

SAINTS AND SINNERS IN
THE WORKS OF MARIE DE FRANCE

by

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ABSTRACT

The problem of this thesis may be briefly stated: What was Marie de France trying to say when she wrote the Espurgatoire, the Fables and the Lais? What exactly was she trying to tell her Twelfth Century audiences and how did she wish posterity to interpret her compositions? Were her books written to entertain or to edify? Or again, did she have in mind some moral or spiritual improvement yet wish to entertain simultaneously?

With a view to discovering the answers to some of these questions, the writer decided to undertake an analysis of the themes of sin and saintliness in the works of Marie de France. Some of the terms frequently used in the course of the investigation (e.g. sin, saintliness, theology) were then defined. In the Espurgatoire, it was discovered that the main theme was the theme of sin. There were few specific sins mentioned in that work, however. In the Fables, on the other hand, the sins are always specific. An attempt to classify the Fables yielded six categories which revealed Marie's wide range of interests and her deep concern with the problems of good and evil. This medieval ethic in the Fables is religious. A first group of seven Lais was examined. The content of each lay was discussed, the magic elements

traced, the destiny motif and the theme of sin analysed. The aim of this procedure was to reveal the complexity of Marie de France's compositions--a complexity to be found in the various themes of the Lais, their symbols, their structure, and on occasion, their language. In a second group of five Lais, the writer pursued his analysis of the themes of sin and of saintliness. In seven out of a total of twelve Lais, the sins revealed were clearly theological. In the Prologue to the Lais, the writer tried to show that there was no real break in the meaning of lines 1-27. The connecting link seemed to him to be the idea of a process of explanation. Marie's message is that deep, important truths must be continually examined and interpreted afresh. This is hard work, but it may help to ward off sin. The poetess elaborates upon the theme of saintliness in the Espurgatoire, in those sections of the narrative dealing with the life of St. Patrick, the Terrestrial Paradise and the Celestial Paradise. She also provides further illustrations of the theme in the Lais of Fresne and Eliduc.

The message in the Espurgatoire, the Fables and the Lais is an exhortation to avoid sin in this world and seek salvation in the life to come. (The Fables and the Lais are also entertainment of the highest order.) Marie's interest in religion in the Espurgatoire is obvious. The medieval ethic in the Fables is religious. The preoccupation of the poetess with the problems of good and evil in the Lais shows

the same deep moral concern. Marie's audience for all three works was the same, i.e. the lay nobles, but there is evidence in her writings that she wished posterity to think about and expound her texts. Devotion, tenderness, trust and reason play an important role in Marie's concept of love, which is closely allied to that of destiny. She accepted the knightly code of morals and was not unacquainted with the casuistry of courtly love, yet she rejected "l'amour courtois," which she probably held to be contrary to Christian ethics. Marie de France's thinking is, on the whole, typically medieval. Her conclusions are almost all orthodox. She shows in the Fables, however, that although she believes in authority, she is not prepared to tolerate its abuse. Nor does Marie's orthodoxy allow her to be complacent about the problem of "la mal-mariee." The fact that she is even prepared, on occasion, to condone adultery would seem to suggest that her views on the role of women in the Twelfth Century were not quite orthodox. Were secular influences responsible for this independence of thought, or are both secular and religious influences accountable? What is certain is that Marie de France was interested in the Christian ideal of conduct, with its assumption on the one hand of human imperfection, and on the other, of an infinite perfectibility. Thus, it would be possible to look upon the combined works of Marie de France as a triptych, i.e. a set of three panels with pictures, designs or carvings, so hinged, that the two side panels may be folded over the

central one. The Lais--the most complex of the three works--
would be the central panel and the Fables and the Espurgatoire
would be the two side panels. Such a triptych would certainly
be used as an altar-piece for the greater glory of God.

SAINTS AND SINNERS IN THE WORKS OF
MARIE DE FRANCE

PREFACE

The works of Marie de France suggest a personality with engaging yet elusive charm. The writer hopes that an analysis of the theme--"Saints and Sinners in the Works of Marie de France"--which runs like a thread through the entire fabric of Marie's poetic invention, will furnish sufficient evidence to enable him to arrive at certain definite conclusions about the aims of the first French Poetess.

What was Marie de France trying to say to her Twelfth Century audiences and how did she wish posterity to interpret her compositions? Were her books written to entertain or to edify? Or again, did she have in mind some moral or spiritual improvement, yet wish to entertain simultaneously?

The best-known and most loved of her works is, undoubtedly, the Lais, which are specimens of a genre which first appeared in the Twelfth Century. Yet, the Fables and the Espurgatoire, if they do not reach such heights of artistic perfection, can be read and enjoyed with profit. Indeed, if we really wish to discover the true nature of her poetic contribution to the literature of the Twelfth Century,

it is imperative that we read the Fables and the Espurgatoire de Seint Patriz, as well as the Lais. In the investigation to follow then, all three works will be examined.

The present study does not have, as one of its aims, a discussion of the "Anonymous" lays, such as Tyolet, Tydorel and Guingamor, which have been attributed to Marie de France by certain scholars,^{1,2} since there appears to be no academic consensus favourable to the acceptance of such views.

¹Gaston Paris. "Tyolet," Romania, VIII (1879), pp. 40-50; "Tydorel," Romania, VIII (1879), pp. 66-72; "Guingamor," Romania, VIII (1879), pp. 50-59.

²Warnke includes Guingamor as one of Marie's works. Edition of "Lais," Halle, 1925.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Tribute must be paid to the vast amount of work that has been accomplished by scholars, who have devoted so much time and energy to the problem of sources or origins in the works of Marie de France. The names of Eduard Mall, Karl Warnke and T. Atkinson Jenkins must be mentioned in connection with the discussion of sources for the Espurgatoire de Seint Patriz. The Espurgatoire is the only one of Marie's productions, of whose immediate source we can be certain. It is, to a great extent, a faithful reproduction of the Latin treatise of the Cistercian monk, H. (probably Henry of Saltrey), who lived in England in the Twelfth Century. This narrative poem, written in rhymed octosyllabics, has 2,302 lines.

Marie de France has referred to the source of her Fables. She asserts that her original was a collection of Fables, translated from Latin into English by a certain Alvrez. She is under the mistaken impression that the author is King Alfred. Warnke has shown that the first forty Fables of the complete selection of Marie's Fables, are based on the Romulus Nilantii, a prose derivative of the Fourth Century Romulus.

The latter (the Romulus) is itself a prose adaptation of the Fables of Phaedrus (1st century A.D.), whose collection is based mainly on traditional stories descended ultimately from Greek sources. Some of Marie's Fables were taken from the Vulgate Romulus, some from the Corpus of Renart Tales, others are based on popular fabliaux or Monks' Tales, while the remainder either appear to show eastern influences and have reached us through oral channels or show little or no evidence of their origins. The investigations of Léopold Hervieux¹ and Karl Warnke² have thrown considerable light on the problems of origins and sources, yet there remains much uncharted territory for research in this particular field.

The fable is, of course, a didactic genre, composed of a narrative element and a moral element inferred from the former. It is a fictitious story, where the characters are usually, but not always, animals. Sometimes, the practical moral element is somewhat loosely connected to the narrative of the fable. In Marie de France's collection, there are 102 fables.

Much has been written on the origins or sources of Marie's Lais. The lai (or lai breton) has been compared to a short story, and described as "une nouvelle en vers."³ It

¹Léopold Hervieux, Les Fabulistes Latins, (Paris, 1893).

²Karl Warnke, Die Fabeln der Marie de France (Halle, 1898).

³Ernest Hoepffner, Les Lais de Marie de France (Paris: Nizet, 1959).

is a narrative poem, written in rhymed octosyllabics. It portrays a single incident or sentimental episode (aventure). The Lays of Marie de France vary in length. ("Chievrefeuil" has 118 lines, Eliduc 1,184.) Lucien Foulet has advanced a theory purporting to show that Marie de France was the creator of this genre. His theory, in effect, denies the existence of the reputed Breton sources. Yet Marie herself has informed us, that Breton Lais could be heard and read in her day.

What was meant by the Matière de Bretagne? We are familiar with these stories (la "matière") through Medieval French literature (where remarks about them are made and where we also find adaptations). In Welsh manuscripts of the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries, the stories are to be found retold. The subject deals with King Arthur, the King of the Britons, at the time of the Anglo-Saxon invasion in England. The words "Bretagne" and "Breton" could be applied to Twelfth Century Continental Brittany or to Sixth Century Britain, the island home of the Bretons. Does "de" in "Matière de Bretagne" mean "from" or "about"? All we can say is that there were Breton minstrels, some of whom may have been Welsh, who spread Celtic stories in non-Celtic territories, including France, during the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries. But none of these stories is preserved in the form in which they are told. None appear to have been consigned to writing.

In addition to the narrative part, the lai included a melody, which was played by the Breton rote (a kind of harp).

But again, these melodies have not come down to us. Marie may have adapted the narrative part of some of these *lais*, for she refers to written sources (Guigemar 22-24, Chievrefeuil 5-7). She also refers repeatedly to oral sources. There are "li auntien Breton" (Eliduc 1182) or "li auncien" (Milun 534) or again "un mut ancien lai bretun" (Eliduc I). On more than one occasion she claims that the *lais* have been composed by Bretons. (Compare Guigemar 20. Equitan - 2 ff and 312. Les Deux amants - 5, Laostic - 244.)

We know little about the relationship of the French *Lai* to its Breton model, however. Perhaps Professor Ewert sums up the position best, when he writes that "the Lais show a masterly adaptation of the primitive Breton legends and the popular stock-in-trade of the Breton *jungleur* to the tastes of Marie's contemporaries."¹

The problem of literary sources has also engrossed scholars. The Prologue to the Lais shows that Marie was familiar with the writing of the ancients. She was acquainted with the Remedia Amoris of Ovid, perhaps through French translations or adaptations. She knew the Brut of Wace and the Roman de Thebes. She had read an account of the Tristan story (Chievrefeuil, 5-7). Her idiom and her treatment of certain themes, however, reveal most clearly the influence of the Roman d'Eneas.

¹De France, Marie, Lais, ed. Alfred Ewert, Introduction, p. XVII (Oxford: Blackwell, 1958).

Scholars have attempted to establish the identity of Marie de France. Eduard Mall held that Marie de France was Marie de Compiègne and E. Winkler tried to show that she was Marie de Champagne. Both theories have been refuted. E. Levi has suggested she was the Abbess of Reading. U.T. Holmes has suggested that the poetess might be identified with a "Marie, the daughter of Count Walran de Meulan who married a Hue Talbot and presumably went to live in Herefordshire and Devon."¹

Perhaps the most widely-accepted view is that of the British Historian, Sir John Fox,² who has suggested that Marie was the natural daughter of Geoffroy d'Anjou (the father of Henri II). This Marie became the Abbess of Shaftesbury in 1181 or earlier and died about 1216.

The poetess in the Epilogue to the Fables states "Marie ai nun, si sui de France." She claims to have translated the Fables from an English collection at the request of a certain Count William "Par amur cunte Willame, le plus vaillant de nul (cest) realme." In the Prologue to the Fables, she describes the Count, as a "fleurs ... de chevalerie." In the Prologue to the Lais she states she does not wish to translate a good story from Latin into French, for many have already done this and such an undertaking would bring her little credit. She intends to write down what she has heard

¹U.T. Holmes, A History of Old French Literature (New York: 1937).

²Sir John C. Fox, "Marie de France," English Historical Review, XXV (1910), 303 ff, and XXVI (1911), 317 ff.

and what others have composed "Pur remembrance." She claims to be writing in honour of a "nobles reis, ki tant estes pruz et curteis, A ki tute joie se encline, E en ki quoeur tuz biens racine." In the introduction to Guigemar, having referred to herself as "Marie, ki en sun tens pas ne s'oblie," she states:

Mais quand il ad en un païs
Hummé u femme de grant pris
Cil qui de sun bien unt envie
Sovent en dient vilenie.

In the Espurgatoire (l. 2297-2300) she writes:

Jo, Marie, ai mis en memoire,
le livre de l'Espurgatoire
en Romanz, qu'il seït entendables
a laie gent e convenables.

It would seem, then, that Marie was a native of France (possibly in the sense of l'Isle de France, as opposed to Burgundy or Champagne), that she knew English and Latin, that she claimed to be a serious writer, who disliked envious rivals. She probably lived and wrote in England, for, there are English names and words in both the Lais and the Fables. She translated the Fables from an English collection and the original of the Espurgatoire is the work of an English monk, H. (probably Henry de Saltrey).

The only really dependable source for the dating of Marie's works is the reference to Saint Malachias in the Espurgatoire de Seint Patriz (l. 207). As this Bishop was canonized on July 6, 1189, it is clear that Marie de France must have composed her Espurgatoire after that date. The King

to whom the Lais were addressed may have been Henry II of England or the young King Henry (Henri au Cort Mantel). The Count William, at whose request the Fables were written, was perhaps William Longsword (Guillaume de Longuespee) reputed to be a natural son of Henry II and Rosamund Clifford. Other suggestions advanced by scholars are William Marshall (Guillaume le Maréchal, 1146-1219) or William de Mandeville, Earl of Essex. Marie probably wrote during the last one third of the Twelfth Century.

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The classification of manuscripts, the use of linguistic criteria to establish critical texts, problems of authenticity, the study of literary influences, the search for evidence in the dating of Marie's works, the attempt to establish Marie's identity--these have been the main aims of research. More recently, however, an attempt has been made to explore other avenues. Attention had already been paid to the world in which the poetess lived, but a greater emphasis has been laid within the last twenty years upon the ever closer study of that world. In this sense, it might be held that E.A. Francis' and Alfred Adler's works, constitute to some extent a new approach. E.A. Francis¹ has shown that the moral in Marie's Fables often refers to contemporaneous problems. She has shown, in particular, that the trial scene in Lanval is based

¹Elizabeth A. Francis, "Marie de France et son Temps," Romania, lxxii (1951), 78-99.

upon the legal procedure of the day. The legal terminology used by Marie can be found in descriptions of actual trials of the period.¹ Indeed, between the years 1050 to 1200 stable political institutions gradually emerged and a new system of law was evolved. Feudal barons and their military followers alone could no longer satisfy the needs of the new age (and Henry II's court in particular!). A literate professional staff became necessary for the peaceful exploitation of resources and the administration of justice. Mr. Alfred Adler² would appear to be in sympathy with the attempt to discover new facts from contemporary records. He is particularly interested, however, in the problem of "Höfische Dialektik."

A second approach to research problems has been that of "l'école immanente," of whom Leo Spitzer³ is the main representative. Pierre Le Gentil writes, "La critique que M. Spitzer qualifie d'immanente est une critique qui cherche les 'rapports intimes' par lesquels sont unis les moindres détails à l'intérieur des organismes vivants."⁴ Le Gentil adds that

¹Sir Frederick Pollock, and Frederick William Maitland, The History of English Law before the Time of Edward I (Cambridge University Press, 1898).

²Alfred Adler, "Höfische Dialektik im Lai du Freisne," Germanisch-Romanische Monatschrift, Vol. 42 (1961).

³Leo Spitzer, "Marie de France - Dichterin von Problem-Märchen," Zeitschrift für Romanische Philologie, L (1930), 29-67. Also "The Prologue to the Lais of Marie de France and Medieval Poetics," Modern Philology, XL-XLI (1943), 96-102.

⁴Pierre le Gentil, "A Propos du Lai du Chèvrefeuille et de l'interprétation des Textes Médiévaux," Mélanges d'histoire littéraire offerts à Henri Chamard (Paris: Nizet, 1951).

this school of critics must, when studying medieval literature, possess "le sens du mystérieux" and "le sens de l'architecture intellectuelle." The correct approach to a work of art is intuitive as well as rational. Friedrich Schürr¹ and R. Foster-Damon² share some of Spitzer's views and could, therefore, be included in this group. Mention must be made of a third group, including Ernest Hoepffner and Jeanne Lods, who stress the effectiveness of Marie's writings on the fundamental theme of love. These two writers are interested, therefore, mainly in the Lais.

The above three groups do not include the names of many eminent critics of the works of Marie de France. Nevertheless, they represent tendencies or a direction along which research is progressing.

The works of Marie de France have, in the past, attracted well-informed scholars of the highest calibre. It is, therefore, with a certain amount of diffidence that the writer of this thesis questions the validity of some of their many findings. Only the sincere wish to contribute an original and worthwhile solution to the problem of this thesis and the importance of the subject could justify an analysis of these findings.

¹Friedrich Schürr, "Komposition und Symbolik in den Lais der Marie de France," Zeitschrift für Romanische Philologie, L (1930), 556-82.

²S. Foster-Damon, "Marie de France: Psychologist of Courtly Love," Publications of the Modern Language Assoc., XLIV (1929), 968-96.

The problem of this thesis has been stated in the Preface in general terms. What is Marie de France trying to say to her audiences in the Twelfth Century and what does she mean to us, now? The problem is, indeed, complex.

Lucien Foulet, in an article entitled "Marie de France et la légende du Purgatoire de Saint Patriz" (Romanische Forschungen, XXII, pp. 599-627) states that Marie de France was not drawn to Henri de Saltrey's work by her interest in theology. Marie wanted mainly ("avant tout") an interesting story. Marie certainly wanted an interesting story. Whether this was her main concern or not is a different matter. And whether she was interested in theology or not, is something the writer hopes to discuss in the course of this investigation.

Jeanne Lods referring to Marie de France also states: "Elle n'est pas théologienne, et, dans les Lais, tout au moins peu moraliste." The first half of this statement seems to be in agreement with Lucien Foulet's statement from his article on l'Espurgatoire de Saint Patriz. As regards the second half of the statement that Marie de France is "peu moraliste dans les Lais," the writer of this thesis is inclined to disagree with M^{lle} Lods. If morality means the quality of being in accord with the principles and standards of right conduct, it would be difficult to share Miss Lods' views. Marie would appear, on the contrary, to be immensely interested in how her characters act in the Lais and whether they pursue good or evil ends. This point will be discussed more fully

in a later chapter.

Suheyhlâ Bayrav¹ in his book "Symbolisme Médiéval--Bérout, Marie, Chrétien" writes:--"D'autres (meaning Lays) ignorent tout souci éthique et ne visent qu'à raconter une belle aventure." But there are surely very few Lais, if any, where this description would fit.

Miss E. Rickert² holds that among Marie's works, only the Espurgatoire shows an interest in religion. This again would seem to this writer to remain a matter for debate.

Ernest Hoepffner points out that Marie, although acquainted with "l'amour courtois" does not approve of it. For her, love is a simple, natural passion. It should, however, be controlled by reason (cf Les Deux Amants, Eliduc). Hoepffner holds that Marie has sympathy and understanding for her own characters. He adds, however, "Cette compréhension s'accompagne toutefois chez Marie d'un profond sentiment de justice, cette notion de la justice rigide et implacable que Marie partage avec son temps."³ The writer is in complete agreement with this statement, but he would add that Marie shared with her epoch certain equally definite religious ideas. Why, for instance, does Marie show no pity for the lady in

¹Suheyhlâ Bayrav, Symbolisme Médiéval--Bérout, Marie, Chrétien (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France), 1958.

²Sir John C. Fox, op. cit. (1910). Also Edith Rickert, Marie de France: Seven of her Lays done into English (London: 1901).

³E. Hoepffner, op. cit., p. 177.

Chaitivel? Because she does not approve of "l'amour courtois," which is contradictory to Christian ethics.

Hoepffner discussing the love element in Marie's Lais writes (op. cit., p. 171) "C'est un sentiment doux et tendre, teinté de mélancolie, car Marie en connaît la fragilité et la durée éphémère." Indeed, is it not rather what love leads to, that matters? Does it lead to good, or does it lead to evil? What is the destiny reserved for the lovers?

Professor Ewert in the introduction to his edition of Marie's Lais, attempts to date her various works. "Marie's own statements" he writes "indicate the order (1) Lais, (2) Fables, (3) Espurgatoire, that is to say, a progression from entertainment through moralization to edification."¹ He maintains that when Marie wrote the Prologue to the Lais, she had not yet written the Espurgatoire (a translation from Latin) otherwise, she would not have rejected the translation of some "bone estoire" from the Latin. Professor Ewert also writes the following:

The Prologue to the Lais leads off with a "moral" justification of literary activity and even if one allows for the conventionality of this exordium, it is most unlikely that, if she had already composed the Fables, she would have proceeded to dismiss the idea of translating from Latin without mentioning translation from English and her own Fables.²

¹De France, Marie, op. cit., Introduction, p. VII.

²Ibid., Introduction, p. VI. The underlinings are this writer's.

It should be noted, then, that the idea that the Lais are entertainment as opposed to moralization or edification, is based on the argument for the order (1) Lais, (2) Fables, (3) Espurgatoire. The very slender evidence for this is to be found mainly in Marie's own writings and Professor Ewert's findings seem to the present writer to be provisional. There is considerable disagreement among scholars over the dating of Marie's works.¹ It may well be that the Lais like the Espurgatoire and the Fables are not purely entertainment.

To show the interdependence of Marie's whole literary production is one of the aims of this thesis. Friedrich Schurr² appears to be one of the few scholars, who has, to some extent, indicated the interdependence of the works of Marie de France. Certainly, Schurr attempts to link up the Lais and the Fables, in that he stresses the allegorical element to be found in both of them.

Schurr makes it quite clear that he believes Marie's stories to have "ihren Sinn innerhalb des Weltbildes," i.e. they make sense within the framework, as it were, of her philosophical or theological views, and he stresses the spiritual aspect of her works. Leo Spitzer has also defined the Lais as "an attempt to bring to the fore the deepest

¹See Appendix A.

²Schurr, op. cit., L, 556-82.

problems of life by condensed symbols in a fairy tale atmosphere."¹ And the same author has demonstrated convincingly that Marie was a "poeta philosophus et theosophus." This, among other things, implies that she was a literary writer whose "forma mentis" was an "anima naturaliter christiana."² Lastly, Foster Damon³ suggests that she was familiar with the works of the subtlest theology and that she may, therefore, have considered the whole visible universe as a symbol of the unseen.

It is possible then to look upon the combined works of Marie de France as a triptych, that is, a set of three panels with pictures, designs, or carvings. The panels are often so hinged that the two side panels may be folded over the center one. Such triptyches are used as altar-pieces for the greater glory of God.

In the meantime, the theme of "Saints and Sinners" requires closer examination.

¹Helmuth Hatzfeld, "Esthetic Criticism applied to Medieval Romance Literature," Romance Philology, 1948, pp. 305-327.

²Footnote to: Leo Spitzer, "The Prologue to the Lais of Marie de France and Medieval Poetics," Modern Philology, XL-XLI (1943), 96-102.

³Foster-Damon, op. cit., p. 996.

CHAPTER II

SAINTS AND SINNERS

The aim of this chapter is to discuss certain terms frequently used in the course of this investigation. Such expressions as theology, saintliness, sin, purgatory, and penance, must be examined and defined so that the reader may become familiar with the precise meanings to be attached to them in later chapters.

Theology is now no longer merely the Dogma of the Divine nature or of Christ's person. It has been defined as "the theory of how Christian Salvation is conveyed through the sacraments to sinful man."¹ It has also been described as a "method for reflecting on the mysteries revealed in Christian origins,"² or again "a discipline in which the truths of the Christian religion, based on and illuminated by revelation, are interpreted, developed, and ordered into a body of doctrine."³

However, the main concern of this writer is not with theology, but with the literary productions of Marie de France. It is felt that the following more general definition is more

¹Encyclopaedia Britannica.

²Jean Leclercq, The Love of Learning and the Desire for God, A Mentor Omega Book, New American Library, 1962, p. 225.

³Y. Congar, Theol. Dict. de Theol. Cath., XV, 1-341.

suitable: Theology is the Study of God and the relations between God and the Universe. Unless otherwise indicated then it can be assumed that the writer, when he uses the word "theology" is referring to this last definition.

The saints were among the first to expound humanitarian principles and to fight for social justice. They showed sympathy and love for the poor, they considered all nations and races to be equal, they proclaimed the sanctity of work. They examined and reassessed the role of women in the social structure. They were among the first educators. They helped improve the lot of the slave.

Why should the saints have exerted so great a cultural influence on succeeding generations? They did so because they had set an example of perfection or near-perfection to others. In the sure possession of their faith they lived in the light of a Divine Love. Unhampered by earthly desires, they could converse with God. They believed in a supernatural reality, independent of the senses: they obeyed the Divine Law. They longed for an eternity, where union with God would be their sole reward.

Renunciation and self-discipline are two of the most constant characteristics of the saint. God is the whole and only good. The saint fasts repeatedly. He mortifies the flesh. Sometimes, he seeks poverty and solitude, at other times, he works with his fellow-men. He is always humble.

Some of the better presentations of saints show clearly

that the saint is never alone. He is seen against a luminous background, where the blue of Heaven floats around his head or the pale gold of a halo encircles it. Indeed, he cannot be separated from this background, which reveals that he lives in God and for God. Sometimes the saint is represented as part of a pillar in a church. The body seems to lack freedom of movement. The saint has been overpowered by his religious experience--his body is extended by the attraction of Divine love. His desire for union with God is like a flame, rising ever upwards. The saint, then, is conditioned as a result of his overwhelming discovery of the love of God. Pascal says: "Pour faire d'un homme un saint, il faut bien que ce soit la gr^âce, et qui en doute ne sait ce que c'est que saint et qu'homme."¹

Representations, legends and chronicles tell us how varied are the activities of the saints. The saint may be a scholar, an artist, an army leader, a king, a lonely visionary or wandering preacher. Do we not think of St. Anthony of Coma as a Saint of Renunciation? Has not St. Augustine been named the "saint of the intellect"?² St. Francis of Assisi is surely the Saint of Love, St. Ignatius of Loyola, the Saint who subdued the Will. Is not St. Theresa

¹Blaise Pascal, Pensées, ed. Guersant Marcel, Sixieme chapitre, La Morale Chretienne (Paris: Club français du Livre, 1957).

²René Fulop-Miller, The Saints that Moved the World (New York: Collier Books, 1962), p. 117.

of Avila, a visionary or ecstatic saint, as had been St. Hildegard of Rupertsberg 500 years earlier?

However, the aim of the saint is always the same. It is union with God and the salvation of the soul. His whole life is an attempt to imitate the life of Jesus Christ. The saint is usually seen, then, journeying along the road to perfection.

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The concept of sin played an important part in the religious thinking of the Middle Ages. The sin of Adam and the sin of Satan are themes, which have attracted theologians, poets, and artists. God had endowed Adam with supernatural grace, when He first created him. Adam was immortal. Satan stood highest among God's angels.

Sin would seem to imply a lack of perfection, a privation of infinite being, an insufficiency of power and knowledge relative to God's might and omniscience. This need not imply moral evil, however. Sin in this sense is a strictly theological concept.

If God predestined Adam or Satan to sin, then the responsibility for sin was no longer theirs. On the other hand, if God did not predestine Adam and Satan to sin, then the cause of their sin must have been a free choice on their part between good and evil. But how exactly did the conflict between good and evil arise within them, and what could make them choose evil? The sin of Adam and the sin of Satan are

among the great mysteries of the Christian religion.

The third chapter of Genesis illustrates clearly the sins of pride and envy in Satan and Eve. Adam's disobedience has its roots in the fact that he loves Eve more than he loves God. Sin has been defined as the "purposeful disobedience of a creature to the known will of God."¹

In both pagan and Christian worlds, pride is considered the basic sin. The heroes in Greek plays, who strive against the will of the gods, soon learn to their cost, that they are mere human beings. Pride is an excessive belief in one's own worth or it may involve an exaggerated love for some object, which is not deserving of such love. The Supreme Good is the only object worthy of a boundless love. Earthly goods should be valued only for their relative merits. The Divine Law must be observed.

The Judaeo-Christian conception of sin implies a relationship of law or a bond of love between God and man. Transgression is contrary both to the natural law, which our reason approves and to Divine Law. An act is sinful, if the person who commits it turns away from God to the worship or love of other things.

Criminal and sinful behaviour are not to be confused. The criminal act violates the law of man, the sinful act violates the Law of Gd. Both may be evil, but unless the act

¹F.L. Cross, The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church.

is contrary to the spirit of Divine Law, it is not a sin. Indeed, the whole concept of sin is related to a belief in God. Disbelief in God would imply disbelief in sin, in which case there would be neither wicked nor righteous. Pascal says:

Changeons la règle que nous avons prise jusqu' (ici) pour juger de ce qui est bon. Nous en avons pour règle notre volonté, prenons maintenant la volonté de (Dieu): tout ce qu'il veut nous est bon et juste, tout ce qu'il ne veut (pas, mauvais et injuste). Tout ce que Dieu ne veut pas est défendu.¹

In other words, the absence of God's Will renders something unjust and wrong.

St. Thomas Aquinas points out that evil is more comprehensive than sin.² Sin is always present in human nature, never in the Divine nature.

The doctrine of Original Sin seems to be connected to the doctrine of the need for a Divine Saviour. God himself became man to redeem the human race from the taint of Original Sin. According to Thomas Aquinas, man's fall from grace means not only that he is deprived of those extraordinary gifts of life and knowledge, but also is wounded in perpetuity by Adam's sin. "Weakness, ignorance, malice and concupiscence," Aquinas³ declares, "are the four wounds inflicted on the whole of human nature as a result of our

¹Pascal, op. cit., p. 778.

²T. Aquinas, Summa Theologica (Part II) First Part (Literally translated by the English Dominican Province) (London: Burns Oates & Washbourne Ltd., 1927), p. 266.

³Ibid., p. 447.

first parent's sin." With the loss of grace, man also suffers a diminution in "his natural inclination" to virtue. The "gift of grace" is required to heal these wounds.

Sins have been classified according to whether they were carnal or spiritual, mortal or venial, formal or material, and according to their degree of gravity. The cardinal virtues in theology are prudence, justice, temperance, fortitude. The theological virtues are faith, hope and charity. Charity or love is the principle of sanctity, just as pride is the principle of sin. The seven deadly sins are: pride, lust, envy, gluttony, anger, and sloth.

What distinction is to be made between sin and vice? By vice is meant wicked or evil conduct. The word has the connotation that a particular moral failing can be observed within a social group. Sin, on the other hand, refers to our relations with God. Treachery and deceit, for example, can be regarded as vices from a social point of view, but as sins from a theological point of view. Again, malice is a desire to harm others. No society can tolerate such a vice for long. But malice is also a sin, for it is not in accord with the practice of brotherly love of our neighbour which God has enjoined us to observe.

St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas are in agreement that good works as well as grace are necessary for salvation.

Sin, in the strictly theological sense, should not be confused with a "sense of sin," which is a much more modern

concept.

Catholic theologians have always made a distinction between eternal punishment of the damned in Hell and the expiatory punishments of the repentant in Purgatory. In other words, punishment can be remedial as well as retributive. Indeed, punishment may be for the good of those who are punished, but it can also be for the "amendment" of others.

Purgatory, according to Roman Catholic teachings, is a state or place of temporal punishment where those who have died in the grace of God are expiating their sins by suffering until such time as they are admitted to the Beatific Vision, that is, the Divine Being in Heaven, who is the final destiny of the redeemed.

