemns those who would seek to reproach his courtly lord, Amors, in terms applicable to the avowed enemies of Christendom.

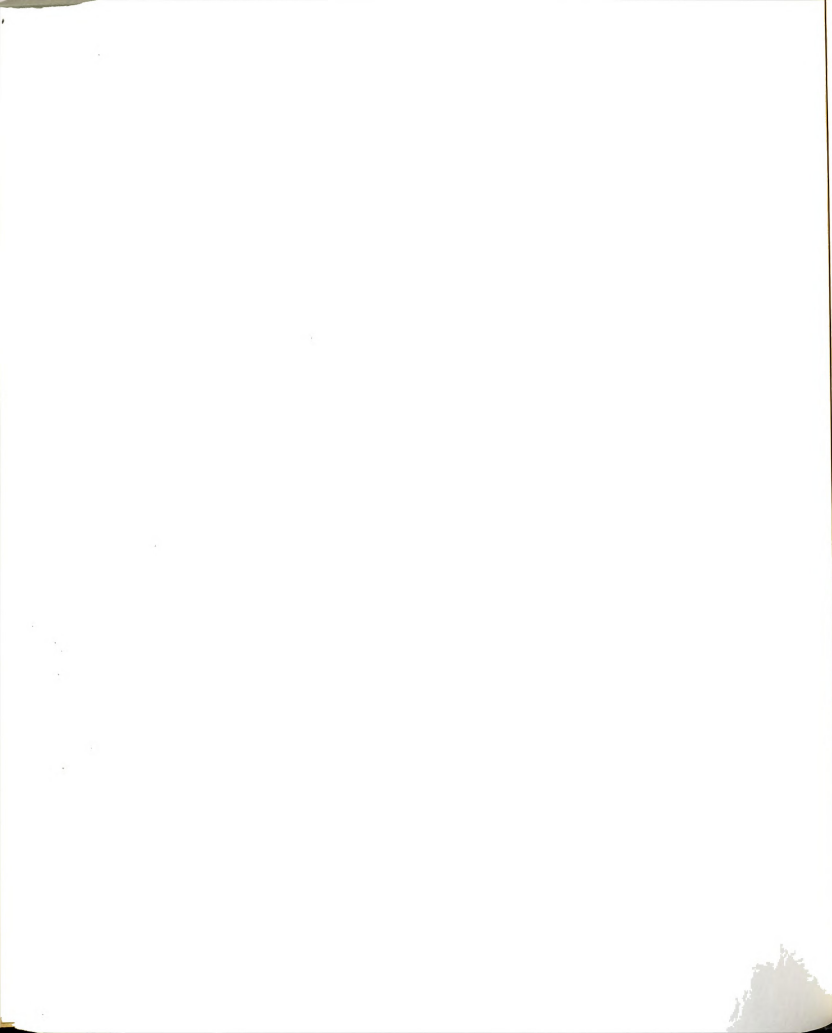
Mort Mahon!  
 Qui d'amer qiert acheson  
 Por esmai ne pour dotance!  
 E! é! é!  
 [I, ll. 25-28].

The lover's righteous indignation against such heretics is reinforced by his perception of himself as a martyr for the cause of love, one whose suffering is not a meaningless, ritualistic penance but, rather, a means toward the salvation of his soul:

S'ele me fet languir  
 Et vois jusqu'au morir,  
 M'ame en sera sauvee  
 [XV, ll. 31-33].

The idea of martyrdom--the mort-par-amour theme--and the salvation which such death assures, necessarily connotes attainment of Paradise. The paradise that the courtly lover envisions, however, is not the bodyless state of eternal ecstasy in which one adores the Godhead in rapt devotion but, on the contrary, a place where one enjoys the eternal company of one's beloved. Like Aucassin, Thibaut's poet-persona declares that he has no desire to enter a heavenly paradise if his lady is not there also:

Et je me doi garder a escient  
 De corocier li, qu'estre ne voudroie  
 En Paradis, s'ele n'i estoit moie  
 [XXV, ll. 12-14].



Expanding upon this notion of Paradise which differs so greatly from the concept of the afterlife proposed by the theology of the Church, the lover suggests that God would, in fact, be unfaithful to his promises if he did not allow the lover and lady to enjoy each other's favors there without restriction:

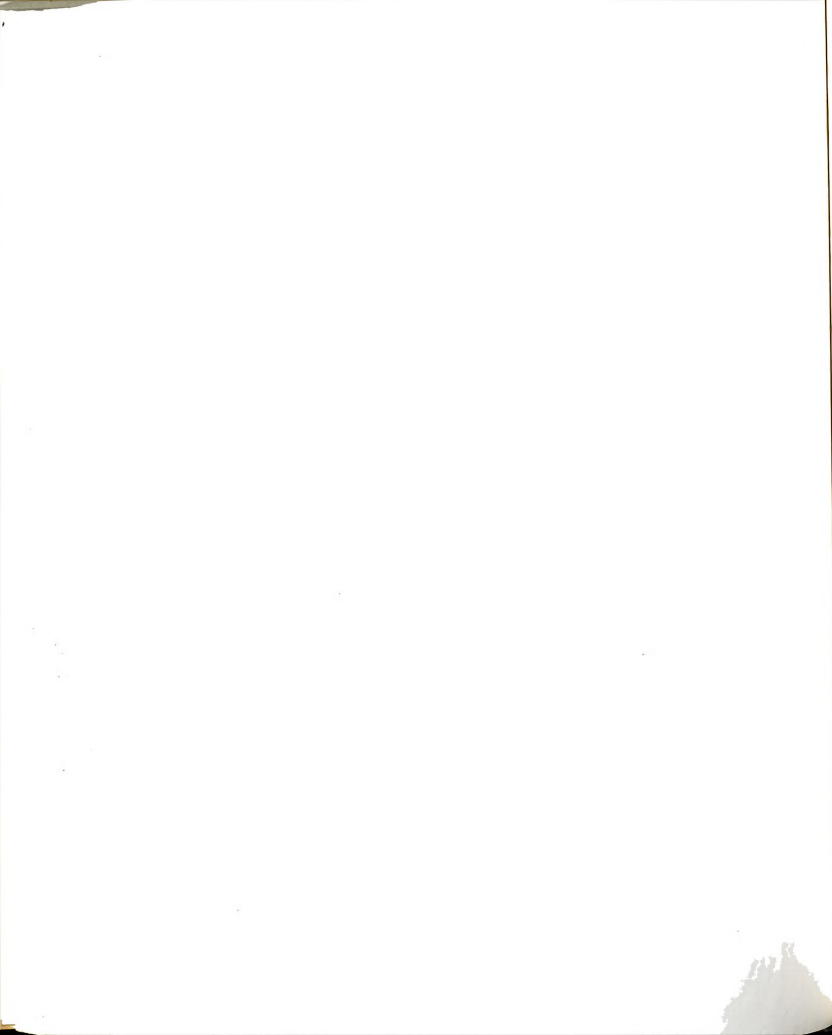
Deus nous pramet que, qui porra ataindre  
 A Paradis, q'il porra souhedier  
 Quanq'il voudra; ja puis ne l'estuet plaindre,  
 Que il l'avra tantost sanz delaier;  
 Et, se je puis Paradis gaaignier,  
 La avrai je ma dame sanz contraindre,  
 Ou Deus fera sa parole remaindre  
 [XXV, ll. 15-21].

The logic of the lover's argument, namely that Deus as seigneur must keep his word, is directly related to analogous situations in the chansons wherein the lover presses Amors or the lady to fulfill their feudal obligations to him. Such urgings are often presented in terms appropriate to commercial dealings, on as mundane a level as one man owing money to another (chanson XXXII, ll. 31-34). Indeed, the lover seems to view the earning of his place in Paradise as a commercial venture:

Dame, se je servisse Deus autant  
 Et priasse de verai cuer entier  
 Con je faz vous, je sai certainement  
 Qu'en Paradis n'eüst autel loier  
 [XXI, ll. 21-24].

In the value system appropriate to the courtly lover, whereby the lady's favors and the joys of service to Amors are of supreme worth, such a rented altar in Paradise is





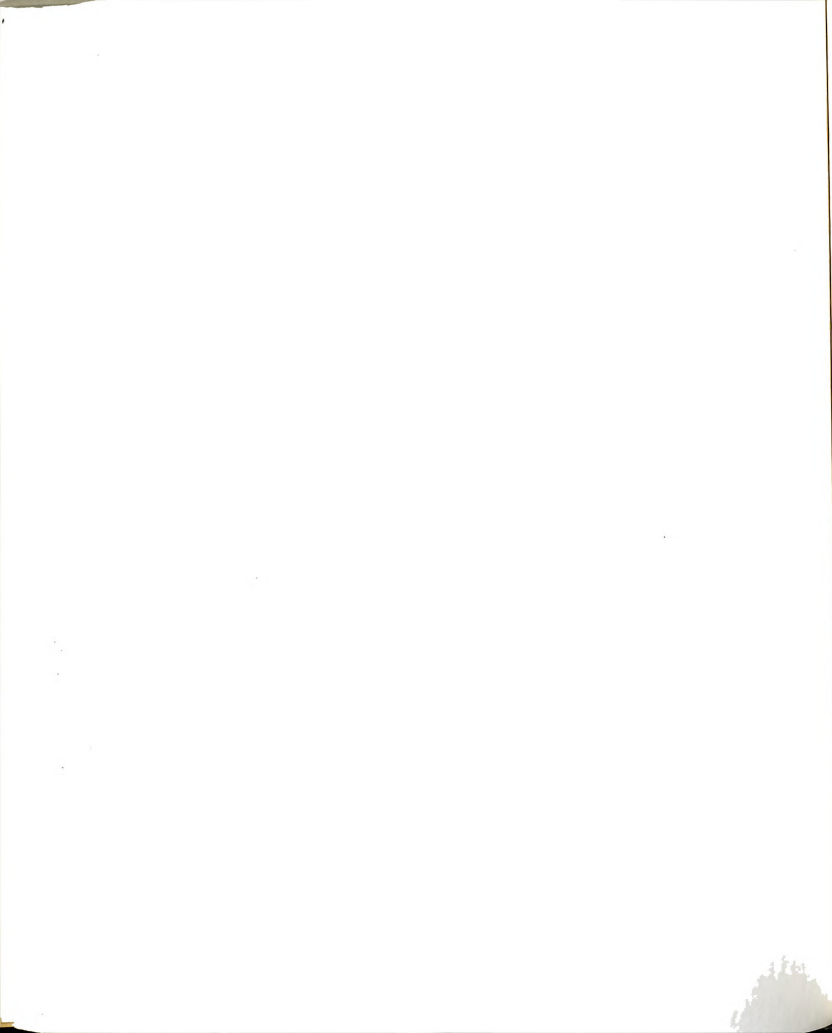
nothing in comparison to the lady's smile. In the envoi the poet-persona, addressing the lady under the senhal, Aygle, emphasizes that his major rôle is that of the true lover and states:

Aygle, j'ai touz jorz apris  
A estre loiaus amis,  
Si me vaudroit melz un ris  
De vous qu'autre paradis  
[XXI, ll. 51-54].

For the poet-persona of the religious verse, who considers his major rôle to be that of servant of God, the attainment of Paradise is a primary concern but, again, one's admission to the kingdom is not without its transactional aspects. In crusade song LIII the poet-persona enjoins his fellow men to take up the cross and risk death as equal compensation for the death suffered by Christ for the sins of men. One's admission into Paradise is, moreover, contingent upon one's participation in battle against the foes of Christianity:

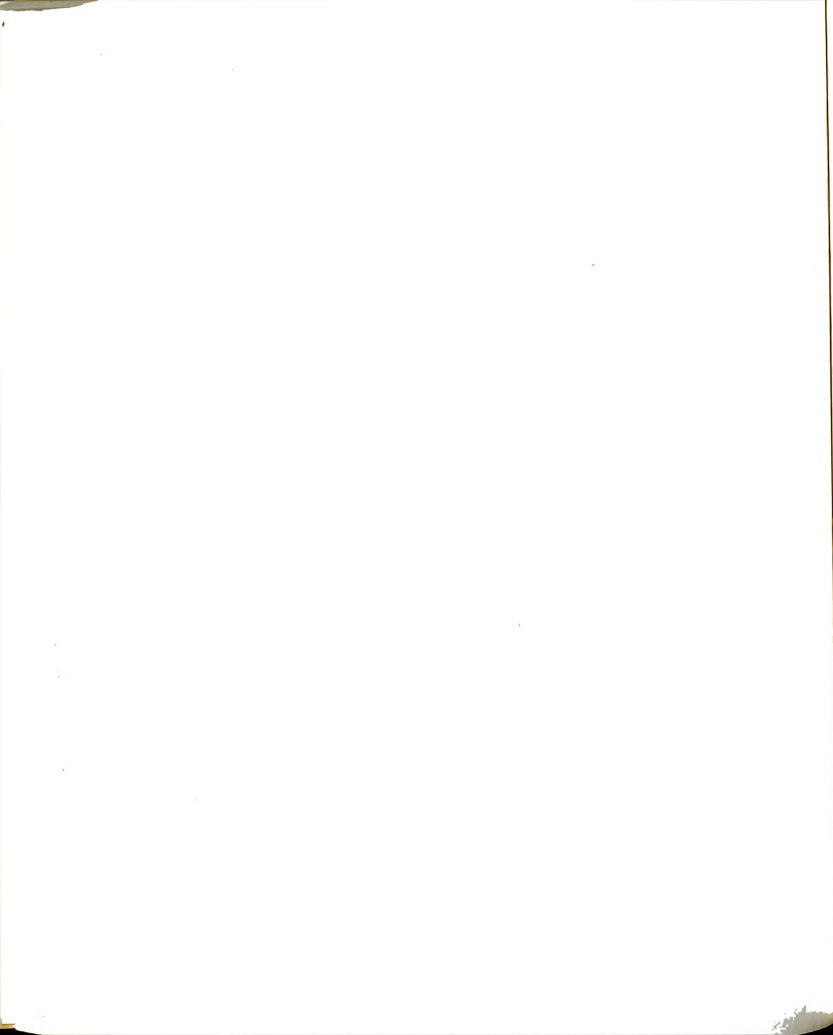
Seigneurs, sachiez: qui or ne s'en ira  
En cele terre ou Deus fu morz et vis  
Et qui la croiz d'Outremer ne prendra,  
A paine mès ira en Paradis  
[LIII, ll. 1-4].

The heavenly paradise that the poet-persona envisions is not dealt with directly at great length in the religious verse. Through the description of a Last Judgment scene and in a plea expressed by the poet-persona in the same crusade song it is clear that the delights of Paradise



consist of seeing God and the Blessed Virgin. The emphasis placed upon the visual aspect of heavenly bliss is not surprising; "seeing God" is, after all, the theological reward promised to the pure of heart. More importantly, however, concentration upon sight as essential to celestial joy may be seen as a direct extension of the notion of joy derived from the courtly tradition. It is the experience of seeing the lady that overwhelms the lover and represents a turning point in his life. The subsequent process of remembrance, involving contemplation of the lady with the eyes of his heart also brings the lover sublime joy and enables him to overcome, in a spiritual manner, physical separation from his beloved. Likewise, the inability to gaze upon the lady's beauty directly causes the lover great distress, constituting, as it were, exclusion from paradise, the courtly version of hell.

In the religious verse, hell is a dark malodorous prison to be feared by those who refuse to abandon their vices or those who will not forego the comforts of their homes and families in order to embark upon the crusades. The devil is seen to be a wily fisherman, catching many men with his irresistible bait, covetousness, pride, debauchery and wickedness. The latter three temptations, personified, act as the devil's boatsmen, filling his huge net with unwitting sinners:

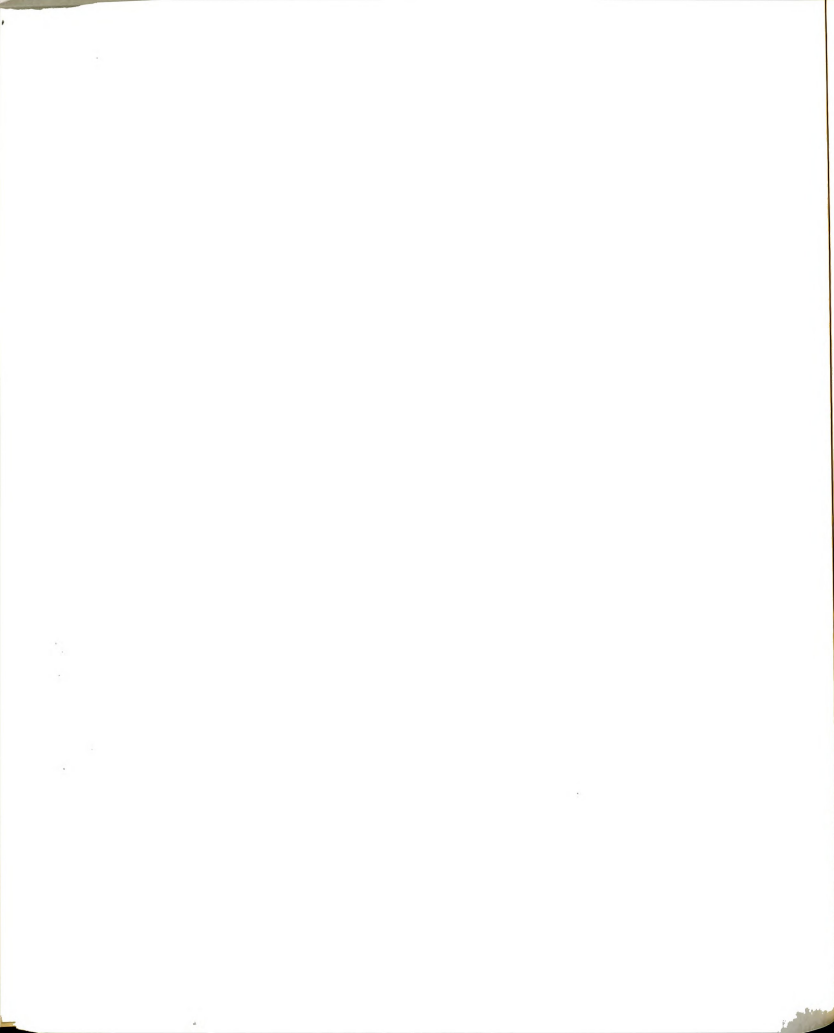


Deables a geté pour nous sesir  
 Quatre aimeçons aoschiez de torment:  
 Couvoitise lance premierement  
 Et puis Orgueil pour sa grant roiz enplier;  
 Luxure va le batel trainant,  
 Felonie les gouverne et les nage.  
 Ensi peschant s'en viennent au rivage . . .  
 [LX, ll. 28-34].

The personification of the sins as boatmen is not unlike that of the unicorn poem in which Amors appoints Beauty, Fair Seeming and Danger as doorkeepers of his prison, and against whose assaults the lover was virtually powerless. In both cases the poet-persona is dependent upon help that must come from outside himself; in the chanson he turns to the lady, in the religious song, to God himself. The situation of the poet-persona in the religious poem (LX) is analogous to that commonly experienced by the courtly lover in still another way, namely that the wicked of this world, like so many counterfeit coins, are indistinguishable from the good:

Les peudonmes doit on tenir mult chiers  
 La ou il sont et servir et amer,  
 Mès a paines en puet on nus trouver,  
 Car il sont mès si com li faus deniers  
 Que on ne puet en trebuchet verser,  
 Ainz le gete on sanz coing et sanz balance;  
 Torz et pechiez en eus fine et commence.  
 Faus tricheor, bien vous devroit menbrer  
 Que Deus prendra de vois cruël venjance!  
 [LX, ll. 37-45].

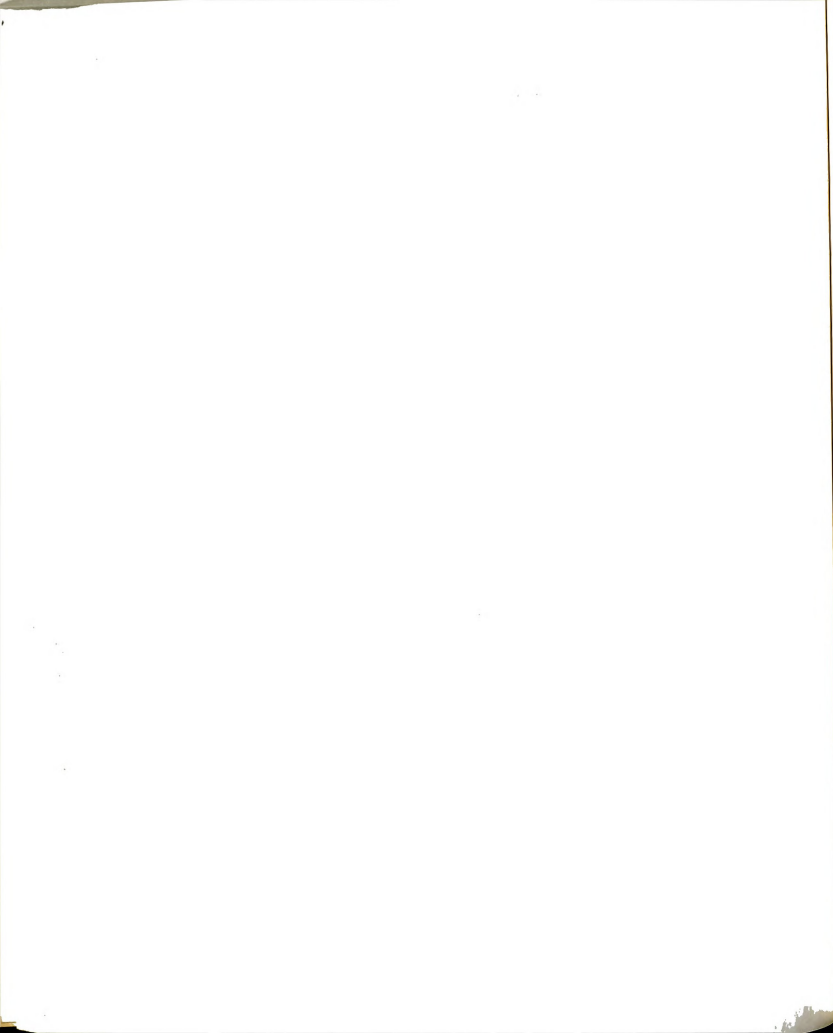
The certitude expressed by the poet-persona that God will indeed wreak vengeance upon sinners constitutes a point of divergence from the courtly tradition. The lover,



relying upon the powers of discernment of his lady, cannot be assured of the recognition he deserves as a true lover since her powers are ultimately limited. The servant of God, on the other hand, entrusts his case to an omniscient lord, and can remain steadfast, secure in the knowledge that his own inner disposition will be acknowledged and rewarded.

It is in such comparisons that the dichotomy between the feudal hierarchies of the chansons d'amour and the chansons pieuses becomes clearest. The basic structure is identical in both, the poet-persona, subservient to a lord and a lady, hopes ultimately to gain his just reward either in this world (chansons d'amour) or the next (chansons pieuses). The characteristics of the lord and lady that the poet-persona serves, however, undergo certain transformations in the transition from secular to religious verse. The courtly lady as object of the lover's devotion, one whom he worships as in a high sanctuary (VII, ll. 33-35) is, nevertheless, cruel, refusing her favors to the lover, and inconstant, not always bidding him the fair welcome he received on previous encounters. Neither is Amors the perfect lord. The lover, in fact, likens him to a devil or a trickster who deceives those who are faithful to him and, worse still, makes them suffer mortal torments.



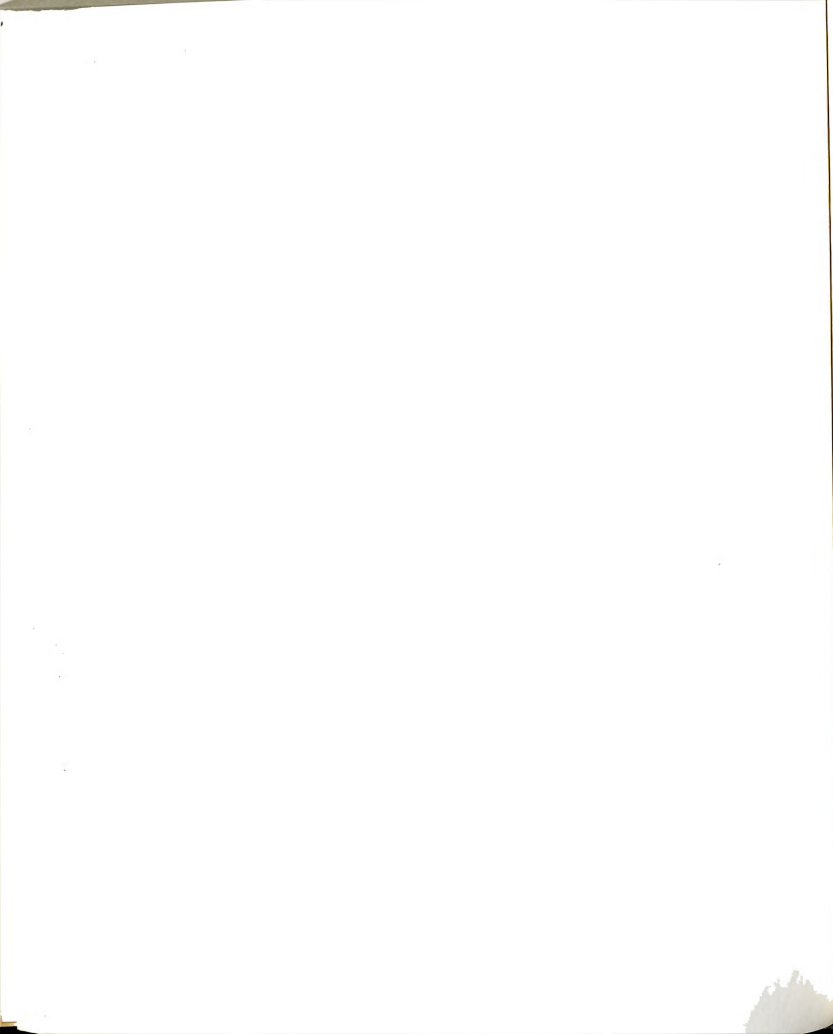


Fidelity to such sovereigns is indeed madness and, although the lover usually succumbs to the folie of his heart, in chanson IX he clearly renounces Love's service and pledges fealty to a more merciful and more constant lord, Deus, and the heavenly lady who is more deserving of his adoration:

Tant ai amors servies longuement  
 Que dès or mès ne m'en doit nus reprendre  
 Se je m'en part. Ore a Dieu les conmant,  
 Qu'en ne doit pas touz jorz folie enprendre;  
 Et cil est fous qui ne s'en set desfendre  
 Ne n'i conoist son mal ne son torment  
 [IX, ll. 1-6].

The tone of the lover's proclamation is both self-righteous and magnanimous as befits the attitude of one recently converted to the "way of truth." He harbors no ill will toward his former master although Amors has mistreated him; he refuses to slander the god of love, insisting instead that at least Amors had made him love the best and most beautiful lady ever chosen (ll. 17-20). Nor is the lover antagonistic toward those who still serve Amors; on the contrary, he wishes that all lovers might receive the favors of which he himself can no longer partake (ll. 15-16).

In contrast to the god of love, God the father, Deus, is a merciful, healing master to whom the poet-persona will henceforth dedicate his songs and in whom he can take refuge against any future assaults of love:



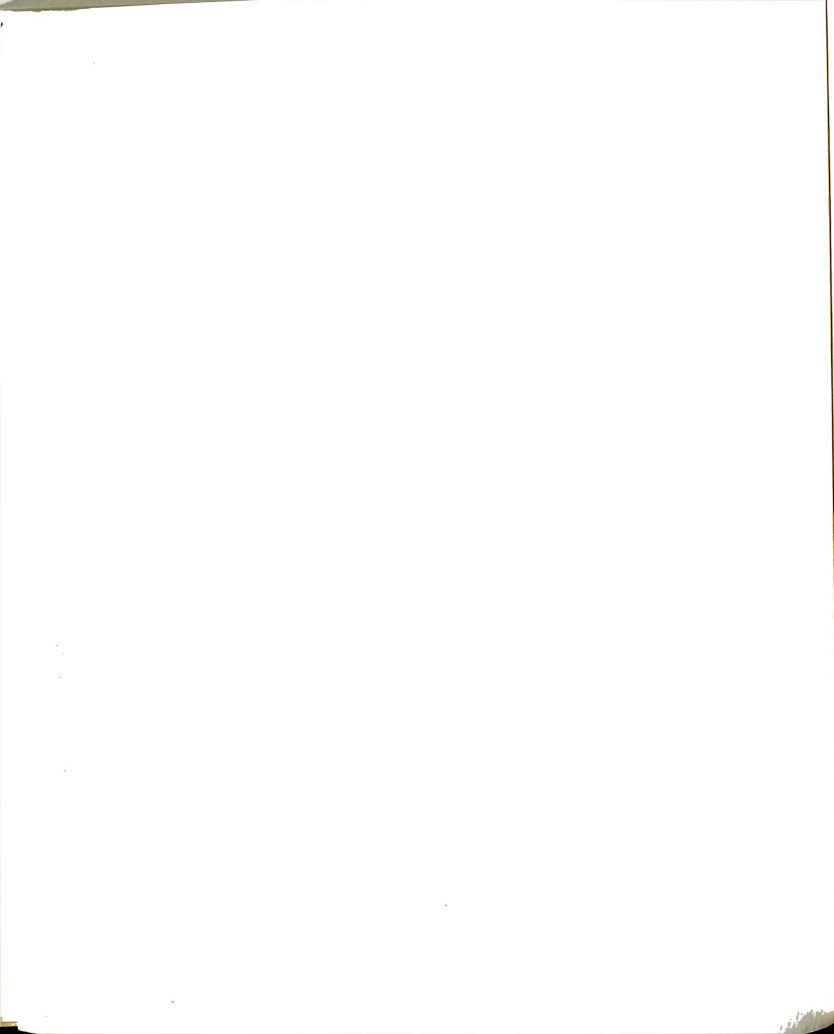
Mès bien m'a Deus par sa pitié gueri,  
 Quant delivré m'a de sa seignorie.  
 Quant eschapez li sui sanz perdre vie,  
 Ainz de mes euz si bone heure ne vi,  
 Si cuit je fere oncor maint jeu parti  
 Et maint sonet et mainte raverdie  
 [IX, ll. 27-32].<sup>1</sup>

The poet-persona's determination never to love again bears one exception, namely the one lady whom one ought to adore and from whom "one cannot fail to obtain recompense" (l. 43), the Virgin Mary. Like God the father, she represents someone upon whom the poet-persona can rely, and it is this certainty which most consistently differentiates the courtly--or secular--and heavenly sovereigns.

