To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Barbara McCarter Bloy entitled "'Women's Exercise': Studies in the Female Personae of Elizabethan Miscellanies." I recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, with a major in English.

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"WOMEN'S EXERCISE": STUDIES IN THE FEMALE PERSONAE OF ELIZABETHAN MISCELLANIES

A Dissertation

Presented for the

Doctor of Philosophy

Degree

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Barbara McCarter Bloy

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ABSTRACT

The primary material is those poems which have a female persona or contain the direct discourse of a woman from the eighteen extant miscellanies published in London between 1557 and 1603. Many of the poems are anonymous, but rather than drawing inferences about their authorship, the study is an examination of demonstrably popular poetry to determine how Elizabethan men regarded women and how they regarded the art of poetry. Poets who have been assigned authorship include most of the important writers of the age, almost all male. Their negative capability can be fully appreciated when their personae are so decidedly other than themselves as women. Tudor rhetoric books offer instructions in *mimesis* which are carefully followed by some poets and transcended by others. They created two distinct types of female personae. The mistress is the woman in love, victim of the persuasions of a courtly lover; in falling from her pedestal she finds her tongue and voices her complaint. Her counterpart, the *femme d'esprit*, is willful, witty, and argumentative. She may be either amorous or a devotee of Diana; she inverts or refuses the pastoral *carpe diem* argument and the courtly ploy. The language and imagery of both types is distinctly different from that of male personae. Their use of myth, especially of Cupid and of Venus and Diana, reinforces the two choices of life open to the Elizabethan woman: the religion of love or the worship of virginity.

This study helps to demonstrate that in Elizabethan England many medieval trends in poetry continued virtually unchanged; that a large body of poetry either ignored or satirized the fashion for Petrarchan verse; that Ovid's direct influence was greater and broader than we suppose; that Tudor poets were rhetoricians; that men's attitude toward women changed as adulterous courtly love became premarital Petrarchan courtship under the aegis of that living *femme d'esprit*, Elizabeth I.

Chapter I demonstrates that the primary material comes from an earlier folk tradition in England and France. A sonnet rarely has a female persona, but ballads, songs, airs, lyrics, and pastoral songs frequently do. Chapter II traces the direct influence of Ovid's *Heroides* and Tudor rhetoric books in the creation of a new poetic type, the complaint of a mistress. Chapter III illustrates that the anti-petrarchanism of the *femme d'esprit* is an objection, not to the falseness of style, but to the profound hypocrisy of the would-be seducer. Chapter IV summarizes the difference between the *femme d'esprit* and the mistress, followers of Diana and Venus, by examining their language and imagery.

Appended to the study is an index of poets, a full bibliography of the eighteen miscellanies, and a list of works consulted.

PREFACE

"WOMENS EXERCISE": STUDIES IN THE FEMALE PERSONAE OF ELIZABETHAN MISCELLANIES

It is not womens exercise,
To straye or gadde in field or towne;
Men count them neyther good nor wyse,
They blot and blemis their renoune.
They hurt their fame, they please their foe,
And greeves their friend to see them so.
(*The Paradyse of daynty devises*, No. 116)

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INTRODUCTION

The primary material of this study is a body of poetry culled from the eighteen extant miscellanies published between 1557 and 1603. All of the poems have a female persona or contain the direct discourse of a woman. Medieval poetry with the same qualifications is included, and lyric poetry from songbooks and the major poets of the first quarter of the seventeenth century round out the picture. Since this material has never been isolated, it seems worthwhile to see where it comes from and what it has to tell us about literary history. Of the miscellanies published during Elizabeth's reign, twelve contain poems relevant to this study. To familiarize the reader with their colorful titles and the order in which they appeared, here is a chronological list:

Tottel's *Songes and sonettes*, 1557

A Handefull of pleasant delites, 1566

The Paradyse of dainty devises, 1576

A gorgious Gallery of gallant Inventions, 1578

The Forrest of Fancy, 1579

Howell's Devises, 1581

Brittons Bowre of Delights, 1591

The Phoenix Nest, 1593

The Garland of Good Will, 1593

The Arbor of amorous Devises, 1597

Englands Helicon, 1600

A Poetical Rapsody, 1602

Notes refer only to these titles; a bibliography of all the miscellanies is appended, as well as an index of poets. The known poets include most of the important writers of the era: Wyatt, Surrey, Nicholas Breton, Thomas Watson, John Davies, George Peele, Thomas Lodge, Batholemew Yong, Robert Greene, Philip Sidney and Walter Raleigh, as well as songwriters like Campion. Many of the poems are anonymous, but it is not to our purpose to draw inferences about their authorship. We are looking at this material as a body of poetry that was demonstrably popular at the time and therefore has something to tell us about how men regarded women and how they regarded the art of poetry.