From her early beginnings the Roman Catholic Church has insisted on the necessity of prayer for the dead. It has encouraged officially the offering of Masses, indulgences and public as well as private prayers, and works of devotion on behalf of the souls in Purgatory.

God provided in the Sacraments instruments of healing grace which would remove our sins, hereditary and acquired. In the early centuries of the Christian era, absolution was withheld until the completion of the Penance. Confession and penance ("satisfacciun") were followed by absolution. In today's "private penance," confession and absolution are followed by a light formal penance. The term "penance" comes, of course, from the Latin "poena" meaning punishment. In

those early Christian centuries, then, it was held that the sinner should to some extent atone for his transgressions during his life-time. Great importance seems to have been attached to the "satisfacciun" or the amends made by the sinner.

Feudal notions combined with the penitential system had contributed in the eighth and ninth Century to produce a somewhat external view of sin. For each sin due satisfaction was to be paid in a measurable quantity of penance. As a result of the teachings of St. Anselm and the Victorines a more personal view of sin reappeared, however.

The practice of asceticism also played a role in favouring beliefs such as that of the "satisfacciun." Did not the ascete endeavour to subdue or eradicate his passions and control his will?

The Penance consisted usually of fasts, continence, pilgrimages, floggings, and imprisonment. For practical reasons, a system of commutations eventually replaced the full penances of the early centuries. A Penance of years or a long and arduous pilgrimage was replaced by a sum of money given by the sinner or he might be made to repeat parts of the Psalter in a position of extreme discomfort. The practice of indulgences was to evolve later from this system of commutation.

Catholics today would, no doubt, regard the Eucharist as the principal sacrament. But to non-catholics the Middle

Ages appear often as a period when the principal sacrament was the sacrament of penance. The Christian appears like an invalid, whose state of health is ever dependent on the services of the Church.

Several definitions of sin have been suggested in the course of this chapter. That of the *Privatio Boni*,¹ which implies that sin is lack of perfection, that somewhere there is a privation of Infinite Being and insufficient power and knowledge. Another definition would stress the importance of the Relationship of Law or the Bond of Love between God and man. In the experience of God's People, some aspects of sin are: idolatry, lack of mercy, injustice, breach of the natural law, disbelief in Christ, lack of will, lack of responsibility.

The term Original Sin was examined--here the definition of the word sin might be "the purposeful disobedience of a creature to the known will of God." Sin then can be the breaking of a religious law or moral principle, through a wilful act.

The sin of pride appears to be the ultimate source or origin of sin, just as the virtue of charity or love is the principle of sanctity.

There are many possible definitions of sin. To the writer, a more general definition would seem useful therefore.

¹F.L. Cross, The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church, p. 1260. St. Augustine opposed to the Manichean doctrine the Platonic view that sin was in essence privative (*Privatio Boni*).

the aim of the saint is undoubtedly union with God. Sin, then, must be a movement in the opposite direction--a movement away from God. In other words, where there is sin, there is the absence of perfect harmony with God.

The main theme of the Espurgatoire de Seint Patriz in the following chapter is the theme of sin. The variations on that theme include--the results of sin, the avoidance of sin, the rejection of sin.

CHAPTER III

THE PURGATOIRE DE SEINT PATRIZ

Folklore, legend and the miraculous are strangely interwoven with history in the various lives of Saint Patrick. Patrick was born about 389 A.D. and died in 461 A.D. Several countries have claimed to be his country of origin.

The sources which scholars have used to establish his identity are three-fold. (1) The Confession, consisting of twenty-five short chapters written in Latin. The authenticity of this document is usually accepted. (2) The Letter to Coroticus--an appeal to the latter, a robber baron and his soldiers, some of whom were Christians, to put an end to their crimes and to return certain baptized women, who had been captured in a raid in Northern Ireland. (3) The Lorica--an Irish hymn or verbal charm invoking the protection of God against the dark forces of evil. There are two ancient biographies, one by Bishop Tirechan, probably around 670 A.D., and the other is Muirchu's Life of St. Patrick.

Patrick seems to have been captured as a young man by pirates, and was sold as a slave in Ireland. He spent about seven years in Ireland, tending his master's sheep. He prayed and meditated in the woods and on the hill-sides. Then one day, he heard a voice bidding him return home. A ship

was waiting for him at the coast, if he hastened. Patrick proceeded to search for the ship and found one. He may have studied with the well-known Martin of Tours in Gaul. At the age of thirty, he had a vision, in which he was called upon to preach the Gospel in Ireland. The Irish were at this time pagans, Sun and Fire Worshipers. Their religion was full of superstition and magic, their Druid priests all-powerful. But Patrick had had an opportunity to observe the Irish during his long period of captivity. He had noticed their clannishness. His policy seems to have been to speak to the chieftains first. When the chieftain of the clan had been converted, his followers would imitate his example. Also, he tried to incorporate their customs into Christianity--he did not destroy their idols or remove their stone pillars. Instead, sacred names or symbols of Christianity were inscribed upon them. Christian Churches, schools and monasteries soon appeared.

It is probable that the conflict between Druidism and Christianity lasted many centuries. Legend has it that the power of Patrick's opponents, the Druids, was so great that he was obliged, in spite of the sweetness of his character, to curse their fertile lands, which thereupon became dismal bogs, their rivers, so that they produced no more fish,¹ and

¹In Leslie Shane's "The Script of Jonathon Swift and Other Essays," (London, 1932) the author meets an old Irish fisherman who tells him about the legends of the lake, Lough Derg, the site of St. Patrick's Purgatory "in a soft and

their very kettles, so that no amount of fire could make them boil.

According to another myth, St. Patrick was successful in banning the snakes from Ireland.¹ Indeed, in the Middle Ages, there were three legends, which made a deep impression upon the minds of men: the Story of the Wandering Jew, the Story of Prester John, and the legend of St. Patrick's Purgatory. The latter was known everywhere in Europe after the Anglo-Norman invasion of Ireland in the Twelfth Century.

The operative word in the title of Marie de France's work, St. Patrick's Purgatory is Purgatory. This particular Purgatory is on Station Island in Lough Dearg in Donegal.

In Marie de France's version of St. Patrick's Purgatory, the saint had a vision in which the Almighty promised a plenary indulgence to any mortal sinner who might fulfil certain stipulated conditions. These were that he should truly repent of his sins, confess them and celebrate High

sibilant English with a Celtic syntax." The author writes: "And running into the lake was the Derg River, through which St. Patrick had waded by stepping stones. On one occasion, he mistook a basking salmon for a safe stone and stepped on his back. As the fish slid from under him, the Saint uttered a curse which resulted in no salmon returning to the lake during the Christian Era."

¹On one occasion, the Saint had chained a monster serpent in Lough Dilveen, one of the seven lakes of the Gaultic Mountains, telling him to remain there until Monday. So every Monday morning the serpent calls out in Irish: "It's a long Monday, Patrick."

Communion. If his faith were sufficiently strong, he would then be allowed to enter a cavern, later to be known as St. Patrick's Purgatory, and be shown the tortures of the damned in Hell and the bliss of the redeemed in the terrestrial paradise. He would then return to earth.

Access to St. Patrick's Purgatory could only be authorised by the Archbishop of the diocese in which the sinner lived. At first, the Archbishop would attempt to dissuade the sinner from entering the Purgatory. However, if the sinner insisted that he make the descent to the cavern, the Archbishop would give him a letter, addressed to the Prior of the Abbey Church. The prior in his turn, would try to persuade the sinner not to proceed with his plan. If the sinner should still wish to enter Purgatory, he would be asked to spend fifteen days in prayer and fasting before his departure. A priest would sprinkle with Holy Water the sinner who had heard mass and celebrated Holy Communion. The sinner would then be accompanied to the gates of Purgatory by a procession of singing monks. The prior reminded the sinner once more that many who had entered the gates of Purgatory had not returned. Their faith had not been strong enough to sustain them.

In the Espurgatoire de Seint Patriz, a certain Irish knight, Owen by name, who lived during the reign of King Etienne, confessed his sins to the Archbishop of the diocese, where the Purgatory was situated. He was severely reproved

for his sins. Owen thereupon decided on a descent to St. Patrick's Purgatory.

The knight made his way along a subterranean passage, where there was almost complete obscurity. Soon, however, he could distinguish a pale light. He beheld a field in which a palace was situated. There he was welcomed by fifteen monks "res e tondu novelement," who were wearing white robes. The prior who spoke on behalf of the monks, encouraged Owen to proceed with his descent into Purgatory, but warned him that demons would do their utmost to enslave him. They would even offer to lead him back to the gates of Purgatory through which he had entered. If the knight accepted their offer, he would be lost, body and soul. He must refuse to listen to their promises, menaces and flattery. If he should experience the frightful sufferings, which they inflicted on their victims, he must invoke the name of Jesus. Then, all would be well. Having advised him thus, the monks departed.

Almost immediately, a great host of demons rushed in amid great noise and confusion. They were hideous creatures. They offered to lead him back to the gates of Purgatory; Owen ignored them. They then cast him into a fire, but he invoked the name of Jesus and was saved.

The demons then led Owen to a large field, where the groans and the cries of the tortured could be heard. Many lay face downwards. They were nailed to the ground and

appeared to be suffering great agony. The demons who went round whipping them, then attempted to make Owen share the fate of their victims, but in vain.

The evil spirits dragged Owen off to another field. There he saw sinners lying on their backs and others lying face downwards. Serpents coiled around their necks and their arms. Huge dragons were devouring them, toads were tearing out their hearts. The demons whipped their victims. The sinners were all nailed to the ground. The demons tried to apply the same form of torture to Owen, but he was saved when he invoked the name of Jesus.

In the third field the sinners were suffering great agony. Nails had been driven into their bodies, so that the bodies appeared covered with them. The demons went around whipping their victims as usual. A chilly icy wind blew. So great was the suffering of the victims that they could hardly complain.

The devils dragged Owen along to the fourth field, where the bodies of the sinners were exposed to hot, sulphurous flames. Some were suspended by their feet, their heads pointing towards the flames. Other wretched sinners were suspended by an arm, by the nose, eyes or ears, and other parts of the body. Molten metals were being poured upon them. Owen recognised some of his former companions among them. The demons, as usual, were striking hard. Owen was saved, however, in the usual manner. The demons could do him no injury.

And now the demons showed Owen a big wheel to which human beings were suspended. This instrument of torture was exposed to sulphurous flames as it revolved. The wheel could be made to revolve at a great speed. The demons seized him and tied him to the wheel, but soon he was freed by invoking the name of Jesus.

The demons dragged Owen to a large building where sinners were compelled to bathe in boiling liquids and molten metals. Some appeared to have only one foot in the boiling liquid, others had a knee covered by it, while others again were almost completely immersed in the liquids. The plans of the demons to seize Owen were again thwarted by Owen's prayer to Jesus.

Owen's persecutors now led the way to a mountain-top where a great assembly of naked people of various ages seemed to be gathered. They looked as if they expected death at any moment. A mighty gust of wind suddenly cast them all (demons and Owen included) into a cold, evil-smelling stream. Whenever the victims tried to reach the banks of the river, their persecutors would push them back with their iron hooks.

The demons then dragged Owen along towards the South. Soon they reached a place where flames appeared to rise from the ground. This was a pit or well, the demons explained--indeed, it was the Pit of Hell. Human beings, who appeared to have caught fire, were thrust out of this well, but fell in again, when the flames around their bodies died down. The

demons offered once more to escort Owen back to the gates of Purgatory. He ignored them again. They seized him and cast him into the pit of fire so quickly that he almost forgot to invoke the name of Jesus. When he did, the flames lifted him out of the well. He then beheld demons, upon whom he had as yet not set eyes. They informed Owen that the others had lied to him--this was not the Pit of Hell. They would show him the real pit.

The demons led the way to a deep evil-smelling river. Flames of sulphur and smoke floated above the water. A bridge joined the banks of the river, but this bridge was slippery, narrow, and it was high enough to cause extreme giddiness and discomfort to whoever might wish to cross it. The Irish knight went bravely forward. As he advanced, the bridge widened. He reached the other bank, to the dismay and disgust of the demons, who realised that Owen had not fallen into the Pit of Hell and that they could no longer claim him as their victim.

Owen, now freed of the demons, continued on his way. He then noticed a magnificent wall with a gate made of precious metals. The gate appeared to open before he reached it and as he approached, he could smell the sweetest scents, and see a bright, resplendent light beyond the gates. He was met by a procession of archbishops, archdeacons, bishops, abbots and monks, all wearing their insignia. When the singing had ceased, two Archbishops came forward to welcome him. And now he was

shown this beautiful country, with its very bright, resplendent light. He could smell the fragrance of fruit, flowers, plants and trees. Everywhere, groups of the blessed (for this was a terrestrial Paradise) could be seen in happy conversation, their coloured apparel adding to the beauty of the scene.

Owen was next led to the top of a mountain, where he was shown the portals of the Celestial Paradise. The sky was of a golden hue. Celestial rays fell upon the heads of all those present, including Owen. The Archbishop explained that the blessed were all nourished there, once a day for one hour. The blessed in the Celestial Paradise were nourished thus everlastingly, however.

Owen later rejoined the fifteen monks, whom he had met on his way to Purgatory. They rejoiced at seeing him again, but told him to hasten, for it was already daylight in the world above and the prior of the abbey church would soon unlock the gate. Owen remained at the abbey for fifteen more days in order to fast and to pray. Having consigned his adventures to writing, he later left for Jerusalem as a crusader and eventually returned to King Etienne's court.

The story of Owen's adventures does not conclude Marie's version of the Espurgatoire de Seint Patriz. While Owen was at King Etienne's court, a certain Gervais, an abbot of Louth (Luda), of the Cistercian Order, obtained permission from the King to build an abbey in Ireland. A monk, Gilbert,

was entrusted with the supervision of this work. When Gilbert pointed out that he knew no Irish, King Etienne provided him with an interpreter--the Irish knight Owen. The knight Owen and Gilbert were together for two and a half years. On one occasion, during that period, Owen told Gilbert and his monks about his adventures in St. Patrick's Purgatory. Later, in England, Gilbert happened to be relating Owen's adventures to an audience of monks, when one of them questioned the reality of the apparitions. Perhaps, this member suggested, what Owen had seen had been a vision. How could these beings be corporeal? With a view to dispelling such doubts, Gilbert told the story about the monk in his own Order, who led such a saintly life that the demons abducted him. When the monk returned after three days and three nights, it was evident that he had been ill-treated, for on his body were terrible gashes and wounds which never healed. This was the work of evil spirits. Lucien Foulet¹ points out that the object of this story was to show how Gilbert himself saw the result of the demons' work--that is, the gashes and wounds. Seeing is believing. Perhaps Gilbert's audience, if they believed that he had seen the monk's gashes and wounds, would also believe that Owen had actually seen demons and tortured souls in

¹Lucien Foulet, "Marie de France et la légende du Purgatoire de Saint Patrice," Romanische Forschungen, XXII, (1908), p. 610.

corporeal form.^{1,2} Some of these tortured souls had even been recognised by Owen.

Then Marie de France mentions two abbots, who claimed they knew several men, who had entered the Purgatory but never returned. Archbishop Florentianus testified that he too, knew certain sinners who had not returned, and a few who had returned, but appeared ill and exhausted as a result of their adventures in Purgatory. They had surely atoned for their sins.

Next the Archbishop told the story about the hermit, to whom naked women had appeared. These were, of course, demons. (We are reminded here of the beautiful fellah girl who tempted St. Anthony in the desert. This girl was none other than the Devil.) A Chaplain intervened and asked if he might relate a story. When this request was granted by the Archbishop, the Chaplain told the story about the demons who stole food from a peasant, who had sworn on oath, that he had no bread to give two clerks. In fact, his larder was well-stocked. This is followed by the story of the priest, who was overcome by the beauty of the young girl whom he had adopted. Quite aware of the fact, however, that the demons

^{1,2}Referring to St. Paul's cataclysmic experience on the road to Damascus, Kent in The Works and the Teachings of the Apostles, p. 76, states: "Greek and Norman, as well as Jew, then firmly believed that the spirit of the departed could become visible to the human eye and exert a powerful influence in the affairs of men."

Marie de France in her theological introduction also mentions St. Gregory's reference to visions of corporeal souls (line 180).

were trying to lead him astray, this priest decided at the last moment not to seduce the young girl. Like Origen, he may have been impressed by the words of Jesus in Matthew 19, 12, for he made himself a eunuch "for the Kingdom of Heaven's sake."

The themes of saintliness and of sin are interwoven with consummate skill in the Espurgatoire de Saint Patriz.

The sections of the narratives, which describe the life of St. Patrick, the terrestrial Paradise and the Celestial Paradise, deal with the theme of saintliness.

In the Espurgatoire, the usual characteristics of saintliness are attributed to St. Patrick (190-382). "Mult fu religius e ber." The refusal of the Irish to be converted to Christianity is a cause of great sorrow to the saint.

Nuit et jour fu en oraisuns,
En vieilles, en afflicciuns,
En jeunes e en tristur,
Pur requerre nostre seignur,
Del pueple, qu'on eust merci.

The saint loves his fellow-men. He prays and fasts and indulges in acts of self-abasement. God appears to him in a Vision, gives him a Bible and staff and shows him the Cave of the Purgatory.

Saint Patriz appears to be conscientious. He sees to it that those who return from Purgatory consign their adventures to writing.

The other sections of l'Espurgatoire which handle the theme of saintliness are to be found in lines 1520-1870.

In the terrestrial Paradise the light is brighter than the light of the sun shining on our earth. A wonderful fragrance emanates from fruit, flowers, plants and trees.

When Owen first reaches the terrestrial Paradise, he notices a magnificent wall in front of him and then a door made of precious metals:

Les merveilles qui del mur sunt
Ne purreit nuls cunter ne dire
Ne l'ovraigne ne la matire!
Une porte a el mur veüe,
Bien l'a de loinz aparceüe.
(De) preciūs metals fu faite
E gloriusement purtraite.

The saints wear the same apparel as on earth, displaying the insignia of their rank or office. Their clothes are colourful. Some of the saints are even crowned like kings.

In the French text of Manuscript C. of Cambridge University, EE.6.77,¹ (probably second half of the 13th Century), the anonymous author's descriptions of the coloured apparel, precious stones and glittering gold are characterized by a somewhat richer ornamentation. However, Marie's version provides us with a similar description.

While it is true that Marie is here describing a terrestrial and not a celestial paradise, it would seem strange that the bliss of even a terrestrial paradise of sinless or almost sinless beings should be described at all, in terms of material wealth. Are not many of the objects

¹See "Étude sur le Purgatoire de Saint Patrice" (Amsterdam, Paris, 1927), C.M. Van der Zanden, lines 1350-1360, also 1195-1200.

described--rich apparel, precious stones, insignia of rank--just what the saintly souls shunned, to some extent, during their life on earth, so that their souls should be saved in the life to come? It is difficult not to see in Marie's description of the terrestrial paradise an allegorical treatment of something spiritual. Only thus can the bliss of heaven be revealed to us mortals! Only thus can saintliness be represented.

In l'Espurgatoire, there is little information about the Celestial Paradise. Owen was shown only the portals of the Celestial Paradise. It would seem that on the occasion of his visit to the terrestrial paradise, the Ineffable Presence made itself felt for one hour. The heads of all those present were, as it were, bathed in the rays of the sun. The grace of the Lord streamed down upon the heads of all those who were present. Owen felt such bliss, that he did not know whether he were alive or dead.

This section dealing with terrestrial paradise and celestial paradise would seem to continue the earlier section, describing the life of St. Patrick in that the theme is saintliness--the saint on earth and the saint in the terrestrial paradise. Just as St. Patrick desires union with God, so do the blessed in terrestrial paradise long for a complete union with God.

The section on St. Patrick introduces, at an early stage in the poem, the element of the miraculous. If a

miracle is, by definition, an action or event due to an act of God, then clearly the existence of Saint Patrick's Purgatory is a miracle. But other miracles follow when Owen visits the Purgatory. When he is in danger, he has only to invoke the name of Jesus to be saved.

Saintliness, although it is one of the themes of the Espurgatoire de Seint Patriz is not the most important theme in this narrative poem. Had the Espurgatoire been a story mainly about Saints, then it would have ended after Owen's adventures or possibly with Owen in the presence of a Beatific Vision, i.e. the vision of a Divine Being in heaven which, according to Christian theology, is the final destiny of the redeemed. But the fact remains that the saints in the terrestrial paradise themselves behold only the portals of the Celestial Paradise and the Celestial rays fall upon the heads of those in the terrestrial paradise for one hour only every day. Owen cannot claim to have experienced the Beatific Vision.

The poem deals mainly with the theme of sin--Owen, the sinner, for instance, or again, sinners in Purgatory and the confirmed sinners in Hell.

The story of Owen's adventures is followed by others where the element of the miraculous or the supernatural is present--for example, the story of the monk whose wounds would not heal after he had been abducted and ill-treated by demons, or the story of the hermit, whom the devils, in the guise of

naked women, tried to seduce. However, the most common theme--the one which is constantly recurring, is that of sin, the opportunity to sin, the temptations of sin, the fight against sin, and its final rejection.

In the case of Owen, too, in Purgatory the theme is about the rejection of temptation, the rejection of sin.

Owen was guilty of mortal sin. "Mult aveit ovre cuntre Deu en grant cruelté." (Line 513-514.) Owen's sin is not a specific sin--indeed the exact nature of the sins of the sufferers in Purgatory is never indicated. (The only occasion on which a specific sin is mentioned is when the old Irishman confesses to having committed five murders and injured several people, then states that he did not know this was a mortal sin!)

Owen has made up his mind to atone for his sins by descending into Saint Patrick's Purgatory. He shows determination, courage and strength of will.

De feie de bone esperance,
E de justice e de creance
Per icestes vertuz sanz faille
Veintra le diable en bataille.

(Lines 657-660)

The following passage which also lists some of Owen's virtues shows a certain similarity with St. Paul's Epistles to the Ephesians, Chapter VI.¹

¹"Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

Stand, therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breast-plate of righteousness--
Above all, taking the shield of faith, and the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God." (Epistle of St. Paul to the Ephesians, Chapter VI.)

Halberc de justice out vestu
Per quei le cors out defendu
De l'engin de ses enemis
E l'escu de fiance out pris;
Healme out fait de ferme creance
L'autre armeüre, d'esperance -
Espee a del seint esprit.

(Lines 799-805)

Owen's adventures show how sin can be expiated. He is then in a position to join temporarily the Saints in the Terrestrial Paradise.

Lucien Foulet is of the opinion that Marie de France's original text, which she translated from the Latin of Henri de Saltrey into French, contained the story about the Irishman, who had committed several murders, the theological introduction, the story of Owen, the testimony of Gilbert de Louth (Luda) and the epilogue of Henry of Saltrey. The original also contained (a) the testimony of Archbishop Florentianus and the story about the first hermit (including that about the priest and the young girl) and (b) the second hermit's story about the demon and the victuals. Foulet holds that this selection, making up the original text, shows that Marie de France's main interest was in the relation of stories "Ce n'est pas la théologie qui l'a attirée à l'oeuvre; ce qu'elle a vu dans son traité, c'est une très intéressante histoire."¹

Certainly, these stories are entertaining. In the story of Owen's adventures the author leads us breathlessly from one field of torture to the next. Wherever the demons

¹Foulet, op. cit.

are to be found there is noise and confusion. No one could disagree with M. Lucien Foulet, when he claims that Marie was interested in the telling of tales. Whether she was mainly interested ('avant tout') in this, is another matter.

What then is the Espurgatoire about? It is about the future life. To avoid sin in this world and to seek salvation in the next was the chief concern of man in the Middle Ages. Man did not believe in the fixedness of Nature's laws, hence his great interest in miracles and wonders of all kinds.

In a previous chapter, it has been shown that sin and a belief in God are intimately connected. If theology is defined as the study of God and the relations between God and the Universe, then the Espurgatoire de Seint Patriz is a narrative poem, which treats of theological problems.

The aim of the Espurgatoire is to edify (in Latin--to build--aedificare) that is, to instruct or improve morally or spiritually. (See lines 17-20.¹ Also lines 26-30, Prologue).²

Lines 31-188 form the theological introduction.

¹Ja seit iço que jo desir
De faire à grant profit venir
Plusurs genz e les amender
E servir Deu plus e duter.

²Pur ço que j'en ai entendu
Ai jò vers Deu greignur amur
De Deu servir mun creatur
Pur quei je voldrai a ovrir
Ceste escripture e descuvrir.

Reference must first be made, however, to St. Gregory, who wrote about the future life in his Dialogues, Book IV. Marie appears to be familiar with some of his writings.

St. Gregory analyses carefully his own experiences and spiritual states. He is very conscious of the effects of Original Sin and understands the value of weakness and temptation for spiritual progress.

The term "compunccion" (line 41, Marie de France's Espurgatoire) referred in Christian vocabulary to a pain of the spirit. We suffer from the conflict arising, on the one hand, from the existence of sin and the tendency to sin, and, on the other hand, from the existence of our desire for God and even our possession of God. The world dulls our senses, but God can make His Presence felt. This action of God, "compunccion" is exerted through tribulation, suffering, sin and temptation. God gives the demon permission to tempt man because of the benefits to man resulting from this temptation. The latter makes us aware of our weaknesses and leads to the purification of our intentions. It is a cure for pride: God is prepared to incur the risk involved, for temptation, and even sin, are less grave than pride.

The Christian life is conceived of as a life of detachment from a world of sin and an intense desire for God. Man's egoism must be checked, controlled and put to rout. St. Gregory recalls the "weight" that belongs to a changing, mortal world, the "gravity" which ties us down to earth (hence our

"grave sins"). Gravity is a sign of corruption. By "inquietudo" he means lack of tranquillity or peace.

In the theological introduction to the Espurgatoire, Marie refers twice to St. Gregory and once to St. Augustine. She states that there is much in the writings of St. Gregory to terrify sinners and encourage the pious to further piety. When death occurs, angels are present, who guide the souls of the righteous to their resting-places, but devils subject those of the wicked to various forms of torture. It is granted to some souls, before they separate from the body, to see what will befall them later. These souls see visions, or hear the voice of their conscience or are the object of important revelations. Then they return among the living, where they tell their story. These stories concern the suffering of sinners and the happiness of the blessed and are about material objects or bodies--rivers, flames, bridges, black or white men. They describe the manner in which tormented souls are dragged about, beaten or hanged. Many have tried to discover how the soul separates from the body, where it goes, what it finds, but perhaps there are more grounds for fearing than for asking questions, for all this is hidden in mystery. We only know that the separation of body and soul takes place. However, to the good man, no evil can happen. His will be life everlasting.

According to St. Augustine, the souls of confirmed sinners and the souls of the righteous will be assigned

different places according to whether they are to rest in peace or suffer torments. Some souls have been separated for some time from the bodies they inhabited and have returned among the living at God's request. Thus a mortal has been known to state that he saw things of the spirit in a material form.

When Owen is in the "Paradis Terrestre" the Archbishops approach him in order to explain everything:

Des choses que veü avez
Nous dirons la segnefiance.

There is a reference to Adam's sin or the Fall.

Aneire perdit la clarté
Del ciel par sa maleurté.

(Lines 1707-1708)

We are all sinners then, the Archbishops tell Owen, but we had faith in Christ, we were baptized and reached the Terrestrial Paradise by the grace of God. We had to pass through Purgatory, as you did, to expiate our sins. We were punished, some more than others, according to the gravity of the sin committed. All those who suffer in Purgatory with the exception of those in the "Puz d'enfer" will rejoin their friends in the Terrestrial Paradise. No one knows, however, how long he will remain in Purgatory, before being granted access to the Terrestrial Paradise.¹ In the same way, no one knows how long we shall remain in Terrestrial Paradise before

¹Cf Pascal, "La peine du purgatoire la plus grande est l'incertitude du jugement" (Le Deus Absconditus). Pensée 767. Sixième chapitre. La Morale Chrétienne. Ed. Guersant, 1957.

we are allowed entry into the Celestial Paradise. The soul longs for eternity in Heaven (or union with God). The notion of eternity, as opposed to time, is closely connected to that of the salvation of the soul.

The Espurgatoire is to some extent a propagandist piece of literature, for Henri de Saltrey was working for the propagation of certain ideas, doctrines and practices, which would benefit the Cistercian Order, in particular, and the Roman Catholic Church in general. When asked by King Etienne to accompany Gilbert to Ireland, as an interpreter, Owen replied that he would be very happy to serve the Cistercians, who, he had noticed, enjoyed greater glory in the other world than other people. Secondly, the fifteen monks described as "divine messengers" (line 626) are, undoubtedly, Cistercians.

Res e tundu novellement
Blanz vestemenz orent vestuz.

In the Espurgatoire, these monks give Owen their blessing and some useful advice before his departure to expiate his sins. On his return they welcome him. Theirs is an important role in the story of Owen's adventures.

C.M. van der Zanden¹ has pointed out that such propaganda is unnecessary, when there is no corruption or inefficiency in an Order. It would seem that towards the end of the Twelfth Century, the Cistercian Order had acquired much wealth and land. Unfortunately, hypocrisy, avarice and cupidity

¹C.M. van der Zanden, Le Purgatoire de Saint Patriz (Étude sur le Purgatoire de Saint Patriz), Paris: Amsterdam, 1927, p. 71.

had also increased. Giraldus Cambrensis² (Opera. Vol. IV, p. XIV) writes:

Of the great monastic bodies then established in every corner of it (England) by far the most numerous, influential and important were the Benedictines: next to them were the Cluniacs and last of all, though at that time (end of Twelfth Century) perhaps the most active and unscrupulous, were the Cistercians.

In Marie de France's version, however, the propagandist aspect is only a small part of the whole, only one small facet of the gem. The general aim is as already stated, to build (aedificare) to instruct and improve morally and spiritually. The Cistercians receive high praise. On the other hand, "li cloistrier" are urged to think more often of "les peines enfernals"--only thus can they understand that they have little reason for complaining about their hard life. Marie's Prologue makes it quite clear that she is writing for "la simple gent" and the Epilogue also informs us that the whole Espurgatoire is for "laie gent et cuvenable."

An important section in the Homily is from line 1433-1458. In this passage, it is urged that we pray for the dead, that masses be said for them, that we should give alms and that we perform works of devotion. This will help the sinners in Purgatory expiate their sins. The ideas of this Twelfth Century man (Henri de Saltrey), if they were his, were later

¹Giraldus Cambrensis Opera, Ed. J. Brewer. Gt. Britain Public Record Office Publications. Published by the authority of the lords commissioners of Her Majesty's Treasury, under the direction of the master of the rolls. (London: Longman & Co. 1861-91). Rerum Britannicorum medii aevi scriptores or Chronicles and Memorials of Gt. Britain and Ireland during the Middle Ages (No. 21).

to evolve into the Dogma of the Purification of Sinners and the Dogma of the Efficiency of Prayers for the Dead (laid down at the sixth session of the Council of Trent, 1547).