In the chansons it was most often the poet-lover who was forced to maintain a steadfast, reliable stance, always at the mercy of his capricious master and mistress. In the religious poems the figures of master and mistress have been refined or purified in a sense, purged of the negative aspects--cruelty, indifference, inconsistency--exhibited by Amors and the Dame. The static universe of the chanson, based upon the premise that the lover must always be kept in a state of uncertainty and unrequited desire, gives way, in the religious verse, to a universe

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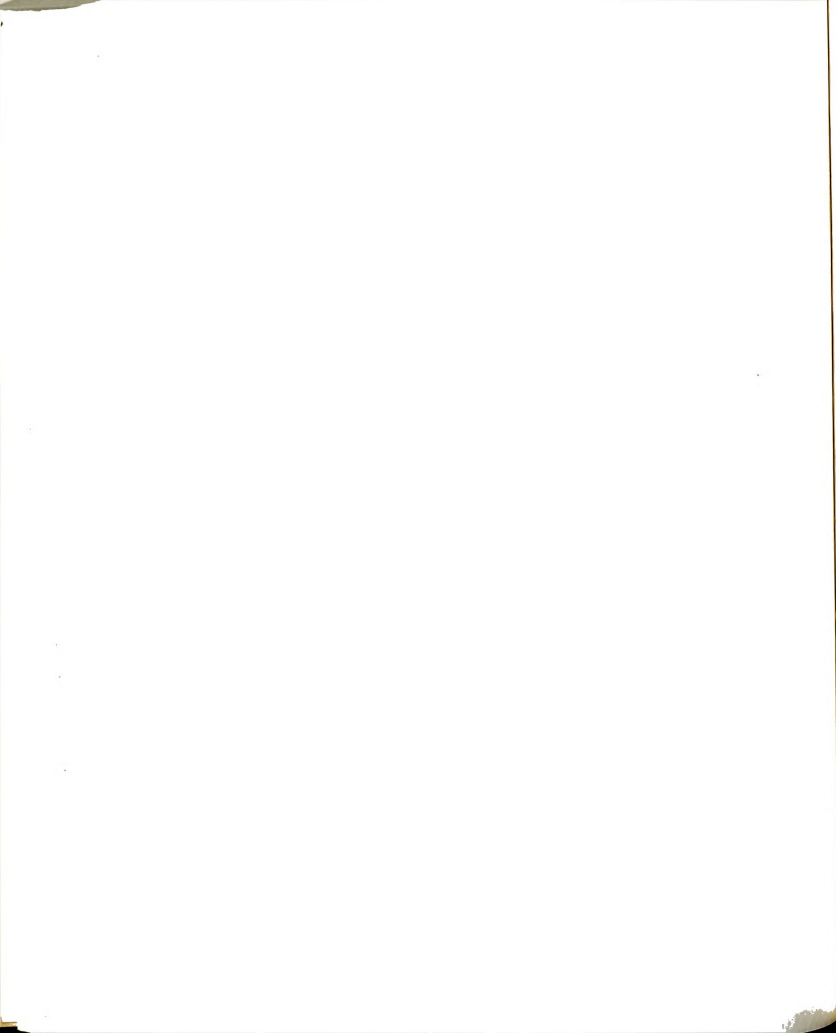
<sup>1</sup>Although "sonet" may designate "chanson" and thereby include Thibaut's religious verse, the extant jeux-partis in which Thibaut participates hardly reflect the new-found religious fervor expressed in this chanson.



where attainment of reward is the certain outcome of one's service, and in which there is little room for ambiguity.

The poet-persona of crusade song LIII certainly operates within a frame of reference in which there are no gray areas. Those who take up the cross will win Paradise; those who do not will be excluded. Those who depart are "sage, vaillant bachelor" (ll. 15 and 17); those who remain behind are termed "morveus" and "cendreus" (l. 18), blind to the higher reality that one's only true friend is he who "without hesitation was placed on the true cross for us" (ll. 13-14). The poet-persona allows for no qualifications or exceptions; anything other than immediate enlistment in the ranks of the crusaders is "fole atendance" (l. 12) punishable by eternal damnation.

In other crusade songs, however, the poet-persona's commitments are less clear. Since departure for the Crusades necessitates separation from his lady, the poet-lover--who presumably has not at this point definitively renounced Amors and his service--is in conflict with the poet-persona whose rôle is to serve a higher master and mistress. So great is the lover's devotion to his lady that he experiences extreme inner turmoil, hating himself for having to leave her, and exclaims that, in so many words, he wishes the Holy Land had never existed:



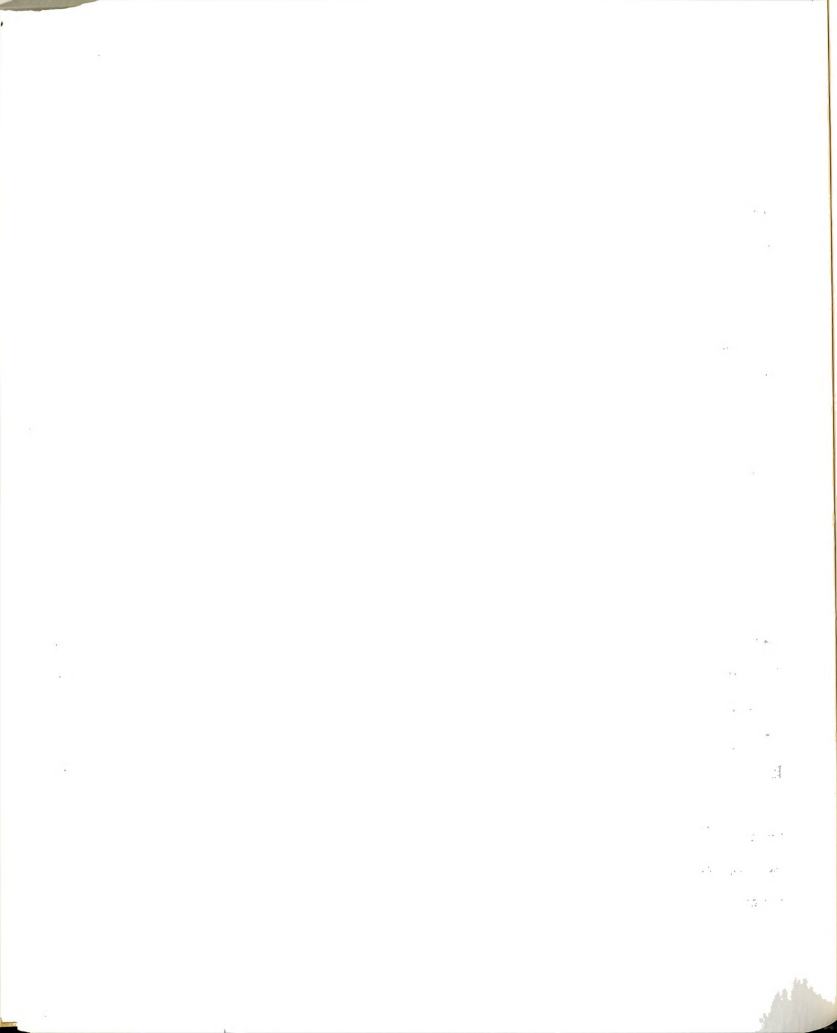
Deus! pour quoi fu la terre d'Outremer  
 Qui tanz amanz avra fet desevrer,  
 Dont puis ne fu l'amors reconfortee,  
 Ne ne porent leur joie remembrer!  
 [LIV, ll. 5-8].

That the poet-persona at this point in the chanson is more devoted to love's service than to the "heavenly" cause is indicated by both his great distress and his expression of solidarity with "so many separated lovers" as opposed to the ranks of the "vailant bachelier" of the previous crusade song.

In each of the first three stanzas the poet-persona refers to the joy of loving that he will have to forego through this seemingly forced departure, joy without which he thinks he cannot survive, and for which he repents of ever having taken up the crusader's cross. The poet-persona is clearly one who acts under the dominance of his fins cuers and is so firmly grounded in his identity that he can only reconcile leaving his lady by transposing his love to a higher plane. In this particular conflict of mind and heart, the poet-persona chooses the way of wisdom: "Iceste amor est trop fine et puissanz, / Par la couvient venir les plus sachanz" (ll. 37-38).

Although he does so with regret that reveals the depth of his attachment to the lady, the poet-persona pledges fealty to his heavenly lord in appropriate feudal terms. His new rôle as servant of God seems to be an





exclusive one that necessitates the definitive renunciation of his earthly lady:

Tout lais pour vous [Deus] ce que je tan amoie.  
[l. 26].

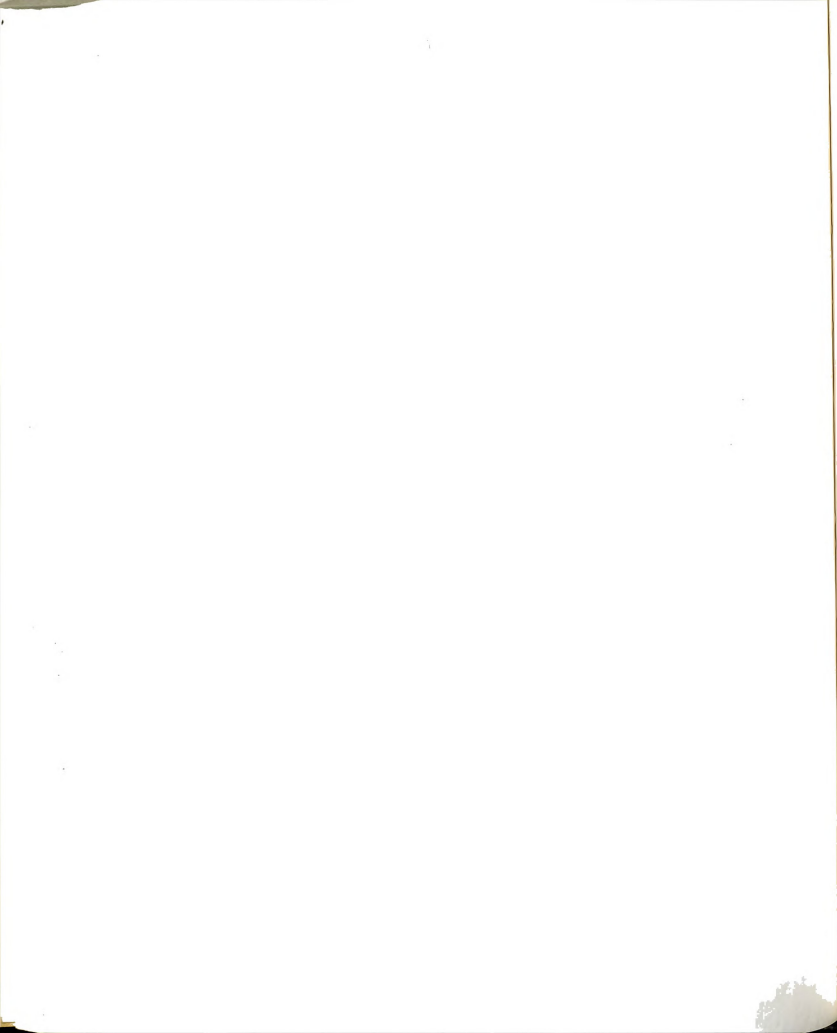
. . . pour vous [Deus] pert et mon cuer et ma joie  
[l. 28].

Bien doit mes cuers estre liez et dolanz:  
Dolanz de ce que je part de ma dame,  
Et liez de ce que je sui desirranz  
De servir Dieu, qui est mes cors et m'ame  
[ll. 33-36].

Just as the courtly lover often stressed the reciprocal obligations that Amors owed to his servants, so does the poet-persona, servant of God, insist upon due recompense for his great sacrifice. The reward that he envisions is "decked with flowers" (l. 27) and consists of being cleansed from all "foul-smelling sins" (l. 40).

In contrast to the lover's relationship to Amors, the poet-persona emphasizes that the heavenly lord is one who never betrays his servants; the servant of God is thereby assured of his salvation. To fill the void that still brings him suffering, however, the servant of God seeks to strike up a new relationship with an even more perfect lady:

Dame des cieus, granz roïne puissanz,  
Au grant besoing me soiez secorranz!  
De vous amer puisse avoir droite flame!  
Quant dame pert, dame me soit aidanz!  
[ll. 41-44].



This final address to the Virgin Mary, suggesting that she take on the rôle of his protectress and object of his passion--his "droite flame"--reveals that, although the poet-persona has verbally taken on a new and all-inclusive identity as servant of God, his rôle as lover is still operative within the religious context. Losing one lady, he turns to another, an exchange which is made feasible by the fact that both the heavenly and earthly ladies are often described in identical terms, and the lover's attitude toward his earthly or courtly lady is often one of worship:

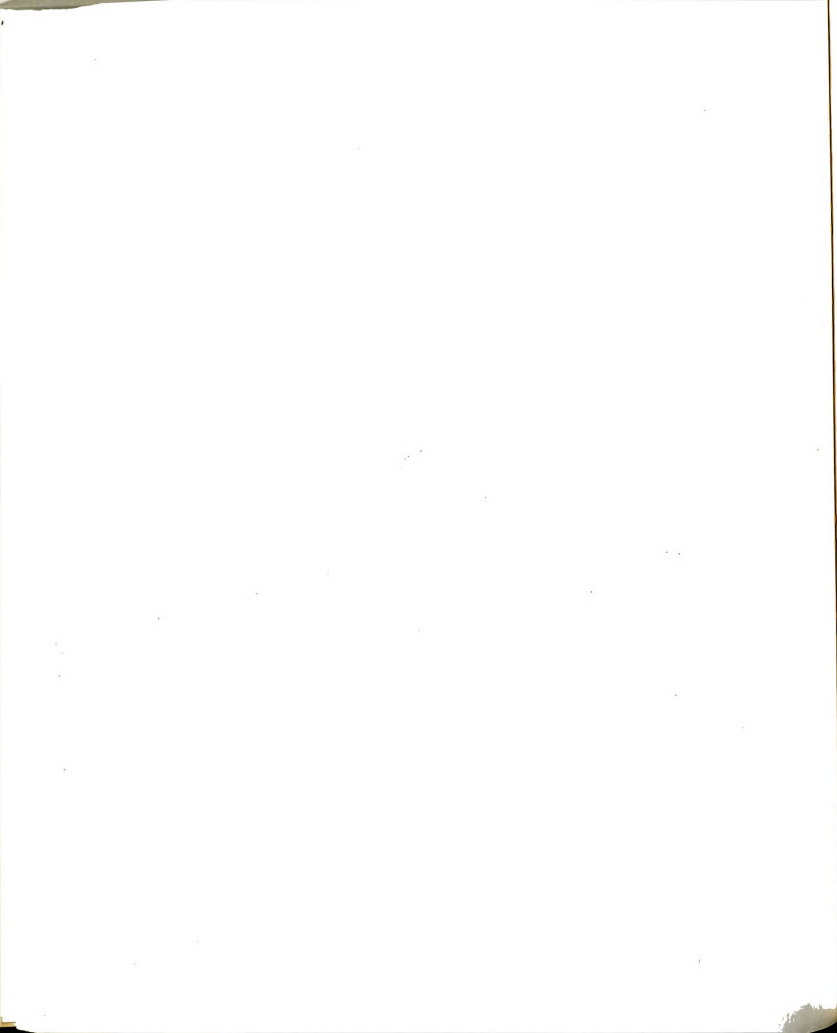
Cette soumission à la dame est si totale,  
se pénétrée d'humilité, qu'elle dégénère en une  
véritable idolatrie. Isolés de leur contexte,  
certains passages semblent d'authentiques  
prières, et on pourrait les croire adressés,  
à la Vierge. Et pourtant il faut se rendre à  
l'évidence: il s'agit bel et bien d'une femme  
en chair et en os. . . .<sup>2</sup>

Likewise in Thibaut's chansons d'amour, the lover often perceives the lady as a gift from God, a reflection of his divine perfection that illumines the whole world and draws men to a state of higher worth. In rapt contemplation the lover states:

Touz esbahiz m'obli en merveillant  
Ou Deus trouva si estrange biauté;  
Quant il la mist ça just entre la gent,  
Mult nous en fist grant debounereté.  
Trestout le mont en a enluminé,  
Qu'en sa valor sont tuit li bien se grant  
[XI, ll. 8-13].

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<sup>2</sup>Moshé Lazar, Amour courtois et <fin amors> dans la littérature du XII<sup>e</sup> siècle (Paris: Klincksieck, 1964), p. 69.



. . . ele fet trestoz ceus melz valoir  
 Cui ele veut belement acoillir  
 [IX, ll. 24-25].

That the lady comes from above and was placed by God among the common people suggests her divine qualities. The lover is speechless in her presence as he would be when confronted with a miraculous apparition.

The image of overpowering brightness used in still another chanson d'amour is related not only to the lady's beauty but to her moral qualities as well, "la granz biautez et li bien que g'i vi" (VI, l. 12). This insistence upon radiant light in association with the courtly lady is a further indication of her divine nature. According to E. de Bruyne:

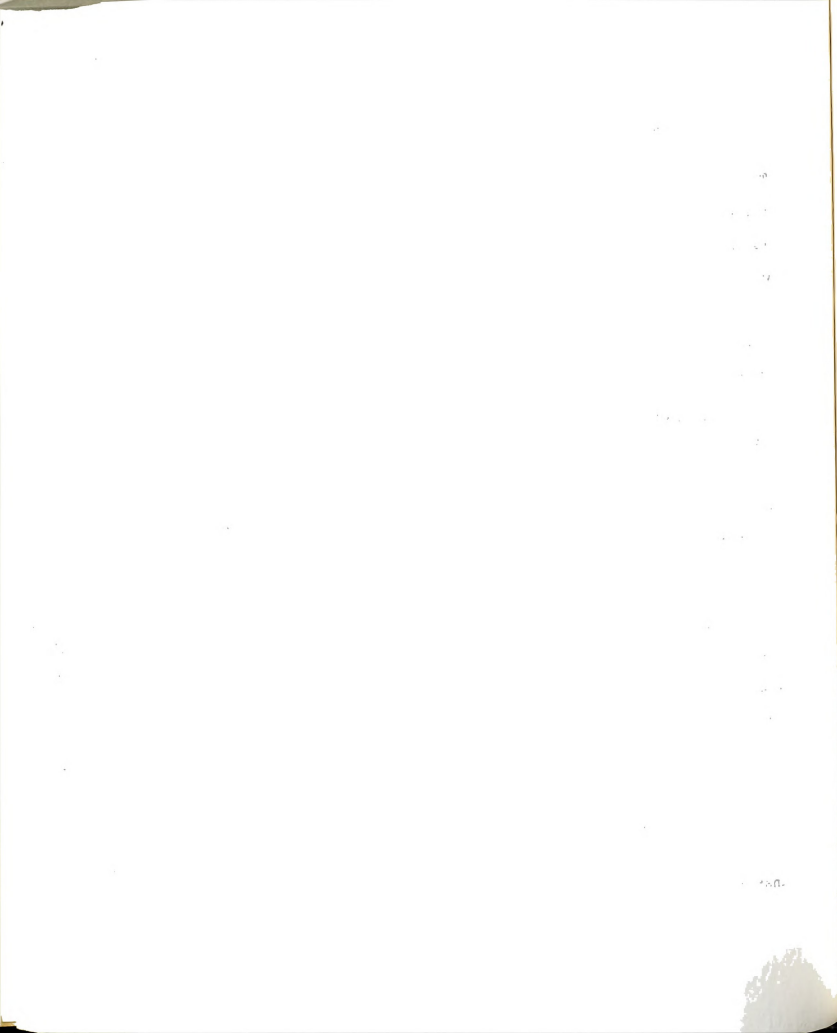
Puisque Dieu seul est assez puissant pour multiplier instantanément l'être et influencer sur l'agir universel, il est la Lumière à l'état pur. . . . Dans la mesure où les choses sont lumineuses, elles ne sont pas seulement nobles, elles sont divines.<sup>3</sup>

The courtly lady's beauty comes directly from God and obscures any brilliance that a mere mortal might imagine, namely the brightness of the finest summer's day:

N'est merveille se je m'en esbahi.  
 De li a Deus le siecle enluminé,  
 Car, qui avroit le plus biau jor d'esté,  
 Lez li seroit obscurs a midi  
 [VI, ll. 12-16].

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<sup>3</sup>E. de Bruyne, L'Esthétique du Moyen Age (Louvain: Institut Supérieur de Philosophie, 1947), p. 78.



That the lady's beauty is celestial in quality is reflected also by the effect that it has upon the poet-lover. It inspires him, in fact, to mold his behavior in terms of the New Testament ethic of loving one's enemies. The enemies to which the lover refers are none other than the various aspects of the lady that inflicted upon him the "wounds of love":

Ainz riens ne vi en li ne m'ait navré  
 D'un coup parfont a si tres douce lance:  
 Front, bouche et nés, euz, vis frès coloré,  
 Mains, chief et cors et bele contenance.  
 Ma douce dame, et quant les reverré,  
 Mes anemis, qui si fort m'ont grevé  
     Par leur puissance  
 C'ainz mès nus hons ne fu vis  
 Tant amast ses anemis?  
 [X, ll. 37-45].

The qualities of physical and moral perfection as well as radiant illumination are all used by the poet-persona in the religious verse to describe the Blessed Virgin. She is, first of all, a courtly lady whose beautiful body accords with her inner perfection. In expounding upon the five letters of the name, Marie, the poet-persona states:

I est touz droiz, genz et de bele taille,  
 Tels fu li cors, ou il n'ot qu'enseignier,  
 De la Dame, qui por nos se travaille  
 Biaus, droiz et genz sanz teche et sanz pechier  
 [VII, ll. 29-32].

She bears the courtly title of "amie" (LVII, l. 8), is "plaine . . . de cortoisie" (LIX, ll. 33-34), and is often referred to by the poet-persona as "douce dame," the most





common address for the lady found in the courtly lyrics. Her beauty, like that of the courtly lady is "plus clers qu'estoile jornaus" and "fet tout le monde esclarcir" (LIX, ll. 16, 18).

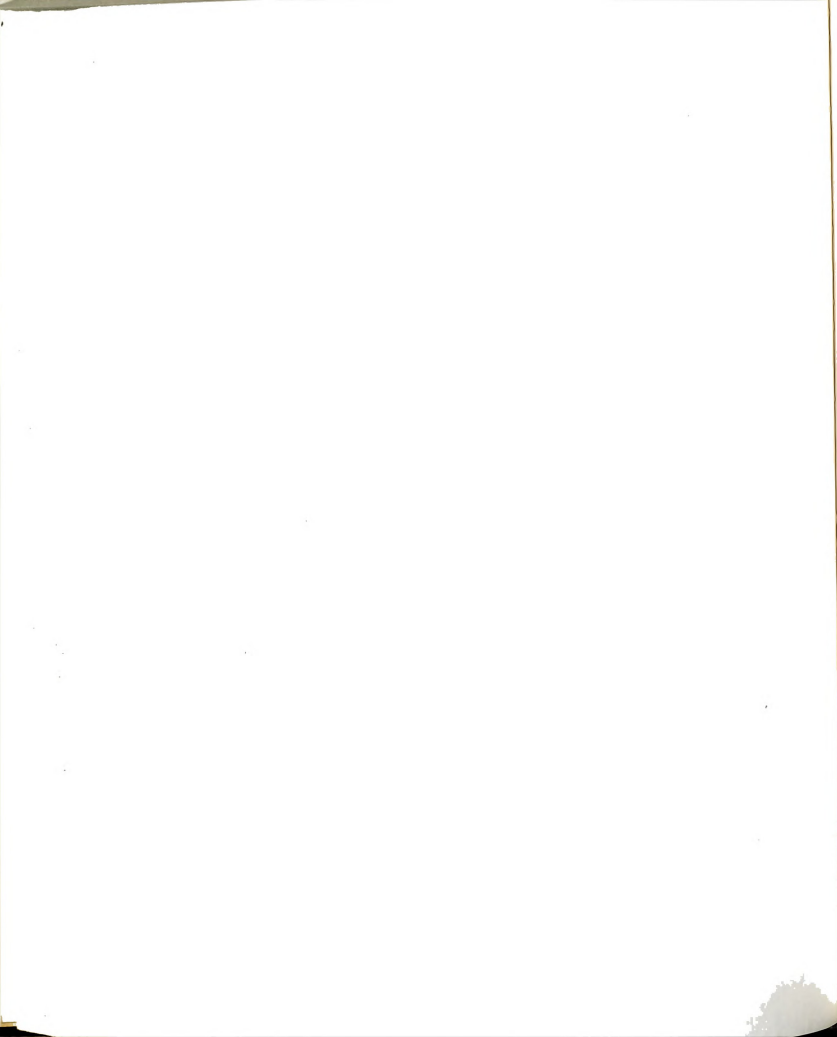
Such descriptions and references to the Blessed Virgin indeed lead one to agree with C. S. Lewis that:

. . . there is no evidence that the quasi-religious tone of medieval love poetry has been transferred from the worship of the Blessed Virgin: it is just as likely--it is even more likely--that the colouring of certain hymns to the Virgin has been borrowed from the love poetry.<sup>4</sup>

If the persona of the Blessed Virgin is so firmly grounded in the courtly tradition, what remains to be seen, then, is to what extent and in what manner she surpasses the ideal of courtly perfection. The figure of the Blessed Virgin is, after all, representative of a realm which, according to the poet-persona's own admission, is of far more worth than the courtly universe. This admission on the part of the poet-persona is determined, first of all, by the fact that, unlike the courtly lady, the heavenly queen is reliable and constant, full of mercy and pity toward those who honor her and her son. She does, in fact, serve as an intermediary between the sometimes vengeful, angry figure of God the Father and his weak, sinful servants. The same "tres douz

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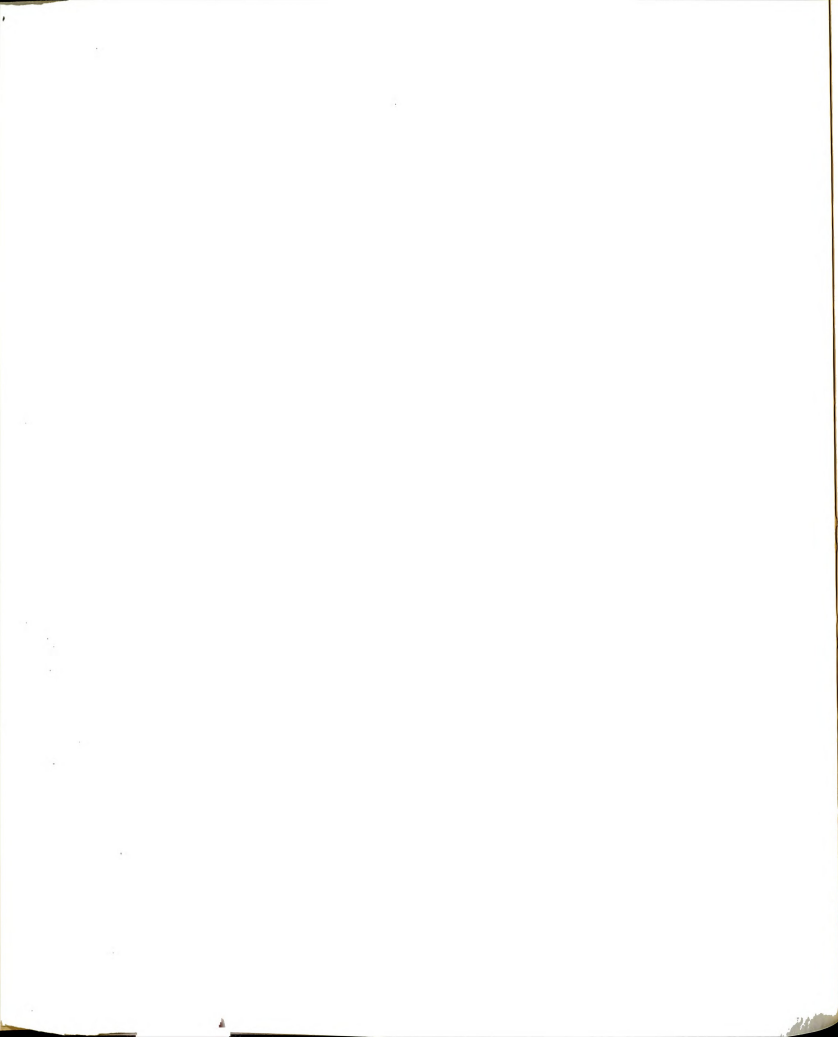
<sup>4</sup>C. S. Lewis, The Allegory of Love (New York: Oxford University Press, 1938), p. 8.



mot plesant et savoré" that so charmed the lover in the chansons d'amour are put to a higher use in the religious verse, representing the Virgin's ability to assure the eternal salvation of those who turn to her for aid:

Deus, qui tout set et tout puet et tout voit,  
 Nos avroit tost un entredeus geté,  
 Se la Dame, plaine de grant bonté,  
 Qui est lez li, pour nous ne li prioit.  
 Si tres douz mot plesant et savoré  
 Le grant coroz du grant Seigneur rapaie  
 [LX, ll. 10-15].

This intercession of the Virgin on behalf of sinners awaiting judgment is in keeping with cathedral iconography of thirteenth-century France. The Last Judgment scene figures prominently in the sculpture and stained glass windows of cathedrals throughout France, constantly reminding the faithful that their actions would be weighed in the balance of Good and Evil and that the condemned would suffer horrible torments inflicted by the beats of Hell. In certain Last Judgment scenes, however (at the cathedrals of Laon, Chartres, Notre Dame de Paris, Rampellon, Saint-Sulpice at Favières and Saint Seurin at Bordeaux), the Virgin and St. John appear to the right and left of the Judge. Such a representation is not in keeping with evangelical accounts of the Last Judgment. E. Mâle suggests that:



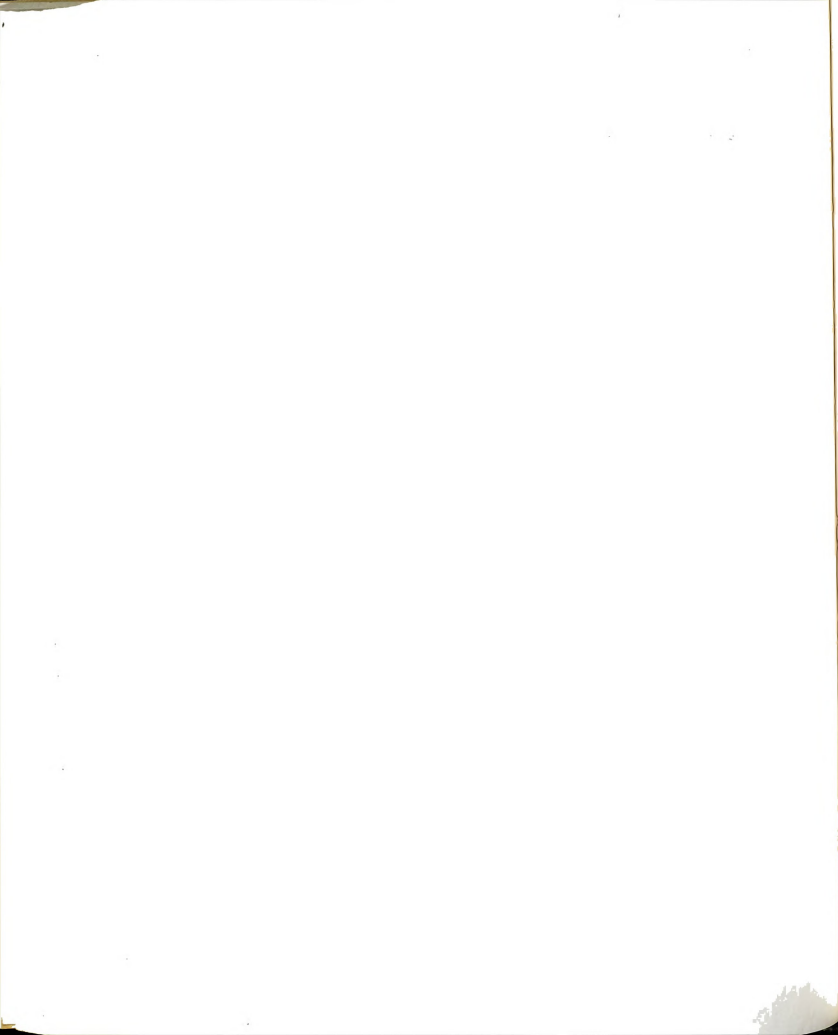
. . . in introducing the Virgin and St. John into the scene of the Judgment the artists were guided by a wholly popular feeling of piety. The mother and the well-loved disciple who stayed by the Cross in the day of anguish, surely deserve to share the triumph of the day of glory. But in this case why represent them like suppliants kneeling with clasped hands? One here touches an intimate chord in the Christian soul. The theologians had thought that in that great day no prayer could move the Judge, but the humble crowd of faithful could not believe this, and they continued to hope that the Virgin and St. John would still be powerful intercessors who would save many a soul by their prayers. The artists were inspired by this belief, which they shared, and in opposing grace to law they brought a ray of hope into the midst of the solemn circumstances of justice.<sup>5</sup>

In addition to the intercessory power of the Virgin's sweet, gracious words, her illuminating beauty serves a function that surpasses that of the courtly lady. Like the courtly lady's radiance, that of the Blessed Virgin is overwhelming and inspires those who gaze upon it to moral perfection. The Virgin's radiance, however, is an instrument of salvation that extends beyond the ranks of the faithful, bringing even the infidels to the path of "true light":

Par vous est touz renluminez  
Li mondes, nès li renoié;  
Quant il seront ravoïé  
Et crerront que Deus soit nez,  
Seront sauf, bien le savez  
[LIX, ll. 35-39].

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<sup>5</sup>Emile Mâle, The Gothic Image: Religious Art in France of the Thirteenth Century (New York: Harper and Row, 1958), p. 371.