This study would not have been done even ten years ago for the simple reason that it would not have occurred to anyone. But consideration of the woman in literature does now occur to students of the Petrarchan tradition. We search modern anthologies of Elizabethan lyrics in vain for poems with a female persona. The woman would have been better absent than to be the shadowy Stella who answers Astrophel's *carpe diem* argument with a "no, no, no, no" but eventually gives in. But then we think of Rosalinde's lovely madrigal, "Love in my bosom like a bee," and the mere existence of such a poem has important implications. There are only two or three sonnets put in the mouth of a woman, but little-known ballads, songs, airs, complaints, lyrics, and satires often have a woman speaker. These, and the occasional pastoral poem spoken by a shepherdess seem peripheral--or are they? The questions raised are many: What did the Elizabethan

female persona have to say when she *did* speak up? Did the poet borrow forms and conventions of the male persona or invent new techniques to express her point of view? What is her perception of the world? Her range of interests? How does she feel about herself? About marriage? About the choices of life open to a woman? Is she interested in the preoccupations of the age: exploration, speculative thinking, *memento mori*? Is there anything remarkable about her language and imagery? There are two answers to each of these questions. In fact, the shape of this study comes from my perception of two distinct types of female personae. Chapter I traces medieval sources of a remarkable figure whom I call the *femme d'esprit*. It defines her in terms of her counterpart, the mistress. Chapter II traces the complaint of the mistress, the woman in love, finding its sources in Ovid and the Tudor style books. Some Elizabethan complaints by a woman merely borrow the male lover's devices, some are close to the Ovidian tradition, some are exercises in rhetoric, but some transcend their sources. The third chapter looks at the answers of the *femme d'esprit* to the *carpe diem* argument of their lovers, their refusals of the courtly ploy, and their anti-petrarchanism. Chapter IV summarizes the study by commenting on the difference between the language and imagery of the female persona and those of the male. The way the woman uses the central myths of Venus and Diana bears out the study's original dichotomy between the *femme d'esprit* and the mistress; the most telling evidence of which is Spenser's handling of Venus and Diana in the *Faerie Queene*, surely a central document of its age.

This study was rewarding for several reasons. The persona-oriented reading of poetry includes all the advantages of the contextual and generic approaches, and uses the techniques of rhetorical criticism. This combination of methods is in itself a valuable tool which has many applications. The primary material is unfamiliar to many students of the English Renaissance. Although much of this is second-rate poetry, it all appeared in popular miscellanies, and this argues for its familiarity and wide acceptance in its own era. Surely examination of the poetry will help us realize several things about Elizabethan England: that many medieval trends in poetry continued virtually unchanged; that a large body of poetry either ignored or satirized the fashion for Petrarchan verse; that Ovid's direct influence was greater and broader than we suppose; and that Tudor poets were rhetoricians every one. Certainly some great poems are placed more clearly in their cultural context by the study of the inferior but popular works of the time. Chaucer's *Wyf of Bath's Prologue*, Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis* and the heroines of his comedies and problem plays, and the women in the *Faerie Queene* can be profitably reexamined in the light of these miscellany poems and the tradition they represent. And finally, the question of the woman's "~~place~~" in an England dominated by the great Elizabeth can be explored. The Virgin Queen was surely a living model for the *femme d'esprit*. The adulterous courtly love of the Middle Ages metamorphosized into pre-marital Petrarchan courtship; men's attitudes toward women changed, as did women's perception of themselves. Erasmus and More and Sidney turned the medieval ideal of chivalry into the humanistic one of courtesy

E.M.W. Tillyard perceives this change as "a new faculty of sympathy, of entering imaginatively in the other person's place." When the dying Sidney gave a common soldier his water, he was acting not from an abstract ideal of conduct, but from personal consideration.[1] The individual person is perceived to have inviolable integrity, and the woman is accepted as a person if she sees herself as one.

While it may seem that a major objection to this study is that many of these poems were signed by men and almost all the rest can be assumed to have been written by male poets, this factor does not undermine the study's value; in fact it shows the large degree of negative capability enjoyed by the poets. That Elizabethan writers became masters of *mimesis* is not obvious when we can easily identify Sidney as Astrophel or Shakespeare as the persona of his sonnets. That these poets did not describe to any such notion as "look in thy heart and write" only becomes clear when we see them at work creating a persona so decidedly other than themselves as a woman. We who first read the lyrics of this golden age through a mist of Wordsworthian romanticism and the fog of biographical zeal must read them anew in the clear light as utterances by a persona, the result of rhetorical skill and craftsmanship. In creating a persona, a dramatic mask, these poets have entered a process which has at its best profound results for humankind. Plato understood and feared its enormous power. In *The Republic* he

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[1] E.M.W. Tillyard, *The English Renaissance: Fact or Fiction?* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1952), p. 31.

classifies poetry according to the degree to which it employs direct speech as opposed to indirect speech and narrative. Direct speech involves *mimesis*, a representation or imitation requiring the poet or narrator to put himself in position of the character speaking, think his thoughts, and feel his feelings. Plato would banish mimetic poetry (tragedy, comedy, the epic) from his ideal state because *mimesis* reproduces emotions so well, including evil and base ones. Schoolboys recited Homer dramatically, and Plato is so convinced of the power of *mimesis* that he would censor the representation of "bad" characters, afraid that they will teach future Guardians to be themselves "bad." For example, the "good" man should not fear death, but should have courage and endurance. Therefore, Plato insists, we must cut out from our poetry lamentations by famous men. "We can give them to the less reputable women characters or to cowardly men, so that those whom we say we are bringing up as guardians of our state will be ashamed to imitate them."[2] Specifically, Plato does not want to permit men ever to take the parts of women, "nor to represent them abusing their husbands or quarreling with heaven and boasting of their supposed good fortune, or mourning and lamenting in misfortune. Far less can we permit representation of women in sickness or love or child-birth."[3] What could he mean but that *mimesis* has great power? But he was assuming that the power of empathy would make men effeminate,

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[2]Plato, *The Republic*, trans. G.M.A. Grube (Indianapolis: Hacket , 1974), Book III, pp. 56-57.