It must be remembered that the service of commemoration of the dead is offered not only for the dead, but also for sinners. According to Catholic Doctrine, it is only a matter of time before the living enter the state of Purgatory. Death is but a thing delayed. The mass for the Dead, then, is one more instance of the fact that the Mass has its roots in Fellowship--in union with Christ, the Son of God, and our fellow man.

In 1'Espurgatoire de Seint Patriz, there appear to be two methods of dealing with sin or the results of sin:

1. Voluntary action such as Owen's. He wishes to expiate his sins now, to have fewer to expiate after death (no matter what the Archbishops and priors say). The origins of this method of dealing with sin are to be found in asceticism.

2. The intervention of others. Prayers, masses, alms, good works on earth may alleviate the suffering of the souls in Purgatory. There are two references in the Espurgatoire to this method of combating sin. One is in the Homily (lines 1400-1484), the other is in Archbishop's speech (lines 1759-1764).

Marie de France writes in the first line to the Prologue: "Al nun de Deu, qui od nus seit," and in the last two lines to the Epilogue: "Or preium Dieu que par sa grace De nos pechiez mundes nus face." The tone of the whole narrative poem is set from the first line and Marie again wishes to remind us of her intentions in the last two lines of the Epilogue. Her intentions or aims are, of course, to edify ("amender la simple gent"), and the whole poem is intended for "laie gent et cuvenables."

From the beginning, it is clear that Marie's is a religious attitude, and that she is interested in theological problems. Indeed, in the course of the Espurgatoire, she handles problems concerning the Holy Orders (the monks are admonished in the Homily for not thinking enough of "les peines infernals" and for complaining about their hard life), problems connected to Baptism (Are not the saints in the Terrestrial Paradise there partly because they were baptised?), and problems related to Penance--confession, "satisfacciun" and absolution (in that order). In other words, Marie has written about three out of the seven Roman Catholic Sacraments--Holy Orders, Baptism, and Penance. Marie's introduction is theological and she appears to be acquainted with the works of St. Gregory and St. Augustine. The following theological concepts are discussed: Purgatory, Terrestrial Paradise, Eternity (in Purgatory and Terrestrial Paradise), the Fall and Grace. There is a reference to the Holy Ghost. Marie's

interest in theology is manifest in the theological introduction and the Archbishop's speech in Terrestrial Paradise, as it is in the Homily and in the biblical language to be found in lines 799-805.

The tone of the poem is serious as one might expect in a narrative of this kind. The poem is considered to be a faithful reproduction of the original and this would to some extent account for the serious tone. But here and there, Marie's personality seems to come through the translation, and the impression left on such occasions is also one of tenseness and seriousness. For example, Marie relates the story of the old Irishman who committed five murders and wounded several people without knowing this was a mortal sin. The touch of humour in this episode seems to have escaped Marie--she appears to relate this episode without the flicker of a smile. Foulet writes: "L'esprit est absent des récits de Marie. Elle conte toujours avec gravité et presque avec candeur."¹ The writer of this thesis believes that M. Foulet's statement is true of the Espurgatoire. If other versions of the Espurgatoire are compared with Marie's, the difference can be observed. For example, the Cambridge Manuscript Ee.6.11 (C) of the Espurgatoire--probably a thirteenth Century document, has the following touches of humour:

(a) St. Patrick falls asleep in front of the altar

¹Foulet, op. cit., p. 626.

(then he has his Vision in a dream).

(b) The description of the sinners, suffering in the third field, who are "cloufichies":

En tut le mund n'ad aiguillette
Ja ne seit ele si greslette
Ke surmettre le puissez
Si akun clou ne tucheisez.

(Lines 707-712)

There is a lightness of touch and a certain amount of charm in this description (partly because of the diminutives, no doubt!).

Marie's version reads:-

E jurent adenz en envers,
Fichiez en terre od clous de fers.
Ardanz, des chies des i qu'as piez,
Par tuz les membres sunt fichiez
Si espes que nuls n'i mettreit
Sin dei qu'a clou n'i tuchereit.

(Lines 1039-1044)

This is a simple and straightforward description.

Marie was in sympathy with the spirit of the Latin original. She wished to show her respect for the original version of the monk H., hence the faithful reproduction. E. Curtius has said: "Much of what we call Christian is purely and simply monastic."¹ According to Jean LeClercq, "More than any other Christians and men of letters, the monks feel a constant urge to transcend belles-lettres in order to safeguard the primacy of the spiritual."²

¹E. Curtius, European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages (New York: Trans. Willard R. Trask, 1953), p. 515.

²Jean LeClercq, The Love of Learning and the Desire for God, A Mentor Omega Book, New American Library, 1962, p. 255.

Sometimes what you say is more important than how you say it. The message is what matters. Some writers, it is true, like St. Bernard, could combine literary genius with holiness, but there must have been many like Henri de Saltrey, who were not literary geniuses, but who, nevertheless, wrote accounts which impressed their contemporaries. Marie seems to have felt that Henri's attitude should be respected.

Lucien Foulet believes that Marie did not think of the Espurgatoire as (a) a story of an adventure, followed by (b) a Theological Justification. "Elle n'en a nullement soupçonné le caractère composite."¹ Marie, according to Foulet, thought the entire work the production of Henri de Saltrey. She did not know that some of the stories towards the end of the poem had been added by various "copistes" in the Latin versions.

If Marie did look upon the work as a whole and not as a somewhat loosely connected selection of narratives, then clearly she must have thought that the work still had some kind of unity. The theme, which gives Marie's Espurgatoire de Saint Patriz unity is, of course, the theme of sin. The theme of saintliness is a secondary one, otherwise the Espurgatoire might have ended with a Beatific Vision after Owen's adventures, whereas only the portals of Celestial Paradise are revealed to Owen and the saints of Terrestrial

¹Foulet, op. cit., p. 623.

Paradise.

Marie may have thought that the original wished to show how Owen did, in point of fact, lead a quiet, sinless existence after his return from Purgatory until his death. The story of the first hermit involves temptation and the possibility of sin (the appearance of demons as naked women). The second hermit's story of "le vilein qui se parjura," also treats of the theme of sin. Finally, the story of the Priest and the young girl certainly has temptation and sin as its main theme. The demons' plans are always thwarted, however.

The Espurgatoire thus reveals a constant preoccupation with sin and the results of sin. Those sins are not usually specific. It is to Marie's Fables that we must turn to discover more about specific sins.

CHAPTER IV

THE FABLES

The aim of this chapter is, first, to attempt to provide a classification of Marie de France's Fables, and secondly, to give a fairly detailed description of those fables, where certain specific sins are the main theme.

The systematic arrangement of fables into classes and groups leaves much to be desired, if only because a single text may have claims to be included under more than one heading. However, the attempt to classify the Fables, will, it is hoped, reveal not only Marie de France's wide range of interests, but also the uniqueness of her contribution to the genre.

The practice of such virtues as loyalty, resignation, moderation and industry, is usually in the interest of the community. A great number of fabulists have, therefore, in the past, given their attention to the social virtues, and the fable proved to be an instrument fully capable of teaching a lesson in prudence or worldly wisdom.

Most fables are about animals. Some have gods as their protagonists, others men, while men and gods appear together on occasion. Only a few are concerned with the

natural elements (i.e. the sun, the wind, the sea or the river), or with plants. Many are merely anecdotes with a moral somewhat loosely attached.

Marie de France's Fables are mainly concerned with animals or with men. She has also written fables of the "anecdote" variety. Few gods or goddesses appear, however, in her Fables. In Fable XXXI, De pavone et Junone, the goddess Juno appears to converse with the peacock, who complains about having no voice. There are also references to "la sepende" and "la deuesse" in Fable XCVI, De lepore et cervo, and to "sepende" in Fable LXXIV, De scarabaeo.

It is difficult to believe, however, that Marie's intention, when writing the Fables, was to offer a slight improving story, after the fashion of an Aesop's fable. "The Middle Ages were nothing if not moral and didactic."¹ There were, for example, the Bestiaries--a medieval collection of fables, allegories, and stories. These stories about animals were sometimes fanciful, at other times moralistic. "Lapidaries," "volucraries" and "Herbaries" dealt with the moral qualities of precious stones, birds, and herbs. The exempla were short tales of an edifying character, used to illustrate the text of a medieval sermon. The stories might be taken from the Classics, the Bible, local history, or folk-lore.

The moral concern in Marie's work cannot, of course,

¹Charles Homer Haskins, The Renaissance of the Twelfth Century (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1927), p. 109.

be summarized, but the reader feels it is there, when he examines the Fables. But the medieval ethic, as L.A. Cormican¹ has shown, was a religious one. The principle that "no man liveth to himself or dieth to himself" implied the practice of brotherly love towards neighbours, but it also implied the medieval doctrine of the power of concupiscence over man (the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, the pride of life), because of Adam's sin.

In Chapter II, reference was made to the four Cardinal Virtues--justice, prudence, temperance or moderation, and fortitude. The first classification that this writer proposes, then, is a classification, according to the themes of--Justice, Prudence, Temperance (Moderation), and Fortitude.

The theme of justice is dramatically illustrated and developed in several fables. Miss E.A. Francis affirms that a fair number of the fables are concerned with social justice, as it was understood, no doubt, in Henry II's Court in England in the Twelfth Century. In these fables, problems of good and evil, of wisdom and folly, are part of the feudal picture. The nature of the feudal bond is discussed. The liege lord must uphold what is right, just, and lawful, the selection of liege lords must be prudently carried out, vassals, on the other hand, must respect and obey a good liege lord. In the Appendix to her article "Marie de France et son Temps"

¹L.A. Cormican, "The Medieval Idiom in Shakespeare," Scrutiny, Vol. XVII, Pt. IV (1951).

(Romania, LXXII, pp. 78-99), Miss Francis gives the "morals" of these fables¹ (pp. 97-99, Warnke Edition). This writer has added a further list of fables² in the Appendix to his thesis where the morals, which also refer to contemporary Twelfth Century problems, can be examined. It would seem that, in addition to Miss Francis' fourteen fables, ten more could be added, which show concern with social justice at Henry II's court. Marie seems to have added something peculiarly her own to the "morals" of these fables, although she claims to have translated the original work faithfully (Prologue lines 27-28). There are twenty-four fables in this category, at least. This would, in the writer's opinion, be a conservative estimate. There might be as many as thirty fables altogether in this group. Even so, Marie de France wrote one hundred and two fables, plus a prologue and an epilogue.

The next theme to be considered is that of prudence. The point has already been made that the great majority of fables are counsels of prudence or of worldly wisdom. The writer wishes, however, to include in this category only those fables, where the "morals" themselves purport to give counsels of prudence. Such are Fable VI, De sole nubente (where it is

¹Miss Francis gives the "morals" of the following Fables:- II, IV, VIII, XV, XIX, XXXIV, XXVIII, XLVII, XLIX, LXII, LXIII, LXXVIII, LXXX, LXXXIV.

²Fables (Warnke Edition):- VI, VII, XVIII, XX, XXIII, XXVII, XXIX, XXXVI, XLVI, LVI.

suggested that we do nothing to strengthen the position of wicked liege-lords), in Fable VIII, De cane parturiente, where it is recommended that prudence should enter into our relations with the "felun hume," in Fable LXXXIX, De lupo et capra, where sensible people are told to be on their guard, for "li felun e li desleial dunent tuz jurs conseil de mal." In Fable XX, De fure et cane, "chescuns frans huem" is told not to accept rewards or listen to the flattery or the promises of those who attempt to undermine his allegiance to a liege-lord. In Fable CI, De catto infulato, it is suggested that

nuls ne se deit metre en justise
de celui ki mal li vult querre.

Moderation or temperance, is also held up to us as a virtue in Fable LXXXVIII, De lupo et vulpe, where "li bons sire" settles differences in court, calmly and reasonably. There is no mention of fortitude in any fable, although in Fable IV, De cane et ove, the poor sheep, who is falsely accused of not paying back an alleged debt ("le pain presté"), and who has therefore to be fleeced of his wool, shows considerable fortitude. The moral of this fable refers to the poor, who are ill-treated by the rich.

The themes of moderation and fortitude are not, however, developed as fully as those of justice and prudence.

A second classification of the Fables could be made according to religious content. In Fable XXII, De leporibus et ranis, the hares, bewailing the insecurity and fear in which they live "s'en vuelent fors eissir." As they reach a

pond, some frogs scuttle into the water. The hares realize that there are creatures even more tormented than they and so they return to their burrows. The moral of this fable states:-

Ja mes regne ne troverunt
n'en cele terre ne vendrunt
que tut i seient senz pour
u senz travail u senz dolur.

In Fable XXV, De vidua, the widow of Ephesus theme, which occurs so often in the world's literature, appears once more. However, Marie's moral seems to have religious overtones. Marie does not, as so many fabulists have done, write that the widow lost her former good name as a result of her conduct. She writes:-

Par iceste signefiance
poum entendre quel creance
deivent avoir li mort es vis.
Tant est li munz fals e jolis.

In the "morals" of these two fables, belief in a supernatural realm or in a Divine Power is implied.

The following four fables--Fable XLVIII, De fure et sortilega, Fable LIV, De rustico orante et equum petente, Fable LV, De rustico stulto orante, and Fable XCIX, De homine in nave, might more appropriately be termed quasi-religious. The "morals" are counsels of prudence and so these fables might have been included under the first classification with the theme of prudence. However, they appear to be religious, and so have been added to De vidua and to Fable XXII, De leporibus et ranis.

In Fable XLVIII, De fure et sortilega, a thief makes a compact with a witch, who promises to help him, if he continues his "mestier." However, when the thief becomes a "gallows bird," she breaks her promise. The moral is as follows:-

Pur ceo chastie tute gent
qu'il ne creient, Deus le defent,
en augure n'en sorcerie;
kar traiz est ki s'i afie:
li cors en est mis en eissil,
e l'alme vet en grant peril.

The following fables are concerned with the expression of a belief in a Divine Power. In Fable LIV, De rustico orante et equum petente, the villein prays in church for another horse. Meanwhile thieves steal the only horse he has. The villein then prays for the return of the horse that has been stolen. The moral reads:-

Pur ceo ne deit nuls huem preier
de plus aveir qu'il n'a mestier:
ceo guart que deus li a done,
si li suffise en leialté!

In Fable LV, De rustico stulte orante, a villein prays that God should bless him, his wife, and his children, but no one else. Another villein, on hearing this, prays that God should lay a curse upon this villein, his wife, and children, but no one else. The moral is as follows:-

Par cest essample vueil retraire:
chescuns deit tel preiere faire,
ki a la gent ne seit nuisable
e ki a deu seit acceptable.

Lastly, in Fable XCIX, De homine in nave, a man prays

to God that He should guide a ship safely to port. The more he prays, however, the longer does the ship sail on the high seas. In desperation, he asks God to do whatever He wills. Shortly afterwards the ship reaches port. The moral is:-

Li sages deit raisnablement
preier a deu omnipotent,
que de lui face sun plaisir:
de ceo li puet granz biens venir.
Kar mielz set deus qu'il li estuet
que sis quers, ki li change e muet.

A third classification of the Fables might be made according to the theme of the wickedness of women. One example is Fable XLV, Iterum de muliere et proco eius. In this fable a husband sees his wife with a lover. When he informs her of this, she declares that this is bad news. Her grand-mother and her mother, just before they died, were similarly seen with lovers, when they were, in reality, alone. The wife suggests that she should spend the remaining hours of her life in a convent. The husband, overcome with emotion, begs her not to leave him. "Mencunge fu quan que jeo vis" he affirms.

The moral of the story is:-

Pur ceo dit hum en reprovier
que femmes sevent engignier:
les veziées nunverables
unt un art plus que li diables.

Another example is Fable LXXII, De homine et serpente, a villein and a serpent have made a compact, whereby the villein will bring milk to the serpent twice a day. The

villein, on the other hand, receives gold and silver from the serpent, and his fields yield good crops. The villein, on his wife's advice, attempts to kill the serpent. In this he is unsuccessful. On the following day he finds that all his sheep have been killed and their baby has died in the cradle. In despair, the villein decides to return to the serpent, persuade him that they are still friends, and offer him milk once more. The serpent informs him he may bring milk as formerly and leave it at the same spot, but he does not wish to see the villein again come so close to him. The breach of faith will long be remembered.

The moral of the Fable is:-

meinte femme cunseille a faire
ceo dunt a plusurs nest cuntraire.
Sages huem n'i deit pas entendre
n'a fole femme cunseil prendre,
cum fist icil par sa vileine,
dunt il ot puis travail e peine.

These two fables appear to be the only fables in the collection where theme of the wickedness of women, implicit in the narrative, is made explicit in the moral.

In Fable I, De gallo et gemma, the moral states:-

Veu l'avuns d'ume e de femme:
· · · · ·
le pis pernent, le mielz despisent.

And again, in Fable L, De lupo et ariete

ne huem ne femme lecheresse
ne guardera vou ne pramesse.

Although in Fable XCV, De uxore mala et marito eius, the wife is described as "mult felunesse," the moral is not

concerned with the wickedness of women at all. Similarly, in Fable XCIV, De homine et uxore litigiosa ("le pre tondu"), the moral does not refer specifically to the wickedness of women.

It would seem then, that in Marie de France's collection there are only two fables, where the theme of the wickedness of women has been fully illustrated and developed. There can be no doubt that in these particular fables women are dangerous and cunning jades!

A fourth classification is that of "Li Nunsachant." Marie de France has written three fables about "Li Nunsachant." In Fable XLI, De homine divite et servis, a rich man sees two servants in a field one day, conferring with one another so solemnly that his curiosity is aroused. He asks them why they are acting thus. They answer that they appear more cunning and interesting by so doing.

The moral is:-

Ceo funt suvent li nunsachant:
de tel chose mustrent semblant,
pur altre gent surveziér,
ki ne lur puet avoir mestier.

In Fable XLIII, De rustico et scarabaeo, a villein lies sleeping in the sun. Somehow, a beetle penetrates into his body. He suffers such pain that he has to consult a doctor, who informs him that he is pregnant. There are many who believe this. The moral states:-

Par cest essample le vus di:
des nunsachant est altresì,
ki creient ceo qu'estre ne puet,
u vanitez les trait e muet.

In Fable LXIV, De homine et equo et hirco, a rich man wants to sell a horse and a goat for twenty sous. He finds a customer for the horse, but the goat, he is told, is worthless. The rich man, in a rage, tells his customer he will have to buy both animals or leave them both.

The moral is:-

Veeir poez del nunsachant,
ki sun mal us prise altretant
cume sun bon tut oëlment:
ne poet lessier sun fol talent.

A fifth category of fables is that of the theme of stupidity or folly.

In Fable CVII, De homine et serpente (which we have already discussed), there is a reference to "fole femme" in the moral. In Fable LXXVII, De lupo et ericio, one of the shortest fables in the collection, the moral refers to a "bricun" or fool. In Fable LVII, De rustico et nano, a villein catches a hobgoblin. The latter grants the villein three wishes, on condition that he (the hobgoblin) be not shown to other people. The villein gives his wife one of the wishes. One day the couple are having a meal. The villein's wife can not extract some bone-marrow, which she wishes to eat. She, therefore, wishes that her husband had a long, curved bill, like that of the hoopoe. When the wish becomes reality, her husband is naturally anxious to do away

with such an ornament. Thus, only one wish is left to the pair.

The moral reads:-

Li fols quide del vezié
qu'il le vueille avoir conseillié
si cume sei; mes il i falt,
kar tant ne set ne tant ne valt.

In Fable XCI, De cerva hinnulum instruenta, a hind warns its fawn in vain of the dangers it may have to face-- dogs, wolves, and man. The last two lines of the moral read:-

Quant fols ne vult creire le sage,
suvent i pert par sun ultrage.

In Fable XVIV, De homine et uxore litigiosa ("le pré tondu") the moral refers to the "fols," who "parole folie."

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Before this writer proceeds to establish a sixth and last category for the Fables of Marie de France--a category composed of thirty-two fables about specific sins-- he would like to discuss the themes of indiscretion and weakness, which have been illustrated and to some extent developed by the first French poetess.

Indiscretion would seem to be a vice or a sin. As a sin, it appears akin to pride. But to what extent is pride present in it? To what extent does ignorance enter its composition? Basically, indiscretion means imprudence, or lack of good judgment.

In Fable LI, De simia et prole eius, a mother monkey

proudly shows her ugly little son to all and sundry.
Eventually she shows him to a bear, who promptly gobbles him
up. The moral is:-

Pur ceo ne devreit nuls mustrer
sa priveté ne sun penser.
.....
par descovrance vient granz mals,
n'est pas li siecles tuz leials.

In Fable XIV, De leone aegroto, the theme is weakness-
physical weakness.

An old lion worn out with age and feebleness is
breathing his last. Many animals pay him a visit, some
because they are interested in his will, others because they
wish to be present when he dies. An ox butts him with his
horns, an ass kicks him, and a fox bites his ears.

The real meaning of the fable is that "li nunpuissanz
a poi amis."

The moral states:-

Ki qu'unkes chiece en nunpoeir,
se pert sa force e sun aveir,
mult le tienent en grant vilte
nis li plusur ki l'unt ame.

In Fable LXXXVII, De duobus lupis, two wolves, who
want to reform, decide to help the villagers in the fields
gather in their sheaves. The villagers, however, shout at
them and chase them away. The wolves, therefore, revert to
their old practices. "Ja mes bien ne ferunt, ceo distrent."

The moral states:-

Ceo veit hum suvent del felun,
ki a mult petit d'achaisun

laisse le bien que il commence;
se il ne veit en sa presence
le luiier, qu'il en vult aveir,
a mal en turne sun espeir.

Sin, it would seem, may arise from weakness (lack of fortitude), just as it may arise from ignorance or sheer malice.

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Sixth Category--In the Fables, the following themes will be examined in some detail: (1) the theme of malice, (2) the themes of greed, covetousness and miserliness, (3) the themes of treachery, deceit, slander, robbery and theft, (4) the themes of presumption, pride and envy.

Three fables belong to the first group, where the theme is that of malice. Fable LXVIII, De leone infirmo, Fable XLIX, De fabro et securi, and Fable III, De rana et mure.

In De leone infirmo, the lion is sick. The animals, who have gathered together to consider the matter, decide that the fox should be summoned, so that he may be consulted about a cure for the lion's ailment. But the fox, who is "quointes et veziez" does not appear. He remains close enough to the room, where the animals have assembled, however, to overhear the wolf denounce him in no uncertain terms:

. Riens nel detient
fors l'engreste de sun curage;
kar j'i enveiai mun message.

The fox should be killed or hanged, the wolf asserts. On hearing this, the fox decides it is time to act:

Pas pur pas est avant venuz,
que des bestes fu bien veüz.

The fox informs the gathering that he has wandered far and wide for many a long day and has consulted doctors in Salerno about the wolf's illness. These doctors told him that in order to cure the lion, a wolf would have to be flayed alive and the blood of its hide applied to the lion's chest. Immediately the animals lay hands upon the wolf. As the wolf leaves, the fox gently expresses the hope that he (the wolf) has learned his lesson. "If you treat others badly," says the fox, "you must expect to see the evil rebound upon you." The moral of the fable confirms the fox's statement:

Tels purchase le mal d'altrui,
que cil meïsme vient sur lui,
si cum li lous fist del gupil,
que il voleit metre a eissil.

The narrative in this fable is lively and colourful. The lesson in the fable, as in all good fables, is implicit in the narrative. Yet, somehow, the reader does not derive the same satisfaction from reading this fable as he does from Marie de France's best fables. Could it be that we sympathize with the wolf rather than the fox? Was the wolf as malicious or malevolent as the moral would seem to imply?

In Fable XLIX, De fabro et securi, a smith possesses a sharp axe, which is, nevertheless, useless, for it has no shaft attached to it. The smith asks several trees where he can find the best wood for the shaft of his axe. All the trees recommend the black thorn-tree as the most suitable for

his purpose. He accepts their suggestion and later cuts down the thorn-tree itself.

The moral is:-

Tut altresì est des malyais,
des tresfeluns e des engrès:
quant uns prozdum les met avant
e par lui sunt riche e manant,
s'il se surpueent mierz de lui,
tuz jurs li funt hunte e ennui;
a celui funt il tut le pis,
ki plus les a al desus mis.

In other words: Far from showing gratitude to a benefactor, some people show a desire to harm him out of sheer spite.

In Fable III, De mure et rana, a mouse, who lived in a mill, was trimming its whiskers one day when a frog appeared and asked if it were the owner of the house. The mouse invited the frog to spend the night in the mill. There were so many holes into which they could disappear, if necessary! Supplies of flour and wheat were abundant. The two animals had a copious meal. Then the mouse asked the frog whether it liked the food. "Yes," replied the frog, "but it might be even more to my taste, were it moistened a little at that pool in the meadow where I live. Why not come with me?"

Tant li premet par sun engin
e la blandist par sa parole,
qu'ele la creit, si fist que fole.

In the meadow, there was so much dew, that the mouse thought it would drown. She wanted to return to the mill, but the frog insisted that they proceed to a river. Here the

mouse broke down and wept, for she could not swim. The frog tied the mouse's foot to its own and began to swim. When they reached the deep end of the river, the frog dived in, trying to drown the poor mouse:

La suriz pipe en halt e crie,
ki quida tute estre perie.

But a kite spotted the two animals--"les eles clot, a val descent." The kite snatches its victims between its claws. The frog was fat and appetizing and so the kite devours it and lets the mouse go.

The moral states that the very suffering which the wicked wish to inflict upon others, rebounds upon them in the end.

The theme of malice is handled with greater artistry in this fable than in the two preceding ones. In what might be called Act I, the unsuspecting mouse invites the treacherous frog into its house and entertains lavishly. In Act II, the frog leads its poor victim through the dewy grass, where it almost drowns. In Act III, the two animals reach the river, where the mouse would undoubtedly have drowned, had not the kite intervened. Malice implies a deep-seated animosity that delights in causing others to suffer or in seeing them suffer. Marie de France has succeeded in making the reader aware gradually of the grudge harboured by the treacherous frog.

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The second group of fables, that the writer wishes

to examine in detail, is that group which includes the themes of covetousness, greed or miserliness (also to some extent, lechery and concupiscence).

In Fable II, a wolf standing higher up a stream than a lamb, accuses the lamb of muddying the water so that he cannot drink. The lamb remonstrates that he is standing lower down the river and cannot possibly disturb the water higher up. Thereupon, the wolf accuses the lamb of insulting him, as the lamb's father had done on a previous occasion, six months earlier. "Why do you tell me this?" asks the lamb. "I was not even born then." "You are always doing what you should not do," says the wolf. He then pounces on the lamb and devours him.

The moral of the fable states that many viscounts and judges accuse falsely, as did the wolf, because they covet and wish to acquire what belongs to their victims. Covetousness implies a greed for something that another person rightfully possesses.

In Fable V, De cane et umbra, a dog crosses over a river, holding in its mouth a piece of cheese. Half-way across, the dog sees the reflection of the cheese, but concludes that it has seen another cheese. It decides it wants both cheeses. It opens its mouth and drops the cheese:

e ombre vit, e ombre fu,
e sun furmage ot il perdu.

The moral reads:-

Ki plus coveite que sun dreit,
par sei meismes se deceit;
kar ceo qu'il a pert il sovent,
e de l'altrui n'a il niënt.

In Fable XI, De leone venante, a lion, a buffalo, and a wolf, who are hunting, catch a deer and flay it alive. The lion then informs his companions that he is entitled to one third of the deer because he is king of the animal kingdom, he is entitled to another one third because he hunted the deer, and the remaining one third is his because he killed it.

On another occasion the lion is accompanied by a goat and a sheep. The animals catch a deer. Once more the lion claims that the deer is his, the first quarter because he is king, the second quarter because he took part in the hunt, the third quarter because he is the strongest of the three, and the fourth quarter because he planned that they will fight for it.

The moral of the fable states that the poor cannot compete with rich men, who wish to retain everything on which they can lay hands, "li riches vult tut retenir."

In Fable XXVIII, De simia et vulpe, a monkey meets a fox and makes the strange request "que de sa cue li prestat, si lui pleüst, u l'en dunast." The fox's tail is too long, the monkey's children, on the other hand, have no tail at all. The fox replies that, if it could no longer drag its tail along the ground, even then, it would not comply with the monkey's request.

The moral in this fable refers to "l'aver hume"--

the miser--

se il a plus que lui n'estuet,
ne vult souffrir (kar il ne puet)
qu'altre en ait aise ne honur;
mielz le vult perdre chascun jur.

In Fable L, De lupo et ariete, a wolf who has undertaken not to eat meat for forty days during Lent, breaks his promise when he encounters a fat, appetizing lamb. The moral states that the "ume de malvais quer," who cannot curb his desires, will never keep his promises. The vices mentioned in this fable are gluttony, lechery and intemperance (i.e. excess of any kind). However, Marie de France also indicates that the disposition to sin is present, when she writes "l'ume de malvais quer."

In Fable LII, De dracone et homine, a villein and a dragon are friends. The villein often promises to serve the dragon faithfully. The latter, therefore, decides one day to test their friendship. He asks the villein to keep an egg, in which are stored all his wealth and strength, while he goes for a stroll. If the egg is destroyed, he (the dragon) will die.

When the dragon leaves, the villein destroys the egg, in the belief he will thereby kill the dragon and inherit his fortune. But the dragon returns. Their friendship is over.

The moral states that we should not entrust a "tricheur" or a "felun" with valuable property.

En coveitus ne en aver
ne se deit nuls trop afier.

In Fable LVI, De rustico et monedula eius, a jackdaw, whom a villein had taught to speak, was killed by a neighbour. The latter was summoned to appear before a court. The accused brought with him a leather purse, which he kept hidden beneath his cloak. The keys of the purse appeared beneath the cloak. Now and again, during the proceedings, the accused would open up his cloak until finally the judge caught sight of the purse. The judge then asked the villein, who had lodged the complaint, what the jackdaw used to say or sing. The villein replied he did not know. The judge then ruled that if this were the case, no decision could be given by the court.

The moral reads:-

Pur ceo ne deit princes ne reis
ses cumandemenz ne ses leis
a coveitus metre en baillie;
kar sa dreiture en est perie.

In Fable LXII, De aquila et accipitre et columbis, the eagle, king of birds, rests high up on the branch of a tree in the full heat of the season. The hawk, his seneschal, sits on another branch beneath the eagle. He looks down with displeasure at the doves who are playing below, and thinks: if the eagle were not above, or if he were to move to another tree, I should soon put an end to your games. "Jeo fereie de vus justise."

The moral reads:-

Pur ceo ne deit princes voleir
seneschal en sun regne avoir
ne coveitus ne menteur,
s'il nel vuelte faire sun seignur.

It is interesting to read the morals of Fables LVI and LXII (the last two discussed), and then read what Macchiavelli was to write three hundred years later in the Prince:-

For a prince to be able to know a minister, there is this method, which never fails. When you see the minister think more of himself than you, and, in all his actions, seek his own profit, such a man will never be a good minister, and you can never rely on him; for, whoever has in hand the state of another must never think of himself, but of the prince, and not mind anything but what relates to him.¹

The "morals" of Fables LXII and LVI are almost identical. It is interesting, therefore, to note that the narratives differ considerably. Fable LVI is a lively, fast-moving story. The reader sees the accused villein, with purse-keys dangling, open up his cloak so that the old judge can see his reward. In Fable LXII, on the other hand, the eagle sits solemnly at the top of a tree--the hawk rests on another branch. The heat is considerable. Only the doves move about below.