It is significant that the truth revealed by the Virgin's light is that "Deus soit nez" for it is in her rôle as mother that the Virgin differs most strikingly from the figure of the courtly lady. According to Mâle:

The Virgin of the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries is a queen. She appears in the west porch of Chartres and in the Porte Sainte-Anne at Notre Dame at Paris seated on her throne in regal state. She has a crown on her forehead, a flowering sceptre in her hand and holds the Child on her lap. She is seen again under this aspect in the window at Chartres known as la belle verrière [Figure 1] and in a fine window at Laon [Figure 2].<sup>6</sup>

Mâle is correct to insist upon the majestic quality of these portrayals of the Virgin, but an examination of the sculpture and the windows to which he refers reveals that Mary is presented in her dual rôle as queen and as mother; she is never seen without the child Jesus on her lap (see Figures 1 and 2 from Mâle, pp. 234-235).

In Thibaut's religious verse as well, Mary functions both as celestial queen and as mother of God. It is the latter rôle that receives the most emphasis, however, for although the poet-persona's attitude toward the Virgin is that of a humble servant toward a regal lady, he most often refers to her and addresses her in terms of her capacity as mother of the Saviour.

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid., pp. 235-236.



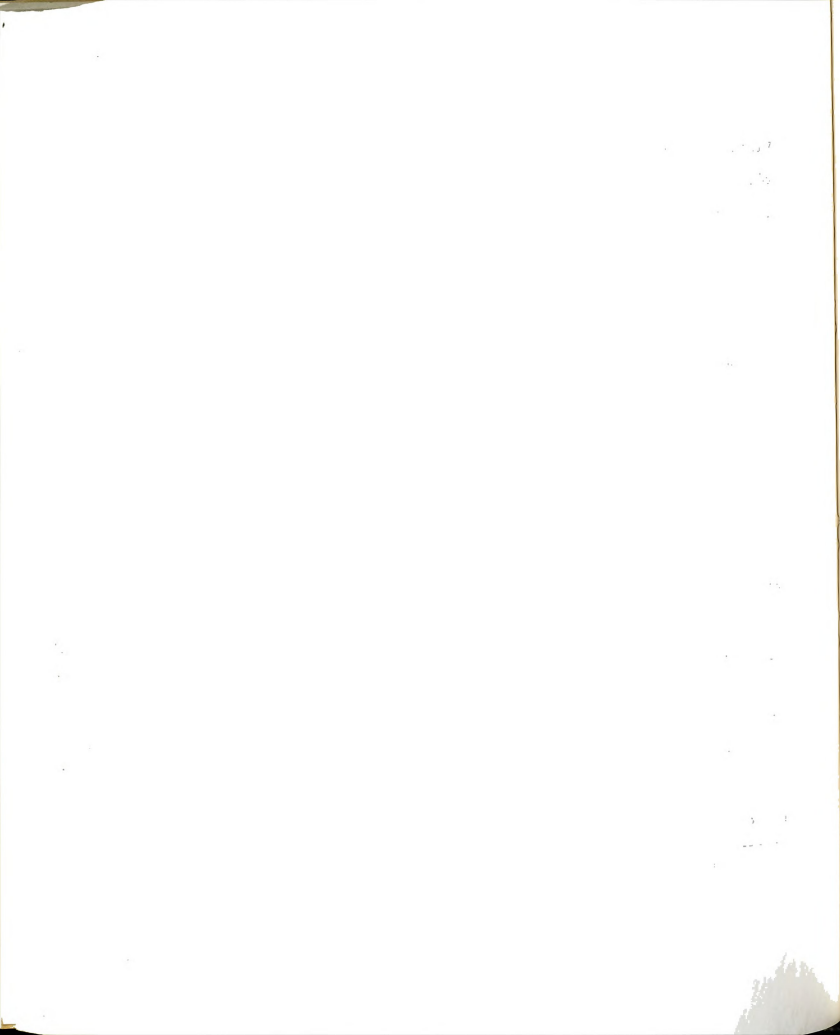




Figure 1. Window at Chartres.

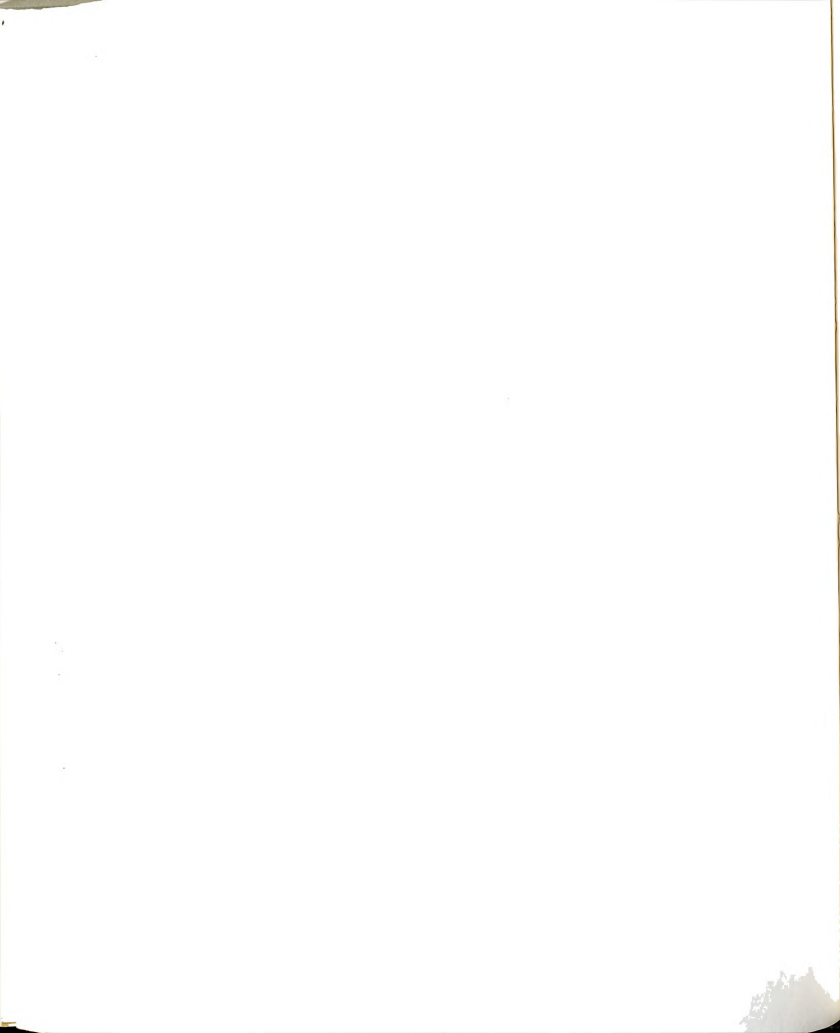


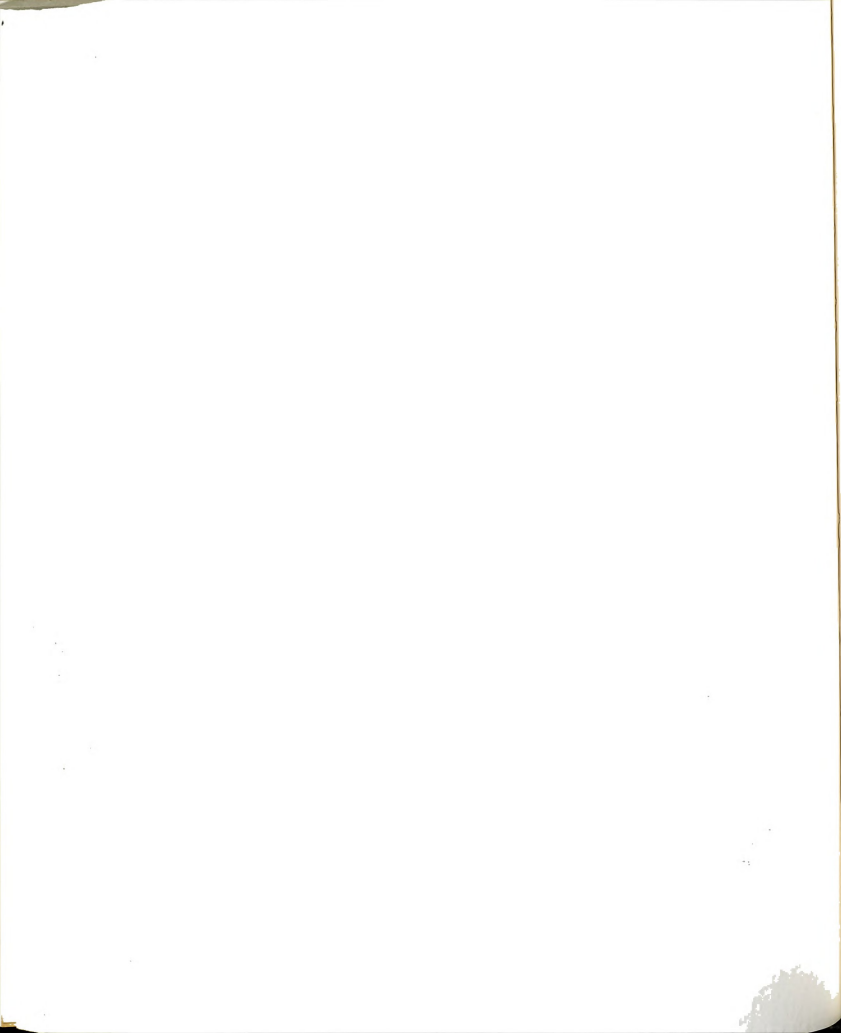


Figure 2. The Virgin (window at Laon).

This is most evident in Chanson LVII in which the poet-persona takes on the rôle of teacher and sets out to explain the full significance of the five letters of the Virgin's name.<sup>7</sup> In four of the five stanzas of the chanson the poet-persona refers in some manner to the rôle of Mary as mother:

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<sup>7</sup>Frappier (*La Poésie lyrique . . .*, p. 192) regards this piece as "un commentaire laborieusement laudatif des cinq lettres du nom de Maria." It is hardly as "laborieux" as that of the author of the *Speculum beatae Mariae* who wrote a whole volume on the two words, Ave Maria. See E. Mâle, pp. 233-234.



. . . par li vint [Deus] ça jus entre sa gent  
[1. 5].

. . . la Dame qui en son biau cors gent  
Porta le Roi qui merci atendon [11. 13-14].

C'est li cors Dieu . . .  
Que la Dame dedenz son cors porta  
[11. 21-22].

Vint Deus en li, quant ele l'enfanta [1. 30].

This reiterative amplification, in keeping with the didactic tone of the chanson, teaches a single lesson--that Mary, by virtue of her motherhood, is instrumental in man's salvation, and she is, moreover, gentle and pure of heart; one never fails to win absolution through her intercession.

So steadfast is the Virgin's compassion toward those who entreat her for mercy that the courtly lady is, in comparison, no better than Eve, the female figure held responsible for introducing sin and suffering into the world. The contrast between celestial and courtly love becomes clearest in a highly stylized chanson (LVIII) based upon a series of variations upon a central tree image. The opening lines of the chanson are conveniently ambiguous, open to both religious and courtly interpretations:

Mauvès arbre ne puet florir,  
Ainz seche touz et va crollant;  
Et hons qui n'aime, sanz mentir,  
Ne porte fruit, ainz va morant  
[LVII, 11. 1-4].

This particular use of the tree image has obvious religious connotations based upon a New Testament parable illustrating

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the power of faith and prayer. In this parable, Christ curses the fig tree because it is barren; the tree subsequently withers and dies (Mark 11:12-14, 20-30). On the other hand, the opening lines are not unlike Thibaut's variations upon the springtime motif as exordium in the chansons d'amour and, furthermore, the sententia of lines 3-4 might lead one to believe that this is indeed the introduction to a courtly love song. The figurative death mentioned in line 4 could be either secular or spiritual--secular in that one who does not love is "dead" in a courtly sense, and religious in that those who fail to produce spiritual "fruit," like the barren fig tree, will be condemned to death.

The remainder of the first stanza is equally open to dual interpretations. The fruit of loving is "de cointe senblant" (l. 5), the word "cointe" ("beguiling") drawn from among the standard adjectives used to describe the courtly lady. The idea that this fruit is so valuable that no one could buy it, which may indicate its divine quality, nevertheless closely echoes the refrain of chanson XVIII, "Nus ne puet trop acheter / Les biens qu'Amors set doner." Neither can one definitively ascertain that the opening images are being used strictly in a religious sense by the fact that the fruit of Nature is capable of alleviating all pain, for the courtly lover in the chansons d'amour certainly insists



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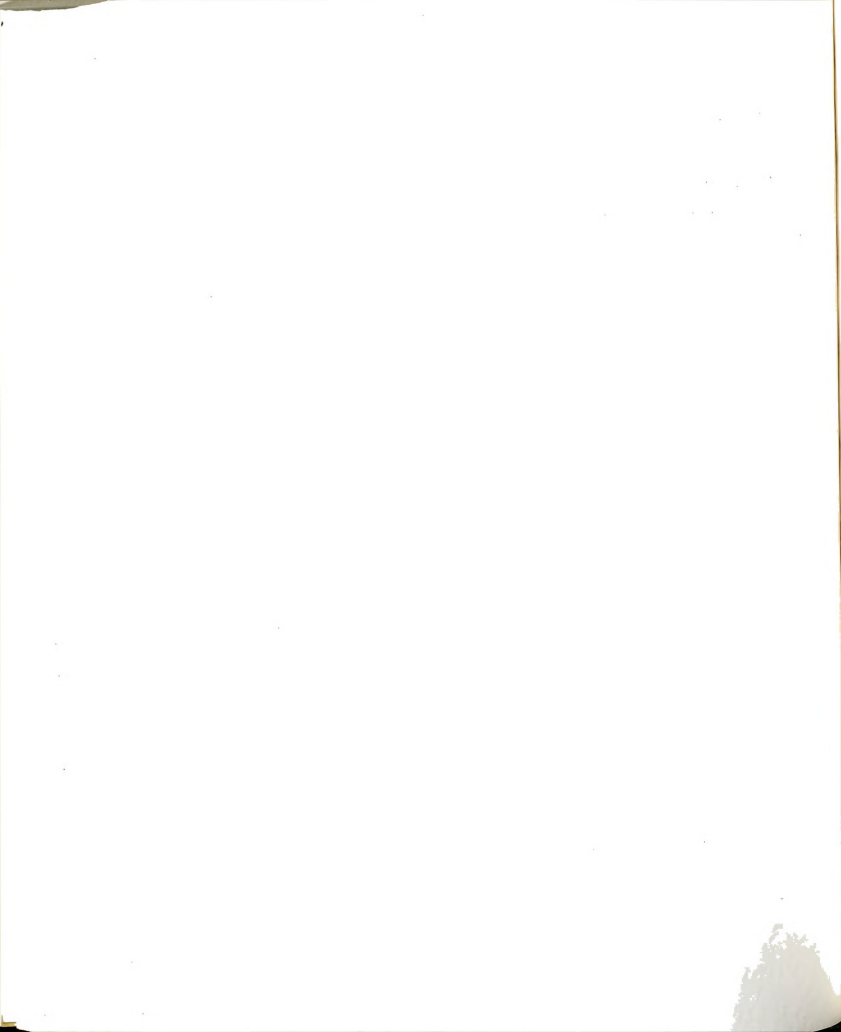
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that, despite all his lamentations about the sufferings of love, the joys and the "granz biens" that come from loving far outweigh its pain. Nor does the authoritative tone of the closing lines of the stanza indicate that the poet-persona is speaking from a strictly religious point of view; the poet-persona of the chansons d'amour can be equally as didactic.

In the opening lines of the following stanza, however, Thibaut makes it eminently clear that the superior love he is describing is none other than the love of God. Given Thibaut's skill as a craftsman, it is likely that the initial sustained ambiguity and the subsequent sudden clarification are deliberate. The technique of an effective polemicist lies not only in his control of exempla and explications, but also in taking one's audience by surprise. The lords (Seigneur, l. 23) to whom this chanson is directed, used to Thibaut's courtly lyrics, might passively assume that this is to be just another song in praise of his anonymous lady; the imagery, the sententiae drawn from the examples given and the didactic or authoritative tone are not unlike those of the chansons d'amour.

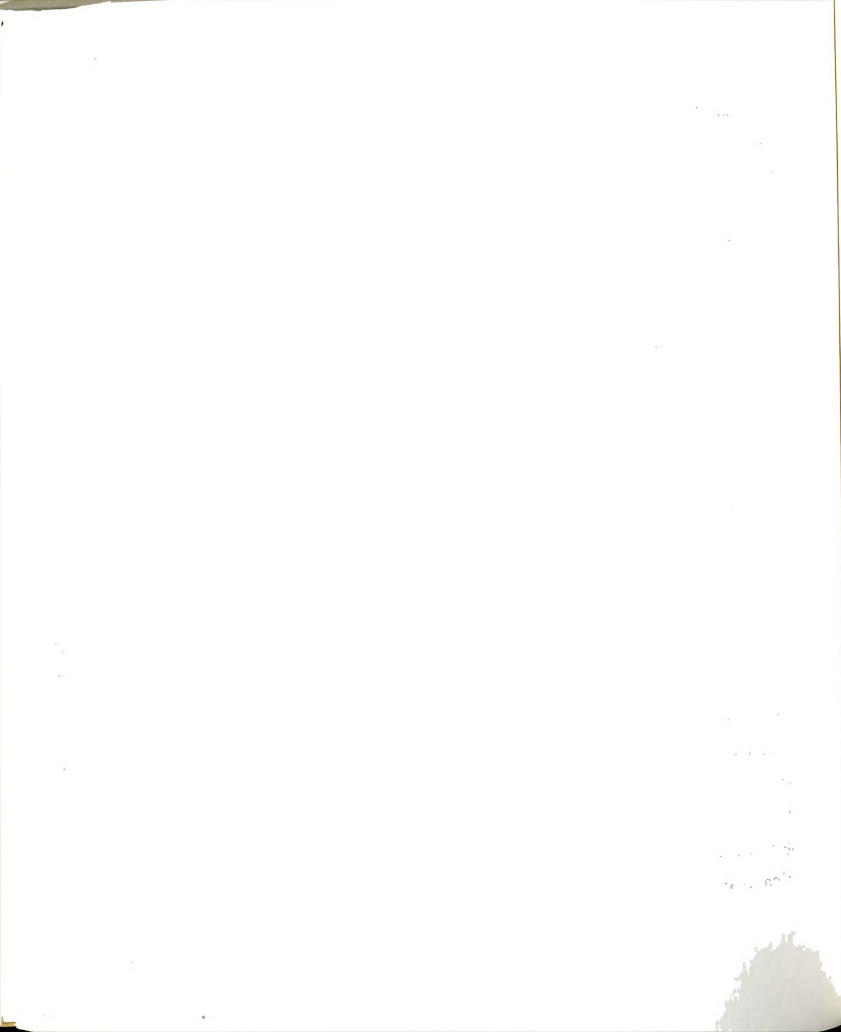
Suddenly, however, Thibaut confronts them dogmatically with a single, unequivocal statement; this life-giving love, the fruit of Nature, is the love of God and "no one can taste of this fruit unless God has prepared him"



(11. 12-13). The statement, a paraphrase of Christ's words, "No one can come to me unless the Father draw him" (John 6:41), reveals that the poet-persona's rôle is not that of one who will expound upon Amors' precepts, but, rather, that of one who endorses a higher reality to the detriment of courtly values. As the chanson continues, the tree and its fruit are the pivotal images upon which all distinctions between the two "universes" are based, an oblique reference to the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil serving as the first point of differentiation between the celestial and earthly ladies. The poet-persona first uses this biblical tree reference as a teaching device, explaining to the seigneurs the significance of Eve's action and the merits of partaking of the ripe fruit of the love of God and his mother:

Par le fruit fu li premiers plors,  
 Quant Eve fist Adam pechier;  
 Mès qui du bon fruit veut mengier  
 Deus aint et sa Mere et son non,  
 Si queudra le fruit de seson  
 [LVIII, 11. 18-22].

In the third stanza the poet-persona's preoccupation changes from an attempt to teach a lesson to others to a concern for the state of his own soul. He concludes his lesson by saying: "Du fruit meür conté vous ai / Que cil quieut qui a Deus se tient" (11. 25-26). What then follows is a confession that he himself has been corrupted by Eve's unripe



fruit, and he relates this directly to the experience of loving his courtly lady:

De ce fruit [en qu'Adans pecha]  
 est plains mes vergiers:  
 Dès que ma dame vi premiers,  
 Oi de s'amor plain cuer et cors,  
 Ne ja nul jor n'en istra fors  
 [ll. 30-33].

Having established a direct correlation between the fall of Adam and his own all-consuming, still continuing love for the courtly lady, the poet-persona abandons the didactic tone of earlier stanzas, devoting himself entirely to continuing his confession and begging pardon for his sins.

The image that the poet-persona then uses to describe his actions--he is like a child who plays around a tree or hangs from its branches--is effective on several levels. It serves, first of all, as an excuse for the poet-persona's folly. The limited intellectual awareness of the child and his aimless, back-and-forth movement and inability to climb the tree suggest that the poet-persona would like his sin--falling in love--to be considered an unintentional fault, something that happened to him because his rational faculties were not stronger than his heart:

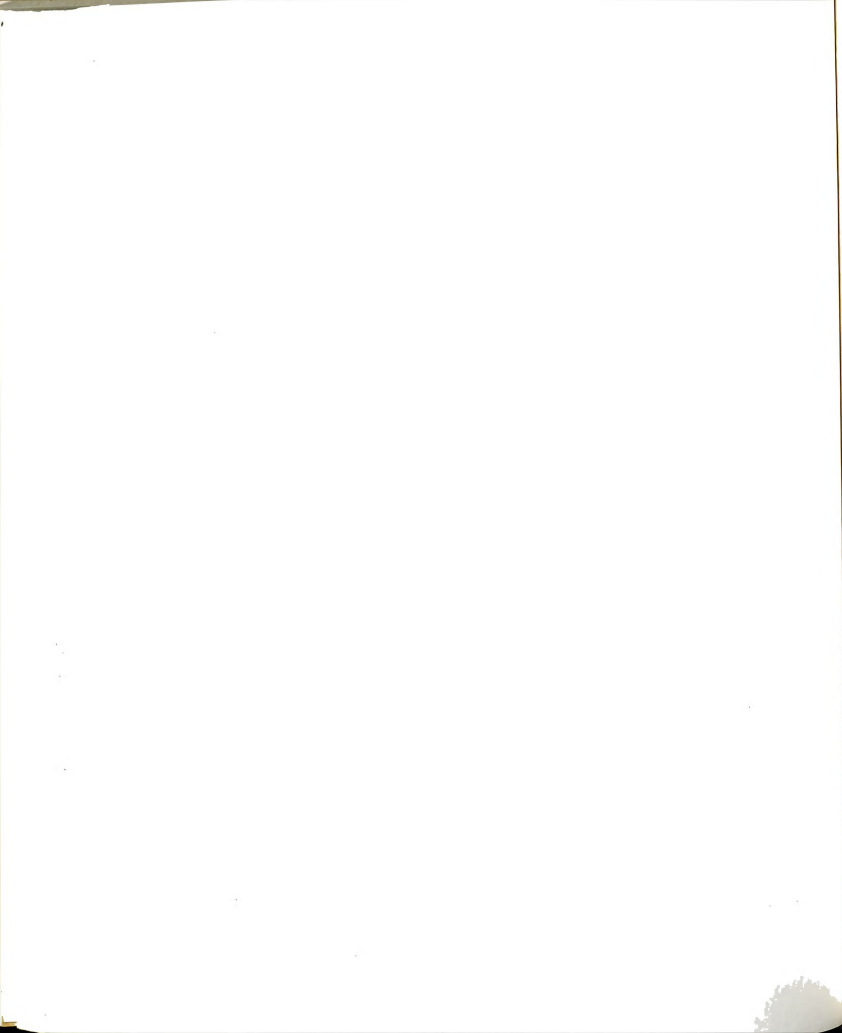
. . . ançois m'avient  
 Si comme a l'enfant, bien le sai,  
 Qui a la branche se soustient  
 Et entor l'arbre va et vient  
 Ne ja amont ne montera;  
 Ensi mes cuers foloaint va  
 [ll. 36-40].



Secondly, the use of the child image represents an attempt on the poet-persona's part to establish a new self-identity in keeping with his rôle as repentant sinner. A continuation of his original assertive rôle would be inappropriate since he admittedly has tasted much--indeed more than most men--of the unripe fruit of earthly love. In order to obtain forgiveness, he takes on the rôle of a child, weak and in need of comfort. He needs to be perceived as a child first of all because unless one becomes as a little child, one cannot enter the heavenly kingdom (Luke 18:15-17) and, more importantly, so that he, as child, can appeal to the Mother of God for intercession--Mary, once again, is presented in her rôle as the one through whom God came into the world. Just as the poet-persona of crusade song LIV substituted the celestial lady for the courtly one as object of his devotion, in this chanson the poet-persona turns from the courtly lady, represented by Eve, dispenser of deadly fruit, to a more perfect lady, the Virgin who gives him the good fruit of salvation to eat.

The modulations of the tree/fruit imagery serve, then, to differentiate the celestial and earthly ladies, as well as distinguish the true servants of God--those who bear good fruit--from the false. The tree image relates to still another important distinction to be made between the religious and secular verse, that is, the notion of "folie."





In the chansons d'amour it was clear that folly or madness was associated with loving and that service to Amors was not something that one would undertake rationally. The references to love's madness were not, however, entirely negative. The dominance of the heart's irrational folie was, rather, of positive assistance to the lover, instructing him in the secret ways of love incomprehensible to one's rational faculties. When seen from a religious point of view, however, the notion of folie takes on entirely different connotations. In chanson LVIII, for example, the courtly love that the poet-persona once perceived as a precious, all-consuming passion is seen to be nothing more than a child's pastime, aimless, without real purpose and significance, a circular path that leads only to one's downfall and exclusion from the celestial kingdom.

The association of love's folly with childlike behavior minimizes the seriousness of such actions and makes the poet-persona's request for the strength of repentance a favor that is likely to be granted. In chanson de croisade LIII, however, the contrast between wisdom and madness is of more dire consequence. "Folie" consists of not participating in the crusades; "sagesse" is to seek the honor of God and of this world--a curious but perhaps not unlikely juxtaposition--by freeing the Holy Land from the grasp of the infidels. To commit folly

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by remaining behind is not, however, seen as an innocent, unintentional act--such as the "folie" of chanson LVIII--but, rather, as a sign that one is under the power of the devil and has lost all "sense, boldness, and power." Such indications of sinfulness will not be easily pardoned unless one "comes to one's senses" and turns from sinful thoughts. One's inability to do so carries with it the threat of certain punishment meted out by a righteous God.

Likewise in chanson LX he who chooses to pledge himself to any other love than the love of God is "exceedingly mad" since, as the poet-persona points out, the nature of divine love, free of ruse and falseness, is far superior to any other:

Mult par est fous qui autre amor essaie,  
 Qu'en cesti [l'amour de Dieu] n'a barat ne  
           fausseté,  
 Ne es autres ne merci ne manaie [ll. 16-18].

Such madness is, once again, punishable by condemnation to "enfer le puant" (l. 23) described in graphic terms through the personification of the vices as fishermen.

The image of God the Father in the religious verse, however, is not always that of an angry, vengeful Old Testament Yahweh whose wrath is tempered only by the sweet presence of the Virgin Mary. As has already been indicated, in contrast to Amors, God is at least a consistent if not merciful seigneur in whom one finds assurance of eternal reward for one's service, even though the threat of certain

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punishment for one's sins is also a constant factor. In the single extant serventois by Thibaut de Champagne, "Deus est ensi comme li pellicanz" (LVI), Deus is portrayed as a deity who combines two aspects of the Trinity, a God-the-Father who protects and nurtures his offspring and a God-the-Son figure who, through his passion, and death, ransoms the innocent. The God that Thibaut describes in the serventois is one who triumphs over the devil through self-sacrifice, a humanized deity who does not inspire fear and terror, but, rather, with whom one can sympathize and join in triumph over the evil forces in the world. The poem itself is ultimately a denunciation of evil and a call to combative action against it; the sympathetic portrayal of God the Father encourages the faithful to participate in the struggle not through fear of eternal damnation but, rather, as a positive response to the unjust suffering of a loving God. Thibaut achieves this effect through the use of stylistic devices and imagery characteristic of the chansons d'amour, using exempla and sententiae both to proclaim general truths and to illustrate the gravity of particular situations.

The first exemplum used by Thibaut is based upon the pelican story, one that was commonly given allegorical interpretations:

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Deus est ensi comme li pellicanz  
 Qui fet son nif el plus haut arbre sus,  
 Et le mauvēs oiseaus, qui vient de jus,  
 Ses oisellons ocit: tant est puanz;  
 Li peres vient destroiz et angoisseus,  
 Du bec s'ocit, de son sanc dolereus  
 Vivre refet tantost ses oisellons.  
 Deus fist autel, quant fu sa passions:  
 De son douz sanc racheta ses enfanz.  
 Du Diable, qui trop estoit poissanz  
 [LVI, ll. 1-10].

According to standard bestiary tradition,

The pelican is said to have great love for its young. However, when these begin to grow, they strike their parents in the face. Their parents in turn strike and kill them. After three days their mother pierces her side and sheds her blood over the dead children, thus receiving them.

Allegorically Christ is the pelican whom mankind struck by serving what has been created rather than the creator. Christ then ascended the Cross, where from his pierced side flowed the blood and water of man's salvation and eternal life.

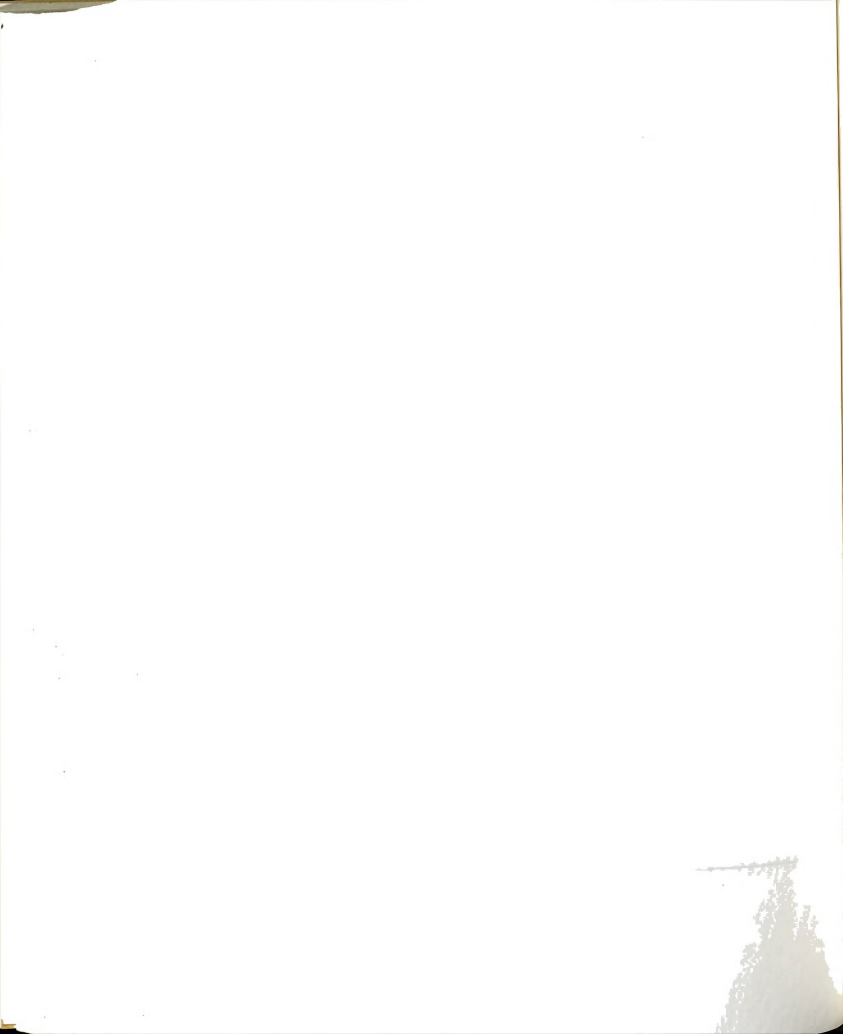
. . . Also there is a variation which is found in some Latin bestiaries and is carried through their French translations. Instead of the mother's resuscitating the young, it is the father who, regretting his action which had caused their death, pierces his side.<sup>8</sup>

Thibaut's interpretation of the story follows the French tradition quite closely with one major difference; it is not the father pelican (Deus) who is responsible for the death of the children, it is, rather, the wicked bird (le Deable) who slays the pelican's young. This variation upon the original story is significant in that it establishes a clear dichotomy between good and evil. No longer

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<sup>8</sup>McCullough, p. 156.

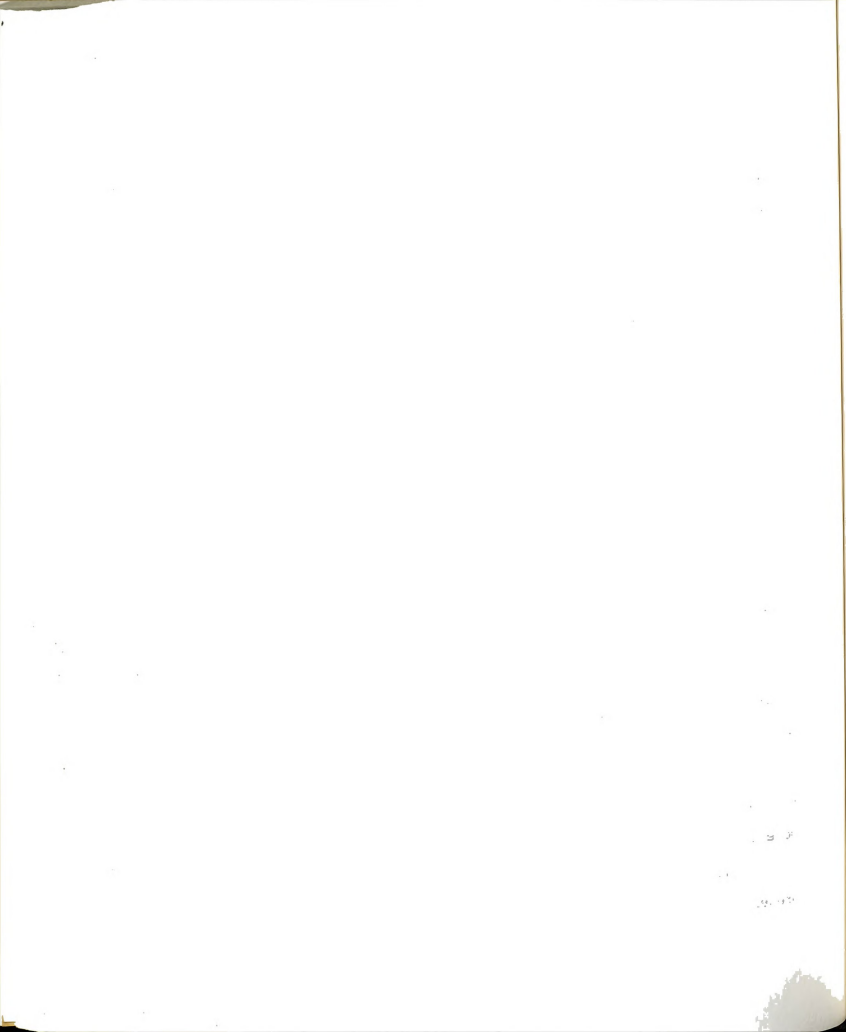




is God the Father seen as a once-vengeful father who later repents of his wrath and takes pity on his children; he is, instead, all-loving and all-merciful. In chiaroscuro-like opposition to the benevolent pelican who dwells "in the highest tree" is the evil bird who comes "from below" ("de jus"), the spatial contrast indicating the moral baseness of the wicked bird and the infernal region where he nests.

The clear distinction between the representatives of good and evil (Deus and le Deable) facilitates the making of a rational moral decision since there are no qualifications modifying either position. God is a self-sacrificing deity who sheds his own blood for his children; the Devil is wicked, powerful, foul-smelling, and clearly guilty of the murder of innocent victims. Thibaut, however, does not appeal to his audience solely on an intellectual level; he also emphasizes the suffering and compassion of the father bird through the adjectives he chooses, "destroiz et angoisseus," thereby arousing great sympathy for the plight of the father bird on the part of the audience. The ser-ventoïs is, after all, a polemical and not a didactic form of poetry. Thibaut's purpose is not, then, simply to teach a lesson, but to rally support for a cause that he makes more specific in the second stanza.

This movement from generalized sententiae or presentation of exempla to their application to specific



situations was used repeatedly in the chansons d'amour as the lover tried to apply the rules of love to his own situation, often formulating statements that served as self-consolation. The application of general statements to the lover's own plight usually reinforced the closed, subjective universe characteristic of the chansons d'amour whereby the poet-persona's sole preoccupation was his love for the lady and the endless suffering he endured for her. In the serventois he uses the same technique to an entirely different end, revealing concern not for his personal distress but for the perilous state of the world in which "orguels, baraz, felonie, traïsons" and "bobanz" seem to be gaining control. The poet-persona renders his concern for the state of the world even more precise by referring--although sometimes obliquely--to specific contemporary situations: the fact that clerics have abandoned writing sermons in order to wage war and kill people (stanza II); barons that the poet-persona perceives as innocent are being accused of wrong-doing (stanza III); and, worst of all, the Pope and his followers, the papelart are putting innocent people to death (from stanzas III and V), a comment interpreted by Wallensköld as a reference to Pope Gregory IX who was advocating a crusade to aid the Latin Empire of

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Constantinople during the years 1236-1239, whereas Thibaut was in favor of going to Palestine (l. 7).<sup>9</sup>

Other techniques common to the chanson tradition that are used in the serventois are the use of repetition to underscore the gravity of a particular situation (reminiscent of the lover's reiteration of specific words within a single chanson or stanza to create certain effects as, for example, the use of "maus" in chanson II, "chant/chançon" in chanson XXXIII, and "dolor/dolonte" in chanson VII), literary allusion, and rationcinatio consisting of posing a rhetorical question that the poet-persona himself answers. In the serventois these devices are used to intensify the speaker's diatribe against the evil of the world, to illustrate the immediate potential dangers of such a situation and, finally, to identify and condemn those who are at fault, threatening them with the certain prospect of carrying the burden of their sins into hell.

The use of repetition in the serventois consists of the occurrence of the word "mal/maus" four times in succession in the latter half of stanza III:

Le mal en font deseur aus revenir;  
Et qui mal qiert, maus ne li doit faillir.  
Qui petit mal porchace a son pouoir,  
Li granz ne doit en son cuer remanoir  
[ll. 27-30].

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<sup>9</sup>See Wallensköld, p. 197, Rem. III, 21.



The "mal" referred to by the poet-persona is not, of course, the "maus d'amors" but that evil which threatens to undermine the moral structure of the world as the speaker perceives it. Like the poet-lover, the speaker resorts to the use of sententiae to condemn those who have resorted to wickedness and evil ways, making life difficult for those who wish to remain faithful servants of God.

In contrast to the poet-lover whose laments reinforce his isolation, the speaker of the serventois affirms his solidarity with all suffering persons through the use of a mystical body image and the words "nostre, noz" and "nos"; "Nostre chiés fet touz noz menbres deloir / Por c'est bien droiz qu'a Dieu nos en plaingnons" (ll. 21-22). The literary allusion of the following stanza presages the great upheaval that is to come because of the internal conflict referred to by the poet-persona:

Bien devrions en l'estoire vooir  
La bataille qui fu des deus dragons,  
Si com l'en treuve el livre des Bretons,  
Dont il couvint les chastiaus just cheoir:  
C'est cist siecles, que il couvient verser,  
Se Deus ne fet la bataille finir  
[ll. 31-36].

It is in this stanza that the poet-persona assumes a rôle entirely foreign to that of the chansons, namely the rôle of prophet afforded to him by the tale he has chosen to explicate. In this particular tale<sup>10</sup> only the seer Merlin

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<sup>10</sup> Found in Wace, Le Roman de Brut, éd. par Ivor Arnold (Paris: S.A.T.F., 1938), ll. 7319-7582, and in



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can divine the cause of the destruction of King Vortigern's castle, namely the subterranean battles of two rival dragons who make the foundations of the earth tremble. After this episode Merlin makes a series of prophecies about the kingdom of Britain, alluded to by Thibaut in line 38, "Por deviner qu'estoit a avenir." Within the framework of relating the Merlin story, Thibaut interpolates his own judgment that it is this world that must be overthrown (l. 35), and issues his own prophecy that the Antichrist is close at hand.

In the following stanza Thibaut makes use of a ratiocinatio (used in chansons d'amour XXIII, XXVI, XXVIII, and XXXII) to call attention to the real cause of evil in the world, the papelart. Even in the Middle Ages the term "papelart" carried with it the connotation of "one who is deceitful, hypocritical."<sup>11</sup> Through the papelart reference Thibaut gives his final exegesis of the pelican story, equating the papelart with venom in their beaks to the hypothetical wicked bird of the bestiary legend, thereby focusing his audience's attention upon one specific group that must be overcome in order to restore balance and moral order to the world.

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Geoffrey of Monmouth, History of the Kings of Britain (Baltimore, Md.: Penguin, 1966), pp. 166-185.

<sup>11</sup> Brunetto Latini, Li Livres dou Tresor, éd. par Francis J. Carmody (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1948), p. 284.

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The envoi of the serventois closely resembles the envois of many chansons d'amour in that the poet-persona chooses those lines for an appropriate address to his sovereign lord and lady, in this case Deus and the celestial Dame. Promising to love and serve them, the poet-persona of the serventois, like the lover in the chansons, asks for a reciprocal favor, namely that God and the lady offer their faithful ones protection against the poisonous evil birds. Once again, the speaker of the serventois makes his request not only on his own behalf--as would the isolated, suffering lover--but on behalf of all the faithful who are in grave danger. Alike rhetorically and stylistically, the chanson and the serventois nevertheless express two completely different "universes": one, the interior world of the submissive, suffering poet-lover; the other, that of a poet-persona who is very much concerned with the outside world.

The same may be said of the relationship between the chansons and the religious verse as a whole. Although the two bodies of verse are closely related--indeed sometimes almost identical--in terms of their vocabulary, imagery, and stylistic devices, the two realms--secular and religious--are nonetheless distinct, the transcendent world of the religious verse being purified of any of the ambiguities that might be present in the courtly "world." Deus is not like Amors; he is consistent and forthright, and

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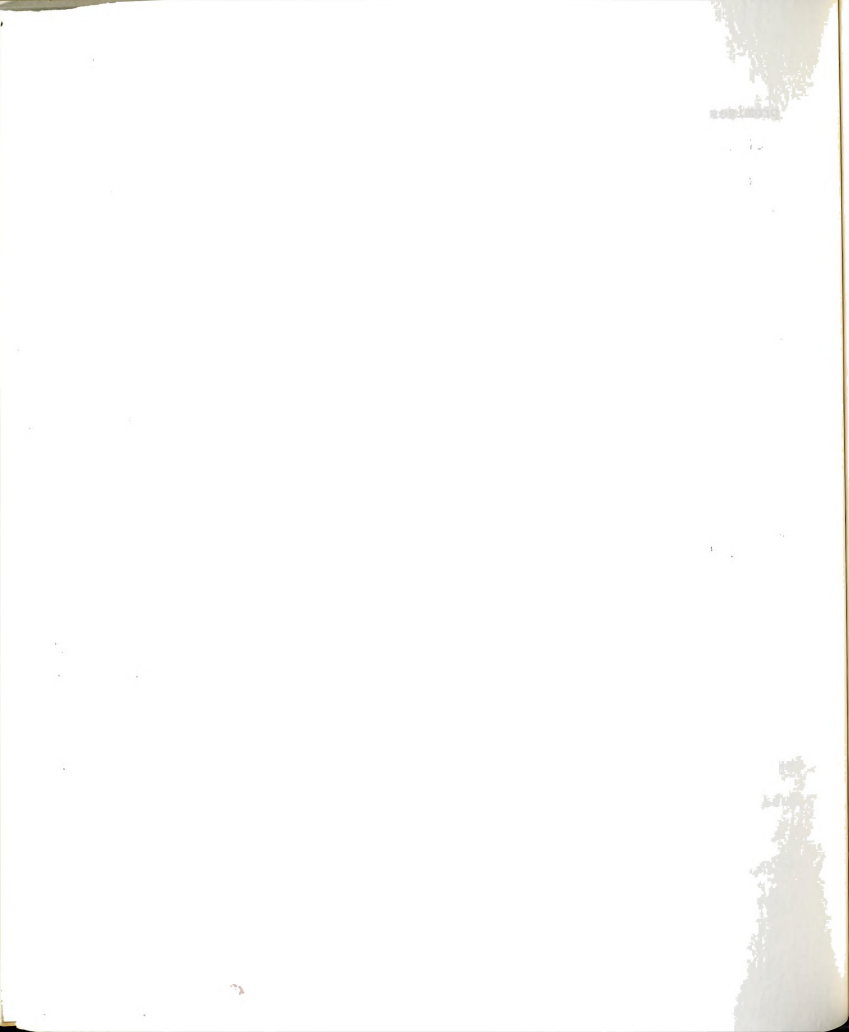
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promises rewards that surpass even the fairest courtly visions--or so states the converted poet-lover. The Virgin, too, unlike the courtly lady is steadfast in her mercy and protection of those who entreat her, and her beauty has powers that far surpass the courtly lady's. The servant himself remains humble and yet, in the service of the heavenly lord speaks with greater assertiveness, clearly differentiating between good and evil, and, at times, takes on the awesome rôle of prophet, exhibiting powers of which the courtly lover is incapable. As a whole, the courtly and religious verse clearly illustrate the range of voices of which the roi-trouvère was capable, moving freely from one realm to the next, communicating with precision, grace, and delicacy, the equally wide range of emotions experienced by love's servant and the servant of God.



## CONCLUSION

Thibaut's chansons encompass a wide range of medieval lyric forms. The chansons d'amour, by far the most numerous, are the basis of discussion for the first three themes discussed, each characterized by paradox: the sweet sickness of love, the sweet pain of remembrance, and the prison of love.

The "douce dolours d'amors" is the theme that recurs with most frequency in Thibaut's chansons d'amour. A close examination of these chansons reveals that, although Thibaut integrates into his love songs the courtly stereotype of the attendant, suffering lover as outlined by Andreas Capillanus, in many poems the poet-persona strains the limitations of such narrowly defined behavior. He is often rebellious, defiant, angry, willing to challenge the authority of his sovereigns, Amors and the lady, and expresses vexation concerning the paradoxical nature of his suffering and the conflicting emotions that he experiences. This wide range of response to love's suffering is conveyed through the use of rhetorical devices and striking imagery which enrich the poet-lover's ultimate resolution of his conflicts, the reaffirmation of his tenderness and passionate fidelity to the lady who surpasses all others in beauty and virtue.





Closely related to the "sweet sickness of love" is the equally paradoxical "sweet pain of remembrance." The poet-persona's preoccupation with recollection of the past is a function of the courtly code whereby the lover's passion must remain secret and according to which the lady was always distant and unattainable. In Thibaut's poetry the phenomenon of remembrance is characterized by specific patterns and thought processes. Of pivotal importance is the moment when the lover first beheld the lady; it is a distinct turning point that changes his whole existence and it is to that moment that the lover subsequently directs his thoughts. At this point, remembrance brings both pain and solace since, when the lover is in a state of conscious recollection of the past, he is even more acutely aware of the physical and temporal distance between himself and the lady, even though the memory of her is, in itself, of exceeding delight. Involuntary as well as voluntary remembrance leads to meditation upon the lady's physical and moral qualities which, in turn, leads to a timeless state of rapt contemplation. Ultimately, however, the vision disintegrates and the lover is again confronted by the painful reality of separation and is tormented by sadness, fear, and despair.

Physical separation from the beloved serves as a partial basis for the third major theme, the "sweet prison

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$$x = \frac{1}{2} + \frac{1}{2} \sqrt{1 - 4\alpha}$$

of love." Love's prison is a manifestation of the lover's psychological state as well; he is immobilized, unable actively to change his situation and yet unable to quit love's service. The poet-lover's intense and unresolvable conflict is communicated by personification of the lover's heart and mind ("resons"), and by the phenomenon of dédoublément whereby the lover and his heart each lead an independent existence; the lover in his own sad state of exile from the lady, the heart in joyful imprisonment with her.

The prison theme affords Thibaut rich and striking metaphors, of which the most well known is the Roman de la rose-like description of Amors' prison in the unicorn poem (chanson XXXIV). Only in Thibaut's religious verse does one find comparable sustained metaphors and highly refined techniques. Additional minor variations on the prison theme reveal Thibaut's ability to strain the narrow limitations of acceptable courtly behavior, stopping at nothing short of threatening to abandon the courtly lady herself.

The boldness and independence of the lover in such cases is directly related to still another theme, the voice of authority as expressed in the chansons d'amour and the dialogue poems. Through extensive use of generalized sententiae the poet-persona establishes the rules of comportment expected of true lovers, attempts to define the means of distinguishing true lovers from false, and

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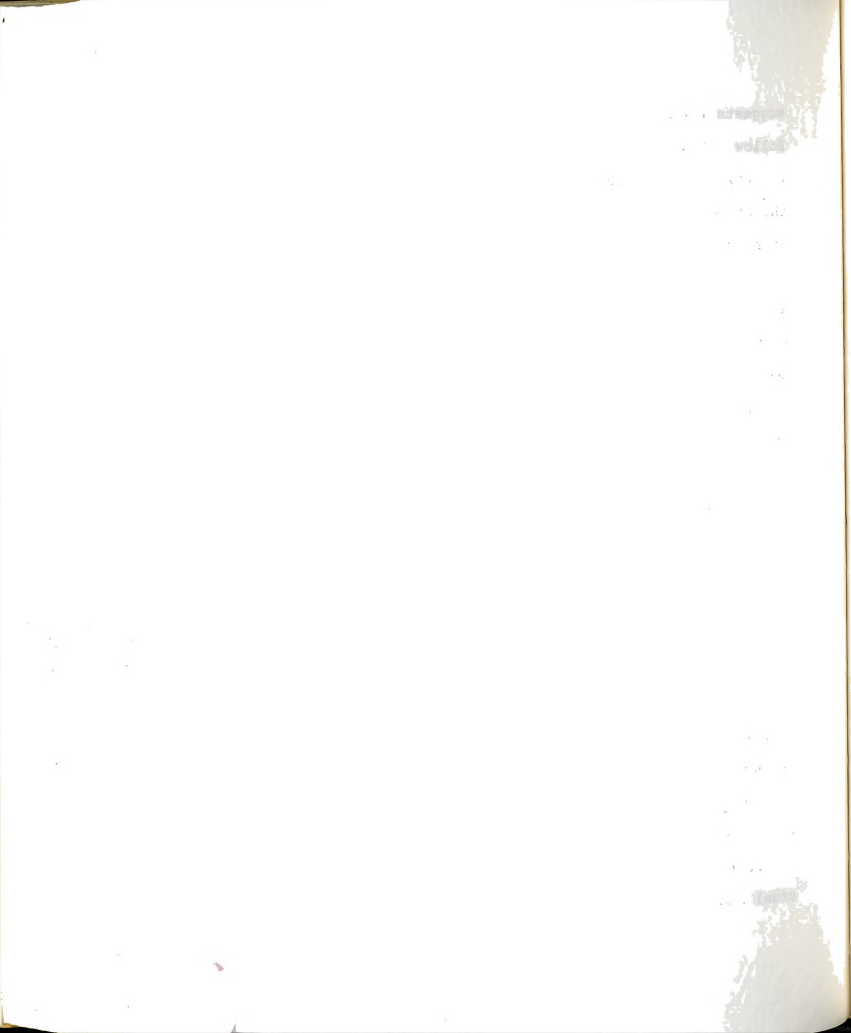
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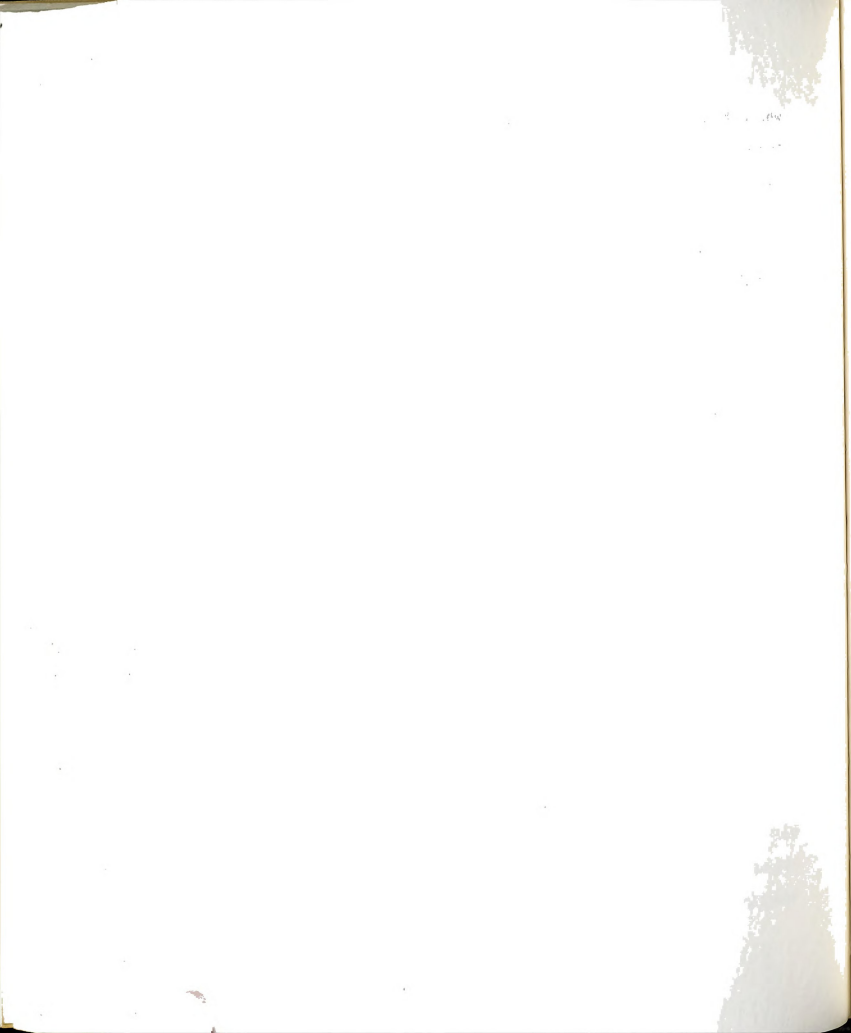
suggests that there are also rules that the lady should follow. This authoritative voice, so effective in upholding the values of the courtly code, functions equally well in the world of the jeux-partis and débats, where there are fewer restrictions. The participants of the dialogue poems are free to discuss explicit sexual matters and no longer are forced to treat their ladies as distant, unchanging, unattainable ideals. One finds then, in the amoebean verse, the coming together of two worlds, the courtly and the actual, changing world in which the trouvères live and create, and such a juxtaposition, although it is expressed in verse which was written solely to amuse and to entertain, raises deeper philosophical questions concerning the search for ideals that are consistent with one's real life.

In Thibaut's religious verse the ideals, the feudal hierarchy of lover as servant of a sovereign lord (Amors) and lady, as well as the technical refinements of the chansons d'amour are transferred, as it were, to a higher plane whereby the humble poet-lover offers his talents and pledges fealty to a divine master and celestial mistress. In such a transposition the courtly concepts of "folie" and "paradis" are reevaluated and found to be of little worth to one who seeks a heavenly reward. Likewise, in comparison to Deus and the Vierge, Amors and the Dame seem cruel and inconstant, undeserving of the devotion of one



who entrusts himself to an omnipotent, just, and merciful Lord and a lady of unsurpassed beauty and compassion. The poet-persona continues to play the rôle of steadfast servant and spokesperson delineating rules for the faithful to follow and takes on the more awesome rôle of prophet, as well as that of an innocent child in order to appeal to Mary in her rôle as mother, and to render himself all the more worthy of entrance into the heavenly kingdom. Again, Thibaut reveals his technical virtuosity and versatility, the ability to speak with many voices, effectively communicating the wide range of emotions experienced by love's servant and the servant of God.





## APPENDIX



## APPENDIX

### I Por conforter ma pesance

- I        In order to ease my pain  
           I am writing a song.  
           It will be good if it helps me  
           For Jason.  
 5        He who won the (golden) fleece  
           Never had such a severe penance.  
           E! e! e!

- II        I debate with myself  
           For reason  
 10       Tells me that I act childishly  
           When I remain in prison  
           Where ransom is of no value;  
           Therefore I have need of solace  
           E! e! e!

- III 15   My lady is so well known  
           And so renowned  
           That I have expressed my fidelity  
           To her in song.  
           More than the gift of another's love,  
 20       I prefer a glance, when she darts it at me.  
           E! e! e!

- IV        I love her company  
           And her sweet name  
           More than the kingdom of France.  
 25       Death to Mohammed  
           Who seeks reasons to reproach love  
           Because of fear or dread.  
           E! e! e!

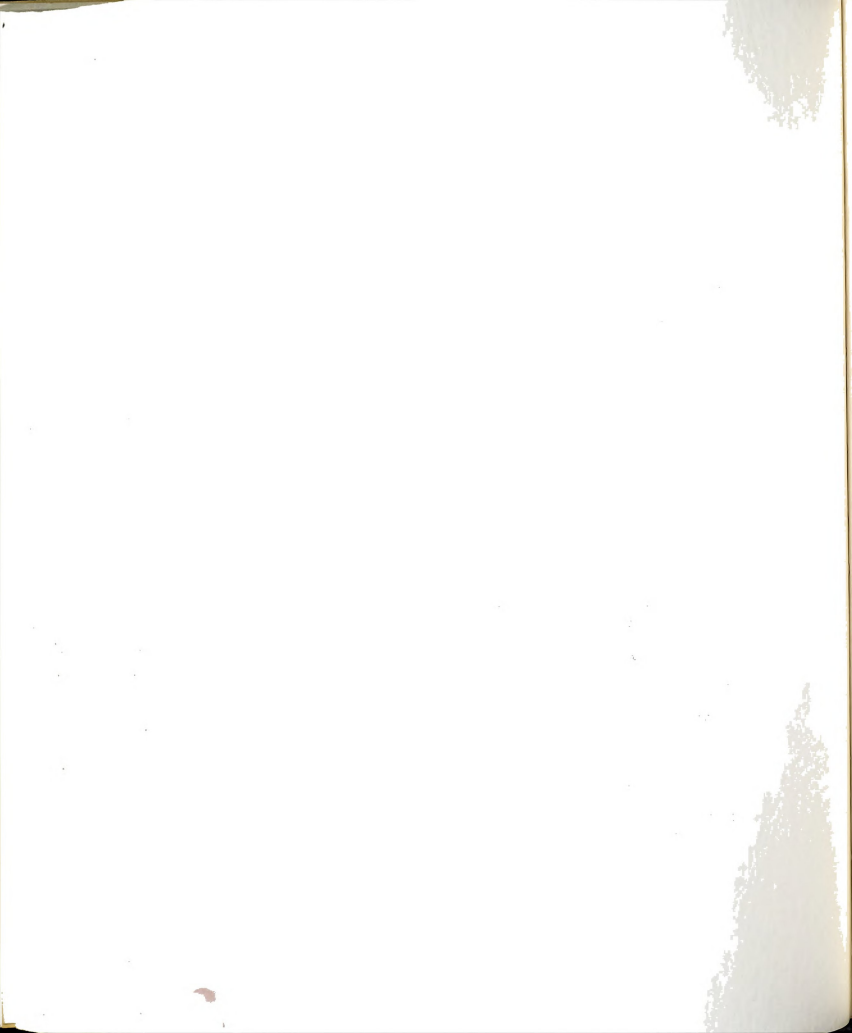
- V        Memory of her as my companion  
 30       Is deep within me;  
           Every day I contemplate her likeness  
           And her image  
           Grant me recompense, Amors!  
           Do not suffer my misfortune!  
 35       E! e! e!

- VI        Lady, I would like you to be  
           Cognizant of it.  
           E! e! e!



II De touz maus n'est nus plesanz

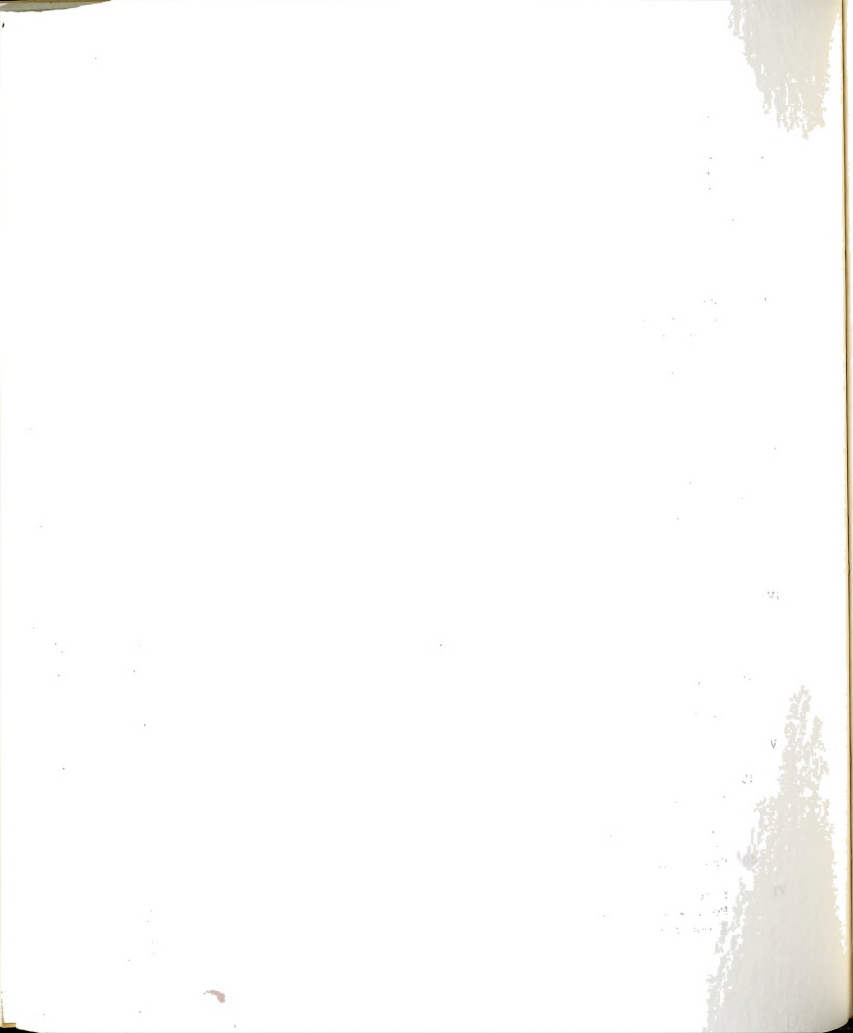
- I Of all sicknesses, none is pleasant  
 Except that of loving,  
 But that one is sweet and painful  
 And delectable to the thought,  
 5 And can give such great comfort,  
 And there is so much good that comes from it  
 That no one ought to stop loving.
- II As an obedient, true lover  
 I wish to submit to my lady.  
 10 I cannot be sorrowful  
 When I hear (anyone) speak of her;  
 Remembrance pleases me so greatly  
 That to remember her beauty  
 Is a safeguard against all sicknesses (evils).
- III 15 Amors, since you put me, bound,  
 Into your prison  
 I would rather be put to death  
 Than have ransom.  
 Such a sickness is quite without reason  
 For it pleases me when it makes me worse  
 20 And I never seek any cure for it.
- IV Insofar as it concerns you  
 Lady, it seems reasonable to me;  
 Love for you overwhelmed me,  
 As well as your gracious manner  
 25 And the beauty which glows  
 In such abundance in your face  
 And from your feet to your head.
- V If you would be, Lady,  
 a bit more gracious to me  
 30 I could not ask God  
 For a greater favor,  
 For I would have so much joy  
 That all men, indeed,  
 Would be sorrowful in comparison to me.
- VI 35 Lady, from whom I await all riches,  
 Know that when I see you,  
 No one has such joyful torment.