In Fable LXVII, De corvo pennas pavonis inveniente, a crow happens to come across a pea-cock's feathers. He realizes then how plain his own are, pulls them all out, and adorns himself with pea-cock feathers. His appearance, however, is unfamiliar to the pea-cocks, who knock him about and chivy him off. When he returns among the crows, the latter also do not recognise him. Thus he finds himself banished.

¹Niccolo Machiavelli, The Prince, A Mentor Classic, New American Library, 1935, p. 115.

from the society of both crows and pea-cocks.

The moral is as follows:-

Ceo puet hum veeir de plusurs,
ki aveir unt e granz honors:
uncor voldreient plus cuillir
ceo qu'il ne pueent retenir;
ceo qu'il coveitent n'unt il mie,
e le lur perdent par folie.

In Fable LXXXV, De ape et musca, the fly claims superiority over the bee. It can travel everywhere, even sit upon the king, whereas the bee works hard throughout the year, gathering supplies, then dies. The fly, on the other hand, can eat its fill of honey. "All this is true," says the bee, "but I am loved and respected, which is more than you can claim to be."

The moral points out that the "natre felun"--the wicked miser--whose only concern is his many possessions, would do well to give a little thought to his own behaviour and reputation.

In Fable XCVI, De lepore et cervo, a hare looks upon a deer, and cannot but admire the horns of its head. The hare asks the goddess why it can not have horns like those of the deer. The goddess replies:-

"Tais, fols," . . . "lai ester:
tu nes purreies guverner."

However, the hare insists, so his request is granted. Unfortunately, the prediction of the goddess proves to be correct.

The moral states:-

li coveitus e li aver
vuelent tuz jurs tant cuveitier,

e si se vuelent eshalcier,
tant enpernent par lur ultrage,
que lur honors turne a damage.

In Fable IV, De cane et ove, a dog, who is "males quisches, tricheur," a sly, lying, deceitful creature, accuses a sheep of not returning a piece of bread which he had loaned it. The sheep denies ever having received the bread. The judge asks if there were any witnesses to the transaction. "Yes," replies the dog, "the kite and the wolf." The latter swear solemnly that what the dog says is true. The judge decides that the bread should be returned. The sheep cannot comply with his instructions. It, therefore, has to sell its wool. In the cold winter that follows the sheep dies. The dog, the kite, and the wolf waste no time in claiming their victim. The sins or vices here, are covetousness, lying and deceit.

In the moral, the poetess refers to those who bring trumped-up charges against the poor, and to how the poor are obliged to pay for the fraudulent proceedings at court.

The third group of fables that the writer wishes to examine in detail is that, including the themes of treachery, deceit, slander, robbery and theft.

In Fable XII, De aquila et testitudine, an eagle has caught sight of a whelk. He wants to eat it, but cannot open

the shell. A crow offers to help him, provided he be allowed to share the meal. He suggests that the eagle fly as high as he possibly can and that he should let the whelk fall on hard ground. The eagle agrees to do this. The treacherous crow, however, opens the shell and eats the "peissunet." When the eagle reaches the whelk, the crow has disappeared and the hole, which the latter has made with his beak, is so small that the eagle cannot even see it.

The moral refers to the

. felun,
ki par aguait e par engin
mescunseille sun bon veisin;

and the last three lines state:-

par traïsun li tolt e emble
l'aveir que cil a purchacié
par grant travail e guaaignié.

(traïsun, has, of course, the meaning of "treachery" or "deceit").

In Fable XXXIV, De simiarum imperatore, an Emperor once kept a monkey. The animal was well-treated and had an opportunity to observe how the Emperor ruled his court. Eventually, the monkey took to the forest, assembled all the monkeys together and had himself appointed king. He then dubbed knights and appointed counsellors and servants.

Dunc prist femme, si ot enfanz,
e tint festes riches e granz.

Two men unwittingly strayed into monkey territory. One was honest, the other lying and deceitful. The honest man was asked his opinion about the monkey-king, his wife and their little son. The answer came:-

"tu iés singes, ele est singesse
laide e hisduse e felunesse.
Par tei poéz saveir de tun fiz
que c'est uns singetels petiz."

The other man, who was lying and deceitful, was asked the same question. He claimed that "unkes ne vit plus bele gent"--the monkey looked like an Emperor, his wife an Empress and his son might quite well be a king.

The honest man was tortured and punished. His deceitful companion was well rewarded for his base flattery.

Once more the moral complains about lying and deceit at court:-

ne puet mie od le tricheur
li leials huem avoir honur
en curt u l'em vueille trichier
e par mençunge forsjugier.

In Fable XLII, De homine divite qui sanguinem minuit, a rich man was undergoing treatment at the hands of a doctor. As the doctor had to bleed the patient, a sample of the latter's blood was always kept in a receptacle. The rich man's daughter had been given strict instructions that the sample was not to be touched. Thus, it might be possible in the end to identify the father's sickness. One day the girl let the receptacle fall to the ground. She was afraid to tell anyone about this, and she replaced her father's blood with a supply of her own. When the doctor analysed the blood, he discovered that his patient was pregnant. He was astounded. His patient too, was not a little astonished. The girl then stepped forward, telling both men the truth, "tant par destreit

tant par amur."

The moral, which is somewhat loosely attached to the anecdote, claims that deceivers and thieves are often the cause of their own undoing.

In Fable LIII, De eremita, a villein and a hermit lived together. The villein would often ask why Adam had tasted the forbidden fruit, thereby causing untold harm to humanity, and why God had not forgiven Adam his sin.

The hermit, who was annoyed at the constant questioning, decided to teach the villein a lesson. He placed a mouse underneath a large plate, which had been turned upside down and gave the villein instructions not to touch the plate while he prayed at the monastery. The villein's curiosity was aroused, however, and during the hermit's absence, he lifted the plate to see what was underneath. He saw the mouse escape. When the hermit returned, the latter pretended to be angry and then pointed out that the villein would never again be able to blame Adam for eating the forbidden fruit.

The moral is: do not concern yourself with other people's shortcomings and defects. Try to see your own faults. The spreading of false statements (or slander) must be avoided at all costs.

In Fable LXI, De vulpe et columba, a fox has just attended a council meeting, where a royal letter was read out. In this letter the king wished it to be known that all strife between animals and birds should cease:

ensemble purrunt mes aler
oysel e bestes, e juër.

"You might as well come down from the cross on which you are perched and sit beside me," said the fox. "Very well," said the dove, "but what do I see?--Two knights on horseback, accompanied by their dogs." "I think," said the sly fox, "I shall slip into the woods then. I wish to avoid trouble. Perhaps they have not yet heard about the king's letter."

The moral of this fable again refers to lying and deceit:-

Si vet des feluns veziéz:
par els sunt plusur engigniez
par parole e par fals sermun,
cum cil volt faire le colum.

In Fable LXXI, De lupo et ericio, a wolf and a hedgehog had made a pact. While the wolf attacked its prey, the hedgehog would endeavour to keep the dogs at bay. On the other hand, should the hedgehog be caught, the wolf was expected to come to its rescue. One day the wolf seized a lamb. The shepherds shouted at him, the dogs followed barking and the wolf disappeared in the forest. The hedgehog, who was in difficulties, shouted for help. "I shall give you no help" said the wolf. But the hedgehog begged the wolf to kiss him farewell. "You will be able to tell my children they are orphans and that you left me alone on the road" he said.

When the wolf kissed the hedgehog, the latter gripped his chin with his spines, compelling him to carry him to the

woods. Then the hedgehog left the wolf and climbed up a tall tree. The wolf asked him to come down and keep back the dogs, who were still following. "No," said the hedgehog, "you were about to leave me in the lurch. It is now my turn to abandon you."

The moral runs:-

Ceo puet hum veeir del felun,
ki vult traïr sun cumpaignun:
il meïsmes est encumbrez
la u li altre est delivrez.

In Fable XCVIII, De catto et vulpe, a cat and a fox discuss how they can best defend themselves if the need arises. "I have two weapons" said the fox "and a purse containing many more." "I have only one" says the cat. Just then two dogs come running up to them. The fox calls out, "I need your help now." "Help yourself" says the cat, "I've only one weapon" and he climbs up a thorn-tree. As the fox is being hard-pressed by the dogs, the cat calls out, "why don't you untie the purse you spoke about?" "I would rather have your one weapon now than all those in my purse" answered the fox.

The fable ends thus:-

Del menteür avient suvent,
tut parolt il raisnablement,
sil puet li sages entreprendre,
s'il vult a sa parole entendre.

In the following group of fables the principal theme is pride, which was referred to in Chapter II, as the ultimate source of the origin of sin.

In Fable X, De vulpe et aquila, while a fox plays with its children, an eagle swoops down and carries one of them off. The fox pleads in vain for the return of its child. With the help of a burning ember and some twigs, however, the fox proceeds to set fire to the oak-tree, where the eagle has its nest. The eagle, in terror, shouts:

. Pren tun chael!
Ja serunt ars tuit mi oisel.

The moral is that the "riche orguillus" will never listen to the poor man's plea, unless the latter be prepared to avenge a wrong done to him.

In Fable XIII, De corvo et vulpe, a crow catches sight of an assortment of cheeses, displayed upon wicker. It makes off with one of these. A fox, who happens to pass by, decides he would like to share the cheese with the crow (qu'il en peüst sa part mangier). He therefore flatters the crow. He says, "tant par est cist oisels gentiz!" And later:

Fust tels sis chanz cum est sis cors,
il valdreit mielz que nuls fins ors.

Of course, the crow begins to sing, the cheese falls to the ground and the fox carries it off.

Puis n'ot il cure de sun chant,
que del furmage ot sun talant.

The moral refers to

. des orguillus
ki de grant pris sunt desirus.

These people, who are puffed-up with pride and think only of rewards, are easily misled by flatterers and deceivers.

In Fable XV, De asino adulante, an ass looks at his master as he plays with a little dog. He comes to the conclusion that he is superior in every way to the little dog. Consequently, he will play with his master too. One day he begins to skip around and paw him, thereby almost killing him. The master, terrified, calls for the servants, who appear with sticks and staves. They beat the ass so hard that he can hardly regain his stable.

U.T. Holmes¹ has summarized the moral of this story by saying, "One should not seek to rise to a position in life for which one was not intended." The reference in the moral to presumptuous people reads:-

. meinte gent
ki tant se vuelent eshalcier
e en tel liu aparagier,
ki n'avient pas a lur corsage,
ensurquetut a lur parage.

In Fable XXXV, De asino et leone, an ass greets a lion in a somewhat familiar manner. The lion expresses surprise at this. The ass retorts: "You think that no other beast is your equal. Come with me to the top of the mountain and I shall show you that I can spread fear as well as you." The two animals reach the top of the mountain; down below in the valley, many animals have assembled. The ass then brays so abominably that the animals below flee in terror. "These animals were terrified" said the lion later "not because of

¹U.T. Holmes, A History of Old French Literature (New York: 1937), p. 210.

your great strength or ferocity, but because of the abominable noise you were making."

ki tant lur semble espoëntable
que tuit te tienent pur diable.

The moral refers to the "orguillus felun" who threatens his neighbour and who quarrels with him. He thinks he is superior to other people, so long as he talks loud.

In Fable LVIII, De vulpe et umbra lunae, a fox, passing by a pond one night, looked into the water and saw the reflection of the moon. It thought it saw a large cheese. It began to lap up the water thinking it would be able to seize the cheese. It drank so much water, however, that it died ("il creva").

The moral refers to presumptuous people, who expect more than their due in life.

Meinz huem espeire, ultre le dreit
e ultre ceo qu'il ne devreît,
aveir tutes ses volentez,
dunt puis est morz e afolez.

In Fable LXXIII, De mure uxorem petente, a mouse, in search of a mate, decides it must marry "la fille al plus halt element." It, therefore, approaches the sun with this end in view. The sun informs the mouse, however, that the cloud which casts its shadow upon it, is stronger than he. The cloud asserts that the wind is stronger than he. The wind, in turn, claims that there is a great stone-tower in the neighbourhood, which can withstand the mightiest gusts. Finally, the stone-tower informs the mouse that there are

mightier than he--the mice who make their nests inside the tower and reach every part of it with ease.

Now, the mouse had said on taking leave of the cloud:
"Ja mes ta fille ne prendrai." Its parting words to the wind were:

ne dei plus bas femme choisir,
qu'a mei ne deit appartenir;
Femme prendrai a grant honur.
Or m'en irai desqu'a la tur.

When the stone-tower informs the mouse that its own kind are stronger than he, then, at last, the mouse realizes its folly and says:

Jeo quidoué si halt munter:
or me covient a returner
e rencliner a ma nature.

"Yes," says the tower

Tels se quide mult eshalcier
ultre sun dreit e alever,
qui plus bas estuet returner.

And the mouse marries "la suricete petite."

The moral refers to three types of sinners, those who are puffed-up with pride, those who envy other people's advantages and possessions, and those who overstep the proper bounds (the presumptuous). These types of sinners all resemble the mouse in the fable.

In Fable LIX, De lupo et corvo, a wolf sees a crow sitting on a sheep's back. If I were to do that, thinks the wolf, people would shout at me as if I wanted to devour the animal.

The moral states that the evil-doer dislikes his faults

to be known and he envies the good man his reputation.

In Fable LXXIV, De scarabaeo, a beetle crawls out of a dung-heap and sees an eagle. Immediately it feels dissatisfied with its lot. The Creator had made the eagle "curteis e bel," whereas beetles

. n'esteient ver ne oisel;
saül ne poeient voler,
jeün ne poeient aler.

The eagle flies so high that you cannot see him. He hovers in the sky, then swoops down. His voice is low and pleasant, his body shiny.

The beetle decides never to return to the dung-heap, but to fly with the birds in the heavens.

Idunc cumença a chanter
mult laidement e a criér.
Deriere l'aigle prist un salt;
car il quida voler plus halt.

But this leap in imitation of the eagle's flight proves too much for the beetle, who, giddy and exhausted, cannot reach the dung-heap again. He feels incredibly hungry and miserable and complains loudly. It matters little to him now if the birds hear him or not. He no longer cares whether he be bird or worm. He only wants to eat

kar de feim ai dolor e mal.

The moral states that sometimes people learn from their own experience how wrong they are to be presumptuous or pretentious.

In Fable LXXV, De apro et asino, a boar, as he

hurtles along a pathway, encounters an ass who makes no attempt to make way for him. Amazed and angry, he says:

Bien sai, que jeo fereie,
se mes denz aguisier voleie.

The moral refers to

. l'orguillus hume,
ki quide bien en sun penser
que nuls nel deie cuntrester;

A review of the six main categories of fables so far discussed would now seem appropriate.

First Category.--Miss E.A. Francis has shown that the theme of justice has been particularly well illustrated and developed in several fables. Marie de France probably believed that feudal lords should be powerful (Cf. De leone aegroto, Fable XIV--"li nunpuissanz a poi amis") but they must not be too powerful (Cf. De sole nubente, Fable VI). The feudal lord must uphold what is right, just, and lawful. On the other hand, the vassal should respect and obey his liege lord. Careful selection of feudal lords is advised. Marie appears to accept the hierarchical structure of society and has only contempt for those who would climb above their station. However, there are occasions when she is capable of sudden outbursts against the oppression of the poor and the weak, with whom she sympathizes.

The theme of prudence is illustrated specifically in those fables where the "morals" themselves are clearly

counsels of prudence or worldly wisdom.

The themes of moderation and fortitude were also illustrated and developed to some extent.

Second Category.--Marie de France was interested in religious questions. The "morals" of Fable XXV and Fable XXII revealed a belief in a supernatural realm or a Divine Power. Four other fables belonging to this category were really amusing anecdotes to which a christian moral had been attached. The picturesque details of these fables, however, should not lead us to suppose that the fables were written only to entertain. Three of these last-mentioned fables were concerned with the expression of belief in a Divine Power (Fables LIV, LV, and XCIX).

Third Category.--The theme of the wickedness of women was illustrated and developed fully only in two fables (Fables XLV and LXXII). In both fables the moral implicit in the narrative, is made explicit in the moral.

Fourth Category.--"li nunsachant"--the ignorant. This theme provided material for three fables.

Fifth Category.--"li fols"--the foolish or stupid. This theme provided material for five fables.

Sixth Category.--The themes of certain specific sins or vices were examined, among which the most often mentioned were:- malice, greed, covetousness, miserliness, treachery (or deceit), robbery, theft, slander, presumption, pride, and envy. Whereas in the Fabliaux, lechery is the most often

mentioned sin, in the Fables, deceit, pride, and covetousness appear to be mentioned equally often.

A review of the six categories suggested for the Fables of Marie de France reveals the poetess' wide range of interests.

Parts of the Prologue and the Epilogue have already been discussed in Chapter I.

Three passages are of interest for the present chapter, however.

In lines 1-10 of the Prologue, Marie de France writes that scholars should give their attention to those good books and writings where exempla and proverbs were set down by the ancient philosophers who wrote with a view to the moral and spiritual improvement of themselves and others.

Cil, ki sevent de letreüre,
devreient bien metre lur cure
es bons livres e es escriz
e es essamples e es diz,
que li philosophe troverent
e escristrent e remembrerent.
Par moralite escriveient
les bons proverbes qu'il oeient,
que cil amender s'en poïssent
ki lur entente en bien meïssent.
Ceo firent li anciēn pere.

In lines 23-26, Marie points out that many an entertaining anecdote is followed up by a moral, and the whole meaning of the fable is not in the narrative:

mes n'i a fable de folie
u il nen ait philosophie
es essamples ki sunt apres,
u des cuntes est tuz li fes.

Lastly, in the Epilogue, Marie states in the last three lines that she prays to God that she may be able to devote all her energies to such a work and that she may die in peace. An alternative reading for line 21 would change the meaning to the following: and now I pray to God that I be allowed to undertake this work that I may die in peace.¹

In a preceding paragraph, the wide range of Marie's interests was noted. It is, however, the combination of Marie's wide range of interests and her single-mindedness which make the Fables an outstanding contribution to French literature of the Twelfth Century. The underlying seriousness of purpose in her work, her concern with the problems of good and evil, folly and wisdom, become more apparent as one reads the whole collection of Fables. Further evidence of her single-mindedness is to be found in the Prologue (lines 1-10), and the last three lines of the Epilogue. It is difficult, after reading these lines, to believe that Marie de France wrote the Fables with a view to entertainment alone, even if prologue and epilogue show the usual conventional literary forms.

Marie de France's seriousness of purpose, or moral concern is, of course, in complete accord with the medieval ethic, where sin plays such an important role. In the six categories discussed above, the part played by the concept

¹ Karl Warnke, The Fables--Epilogue, lines 20-21, p. 328:
Or pri a deu omnipotent
qu'a tel uevre me doinst entendre

S21 que tel oeuvre me laist enprendre

of sin is, indeed, considerable. In the first category, the moral failing or sins of feudal lords and of judges in court are mentioned again and again. These sins have already been listed. In the second category (religious themes) the sin of pride or presumption seems to be the chief one depicted. In the third category, the wickedness of women is the sin portrayed--a sin originally illustrated in the third chapter of Genesis as pride and envy. In the fourth category, ignorance, although not a sin in itself, may lead to sin, as may foolishness (fifth category), or moral weakness. In the sixth category an analysis of themes involving specific sins in the Fables was attempted.

Marie de France, in the last two lines of the Espurgatoire de Seint Patriz asks us to pray to God, that he may cleanse us all of our sins. The fables, too, conclude with a prayer to the Deity.

Or pri a deu omnipotent
Qu'a tel uevre me doinst entendre
Que jeo li puisse m'alme rendre

However, on this occasion, Marie appears to be concerned about her own soul rather than about that of others. In order to ensure the salvation of her soul she must, among other things, devote all her energies to writing. She makes the same point in the Prologue to the Lais (lines 23-25).

Ki de vice se vult defendre
estudier deit e entendre
e grevose oeure comencier.

Only by hard work can she ward off sin.

It would seem, then, that Marie's motives in writing the Fables were, as might be expected, complex. She certainly wished to entertain, for although a fable exemplifies a moral thesis, it is basically a story about animals or human beings who talk and act. However, the writing (or translation) of these Fables could be hard work. Marie welcomed this fact for religious reasons. Thus, Marie, to some extent, like the copyists in the monastic scriptoria, was stimulated by the hope of eternal rewards, when she wrote the Fables. Here, then, is a real point of contact between the Espurgatoire and the Fables on the one hand, and between the Fables and the Lais, on the other. Her motives in writing these works, as far as we can judge, appear, to some extent, to have been similar.

CHAPTER V

THE LAIS

It is the intention of the writer to deal with seven of the Lais of Marie de France in this chapter. The Lais are: Lanval, Yonec, Guigemar, Les Deus Amanz, Laostic, and Chevrefoil. In a subsequent chapter, the writer will discuss the remaining five Lais: le Fraisne, Bisclavret, Equitan, and Chaitivel, where Marie de France has elaborated most fully upon the themes of sin and of saintliness.

The seven Lais--Lanval, Yonec, Guigemar, Milun, les Deus Amanz, and Chevrefoil--form a group which can be further subdivided into (1) Lanval, Yonec, Guigemar, (2) Milun, Laostic, Chevrefoil, and (3) Les Deus Amanz. Fairy-tale and magic elements are to be found in the first three--Lanval, Yonec, Guigemar--hence they are grouped together. The other three Lais--Laostic, Chevrefoil, and Milun belong to a group of symbolic lays. Les Deus Amanz is best treated separately as it can not be classified in either group. It is now desirable to compare some of the lays, just as later, it will be necessary to compare all the works of Marie de France. With this end in view, the writer proposes to describe the content of each lay and discuss its magic elements, if there

are any. The motif of destiny and the theme of sin can also be traced in each of the seven lays. In this way it is hoped to reveal the complexity of Marie de France's Lais, for although Marie sometimes achieves effects of great simplicity and beauty, the simplicity is only apparent.

In the Lai of Lanval, King Arthur is sojourning at Carlisle. He had been waging war against the Picts and the Scots, who were now in Logres. At Easter, the King married off some of his Barons, Counts, and Knights of the Round Table and distributed gifts. He failed to reward one knight, however, a foreigner, Lanval, who was a King's son.

One day Lanval mounted his steed and rode forth out of the city. Having reached a meadow, where a swift stream flowed, he saw two fair damsels approaching him, one carrying a basin of finely wrought gold, the other a towel. The ladies informed Lanval that their mistress wished to see him. Lanval was led to a magnificent tent, in which he beheld a lady, whose beauty surpassed the lily or the new-blown rose, when they flower in summer. This fair lady, who was, of course, a fairy, told Lanval that she loved him. Lanval gallantly replied that there was nothing that she might command that he would not do to the best of his ability, be the thing folly or wisdom. The fairy told him he need only desire something to have it. He must not reveal his secret, however, to anyone, otherwise he would lose her forever. Whenever he wished to speak to her she would appear,

although she would be visible to no other man. Lanval, having supped with the lady and her damsels, kissed her tenderly and left. On returning to the city, he found that his men were all well-clad and equipped. Lanval lavished gifts on friend and stranger alike. He was very happy for he could see his fairy mistress, whenever he wished.

In that same year, after the Feast of St. John, Lanval was invited one day to join thirty other knights in an orchard below the tower where Queen Guinivere had her lodging. When the queen saw Lanval alone, she decided to keep him company and sat down beside him. She told him she had always admired and cherished him and she offered him her love. Lanval refused her offer, however; he claimed he did not wish to betray his liege-lord, the King. The queen angrily retorted that the reports she had heard about him must be true, that he had no liking for women. No doubt, he would prefer the company of his valets. Lanval violently denied the accusation. He loved a lady, he said, whose poorest waiting-woman was more beautiful in every way than the queen. The latter departed in tears. When the king rejoined his wife, the queen complained that Lanval had attempted to seduce her. On being repelled, he (Lanval) had claimed that he knew a fair lady whose lowliest waiting-woman was more beautiful than she (the queen). The king swore solemnly that if the knight could not defend himself

in court, he would be hanged or burnt. Lanval, in the meantime was overcome with anguish and despair, for in the heated altercation with the queen he had revealed his secret and could no longer see his fairy-mistress whenever he wished.

Lanval denied the accusation that he had betrayed his liege-lord, but he admitted the truth of his boast ("vantage") about his lady. On the day appointed for his trial, the Duke of Cornwall suggested that Lanval should be put upon his oath. If he could prove that what he had said was true, then he would be pardoned. If, however, he could not prove the truth of his assertion, then he would be informed that the King no longer required his services and he would be banished from the court.

The barons and knights were about to pronounce judgment, when they saw two very beautiful maidens come riding on white palfreys. The ladies addressed the king courteously, asking him to assign rooms, where their mistress might lodge that evening. The king agreed to their request and the barons continued with their deliberations. Two more maidens appeared, of noble mien and clad in gold-embroidered robes. Many thought them more beautiful than the queen. These ladies also asked for rooms and the king again agreed to the request. He then asked the barons to pass judgement on Lanval speedily.

Once more the barons were about to give a verdict when the most beautiful lady appeared, mounted on a white

palfrey. Her raiment was white and she was laced on either side. She had blue eyes and fair curly hair. Her mantle was of silk, a hawk rested on her wrist, and a hound followed behind her. Old and young looked at her eagerly.

The lady dismounted in front of the king and let her mantle fall, that all might see her better. "King Arthur" she said, "I have loved one of your knights, Lanval. I do not wish any harm to befall him. The queen has wrongly accused him, for he never asked her for her love. As to the boast he made, let the barons and knights decide whether he be guilty or not." Thereupon all those present decided that Lanval had defended himself successfully.

Outside the hall there was a block of marble which the knights of King Arthur's court used when they wished to mount their steeds. Lanval stood thereupon and as his fairy-mistress rode past he sprang swiftly behind her on the palfrey. They left for the fair island of Avalon and no one has ever heard of Lanval since.

In Lanval, the fairy-tale element is very prominent. During the first half of the story the fairy can be seen only by Lanval. Towards the end of the court scene, however, she is visible to all. Before Lanval meets the fairy, there is little to indicate that the fairy-world is about to reveal itself to him. Marie has, however, written the line "Mes sis cheval tremble forment"--a short line, but an effective one. The fairy herself is described thus:-

Flur de lis e rose nuvele,
quant ele pert el tens d'esté,
trespassot ele de bealte.

The reader, however, sometimes feels that he is seeing a Twelfth Century beauty rather than a fairy. The results of the fairy's gifts of gold and silver are obvious when Lanval returns to his hostel, and the more liberally he spends, the faster his gold and silver supplies increase.

The first pair of beautiful maidens who come riding on white palfreys, as the court is deliberating Lanval's case, transport us to the world of magic again. They are followed by two more maidens, perhaps more beautiful, then the fairy (Lanval's mistress) dismounts in front of King Arthur and reveals her beauty to all. The blending of the world of reality and the world of magic is only temporary--there is no real fusion. As soon as the fairy has done what she can to exonerate Lanval of the Queen's charges, she departs, and Lanval leaps on the steed as it moves swiftly away. The world of magic and the real world are two different realms.

In the following pages, the writer intends to use the word destiny in the sense of an inevitable succession of events (as determined supernaturally or by necessity). The destiny motif appears again and again in Marie's Lais. Lanval's conflict with the queen endangers his relationship with his fairy-mistress for their secret must be kept at all costs. When the queen accuses Lanval of perversity,

however, he makes the boast ("vantance") in a blind rage. Because of this "vantance" Lanval must later face the charges levelled against him by the King, that he has tried to seduce the Queen and that he has insulted her. The "vantance" also means that he has broken his promise to his fairy-mistress and has, therefore, lost her temporarily.

Lanval's sin (in the sense of a misdemeanor or a fault) is, of course, his boast. A boast usually suggests pride or satisfaction in one's abilities or acts, but here Lanval is proud mainly of having such a friend as the "Fée," or perhaps of having been chosen by her as a lover. The fault lies in the fact that he has given expression to this pride and has thus broken his promise to his lady. However, the breaking of this promise has occurred in a moment of rage, almost in spite of himself. Hence the fairy appears at the trial in order to help the barons make the right decision at the trial.

The sin in Lanval is a simple fault or misdemeanor. It is, in no sense, a theological sin.

In the Lai of Yonec the reader learns that Carwent once lay on the stream of the Duelas. This stream was at one time a navigable waterway. The aged Lord of Carwent had married a beautiful young woman, whom he kept a virtual prisoner in a tower, because he was jealous; the lord's aged sister was the only company she had. After seven years of such isolation, the lady's beauty began to fade and she

wished for nothing more ardently than death. One spring morning, when her husband had left the castle in pursuit of game and his sister was busily engaged in reading her psalter in another room, she began to complain bitterly of her fate. According to Breton legend, certain noble ladies and valiant young knights used to meet and make love. The knights were invisible to all but their ladies. If only God would allow her such a handsome young lover! thought the lady. Hardly had she uttered these words, when a hawk with thongs strapped to its feet came flying through the window, settled down in front of the lady and changed into a handsome knight. The knight informed the lady that he had loved her for a long time. But he could only come to her if she first called him; now, he could be her lover. But the lady would not heed his request for her love unless he could convince her that he believed in God. The knight promised to partake of the sacrament and say the Credo; let the lady, he suggested, pretend to be ill and call upon the priest for Holy Communion. The husband's sister refused the lady's request for a priest at first, but when she beheld the lady in a swoon and heard her mention the word death, she hastened to fetch the priest. Thus the knight having assumed the lady's "semblance" received Holy Communion from the priest's hand. Muldumarec (such was the knight's name) and the lady then made love.

Muldumarec promised to come to her as often as she wished, but she must be prudent; he had a presentiment that

the husband's sister would betray them and that he would die as a result. The lovers met often and the lady recovered her beauty. Her husband, noticing the change in her, discussed the matter with his sister to whom he gave instructions to spy on his wife, with a view to discovering what was happening. Muldumarec's presence was discovered by the husband's sister, who immediately informed her brother. The deceived husband had knife-like prongs installed at the window where the hawk-knight usually entered.

On the following morning the husband ostensibly departed for a day's hunting. The hawk, as usual, flew through the window but was fatally injured by the prongs. The hawk-knight, who was bleeding profusely, told the lady he was going to die. He told her that she would bear a son who would avenge them both. The knight left the lady, who followed him a little later to an entrance at the side of a mountain. Then she crossed a meadow and saw a city, whose houses were all silver and a river where a great number of ships lay at anchor. The city-gates were open and the lady had only to follow the traces of her lover's blood to reach a palace. She passed through two rooms, in each of which a knight lay asleep. In the third room she found her beloved lying on a magnificent bed. He told her he was going to die at noon and urged her to leave. She might be in danger. His people knew that he was dying because of her love. He then gave her a ring, explaining that as long as she wore it,

her husband would forget the past. He also gave her a sword, which she was to hand over to their son, later when he would be a young man. Muldumarec then foretold that she and her son and her husband would go on a pilgrimage to Karlion. In an abbey they would find a tomb and the monks would tell her how he (Muldumarec) met his death. It would be necessary then, for the lady to tell her son the whole story of their love and their betrayal and to give the son the sword.