III Je ne vois mès nului qui gieut ne chant

- I I no longer see anyone who plays or sings  
Nor willingly makes merry or is joyful,  
And for this reason I have not sung in a long time  
As I once was wont to do,  
5 Nor has anyone asked me to do so;  
And for this reason, if, in my song  
I speak foolishly of whatever I please,  
No one ought to reproach me cruelly for it.
- II He who reproaches a true lover commits a mortal sin,  
10 And he who chastises himself for his words does not love;  
Such is the custom of a true lover;  
The more he thinks of her, the more he is troubled.  
Whoever places his whole heart and desire in love  
Ought to undergo good and bad giving thanks.  
15 He who does not act thus commits folly  
And will never have great joy during his life.
- III God help me, I have never seen anyone  
Who loved very well and was able to retreat from it;  
He who wishes to conduct himself otherwise  
20 Is mad and wicked and full of vexation.  
Ah! sweet lady, if you had been there where I was,  
If your tender heart, which seems so well-disposed  
Knew anything about love, it would have had pity  
If it had ever received it from another.
- IV 25 When Amors pursues me more, I flee him less  
This sickness is quite contrary to all others,  
For God has never created a person who loves  
Who cannot turn his sufferings into joy.  
I have never faltered in my love for you  
30 Since that hour, lady, when I became yours,  
For my fine heart made you so pleasing to me,  
In spite of myself and what I thought about it.
- V I am so preoccupied that I do not know what I seek  
Except mercy, lady, if you find it suitable;  
35 For you know well that a good song will never be sung  
As a reproach to a proud heart.  
One ought to be exalted for one's pity  
And pride should not be harbored there  
Where love has such renown;  
40 One ought to favor and aid one's own.
- VI Song, tell her that there is no profit in all this;  
For, even if she had sworn my death a hundred times,  
I would still have to remain in her power.





IV Fueille ne flor ne vaut riens en chantant

- I Leaf and flower are worth nothing in singing  
 Except by default, nothing more, in rhyming  
 And giving solace to peasants  
 Who often bark out crude words.
- 5 I sing, not to raise their spirits,  
 But to make my own heart a little more joyful,  
 For a sick person is often cured  
 By a comforting word when he is not able to eat.
- II Whoever sees his enemy running toward him
- 10 In order to shoot large metal arrows at him  
 Indeed ought to turn and flee  
 And save himself, if he is able, from the archer;  
 But when Amors comes to shoot at me more  
 And I flee him less; it is an exceedingly great marvel,
- 15 And thus I receive the blow in the midst of a crowd  
 Just as if I were alone in an orchard.
- III I know truly that my lady loves a hundred  
 And still more: it is in order to vex me.  
 But I love her more than any living thing,
- 20 God grant that I might embrace her graceful body!  
 That is what would be most precious to me,  
 And, if I knowingly perjure myself  
 I ought to be brought forth  
 And hung higher than a bell tower.
- IV 25 If I say to her: "Lady, I love you so much,"  
 She will say that I am trying to deceive her,  
 I have neither the wit nor the boldness  
 To dare dispute it with her.  
 I would need a heart which ought to help me,
- 30 For the word of anyone else is useless in this matter.  
 What will I do? Counsel me, lovers!  
 Which is better, to speak or remain silent?
- V I dare not say that it is folly to love  
 For in this matter the most foolish is most to be esteemed;
- 35 One often must depend on chance  
 More than on wit or reason in pleading one's case.  
 No one can give instruction on how to love well  
 Except the heart, which gives the desire.  
 He who loves loyally, with a true heart,
- 40 Knows more about it and can help himself less.
- VI Lady, have pity! Please consider how much  
 I love you; I ask nothing more.  
 See the amends for which I beg you.

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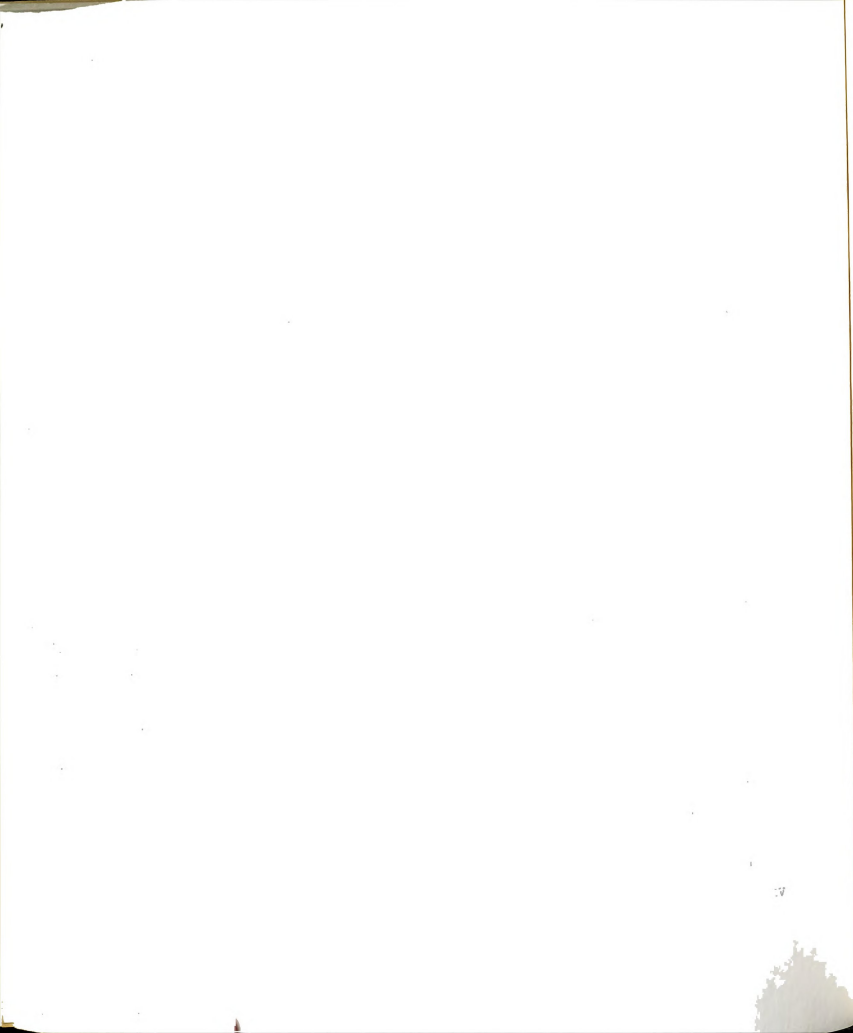
V Li rosignous chante tant

- I                   The nightingale sings so much  
                     That he falls from the tree, dead;  
                     No one has ever seen such a beautiful death,  
                     So sweet and gracious.
- 5   Likewise I die singing in a loud voice,  
      But I cannot be heard by my lady.  
      Nor does she deign to have pity on me.
- II                   Everyone says that he loves  
                     More than anyone ever has before,  
      10           This confounds lovers  
                     For the false lie only too often.  
      But a lady ought to realize, from their false words  
      That their false hearts have forsaken all good qualities  
      And it is not right to take pity on them.
- III 15           Never has there been haughtiness as great  
                     As that of Julius (Caesar) toward Pompey  
                     Yet my lady has even more for me  
                     Who die desiring.  
      My thought is ever before her  
      20   And day and night begs mercy a thousand times,  
      Kissing her feet, that she might remember me.
- IV                   I will call upon God as a witness  
                     And all the saints from on high,  
                     That, if anyone can love more than I,  
      25           I will not ask reparation  
      Nor evermore to be heard by you;  
      Thus you may take away from me your kind words  
      And chase me like a mountain animal.
- V                    I do not think that the serpent  
      30           Or any other animal strikes  
                     As fiercely as does Amors in triumph;  
                     His blows are exceedingly heavy.  
      He strikes more steadily than Turks or Arabs,  
      And not even Solomon or David  
      35   Or a madman from Germany could withstand the assault.
- VI                   It is no wonder that I am dismayed,  
                     For comfort is so difficult to obtain  
                     That I fear greatly that I will lack all goods.
- VII                  Lady, I cannot be parted from you,  
      40   Thus I declare to you the pleasures and (tokens of) mercy  
      Which I still wait for you to grant me.
- VIII                Amors will have struck me many harsh blows.  
                     Song, go quickly and not reluctantly  
                     And greet our people of Champagne!



VI De bone amor vient seance et bonté

- I From true love comes knowledge and goodness,  
And love comes, likewise, from these two.  
All three are one, if one reflects upon it;  
Never will they be separated.
- 5 They have chosen together, through deliberation,  
The couriers who have gone ahead:  
They have beaten such a well-worn path  
From my heart that they will never stray from it.
- II At night the couriers are in the light  
10 And during the day they are obscured from people's view:  
The sweet glance, gracious and charming,  
The great beauty and the goodness that I see in her;  
It is no wonder that I am awestruck by these things;  
Through her presence God has illumined the world,  
15 For, whoever would have the fairest summer day  
At high noon, would have darkness next to her.
- III In love there is fear and boldness:  
The two are three and from the third are the two,  
And great value is attached to them  
20 Where all good qualities remain and take refuge.  
For this reason, love (amors) is the hostel of everyone  
Where no one is needy, according to his merit.  
(Yet) in your hostel, lady of great worth,  
I am so needy that I know not where I am.
- IV 25 I have no recourse but to place myself at her command  
For I have forsaken all (earthly) goods for her:  
Either great joy or my death awaits me,  
I know not which, since the moment I was before her.  
At that moment her eyes did not cause me any pain  
30 For they struck my heart so sweetly  
With amorous desire;  
The blow which I received from them is still there.
- V The wound was severe and becomes still more inflamed;  
There is no doctor who could cure me  
35 Except she who had the arrow shot at me.  
If only she would deign to touch it with her hand  
She could withdraw the mortal blow  
By its whole shaft; this I desire greatly.  
But the iron point cannot be removed  
40 For it broke inside upon dealing the blow.
- VI Dame, there is no other messenger  
By whom I dare to send you my innermost desire,  
Except my song, if you wish to sing it.



VII Une dolor enossee

- I      A pain has entered  
          Deep within my heart  
          And I cannot extract it  
          For anything ever born;  
       5      It is the pain of love,  
          For which I have no comfort or aid,  
          Thus I think that that which I love hates me.
- II      One must rid oneself  
          Of desperate sorrow,  
       10     I do not want it to enter me  
          At any cost.  
          I prefer to suffer  
          My pains and great fears  
          Than to suffer unrequited desire.
- III    15     Lady, I dared not complain to you  
          In any manner,  
          For your exceedingly great beauty  
          Has extinguished reason in my heart,  
          So that I have not the power  
       20     To tell you my wishes;  
          Thus it may last forever.
- IV      I see well that I cannot reach her  
          Through any message,  
          Nor, indeed, do I seek to speak out,  
       25     Nor direct my complaints elsewhere;  
          Thus I shall wait, indeed,  
          For her mercy which is so difficult to obtain,<sup>1</sup>  
          If pity does not break her (resistance).
- V      I dare not enter her chamber,  
       30     So greatly do I fear her anger.  
          I must be content with sighs and floods of tears  
          For I can do nothing else;  
          And so I continue to adore  
          The place, and beg mercy  
       35     As in a high sanctuary.
- VI      Lady, whom I love so much,  
          In your delay, grant me some token  
          Which will entice me to stay.
- VII      Bernard, he who feels my sufferings  
       40     And does not seek mercy  
          Has too much vexation and difficulty.

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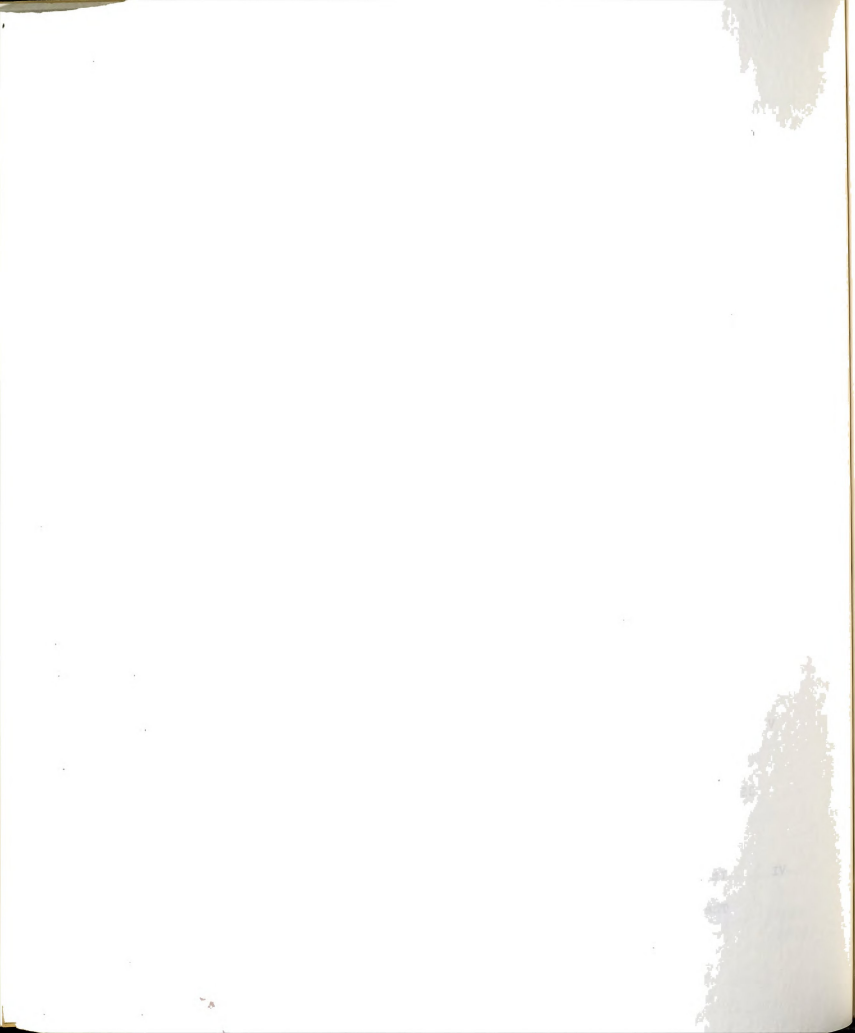
<sup>1</sup>The translation fails to render here the stylistic device of phonetic repetition: 1. 22, voi; 1. 24, voir; 1. 26, voir; and 1. 27, voloir.





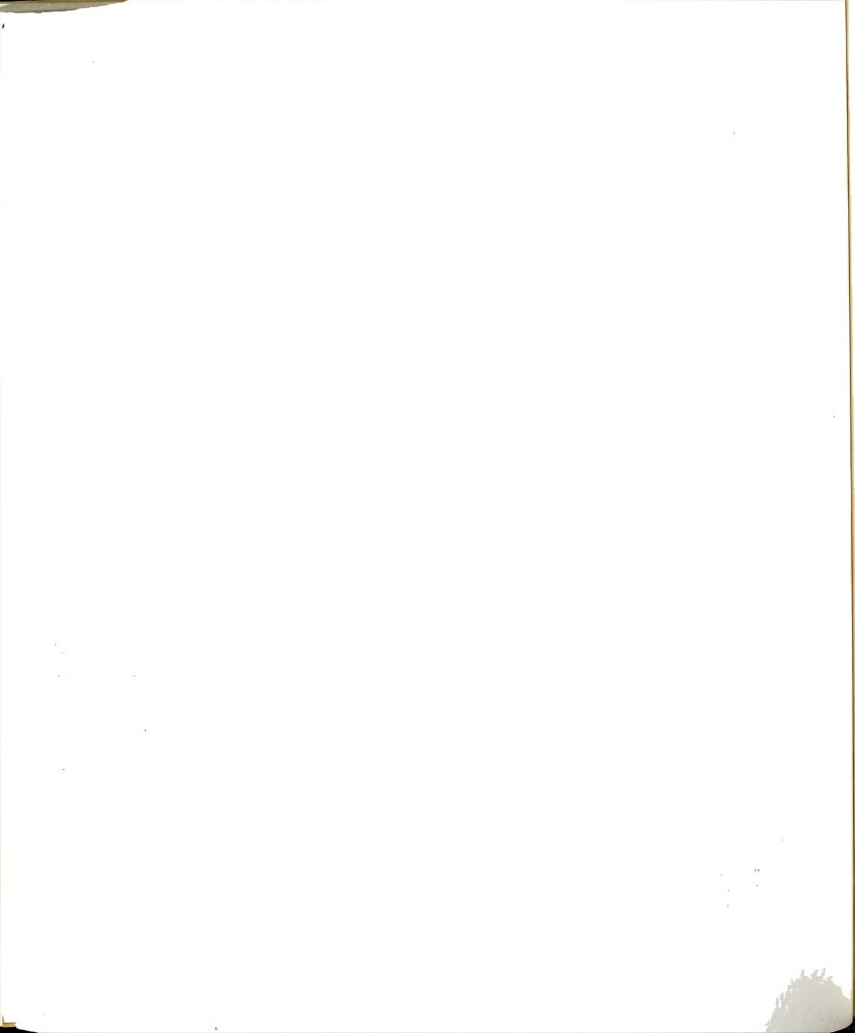
VIII Por mau tens ne por gelee

- I        Neither bad weather nor frost  
          Nor cold mornings  
          Nor any other living thing  
          Will ever separate my thoughts  
       5        From the love which I have,  
              For I have loved her only too much  
              With a true heart.  
              Valara!
- II        Beautiful and blonde and fair,  
          You please me when it suits you.  
       10       Ah, God! if only the love which I have begged you for  
              Were given to me!  
              If it is refused to me  
              When I plead for it,  
              I shall die.  
       15       Valara!
- III       Lady, in your command  
          I have placed my body and my life.  
          In God's name, do not put me to death!  
          There where the true heart humbles itself  
       20       One must find  
              Pity and succour  
              As solace.  
              Valara!
- IV        Lady, be courteous!  
          May it please you that during my life  
       25       I might pronounce these words:  
              My beautiful, very sweet beloved,  
              I dare to name you,  
              For I shall never have any desire  
              To love another.  
       30       Valara!
- V        Never could I complain,  
          For my sorrow would be so much greater;  
          Nor could I feign loving  
          Nor extinguish my pain  
       35       If I could not say  
              That I wish to remain  
              Entirely at her mercy.  
              Valara!
- VI        It would be too difficult to suppress  
          Songs about her;  
          The love with which I think of her  
          Would have to be broken.  
              Valara!



IX Tant ai amors servies longuement

- I I have served loves for so long  
That, henceforth, no one must reproach me  
If I desist. I commend them now to God  
For one must not undertake folly forever;  
5 And he who cannot keep himself from it  
Nor recognize its pain and torment is foolish.  
One would regard me henceforth as childish,  
For each turn of weather must await its season.
- II I am not like those other people  
10 Who have loved and then wish to dispute it  
And speak slander through vile ill-will.  
One must not sell his services to his lord,  
Nor slander nor commit crimes against Amors  
But let him who breaks away break away in good faith.  
15 I, for my part, want all lovers  
To receive great favors, even though I may no longer partake of them.
- III Up to this point Amors has done me great good,  
For he has made me love, without baseness,  
The most beautiful and also the best one,  
20 In my opinion, who has ever been chosen.  
Amors now wishes, and my lady begs me,  
To go away, and I thank her greatly for it.  
For I have no greater reason on my side  
When my lady, of her own will, chastises me.
- IV 25 I have never merited anything else from Amors  
As long as I have been in his service;  
But God, in his pity, cured me  
When He delivered me from the seignury of love.  
I have never seen a better hour  
30 Than when I escaped from him (Amors) without losing my life.  
Thus I think I will write many a jeu-parti,  
And many a sonet and reverdie.
- V At the beginning one must keep oneself  
From undertaking anything excessive,  
35 But true love does not let a man think  
Or choose rightly where to direct his thought.  
One loves, rather, in a strange country  
Where one cannot come or go  
Or do what one can always find;  
40 (In such an) exile, one indeed undergoes madness.
- VI May God keep me from love and from loving  
Anyone but Her who ought to be adored,  
And from whom one cannot fail to obtain recompense.



X Douce dame, tout autre pensement

- I Sweet lady, when I think about you,  
 I forget all other thought in my deep desire<sup>1</sup>  
 Ever since I first beheld you with my eyes  
 Amors has not been savage toward me;  
 5 But he torments me more than before.  
 For that reason I see that I await no cure  
     Which might soothe me.  
     Except to contemplate you  
     With the eyes of my heart in thought.
- II 10 If I cannot go to you often,  
 Let it not grieve you, beautiful, courteous, and wise one;  
 For I greatly fear the wicked people  
 Who, by guessing will have caused great harm;  
 And if I pretend to love elsewhere,  
 15 Know that it is without heart and without desire  
     So be understanding about it;  
     And if it were to grieve you,  
     I would desist.
- III Without you, lady, I cannot have joy,  
 20 Nor do I wish that God would grant me joy from another!  
 For I prefer to remain in your power  
 And undergo suffering rather than any good which I might have.  
 Ha! the smiling, beautiful eyes which welcomed me  
 Made me change the disposition of my heart (mon corage);  
 25 So that I who used to  
     Reproach and despise love,  
     Now feel its death-dealing pains.
- IV A beauty as great as anyone could find  
 And the courteous manner which governs her body,  
 30 God made her in order to strike with awe  
 All those whom she wishes to make joyful.  
 I do not seek any excess from you, lady,  
 Except that you might deign  
     To consider me yours;  
 35 This would be great solace to me,  
 And hope of love.

---

<sup>1</sup>"En mon corage" is difficult to render. Various interpretations ("intention, désir, sentiment, pensée, avis") seem inadequate. "Corage" implies involvement of one's innermost self; the heart as center of desire as well as of "thoughts" which go beyond the intellectual capacity to focus on an object or person. This idea is conveyed also in lines 8-9 of this poem.

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- V      There was nothing about her which did not overwhelm me  
         With a blow that struck sweetly and deeply:  
         Forehead, mouth, and nose, eyes, the fresh color of her face,  
 40    Hands, head, and body, and a beautiful countenance.  
         My sweet lady, when will I again see  
         These, my enemies, which have brought me so much pain  
                 By their power?  
         No man was ever alive  
 45    Who loved his enemies as much.

- VI     Song, go to the one who knows well  
         And tell her that I have sung in great fear  
                 And apprehension;  
         But it is only right that a true lover  
         Be attentive to his lady.

XI    Tuit mi desir et tuit mi grief torment

- I      All my desires and all my painful torments  
         Come from there where all my thoughts are.  
         I have great fear, for all  
         Who have seen her gracious, adorned body  
 5    Are well-disposed toward her.  
         Even God loves her, I know it truly;  
         It is a great wonder, when he suffers so much because of  
                 her (rivalry).<sup>1</sup>
- II     Overwhelmed, I forget myself while pondering  
 10    About where God found such wondrous beauty;  
         When He placed her among us,  
         He did us a great service indeed.  
         The whole world is illumined by her,  
         For her worth is composed of all great goods;  
 15    No one who has seen her would not tell you as much.
- III    May foolish hope be followed by good fortune  
         Which makes many a lover live and rejoice!  
         Despair makes one languish and grieve,  
         And my foolish heart makes me think that I am cured;  
 20    If it were wise, it would make me die.  
         For this reason it is good to be insane,  
         For with too much (good) sense misfortune can indeed come.

---

<sup>1</sup>Possible rendering: "when he deprives himself of her so much."



$\frac{1}{2}$

- IV      Whoever wished to remember her  
          Would not feel sickness nor wish to cure it  
 25    For she adds greatly to the worth of all those  
          Whom she wishes to welcome graciously.  
          God. how painful it was to leave her!  
          Amors have mercy! Make this known to her:  
          The heart which does not love cannot have great joy.
- V    30    Please remember, lady, the sweet welcome  
          Which was accompanied by such great desire,  
          That my eyes did not have the power  
          That I dare glance at you;  
          With my lips I dared not beg you  
          Nor speak to you, lady, of that which I wish;  
 35    So cowardly was I, alas, and weak, that now I grieve about it.
- VI      Lady, if I may address you,  
          I will speak much better than I am accustomed to do,  
          If only Amors, who treats me with exceeding pride, lets me.
- VII     Song, go straightway and announce to Raoul  
 40    That he should serve Amors and bid fair welcome  
          And sing as much as a bird caught in a trap.

XII    De nouveau m'estuet chanter

- I      Once again I find it fitting to sing  
          When I am most distressed.  
          When I can find no pity,  
          I must, indeed, sing reluctantly;  
 5    I dare not speak to her;  
          I am making a messenger of my song  
          For she (the lady) is so courteous and wise  
          That I cannot think of anything else.
- II      If I could forget  
 10    Her beauty and her good words,  
          And her sweet countenance,  
          I could indeed be cured;  
          But I cannot take my heart away from her.  
          So much do I think of her with true desire (de fin corage).  
 15    Perhaps I have thus committed great folly;  
          It still suits me to be perseverent.



- III      Everyone says that he is dying of love,  
           But I seek not to ever die from it.  
           I prefer to bear my grief,  
 20    Live, wait, and languish,  
           For she is indeed worth  
           My sufferings and unrequited desire.  
           He does not love rightly  
           Who seeks to profit from it.
- IV    25   Lady, one who has great fear  
           Is often driven to frenzy  
           And insane thoughts,  
           And I cannot keep myself from them.  
           If it is your pleasure  
 30    My suffering will be redeemed,  
           For only the one whom I desire  
           Can make my heart rejoice.
- V      No one can have great joy  
           If he has not learned it from great suffering.  
 35    He who always has his own way  
           Will hardly be a true lover.  
           For this reason Amors causes suffering,  
           That he wishes to give recompense  
           To those who know how to wait  
 40    And serve according to his (Amors') will.
- VI      Lady, with all my power  
           I give myself to you without dispute,  
           For, without you, no wealth can come.  
           To me, nor have any merit.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>"Ne ne puet valoir." The "ne ne" construction is difficult to render. One could possibly interpret this line to mean, "Sans vous, nul bien (ne) puisse être rendu à moi, ni puisse valoir." Since the text as given by Wallensköld offers no clear interpretation, one might assume that this is an instance of scribal error, giving rise to several possible interpretations. One might assume that "ne ne" should really be "ne me," and interpret the final clause as--"Nor have I any worth." One would have to assume that the verb "puet" (l. 44) is also incorrect, the correct reading being "ne me puis valoir." This seems to be a bit far from the established text, although the idea thereby expressed is certainly fitting to the "courtly love" ethos, that of the lover being of no worth except through the lady's recognition of him.



XIII Nus hons ne puet ami reconforter

- I  
 No one can give comfort to a lover  
 Except the one to whom he has given his heart,  
 For this reason I am given to lamenting and weeping  
 For no comfort comes to me, it is clear,  
 5 From there where all my memory lies.  
 For loving well I am often in distress  
     To speak truly.  
 Lady, have mercy! Give me hope  
     Of having joy!
- II 10 I cannot speak to her very often  
 Nor contemplate her beautiful eyes.  
 It grieves me that I cannot go there,  
 For my heart is always (there) in its entirety.  
 Ah! beautiful one, sweet without knowing it!  
 15 Please give me better expectations  
     Of good hope!  
 Lady, have mercy! Give me hope  
     Of having joy!
- III  
 I do not know how to beg mercy of her enough  
 20 Without her thinking that I am feigning it,  
 For so many people are given to deception  
 That true lovers can hardly be recognized.  
 This brings me death and disadvantage,  
 (Takes away) all my joy and confidence  
 25 And makes me grieve.  
 Lady, have mercy! Give me hope  
     Of having joy!
- IV  
 There were some who reproach me  
 For not saying whose lover I am,  
 30 But never will anyone alive know it  
 Except you, lady, to whom I express it  
 With great cowardice, fear, and apprehension  
 You can tell, then, indeed, by my manner  
     The disposition of my heart.  
 35 Lady, have mercy! Give me hope  
     Of having joy!



- V        Amors, I wish to enter a claim against you  
           For you have committed great larceny.  
           You know only too well how to steal a man's heart,  
 40 But in returning it there is neither limit nor end,  
           Thus you keep it trembling in the balance.  
           Amors, in you I have placed the writ  
               Of my desire.  
           Lady, have mercy! Give me hope  
 45        Of having joy!
- VI        Song, go to Nanteuil without delay!  
           Tell Philip that if he were not of France,  
               He would be worth much more.  
           Lady, have mercy! Give me hope  
 50        Of having joy!
- XIV    Tout autresi con fraint nois et yvers
- I        Just as snow and winter melt away  
           When summer comes and the fair season returns,  
           False prayers proffered by false lovers ought to melt away  
           And the plight of true lovers be amended;  
 5 And I fear greatly that it will go badly for me  
           If it goes well for all the others;  
           But I direct myself so steadfastly to that place where  
               beauty dwells  
           That I am a magnet, even though all does not respond to  
               me like iron.
- II        By God, Amors, I shall hence be weak and pale  
 10 And more distressed than one who wears a hairshirt  
           For I know not of you any other state  
           Than that which brings me such distress.  
           Do not be like the swan who always  
           Beats his cygnets, when he ought to treat them better.  
 15 When they are large and return to the nest<sup>1</sup>  
           And first he nourished and cared for them.

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<sup>1</sup>The text gives the singular "il vient" where "ils viennent" is clearly needed for the sense of this legend as presented in the bestiary tradition. It seems that Thibaut has confused the pelican and swan legends. According to bestiary tradition, it is the pelican that kills its young, reviving them three days later with its own blood. See McCullough, pp. 155-156.





- III      No pain exists for those who await recompense;  
           It is, rather, a joy, for those who understand this.  
           One who always wishes to do his own will.
- 20      Can be reproached for many things.  
           Those who do not know how to wait to be honored  
           Ride about dressed in rich attire.  
           In Amors there are many great rewards  
           With which he can make his faithful one joyful.
- IV 25   Certainly, lady, I know indeed  
           That I need not lose if I know not how to defend myself.  
           Amors comes hastening to make me love you  
           And I declare myself defeated without dealing a blow;  
           And you hold the victory standard
- 30      So that no one can reproach you for it;  
           And (yet) I want you to know one thing:  
           If you put me to death, you gain nothing.
- V        No one unwillingly catches a bird in a trap  
           Which he does not wound or kill or frighten,
- 35      And Amors acts likewise  
           Toward many of those he keeps in his school;  
           He draws them sweetly and shows them why;  
           At first each is so happy that he flies.  
           You are very attractive to me, but words fail me here
- 40      For I will tell you for whom this grieves me.
- VI       Song, go to the place where I see  
           A sweet heart at least, and speak these words;  
           If my eyes are far, this frightens me,  
           But I always have confidence in my faith.



XV Amors me fet commencier

- I        Amors is making me begin  
           A new song  
       For he wants to teach me  
           How to love the most beautiful one  
       5        In the world:  
           The lady with the graceful body  
           Is the one of whom I sing.  
           May God grant me news  
           That would be to my liking!  
       10        For my heart frequently  
           Beats rapidly for her.
- II        My sweet, beautiful lady  
           Could advance me greatly  
       If she wanted to help me.  
       15        With this little song.  
           I love nothing  
           As much as her  
           And her qualities  
           Which renew my heart.  
       20        Amors ensnares and takes me captive  
           And makes me glad and joyful.  
           Because he calls me to himself.
- III        When true love summons me  
           It pleases me exceedingly  
       25        For that is what I desired most  
           In all the world.  
           Now I must serve him  
           --I cannot keep myself from it--  
           And be more obedient in all things  
       30        Than to anything else in the world.  
           Even if he makes me languish  
           And I go to my death,  
           My soul will be saved by it.
- IV        If the best one in this world  
       35        Has not given me her love,  
       All lovers will say  
           That this is a hard fate.  
           If it still might happen  
           That I have, without fail,  
       40        My joy and my pleasure  
           From the one I have loved so much,  
           Then they will say, without lying,  
           That I shall have attained my desire  
           And fulfilled my quest.
- V        45        The one for whom I sigh,  
           The fair blonde  
           Can indeed say and avow  
           That Amors has made great haste for her.



XVI En chantant vueil ma dolor descouvrir

- I I wish to disclose my sorrow in song  
 For I have lost that which I desired the most.  
 Alas! I know not what will become of me  
 For it is from my love that I hope to receive joy;  
 5 Thus I shall have to languish in sorrow,  
 When I can no longer see nor hear  
 The beautiful one to whom I was attentive.
- II Heavy are my sighs when I think of her,  
 And that is constantly, for never would I give it up  
 10 It suits me to obey many people for her;  
 I know not if anyone goes this way.  
 But, if anyone can come to true love  
 Through loving well and serving loyally,  
 I know indeed that I shall still have joy from it.
- III 15 My melodies are so full of anguish and sorrow  
 Because of you, lady, whom I have loved so much,  
 That I know not if I sing or if I weep;  
 Thus must I suffer my fate.  
 But, if it please God, I will still see the day  
 20 When Amors will have taken another turn  
 By giving you better thoughts about me.
- IV Be mindful, lady, of true love:  
 That loyalty has not forgotten you,  
 That I trust so much in your merit  
 25 That it always seems as if I have found mercy,  
 And nevertheless I die night and day!  
 May God grant that, to take away my sorrow,  
 My pain be eased by you!
- V Lady, I want you to know in truth  
 30 That no (other) lady has ever been loved by me,  
 Nor do I ever want to be parted from you;  
 I have directed all my heart and intention toward you.  
 Lady, I do not seek to deceive,  
 For never have I had to endure such pain.  
 35 Please do not frighten me at the outset!
- VI Song, go without delay!  
 Beg her who has the most power  
 That you be sung by her often.



XVII Je me cuidoe partir

- I        I thought I made a break  
           From Amors, but it is all in vain.  
           The sweet pain of remembrance  
           Which does not leave me day or night
- 5        During the day assaults me,  
           And at night I cannot sleep;  
           Thus I lament and sigh and weep.  
           God! I burn so when I remember her  
           But I know well it does not matter to her.
- II 10    No one ought to betray Amors  
           Except churls and debauchees  
           And, unless it brings pleasure,  
           I see no profit in it;  
           I want him<sup>1</sup> to find me full of ardor,
- 15       Without guile or deceit;  
           But if I can pursue the deer,  
           That which can flee so swiftly,  
           There is no one as joyful as Thibaut.
- III       The deer is adventuresome
- 20       And as white as snow,  
           And its two tresses  
           Are finer than Spanish gold.  
           The deer is in a retreat  
           With a very dangerous entry
- 25       And thus is guarded from wolves:  
           These are the wicked, envious people  
           Who distress the courtly too much.
- IV       Neither the dying knight  
           Who has lost his armor,
- 30       Nor the village whose houses, vineyards,  
           Wheat and grain are consumed by fire,  
           Nor the hunter caught in brambles,  
           Nor the starving wolf  
           Suffers, in comparison with me.
- 35       For I fear that I am among those  
           Who love beyond their means.

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<sup>1</sup>The use of the pronoun "ele" is ambiguous here due to the gender (feminine singular) of the word amors (Amors) in medieval French. The antecedent here could be Amors or it could simply be the lady who is referred to indirectly in the following metaphor of the deer. I have rendered "ele" in this stanza as "him," equating it with the personage of Amors. This interpretation is, I think, more syntactically acceptable.





- V Lady, I ask you one thing:  
Do you think that it is a sin  
To kill one's true lover?
- 40 Yes, indeed! you know it is!  
If it pleases you, then kill me,  
For I wish it and consent to it,  
And, if you love me better alive,  
I say to you before witnesses,
- 45 You will be much happier for it.
- VI Lady, with whom none can compare,  
I beg you, please,  
To have mercy!
- VII Renaut, Philip, Laurent,
- 50 The words which make you laugh  
Are truly filled with pain.

XVIII De ma dame souvenir

- I Amors has woven my lady's memory  
Into my innermost desire,<sup>1</sup>  
It makes me die joyfully  
If I find her cruel toward me.
- 5 The beautiful one whom I desire so much  
Will do what she pleases with me  
For I am hers without fail.  
No one can even buy  
The goods that Amors can give.
- II 10 Beautiful and good lady, I wish to spend  
My whole life serving you;  
My heart and deepest desire  
Are devoted entirely to you without fail.  
Deign, by your grace,
- 15 Amors, to keep me in your service!  
Make her think of me!  
No one can even buy  
The goods that Amors can give.

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<sup>1</sup>"Corage" in this chanson is translated as "innermost desire" (l. 2) and as "deepest desire" (l. 12); cf. footnote, chanson X. The use of corage and sauvage as a rhymed pair seems to have been a preferred combination for Thibaut; used here in lines 2 and 4; in chanson X also in lines 2 and 4.



- III Amors has a custom  
 20 When waging war against a lover:  
 He makes his suffering pleasing to him.  
 It seems to me that in my case  
 No good can come to me  
 Other than the solace from on high  
 25 Which God deigns to let me find in Amors.  
No one can even buy  
The goods that Amors can give.
- IV And whoever would be mindful of  
 Her great merit always (would realize that)  
 30 She is above the best ones;  
 For it always happens that I see her  
 And that her fresh complexion  
 Is a mirror in my heart.  
 God! how beautifully it reflects itself there!  
No one can even buy  
 35 The goods which Amors can give.
- V Since I must wait thus,  
 It seems that I commit folly.  
 I do not think that I will ever find mercy  
 40 Even if I try every path.  
 I trust my lady too much;  
 I did not deserve  
 That she grieve me so.  
No one can even buy  
 45 The goods which Amors can give.
- VI Song, go straightway and tell  
 Blazon, my friend,  
 To have you sung!  
No one can even buy  
 50 The goods which Love can give.

XIX Li douz penser et li douz souvenir

- I Sweet thought and sweet memory  
 Make my heart begin to sing,  
 And also noble Amors who doesn't let me linger,  
 And who maintains his own (servants) in joy;  
 5 And puts sweet remembrance in their hearts.  
 Amors, indeed, is of power too lofty;  
 He makes the distressed man rejoice  
 But does not let him part from him because of pain.



- II        No one can maintain wit or honor  
 10        If he has not borne the sufferings of love,  
           Nor will he rise to great worth  
           Nor will he see any great future;  
           For this reason, Amors, I beg of you a fair countenance  
           Since one must not part from you out of distress,  
 15        Nor would I ever do that  
           For I wish to die entirely perfect in love.
- III       Lady, if I dared to make my plea to you,  
           Much good would come to me from it,  
           But I have not the boldness  
 20        That I dare reason well before you.  
           This rends me and slays me and distresses me.  
           Your beauty wounds my heart so  
           That my eyes cannot help me  
           With the glance that I desire so much.
- IV    25    When I had<sup>1</sup> to leave you, lady,  
           There certainly was never a more sorrowful man;  
           And God would, I believe, strengthen me  
           If I could ever approach you;  
           All the good and all the bad which befalls me  
 30        Comes from you, sweet true lady,  
           And except for you, no one can ever help me.  
           Nor will anyone, if he should need to.
- V        No one is capable of describing  
           Even a fiftieth of her great beauty,  
 35        The pleasant words, the amorous glances  
           Make me rejoice and grieve often.  
           From them I await the joy which my heart ardently desires,  
           And fear reenters my body.  
           Thus I must, of necessity, die.
- 40       Lady, you who are my sole desire,  
           I greet you from across the salty sea,  
           As the one whom I think of night and day,  
           And no other thought gives me joy.

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<sup>1</sup> (L. 25) the past tense is clearly required here for a logical sequence of tenses; the O.F. text, however, reads couvient, present tense.



XX Chanter m'estuet, que ne m'en puis tenir

- I I must sing, I cannot keep from it.  
And yet, I have nothing but vexation and grief;  
But it is always good to rejoice  
For no one gets ahead by mourning.
- 5 I sing, not like a man who is loved,  
But like one who is distressed, pensive and abandoned;  
For I no longer have hope of anything good,  
I must always resort to words.
- II I can tell you one thing without lying:  
10 That with Amors there is fortune and misfortune.  
If I could part from her  
It would be better for me than to be lord of France.  
Once I said like a desperate madman:  
I would rather die remembering her beauty  
15 And her great merit and sweet company  
Than be proclaimed lord of the whole world.
- III Nothing good will come to me, I know indeed,  
For Amors hates me and my lady forgets me,  
It is reasonable; he who devotes himself to loving  
25 Must not fear death, pain, or madness.  
Since I have given myself to my lady  
Amors wishes it, and when it pleases him  
I shall either die or have my beloved back again,  
Or my life will not be my salvation.
- IV 30 The Phoenix seeks the pyre and the vines  
In which he burns himself and gives up his life.  
I also sought my death and my torment  
When I saw her, if pity helps me not.  
God! how delectable was the sight of her  
35 From whom I will suffer such torment!  
The memory makes me die of yearning  
And of desire and of great will.
- V Amors is indeed of exceeding power  
For he does good and ill as it suits him.  
40 He makes me suffer much too long;  
Reason tells me to take my thought away.  
But I have a heart like no other;  
Which tells me constantly: "Love, love, love!";  
No other reasoning does it offer,  
45 And I shall love, I cannot be deterred from it.





VI        Lady, have mercy! you who know all good.  
           All merit and all great goodness  
           Are in you more than any other lady born.  
           Help me, you who are able to do it!

VII 50   Song, run to Philip, my friend!  
           Since he has become part of the court,  
           His love has indeed turned to hate;  
           Hardly will he be loved by a beautiful lady.

XXI    Tout autresi con l'ente fet venir

I        Just as the water which falls  
           Makes a grafted scion grow,  
           So does remembrance give birth to true love  
           And make it grow and flower through habit and use.

5        No one ever overcomes true love,  
           Thus one must be content to remain at its mercy.<sup>1</sup>

          Because of my sweet sorrow,  
           Full of such great fear,  
           Lady, I make great efforts to sing,

10       When, in my heart, I am weeping.

II       Would to God that, to cure my sorrow,  
           She were Thisbe, for I am Pyramus.  
           But I see well that it cannot happen:  
           And thus I shall die for I cannot bear it anymore.

15       Ah, beautiful one! how distraught I am because of you!  
           The first day I saw you

          You struck me with a lightning bolt  
           And I was overwhelmed by the burning fire of love,  
           The bow was not like the arc of dawn

20       Which strikes so softly.

III      My lady, if I served God  
           And prayed to Him as truly and as wholeheartedly  
           As I do you, I know indeed  
           That I would not have to rent an altar in Paradise;

25       But I cannot serve or pray to  
           Anyone but you, whom my heart seeks.

          And yet I cannot perceive that  
           I should ever have any joy,  
           And I can only see you

30       With my eyes closed, in the depths of my darkened heart.

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<sup>1</sup>The translation does not render the contrast made in the text:  
desus (l. 5); desouz (l. 6).



- IV      The prophet, who does not lie, states rightly  
          That in the end the just will falter;  
          And the end has come, indeed,  
          For cruelty overcomes mercy and entreaty,  
 35      And service is of no use,  
          Nor is true love nor long-suffering.  
                 Thus pride and arrogance have more power  
                 Than sweet desire  
                 And there is no way to deal with Amor [sic]  
 40      Except to wait without hope.

- V        Eagle, without you I can find no mercy.  
          I see and know indeed that I lack everything;  
          If you wish to evade me thus  
          And have no pity on me  
 45      You will (still) never have such a loyal friend  
          Nor would you ever find aid.  
                 And I shall die, miserable,  
                 My life will be ever worse  
                 Far from your beautiful, fair face  
 50      Where the rose and the lily bloom.

- VI        Eagle, I have learned so well  
          How to be a loyal friend  
          That your smile is worth much more to me  
          Than any other paradise.

XXII    A enviz sent mal qui ne l'a apris

- I        He who hasn't learned, suffers reluctantly:  
          It is necessary to cure it or die or remain,  
          And my suffering, alas! of which I dare not complain  
          Is much more overwhelming than all others.  
 5      I want to die, but when the hope of  
          Attaining great joy confronts me,  
          Then I am comforted. Indeed, if only I could  
          Suffer in peace; but I cannot, it is clear.
- II        And this one is so tormented by Amors  
 10      That he remains entirely at his command;  
          It is a great wonder to me that Amors can be so deceitful  
          To me, for I am devoted to my lady.  
          Ever since I saw her beautiful body, straight and fine,  
          And her fair face which distracts me so,  
 15      I never thought anyone could be as deceitful  
          As he; it is still all the worse for me.



- III But he who serves and awaits mercy  
Must have true, entire joy;  
And I, who dare not entreat her directly
- 20 --So greatly do I fear her refusal--  
Ought to go away, indeed, by faith,  
But I cannot see how I could do it.  
It cannot be thus; I give myself to her  
And she is in no way within my dominion.
- IV 25 Henceforth I wish to make my entreaty singing,  
And, if it pleases her, she will not be so haughty toward me,  
For I do not think that anyone who seeks  
Amors' mercy has a heart that does not weep,  
So that, if Pity falls at my lady's feet on my behalf,
- 30 I doubt greatly that she will not be conquered.  
Thus I know not if I act foolishly or wisely  
For this decision depends upon her judgment.
- V If my lady does not act otherwise  
Toward me, who love her with such great ardor
- 35 --I desire her greatly--and, if she despises me,  
I am Narcissus who drowns of his own power.  
I am nearly drowned, distant is my cure,  
If I must wait forever for her help.  
I must serve well in order to receive such great recompense,
- 40 I would like very much for her to know my faith.
- VI Lady, mercy! may I have pardon from you!  
I love you so much, this is indeed an amorous quest.  
I cannot hide my thought very well  
And so you will be aware of it, I believe.

XXIII Chançon ferai, que talenz m'en est pris

- I Since desire has overtaken me, I will write a song,  
About the best (lady) in the whole world.  
About the best? I think I have made a mistake.  
If she were such, if God granted me joy,
- 5 She would have taken pity on me,  
For I am entirely hers and at her mercy.  
God, is there no pity in the heart  
Of such a beauty? My lady, of whom I beg mercy,  
I feel love's sufferings for you,  
Do you feel them for me?



- II Sweet lady, I was once without love,  
When I noticed your noble manner;  
And when I saw your beautiful, fair face,  
My heart began to beat again:
- 15 It summons and commands me to love you,  
And it is entirely at your command.  
The body languishes, for it is cruelly put to the test,  
If you take no pity on it of your own accord.
- 20 The sweet pains from which I await joy  
Have wounded me so  
That I shall die if she makes me wait.
- III Indeed has Amors great strength and great power  
To choose at will, without reason.  
Without reason? God, I cannot say that I know,
- 25 For my heart is grateful to my eyes  
Which chose such a beautiful one,  
From whom I shall never part;  
Thus shall I suffer great penance for her,  
So that pity and mercy will overcome her.
- 30 Will you say who has stolen my heart?  
The sweet smile and her beautiful eyes.
- IV Sweet lady, if it pleased you, in one evening  
You could give me more joy  
Than Tristan, who did all in his power,
- 35 Ever had any day of his life;  
My very joy is turned into grief.  
Ah, body without a heart! She who cuts me to the heart  
Has wreaked great vengeance upon you,  
And yet I shall never part from her.
- 40 He who has a beautiful lady's love  
Must keep it and love her well.
- V My lady, for you I wish to go folly's way,  
For I love my pains and my sorrow,  
For after the sufferings I await great joy
- 45 Which I shall have shortly, if it pleases God.  
Amors, have mercy! do not be forgotten!  
If you fail me now, it will be double treason  
That my great sufferings for you please me so much.  
Do not let me be forgotten very long!
- 50 If the beautiful one has no pity on me,  
I shall not live very long.
- VI The great beauty which overwhelms and pleases me  
And who is more desirable than all others  
Has laced my heart in her prison.
- 55 God! I think only of her,  
Doesn't she think of me?





XXIV Contre le tens qui devise

- I        In honor of the season which divides  
           Winter and the rain of summer,  
           When the thrush, who has not sung for such a long time,  
           Sings graciously,
- 15       I shall write a song, for it comes willingly  
           To me, for I have thought about it.  
           Amors who has become a part of me.  
           Has shot his arrow straight at me.
- II       Sweet lady, I have found
- 10       No generosity in you,  
           Unless it has been put there  
           Since I have seen you.  
           You are much too haughty toward me,  
           But your beauty which is shared by no other
- 15       Causes this;  
           For it is there in such abundance.
- III      There is no abstinence in me  
           That I might direct my thoughts  
           Somewhere else than toward her, where
- 20       I can find neither recognition nor mercy.  
           I was indeed made for loving her,  
           For I cannot be satisfied,  
           The more that befalls me,  
           The more I fear her.
- IV 25   I fear one thing  
           That I cannot hide:  
           That she is a bit too young.  
           This causes me discomfort  
           For, if she thinks well of me,
- 30       She dare not show it.  
           If only she might show it,  
           So that I might guess it!
- V       Since (the moment) when I entreated her  
           And gazed upon her,
- 35       Love made the light pass  
           Through my eyes to my heart.  
           This passage causes me pain  
           Against which I have no defense,  
           Nor can I turn it back;
- 40       My heart would rather break.
- VI      My lady, I must cry out to you  
           And beg your mercy.  
           May God grant that I find mercy!



XXV Dame, l'en dit que l'en meurt bien de joie

- I Lady, it is said that one can indeed die of joy.  
I have feared<sup>1</sup> it, but it was for nothing,  
For I believe that if I were in your arms  
I would come to a joyful end.
- 5 Such sweet death would be to my liking,  
For the pain of love which wages war on me  
Is so very great that I fear death from it.
- II If God grants me that which I sought from Him  
Only this keeps me from death,  
10 It is reasonable: if I died for her  
Her heart would grieve for me;  
And I must consciously keep  
From angering her, for I would not want  
To be in Paradise if she were not mine there.
- III 15 God promises us that he who attains  
Paradise can hope to obtain  
All that he wishes; he will never have to lament,  
For he shall have it all, immediately, without delay;  
And, if I can merit Paradise,  
20 There I shall have my lady without restraint  
Or God will have failed His word.
- IV Great love cannot be separated or broken  
Unless it is in a disloyal, deceitful,  
False, cheating heart, which, through lies and pretensions,  
25 Puts much distance between the loyal and their joy.  
But my lady, with her sweet, beguiling words,  
Knows so well, in my opinion, how to make herself sought after,  
That she recognizes that which makes one drawn to her.
- V If I could live long enough that  
30 My sorrows would matter to her, I might well be cured;  
But she considers my words as pure invention  
And always says that I wish to deceive her;  
And I love her and want and desire her so much  
That there is nothing in the world which matters to me but her,  
35 I would rather be dead than be deceptive.
- VI Lady, whoever wants to keep his prisoner well  
And if he has captured him after such a hard fight,  
Should give him grain after the chaff.

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<sup>1</sup>Line 2, Je l'ai douté: There are two meanings possible: I have feared it; I have doubted it. Either meaning is acceptable here. The poet could have meant: "I doubted it, until I met you, Lady; being in your arms would indeed bring me so much joy that I would die." The choice of the word "fear" is a rather arbitrary one, which gives the emphasis "I once feared death, but it was for nothing, for now I find that such a joyous end would be to my liking."



XXVI Je ne puis bien metre en nonchaloir

- I I cannot be indifferent about singing  
When Amors commands me to do so;  
Because of this I have the greatest sorrow in the world,  
For I dare not reveal my thought;
- 5 I see others practice deceit in doing so.  
Such as they feign love who desire it not at all;  
I sing that I might hold back my tears,  
And await joy after my sorrow.
- II This sorrow which should befit me  
10 Is (a river) without banks or bottom;  
And if there is no one who can answer me otherwise,  
I will have demonstrated this with great reason;  
For after great suffering it is said to be true  
That great joy is oftentimes recovered.
- 15 If it is thus, I have no fear  
That, for my sufferings, I shall not have the reward.
- III This reward, God! when shall I receive it?  
Certainly, lady, I await it from you alone.  
Your beauty and your fair manner
- 20 Make me have good hope;  
And I know not if I have committed great folly  
For greatly do I fear false semblance from you.  
And so I say it, for I cannot hide it,  
Nor can I leave you or move away.
- IV 25 I will never move away or take leave of you,  
I would not do it for anything that lives.  
If I leave, when I recover from it  
And await whatever befalls me,  
And thereby hide my troubled heart,
- 30 Then I shall see if Amors is aware of it  
And if he knows how to reward a friend.  
I shall not lose for having hidden.
- V Hiding is said to be of great value to a lover,  
But I can perceive no good in it.
- 35 My own concealment does me more harm than good,  
For jongleurs who tease and provoke  
Say so much that they receive mercy right away,  
And do not care a trice if they lie.  
And I, lady, give myself to you as a pensive,
- 40 Humble, concealing, perfect, loyal friend:
- VI No man will ever love truly  
If he has a deceptive, cheating heart.



XXVII Empereor ne roi n'ont nul pouoir

- I       Emperors and kings have no power  
           In comparison with Amors, this I wish to prove to you:  
           They can give their wealth,  
           Lands and fiefs, and pardon wrongdoings,  
 5       But Amors can keep a man from death  
           And give joy that lasts,  
           Full of good fortune.
- II       Amors makes a man worth more  
           And no one but he could change this;  
 10       Great desire gives sweet inclination  
           So that no one can think about anything else.  
           Above all, one must love Love (Amors);<sup>1</sup>  
           He fails in nothing except restraint  
           And in that, he causes me great difficulty.
- III 15   If Amors wanted to give as much reward  
           As he is able to, his name would indeed be appropriate,  
           But he does not wish to do so, for which I have a sorrowful heart,  
           For he keeps me distressed, without reward;  
           And I am such that, whatever be the outcome,  
 20       I will be dedicated to serving him.  
           I have begun it and shall not recant.
- IV       Lady, will one ever have the mercy he awaits?  
           You know that, all in all,  
           I am yours; it could never be otherwise.  
 25       I do not know if this sickness would strike me down.  
           For so many tries (there is) little success,  
           So that, if I dared say it,  
           My joy would be only too great.
- V        I don't think there has ever been anyone  
 30       Whom Amors has kept at such a perilous point.  
           I am so distraught that I am losing my senses;  
           I feel and see well that this is hardly a game.  
           When she acts lovingly toward me  
           I believe that I have a friend  
 35       But later I find that I have none.
- VI       Lady, my death and my life  
           Are in you, whatever I say.
- VII      Raoul, he who serves and entreats  
           Would have great need of help.

<sup>1</sup> (L. 12) in the original text, "doit on Amors amer," the juxtaposition of the lexically related terms Amors and amer creates an intensity which translation does not quite render. The emphasis of the meaning of the name Amors is stressed also in chanson XXX, "Savez por quoi Amors a non amors."



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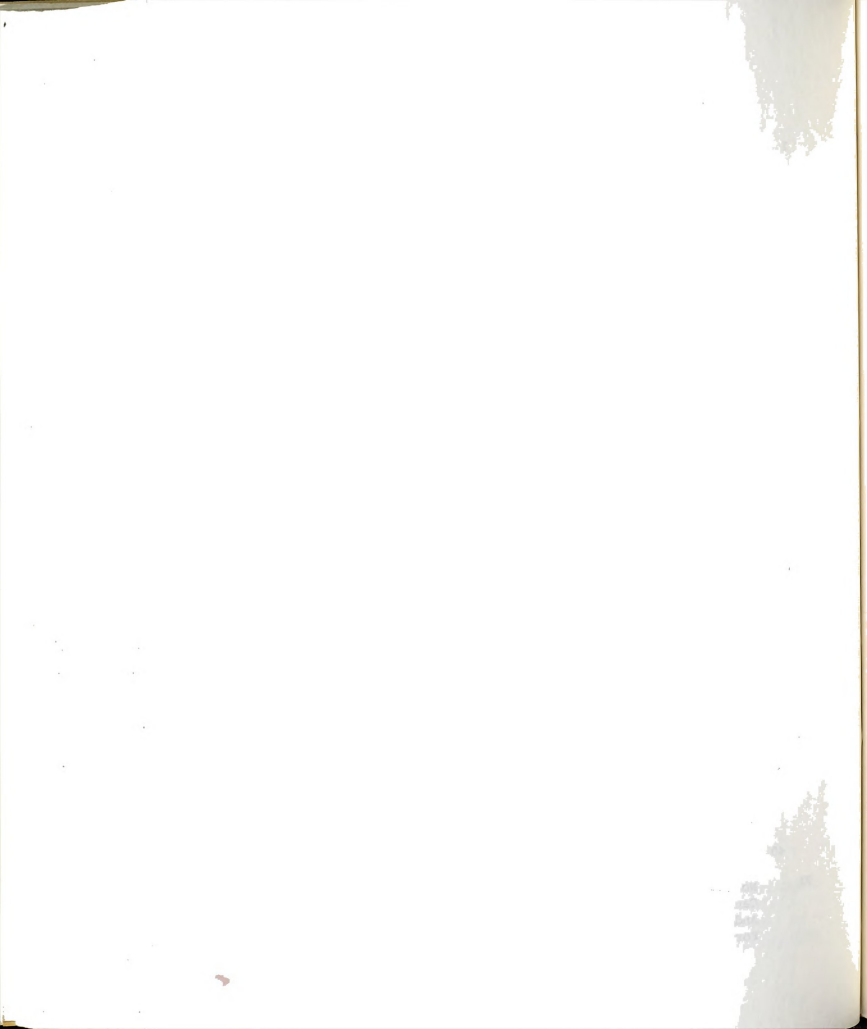
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XXVIII Por froidure ne por yver felon

- I Neither because of the cold nor cruel winter  
 Shall I give up  
 Writing songs about love,  
 And I shall state
- 5 That whoever loves should repent of it, if he is able.  
 Everyone says it, but is given to lying about it.  
 Whoever loves well cannot be parted from it,  
 As long as the soul is part of the body.
- II I speak for myself, for I have thought about it:  
 10 I have disputed with myself.  
 The more I become conscious of such a motive,  
 The more I am afraid  
 That the fear comes from my own, loyal thought.  
 The more I think of her, the more it is there in abundance.
- 15 Lady, mercy! I can fail you no more  
 Than will the sea fail for lack of rain.
- III Lady, if I fear my great suffering  
 Let it not grieve you,  
 For you can indeed alleviate my suffering.  
 20 Go to her,  
 Song, and tell her, weeping  
 That one token of love's mercy given with a sigh  
 Is worth a hundred times more to a true, loyal ami  
 Thank his beloved (amie) could ever imagine.
- IV 25 Strong are the snares and large is the net  
 --This is no boast--  
 In which the one who loves is caught.  
 And what will you say,  
 Since I know and recognize her manner  
 30 And am devoted to her entourage.  
 Has she taken me bound and seized? (saisi)  
 Yes, indeed, I shall never be freed. (dessaisie)
- V Since it is thus, I shall wait dutifully  
 With long-suffering hope,  
 35 For there is nothing I would like so much  
 As to do her will  
 Without reproach,  
 In this lies my heart and my thought;  
 In this manner, I believe that I shall have mercy.
- 40 God, when shall I see that for which I thank (mercie) her!
- VI No one but you, lady,  
 Can estimate how long this suffering may last;  
 And, please, do not forget it,  
 For at no time does my heart forget you.



XXIX Coustrume est bien, quant on tient un prison

- I      It is customary, when one keeps a prisoner  
         That he does not want to hear or listen to him,  
         For nothing makes the heart as cruel  
         As great power, if one wishes to misuse it.
- 5      For this reason, lady, I fear for myself,  
         For I dare not speak of ransom,  
         Nor of being a hostage, if not in disguise.  
         After all this, I cannot escape.
- II     I have great suspicion in my heart about something;  
     10   It is the thing which makes me most afraid:  
         That there are so many people all around her.  
         I know indeed that it is to cause me pain.  
         They are always saying: "Lady you are being deceived;  
         A rich man will never love for love's sake."  
     15   But they lie, the evil *losengiers*,  
         For he who has more must be more careful in love.
- III    If my lady doesn't want to love anyone,  
         Myself or anyone else, I thank her five hundred times;  
         For there are many others who, unlike myself,  
     20   Entreat boldly, with false hearts.  
         Boldness often wins,  
         But I am senseless when I am before her;  
         I have so much suffering, pain, and anxiety  
         That I can only say: "God be with you!"
- IV    25   You know well that no one recognizes in himself  
         That which one fully recognizes in another.  
         Never did I recognize my own folly,  
         So greatly have I loved with a true, loyal heart;  
         But one thing soothes me a little:  
     30   That I have some refuge in hope.  
         The bird puts himself into the trap  
         When he can find no other safeguard.
- V      It often happens when I think of her  
         That, in the midst of my suffering, a sweetness comes  
     35   Into my heart with such intensity that I forget myself entirely  
         And it seems as if I were in her arms;  
         And afterward, when I come to my senses, and I see that I have  
                 completely failed  
         Then I become angered and swear and curse myself,  
         For I know that she has no memory of it.
- VI    40   Of you of beauty and of mercy difficult to obtain,  
         If my travails do not merit you,  
         I shall live in suffering if it is fitting for me to live,



XXX Savez por quoi Amors a non amors

- I Do you know why Amors, who makes only his own (followers)  
Suffer, is called amors?  
Whoever might know it, let him give his opinion,  
For I do not know, God help me!
- 5 Amors seems like a devil who manipulates:  
The one who trusts him he deceives all the more.  
And it burdens me a hundred thousand times more  
For him than for myself if I should ever have mercy  
When one can accuse him of treachery.
- II 10 I am his alone and feel the pains of it,  
And am burdened greatly by his ill,  
And believe that in his goodness lies my advancement  
For generosity is bestowed upon many by one's lords;  
And the one who chastises his lord
- 15 When he acts cruelly serves him well.  
But Amors does not care about chastisement  
For he has seen and heard so much  
That nothing that anyone says matters to him.
- III Amors has angered me so many times
- 20 That in my anger, I have no more power;  
Thus I am his all the more when I despair the most.  
Just like one who lies sick  
Next to the hearth and cannot defend himself  
Threatens to cut people in two,
- 25 Likewise I say this to soothe myself.  
It does great good when one hears it spoken of;  
One can better withstand Amors' assault.
- IV If I lament over it, it should not cause great amazement,  
For God made her in order to make men grieve.
- 30 There where Amors brought me to see her,  
I still feel the very sweet touch  
Given by her tender white hand  
When she took me by the hand to greet me,  
I love the hand by which I wish to be touched
- 35 More than the body which it brings to mind  
For Amors knows how to comfort his own (servants).
- V He who knows how to love would know how to hate  
Better than any other man, if he wanted to.  
But there is no loyalty nor reason in this,
- 40 That he who loves well should depart from it,  
Thus each one must love his renown.  
And if Amors reflected upon it  
He would give joy and succour  
To be true, loyal friend for having suffered great ill;
- 45 Thus he would be served and honored.

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- VI      Lady, have mercy! The perfumed hand  
          To which, night and day, I give a hundred kisses, one  
                  after another,  
          Makes me speak of you in such a spirited manner  
          That it seems to me that I have found mercy.

XXXI    Les douces douleurs

- I            The sweet sufferings  
               And the pleasant pains  
               Which come from love  
               Are gentle and burning,  
   5    And he who boldly commits folly  
               Will hardly receive help.  
               I have committed one from which fear  
               Takes hold of my body so that I feel it.
- II            It is indeed great folly  
   10        To love loyally.  
               Would that one could  
               Direct his desire elsewhere!  
               Oh, God, I have learned so much about this  
               That sooner would a tower  
   15        Be overturned by flowers  
               Than I would ever be found cowardly.
- III           Long delays  
               And great desire have overcome me  
               So that, to her own detriment  
   20        Does she wish to anger me.  
               She will do less to be esteemed  
               If I have no comfort from her,  
               For there is nothing in the world so difficult  
               For her that would not be easy for me.
- IV    25       I sing and take diversion  
               In order to soothe myself  
               And see in my fate  
               Vexation and danger (difficulty).  
               I shall perish so easily  
   30        When I cannot reach port,  
               Yet I have no recourse elsewhere  
               Without breaking my allegiance.





- V            Lady, I have devoted everything,  
               --Both heart and mind--  
 35        To you and have been steadfast  
               Without ever wavering.  
               If I wanted to enumerate  
               Your beauty, your worth,  
               I would have too many enemies.  
 40        Therefore I dare not speak of them.

- VI           Lady, I can last no longer,  
               For my situation grows ever worse,  
               Until you say: "Friend,  
               I want to give you my love."

XXXII Por ce se d'amer me dueil

- I            Even though I lament about loving,  
               I still have great comfort from it,  
               For I always remember,  
               God! what me eyes beheld:  
 5           It is her great, true beauty  
               Which assaults me through several of my senses,  
               So that I am in great turmoil:  
               It is with my heart, my body and my eyes that I see her.  
               But she has my heart, which is of the greatest power.  
 10        God grant that she might wish to have the others!

- II           Many people have a way of acting  
               Which might be right or wrong,  
               And Amors strikes unceasingly;  
               Never will he fear haughtiness.  
 15        The wise man is even more frightened by him  
               For he (Amors) knows only too well how to inflict severe wounds.  
               He has made mine very serious indeed, for he has my heart.  
               It pleases me when I see it in his prison;  
               I feel love more through it than through any other faculty.  
 20        God grant that he might keep it according to my will!