The lady, on her way home, heard bells ringing. The people were mourning their King Muldumarec, who had just died. The lady fainted several times. Having reached her husband's home she noticed that he made no reference to what had happened, nor did he reprove her for her conduct. The son, Yonec, grew up to be a splendid youth and was duly dubbed Knight.

In the same year that Yonec became a knight, the lady, her husband, and her son traveled to St. Aaron. At Karlion a young boy led them to the Abbey, where they spent a night. On the following morning the Abbot invited them to prolong their stay another day and visit the Abbey. In the chapter-room they found a newly decorated tomb; twenty candles burned night and day in this room. The travellers were told that the lord of Karlion was buried there. He died because of his love for a lady and the people were still waiting for his son to appear and rule his kingdom.

On hearing this, the lady understood it was time to act. She told her son the story of her life and her love for his father Muldumarec. She then handed over the sword and fell dead upon the tomb of her beloved. The son gripped his sword and cut off his step-father's head, thus avenging the death of both parents. Yonec became King of Karlion.

The magic element is again very prominent in Yonec, where a hawk with thongs strapped to its feet comes flying through a window and then changes into a handsome young knight. The latter could not have appeared at all, had the lady not called him. He assumes the lady's "semblance" to partake of the Sacrament. When the hawk-knight is fatally wounded and departs for his kingdom, the lady follows him into his silver city or magic realm. He gives the lady a ring, which will make her husband forget the past as long as she wears it.

The destiny motif is equally prominent. The lady is destined to spend seven years in the isolation of her tower. "Mult est dure ma destinee," she complains. On another occasion the hawk-knight asserts that he knows the husband's sister will betray him and that he (Muldumarec) will die. He also foretells that the lady and her son will be shown his tomb (i.e. Muldumarec's) at an abbey. The lovers are joined together in death at the end of the lay and yet their love lives on, as it were, in Yonec, who has become King of Karlion.

The lady's changed looks are the cause of the hawk-knight's death. Muldumarec had warned her to try not to show her love, for this would surely bring about his death. This, then, is her sin (in the sense of a fault or misdemeanor). Again, it is in no sense a theological sin.

Pur vostre amur perc jeo la vie!
Bien le vus dis qu'en avendreit,
vostre semblant nus ocireit.

Muldumarec had also counselled moderation,

Mes telle mesure esgardez,
que nus ne seium encumbrez.

for too much love (and the manifestation of love) would bring death.

In the Lai of Guigemar, the hero, who was a son of Oridials, grew up at King Hoel's court in Brittany. Having become a valiant knight, he left his country to seek fame in other lands. He had only one failing. He could not feel affection or love for any woman.

After Guigemar had returned to Brittany, he went off one morning in pursuit of game. He stretched his bow and drew upon a white hind. His arrow struck the animal's hoof, but rebounded and pierced his thigh, thus compelling him to dismount. Then the white hind spoke, saying that he (Guigemar) would never be cured of his wound until such time as he should meet a lady, who would love him and whom he would love, but this love would bring such suffering to both of them as is seldom experienced by men and women. Guigemar then felt that he should leave his companions and wandered on until

he came to a river he did not recognize, where a splendid ship awaited him. He rested for a while on a magnificent bed in the ship. When he arose from the bed the ship started to move. Later in the day, it arrived at a castle near an ancient city, which was the capital of the country. The lord of this city was an old man who, being jealous, allowed his wife little freedom. At the foot of the donjon was a garden (shut in on all sides). The walls were of green marble, high and thick. There was only one entrance guarded night and day. On the fourth side was the sea. No one was allowed to approach his wife, save the lady's niece, and an old priest who attended to her spiritual needs. On the evening that Guigemar arrived at the castle, the lady and her niece were in the garden. They saw the ship, boarded it out of curiosity, and soon found themselves standing in front of the wounded knight. They thought Guigemar was dead, but the knight awoke and told them his story. He invoked so much sympathy from his audience, that the ladies offered to lodge him until his recovery. The ladies led him to the castle, bound up his wound and nursed him so well that soon Guigemar's wound healed, but he fell in love with the lady. Guigemar felt that if his love were not returned he would surely die. He first discussed his passion with the lady's niece, who was very devoted to her aunt. The niece promised to help if she could. When the lady returned from Mass one morning, Guigemar confessed his love to her.

As she was enamoured of the knight and realised the sincerity of his feelings, she granted him her love. For a year and a half the two lovers lived together happily.

One morning, however, the lady had a foreboding that fate would soon separate her from her lover. She, therefore, tied a knot in his shirt and made him promise that he would never love any other woman than the one who could untie the knot without cutting it. In the same way the knight encircled her waist with a girdle and asked her to marry only that knight who could open the clasp of the girdle without destroying it. One day a chamberlain, discovering the lovers, reported the matter to the lady's husband, who appeared with three of his men. Guigemar told him his story, but the husband would not believe him. He challenged him to show him the magic ship. Guigemar departed in search of the ship, which he found waiting for him. The ship carried him back to his native Brittany. Guigemar was welcomed by all his friends, but he remained depressed because he was now separated from his lady. Guigemar's vassals and friends told him he should marry, but he always answered that he would only marry the lady who could untie the knot of his shirt. Not one of the young ladies in Brittany, who made the attempt, was successful.

For two years Guigemar's friend remained a prisoner in the tower. Then one day she left despite all the bolts and bars in the castle. She wanted to drown herself, for

she had been very unhappy during these past two years. However, she found the magic ship, which had already conveyed Guigemar twice, awaiting her. When she had gone on board it sailed away and continued until it arrived in front of a castle belonging to a knight called Meriaduc, who fell in love with the lady immediately. Meriaduc wooed her in vain, for he could not unclasp the girdle, try as he might. Many of the knights made the attempt, but they all failed. Meriaduc was engaged in military operations against a neighboring lord. He, therefore, held a tournament to which he invited many valiant knights, including Guigemar, to help him defeat the enemy. Thus, it came about that Guigemar met his friend once more. They dared hardly speak to one another. Meriaduc noticed their strange conduct and mockingly suggested that the lady undo the knot of Guigemar's shirt. This she performed with complete success. Guigemar then recognized the girdle she was wearing. He explained the situation to those around him and asked Meriaduc to give him back his friend. He would serve under Meriaduc with his men for two or three years, if necessary. Meriaduc refused and Guigemar declared war on him. All the knights in the city decided to support Guigemar and go over to Meriaduc's enemy. Meriaduc's Castle was beleaguered, the defenders starved into submission, and the garrison killed. Guigemar was, at last, united with his beloved. Their suffering was over.

In Guigemar, as opposed to the two fairy-lays of Lanval and Yonec, both the hero and heroine are human beings. The lady is probably not a fairy, even if she is able to leave the castle where she has been imprisoned for so long behind bolts and bars. Marie also writes of Meriaduc and his chamberlain.

Dedenz unt la dame trovee,
Ki de belté resemble fee.

There is insufficient evidence, however, in the Lai to warrant the assumption that she is meant to be a fairy.

Fairy-tale elements are clearly discernible in this lay, however--the white hind or roe that speaks, the unfamiliar river, the magic ship--for example. The wound from which Guigemar suffers must be viewed symbolically or magically. The pain seems to compel him to leave his companions and he is drawn towards the river to the ship. By the time he reaches the river his familiar world has disappeared. Jeanne Lods has clarified considerably lines 145-151 of Guigemar. The changes of punctuation suggested are indeed important, for they make it quite clear that the stream, which Guigemar knew, has become a magic river with a harbour for ships. It is the presence of the "tref" which worries Guigemar not the fact that it is a pilotless conveyance. Guigemar's familiar surroundings have to change before he can experience real love.^{1,2}

¹Jeanne Lods, "New Interpretation of Guigemar, v. 145-50," Romania, LXXVII, 1956.

²See Appendix C.

The destiny motif again appears in the Lai of Guigemar. The hero, at first, rejects the love of all "dames et puceles," but the symbolism of knot and girdle would also seem to indicate that Guigemar and his lady were destined for one another--their love excludes all other possible loves (e.g. the lady does not love her husband or Meriaduc--none of the ladies in Brittany can undo the knot in Guigemar's shirt). Guigemar is told by the dying white hind about his destiny. He will suffer from his wounds until he meets a woman whom he loves and who will love him. They will both have to suffer, however, before attaining happiness together. Friedrich Schürr has suggested that the basic theme in Guigemar is to be found in the allegorical painting on the wall, where the goddess Venus is depicted as throwing into the fire the Remedia Amoris of Ovid. Venus is seen excommunicating all those who ever read this book or who carry out its teaching. Guigemar's destiny was to love a particular lady.¹

The sin in Guigemar is more than indifference to love; it is probably, as F. Schürr asserts, a striving against or a resistance to love. Schürr believes that the destiny which was foretold by the speaking white hind to Guigemar, was partly intended as necessary atonement for original sin, but also as punishment for his hubris which

¹Friedrich Schürr, "Komposition und Symbolik in den Lais der Marie de France," Zeitschrift für Romanische Philologie, L, 1930, p. 560.

is the cause of his resistance to love. This writer would agree that the sin in Guigemar was arrogance, or excessive pride, and that it might be considered a theological sin.

Milun, a most valiant knight, was born in South Wales. His fame had spread to Ireland, Norway, Gotland, England, and Scotland. A young lady, who had heard of his valour, became enamoured of him and offered him her love. Milun sent her a ring as a symbol of his own love for her. They met often and made love. The lady became pregnant. Milun's friend feared greatly the punishments meted out against women who have a child, born out of wedlock. She and Milun agreed that the child should be sent, as soon as it was born, to the lady's sister in Northumbria. A bracelet, along with a letter of explanation, would be attached to the child's neck. When the time came the newly-born child was taken as arranged to Northumbria, where his aunt was happy to adopt him. Milun then left the country again to win fame in foreign wars. During his absence his friend was married off by her father to a rich baron. When Milun returned he was distressed to hear about his friend's plight. Milun wrote a letter, which he hid under the feathers of a swan. His squire, disguised as a fowler, obtained an interview with the lady, ostensibly to gain the lady's support and protection for his calling, and handed over the swan. The lady felt the letter and guessed at once that it was Milun's. She gave the messenger many rich gifts, dismissed

him, then read the letter. Thus the swan came to be used as an intermediary between Milun and his friend. Milun would feed the swan well for some time, then he would let it starve for three days before it flew away with a letter. The lady also sent Milun letters with the help of the swan. Thus, the lovers were able to meet on several occasions.

Twenty years passed by. Meanwhile, Milun's son had become a handsome, valiant knight. His aunt gave him the ring and the letter which she had originally received from his parents. The son wished to be the equal of his father in knightly prowess, so he set out to win fame. He set sail from Southampton, later reaching Barbefluet in France. Soon he acquired a reputation as a knight, for he entertained lavishly. When Milun heard about this young man, a feeling of ill-will overcame him at the thought that another should be so highly esteemed. Milun decided to meet the stranger in combat, then he would seek out his son. Milun's friend approved the plan. He crossed over to Normandy and to Brittany and soon his fame began to spread also. A tournament was being held at Mont St. Michel. Here were many Normans, Bretons, Flemings, and French, but few English knights. Among the latter was the young knight, whom Milun now saw for the first time. Milun fought well, but the young man received the most praise and acclaim. Milun, having decided to joust with this young knight, dealt him such a blow that the shaft of the knight's lance was broken in pieces. On the other hand, Milun was unhorsed

by his opponent. When the stranger saw Milun's grey hair and beard beneath his visor, he regretted having unsaddled him. Milun then noticed the young knight's ring and asked him about his parents. Before the stranger could finish his story, Milun had excitedly informed him that he (the young knight) was his son. The son dismounted and embraced his father. The spectators were then given an explanation of what was happening. Many of them wept with joy. Milun told his son how he had loved his mother and how the swan had been the intermediary for their love over a long period. Milun's son stated he would unite his parents and kill the husband of Milun's friend.

On the return journey to England, however, Milun received the news that his friend's husband had died. Milun and his son were urged to hasten home. Thus Milun and the lady were at last united by their son.

In Milun, there are no fairy-tale elements, and the themes of sin and destiny are closely related. The sin is presumably that the young girl in the story has offered herself to the man she loves. The son is born out of wedlock. As marriage is a religious sacrament, where the rights and obligations of both partners are stressed, the sin in Milun might be considered theological.

It is the destiny of the lovers to be parted for a long period of time although they are able to meet on several occasions. When Milun's friend has given birth to a boy,

the latter is immediately taken to Northumbria, where an aunt adopts him and brings him up. This measure is found to be necessary because the law of the country deals severely with mothers whose offspring are born out of wedlock-- Milun's friend might have been put to the sword or sold in foreign lands.

Destiny leads Milun's son, who has become a valiant knight, to meet his father in combat at Mont St. Michel. On their return homewards Milun receives a message from his friend that her husband has died (Milun's son is therefore not destined to kill his mother's husband). Thus, as Leo Spitzer¹ has stated, "Die Liebenden werden durch das Kind, das ihrer Verbindung entstammt, geeint," and later he writes: "der moralisch lautere Sohn gibt dem Vater die Mutter."

In the *Lai of Laostic* two knights, who were neighbours, lived in St. Malo. One of the knights had a beautiful, intelligent wife. The other, a bachelor, had become attached to her and the lady returned his affection. The lovers could often see one another and speak to each other. They loved wisely and discreetly. With the arrival of summer the lady and her friend felt more than ever the power of love. During the night, the lady would often leave her husband's side to stand at a window in order to see her lover. In the end,

¹Leo Spitzer, "Marie de France - Dichterin von Problem-Märchen," Zeitschrift für Romanische Philologie, 1930, L, 34.

her husband became angry and he asked her what she was doing. She replied she was listening to the song of the nightingale. It was a beautiful song, she must listen to it, rather than sleep. The husband then decided to destroy the nightingale. All kinds of contrivances (nets and snares) were installed and bird-lime was plastered on all the branches of the trees. Soon he brought in the little bird, that his wife might see it. "The nightingale will never disturb your sleep again," he said, and he twisted the nightingale's neck, throwing the little body at his wife so that bloodstains appeared on her "Chainse." The lady wept, then wrapped up the little body in a velvet cloth embroidered with gold. She sent a valet to her lover, that he might receive the body of the nightingale and might learn how the nightingale had met its death. The knight, who was very chivalrous and well-mannered, had a casket made from gold and precious stones. The nightingale's body, having been placed inside, the casket was sealed and the knight never parted with it.

In Laostic, destiny has brought the two lovers together, for the lady's husband and her lover are neighbours. The lovers can see each other frequently and can converse. During the night, the lady leaves her husband's side to be near her lover. However, the husband becomes suspicious and jealous. The nightingale is caught and becomes a victim to his spite. The lady wraps up the body of the little bird in a velvet cloth and sends it to her friend, who has a

precious casket made. The body of the nightingale is placed inside. Having sealed the casket, the lady's lover never parts with it.

Does the Lai Laostic really have a happy ending? The nightingale is a victim of love. It is also a symbol of love. The nightingale was brutally murdered. But can love be extinguished as easily? From this point of view, it might be held that the ending is a happy one. Yet the drops of blood on the lady's "Chainse" are also symbolical. They mean that happiness on earth of any kind must be paid for, and that human love is fragile. Further, although the love relationship in the lai appears to be Platonic, it must be remembered that the Platonic ladder is rather slippery. For this reason the writer would agree with Hoepffner¹ when he writes: "On reconnaît, sous une forme atténuée, la grande idée fondamentale des romans de Tristan, la mort, cruelle rançon d'un amour coupable." It seems to this writer that this charming lai, to be appreciated fully, must be examined against such a background. There is no happy ending and the sin implied is that of adultery.

In the Lai of Chevrefoil, King Mark had banished his nephew from his court. Tristan remained for a year in South Wales, but his love for Iseut soon compelled him to return to Cornwall. There he lived alone in the woods

¹Ernest Hoepffner, Les Lais de Marie de France (Paris: Nizet, 1959), pp. 142-143.

during the day, and at night lodged with peasants. He learned from them that a festival would be held at Tintagel, to which all the barons would be summoned, at Pentecost, and the queen would be there. On the day when the queen and her retinue were due to pass by the forest where Tristan was hiding, the latter cut a square-shaped block of wood from a hazel tree--then he carved his name upon a stick. Tristan had earlier written a letter¹ to the queen, in which he assured her that he could no longer live without her. They were like the honey-suckle and the hazel; neither could exist without the other. Tristan placed the stick in the path where the royal procession would pass. When the queen saw the staff, she gave her escort instructions to halt and she dismounted, ostensibly, to rest a while with her faithful servant Brenguein. The lovers meet, to their great joy. The queen tells Tristan that King Mark regrets having banished him from the court. He will soon be recalled. The lovers then take leave of one another and Tristan returns to South Wales, where he intends to remain until such time as his uncle invites him back to the court. Tristan composes a lai to commemorate the words, which he wrote to the queen and the joy he experienced on seeing her again.

Tristan is, of course, the knight of medieval legend, whom King Mark of Cornwall had earlier sent to Ireland to

¹The various interpretations of the message will be discussed later.

bring back the princess Isolde (or Iseut) as the King's bride. Isolde and Tristan unwittingly drank a magic potion, which induced them to fall in love. Ultimately, they died together.

The background to Marie de France's Lai, i.e. the events leading up to the situation in Marie's lai, is, therefore, one of predestination and sin. The lovers are destined to drink the magic potion and are therefore destined to fall in love with one another and later to commit adultery. This is the sin for which they pay the ransom of death. Like Marie's other lai Laostic, this lai only appears to end on a happy note.

In Les Deus Amanz, Marie de France explains how a mountain called "le Mont des Deus Amanz," near Pitre, in Normandy, acquired its name. A king once reigned at Pitre on the Seine. After his wife's death, this king lavished all his affection upon an only daughter. Because he did not wish to marry her off, his subjects found fault with his conduct. As he wished to silence his accusers, he let it be known everywhere that whoever wished to win the king's daughter, would have to carry her to the top of the mountain, outside the town, without pausing for a rest. Many undertook this ordeal, but none succeeded. A handsome youth, who lived at the court, won the heart of the king's daughter. They loved one another secretly. The youth knew that the task imposed upon him by the king would be beyond his strength.

He, therefore, suggested to his friend that they elope. The young lady would not agree to this suggestion. She did not wish to hurt her father, whom she loved very much. She suggested that the youth go to Salerno, where she had an aunt, who was versed in the medicinal qualities of herbs. This aunt would concoct a potion, which would give him sufficient strength to undertake the ordeal that had been instituted by her father. When the youth returned from Italy, he paid the king a visit and asked for his daughter's hand in marriage. The king thought he was not strong enough to undertake the ordeal, but he granted him permission to attempt it. The young lady did everything possible to make the youth's task easier.

In the presence of all the king's vassals and friends, the youth began, one day, to climb up the mountain, bearing in his arms the king's daughter, who wore only a very light garment. When he had advanced half-way up the mountain the maiden felt that he was beginning to tire. She suggested on several occasions that he drink the potion, but he did not want to stop. He claimed that the shouts of the crowd might unnerve him. Instead of drinking the potion, he could advance three steps farther. The youth reached the top of the mountain, but he had overstrained himself. He fell down and died suddenly. The young lady, thinking that he was unconscious, tried to place the phial between his lips that he might drink. When she realised that he was dead, she

threw the phial upon the mountain-side and the liquid caused many flowers and herbs to spring up. The young lady then kissed her dead lover, lay down beside him and died of a broken heart.

The king and his vassals mourned the sad fate of the lovers and three days later the lovers were buried at the top of the mountain in a marble coffin.

The only magic element that the poetess introduces into this lai, is that of the potion which, when thrown upon the mountain-side, causes flowers and herbs to spring up.

The king's daughter is destined not to be given away in marriage to any suitor, although with a view to satisfying his vassals, the King has instituted the ordeal already described.

The youth knows quite well that he cannot possibly achieve success in his undertaking. The fact that he first suggests an elopement, proves this. During the ordeal, the youth's friend urges him to drink the potion, but he makes what are probably specious excuses--e.g. instead of drinking he could advance three steps farther, the noise of the people assembled below might disturb him. The truth is that he wishes to owe little to the strength-giving potion. He wishes to reach the top of the mountain, unaided. His is a case of excessive love, but is it not also to some extent a case of excessive pride or hubris?

On the other hand, at first, the youth is prepared to suffer, rather than act quickly or rashly and then fail in his design (lines 68-70). He concurs with his friend's suggestion, that he should go to Salerno. When he tells the King that he wishes to attempt the ordeal, the King thinks it very unwise ("mes mult le tint a grant folie")--then the poetess herself adds later, "Mes jo criem que poi ne li vaille, kar n'ot en lui point de mesure." The inference to be drawn from these facts seems to the writer to be that there is more "desmesure" and "folie" than hubris in the portrait of this lover. The fact that he was only a "damisel" is an additional reason for regretting his misfortune. The young lady, however, who was not only beautiful, but also sensible, is entitled to the reader's compassion.

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In addition to describing the content of Marie de France's seven lais in this chapter, the writer has also discussed, where this was possible, the magic element, the destiny motif, and the theme of sin. His aim was to reveal the complexity of these particular works of Marie de France. It is fairly obvious that there must be other threads in this strand of complexity, yet perhaps these particular threads--magic elements, destiny motif, and the theme of sin--will allow us to arrive at certain conclusions now.

In Lanval the fairy element is more prominent than in all the other lays (with the possible exception of Yonec).

As interesting as the fairy-world of Lanval is, it is the fusion of two worlds--the fairy and the real--which must be conceived to be Marie's most remarkable artistic achievement. This complex fusion of two worlds is to be found, for example, towards the end of the lay, when the fairies make their appearance among the knights and barons of King Arthur's Court. Marie knows how to give the story the spice of verisimilitude.

Yet there is a sense in which the two worlds are quite separate. As has already been pointed out, as soon as the fairy had done everything possible to acquit Lanval of those charges that had been levelled against him, she departed speedily to her own magic realm.

The destiny motif and the theme of sin (sin, in the sense of a fault or misdemeanor), undoubtedly help to give this lai its distinctive flavour. The lovers, after all, are destined for one another, yet Lanval's boast¹ threatens, at one point of the story, to endanger this relationship.

In Lanval, the fairy is visible to one person and not to others (for example, to Lanval only during the first part of the story). Towards the end of the Lai, she is seen for a brief period by all at King Arthur's Court. In Yonec, on the other hand, the magic is closely tied up with the transformation motif. The hawk becomes the knight Muldumarec,

¹Schürr, op. cit., p. 563.

or the knight changes into a hawk. This hawk-knight is also King of Karlſon. The lady's sin or fault is in this lay an extremely complex concept ("vostre semblanz nus ocireit"). The fault would seem to be lack of moderation in love or too much happiness in love.

In Guigemar, the destiny motif and the theme of sin are important threads in the strand of this complex lai. Those have been fully discussed. There are a few hints of magic--the lady escapes mysteriously from her prison, the word "feé" is used to describe her beauty. There is, of course, the speaking white hind, the stream that has become a river (transformation motif!), and the magic ship. Unlike those in Lanval and Yonec, the hero and heroine in Guigemar are both human beings. The knot in Guigemar's shirt and the lady's girdle point to further complexity, for these objects are symbolic. They are connected also to the destiny motif and to the concept of an exclusive love. Guigemar has been assigned a place among "les lais féériques" by Hoepffner (along with Lanval and Yonec), but it is partly a symbolic lay!

In Milun, the first of the group of purely symbolic lais, the swan is the messenger of love--a love, which endures in spite of many obstacles. Once Milun has discovered his son, however, it is the latter who, in a sense, replaces the swan, for it is he who unites his parents. The complexity in Milun lies mainly in the symbolism. Destiny and sin are

closely connected as themes in this lai, as has been shown, but there is no magic element discernible. Laostic is also a symbolic lai, where the significance of the nightingale and the drops of blood on the lady's garment has been discussed at some length. The complexity of this lai would also seem to lie in the fact that it can be read at two different levels--as a charming, entertaining story with a fairly happy ending, or as a story with a deeper meaning than might at first appear.

The Lai des Deus Amanz cannot be classified as a magic or a symbolic lay.¹ The only magic element is the strength-giving potion. The sin or fault of the young man is that of excessive love, "desmesure" or "folie." Destiny was unkind to the lovers from the beginning. The story unfolds simply and entertainingly and would appear to be less complex than some of the other lays. However, Marie, in the introduction to the lai, informs us that the two lovers lie buried at the top of the mountain ("a un halt munt merveilles grant: la sus gisent li dui enfant.") The poetess repeats this statement at the end of the poem, phrasing it differently, of course: "Desur le munt les enfuirent." She also adds, as in most of her lays, "Li Bretun enfuirent un lai." Marie de France appears to be

¹ See, however, Anna Granville Hatcher, "Lai du Chevre-feuil," Romania (3rd Book), Vol. 71 (1950), p. 333.

interested in the story but she also wishes to refer to some definite period in the past (later the Bretons composed a lai!!) In other words, the poetess, by providing some kind of a frame-work for the story (or by her imaginative treatment of the story) has idealized the original incident or sentimental episode.

On analysis, the complexity of this particular lai, then, will be seen to reside in its structure, overall-design or "form."

The examination of seven of Marie de France's Lais, has revealed to some extent, it is hoped, the complexity of her artistic productions--complexity of theme (as in Lanval, Yonec, Guigemar), complexity of symbolism (as in Milun, Laostic, Guigemar), and complexity of structure (as in Les Deus Amanz). Is there, on occasion, in the works of Marie de France complexity of language?

It might be fitting, at this point, to examine a passage from "Chevrefoil," which has been much debated owing to its apparent lack of clarity. The writer is referring to the "message" in Chevrefoil (lines 61-78), and also to lines 107-113 (see Appendix E). Is Marie de France really to be accused of lack of clarity in this passage? One section of her Prologue to the Lais (lines 9-22), although at one time it must have appeared to be quite lacking in clarity, is no longer considered so obscure.

It is not the aim of the writer to discuss the different interpretations of this passage in great detail. Such an undertaking would require a separate chapter in this thesis. The writer's aim is merely to suggest that, perhaps, after all there is no real lack of clarity in the lines to be discussed. What there is, is again complexity--a complexity of language. Some of the scholars, who have been preoccupied with the poem have also produced complex solutions in their interpretations!

In Marie de France's Chevrefoil, Tristan fashions a block of wood four-square from a hazel-tree and carves his name on a stick. Various interpretations of the "message" in lines 61-78 have been given. Some critics, such as Gertrud Schoepperle,¹ and Grace Frank,² believe that the whole message of Marie's lines was written on the stave of hazel-wood. (Tristan stated in this message that he had waited for Iseut for a long time; they were like the honey-suckle and the hazel: neither could exist without the other.) Grace Frank believes that Marie had rune sticks or ogham tablets in mind for letters graven on wood, wands, and square staves with poems and other inscriptions upon them, were no novelty in the Twelfth Century. Marie de France, thus, intended us to think of the whole message as carved on wood. Lines 107-113

¹Gertrud Schoepperle, "Chevrefoil," Romania (1909), Vol. XXXVIII, pp. 196-218.

²Grace Frank, "Marie de France and the Tristan Legend," Publications of the Modern Language Assoc. (1948), Vol. 63(1), pp. 405-411.

would, therefore, mean that Tristan wrote a Lai to commemorate his meeting with the queen and the writing on the stave. Other critics, such as Leopold Sudre,¹ Lucien Foulet and Alfred Ewert² are against the idea of a long message, carved on wood. Tristan cannot have written out a message, the import of which fills seventeen lines. Also, the queen could hardly have read this message as she rode past on horseback. Foulet and Ewert are of the opinion that Tristan must first have sent the queen a written message, warning her of his presence in the forest and reminding her of some particular signal that had been used on previous occasions (lines 57-58); lines 63-78 would, therefore, indicate the content of that letter. The lines 77-78 would be a fitting conclusion to it. In other words, Tristan used the stick of hazel-wood with the letters T-R-I-S-T-A-N only, carved upon it, as had been agreed. Lines 107-113 would seem to mean that Tristan composed a lai to commemorate the meeting of Tristan with the queen and the writing on the stave as the queen had directed.

Miss Rickert³ believes that the message was conveyed in the symbolism of the hazel and the honeysuckle. Leo Spitzer⁴ is of the opinion that the queen was inspired, in

¹Leopold Sudre, Romania, XV (1886), p. 551.

²Lais, ed. Alfred Ewert (Oxford, 1958), p. 184.

³Edith Rickert, Marie de France: Seven of her Lays done into English (Notes David Nutt, 1901), p. 193.

⁴Leo Spitzer, "La lettre sur la Baguette de Coudrier" dans le Lai du Chievrefeuil, Romanische Literatur-Studien, 1936-56 (Tubingen: 1959), pp. 3-14.

that she read beneath the literal surface of the bark to its spiritual core and divined her lover's message. Miss A.G. Hatcher¹ approves of Spitzer's interpretation. (She does not, however, agree that--"pur les paroles remembrer"--line 111, refers to line 96--"e ele li dist sun plaisir"--at a distance of 15 lines!"). If the stick of wood were found unexpectedly in her path, the name Tristan would be a message to the queen. The message existed, but only as an evocation, finally to be recorded as a lai (lines 102-113); a name, engraved for Iseut on hazel-wood, would not only be a sign of Tristan's presence, but would become "a symbol of their love--that is, a message: then a silent voice (Bele Amie, si est de nus--) then the voice of Iseut (--si com la reine l'ot dit), who repeats to him the words she had divined--to become at last a poem, set to music and given final shape by art; a witness to the miracle of love's understanding." Pierre le Gentil² pays tribute to Leo Spitzer's contribution to the debate, but seems unwilling to commit himself completely to Spitzer's approach to the problems involved in the interpretation of texts such as that of Chievrefeuil. He believes that lines 77-78, "Bele amie, si est de nus: ne vus senz mei ne jeo senz vus!" were written on Tristan's stick

¹Hatcher, op. cit., 330-344.

²Pierre le Gentil, "A Propos du Lai du Chievrefeuille et de l'interprétation des Textes Médiévaux" Mélanges d'histoire littéraire offerts à Henri Chamard (Paris: Nizet, 1951).

of hazel-wood as well as his name. Jean Frappier¹ also pays tribute to the contributions of Spitzer and Hatcher, but asserts that no miracle is involved in the sending and reception of the message. Marie states clearly in lines 57-60, the signal had been used on former occasions. There could, therefore, be no miracle. Frappier believes that insufficient attention has been paid to lines 57-60.

One thing may safely be asserted--this debate over the exact meaning to be assigned to lines 61-78 and lines 107-113, is not over yet. It may be that the disputants appear to differ, more than they really do. Leo Spitzer and Miss Hatcher are particularly interested in "developing new varieties of symbolic logic." Miss Grace Frank,² on the other hand, has this to say:

For my part, if Marie de France writes of werewolves, magic potions, speaking hinds, hawks that turn into knights, ships that sail themselves, a fairy mistress who appears and disappears at will, I do not ask how such things can be. Tristan might carve a message, whose import fills twice seventeen lines, and I would not question Marie's poetic right to have him do so.