- III          Lady, he who loses in battle  
               What he has, for his friend's sake,  
               (And) he does not receive recompense for it,  
               Is put to shame by witnesses;  
 25        And I lose, without winning it back,  
               My heart which you keep in prison.  
               I have not lost, nor will I lose it thus,  
               For my body will plead to you so much  
               For its heart, that it will be a great marvel  
 30        If you do not become softened by its plea.



- IV            If I owe a man anything  
               --No such man exists--  
               Tomorrow he will hate me for it  
               If I do not put it into his hands.  
 35            It is indeed right to seek in vain  
               And to give without return;  
               (But) I beg of you a thousand times mercy:  
               I entreat you for what ought to be mine;  
               For I do not hope, from your gracious manner,  
 40            That mercy will come to me before it comes to my heart.

- V            Lady, now I have stated my fear.  
               I would always much rather listen  
               If you would ever deign to think of me  
               With more favor,  
 45            But nothing avails me  
               As long as my heart still trembles  
               In the prison where you keep it.  
               God! has any heart ever been so enchanted?  
               Certainly not! but if the body were captured  
 50            With the heart, it would not displease me.

- VI            Lady, even a summer would not suffice  
               In praising your great beauty;  
               But if I can do anything which might please you,  
               It would never be serious if it hurt me a little.

XXXIII Une chançon oncor vueil

- I            I want to write still another song  
               To comfort myself.  
               I want to renew my song  
               For the one who causes me sorrow;  
 5            For this reason I feel like singing,  
               That, when I am not singing, my eyes  
               Often begin to weep.
- II            I thought my lady  
               Was simple and candid, without pride.  
 10            She welcomed me quite graciously;  
               She did it to grieve me.  
               My thoughts are directed so exclusively to her  
               That, at night, when I sleep,  
               My heart goes to beg mercy.



- III 15 Sleeping and waking  
 My heart is entirely hers.  
 And entreats mercy of her  
 As of its own lady.  
 I trust so greatly in her pity  
 20 That when I think about her exceedingly  
 I am completely overcome with joy.

- IV He who feels pain such as mine  
 Often has joy and sorrow.  
 My heart weeps and I sing about it;  
 25 Thus my eyes have betrayed me.  
 Amors, you strike quickly  
 But are slow to grant recompense,  
 Nonetheless, I entreat you for my own sake.

- V Alas! if she does not remember me  
 30 I will surely die.  
 If she knew whence comes my suffering,  
 She would remember me.  
 This suffering will make me die,  
 If my lady does not sustain me  
 35 A little, of her own will.

- VI Song, tell her without lying  
 That the glance she gave me  
 At our separation holds my heart.

XXXIV Ausi comme unicorne sui

- I I am like the unicorn  
 Who is overwhelmed  
 When he gazes upon the maiden.  
 He is so joyful in his torment  
 5 That, fainting, he falls into her lap;  
 Then he is murdered in betrayal.  
 And likewise, indeed,  
 Amors and my lady have put me to death:  
 They have my heart; I shall never have it back again.
- II 10 Lady when I was first before you  
 And say you  
 My heart leapt forth  
 So that it remains with you, although I have gone away.  
 Then it was led without ransom  
 15 Into the sweet prison cell  
 Whose pillars are of desire  
 And the doors are of beautiful sight  
 And the chains of fair hope.

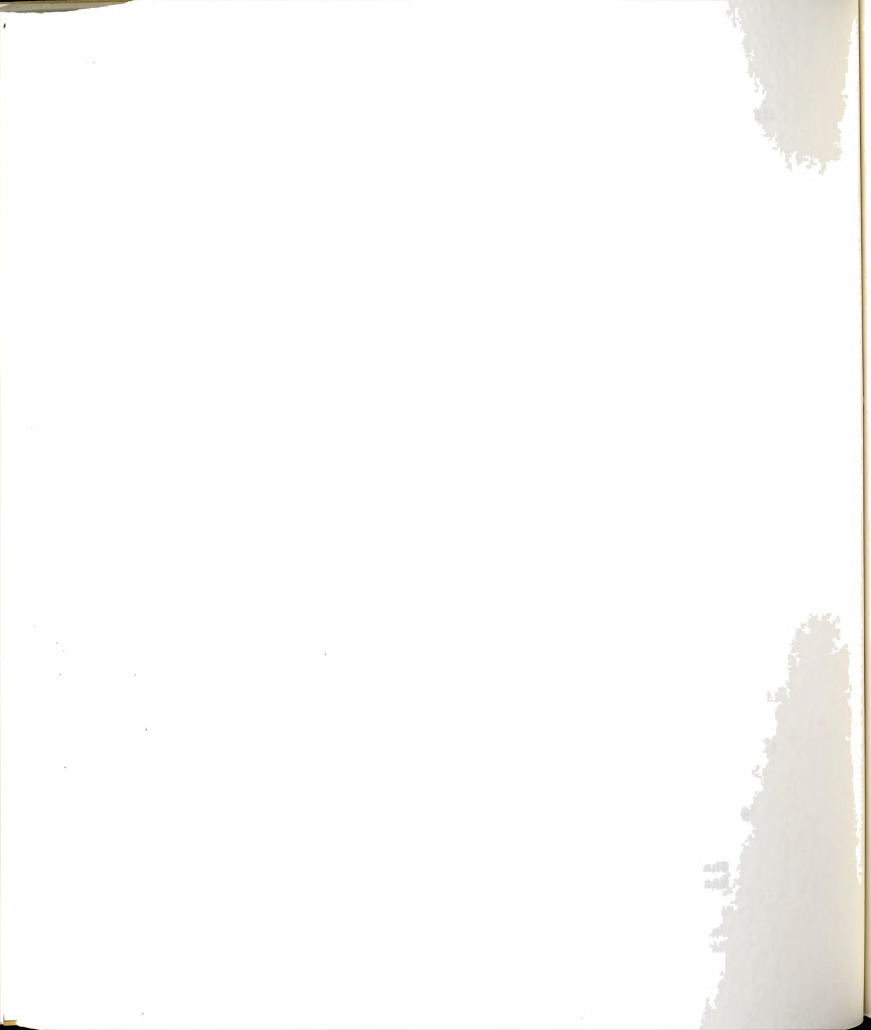


- III      Amors has the key to the cell  
 20      And has put three doorkeepers there:  
         Fair Seeming is the name of the first,  
         And Beauty is put in command;  
         She has placed Danger at the front door,  
         A repulsive, cruel, base, and foul-smelling person  
 25      Who is extremely evil and cunning.  
         These three are clever and bold;  
         They have soon seized many a man.
- IV      Who could bear the horrors  
         And the assaults of these doorkeepers?  
 30      Roland and Oliver never  
         Were victorious in such hard battles;  
         (For) they conquered by fighting,  
         These, one conquers by being humble.  
         Suffering is the standard-bearer;  
 35      In the battle I am telling you about  
         There is no help but mercy.
- V      Lady, I fear nothing more  
         Than failing in my love for you.  
         I have learned how to endure so well  
 40      That I am yours through habit;  
         And if it should grieve you,  
         (Know) that I cannot depart from it for anything  
         Without having the memory  
         And without having my heart always  
 45      In the prison and I with it.
- VI      Lady, since I know not how to be deceptive,  
         It would be opportune to have pity on me  
         That I might bear my heavy burden.

XXXV Qui plus aime plus endure

- I      He who loves more endures more  
         And has more need of comfort,  
         For Amors is of such a nature  
         That he leads his friend to death;  
 5      Later he has joy and gladness from it  
         If he is of good fortune.  
         But I never receive any;  
         She who has no care for me  
         Has put me in oblivion.





- II 10 To my knowledge, no lover  
 Ever had such difficulty.  
 By the sighs and the burning desire  
 And the tears which beset me  
 I am pierced by the strongest one<sup>1</sup>
- 15 And placed in great discomfort  
 And I have no power in comparison with him (Amors).  
 Thus he laughs when he sees me grieve;  
 This lacks pity and restraint.
- III Since pity is lacking
- 20 I really ought to take leave;  
 My reason commands and begs me to do so,  
 But my heart does not wish to undergo it.  
 Thus it hates me because it serves her.  
 Yet I love her sovereignty.
- 25 Lady, I ask you one thing:  
 That you judge whether he who surrenders himself  
 Has merited death.
- IV Many times I have felt her  
 While sleeping at my leisure
- 30 But when sin and desire  
 Awakened me, and the one whom I thought  
 I held for my pleasure,  
 Was not there at all,  
 I wept bitterly
- 35 And would much rather hold her  
 All my life, in a dream.
- V My joy in sleeping would be so great  
 That I wouldn't be able to express it.  
 Awake, I can find no way
- 40 To alleviate my pain.  
 The situation inside out for me  
 Amors indeed ought to turn  
 So that I would forget her while sleeping  
 And have her when awake;
- 45 Then my joy would be complete

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<sup>1</sup>Lines 14-18; the antecedents are unclear in the following cases: 1. 14, la plus fort; 1. 16, vers li; and 1. 17, ainz rit. The referent could be Amors or the lady. I have chosen Amors in this stanza since it is he who traditionally pierces the lover or ami with arrows of amorous passion. Also, it does not seem likely that the lady would witness the poet's grief. The ambiguity of the antecedent continues in the interior monologue of the first part of stanza three. Does the poet refer to service to Amors or to his lady (1. 23); to the sovereignty of Amors or of the beloved (1. 24)? Either seems possible.



- VI        When I wish to beg mercy of her  
           I am so afraid of her  
           That I dare not utter my entreaty.
- VII       Raoul, neither Turks nor Arabs  
 50        Have taken anything from you;  
           Come back soon!

XXXVI   De grant joie me sui toz esmeüz

- I        In my desire I am overwhelmed  
           With great joy that lights my true heart:  
           Since my lady has sent me a greeting,  
           I cannot nor should I keep from singing.  
 5        I am so gladdened by this gift  
           As from one, you can be certain,  
           Who possesses true beauty, courtesy and worth.  
           For this reason I have placed my entire hope there.
- II        Lady, in God's name, may I not be betrayed  
 10        In loving you, for I cannot do otherwise!  
           Of all friends, I am the most elect,  
           But I dare not disclose my situation to you.  
           So greatly did I fear angering you  
           That I never hence dared to send you any message,  
 15        For if, while waiting, I received a bad answer  
           From you, I would surely die.
- III       Never do I wish to betray nor deceive  
           --Nor would anything induce me to learn how--  
           The one who is able to favor me,  
 20        To do and to undo, to give abundance and joy;  
           It is all within her power and her will.  
           God! if she knew my heart and my thought,  
           I know indeed that I would have won,  
           Sweet lady, that which my heart treasures the most.
- IV       25   No one who loves ought to be dismayed  
           If true love distresses and manipulates him,  
           For he awaits such precious recompense  
           That it is not right that he break faith in loving,  
           For he serves more ought to receive more pleasure from it.  
 30        I am so devoted to her great beauty  
           Which is desired and chosen from the others,  
           That it pleases me to be in her service.



- V I can see you with the eyes of my heart, lady,  
 For my real eyes which have given me the thought of you  
 35 Are much too far away from my dear one.  
 From the day I first saw you,  
 My desire to see you has been only too great.  
 Through my song I send you  
 My heart and my self and all of my thought as a gift.  
 40 Accept it, lady, if it pleases you!
- VI Lady, all my thoughts are about you,  
 And I am yours for the rest of my life.  
 In God's name, I pray you that, since my true heart  
 desires you,  
 My wishes will not be granted at a price which is  
 too high.

XXXVIII Baudoyn il sunt dui amant

- I --Baudouin, there are two lovers  
 Who love truly and without deceit  
 A young maiden.  
 Which is more deserving of her?  
 5 One loves her for her merit  
 And also for her courtesy;  
 The other loves her for love  
 Of the great beauty she possesses.
- II --Sire, know indeed  
 10 That the one who loves her with his whole loyal heart  
 Because of her fine upbringing  
 Ought to be esteemed more;  
 For courtesy and great honor  
 Please a loyal friend more  
 15 Than beauty or a rosy complexion  
 Where there is neither pity nor mercy.
- III --Baudouin, there is great value and virtue  
 In great beauty  
 If she speaks kindly,  
 20 Never were words more courteous.  
 Great beauty drives the heart mad  
 More than anything else that exists,  
 And no one can give his heart  
 If beauty is not there first.



- IV 25 --Sire, know indeed:  
 Beauty has lost all her renown,  
 Since merit has elevated  
 The lady's name and increased her stature.  
 It is for courtesy and fair welcome  
 30 That ladies are praised,  
 And by which their merit is increased;  
 Beauty is not capable of this.
- V --Baudouin, one can also find  
 Old women uglier than dogs  
 35 Who have courtesy and great wisdom,  
 But who are worth nothing in bed.<sup>1</sup>  
 Does it make her worth loving  
 That she speaks to you nicely?  
 The beautiful one cannot say anything wrong;  
 40 Whatever she says to me is beautiful.
- VI --Sire, I am not saying  
 That I belong to an old lady, nor shall I ever,  
 To my knowledge, be devoted to one,  
 You are trying to reproach me for the fine qualities  
 45 That a beautiful lady  
 Who has courtesy and merit can reveal.  
 It would be more fitting that you reproach  
 The one who forsakes merit for beauty's sake.
- VII --Baudouin, a mere glance  
 50 Or a smile given to me  
 By the beautiful whom I dare not name,  
 Is worth whatever the ugly one will give.
- VIII --Sire, my own heart will never stray  
 From the one who has it;  
 55 Merit given by Courtesy  
 Has imprisoned it.

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<sup>1</sup>There is some disagreement on the correct reading of the manuscripts concerning the word couchier/touchier. Wallensköld has chosen the latter since "l'autre mot, si grossier ne nous semble pas à sa place à cet endroit." Jeanroy-Långfors in their Recueil général de jeux-partis adopted the form couchier.





XXXVIII Une chose, Baudoyn, vos demant

- I --Baudouin, I ask you one thing:  
 If it happened that a true, loyal friend  
 Who had loved and entreated mercy of his lady  
 For so long that she takes pity on him  
 5 And commands him to come to fulfill her wishes,  
     In order to fulfill her wishes,  
 What will he first do to please her  
 When she says to him: "Fine friend, you may come"?  
 Will he kiss her mouth or her feet?
- II 10 --Sire, I advise that he first  
 Kiss her mouth, for I can tell you that  
 From a kiss on the lips a great sweetness  
 Descends to the heart, by which is brought to completion  
 The great desire with which they love one another;  
 15      And the joy which enlightens the heart  
 Cannot be hidden or suppressed by a loyal friend  
 Thus it seems that he is made totally happy  
 When he kisses the lips of his lady.
- III --Baudouin, indeed! I will never lie about it:  
 20 Whoever first wishes to kiss his lady  
 On the mouth has never loved with a true heart;  
 For thus does one kiss the daughter of a shepherd--  
 I would rather kiss her feet and be grateful  
     Than commit such an outrage.  
 25 One must believe that one's lady is proper.  
 And propriety states that great humility  
 Makes one worthy of being loved more.
- IV --Sire, I have indeed heard for a long time  
 That humility is to the lover's advantage,  
 30 And since Amors, by humbling the lover,  
 Has brought him to the point of receiving the recompense  
 Of having the one whom he has loved and treasures so much,  
     I say that he would commit folly  
 If he did not pay homage to her on her lips,  
 35 For I have heard, and you know well, that  
 To abandon her lips to choose her feet is silliness.
- V --Baudouin, indeed! I did not say that  
 One ought to abandon her lips in order to have her feet,  
 But that I prefer to kiss her feet first,  
 40 And then afterward, kiss her mouth to my heart's desire,  
 And her body, which no one considers to be evil,  
     And her beautiful eyes and her face,  
 And her blond hair which outshines pure gold.  
 But you are presumptuous and excessive,  
 45 And it seems you know little about love.

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- VI        --Sire, it is cowardly indeed, and slack,  
           If one has permission to kiss and to have  
           The sweet solace of her long, slender, soft body,  
           To be indifferent to the sweetness of her lips  
 50 In order to kiss her feet; it makes no sense.  
           God grant that he nevermore  
           Receive such a favor,  
           For a kiss on the mouth is a thousand times more sweet  
           Than one on the feet!
- VII 55    --Baudouin, he who has been so perseverent  
           That he attains his wishes, indeed conducts himself haughtily  
           If he does not fall at her feet;  
           I say that he is a mad devil.
- VIII      --Sire, he whom Amors ensnares  
 60 Cannot help it that he forgets about the feet  
           And chooses her mouth, when he has the time and the place  
           To accomplish all his desires.

XXXIX    Phelipe, je vous demant

- I        --Philip, I ask you:  
           There are two friends, young  
           And mirthful bachelor,  
           With true hearts, who love loyally.  
 5 One is accepted (by his lady),  
           The other is still being put to the test.  
           Which one is to be esteemed more,  
           The one who is loved or the one who entreats?
- II        --Count, know indeed:  
 10 The one who is loved is free from all care  
           And for that reason is more desirous  
           Of being worthy; I know it well;  
           When one has more, one becomes more ardent  
           And eager to do good.  
 15 The one who seeks mercy and aid  
           Cannot be worth much.
- III       --Philip, it is reasonable  
           That the one who seeks ought to be worth more,  
           For he has such great reward  
 20 As his goal.  
           The one who seeks, tries,  
           But the one who is at the summit  
           Never seeks to depart  
           From his beloved.

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IV 25 --Count, the one who entreats  
 Will always have sorrow and suspicion,  
 And the thought of when he will receive pardon  
 Will always burden his heart;  
 But the one who has what he seeks  
 30 Never wonders if he is worthy:  
 Joy has procured his worth for him,  
 As well as his lady, when she entreats him.

V --Philip, the one who wishes to be attentive  
 To his lady, and who awaits day and night  
 35 Receiving her mercy from her,  
 Ought to be worth more.  
 This thought makes him have  
 A heart which is valiant and bold.  
 He who has attained joy  
 40 Never strives to his fullest capacity.

VI --Count, you must realize  
 That you have failed in this:  
 If one is worth less because of having joy,  
 Then all lovers are the object of shame.  
 45 If he who gives himself over to sorrow  
 Is worth more than a joyful friend,  
 We must make the ladies know  
 That no one loves them at all.

VII --Philip, I ask  
 50 My friend Auberon  
 To tell the truth  
 Or may his tongue be shamed!

VIII --Count, I send for Rodrigue le Noir  
 On your account, and beg him  
 55 That he send us his judgment  
 Of who is right in this partie.



XL Cuens, je vous part un gieu par aatie

- I       --Count, I challenge you to a jeu-parti  
 And will rely on your judgment:  
 Two knights each love their beloved;  
 One of the two loves quite loyally,  
 5       The other is extremely deceitful.  
       Which one suffers more, may God bless you;  
       The loyal one or the one who cheats and lies  
       And deceives?  
           Tell me truly,  
 10       Sire, right away,  
       And take one of the alternatives now.  
       And I shall take the other  
       And respond likewise  
       According to your words, by singing.
- II 15   --Monsieur, Gui, the game suits me well,  
       And of the better choice I will give you my opinion,  
       That loyalty will never be destroyed by me,  
       And I will persevere in it for the rest of my life.  
       The disloyal one feels neither pleasure nor pain  
 20       For he is asleep in his vile treachery,  
       And does not care about how to obtain merit,  
       Wrong or right,  
       When he deceives  
       The one who would place  
 25       Both heart and body at his commandment.  
       Damned be he who acts in such a way!  
       He who is good and awaits good  
       Will never have a sorrowful heart.
- III     --Count, I know your thought very little;  
 30       You have not suffered the pains of love:  
       All other sorrows are like dew in comparison to  
       The suffering of one who loves and cannot have joy;  
       And I beg God that he make you know  
       What sufferings one feels who must hide his love.  
 35       Then you would indeed know,  
       It is clear to me,  
       That greatly is the one who loves  
       Valued, and he suffers more  
       Than the other, who is as deceitful as possible  
 40       And who has forsaken all honor.  
       In my opinion, I do not wish to deceive  
       For any reason.





IV       --Monsieur Gui, true love will always  
           Be honored wherever it is found!  
 45       He who has devoted his entire thought  
           To the joy whence comes all knowledge, suffers less.  
           Foolish people cannot be steadfast  
           So each says that he who desires waits too long.  
           A true lover always keeps in mind  
 50               Her beautiful face  
               And her sweet smile  
               Which are Paradise to him.  
           Thus he can never grieve about her  
           From whom he awaits honored joy.  
 55       He who lets his feelings show  
           Is subject to others' ill-will.

V        --I ask Gilon to tell the truth,  
           And to say who is wrong in this discussion,  
           And who ought to be more sorrowful.  
 60       Say it in order to restore peace!

VI       --I place myself at the will of Lord Perron,  
           Whose face looks like a sword,  
           That he put an end to our quarrel  
           And tell the truth to the best of his ability.

XLI   Sire, ne me celez mie

I        --Sire, do not keep from me  
           Which choice would please you more:  
           If it happened that your beloved  
           Commanded that you  
 5       Lie naked by her side  
           At night and not see her at all;  
           Or during the day kiss you and smile  
               In a beautiful meadow  
           And embrace her, but not have  
 10       That which is spoken of most highly?

II       --Guillaume, that which you have sung about  
           Is great madness;  
           The shepherd of an abbey  
           Would have spoken better.  
 15       When I can have at my side  
           My heart, my lady, my beloved,  
           Whom I have desired  
               All my life,  
           I leave you to the banter  
 20       And chatter of the meadow.



III       --Sire, I say that in one's youth  
           Must one learn about love;  
           But he who has not suffered its pain  
           Gives but a cheap imitation of love.  
 25 Little do you value summer or flowers,  
           A fine body or fair welcome,  
           A sweet glance or a complexion  
               Of white and rose.  
           There is no abstinence in you;  
 30 One would mistake you for a prior.

IV       --Guillaume, he who begins thus  
           Is led by folly,  
           And little does he know of love  
           Who does not go directly to bed.  
 35 For beneath the fine coverlets  
           One takes such assurance  
           That one frees himself from fear  
               And trembling;  
           As long as I am in the balance,  
 40 My heart will never be without fear.

V       --Sire, not for anything would I wish  
           To have been put to this.  
           If I could have the one I love,  
           And who would have won me over,  
 45 And gaze upon her face,  
           And kiss her with great joy,  
           And embrace her freely  
               To my heart's desire,  
           Know that if I chose the other,  
 50 I would not be a friend.

VI       --Guillaume, with God as my witness,  
           You have undertaken madness  
           If, when you could embrace her naked,  
           You do not choose Paradise.  
 55 I would never content myself  
           With looking at her face in a meadow  
           If I did not have the other.  
               I have chosen better,  
           For, if she accompanies you at your departure,  
 60 It would be with a derisive laugh.

VII       --Sire, Amors has so overwhelmed me  
           That I am his, wherever I be,  
           And I would rely on the opinion  
               Of Gilon.  
 65 As to which path is correct,  
           And which is to be esteemed more.



- VIII        --Guillaume, you would always remain  
              Foolish and pensive,  
              And he who would advocate such a choice  
 70        Is quite a coward.  
              I believe that Gilon would be of such an opinion,  
              But I place myself at the judgment of Jehan.

XLII Rois Thiebaut, sire, en chantant responnez

- I        King Thibaut, sire, answer in song:  
              You will love a beautiful, young, comely lady  
              More than anything and with a true heart,  
              But you will not be able to have your heart's desire  
 5        If you do not carry her in your arms  
              To the home of another who is loved by her,  
              Or if you do not bid him to come  
              And lie with her in your own dwelling.
- II        --Baudouin, really! you pose a bad game!  
 10        But, in order to have my lady, I will carry her  
              Since it is her wish,  
              In my arms, kissing and embracing her,  
              I shall never believe that, such be her wish,  
              --And I would swear to Saint Barnaby a hundred times--  
 15        That after such good she should want to betray me.  
              A true friend must either wait or die.
- III        --In God's name, sire, you have chosen too wrongly  
              When you wish to take her away from the one  
              Whom she regards as her loyal friend.  
 20        You will never see her without chagrin  
              Because of having taken her from him.  
              He who carries another's beloved in his arms  
              Has a heart which is too cruel and insensitive.  
              I prefer to suffer than to be considered mad.
- IV        25        --Baudouin, he who would let another have his beloved  
              Has indeed lied about love.  
              If one were going to cut me in half,  
              I would never relinquish her if I were hers.  
              Thus, it pleases me so much to await her mercy  
 30        That I forget the cruel vexation,  
              And I rejoice, by faith owed to Saint Paul;  
              But without her the world is not worth a sou to me.

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- V       --Certainly, sire, anyone who wishes to leave his beloved  
           At another man's house never loved with a true heart;  
 35       And anyone will wish to choose rightly about this  
           Must serve that which she loves and holds dear  
           (Even though) Everything she will do about it vexes me  
           I prefer to suffer from that which she will love  
           [I prefer to suffer] That in my dwelling she might do her will  
 40       [I prefer to suffer] That he might be taken and that I might  
           love in hope.

- VI       --Baudouin, indeed! never will my enemy  
           Enter my house in order to possess my lady,  
           But I will carry my lady  
           Wherever she pleases and serve her without hesitation;  
 45       Never will my heart be separated from her.  
           If she says to me: "Fine friend, I wish to go there,"  
           It is a ruse; I do not believe  
           That she says it in order to make me grieve.

XLIII Sire, loëz moi a choisir

- I       --Sire, help me make a choice  
           In this jeu: Which is better:  
           Either to feel one's beloved  
           And kiss and embrace her without seeing her  
 5       Or speaking to her, and without  
           Ever having her love again;  
           Or to talk to her and see her forever  
           Without feeling or touching her?  
           If it is fitting to relinquish one,  
 10       Tell me which is less joyful  
           And from which choice the joy is greatest.
- II       --Raoul, I tell you without lying  
           That he can have no good in him  
           By partaking of that which, of necessity,  
 15       Causes a lover to die;  
           But, while the first choice cannot last,  
           Sight gives more sustenance,  
           As does speech which expresses love.  
           Such a beautiful smile and such solace  
 20       Would alleviate my pain,  
           For I do not wish to resemble  
           Meremellin and his relatives.



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- III      --Sire, you have chosen well in wishing  
             To gaze upon your beloved,  
 25      Since your fat, stuffed stomach  
             Would keep you from touching her;  
             For that reason do you prefer speaking to her,  
             Since you have no other means of solace.  
             It is always such with false witnesses  
 30      Whose appearances belie them.  
             But by kissing and embracing  
             A lady's heart becomes generous,  
             Loyal, and bold toward her friend.
- IV        --Raoul, it is clear to me that a glance  
 35      Ought to comfort a friend more  
             Than to lie beside her at night, troubled,  
             And not be able to light a candle  
             In order to see her, and listen to her, and make merry;  
             One would have nothing but tears.  
 40      And if she put her hand elsewhere  
             When she wished to embrace you  
             And took hold of your staff,  
             You would be more dismayed about that, I assure you,  
             Than about having a large stomach.
- V        45      --King, you resemble a mastiff  
             Who takes revenge by barking.  
             For that reason you have bitten the staff  
             With which I support myself:  
             You have acted childishly;  
 50      For there is no darkness so great  
             That it could ever prevent me  
             From enjoying the sweetness  
             Of embracing my lady;  
             And thus I am more capable of giving up  
 55      My staff than you are your swelling.
- VI        --Raoul, I would rather end our tençon  
             In a courteous manner  
             Than to speak ill in a way which would make  
             The wicked and base people laugh,  
 60      And which would cause us regret;  
             But, in loving, it would be much better  
             To see and to hear than to be elsewhere,  
             And to laugh and talk and give sweet solace  
             With sweet words which touch the heart,  
 65      And to rejoice to one's fill  
             Rather than to grope around in the darkness.



XLIV Bons rois Thiebaut, sire, conseilliez moi

I      Good king Thibaut, sire, give me some advice.  
         I have loved a lady for a long time  
         With a loyal heart and, indeed, in good faith,  
         But I dare not disclose my thought to her,  
 5      So greatly do I fear that she will refuse me  
         The love which distresses me so often.  
         Tell me, sire, what do true lovers do about it?  
         Do they all suffer such great pain,  
         Or do they express the pain that they have from loving?

II    10    --Cleric, I advise and entreat you to keep still;  
         Do not ask why she hates you,  
         But serve her so well and let her know  
         That your heart desires her;  
         For in serving, much love is given.  
 15      Through disguised words and a prudent appearance  
         And through signs must one indicate,  
         That she might know the pain and the sorrow  
         That the true lover bears for her night and day.

III    --In God's name, sire, the advice you give me  
 20      Brings me death and great affliction,  
         For disguised words and signs,  
         And such appearance, you know, come from deception.  
         As one finds in someone who knows how to feign  
         Loving without feeling great pain.  
 25      But a true friend cannot hide his pain  
         Nor keep from expressing that which his heart recalls  
         Through the anguish of the suffering it undergoes.

IV      --Cleric, I see that you wish to make haste,  
         And it is indeed fitting, for clerics are not capable of abstinence;  
 30      But if you loved as much as you have said,  
         You would not reveal it for all of France;  
         For, when one is before one's lady,  
         Then come trembling and great sighs,  
         And the heart fails when one must open one's mouth;  
 35      He who does not fear his lady does not love,  
         For fear comes from great love.

V      --By God, sire, little do you feel, it's clear to me,  
         The great pain, the sickness and torture  
         That night and day a true, loyal lover feels;  
 40      You don't know how Amors rules  
         That which is his and in his command.  
         I know indeed that, if you knew,  
         You would never keep me from saying it;  
         Because it's for this reason that Amors makes the lover suffer  
 45      That he might confess the truth about his pain.



- VI        --Cleric, I see indeed that you are so overcome  
           That the crown (tonsure) suits you well.  
           Since you are so eager to entreat her,  
           It's the suffering of the glands that incites you;  
 50    Such love does not come from the heart.  
           Tell her right away since you are in such anguish,  
           That either you will have her or you will soon abandon her,  
           For anyone can tell from your words  
           That you wish to direct your attention elsewhere.
- VII 55    --In God's name, sire, my love comes from the heart without  
           deceit,  
           But you deceive Amors. For that reason you think  
           That I am also as inconstant  
           As you, who have stopped caring  
           About Amors and those who are in his power.
- VIII 60    --Cleric, since you have waged such war against me,  
           And value my counsel so little,  
           Beg mercy, hands clasped, at her feet  
           And tell her all your desire;  
           She will believe you and it will indeed be true.

XLV    Girart d'Amiens, Amours qui a pouoir

- I        Girart d'Amiens, Amors, who has power  
           Over all men, inflames you and another  
           --You are the more worthy one--  
           With love for a lady who is above reproach.
- 5    (Choose) if you will, now, without further delay:  
           Either you will choose to have her with you,  
           But beware: she will hate you;  
           Or, such is the case I put to you, the other  
           Will have her with him and she will love you.
- II 10    --King of Navarre, misfortune must befall  
           Any man who does not dare to choose the good,  
           Since it is within his power to have it without doing wrong;  
           No friend could make a greater mistake  
           Than to permit, when he could forbid it,  
 15    That another have the private company of his lady;  
           Never would I relinquish the good,  
           Nor would I refuse such good fortune,  
           Nor would another ever partake of it, if I had my way.

June 10 1911

June 11 1911

June 12 1911

June 13 1911

June 14 1911

June 15 1911

June 16 1911

June 17 1911

June 18 1911

June 19 1911

June 20 1911

June 21 1911

June 22 1911

June 23 1911

June 24 1911

June 25 1911

June 26 1911

June 27 1911

June 28 1911

June 29 1911

June 30 1911

- III      --Girart d'Amiens, from your words one can see  
 20      That you have a foolish and tender heart  
          In order to conceive of such a disloyal deed,  
          And so, in order that you be aware of such folly, I want  
          You to know that a true friend is not he who engenders  
          Anything which might be hated or decried  
 25      By the lady by whom he would be loved;  
          If he will be hated for doing his own will,  
          At the first opportunity, he will deceive her.
- IV       --Sire, such a choice is worse than receiving  
          Death, or being inflicted with madness. I cannot  
 30      Understand how anything good can befall me.  
          How could I seek anything more painful  
          Than to let my lady permit  
          That another do with her as he pleases?  
          I could not be in greater despair  
 35      If she hates me. Amors will see to it  
          That I will be loved as soon as he sees fit.
- V       --Girart d'Amiens, the more I see you  
          Speak in such a way, the more diminished is your reasoning.  
          No many seeks to deceive his lady,  
 40      Nor does he merit that another take her from him.  
          If my fate decrees that she be willing  
          To commit such a deed, I do not wish to be burdened by it;  
          I prefer that someone other than myself be blamed for it.  
          If I choose to love, it will profit me more;  
 45      You will never be worthy of such joy.
- VI       --Sire, I cannot persist in the thought  
          That such a test can be turned (lit. "stretched") into good  
          From which the friend will fall into (such) despair,  
          That he dare not contest it in any way;  
 50      Wherefore never do I wish to give myself over, defeated,  
          For better might I not wish to enjoy enough  
          Of the one to whom I am totally (devoted) than that from afar  
          Another might come back who will take advantage of her.  
          Shamed be he who will permit this.