From the above analysis of the different interpretations of the two passages taken from Chevrefoil, the inference seems to be, either, that Marie de France was

¹Jean Frappier, "Contribution au Débat sur le Lai du Chievrefeuille," Mélanges de linguistique et de littérature romanes à la mémoire d'Istvan Frank (Saarbrücken: Annales Universitatis Saraviensis, 1957).

²Frank, op. cit., p. 406.

lacking in clarity of expression or that Marie's language, when she attempts to express an intricate idea (such as that of lines 9-22, in the Prologue to the Lais, or the message of Chievrefeuille) attains such complexity and subtlety that a modern reader is unable to grasp the meaning and all its implications, whereas an intelligent reader or listener in the Twelfth Century might have succeeded.

Pierre le Gentil¹ has pointed out that the reader of a medieval lay, such as the Lai of Chevrefoil, is capable of feeling the poetry inherent in it, yet is unable to understand the creative process that led to its perfection of form. The reader can trace certain obvious techniques and indicate the topoi, but he cannot follow "les mouvements obscurs" which are probably the most important part of the creative process. Pierre le Gentil writes:

A coup sûr, restituer à la forme ses vertus originales est ce qui présente peut-être pour nous la difficulté la plus grave; l'utilisation des mots, avec toute leur gamme de résonances, celle des tours syntaxiques, ou des façons de dire, cet ensemble de choix, faits de victoires, de compromis ou de défaites, qui aboutissent à l'expression, tout cela a de grandes chances, en effet, de nous échapper plus ou moins complètement ----- Nous ignorons ce je ne sais quoi, qui donne à l'ancienne langue sa vie et son mouvement.

In this chapter, the attempt to show the complex features of the works of Marie de France (complexity of

¹le Gentil, op., cit., p. 17.

themes, symbols, structure and language) has really been an attempt to reveal the sophistication and artistry of the poetess. The simplicity of her writings is only apparent simplicity.

There can be little doubt that her most perfect production is the Lais, yet it would be a great mistake to imagine that her other works are lacking in complexity and sophistication. Hans Robert Jauss¹ has shown that the Fables--those moral allegories--are more original than Warnke² had at one time suggested (this originality is closely allied to the complexity of her productions and to her sophistication of thought). As for the Espurgatoire de Seint Patriz, the American scholar, R. Foster Damon³ suggests that "it points towards Dante and his elaborate system of fourfold meanings." The differences in complexity and sophistication, therefore, in Marie's works are not differences of kind; they are differences of degree.

This writer hopes, then, that he has revealed, by an analysis of seven of the lais of Marie de France, the complexity of the poetess' writings.

¹Hans Robert Jauss, "Untersuchungen zur Mittelalterlichen Tierdichtung," Erstes Kapitel, Die erste Volkssprachliche Fabelsammlung und ihr Verhältnis zur "Asopisch-Christlichen" Tradition. Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für Romanische Philologie, (100 Heft), (Tübingen, 1959), S. 26.

²Karl Warnke, "Fables--Introduction," Die Quelle des Esope der Marie de France, Forschungen zur Rom. Phil. Festgabe für Hermann Suchier (Halle: 1900), p. 259.

³S. Foster-Damon, "Marie de France: Psychologist of Courtly Love," Publications of the Modern Language Assoc., XLIV (1929), 968 ff.

One of the several threads examined in the strand of Marie's productions was the theme of sin. The writer discovered that the sin mentioned in Lanval and Yonec could only be described as a fault or misdemeanour. The sin in Les Deus Amanz was that of excessive love "folie" or "desmesure." The "sin" in Milun was, presumably, the "sin" of the parents, whose son was born out of wedlock. In Guigemar, the sin is hubris or an excessive belief in one's own worth. In Laostic and Chevrefoil, the basic theme is adultery, leading to death.

The last four lays, therefore--Milun, Guigemar, Laostic and Chievrefeuil--are those where the theme of theological sin appears to be best illustrated.

In the next chapter the writer hopes to show where the theme of saintliness and sin are best illustrated.

CHAPTER VI

THE LAIS

BISCLAVRET, EQUITAN, CHAITIVEL, FRAISNE, AND ELIDUC

Five more Lais remain to be considered. The writer, after describing the content of each of the first three lays--Bisclavret, Equitan, and Chaitivel--intends to pursue his analysis of the theme of sin. In the same way, after discussing the substance of the Lais Fraisine and Eliduc, he will comment on the theme of saintliness.

In the lai Bisclavret, a valiant knight, held in high esteem by his liege-lord and loved by his neighbours, had married a virtuous and beautiful lady. They loved one another very much, yet one thing caused the lady acute sorrow. Her husband would leave her for three days every week and no one knew where he went and what he did.

One day his wife informed him she would like to ask him something, but she was afraid he would be angry if she did. He kissed her, promising that he would tell her all that he knew, provided it were in his power to do so. The lady then asked him where he went and what he did during his absence from home. The knight begged her not to question him further in the matter for, if she were to know all, she

might cease to love him. Naturally, the lady was not satisfied with this answer. She besought him with prayers and caresses to tell her the whole truth, and in the end the knight yielded to her entreaties. During a period of three days in the week he was compelled to become a werewolf. He would hide in the thickest part of the forest and there live on prey and plunder. The lady then asked him about his clothes. Did he still wear them? No, he replied, he would lay them aside. The knight, however, was not prepared to tell his wife where he laid them, for, if ever they were stolen, he would have to remain a werewolf for the remainder of his days. The lady insisted that she should be told everything and, in the end, the knight yielded once more to her entreaties. Near an old chapel, under a thick shrub was a large stone with a hollow beneath it--there he hid his clothes.

La dame oí cele merveille,
de pour fu tute vermeille.

When the lady had discovered the whole truth about her husband's absences, her love was changed to loathing, and she could only think of escape. Then she decided to consult a certain knight who had loved her formerly and still did. In her distress she turned to this knight and asked him to steal her husband's clothes, while the latter was still roaming the woods in wolf's form. Thus Bisclavret was betrayed by his wife. A search was organized to discover

his whereabouts but this proved fruitless. Subsequently the lady married her friend.

A year later the king went hunting in that very forest where Bisclavret was roaming. The hounds came upon the track of the werewolf. It was pursued all day and would have been torn apart, had he not fled to the king, seized him by the stirrup, and licked his foot. The king was amazed and told his companions to drive away the dogs. He would hunt no more that day. The werewolf followed the king and his suite to the castle, where he was well fed and cared for. The king let it be known that he should be treated well.

Some time later the King held court and summoned all his barons. The knight who had betrayed the werewolf was among those who entered the palace. As soon as Bisclavret saw him he sprang at him and would have torn him to pieces had not the King intervened. Bisclavret twice tried to seize the knight that day. Every-one was amazed for Bisclavret was usually gentle and docile.

Not long after this incident, the King went hunting in the forest, accompanied by the werewolf. Bisclavret's wife, who had learned that the King was sojourning in the neighbourhood, decided to pay him a visit and do homage to him. When Bisclavret saw her, he sprang at her savagely and bit the nose off her face. Those around were about to put an end to the wolf's life, when a wise councillor spoke up. He pointed out that the animal had never shown himself to be

vicious with any of the courtiers. The beast had attacked two people, the lady and the lord, her husband. Perhaps the lady should be questioned as to why the wolf hated her. The lady and her husband were assigned to separate prisons and Bisclavret's wife, fearing the worst, confessed that she had betrayed her first husband. She thought the werewolf might be her first husband. At the King's command, the clothes were produced and laid before Bisclavret, but the wolf would not even look at them. The wise councillor then suggested that the wolf be left in the king's room with the clothes, and that the doors be locked. They would see, later, what had happened. To this, the King agreed.

The King and some barons entered the room a little later and found the missing knight, sleeping peacefully. When he awoke, the King embraced him enthusiastically, and later saw to it that his lands were returned to him. Bisclavret's wife was exiled with her second husband. She had children, but the girls were all born "esnasees," i.e. without noses.

The reader can sympathise with Bisclavret's wife, when she first learns about her husband's transformation into wolf-form. The idea that he can become a savage animal, roaming the woods, fills her with fear and disgust. She no longer wishes to lie at his side and summons a friend to help her in her distress. However, she sends this friend to fetch the clothes, so that Bisclavret may never come back to her. Salvatore Battaglia (Salvatore Battaglia, Fir. III,

229-53. "Il mito del Licantropo nel Bisclavret di Maria di Francia.") points out: "La risoluzione ch'essa elegge è criminale e la mette immediatamente fuori dalla legge morale, non solo quella degli uomini e della società, ma soprattutto quella que vige nel mondo di Maria di Francia governato esclusivamente dalla norma degli affetti e della trasparenza spirituale."

Bisclavret's wife has sinned, in that she has betrayed her husband. She has condemned a partner in marriage (who was not a tyrant, or a jealous old man) to a horrible, miserable existence. She has victimized him. Such betrayal was, indeed, for Marie a sin against love, but the infliction of suffering upon others is also a sin in the theological sense of the word. The sin, in this lai, is not so much the sin of adultery; it is that of the betrayal and victimization of a partner in marriage.

In the Lai of Equitan, the King of Nantes is described as a pleasure-loving monarch, who spent most of his time in hunting river-sports, when he was not engaged in military operations. He also had many love affairs. King Equitan tended, therefore, to leave the administration of his realm to his seneschal. The latter had a very beautiful wife. The king had often heard her being praised and, although he had never seen her, he already loved her. At first, he sent greetings and presents. When he went hunting in the country, he would spend the night at the seneschal's castle. Thus, on

one occasion he saw the lady and her grace, charm, and cleverness captivated him. King Equitan could not sleep that night. He made up his mind, on that occasion, to declare his love on the following day. He knew his love was stronger than his feelings of duty towards the seneschal. In the morning, having feigned sickness, he summoned the lady to his presence and revealed his feelings for her. The lady cleverly referred to their difference of station at first. He was a King and she a seneschal's wife. This was no sure foundation for love. She also expressed the fear that the King would not keep faith were she to grant him her love. Equitan succeeded, however, in winning her love.

Whenever the King received his mistress, he would announce that, as he was being bled, admission to his rooms was strictly forbidden and all doors were closed. No one dared enter, therefore. Equitan's subjects were anxious that he should marry and have heirs. The King would not listen to them. The lady, however, on one occasion, complained that she feared she would be abandoned by the King. The latter assured her that there were no grounds for her fears. If her husband were dead, he would marry her immediately. Thereupon, the lady decided to get rid of her husband, and she asked Equitan to help her carry out her plan. On the next occasion, when the king went hunting, she let him spend a few days at the seneschal's castle. He and the seneschal would be bled together. On the third day, they would have a

bath; the water in the seneschal's bath would be so hot that he would surely die!

About three months later, the King went hunting again and spent a few days, as planned, at the seneschal's castle. He and the seneschal were bled together. On the third day, the baths were prepared in the bed-room, one of them containing boiling water for the seneschal. The latter had gone out early that morning and as he had not yet returned, the lady went to see her lover. Their passion led them to make love on the seneschal's bed. Suddenly the husband returned, pushed the door violently open (although a young girl servant had tried to prevent him from so doing), and saw the adulterous couple on the bed.

The King, who was naked, jumped into the bath of boiling water, which had been intended for the seneschal. The latter then seized his wife and pushed her, head first, into the same bath where, like her lover, she was so scalded, that she died.

Some literary critics consider Equitan to be Marie's weakest lay. Some have even attempted (quite wrongly, according to Hoepffner¹) to show that Marie did not even write this lai at all. Certainly, the story or subject-matter would be suitable for a "fabliau" and the moral (lines 313-316) would form a fitting conclusion for a fable. The

¹Ernest Hoepffner, Les Lais de Marie de France (Paris: Nizet, 1959), p. 152.

actual story of the lady's plan--"le conte de la ruse féminine"¹ takes up less than one half of the lay. It is the first half, which excites our curiosity most. In it are to be found: information about Equitan and his seneschal, a description of the latter's wife, and Marie's own treatment of the Provençal theory of "l'amour courtois." Marie appears anxious to present the character of the seneschal in a favourable light. Not only is he "preuz," "bon" and "leial," but he also conscientiously safeguards the king's interests. In the same way, Marie takes pains to describe the beauty of the seneschal's wife. Indeed the description of the seneschal's wife, along with that of the "fée" in Lanval, are Marie's most detailed descriptions of feminine beauty.

D.W. Robertson² has attempted to show that King Equitan's love was a purely sensual love. He produces the definition of sensual love, as given by Ailred of Rievaulx³ in his *De Spirituali Amicitia*. This definition reappears in a condensation of Ailred's work, which carried such authority in the Twelfth Century that it was attributed to

¹Ibid., p. 152.

²D.W. Robertson, "Love Conventions in Marie's Equitan," Romanic Review, t, XLIV (1953), pp. 241-245.

³Ailred of Rievaulx, "Definition of Sensual Love," Patr. Lat. (Migne), vol. CXCV, col. 665. Also see Appendix F.

St. Augustine.¹ Robertson states that Peter de Blois² gives a similar definition and also in Andreas Capellanus' "De Amore," the essential elements of Ailred's definition re-appear. The definition was a common-place in clerical circles at the time that Marie wrote. The definition implies that such love is not the fruit of serious deliberation. It is not tested by judgment and is not ruled by reason. It knows no measure and proceeds without discretion.

Robertson agrees with Hoepffner that Marie's intention in this lay was didactic and moralizing.³

King Equitan's "affectio" i.e. his state of mind, is receptive to stimulation through the ears and the eyes:

Li reis l'oi sovent loër
Soventefez la salua;
de ses aveirs li enveia.
Senz veüe la coveita.

(Lines 38-42)

The King uses love of pleasure and sexual satisfaction as a source of "chivalry"; he does not guide himself by reason or measure

Deduit amout e druërie:
Pur ceo maintint chevalerie
Cil metent lur vie en nuncure,
ki d'amur n'ont sen e mesure;
tels est la mesure de amer
Que nuls n'i deit raisun garder.

(Lines 15-20)

¹Peter of Blois attributes this work to Augustine (Patr. Lat., XL, 833). See also M.M. Davy, Un traité de l'Amour du XIII^{ème} siècle (Paris: 1932), pp. 140, 142.

²Peter de Blois, Un Traité de l'Amour (Latin Text), French translation (by M.M. Davy) (Paris: 1932), p. 130.

³A Miscellany of Studies in Romance Languages and Literature, presented to L.E. Kastner, 1933, pp. 294-302.

Equitan, then, has heard so much praise of the lady, that he has already fallen in love with her. When he has seen her, he is wounded by the arrow of love (i.e. the lady's beauty passes from the eye to the mind, where it remains fixed). Then follows the sleepless night during which Equitan nurses his conscience, having decided on conquest. The King's lecherous inclinations are not only contrary to his feudal obligations, but also to the second precept of charity. What he proposes to do would, in Ailred's language, be plainly "wicked" and "impious." In lines 79-82, his rationalization of the whole situation is, to say the least, cynical. What a pity if such a beautiful woman should not indulge in adulterous love! Also, in not doing so, she would be lacking in "courtesy" (lines 151-162). Why, he must share her with her husband! When he later declares his love to the lady, he promises to become her "man" or "ami," thus turning the feudal relationship upside down. If she refuses to become his mistress, he will, of course, die. The two exchange rings and enter into a compact. Ailred,¹ in his definition, describes such compacts, where the participants consider nothing sweeter or more just than their mutual satisfaction. Robertson concludes that Hoepffner is right in referring to the lai of Equitan as one where the intention is definitely moralizing or didactic. (Ewert² had stated that Marie's

¹See Appendix D.

²Marie de France, Lais, ed. Alfred Ewert (Oxford: Blackwell, 1958). Notes, p. 176.

intention, although moralizing and didactic, was perhaps hardly as conscious and clear-cut as Hoepffner¹ had suggested.) The love described in Equitan is a sensual love, and the definition of this love was in Marie's time a common-place in clerical circles. Marie's treatment of "courtesy" and "chivalry" is ironic. Furthermore, the conclusion to the lay: "tels purchase le mal d'altrui, dunt tuz li mals revert sur lui" is to be understood, in the sense, that if you do your neighbour any harm, you are also doing harm to yourself spiritually, that is, you are sinning.

The writer would now like to submit his own interpretation of the second half of the lay, i.e. the "aventure" in Equitan. The story of the "ruse féminine" could be divided into two sections, (1) lines 185-263, and (2) lines 263-314. There is quite a difference in the style and tone of each section.

In the first section of the "aventure," the reader learns that every time the lovers met, the King let it be known that he was being bled and that admission to his rooms was strictly forbidden. The King's vassals wanted him to marry and have heirs. The seneschal's wife heard their suggestions. She was greatly perturbed and thought it possible that the king would, one day, leave her. Now, the demands of the king's subjects constituted a very real threat

¹A Miscellany of Studies in Romance Languages and Literature presented to L.E. Kastner, 1935, pp. 294-302.

to the relationship between King Equitan and his mistress. The lady, therefore, decided to discuss the matter with the King. The King reassured her.

The King first said (in lines 226-7) that, if her husband was to die, she would become queen. Then, later, he stated he would never leave her for another woman (lines 231-232). These two statements, taken together, are tantamount to a promise of marriage. The lady certainly interprets the King's words in this manner and she decides to get rid of her husband. She then unfolds her diabolical plan to kill him.

In the first section of the "aventure" then, there is a logical sequence of events--the desire of the king's vassals to see him marry disturbs the lady, who is then compelled to discuss the matter with the king. The king, to reassure the lady must, among other things, suggest that, were she not already married, she would be queen. He would never leave her for another in any case. As this is practically the equivalent of a promise of marriage, the lady feels free to concoct her diabolical plan.

The second section of the "aventure" begins at line 263, "ne demura mie treis meis." It is from this point onwards, that the lay might be held to give the critics some ground for their views, that Equitan is inferior to the other lays. From line 263-314, a great number of verbs of action follow one another and the impression left with the reader

is that the passage lacks Marie de France's usual complexity of style and sophistication of thought. Further, the poetess appears to be in a hurry to reach the end of the lay. The narration of this passage reminds the reader of a motion-picture film where the final section of the reel is unrolled at top speed. This is followed by the moral:

tels purchace le mal d'altrui,
dunt tuz li mals revert sur lui.

Now, before the last section of the "aventure" begins, "ne demura mie treis meis" the seneschal's wife has already concocted the plan for her husband's death. Not only is she clearly an adultress, she is also a potential murderess. Marie is, once more, preoccupied with the theme of sin, and it is interesting to see how her style and tone change when the sin in question is a heinous crime. Surely this section of the "aventure" with its many verbs denoting action, reminds us of certain passages in the Espurgatoire de Seint Patriz. (In the same way, the presence of the bath reminds us of the devils' cauldrons!) It would seem that Marie believes that there are times when, what you say is more important than how you say it. The message is what matters.

Marie wishes to make it clear that the seneschal's wife has shown herself to be capable of the most serious sins. The ending, therefore, does not mean what it appears to mean, but that too much love and the wrong kind of love can lead to the gravest sins, such as adultery and murder. The state of the individual soul is, once more, Marie's chief concern.

In the Lai Chaitivel, the reader is introduced to a lady of high degree, who was beautiful and well-mannered. This lady lived in Nantes in Brittany. She was loved by many knights who paid homage to her. Four knights, in particular, sought her favours. All were noble and handsome, yet the lady could not decide which one she loved best.

About this time a tournament was held in the city of Nantes, and the four knights, who were untiring in their efforts to please the lady, decided to take part in it. The evening before the tournament began, the four knights, who were jousting with others, unhorsed their four opponents. The lady watched their heroic deeds from a tower. During the tournament, the knights surpassed all others in courage and daring, but their zeal caused them to stray too far from their companions, with the result that three of them were killed and the fourth was badly wounded. Friend and foe regretted their fate: the tournament had ended in tragedy. When the news was brought to the lady, she fainted and expressed regret over her great loss. She had the dead buried with full honours, and handed over the fourth knight, who was badly disabled, to the care of a good doctor.

One summer evening, apparently lost in thought, the lady paid a visit to the disabled knight, now slowly recovering. He asked her why she looked sad and anxious. She answered that she had been thinking of his former rivals. No lady, she asserted, had ever been loved by four such noble knights,

and no lady would ever experience such sorrow as hers. To preserve the memory of her suffering, she wanted to compose a lai, for which Les Quatre Doels (The Four Sorrows) would be the most fitting title. The injured man, however, objected; he was more to be pitied than the dead, whose souls now rested in peace; he was disabled and still suffering from unrequited love. The Lai should, therefore, be given the title le Chaitivel (The Unfortunate One). The lady agreed to give the lai this title. The poetess maintains, however, that it sometimes receives the title, Les Quatre Doels.

The lady in Chaitivel appears to have every quality, when the reader first meets her. She is presumably of high degree. She is beautiful, well-mannered, and cultured. Yet the poetess soon introduces a touch of humour into the description of this apparent paragon of virtue. For example (lines 55-56): "Ne volt les treis perdre pur l'un: bel semblant faiseit a chescun." She cannot decide which one of the four knights she loves best, nor is she prepared to lose three of them in order to retain one. She distributes love-tokens (such as rings, sleeves, and pendants) and sends messages to all, but not one of the knights knows about his rivals or the relationship of his rivals with the lady. In the jousting before the tournament, the four knights show courage and daring. They also reveal a lack of "mesure." The lady, who has watched them from a tower, again cannot decide which of the knights deserves most praise.

During the tournament three of the knights are killed, the fourth is wounded. The knights' opponents (as well as their companions) regret their fate. A touch of humour again appears at line 30, "nel firent pas a escient"--the opponents of the three knights had killed the latter unwittingly. Two thousand knights remove their visors and give expression to their grief by pulling at their hair and beards. Of course the lady faints when she hears the news, but what does she say? "Lasse quei ferai?"--What shall I do? Three of my lovers are dead, the fourth is wounded. She thinks mainly of her loss. Naturally the lady will see to it that the injured man has a good doctor and the dead will be buried with all honours in a magnificent abbey.

When the disabled knight asks her why she looks so worried and despondent, she replies: "I was just thinking that never would a lady of my lineage, love four such valiant knights again and then lose them all in one day, with the exception of you, who are now disabled." Then the lady suggests that a lai be composed to commemorate her love and suffering and that it be called Les Quatre Doels. But the injured man objects, maintaining that he is disabled and his love is unrequited. The lai should be called Le Chaitivel.

It would seem, then, that this beautiful, cultured, well-mannered lady is also a Twelfth Century coquette, self-centered and insensitive to the suffering of others. There can be little doubt that Marie's sympathy in this lai, lies entirely with le Chaitivel, whose love is genuine and whose

suffering is real. The lady's sin is the sin of egoism or self-centredness, a sin closely related to the sin of pride which means, after all, an excessive belief in one's own worth.

The writer would now like to refer to lines 19-28 in Chaitivel. This passage seems to be completely lacking in clarity, and it is a little astonishing to find that relatively little attention appears to have been paid to it by so many of these outstanding scholars, whose findings in other directions have so enlightened some of the more obscure passages in Marie de France's writings. It is true that Warnke has referred to and discussed the interpretations given by Tobler and Cohn and has accepted Tobler's suggestions to some extent, but Ewert,¹ referring to the note in Warnke's edition, writes: "None of the emendations discussed at considerable length by Warnke in the note to this passage can be said to carry conviction." Ewert also states that the sole testimony of MS (H) does not allow us to establish with certainty exactly what Marie de France meant.

Ewert's own tentative translation of these lines implies that Marie has written them "in defence of love and its service, which yields rewards or is its own reward."

In the above analysis of the lai of Chaitivel the writer mentioned that Marie introduced touches of humour into the poem and samples were given to illustrate them. Sometimes

¹Marie de France, op. cit., p. 182.

the poetess appears to be using ironical devices as well. For example, does not Marie make use of the device of the naïve hero, when describing the four knights who loved the lady in vain? Marie's descriptions of their impulsive behaviour, their lack of "mesure," their excessive daring and courage in combat, which could only lead to partial disablement or death, would seem to support this claim. Occasionally, too, Marie would seem to be employing the device of the naïve narrator, or expositor. She writes, for example, in lines 17-18, Chaitivel: El nes pot mie tuz amer--ne el nes volt mie tuer (destroy?). Some of the humorous passages to which the writer has already referred, also have the indirectness of irony, for example, in line 130: "Nel firent pas a escient." It is common knowledge that irony can be most complex in some authors and if the writer's suggestion be true, that Marie's writings generally are most complex productions (some of them of greater complexity than others), then her irony may be more difficult to detect and analyse than is usually the case with other authors.

When Ewert states that Marie wrote lines 19-28 "in defence of love and its service, which yields rewards or is its own reward," he cannot have intended the remark as a reference to the Provençal theory of "L'amour courtois," for the remainder of the lai, if this writer's analysis is correct, clearly reveals Marie's antagonism to such courtly love. Marie uses humour (most unusual!) and irony as her

weapons to attack "l'amour courtois."

It is to be hoped that this passage in Chaitivel (lines 19-28) will, in future, receive the attention which it deserves. It may well be that the search for an acceptable interpretation of this particular passage will lead not only to a more complete understanding of the lai of Chaitivel, but also to the shedding of more light on the whole production of the French poetess.

In the lai of Le Fraisne two valiant knights, who were neighbours and friends, once lived in "Britanny." The wife of one of these gave birth to boy twins and the father wished to share his happiness with his neighbour. The latter gave the bearer of the joyful tidings a beautiful horse as a gift, but his wife, who was seated at the table, smiled and remarked how strange it was that the knight should wish to proclaim his own dishonour; it was common knowledge that women, who bore twins, had had two masters. The lady's husband reproached her for her remarks, but the ugly rumour of the wife's adultery spread throughout Britanny and, although most women did not believe the rumour, the wife, who had borne twins, was wrongly suspected of adultery by her husband.

In that same year the slanderer herself gave birth to girl twins. She felt, therefore, that the remarks she had made about the lady who had given birth to boy-twins, had resulted in her own condemnation. Her despair was great.

She even thought of murdering one of the children, but a faithful servant suggested that she carry one child to a monastery. The child was, therefore, wrapped in a garment of white linen, and an embroidered silk cloth, acquired in Constantinople, was spread over her; finally, a costly bracelet was attached to the child's arm. The lady's faithful servant set out with the child in the evening and early on the following morning, having said a pious prayer, she left the child in the fork of an ash-tree near a convent. The porter of the convent, on opening the convent-gate in the morning, found the little girl. His daughter, now a widow, with a child of her own, was told to bathe and feed the child. On the following day the abbess was informed of the discovery of the child. This abbess decided to adopt the little girl and bring her up as her niece. She was called "Fresne" (ash-tree), because she had been found in the fork of the ash-tree.

The girl, in due course, became a well-mannered, cultured, beautiful woman. She made a great impression on Gurun, the lord of Dol. He visited her often and offered the convent many gifts in order to see her. When he had won her love they decided to leave the convent together. Fresne took with her the silk cloth and ring. She lived as his concubine in his castle. Everyone loved her, yet Gurun's vassals thought that he should marry and have heirs. They suggested the daughter of a rich knight in the neighbourhood,

la Codre (hazel-tree). When Fresne heard about the marriage plans she appeared to remain quite composed and accepted her lord's decision. Indeed, she was such a humble, lovable creature, that before the wedding took place (between Codre and Gurun) she (Fresne) had won the favour and affection of the bride's mother.

In the evening after the wedding, Fraisine entered the bridal chamber with a view to ensuring that the bridal couch was fittingly prepared. She noticed that the bed-cover was old and she felt that it was not good enough for the newly-wedded couple on such an occasion. She, therefore, replaced it by the embroidered silk cloth, her own property, which she spread out over the bed.

The bride's mother, who had come into the room with her daughter that evening, noticed the "paile roë"--(the embroidered silk cloth) on the bed and recognised it. She summoned Fraisine to her presence and when she had heard Fraisine's story and seen the bracelet, she could no longer doubt that Fraisine was her own daughter. She then confessed her crime to her husband who, rejoicing at the thought of having another daughter, forgave her.

The marriage which the Archbishop of Dol had celebrated between Gurun and Codre was cancelled. Gurun then married Fraisine. La Codre departed with her parents and later became the wife of a wealthy man in that region.

In Fraisne, the wife of one of the knights has given

birth to boy twins. Her neighbour's wife then maligns her, accusing her of having had two masters. The lady who has maligned her neighbour, later gives birth to girl twins. F. Schürr¹ claims that the theme of this "exposition" is "Vergeltung für eine Verleumdung"--retribution for a calumny (or a merited requital!). According to Schürr, lines 85-88 indicate the theme of this part of the lai:

ore en ai dous; ceo m'est a vis,
sur mei en est turnez li pis.
Ki sur altrui mesdit e ment,
ne set mie qu'a l'ueil li pent;

This part of the lai of Fraisne would presumably be a narrative, the intention of which would be to make the truth contained in lines 85-88 interesting. Schürr has, of course, shown the allegorical element in other lays (e.g. the painting on the wall of Venus in the room of the young lady in Guigemar).

Schürr, like Spitzer, considers that the main part of the story deals with Fraisne and Gurun. The "exposition," then, illustrates the theme of sin which is, however, a secondary theme in Fraisne. In the main part of the story, the theme, in the writer's opinion, is that of self-sacrifice or saintliness. Alfred Adler² has offered a very different interpretation. He holds that the medieval superstition

¹Friedrich Schürr, "Komposition und Symbolik in den Lais der Marie de France," Zeitschrift für Romanische Philologie, L, 1930, pp. 561-2.

²Alfred Adler, "Höfische Dialektik im Lai du Freisne," Germanisch-Romanische Monatschrift, Vol. 42, 1961.

about twins as a sign of adultery is the cause of discomposure or discomfort in this courtly society, where men of rank and purity of lineage are so highly valued. Adler reminds the reader that the lady, who has girl twins, feels she must do away with one of them rather than face her shame (lines 93-94)--("Vergunder ne hunir"). The faithful maidservant, who is "de franche orine" expresses the hope--a cardinal virtue!--that the child will be found by a "produm." Later, the porter at the convent is referred to as a "produm." Before the child is left on the fork of an ash-tree, everything possible is done to show that she is "de bone gent" or "de haute gent." The ring and the embroidered silken cloth are obviously intended to indicate high lineage. The mother is impressed by Fraisine's gracious behaviour and courtesy. Although Adler refers to "Christliches Entsagen" in Fraisine, this self-denial in no way implies a renunciation of courtly society. The ring and the bed-cover are insignia of rank or symbols of high lineage, but they also remind us of the innocent little child in the fork of the ash-tree. Pride (or arrogance) and innocence (or childlike-ness) are often found together in Marie's lays, says Adler. The innocence compensates to some extent for the pride, e.g. the woman slanderer goes down on her knee and confesses everything to her husband. The "merveille" in Fraisne, according to Adler, is the fact that she appears to be not only innocent, but also invulnerable. Adler feels compelled, therefore, to

ask whether in Fraisne there are two worlds as in Lanval-- a real world and a fairy world. He insists, however, that there is only one world--the world of the court. Innocence casts its spell upon the pretensions (and pretentiousness) of court life. Pride and innocence somehow blend and produce a pleasing courtesy in Fraisne. For Adler¹ a certain Christian charm is one of three qualities inherent in Fraisne's character--"höfisches Gleichgewicht, sinnlicher Feenzauber, und christliche Anmut," (p. 50).

Adler, although he is interested in the character of Fraisne, does not discuss the love affair at all. Yet the love episode is probably what interests Marie de France most. This writer believes that the lai of Fraisne is mainly a story about two lovers who are destined to be united. However, great the obstacles that stand in the path of their reunion, they will, in the end, be brought together.

Gurun first falls in love with Fraisne when he meets her at the convent. He must secure the good-will of Fraisne's aunt, so that he may visit the young girl from time to time. To achieve this, he lavishes gifts upon the convent and later he even resides there, ostensibly to obtain remission of his sins. Gurun fears, however, that Fraisne may become pregnant. He therefore asks her to follow him to his castle. Fraisne is loved by all for her humility and courtesy. Never-

¹Ibid., p. 50.

theless, Gurun's vassals insist that he marry and have heirs. Gurun sadly accepts their proposal to marry a young lady, "la Codre" (Hazel-tree), the daughter of a rich knight in the neighbourhood. The wedding of la Codre and Gurun takes place. On the evening of the wedding-day, however, Fraisme's mother discovers that Fraisme is her own child and la Codre's sister. The embroidered silk coverlet has brought about the recognition. The two lovers are at last married (the official wedding between la Codre and Gurun having been cancelled). The destiny motif is certainly prominent in this lai.

During the wedding festivities Fraisme's conduct is observed and greatly admired (lines 381-2, Fraisme) "A grant merveille le teneient - cil e celes ki la veeient." The implication in these two lines would seem to be that Fraisme's behaviour was unusual (as well as admirable). She was not necessarily conforming only to the rules of a courtly society. Surely Fraisme's upbringing in a convent as the mother superior's "niece" explains, in part, her attitude of humility and loveliness. Fraisme's love for Gurun was such that she felt she could, if necessary, forego his company, as valued as it was, for the sake of something of even greater value--namely, the love of God. But then the lovers were destined to be united! There was in Fraisme more than a modicum of Christian charm--in her self-abnegation--there was an element of saintliness.

In Fraisne, the theme of sin plays a subordinate role to the theme of saintliness.

Once there lived a valiant knight, Eliduc, who was happily married to a noble lady, Guildeluëc, in Brittany. The malice of Eliduc's enemies induced the king to banish him from the court. Eliduc decided to leave the land, where he was wrongly held to be a traitor, and he decided to seek glory on the field of battle in foreign lands. Having recommended his wife to the care and protection of friends, and having promised to remain faithful to her, Eliduc set sail and landed in Toteneis near Exeter. The king of this region was an old man who had an only daughter, Guilliadun. He was at war with a neighbour, to whom the hand of the king's daughter had been refused. Eliduc offered his services to this king. Three days after Eliduc's arrival, the news spread that the king's enemies were going to attack and engage in battle. Eliduc set out with ten of his own men and fourteen of the king's knights, to make a surprise attack against the enemy. His plan succeeded. The enemy leader and thirty knights were captured and a considerable amount of booty was acquired. The king, who was waiting for the news of battle in his tower, saw a great number of knights approaching and thought that he had been betrayed by Eliduc. His fears changed to joy when he was told about the defeat of his enemies. The king decided to engage Eliduc for one year in paid military service and make him warden of

the region. The king's daughter, Guilliadun, who had heard much about Eliduc, summoned him to her presence and on this, their first meeting, fell in love with him. Eliduc, having noticed that the king's daughter was attracted to him, regretted not having met her before; on the other hand, he remembered the promise he had made to his wife before leaving Brittany. The king's daughter, in the meantime, had decided she wanted Eliduc as lover and husband. On her chamberlain's advice, after a little hesitation, she sent Eliduc her ring and her girdle. Eliduc, on this occasion, put the ring on his finger, encircled his waist with the girdle, but made no attempt to give expression to his feelings for the king's daughter in the chamberlain's presence. Guilliadun next decided that she would tell Eliduc she loved him. She could not know the conflict that was taking place in Eliduc's mind. The king, one day, introduced his daughter officially to Eliduc. It was on this occasion, when Eliduc had thanked Guilliadun for her presents, that the latter declared her love for him. Eliduc expressed his gratitude for her love; at the same time he pointed out that at the end of his year's service with the king, her father, he would have to return to Brittany. Guilliadun replied that, no doubt, before then, he would have arranged what was to become of her. After this episode the lovers saw each other often.

Eliduc made a prisoner of the king's enemy and thus put an end to the warfare which had raged for so long in the

land. Eliduc heard from his own liege-lord in Brittany, whose enemies had invaded his territories. His old master now realised that he had done Eliduc an injustice by banning him from the court, and he now begged him to return speedily to help him defend his territory. Eliduc, therefore, asked the English king for permission to leave the country. This the king granted, after Eliduc had promised he would come back if he were needed.

When Guilliadun heard the news of her lover's impending departure, she fainted. Later she asked that he take her with him, but Eliduc felt that, as long as he was in her father's service, he could not elope with her. He promised, however, to return later and take her back to Brittany.

When Eliduc reached Brittany, he was welcomed by his wife and by his friends. His wife soon noticed, however, that he was unhappy. She feared that someone might have maligned her or criticized her conduct during Eliduc's absence and that this might have saddened him. Eliduc reassured her, however, explaining that the promise he had given the English king to return after the end of the war in Brittany was a source of anxiety to him. As soon as peace had been secured in Brittany, Eliduc returned to England, accompanied by two nephews, a reliable chamberlain, and his squires. His boat beached safely and he sent his chamberlain to bring back his beloved. The party embarked

at Toteneis. On the return journey they experienced a terrible storm. A sailor blamed Eliduc for the storm for, although he, Eliduc, was already lawfully married, he was taking another woman home. The sailor suggested that this woman be thrown overboard. Guilliadun, on hearing the sailor's words, fell into a deep swoon. Eliduc thought she was dead. In a rage he knocked down the sailor with an oar and cast him into the sea. He then took the helm and steered the boat back to land. Eliduc decided to carry Guilliadun to a chapel near a hermitage, not far from his own home. He thought he would bury Guilliadun there, and above the place where his beloved rested, he would found an abbey. Eliduc left Guilliadun in front of the church-altar, for he felt he would have to consult the wise men of the land about a suitable burial-place. Broken-hearted, he locked the chapel doors and departed.

Eliduc's wife was happy to see him, but again she could not but note his extreme depression of spirits. In the morning, after mass, he went to the chapel, where Guilliadun lay, and after praying and weeping, he returned home. Eliduc's wife discovered, through a trusted servant, that her husband often visited the chapel. On that same day, when Eliduc had gone to the court to pay the king a visit, she left with the servant for the chapel. As soon as she saw the dead maiden, she knew she had solved the mystery of her husband's behaviour. She was overcome with

sadness at the thought that such a beautiful woman had died, and she understood her husband's melancholy.

A weasel came scurrying along and passed over the dead body. The servant struck it and left it on the ground, dead. The animal's mate soon appeared and when it had seen what had happened, it went off to the wood and returned with a red flower, which it placed in the dead animal's mouth. The latter immediately came to life again. The lady told the squire to wrest the flower from the animal's mouth. Having obtained it, she then placed the flower between Guilliadun's lips and the latter awoke from her deep slumber. Guilliadun sighed and complained bitterly about her fate and Eliduc's treachery. Guildeluëc, however, defended her husband. She claimed that she knew how unhappy Eliduc had been since Guilliadun's supposed death. Guildeluëc then stated she would take the veil and thus allow Eliduc to marry Guilliadun. The ladies returned to the castle together and Guildeluëc told her husband how they had met. Eliduc was overjoyed to see Guilliadun again. Eliduc agreed to provide the means for founding a convent in the neighbourhood of the castle, where Guildeluëc would take the veil. Eliduc married Guilliadun. The couple lived happily together for many years and finally, they too, felt the call of the religious life. On the other side of the castle, Eliduc caused a monastery to be built. He took holy orders himself and his wife Guilliadun was welcomed in the convent, into

which she betook herself by Eliduc's first wife, Guildeluec.

In the lai Eliduc, there are three main characters all of whom, in the end, appear to aspire to saintliness. Guilliadun has heard about Eliduc's exploits and admires him. She is a young girl, who has probably fallen in love for the first time. It is at her request that Eliduc pays her a visit. After the meeting she spends a sleepless night. She has, however, made up her mind to have Eliduc as a lover and husband. She takes the initiative again, by sending a chamberlain to Eliduc with a ring and girdle. Eliduc accepts the ring and girdle, but only thanks the chamberlain and offers him presents which the latter declines. Guilliadun wonders what this means. Did Eliduc accept the gifts because he loved her or because he was chivalrous? Or has she been betrayed? At their next meeting Eliduc thanks the lady for the presents she sent him. It is then that Guilliadun declares her love for him. When Eliduc informs her later he must return to Brittany, she faints in his arms. She wishes to elope with him immediately. However she accepts his proposal that he should return for her on a set day. She has complete confidence in her lover. Little wonder then, that she falls into a deep swoon when, during the terrible storm, the sailor denounces Eliduc, stating that he is already married.

Eliduc is a valiant warrior whose exploits are related in the first part of the story, but what really

interests Marie de France is the gradual growth of love between the knight and Guilliadun. Eliduc has sworn to remain faithful to his wife, Guildeluëc, in Brittany. Guilliadun's charm, innocence, and spontaneity, however, soon make a great impression upon Eliduc, who also falls in love. The conflict that is taking place within Eliduc's mind (love for his wife and love for Guilliadun) reaches a climax shortly before he leaves for Brittany. When Guilliadun, on being informed of his departure, faints in his arms, he kisses her saying:

"Par deu," fet il, ma dulce amie,
sufrez un poi que jo vus die:
vus estes ma vie a ma mort,
en vus est trestut mun confort!

Guilliadun, on hearing that Eliduc is already married, falls into a deep swoon. Eliduc and his companions think she is dead. His friends wish to bury her immediately, but he places the body in front of the altar of the hermitage chapel, because he first wishes to discuss with the wise men of the land, the construction of an abbey or monastery which will be erected there where his beloved will be buried. Eliduc states he will no longer bear arms, but will become a monk. He intends to let his grief resound every day on Guilliadun's tomb.

In the lai of Fraisine, the heroine's virtue or saintliness, derives from the fact that she accepts her ill-deserved fate with courage and dignity. But Guildeluëc's love for her husband is so great that she voluntarily releases

her husband from his vows and takes the veil, thus allowing Eliduc to marry Guilliadun.

When Eliduc returns on the first occasion from Logres, Guildeluëc notices anxiously his depression of spirits. She thinks someone has maligned her or criticized her conduct during his absence. She therefore suggests that she be allowed to justify herself, if necessary, before Eliduc's vassals, but Eliduc explains that he is only depressed at the thought of having to return to Logres when the war in Brittany is over.

Eliduc returns on a second occasion to Brittany under the impression that Guilliadun is dead. He has her body conveyed to the hermitage, which is situated in a wood near his castle. Eliduc places the body in front of the altar in the chapel. After locking the chapel doors, Eliduc rejoins his wife. Again Guildeluëc notes anxiously that he is gloomy and dejected. Having promised a valet gifts and rewards, Guildeluëc has him spy on her husband. The servant reports that his master had entered the chapel and that he (the servant) had heard the sound of weeping. Guildeluëc does not consider the death of the hermit to be a likely cause of such grief. That same day, while Eliduc is paying a visit to the king, his wife decides to enter the chapel accompanied by her valet. It is then that she sees Guilliadun lying apparently dead. She evinces no feelings of anger or jealousy. She feels only pity for the beautiful young woman,

lying before her, and sympathy for her own husband. She says to the chamberlain:

"Veiz tu," fet ele, 'ceste femme,
ki de belte resemble gemme?
Ceo est l'amie mun seignur,
pur qui il meine tel dolur.
Par fei, jeo, ne m'en merveil mie,
quant si bele femme est perie,
Tant par pitie, tant par amour
ja mes n'avrai joie nul jur.

Then there occurs the weasel episode. Guildeluëc has seen the weasel revive its dead companion by placing a red flower in its mouth. She has thought immediately of applying the red flower to Guilliadun's lips, so that she, too, may revive. In this way her own husband will no longer suffer.

When Guilliadun awakes from her long sleep, she tells Guildeluëc that she has been betrayed by Eliduc, but Guildeluëc comes to her husband's defence. She has seen how unhappy he was--there can be no doubt that his love for Guilliadun is genuine.

Later, Guildeluëc explains she wishes to take the veil "Kar n'est pas bien ne avenant - de dous espuses meinténir" (lines 1128-1129). Many years later Eliduc and Guilliadun also decide to spend the remaining years of their lives in a religious order and so it comes about that Guildeluëc and Guilliadun, who are now in the same "convent," both pray for the soul of their friend, who is a monk in a neighbouring monastery (and he prays for their souls too!).

Eliduc seems to have realized from the beginning that his love for Guilliadun raised certain important problems, "S'a m'amie esteie espusez, - nel suferreit cresteintez," (lines 601-602). He appears to have been pious. Before visiting the chapel, where Guilliadun's body lay, for example, he would hear mass. He prayed for Guilliadun's soul, of course. He immediately agrees to give Guildeluëc the land and property she asks for, and sees to it that a convent and houses are built in the vicinity of the castle. After their marriage, Guilliadun and he give alms and do good deeds. Then, they too, enter Holy Orders. Guilliadun joins Guildeluëc in the convent, and Eliduc puts all his wealth into the project of building a monastery, where he himself becomes a monk. Marie de France has led the reader gradually to the religious ending of this lay.

The first part of the lai of Eliduc contains a description of the feudal wars (lines 1-270). The second part (lines 271-1144) is the story of Eliduc's love for Guilliadun, on the one hand, and his feelings of duty towards his wife, on the other. The third part (lines 1144-1184) refers to spiritual love. The three main characters in Eliduc are aspiring to saintliness, which is the theme of the third section. Eliduc becomes more thoughtful and pious, as he grows older. The conflict between love and duty must have caused him great suffering. Guilliadun with her charm, spontaneity and innocence, reminds us of Fresne. She is,

deeply devoted to her lover, whom she admires, cherishes, and trusts. There is, at least, an element of saintliness in Guilliadun. Guildeluëc is the most saintly character of the three. However, Eliduc and Guilliadun are travelling, it would seem, on the road to perfection.

This part of the lai recalls to mind St. Patrick in the Espurgatoire or Owen among the blessed of the Terrestrial Paradise. The desire of the three main characters in Eliduc, towards the end of the lai, is undoubtedly, the salvation of their souls and union with God.

The first three lays discussed in this chapter--Bisclavret, Equitan, and Chaitivel--are, of all Marie's Lais, those that best illustrate the theme of sin. The last two lays--Fresne and Eliduc (especially the latter) develop most fully the theme of saintliness. With the discussion of these five lais, this analysis of the theme of Saints and Sinners in the Lais of Marie de France comes to an end.

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Related to the themes of Sin and Saintliness in the lays and fables is the "sensus moralis" of the Prologue to Lais and that of the Prologue to the Fables.

The writer has already referred to certain sections of the Prologue to the Lais (in Chapters I and IV), and now proposes to examine two passages, mainly lines 9-22¹ and

¹Appendix G.

lines 4-8.¹

Spitzer² has indicated that lines 9-22 refer to the interpretation of a work of art, where the reader has added comments after the manner of the "Gloss" technique employed in biblical exegesis. Marie de France considers her work as one more "text" to be "glossed," as was the Old Testament by Tertullian, Augustine, and Jerome, for example.

Ewert³ has translated lines 12-16:

It was the custom among the ancients--so testifies Priscianus--in the books, which they wrote in olden times to put their thoughts somewhat obscurely, so that those who were to come after them and who were to learn them, might continue their writing and add to it from their own ingenuity.

The words "sen" and "surplus" have been interpreted in different ways. Spitzer considers "sen" to be the Christian attitude of the interpreters of "Texts." These readers consult the pagan authors who have deliberately veiled "with the obscurity of poetic form, the eternal verities." Marie appears to be making excuses for the "form" of her lays. Robertson⁴ maintains that if we take "lettre" and "sen," as technical terms and suppose "surplus" to be a synonym for

¹Appendix G.

²Leo Spitzer, "The Prologue to the Lais of Marie de France and Medieval Poetics," Romanische Literatur-Studien, 1936-56, (Tubingen: 1959), pp. 3-14.

³Marie de France, op. cit., p. 163.

⁴D.W. Robertson, "Marie de France, Lais, Prologue, 3-16," Modern Language Notes, LXIV (1949), 336.

a third technical term, to be understood in the light of the first two, the translation can be made more precise.

In the schools, a text would be studied at three different levels--the "littera," i.e. the grammatical explanation, then the "sensus," the apparent sense, and finally the "sententia," a deep understanding of the author's thought or the doctrinal content. This method was applied to the study of profane authors, as well as the study of the scriptures (G. Paré, A. Brunet, and P. Tremblay, *La Renaissance du XIII^{ème} siècle. Les Ecoles et l'enseignement* (Paris, Ottawa, 1933, p. 116)).

Theologians of the Twelfth Century appear to show contempt for those who are only able to discover the sense of scripture, without proceeding to the sentence. Robertson thinks it possible that the same attitude existed among those who studied profane texts. He therefore suggests the following translation for lines 13-16: "So that those, who were to come after and learn them, might gloss the letter or grammatical structure and from the apparent sense, determine the doctrinal content."

Spitzer¹ has explained the equation Poetry = Theology, which he found mainly in Curtius.² The Church fathers could justify the pagan poets by declaring them to be "poetae

¹Spitzer, op. cit., pp. 3-14.

²Ernst Robert Curtius, "Theologische Poetik im italienischen Trecento," Zeitschrift für Romanische Philologie, LX (1940), 1 ff.

theologi." The term could then be applied to the Christian theologian-poets. The theological literature of Christianity is poetic and the poetic literature of paganism is theological. As for the equation poetry = philosophy, Spitzer claims that this was an idea of late antiquity, attested as late as the Thirteenth Century.

This equation, Poetry = Philosophy = Theology reflects the desire to "unify the various spiritual activities of creative man." It was Cassiodorus who wrote, "All the artes come from God" (see Spitzer, op. cit., p. 9). Thus "li philosophe" of the prologue to the fables and "li Philosophe" of line 17 in the Prologue to the Lais (also "li ancien pere" in the Prologue to the Fables and "anciens"--line 9 in the Prologue to the Lais) refer to the poetae - theologi - philosophi, revealed by Curtius; i.e. "the 'clerks' of antiquity, whom Marie naively invests with medieval trappings." (Jauss¹ has also pointed out that "les bons proverbes" in the Prologue to the Fables, line 8, are to be understood as works of Christian Salvation!)

Spitzer explains why Priscian is mentioned in the Prologue to the Lais. The original Greek word for grammatica had exactly the same meaning as the Latin word litteratura. Since Quintilian, the combined terms have acquired the

¹Hans Robert Jauss, "Über die höfische Tendenz in den Fabeln der Marie de France," Untersuchungen zur mittelalterlichen Tierdichtung. Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für Romanische Philologie, 100. Heft (Tübingen: 1959), S. 24 ff, p. 30.

meaning "recte loquandi scientiam et poetarum enarrationem"-- or exercises of grammar (and style) and explanations of poetry, or, as we might say now, linguistics and literary history; even under Charlemagne enarratio was an integral part of the grammatica. Thus it was perfectly logical that Marie should have chosen a grammarian as a type of "homo literatus."

Ewert¹ has translated lines 4-8 of the Prologue to the Lais as follows: "When a thing of virtue is heard by the many, then for the first time does it blossom forth, and when it is praised by the multitude, then has it burst into full bloom."

The writer, at the risk of appearing to digress, would like at this point to refer to Robertson's² contribution "Love Conventions in Marie's Equitan" which has already been discussed, when that particular lai was analysed. Towards the end of this learned article, the author asserts that he agrees with Hoepffner that Marie's intention in the lai of Equitan was didactic and moralising. He claims, however, that, as such terms have unpleasant connotations in our time, one should, perhaps, try to express this truth in a different manner. One might state, therefore, that in this particular lai of Marie de France (i.e. Equitan) "the story

¹Marie de France, op. cit., p. 163.

²Robertson, op. cit., p. 245.

illustrates in terms of concrete particulars, familiar to her audience something she regarded as a respectable and useful philosophic idea." Philosophic ideas, after all, are of little value if no one can understand them. Robertson concludes, by pointing out that Marie de France herself best expressed this point by writing lines 4-8 in the Prologue.

Now, obviously, Robertson's reference to "uns granz biens" as a respectable and useful philosophic idea is not meant as a literal translation. It is an attempt to give the real meaning of the term. Miss Rickert¹ translates the term as "a goodly thing." Professor Ewert² writes "a thing of virtue." Assuming, however, that Spitzer is correct in his interpretation of lines 9-22, the advantage of thinking of the term "un granz biens" as a "respectable and useful philosophic idea," would in the opinion of this writer be that in lines 1-27 of the Prologue there would be no real break in the meaning. It has usually been held (or felt!) that there was a break between lines 1-8 and lines 9-22. For example, Donovan³ refers to Marie's "abrupt shift of thought."

¹Edith Rickert, Marie de France: Seven of her Lays done into English, (London: 1901).

²Marie de France, op. cit., p. 163.

³Mortimer J. Donovan, "Priscian and the Obscurity of the Ancients," Speculum, XXXVI, 1961, 75-80.

It seems to the writer that Marie de France is trying to say that important philosophical truths should be fittingly illustrated (or explained) by the writer (lines 1-9) and that the reader should then continue this process of explanation in his "gloss" technique (lines 9-22). The connecting link between lines 1-8 and lines 9-22 seems to be the idea of a process of explanation, on which Marie lays great stress. Reference is made to this process of illustration or explanation in lines 6-8, by means of the floral imagery. A similar (although not identical!) process of explanation is involved in the "gloss" technique. A "gloss" is, of course, a special explanation of each word in a text (where the meaning of one word is clarified by another word). Basically, however, a gloss is an explanation. In the same way, an illustration is an explanation, whether it be picture, diagram, story or analogy. One might, therefore, employ the equation: illustration = explanation = gloss, and freely translate lines 1-27, where no real break in the meaning would appear, in the following manner: He who has talent, should not hesitate to write. Useful and respectable philosophic ideas should be fittingly illustrated (i.e. explained). In the past, the pagan authors who wrote, somewhat obscurely, knew that future generations would "gloss" their work, i.e. explain it. They knew that men would become more subtle of mind if they increased their knowledge by study and by expounding texts. In this way,

they (the new generations) would, to some extent, be in a position to repel sin and avoid damnation ("dolor" meaning sorrow, probably means damnation here). One wonders, after noting this emphasis on the process of explanation, whether Marie de France was not acquainted with the beginnings of scholasticism, which has been defined as "the medieval attempt to systematize and explicate revealed truth in correlation with a philosophical system."¹

If this interpretation is correct, then it would mean that there is an important break in the Prologue only at line 28, where Marie writes, "Pur ceo commençai a penser." Lines 1-27 would reach a climax, as it were with the word "vice" (sin) and finish at line 27 with "dolor" (damnation).

Thus Marie's message is that deep, important truths must be continually examined and explained afresh. This is hard work but it may help to ward off sin.

Another implication of lines 4-8 is that in Marie's opinion, to be a good writer you must be able to entertain. What sort of audience did Marie's lays appeal to, then? E.A. Francis² states that the fables were addressed to "un publique laïque dont les goûts aristocratiques sont indéniables" and it is more than probable that the Lais were

¹Martin E. Marty, A Short History of Christianity, Meridian Books, 1959, p. 172.

²Elizabeth A. Francis, "Marie de France et son Temps," Romania, XLXXII, (1951), p. 78.

intended for the same audience. Hans Robert Jauss¹ points out that Marie not only introduced a lower genre, the "vulgares fabellae" into a courtly milieu successfully, she also transformed the animal fable into a higher genre. Jauss states: "Sie hat die Tierfabel 'verritterlicht'." Hence in the Prologue to the Fables, the poetess felt she had to explain this transformation. She does this, first, by stating that she does not wish to be considered "vileine" and, secondly, by attaching considerable importance to the process of "translatio." She, purposely, confers upon the originator (and translator!) of the genre and his continuators, prestige or rank. Thus Esope, an "ancien pere," is raised to the rank of a pagan author, Romulus is given the title Emperor, Alfred (in the Epilogue!) is referred to as a King, and William is called Count William. In this manner, Marie de France raised the "genre" to suit her Twelfth Century audience. The use of the octosyllabic couplet (instead of prose, as in the Romulus Nilantinus) also helped to raise the "genre."

Jauss is of the opinion that Marie's ethic in the animal fables is mainly a feudal ethic--"das Gute und das Böse des feudalen Ethos, Treue (fei), und Treulosigkeit (felunie)." Everything appears to revolve mainly around the conceptions of "leialté" or "felunie."

¹Jauss, op. cit., p. 28.

In another important group of fables, however, to which reference will be made later, Marie's "philosophie" seems to centre round the concept of a "nature," which is divinely ordained. Finally, Jauss asserts that the "sensus moralis" of the Prologue to the Fables is no more explicit than that of the Lais. He believes, like Spitzer, however, that Marie was aware of her role as a "Poeta philosophus et theologus." The equation Poetry = Philosophy = Theology is also implied in the Prologue to the Fables.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

The theme of sin runs like a thread through the texture of all three works of Marie de France.

In the Espurgatoire, the theme is elaborated upon considerably. The refusal of the Irish to allow themselves to be converted to Christianity is a cause of great sorrow to St. Patrick, who prays, fasts, and does penance for their sins. Jesus then appears to him and reveals the site of Saint Patrick's Purgatory, thereby enabling the Irish to see for themselves, as they had requested, the rewards that are allotted to the Saints and the punishments meted out to the sinners in the Life after death.

After Saint Patrick's death, a certain knight, Owen, decides to atone for his sins. He visits the cavern known as Saint Patrick's Purgatory, and sees the tortures of the damned in hell, and the bliss of the redeemed in the Terrestrial Paradise. There are several anecdotes about sin in the Espurgatoire. Early in the narrative, for example, there is the story of the old Irishman, who had committed five murders and injured several people, and who did not know this was a sin. Towards the end of the narrative poem,

too, there are a few anecdotes, the theme of which is, again, sin--that of the first hermit, who is tempted by demons, who appeared as naked women--that of the second hermit "le vilein qui se parjura," and that of the priest who decides in the end, not to seduce the young girl whom he has adopted. Very few specific sins are mentioned in the Espurgatoire; that of the old Irishman already referred to, is an exception to the rule.

On the other hand, in the Fables, a great number of specific sins or vices are mentioned--for example, pride, arrogance, envy, treachery, deceit, slander, robbery, theft, malice, greed, covetousness, miserliness, and lechery.

In the Lais, sometimes the sin is mentioned specifically, for example, in the "exposition" of Fresne, it is slander. Usually, however, the sin becomes apparent in the course of the narrative. Thus the sin of the lady in Chaitivel is egoism or pride. In Equitan, it is the lechery of the lovers. In Bisclavret, the treachery of Bisclavret's wife. In Guigemar, the sin is pride, in Laostic and Chevrefoil, it is adultery. All these are sins that fall within the scope of the definition suggested at the end of Chapter II, where sin was described as a movement away from God, or as a state which is marked by the absence of perfect harmony with God. In this sense, the sins that have so far been described in the Espurgatoire, the Fables, and the Lais are theological sins. The sin in Milun, which is the non-

observance of a religious sacrament, would be a theological sin too. Marie de France, however, appears to be interested mainly in the fact that love has to be concealed as a result of this sin.¹

There are a number of sins mentioned in the lais, which are sins only in the sense of being a fault or a misdemeanour. Such are the sins found in Lanval and Yonec, where the faults (that of "vantance" and of "desmesure") are not theological sins. In the same way, in "Les Deus Amanz," the sin is not theological, for it is again "desmesure" or "folie."

There are, therefore, seven lays--Fresne ("exposition" only), Chaitivel, Equitan, Bisclavret, Guigemar, Laostic, Chevrefoil--where the theme of sin is either implied, or illustrated and developed. One might also include Milun in the same group (but there are arguments against this procedure, as has been explained). There are, then, seven, or possibly, eight lays, where the theme of sin plays an important role in the Lais.

In the Prologue to the Lais (lines 1-27), an exhortation to avoid sin is delivered and the manner of achieving this, to some extent, indicated. Again, in the Prologue to the Fables (lines 1-10), the poetess strongly

¹ Jeanne Lods, Marie de France: les Lais. Les Classiques français du Moyen Age (Paris: 1959).

urges the educated to read and study such books as may benefit them most (i.e. the Christian Works of Salvation). In the last three lines of the Epilogue to the Fables, Marie de France indicates that she intends to work hard with a view to the salvation of her own soul. Finally, in the last two lines of the Epilogue to the Espurgatoire, she prays that we may all be cleansed of our sins.

The theme of saintliness appears in two of Marie's three works--the Espurgatoire and the Lais. In the Espurgatoire, a miracle occurs, when Jesus appears to St. Patrick, gives him a Bible and staff, and shows him the cavern, later to be known as St. Patrick's Purgatory. Many years later, a certain knight, Owen, visiting the cavern witnesses the tortures of sinners in Purgatory and the bliss of the saints in Terrestrial Paradise. Owen, on this occasion, sees the portals of the Celestial Paradise, the home of the Saints. On one occasion, too, celestial rays fall upon the heads of all those assembled and Owen becomes aware of the Ineffable Presence. On his return to the world, he leads an exemplary, almost saintly, life. The theme of saintliness is also illustrated in one of the anecdotes towards the end of the narrative poem. When Gilbert, an abbot in England, relates Owen's adventures to an audience of monks, one of them questions the reality of the apparitions. Gilbert, with a view to dispelling such doubts, then tells the story about the monk in his own Order, who led such a

saintly life, that demons abducted him.

In the Lais, the theme of saintliness is illustrated, to some extent, in Fresne. Adler's views about Fresne herself seem to amount to the following: that the equilibrium of a certain set of forces, social and personal, results in Fresne's courteous and gracious conduct. One of these forces, according to Adler himself, is Christian charm. But surely the compelling force in Fresne's character is the strength that she derives from the spirit, which stands her in good stead when she is obliged to make way for a rival. Innocence, which is one of Fresne's outstanding characteristics, implies freedom from sin or evil. Her self-denying attitude is strangely moving. In this charming, courageous and devoted girl, there is an element of saintliness.

In the last forty lines of Eliduc, the theme of saintliness, which is so clearly illustrated in the Espurgatoire, reappears. This writer attempted to show in Chapter VI how the poetess had, to some extent, laid the foundations for this ending, earlier in the narrative poem--Eliduc's piety, for example, appears to increase as a result of his love for Guilliadun and this devotion to religious duties and practices becomes most marked at Guilliadun's supposed death. In the last forty lines, the transition from piety to saintliness or quasi-saintliness is effected. The three main characters choose a life of contemplation and prayer, and enter Holy Orders. Although saintliness is

most prominent in the case of Guildeluëc, the other two characters also show elements of saintliness.