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XLVI Phelipe, je vous demant

- I        --Philip, I ask you  
           What has become of love:  
           In this land and elsewhere  
           No one seems to love.  
 5        To my great amazement  
           I wonder why the situation remains such,  
               For I have heard  
               Great complaints about the ladies  
           And knights make many of them.
- II 10    --Sire, know indeed  
           That love fails for lack of lovers,  
           Joy and merit cease to exist  
           And tournaments decline,  
           Thus they are wrong in blaming  
 15       Old women and cruel husbands;  
               Love is not declining  
               For lack of women to love,  
           But for lack of knights.
- III       --Philip, I agree  
 20       That it is for lack of knights,  
           But that is a result of the dangers  
           To which ladies put them.  
           When knights are at the point of death,  
           The ladies present them with more difficulties.  
 25       They can never find  
               A good response  
           If they drive so many to despair.
- IV       --Sire, it is wrong for them to take leave of love  
           And to complain about it willingly.  
 30       They love ease more than  
           Waiting to receive comfort from Amors  
           They do not love valor or making merry,  
           And busy themselves with seizing and building houses;  
               It is not right:  
 35       He who wishes to love  
           Must make amends for everything.
- V        --Philip, they who depart from it because of fear  
           Indeed do so lightly,  
           Simply because the ladies welcome them  
 40       Unkindly.  
           A lady must draw them slowly,  
           In order to make them aspire more ardently.  
               For a lady must know  
               Enough about loving  
 45       To make her friend worth more.



- VI        --Sire, too hastily  
           Do all those who love  
           Throughout the whole world  
           Wish to receive complete joy.  
 50 For it is the ladies who must  
           Direct the friends at will  
                  And make them languish  
           Without complaint  
           And without deception.
- VII 55        --Philip, (even) true friends  
               Would not have the strength.
- VIII        --Sire, in truth,  
               Ladies make the world worthwhile.

XLVII Dame, merci! Une riens vous demant

- I        --Lady, mercy! I ask you one thing,  
           Tell me in truth, may God bless you:  
           When you die, and I--but I will die first--  
           Because after your death, I could hardly live--  
 5        What will become of Amors, thus stricken with grief,  
           For you have so much grace and merit, and I love you so much,  
           Will Amors cease to exist after our death?
- II        --In God's name, Thibaut, to my knowledge,  
           Amors will not perish because of anyone's death,  
 10        Nor do I know if you are trying to deceive me,  
           For you are hardly thin,  
           When we die (God grant us both a good life!),  
           I believe that Amors will suffer greatly,  
           But the merit of loving will always come to completion.
- III 15        --Lady, you must not think that I deceive you,  
           For I have loved you only too much.  
           Because of joy, I love and esteem myself more  
           And for this I have grown corpulent  
           For God never created anything as beautiful as you.  
 20        But it causes me great dismay that,  
           When we die, Amors will come to an end.
- IV        --Thibaut, be still! No one ought to expound  
           An argument which is devoid of rightness.  
           You say it only to soften me  
 25        On your behalf, you who have beguiled me so much.  
           I do not say, of course, that I hate you,  
           But, if it were fitting that I judge Amors,  
           He would be served and honored.



- V       --Lady, God grant that you judge rightly  
 30      And know the torments which make me lament,  
        For I know well, whatever be the judgment,  
        If I die, it is fitting that Amors falter  
        If you, lady, do not make him remain  
        In the background where he was,  
 35      For no one could grasp your reasoning.
- VI       --Thibaut, even if Amors makes you so distraught because of me,  
        Do not let it grieve you, for, if it were fitting for me to love,  
        I have a heart that would not fail.

XLVIII L'autre nuit en mon dormant

- I       The other night in my sleep  
        I was very disturbed by  
        A jeu-parti addressed in song  
        And (I was) very undecided,  
 5      When Amors appeared before me  
        And said to me: "What do you seek?  
        You are much too inconstant  
        And given to levity."
- II       Then I began to tremble;  
 10      With great apprehension  
        I said to her: "Lady, if I make much of  
        My great suffering  
        It is because of your false seeming,  
        Which has so cruelly wounded me that  
 15      I wish to take leave of your entourage  
        By distancing myself from you."
- III      --He who changes his thought  
        Because of suffering or pain  
        Will never be satisfied  
 20      For very long;  
        There is little suffering left for you.  
        Indeed must one have a black heart  
        Who, in order to do his own will  
        Loses his beloved.
- IV      25   --You know well how to deceive,  
        No one can last in this (matter);  
        It is not within the power  
        Of anyone who desires you.  
        For this reason I am forced to remain  
 30      Without finding any strong hope in you,  
        Nor can I have any worth  
        If it is not merited.

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- V       --Do not have such an insane heart,  
           But, rather, trust in me!
- 35   Whoever is in my power  
       Never becomes worse,  
       His goodness increases a hundredfold  
       As does his worth and largesse  
       You will soon receive recompense;
- 40       Put yourself under my jurisdiction!
- VI       --You have given me such a good sermon  
           That I will never cease  
       To do your will.  
           I place my body and my life
- 45       In your command,  
       In spite of those who have asked me to engage in single  
           combat with you,  
       You, to whom I have promised  
           To give help.
- VII       Now I beg your mercy, in God's name;
- 50       For the one who has loves so well  
           Humbles himself to you.

XLIX   Par Dieu, sire de Champagne et de Brie

- I       By God, lord of Champagne and of Brie,  
       I am quite astonished about something;  
       I have noticed that you no longer sing,  
       And you are rarely mirthful or gay;
- 5       Tell me why you have renounced these things.  
       Summer is coming, and the season of blossoms,  
       When everyone ought to be glad and joyful;  
       Know that you would indeed be worthless  
       If Amors took leave of you so quickly.
- II 10   --Philip, I have no desire to write songs,  
       For I am separated and estranged from Amors,  
       I honored and served him for such a long time,  
       Without ever once being favored by him;  
       Thus I no longer wish to be burdened by him.
- 15       Everywhere I see him in decline and failing,  
       Greatly has his name and esteem been lessened.  
       I renounce it entirely, and you should do likewise  
       If you do not wish to remain in folly.



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- III      --Sire, it was wrong of you to reproach Amors in my presence,  
 20      And you give me false counsel (in telling me) to forsake him.  
         Thus you have served Amors badly and deceived him;  
         His name has not been dishonored,  
         For from Amors comes all honor and goodness.  
         He who serves him well in deed and in thought  
 25      Cannot fail or lose honor,  
         For, without Amors, no one is rightly praised,  
         And he who does nor desire it is of little value.
- IV       --Philip, Amors is mad,  
         No one ought to follow his will.  
 30      I know so well that he is a proven traitor  
         That I value him and his falseness very little.  
         I am so wearied from serving him  
         That I hate those by whom he is praised.  
         For that reason I beg you never to sing about it,  
 35      For you will be deceived by him  
         As I have been, and never receive any recompense.
- V        --Sire, Amors is much too precious and dear,  
         His service and his name please me too much.  
         I shall serve him without retreating  
 40      With my work and my heart and by writing songs.  
         When it pleases him, I shall have my recompense,  
         For I know he is loyal and just.  
         Thus he is accused by the corrupt  
         And the disloyal who seek to reproach him,  
 45      And I find him gracious, while the disloyal consider him haughty.
- VI       --Philip, Amors is false and superficial;  
         You may someday still have occasion to say that I am right.  
         When you have become acquainted with his manner.  
         You would not consider those who have left to be scoundrels.  
 50      I know Amors and his ways too well:  
         In the beginning he may be generous to you,  
         Then you may discover guile and deceit,  
         And in the end his gifts are worth nothing:  
         One must win her over with prayers that are only too great!
- VII      55      --Sire, damned be he who believes your sermons!  
         I dedicate myself to Amors, who summons me,  
         And I shall maintain my intention entirely.
- VIII     --Philip, another season will yet come.  
         When you have not received a good response from him  
 60      You would tell me that Amors is not true.

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L Robert, veez de Perron

- I        Robert, look how wicked  
          Perron's heart is,  
          He wishes to give his daughter in marriage  
          To a very distant baron,  
 5        She who has such a resplendent face  
          That one could see one's reflection in it!
- II        Ah, God! such an action lacks all reason!  
          Look at his weasel face!  
          She who is noble in every way  
 10        Is being taken from you.  
          Robert, whoever would let her be taken away  
          Is not worth a button.
- III       --Sire, one can blame only you  
          If you let her be taken away.  
 15        The one you love so much  
          And from whom you have so much power  
          You ought not to let get away  
          For land or for wealth!
- IV        Indeed, it is your heart which would be considered black  
 20        When you found out the truth.  
          You would have neither the strength nor the power  
          To see her or feel her;  
          And know: One must keep  
          Such find goods near himself.
- V        25       --Robert, I would rather die  
          If it pleased her,  
          Than let her depart.  
          I would give up my whole country.  
          Alas! if only one could lie  
 30        A whole night by her side!
- VI        --Sire, may God grant that you enjoy  
          That which you have desired.
- VII       --Robert, I fear that I will die  
          When they take her away, in spite of God's will!

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LI J'aloie l'autrier errant

- I       The other day, on my horse,  
           I was wandering  
       Alone, thinking about  
           Writing a song;  
 5    When, I heard, I know not how,  
           Next to a bush,  
       The voice of the most beautiful child  
           A man has ever seen;  
       She was no really a child  
 10   For she was about fifteen and a half;  
       I have never seen another  
           With such a gracious manner.

- II       So I came up to her  
           And addressed her:  
 15   "Beautiful one, please  
           Tell me your name!"  
       And she jumped up  
           Holding her staff:  
       "If you come any closer  
 20   You will engage in combat.  
       Sire, leave here!  
       I have no care for such a friend (as you)  
       For I have chosen one much more handsome,  
           Whom I call Robeçon."

- III   25   When I saw her take a fright  
           To such a degree  
       That she dared not look at me  
           Or act otherwise,  
       I began to consider  
 30        In what way  
       She might love me  
           And change her heart's desire.  
       I sat down on the ground beside her.  
       When I looked at her beautiful face  
 35   My heart was so taken  
       That my desire doubled.

- IV       Then I asked her  
           Very kindly  
       If she would deign to look at me.  
 40        And act otherwise toward me.  
       She began to cry  
           And said:  
       "I cannot listen to you;  
           I don't know what you want."  
 45   I drew her toward me and said to her:



"My beauty, in God's name, mercy!"  
 She laughed and said:  
 "Don't do it because of the people!"

- V I put her in the saddle in front of me  
 50 Without waiting any longer,  
 And rode straight away  
 Toward a verdant woods.  
 I looked out over the fields  
 And heard the cries  
 55 Of two shepherds in the wheat,  
 Who came up shouting  
 And raising a great cry.  
 I did enough, more that I say:  
 I left her there and went off  
 60 For I have no care for such people.

LII L'autrier par la matinee

- I The other day in the morning,  
 Between a woods and an orchard,  
 I found a shepherdess  
 Singing to raise her spirits;  
 5 And first she sang this song:  
 "Pain of love keeps me here."  
 When I came to the place where  
 I had heard her express herself,  
 I said to her without delay:  
 10 "Beautiful one, God grant you good day!"
- II She returned my greeting  
 Without delay or self-defense.  
 She was fresh and fair;  
 She pleased me with her welcome:  
 15 "Beautiful one, I seek your love;  
 You would receive many riches from me."  
 She answered: "Knights are indeed  
 Too deceitful.  
 I love Perrin, my shepherd,  
 20 More than a rich man who lies."
- III "Beautiful one, do not say that;  
 Knights are only too valiant.  
 Who else knows how to have a beloved  
 And serve her well  
 25 Except knights and such people?  
 The love of a shepherd  
 Is hardly worth a button.  
 Abandon such thoughts



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And love me; I swear to you:  
 30 You will receive many gifts from me."

IV "Sire, by holy Mary,  
 You speak in vain.  
 Treacherous knights will have deceived  
 Many a lady.  
 35 They are false and given to evil thoughts,  
 And worse than Ganelon.  
 I am going back home,  
 For Perrinet, who is waiting for me,  
 Loves me with a loyal heart.  
 40 Quiet your noise!"

V I understood that the shepherdess  
 Wished to escape me.  
 I entreated her for a long time  
 I was not able to receive anything from her.  
 45 I started to embrace her,  
 But she gave a loud cry:  
 "Perrinet, help! help!"  
 From the woods there came loud cries;  
 I left her without further delay,  
 And rode away on my horse.

VI When she saw me leave,  
 She said in response:  
 "Knights are too bold!"

LIII Seigneurs, sachiez: qui or ne s'en ira

I Lords, be informed: anyone who will not go  
 To the land where God died and lived,  
 And will not bear the Crusade cross  
 Will hardly be admitted to Paradise.  
 5 Anyone who has pity and is mindful  
 Of the Supreme Lord, ought to seek vengeance  
 And deliver his land and his country.

II All of the lowly, who love neither God,  
 Good, honor, nor esteem will remain behind;  
 10 And each says: "My wife, what will she do?  
 Nor would I leave my friends at any cost."  
 Such men have fallen into foolish concerns,  
 For one has no friend except he who, without hesitation,  
 Was placed upon the true cross for us.



- III 15 Now the valiant lads (bachelor)  
 Who love God and the honor of this world,  
 And who rightly wish to go to God, will depart,  
 And the sniveling, the cowardly, will remain behind;  
 They are blind, I have no doubt about it.  
 20 Such a man never aids God during his life,  
 And, for so little, loses the glory of the world.
- IV God let himself suffer on the cross for us  
 And he will tell us on the last day, when all are reunited:  
 "You who helped me carry my cross  
 25 Will go where my angels are;<sup>1</sup>  
 There you will see me and my mother, Mary.  
 And those from whom I never received aid  
Will all descend into the depths of Hell."
- V Everyone thinks he will remain healthy  
 30 And ought never to become sick;  
 Thus the Enemy and sin take hold of them,  
 Until they have neither sense, boldness, nor power.  
 Gracious lord God, take such thoughts from them  
 And put us in your country  
 35 With such holiness that we may see you!
- VI Sweet lady, crowned queen,  
 Pray for us, Virgin of good fortune!  
 Henceforth no evil can befall us.

LIV Dame, ensi est q'il m'en couvient aler

- I Lady, since I must go away  
 And leave the sweet country  
 Where I learned to endure such sufferings,  
 And leave you, it is fitting that I hate myself for it.  
 5 God! why is there the Holy Land  
 Which will separate so many lovers  
 Who, afterward, will have no comfort from love,  
 Nor will they be able to remember their joy!

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<sup>1</sup>Thibaut uses the conditional to describe the hypothetical events of the Last Judgment scene. I have chosen the future tense to accord with the authoritative tone of the rest of the chanson.

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- II        I could not last without love,  
 10        So thoroughly is my thought devoted to it.  
           Nor could my heart let me renounce love,  
           Thus I am there where my heart's desire is.  
           I have learned only too well the hard lessons of love,  
           For that reason I do not see how I can last  
 15        Without receiving joy from the most desired one  
           From whom a man ever dared to beg mercy.
- III        When I am separated from her, I do not see  
           How I can have any good, solace, or joy,  
           For I have never done anything with as much reluctance  
 20        As leaving you: will I ever see you?  
           I am exceedingly sorrowful and afflicted about it.  
           When I remember your gracious words,  
           Again and again will I repent  
           Of ever having taken up this path.
- IV        25        Good lord God, I turn to you;  
           For you I leave that which I loved so much  
           The reward for it ought to be decked with flowers  
           Since for you I lose both my heart and my joy.  
           I am ready and armed to serve you;  
 30        I render myself to you, good Father of Jesus Christ!  
           I could never have such a good lord:  
           He who serves you cannot be betrayed.
- V               It is indeed fitting that my heart be both joyful and sorrowful:  
           Sorrowful because I am leaving my lady,  
 35        And joyful because I am desirous  
           Of serving God, who is my body and soul.  
           This love is fine (true) and powerful;  
           By its path come the most learned;  
           It is the ruby, the emerald, and the gem  
 40        Which cures all from old, foul-smelling sins.
- VI               Lady of the heavens, great, powerful queen,  
           I am greatly in need of succor!  
           May I be inflamed with love for you!  
           When I lose my lady, by a lady may I be aided!

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LV Au tens plain de felonnie

- I            During a time full of wickedness,  
               Envy and deceit,  
               Wrongs and outrage,  
               Without good or courtesy,  
 5            And when our barons  
               Make the whole world grow worse;  
               When I see excommunicated  
               Those who offer the most sense,  
               I wish to sing a song.
- II 10        The kingdom of Syria  
               Cries out to us in a loud voice  
               That we repent  
               --For God's sake!--for not going there:  
               In not going we commit great evil.  
 15        God loves fine, upright hearts;  
               From such men does he wish to receive aid;  
               They will exalt his name  
               And win back his house.
- III           I still prefer, above all,  
               To remain in the Holy Land,  
               Than to go, a poor coward,  
               To a place where I would have no solace.  
               Philip, one must win  
               Paradise by having discomfort,  
 25        Or you will never have, indeed,  
               The well-being, pastimes, or the laughter  
               To which you had become accustomed.
- IV           Amors has run in search of prey  
               And thus takes me, bound  
 30        Into the hostel from which, indeed,  
               I would never seek issue  
               If it were up to me.  
               Lady, heiress of Beauty,  
               I want you to know:  
 35        I will never leave this prison alive;  
               Thus will I die a loyal friend.
- V            Lady, it is fitting that I remain;  
               I never wish to part from you.  
               I never want to stop  
 40        Loving and serving you;  
               The love which assaults me so often  
               Is well worth death.  
               I await your mercy always,  
               For no good can come to me  
 45        Unless it is through your pleasure.



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- VI        Song, go and tell Lorent for me  
           That he guard himself from undertaking  
           Great folly  
           Which false lying would cause in him.

LVI    Deus est ensi conme li pellicanz

- I        God is like the pelican  
           Who makes his nest in the highest tree,  
           And the wicked bird, who is so vile,  
           Comes from below and kills his offspring;  
       5    The father returns, distressed and grieving,  
           And kills himself with his beak; his sorrowful blood  
           Immediately revives the fledgelings.  
           God acted likewise through his passion:  
           With his noble blood he bought back his children  
       10   From the Devil who was too powerful.
- II        Recompense is difficult and slow in coming,  
           For no longer does anyone have goodness, justice, or pity;  
           Pride and deceit have the upper hand,  
           As well as wickedness, treachery, and debauchery.  
       15   Our state is indeed in great peril;  
           One must not take the example of those  
           Who love disputes and battles so much  
           --Namely the clerics who have abandoned writing sermons  
           In order to wage war and kill people--  
       20   Never has such a man believed in God.
- III       Our head causes great pain in all our members,  
           And it is indeed fitting that we complain to God about it;  
           He accuses our barons of great sins  
           Which he weighs upon them when any one of them wishes to  
                  be of worth;  
       25   And people find fault with one another  
           For they know well how to lie and deceive;  
           They bring misfortune upon one another;  
           And whoever seeks evil must not fail to receive evil.  
           He who ardently expels small evils  
       30   Will not harbor great evil in his heart.



- IV        We should learn from the story  
           Of the battle of the two dragons  
           As it is found in the book of the Bretons;  
           In this story the castle fell to the ground.  
 35        It is this world which will be overthrown  
           If God does not put an end to the battle.  
           One should call upon the powers of Merlin  
           To divine what the outcome of it would be.  
           Now Antichrist is coming, it is evident,  
 40        Whose bludgeons the Enemy controls.
- V         Do you know who the evil birds are  
           Who murder God and his children?  
           The papelards, whose name is appropriate.  
           They are indeed cruel, foul-smelling, and evil;  
 45        By means of their wicked words  
           They put to death the simple people, God's children.  
           The papelards make the world tremble;  
           By God the Father, may evil befall them:  
           They have taken away joy, solace, and peace,  
 50        And they will carry the burden of it into Hell.
- VI        God grant that we might serve him  
           And the Lady whom one must not forget;  
           May he always protect us  
           From the evil birds with venom in their beaks!

LVIII    Du tres douz non a la Virge Marie

- I         I will fully explain to you the five letters  
           Of the most gracious name of the Virgin Mary.  
           The first is M, which signifies  
           That through her, souls (ames) are released from torment;  
 5        For through her, God came among men,  
           Suffered the passion for us,  
           And freed us from the black prison.  
           This M is his mother and his amie.
- II        A comes next. It is fitting that I tell you  
 10        That in the alphabet it comes first;  
           And, in all seriousness, one should  
           First greet with a sweet Ave  
           The Lady who, in her find noble body  
           Bore the King from whom we await salvation.  
 15        First came A, and likewise the first man [Adam]  
           That our law might be made and established.

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- III      Then comes R; it is not a lie  
           That the letter R is greatly prized,  
           For we see it each day without fail  
 20      When the priest displays it in his chapel;  
           It is the body of God who will judge us all  
           That the Lady bore in her body.  
           Not let us pray that when death comes,  
           We merit pity more than justice.
- IV    25    I has an upright, noble, and gracious form.  
           Such was the body, where there is nothing but perfection,  
           Of the Lady who takes great pains for us,  
           Beautiful, upright, and noble, without stain and without sin.  
           Because of her gentle heart and in order to destroy Hell,  
 30      God came through her when she gave birth.  
           She was beautiful and noble, and nobly gave birth;  
           She resembles God in caring for us.
- V      A is a lament, you know without doubt  
           That when one says a, one is in great pain;  
 35      And we must lament without delay,  
           To the Lady who seeks only  
           That the sinner be brought to justice.  
           She has such a sweet, noble, and pure heart  
           That he who entreats her with a sincere heart  
 40      Will not fail to receive forgiveness.
- VI      Now let us beg mercy of her in her goodness  
           With the sweet greeting which begins Ave  
           Maria! God keep us from misfortune!

LVIII    Mauves arbres ne puet florir

- I      The bad tree cannot blossom,  
           And so it dries up and withers;  
           The man who does not love, indeed,  
           Bears no fruit and dies.  
 5      Flower and wholesome fruit  
           Are born of him in whom love is born,  
           And this fruit is so precious  
           That no one could buy it;  
           It alleviates all sufferings.  
 10      It is called the Fruit of Nature;  
           And I have explained its name to you.

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- II        No one can taste of this fruit  
           Unless God has prepared him.  
           He who gives his heart and body and innermost desire
- 15       To the love and service of God  
           Gathers the fruit first,  
           And God gives him much aid.  
           Through fruit came the first tears  
           When Eve made Adam sin;
- 20       But he who wishes to eat of the good fruit  
           Loves God, his Mother, and his name,  
           And will gather the fruit in season.
- III       Lords, I have spoken to you about the tree  
           Of Nature, whence comes love;
- 25       I have told you about the ripe fruit  
           Gathered by those who cling to God;  
           But I remember again the green fruit  
           Which will never ripen in me:  
           It is the fruit by which Adam sinned.
- 30       My orchard is full of this fruit:  
           Since the day I first saw my lady  
           This love filled my heart and my body,  
           And never will it leave me.
- IV       I know well that I shall never taste of this fruit
- 35       Which I have gathered; thus it happens to me  
           That I am like a child  
           Who hangs upon a tree,  
           Or comes and goes around it  
           Without ever climbing on it;
- 40       Thus my heart continues its foolish path.  
           My desire is indeed great,  
           For I hold my faults dear;  
           I am as pure as gold  
           Toward her who is all my treasure.
- V        45    God, if I could gather  
           The ripe fruit of loving you,  
           Just as you have made me taste  
           Earthly love and compare it,  
           Then I could take my fill
- 50       And come to repentance.  
           Through your sweet commandment  
           You have given me the best (lady) to love:  
           The precious flower  
           Through whom you came into this world
- 55       And by whom the Devil is confounded.



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VI Mother of God, through your sweetness  
 You give me a taste of the good fruit,  
 For I think I have tasted more of the other  
 Than any man who has ever lived!

VII 60 Philip, renounce your error!  
 I see that you are a good singer.  
 Sing, and we will proclaim on high  
 The song, Te Deum laudamus.

LXI De chanter ne me puis tenir

I I cannot keep from singing  
 About the most beautiful, celestial lady  
 From whom no one receives shame or misfortune  
 For having served;  
 5 For the heavenly King  
 Who deigned to come through her  
 Would never let anyone who serves her  
 Not be saved.

II When God, who is neither changeable nor false,  
 10 Wishes to obey her,  
 We indeed ought to be steadfast,  
 Lady, natural queen!  
 You are worthy of all  
 Who will pay homage to you;  
 15 You are brighter  
 Than the morning star.

III Your beauty which is so resplendent  
 Illumines the whole world.  
 Through you, God came among men  
 20 On earth to suffer death  
 And to take us from the Enemy,  
 And free us from torment.  
 Through you we are avenged,  
 And through you we are saved.

IV 25 David first proclaimed  
 That you would be born of his lineage  
 When he spoke aloud  
 With the voice of the Holy Spirit.  
 You are scarcely in bloom  
 30 And yet have such a powerful flower;  
 God, who never lies  
 And is omnipotent.

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- V        Lady, full of great goodness,  
           Courtesy, and compassion,  
 35        Through you the entire world is  
           Illumined, even the infidels;  
               When they return to the (right) path  
               And believe that God was born,  
               They will be saved, you know it well.  
 40        Lady, have pity on us!

- VI        Sweet lady, I beg mercy  
           Of you, that you might keep me  
           From damnation  
           And from being lost through my sins!

LX    De grant travail et de petit exploit

- I        I see the world burdened and encumbered  
           With great hardship and little action;  
           So full are we of wickedness  
           That no one thinks of doing what he ought;  
 5        We have affirmed the Devil so much  
           That everyone strains and makes efforts to serve him;  
           And we have turned our backs to God  
           Who suffered such cruel wounds for us:  
           He who does not fear death is indeed bold.
- II    10    God, who is all-knowing, all-powerful and sees all,  
           Would have dealt us a deadly sword-blow  
           If the Lady full of goodness  
           Who is beside him had not prayed for us.  
           Her very gracious, delicate words  
 15        Calm the wrath of the great Lord.  
           He who tries any other love is exceedingly foolish,  
           For in this love there is neither ruse nor falseness,  
           And in the other there is neither mercy nor generosity.
- III    The mouse gathers nuts and grain  
 20        To protect its body against winter,  
           And we, cowards, seek to gather nothing  
           That might save us when we die;  
           We seek only foul-smelling Hell.  
           Now consider that a wild beast  
 25        Provides for hardship long in advance,  
           And yet we have neither sense nor wisdom;  
           It is clear to me that we are indeed mad.

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- IV        In order to trap us, the Devil has set  
           Four hooks baited with torment;  
 30      First he casts Covetousness,  
           And then Pride, in order to fill his huge net;  
           Debauchery pulls the boat;  
           Wickedness steers and guides their course.  
           Thus fishing, they reach the shore.  
 35      May God keep us by his commandment,  
           In whose sacred fount we pay homage.
- V        One ought to esteem the valiant  
           Wherever they are, and serve and love them,  
           But we can hardly be found  
 40      For we are mixed in with the counterfeit coins  
           That one cannot toss into the balance,  
           So they are thrown in without coins or scales;  
           Evil and sin end and begin with them.  
           False traitors! well ought you remember  
 45      That God will wreak cruel vengeance on you!
- VI       Song, go to the Lady  
           Who increases all goods. If she wishes to hear you,  
           Never will anyone have been more fortunate.

LXI    Commencerai

- I shall begin  
 To compose a lai  
 About the best (lady).  
 I am in great dismay
- 5        For I have  
           Caused her great suffering  
           For which my melodies turn to tears.  
           Sweet Virgin Mother,  
           If you delay
- 10      In pleading with the supreme Lord,  
           I indeed ought to have great fear  
           Of the Devil, the wicked one,  
           Who wants to lead us all  
           Into the black prison
- 15      From which there is no escape;  
           And I merit the penalty, sweet Lady,  
           Of losing body and soul  
           If you do not help me.  
           Dear God,
- 20      Have mercy on my vile sins!  
           Where will mercy be found

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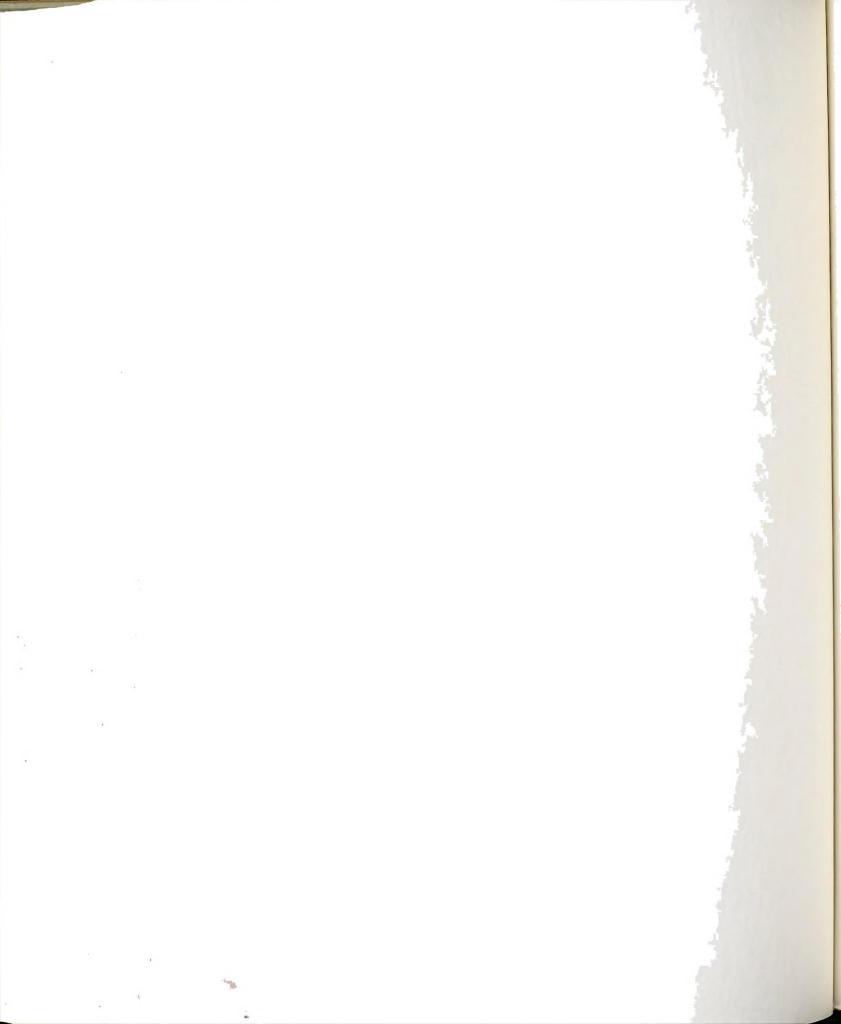
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- If you refuse to grant it,  
     Lady of great worth?  
 Lord, forget justice  
 25 And loosen the cord of your bow (of justice)  
     So that mercy will come  
         To help us!  
 We do need justice;  
 When one is more powerful than everyone,  
 30 One must have mercy  
     On his soldiers.  
 Gracious, sweet Lord, I beg you  
 Not to forget me!  
 If pity does not overcome vengeance,  
 35 We will without doubt  
     Be too badly treated.  
 Lady full of goodness,  
 May your sweet, gracious words  
 Not be forgotten!  
 40      Pray for us!  
 We will never receive succour  
 If it is not from you,  
     I know it truly.  
     I leave it thus;  
 45 God grant that we have  
 True succour without delay!





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Algebra

Geometry

Trigonometry

Calculus

Statistics

Probability

Page

Chapter

Section

Exercise

Problem

Example

Definition

Lemma

Theorem

Corollary

Proof

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