The monks depicted in Marie's Espurgatoire are Cistercians. It is not impossible that in Eliduc Marie, when relating the life of the hero, was thinking in terms of the Cistercian ideal in which body, soul, and spirit were technical terms denoting the ascent of the soul to God.¹

The first stage in the ascent of the soul was that of the body: a self-love without knowledge, limited to the immediate objects of gratification. This stage would correspond to the period when Eliduc was hired over long periods by various liege-lords as a warrior. He was married to Guildeluëc, who obviously loved him deeply. Medieval marriage, however, did not necessarily imply a joining of personalities or a merging of desires. There may have been a master-and-servant or owner-and-property attitude on Eliduc's part (see lines 959-963). Marie's description of the relationship (lines 9-12) is brief and general. (It will also be remembered that in Chaitivel, the description of the lady in the opening lines was only part of the whole picture. Most of Marie's lays resemble Chaitivel, in this sense, to some extent!) The second stage of the ascent of the soul to God was that in which reason, whose seat was in the soul, took a part and prompted a limited and selfish

¹See R.W. Southern, The Making of the Middle Ages, (London: Hutchinson's University Library, Hutchinson House, 1953).

love for the Creator and Bestower of Earthly blessings. This stage would correspond to the period after Eliduc has met Guilliadun. There is evidence in the poem that his piety has increased with the growth of this love (lines 601-602). Before visiting the chapel, where Guilliadun lay apparently dead, he would hear mass. He prayed for her soul, of course. Eliduc also asserted that he would become a monk as soon as he had buried Guilliadun (lines 947-948). He later had a convent built for Guildeluëc, and he and Guilliadun gave alms and did good deeds. The third stage of the ascent of the soul to God was that in which the love of God was freed from its merely selfish and limited aims and was enjoyed in all its sweetness and limitless satisfaction. This stage would correspond to the period when Eliduc, having entered Holy Orders, led a life of contemplation and prayer.

Further, again according to Southern¹ in the late Twelfth Century, men thought of themselves less as stationary objects of attack by spiritual foes and rather more as seekers or travellers. The imagery of journeying became a popular expression for a spiritual quest. (The spiritual ideal of pilgrimage had been exile rather than movement.)

It would seem possible then, that even the first part of Eliduc--the period corresponding to the description

¹Southern, Ibid., p. 222.

of the feudal wars--is, to some extent, the beginning of a spiritual quest on the part of the hero.

Enough has been said by the writer to show that he would disagree with Miss E. Rickert's¹ remark that the ending of *Eliduc* is tacked on so abruptly as to suggest that it was done later by someone who did not approve of the story as it stood. Certainly the ending appears to be somewhat brief, but it is effective, for the reader is given sufficient information about the three main characters to imagine for himself how they spent the remaining days of their lives. It will be remembered that, when Marie wished to describe saintliness in the Espurgatoire, she was sometimes compelled to use allegory. At the end of the lai of Eliduc, spiritual love or quasi-saintliness is again the theme. How could the poetess express poetically the fact that satisfactory spiritual progress was being maintained by all three characters in *Eliduc*? She tells us only that they are travelling along the road to perfection or saintliness. This she does briefly, but effectively.

It was suggested in Chapter III, that the Espurgatoire was partly a propagandist work, in the sense that the monk was working for the propagation of certain ideas, doctrines and practices, which would benefit the Cistercian order, in particular, and the Roman Catholic Church in general. How-

¹Edith Rickert, Marie de France: Seven of her Lays done into English (London: 1901), Introduction, p. 146.

ever, the general aim of the Espurgatoire was to build (aedificare), to instruct, and improve morally and spiritually. What audience was the Twelfth Century poetess addressing? She writes that the Espurgatoire was intended for "laie gent"--i.e. not the clergy, but the lay nobles. By the middle of the Twelfth Century, the importance of this nobility had increased. They were now a hereditary, ruling class who had been granted sole possession of fighting equipment. The classification of society into clergy, lay nobles, and commoners had become more distinct. A great lord might have to attend to the administration of his fiefs, hold courts of justice, and direct the education of the young nobles in the castle. His chief amusement was hunting.

The Fables were also intended for this lay audience with aristocratic tastes. Jauss¹ has shown that the ethic in the animal fables is mainly a feudal ethic, which centres round the concepts of "fei" and "felunie." The same author also refers to that group of fables where "Die Wesensungleichheit der Geschöpfe - beruht auf der Unveränderlichkeit der 'nature'." For example, in Fable I, De gallo et gemma, the cock cannot possibly appreciate a jewel. It is not in its nature to do so. In Fable LXXIV, the beetle cannot imitate the flight of the eagle for the same reason,

¹Hans Robert Jauss, "Über die höfische Tendenz in den Fabeln der Marie de France. Untersuchungen zur mittelalterlichen Tierdichtung," Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für Romanische Philologie, 100. Heft (Tübingen, 1959), S. 24 ff.

and in Fable XXIII, the mouse must choose "la suricete petite" as a mate and not the sun or a tower.

Words and phrases, such as "nature," "dreit," "us," "usage," "alever," "eshalcier," and "rencliner a ma nature" are a key to Marie's "philosophie" of "nature." This latter is divinely ordained. Marie accepts the hierarchical structure of society and has only contempt for those who would climb above their stations. Jaus¹ points out that very often the moral in those fables ends with some such expression as "Veü l'avons" In other words, Marie is only confirming what we know already. The idea of "another time" or an "amender" is not really implied in the moral of this particular group of Fables. This "nature," is of divine origin. Marie's "philosophie" would seem to be fundamentally orthodox.

The Lais of Marie de France were also intended for the same audience. Denis Piramus² in his Vie de St. Edmond, v. 35-36, claims that Marie's lays are popular among counts, barons, and knights, and the ladies listen to them with delight. This aristocratic genre would have considerable appeal for the lay nobles, who believed in the code of chivalry.

The Prologue to the Fables (lines 1-10) is an exhortation to the learned to read and study the Christian

¹Ibid., p. 32 (footnote).

²Denis Piramus, "La Vie Seint Edmund le rei," v. 35-35, ed. Florence Leftwich Ravenel, Bryn Mawr Monograph, (Philadelphia: Winston, 1906)

Works of Salvation, with a view to their own moral and spiritual improvement and that of others. In the same way, The Prologue to the Lais (lines 1-27) is an exhortation to write, to study and to avoid sin. Spitzer has shown that in this passage Marie is conscious of her role as a "poeta philosophus et theologus." If these sections of the prologues were intended for the lay nobles, Marie would seem to be propounding the view that only matters of faith, requiring elucidation, were an appropriate object of study for the intellectuals of the Twelfth Century. These sections of the prologues may have been intended, mainly, for posterity, however.

The Lais, and the Fables were, of course, much more entertaining than the Espurgatoire, yet fundamentally, Marie's message was the same in all three cases. There was no difference of aim; there was only a difference of method or means. The Espurgatoire was a broadside, aimed at "laie gent." One might say that, whereas the Espurgatoire was a frontal attack, the Fables and the Lais were flanking attacks. Naturally, Marie was trying to entertain, but she was also attempting to make this ruling class aware of its destiny (responsibilities is perhaps too modern a word!). It should be remembered that the attitude of the lay nobles was probably rather worldly.

Marie de France wrote not only for this class of society, but also for posterity. She claims to be a serious

writer. In the Epilogue to the Fables, she writes disapprovingly about those scribes who would like to take to themselves the credit of her work. In Guigemar, she refers to her fame and the jealousy it causes others. The complexity of Marie's writings--complexity of theme, symbol, form, and language--the use of allegory, the attempt to elevate a genre as in the Fables, and if we are to believe L. Foulet, the attempt to create a new genre, as in the Lais--all these reveal the great artistry of the First French Poetess, but they also suggest that she was writing for posterity. The message was, to some extent, the same as she had tried to convey to the lay nobles of the Twelfth Century--that future generations should also avoid sin and seek salvation. In all probability, she hoped that these generations would read, think about, and expound her texts. Deep philosophical or religious truths must be continually examined and explained afresh. Such hard work would help in warding off sin.

The Prologue to the Fables (lines 1-10), the Prologue to the Lais (lines 1-27), and the Lais of Guigemar, Fresne and Eliduc show Marie's interest in theology and religion. The Fables are about problems of good and evil, folly and wisdom. The moral concern, which Marie de France reveals in this work is religious. As for the Espurgatoire, Marie de France's interest in religion appears in the theological introduction (lines 30-88), where reference is made twice

to St. Gregory and once to St. Augustine and to such delicate problems as the separation of the soul from the body and the existence of souls in corporeal form.

In the Homily, it is suggested that we help sinners expiate their sins by prayers for the dead, masses, alms giving, and good works on earth. The poetess handles problems concerning the Holy Orders--the monks are reprimanded for complaining about their hard life and not thinking sufficiently about the life to come. In the Homily (lines 1419-1424) Marie de France touches on problems connected to Baptism--are the saints, in Terrestrial Paradise not there partly because they have been baptized? She discusses problems related to Penance--confession, "satisfacciun" and absolution. The following theological concepts are discussed in the Espurgatoire: Purgatory, Terrestrial Paradise, Eternity (in Terrestrial Paradise and Purgatory), the Fall and Grace. There is a reference to the Holy Ghost. Lines 799-805 correspond closely to the Biblical language of the Epistle of St. Paul to the Ephesians (Chapter VI).

Miss Edith Rickert¹ states that religion was quite unimportant to the poetess until she wrote the Purgatory. Obviously this statement is based on the argument that the order of Marie's productions are Lais, Fables, and Espurgatoire. Scholars disagree about this order considerably and the

¹Rickert, op. cit., Introduction, p. 162.

writer does not wish to re-open this subject. Miss Rickert also states that in the Lays and Fables, Marie shows no interest in religious matters (p. 145, Introduction). Here are some of the charges levelled by Miss Rickert at Marie de France. In the Lais there are very few prayers said and they are as short as possible. In Fresne, Marie cannot resist a laugh at the Lord of Dol for his donation to the abbey; her creed in Yonec would hardly satisfy the orthodox; the divorce question in Eliduc troubles her not at all.

This writer would like to begin with Miss Rickert's second point. It is true that Marie de France cannot resist a laugh at the Lord of Dol who, in order to see Fresne, whom he loves, has to make gifts to the abbey, where Fresne resides. Marie's laugh is, no doubt, a kindly one--but what is more important, this picturesque detail is effective, reflecting as it does the solidity and seriousness of that from which it grows. Secondly, if Marie de France chooses to include short prayers in her Lais, rather than long ones, or if no prayers at all are said, there may be very good reasons for this. A long prayer would not be effective, i.e. it might hold up the narrative and too many prayers would produce a similar result. The creed in Yonec might not please the orthodox, but it does not follow that Marie's "attitude was thoroughly worldly" (146). Jeanne Lods, in her Introduction to "Les Lais de Marie de France," p. 25, objects to the fact that Yonec is compelled to partake of

the sacrament. Referring to the heroine of that lai, she writes:

elle vent s'assurer que son amant est bon chrétien et lui impose une épreuve qui peut paraître sacrilège aux consciences un peu délicates. Marie n'est pas théologienne, et dans les lais, tout au moins, elle se montre peu moraliste.

But surely Yonec submits most willingly to the "épreuve." It is he, who says "la semblance de vus prendrai" and in any case, this kind of situation only exists because of the strange amalgam of magic, religion and medieval chivalry in the lai of Yonec. Toldo,¹referring to the mingling of all three worlds in Yonec, states "Il n'y a rien en cela de contraire aux croyances du moyen âge où l'on attribue aux saints même les miracles des divinités païennes." Also, in the Twelfth Century, Andreas Capellanus, a clergyman, undertook to write what was clearly a secular work--the Tractatus de Amore. He could apparently believe, to some extent, both in the Church and in profane love.

The divorce question in Eliduc is a more delicate matter. This writer does not feel qualified to offer a theological justification of the divorce. He would disagree however, with the statement "the divorce question troubles her not at all." The lai of Eliduc, viewed as a whole, remains a deeply religious lay. Marie's attitude is not a worldly one.

¹Pietro Toldo, "Yonec," Romanische Forschungen, t. XVI, 1904, pp. 609-29.

What strikes the writer about some of the prayers that are offered to the Deity in the Lais, is that very often they occur at a turning-point or climax in the story. For example, in Fresne, when the young woman of gentle birth expresses the hope that a "produm" will find the child, she says (line 116) "Si Deu plest, nurrir la fera." On reaching the convent-gate, she prays to God that the child may not perish (lines 162-164). Then she turns round and notices the fork of the ash-tree. Before leaving the child, she says another short prayer, "A Deu le veir le comanda" (line 174). When the worthy door-keeper finds the child in the fork of the ash-tree (line 190) "Il en a Deu mult mercié"--this prayer, although short, is his first reaction to finding the child. Then Fresne is adopted by the abbess and passes as her niece. A new phase of her life has begun. In Guigemar, again, when the magic ship sets sail (i.e. when Guigemar leaves his world of familiar surroundings behind him and a new phase of his life, as it were, is about to begin), he prays to God that he may live (lines 200-202). Again the prayer occurs at a turning-point in the narrative. The effect of the prayer may have been to remove, to some extent, the pride which is so closely allied to his amorous listlessness or disaffection. In Eliduc, the hero, overcome with grief at the thought of Guilliadun's death, prays for her soul. It is after this prayer, that Guildeluëc, who has until then remained in the background of the story, decides

she wishes to discover what is happening in the chapel. A new phase of the narrative has begun. These are only three examples of the way in which Marie de France introduces prayers into her Lais. The insertion of these prayers by the poetess seems most appropriate and provides further evidence of her artistry, and the prayers reveal Marie de France's interest in religion.

In Guigemar (lines 480-495), Marie refers to those churlish knights, who roam about the world in search of pleasure, then boast of their evil deeds. What they brag about, however, is not love--it is sin, folly, or lechery. In her Lais, Marie de France provides many illustrations of the love theme. In Marie's view, love is a natural, spontaneous passion, where the lovers must feel mutually attracted. Devotion, tenderness and trust play an important role. In Marie's conception of love, reason also plays its part as is shown in the lai of Eliduc. The love between Milun and his friend, which overcomes all obstacles over a long period of time evokes admiration in Marie. Self-abnegation, such as is found in Fresne or Guildeluëc, is akin to the devotion which all lovers should share. Love should, at times, be stronger than death, (as in Yonec). The ideal love is symbolized in the intertwining of the honey-suckle and the hazel-tree; if one dies, the other will also wither away. Marie has little sympathy for old husbands, who are tyrannical and jealous--in such cases her

pity and compassion go to "la mal-mariée." On the other hand, punishment is in store for the treacherous wife (Bisclavret) or the faithless one (Equitan), or even for the insensitive woman (as in Chaitivel). Perhaps Frappier¹ has best summed up Marie's approach to the problem of love when he writes: "Elle célèbre, à la fois en psychologue et en moraliste, la tendresse, la fidélité, et le dévouement."

The concept of destiny is often allied to that of love in the Lais. This would seem natural, for the medieval ethic (with its concept of sin) implied that man was corrupt and lacking in freedom of the will. In the end, however, destiny is usually kind to lovers in the Lais of Marie de France--this is certainly true, at least, of Guigemar, Le Fresne, Lanval, Milun, and Eliduc. Love, in Marie's Lais can lead to sin, suffering and death (as implied in Chevrefoil) or to great virtue and saintliness (as in Eliduc). Marie, for all her interest in the subject, knows that even human love withers and dies. It is unlikely that Marie believed in the fundamental idea of "l'amour courtois," that love was the fount and origin of all good. She believed, however, that genuine love was a good to be highly valued.

The Provençal theory of "l'amour courtois" expected, among other things, that court be paid only to a married woman. As a result of this stipulation, love and marriage

¹Jean Frappier (ed.), Les Romans Courtois (Paris: Classiques Larousse, n.d.), Introduction, p. 10.

were placed in totally different categories. True love was named "dilectio"--married love "affectus." Andreas Capellanus wrote his *Tractatus de Amore* about 1180. His main contention was that a man, having educated himself, should maintain, and if possible, augment his personal reputation. He should diligently seek the love of some lady, who was entitled to his complete submission. This relationship was not unlike that of vassal to overlord. In short, the lady (*domina*) was treated like a sovereign. There was always something strangely paradoxical, however, about this cult of love which "exacted at one and the same time, adultery and chastity, duplicity and faithfulness, self-indulgence and austerity, suffering and delight."¹

Marie, in her *Lais*, sometimes discusses problems of courtly love which she, no doubt, heard debated in the milieu to which she belonged. For example, in *Guigemar*, the following question is mooted: Should a lover have to wait long for the love he requests? In *Equitan*, the question is asked--Can a man of the highest lineage love a woman of less rank? In *Eliduc*, the problem is: Can a man love two women at one and the same time? Marie also makes use in her *Lais*, of some of the chief tenets of the Provençal theory of "l'amour courtois." In *Lanval*, for example, the lover has to observe the greatest discretion. In *Equitan*, the King's mistress

¹Morton M. Hunt, *The Natural History of Love* (New York: Grove Press Inc., 1959), p. 131.

assumes the sovereign role of woman. Thus, the poetess was not unacquainted with the casuistry of courtly love.

Marie de France, however, although prepared to accept the knightly code of morals, did not approve of "l'amour courtois." This is clearly illustrated in the Lais of Equitan and Chaitivel. In Equitan, the King's lechery and adultery form part of his "courtesie" and, in Chaitivel, in the same way, the lady's egoism and pride form part of her "courtesie." Marie de France launches a devastating attack against "l'amour courtois" in these two lays. This paradoxical cult of love, which was contrary to the Christian ethic, probably repelled Marie de France. Her method of attack in Chaitivel is the use of irony and humour. Yet her use of irony to attack "l'amour courtois" was an unwilling tribute to its power. C.S. Lewis¹ has suggested that between the world of "l'amour courtois" and that of religion, the rift was irremediable and that Andreas Capellanus, himself, repeatedly recognized this fact. Courtly love can, of course, fuse with religion, as it does in Dante, but when this does not occur, courtly love can "never under the shadow of its tremendous rival, be more than a temporary truancy." The same author also states: "There is, for Andreas, in a cool hour, no doubt as to which of the two worlds is the real one and in this he is typical of the Middle Ages." For Marie

¹Clive Staples Lewis, The Allegory of Love: A Study in Medieval Tradition (Oxford: 1936), p. 42.

de France there was also no doubt as to which of the two worlds was the real one.

In Chapter I of this thesis, it was suggested that the works of Marie de France were not unlike a triptych-- i.e. a set of three panels with pictures, designs, or carvings, hinged so that the two side panels may be folded over the central one. Such triptyches are used as altar-pieces *ad maiorem gloriam Dei*. It might be useful, therefore, to discover how the panels are hinged. In other words, it might be advisable now to determine what Marie de France's three works have in common.

Firstly, it would seem that the poetess was to some extent stimulated by the hope of eternal rewards, like the copyists in the monastic scriptoria, when she wrote all three works, i.e. her motives, as far as the writer can judge were, to some extent, the same.

Secondly, Marie's audience for all three productions was the aristocracy or lay nobles. She addressed all her works to the same audience.

Thirdly, the message which she attempted to convey to that audience was, broadly speaking, the same on all three occasions. It amounted to an exhortation to avoid sin in this world and to seek salvation in the next. The Lais and the Fables, however, while conveying this message, proved to be artistic entertainment of the highest order.

Fourthly, Marie de France's three works show an interest in theology and religion. The Espurgatoire

obviously reveals such an interest. In Marie's Isopet there are five religious or quasi-religious fables. Jauss has shown that the animal fables have a feudal ethic, but that another group of fables centres round the concept of a "nature," which is divinely ordained. Marie's deep moral concern can be felt by the reader of the Fables. The medieval ethic is religious. In the Lais, the theme of sin, which appears in seven of Marie de France's twelve lais is, of course, a religious theme. Lines 1-27 of the Prologue to the Lais, and lines 1-10 of the Prologue to the Fables contribute considerably to the revelation of Marie's interest in theology and religion.

Fifthly, the theme of saintliness appears in two of the three works of Marie de France--the Espurgatoire and the Lais (Eliduc and Fresne). The spiritual quest of the Espurgatoire re-appears in Eliduc and, to some extent, in Guigemar.

It would seem then that Marie's works possess much in common and that the three panels of the triptych are fittingly hinged. The Lais are entitled to the position of the central panel, in view of their greater complexity. In other words, the Lais were written with consummate artistry. The Fables and the Espurgatoire are the two side panels, which may be folded over the central one. This triptych would certainly be used as an altar-piece ad maiorem gloriam Dei.

Marie de France's thinking was typically medieval.

Her conclusions were almost all orthodox. She had no desire to quarrel with the fundamental ideas of her age. She accepted authority and the hierarchical structure of society in which she lived. Prayer, resignation and hard work were among the chief tenets of her creed. She was certainly no revolutionary. She disapproved strongly of those who sought to rise to a position for which they were not intended. She probably belonged to the same class as the audience for whom she wrote her books. Between Marie's medieval thinking and that of the humanist, who was later to put mankind on a pedestal of unsurpassed respect, the gulf was indeed unbridgeable. She might pursue her studies and write the most charming love-stories, yet believe at one and the same time in the worthlessness of whatever did not lead to an understanding of the divine truths. It may be that one should bear this in mind, while reading Goethe's¹ interesting comment on her Lais. "Ebenso werden die Gedichte Mariens von Frankreich durch den Duft der Jahre, der sich zwischen uns und ihre Persönlichkeit hineinzieht, anmutiger und lieber."

Marie's orthodoxy, however, did not mean that she could remain complacent about injuries or wrongs, inflicted upon the weak or the poor, and in the Fables she criticizes

¹Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. Annalen (1820),
"Sämtliche Werke. Jubiläums-Ausgabe, p. 345.

severely those among the privileged, who are unjust and unprincipled. Nor does Marie's orthodoxy mean that she remains complacent about the position of "la mal-mariée." Indeed, Marie disapproves strongly of husbands who are jealous, old, tyrants, and whose treatment of their wives is cruel and unjust. She is even prepared, on occasion, to condone adultery. Where a husband is kind and considerate to his wife, however, and the wife is unfaithful, the sympathy of the poetess goes to the husband. The passages denoting lack of complacency in the Fables reveal clearly that, although Marie approved of authority, she was not prepared to tolerate its abuse. Marie, then, while conforming in fundamental matters, does not hesitate to express her own ideas on specific problems. Marie's attitude towards the problem of "la mal-mariée," on the other hand, would seem to suggest that her views on the role of women in the Twelfth Century were not quite orthodox. It would be tempting to believe that this independence of thought meant that faith did not, after all, wholly absorb the interest of men. Did not secular preoccupations, literary and philosophical, play an important role in this culture still mainly religious? On the other hand, new developments in religion itself had also appeared by the middle of the Twelfth Century. R.S. Southern¹ referring to the period immediately before 1215,

¹Southern, op. cit., p. 98.

writes: "The same generation which laid bare the human basis of secular government was also disclosing a new intensity of spiritual life in the study of the individual soul." After all, St. Bernard, who had brought his generation to consider above all else the human aspects of Christ had exhorted man to apply his own powers to the problems of religion. The attempt had been made to make of religion a more personal matter. Could it be then that Marie had undergone some such religious influence? Or had she undergone religious and secular influences?

The writer certainly does not claim to know the answer to these problems, but it is interesting to speculate. What the writer does know is that Marie de France was interested in the Christian ideal of conduct, with its assumption, on the one hand, of human imperfection, and on the other, of infinite perfectibility.

The reader of Marie de France's works must surely be grateful that the first French Poetess should remind him in such delightfully entertaining fashion that most men will, no doubt, continue to pursue their immediate aims, and further their own selfish interests; nevertheless, salvation can be attained by weighing what may be temporary values against enduring ones, and by choosing wisely.

APPENDIX A

"G. Paris and Julian Harris believe that the relative Order of Lais, Fables, and Espurgatoire, in date of composition was F, L, E; Mall. Gustave Cohen, and T.A. Jenkins have placed them E, F, L; Warnke, Suchier, and Voretzsch arrange them L, F, E, and I agree with this. Ezio Levi is alone in the arrangement L, E, F."

(U.T. Holmes, History of Old French Literature, p. 188.)

APPENDIX B

Warnke, Fables

- VI Ici chastie les plusurs
ki sur els unt les mals seignurs,
que pas nes deivent esforcier
n'a plus fort d'els acumpaignier
par lur sens ne par lur avoir,
mes desturber a lur poeir.
Cum plus esforce, pis lur fet;
tuz jurs lur est en mal aguet.
- VII Altresi est del mal seignur:
se povres huem li fet honur
e puis demant sun gueredun,
ja n'en avra se mal gre nun;
pur ceo qu'il seit en sa baillie,
mercier le deit de sa vie.
- XVIII Issi avient, plusur le funt
des bons seignurs, quant il les unt:
tuzjurs les vuelent defuler
ne lur sevent honur garder;
s'il nes tient alkes en destreit,
ne funt pur lui ne tort ne dreit.
A tel se pernent, kis destruit;
de lur avoir meine sun bruit:
lors regretent lur bon seignur,
qui il firent la deshonor.
- XX Par essample nus mustre ci:
chescuns frans huem face altresi!
Se nuls li vuelte doner luiier
ne par pramesse losengier
que sun seignur deie traïr,
nel vueille mie cunsentir;
atendre en deit tel gueredun,
cume li chiens fist del larrun.
- XXIII Altresi est del traïtur
ki meseire vers sun seignur,
a qui il deit honur porter
e leialté e fei garder.
Se sis sire a de lui mestier
e il le veie afebleier,
a sun busuin li vuelte faillir,
od les autres se vuelte tenir;
se sis sire vient al desus,
ne puet laissier sun malvais us,
dunc voldreit a lui retourner:
de toutes parz vuelte meserrer.

Par tut en est al dei mustrez
e avilliez e vergundez;
s'onur en pert e sun aveir,
e reprovier en unt si heir;
a tuzjurs en est si huniz,
cume fu la chalve suriz
ki ne deit mes par jur voler,
ne il ne deit en curt parler.

XXVII

Cest essample puet hum veeir,
chescuns frans huem le deit saveir:
nuls ne puet mie aveir honur,
ki hunte fet a sun seignur,
ne li sire tut ensement,
pur qu'il vueille hunir sa gent;
se li uns a l'autre est failliz,
ambur en ierent mal bailliz.

XXIX

Pur ceo mustre li sages bien
qu'um ne deüst pur nule rien
felun hume faire seignur
ne traire le a nule honur:
ja ne guardera leialté
plus a l'estrange qu'al privé;
si se demeine vers sa gent,
cum fist li lous del sairement.

XXXVI

De curt a rei est ensement:
tels i entre legierement,
mielz li vendreit en sus ester
pur les nuveles esculter.

XLVI

Par cest essample mustre ici
qu'um ne deit pas faire seignur
de malvais hume jangleür,
u il n'a se parole nun.
Tels se nobleie par tençun
e vuelte manacier e parler,
ki mult petit fet a duter.

LVI

Pur ceo ne deit princes ne reis
ses cumandemenz ne ses leis
a coveitus metre en baillie;
kar sa dreiture en est perie.

APPENDIX C

Le travers del bois est alez
Un vert chemin ki l'ad menez
Fors de la launde, en la plaigne;
Vit la faleise et la muntaigne;
D'une ewe ke desuz cureit
Braz fu de mer, hafne i aveit.

(J. Lods, "New Interpretation of
Guigemar, v. 145-150, Romania,
LXXVII, 78-85, 494-6.)

APPENDIX D

Miss Hatcher, explaining Marie's procedure of choosing a specific concrete object as the centre of her lais, which shall develop within the poem new varieties of symbolic logic, claims that the magic potion represents a means and a necessary means to the fulfilment of the lovers' desire; as the boy reaches the top of the mountain without its aid, it seems to become superfluous; then, in the end, sprinkled upon the grass, it symbolizes love's frustration--its virtue serving, finally, to feed "meinte bone herbe," the memorial to the dead lovers.

(A.G. Hatcher in Romania,
Vol. 71, 1950, p. 339)

APPENDIX E

Warnke, Chievrefueil

(a) lines 61-78

(b) lines 107-113

(a) Ceo fu la sume de l'escrit
qu'il li aveit mandé e dit,
que lunges ot ilec esté
e atendu e surjurné
pur espiér e pur saveir
coment il la peüst veeir
kar ne poeit vivre senz li.
D'els dous fu il tut altresí
cume del chievrefueil esteit
ki a la coldre se perneit:
quant il s'i est lacies e pris
e tut entur le fust s'est mis,
ensemble poeent bien durer;
mes ki puis les vuelte desevrer,
la coldre muert hastivement
e li chievrefueilz ensement.
'Bele amie, si est de nus:
ne vus senz mei ne jeo senz vus!'

(b) Pur la joie qu'il ot eüe
de s'amie qu'il ot veüe
e pur ceo qu'il aveit escrit,
si cum la reine l'ot dit,
pur les paroles remembrer,
Tristram ki bien saveit harper,
en aveit fet un nuvel lai.

APPENDIX F

Ailred of Rievaulx's Definition of Sensual Love

Verum amicitiae carnalis exordium ab affectione procedit, quae instar meretricis divaricat pedes suos omni transeunti, sequens aures et oculos suos per varia fornicantes; per quorum aditus usque ad ipsum mentem pulchrorum corporum vel rerum voluptuosarum inferuntur imagines; quibus ad libitum frui, putat esse beatum; sed sine socio frui, minus aestimat esse jucundum. Tunc motu, nutu, verbis, obsequiis, animus ab anime captivatur, et accenditur unus ab altero, et conflantur in unum: ut inito foedere miserabili, quidquid sceleris quidquid sacrilegii est, alter agat et patiatur pro altero; nihilque hac amicitia dulcius arbitrantur, nihil judicant justius; idem velle, et idem nolle, sibi existimantes amicitiae legibus imperari.

(Migne - Patrologia Latina,
Vol. CXCIV, col. 665)

APPENDIX G

Warnke, Prologue
(lines 1-27)

Qui Deus a dune esciënce
e de parler bone eloquence,
ne s'en deit taisir ne celer,
ainz se deit voluntiers mustrer.
Quan uns granz biens est mult oïz,
dunc a primes est il fluriz,
e quant loëz est de plusurs,
dunc a expandues ses flurs.
Custume fu as anciëns,
ceo testimoine Preciëns,
es livres que jadis faiseient
assez oscurement diseient
pur cels ki a venir esteient
e ki aprendre les deveient,
que peüssent gloser la letre
e de lur sen le surplus metre.
Li philesophe le saveient,
par els meïsmes l'entendeient,
cum plus trespasereit li tens,
plus serreient sutil de sens
e plus se savreient garder
de ceo qu'i ert, a trespasrer.
Ki de vice se vult defendre,
estudier deit e entendre
e grevose oeuvre comencier;
par ceo s'en puet plus esloignier
e de grant dolur delivrer.

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