[3]Ibid., p. 66.

as he feared that music would make them soft. Since the sixteenth century, we have believed that the power of art is not destructive but humanizing. Walter J. Ong argues that "voice is the foundation for role-playing among men in the sense that the use of voice and its understanding . . . forces man to enter into others. From this point of view, it is not strange that as literature develops in the course of history, roles become more manifold and more complex. . . . It is as though this ability to take on the role of another shows the actor's own humanity, shows that the other is already within him, and is, indeed, the shadow of his most real self."[4] This accords well with Sidney's dying action and with his *Defense of Poetry*. The persona-oriented reading of a poem humanizes it. We do not ask "what is the poet saying," but emphasize the poem's dynamic quality, drawing inferences about the speaker because the poem is about the speaker. Images, metaphors, statements are thus important not for what they "mean," but for what they tell us about the speaker. Thus a poem is a dramatic process of utterance which engages our most human interest. There is much beyond a rational consideration of themes and ideas to be learned in this remarkable body of poetry.

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[4]Walter J. Ong, "Voice as Summons for Belief," *Literature and Belief*, ed. M.H. Abrams, English Institute Essays, 1957 (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1958), p. 87.

CHAPTER I

IMPATIENT GRISELDA: THE *FEMME D'ESPRIT*

"and Jhesu Crist us sende
Housbondes meeke, yonge, and fresshe abedde,
And grace t'overbyde hem that we wedde."
(*The Wyf of Bath's Tale*, 11.1258-60)

An examination of English medieval and Renaissance lyrics with a woman persona and of poems that include the direct discourse of a woman shows a simple dichotomy which may be traced. "Good" women are daughters of the Virgin, and include the patient wife, the courtly mistress of medieval poems, and later the Petrarchan mistress. Eve is the progenitor of those who, on the other hand, we may call *femmes d'esprit*, of whom the Wyf of Bath is best known. Eve was viewed by the church fathers as a temptress, who, with her base sexual appetite and her powerful wiles, brought about the fall of mankind. Her daughters include any woman who displays the same natural appetite and thus debases men. Any woman of enough spirit to know her own mind, any who demands mutuality in love relationships, any who rejects a suitor without resorting to coyness, any who refuses the role of worshipped lady may be called a *femme d'esprit*. Conversely, the Blessed Virgin redeems womanhood in the eyes of men by having as her most important characteristics her virginity, her modest submissiveness, and her ability to ennoble the men who worship her. Her daughters are patient Griselda, the courtly lady high on a pedestal, and, later, the Petrarchan mistress who so cruelly reminds men of how base their lust

is and how free her frozen breast is of such feelings. Daughters of the Virgin are not witty, amorous, or willful. *Femmes d'esprit* may be all three, and also sexually experienced, coarse, and bold.

Let us first establish the tradition of the "good" woman, one who, in one way or another, is mistress to a superior male. When we think about woman's "place" in medieval and Renaissance England, we think of that paragon of wifely virtue, Griselda. In Chaucer's *Clerk's Tale*,[1] every man's fantasy comes true: the heroine is both beautiful and virtuous, the perfect chattel. Here are the qualities which made the marquis decide to wed so far below his station:

> But for to speke of vertuous beautee,
> Thanne was she oon the faireste under sonne;
> For povreliche yfostred up was she,
> No likerous lust was thrugh hire herte yronne.
> (ll.211-14)

As a maiden, she is totally self-effacing, which bodes well for her new role as wife. This pure creature has no will at all. She is the property of her father, though she supports him:

> And made hir bed ful hard and nothyng softe;
> And ay she kepte hir fadres lyf on-lofte
> With everich obeisance and diligence
> That child may doon to fadres reverence.
> (ll.228-231)

When the marquis presents himself at her gate, she is the perfect feudal subject:

> And down upon hir knes she gan to falle,
> And with sad contenance kneleth stille,
> Til she had herd what was the lordes wille.
> (ll.292-4)

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[1] *The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer*, ed. F.N. Robinson, 2nd ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1957). Line references given in text.

As we might expect, Walter asks her father if he might marry her. He shows this much respect for his serf's property rights. Ownership of Griselda's body and soul thus passes from one male to another. The marquis extracts from her a promise of unprotesting obedience:

> I seye this, be ye redy with good herte
> To al my lust, and that I freely may,
> As me best thynketh, do yow laughe or smerte,
> And nevere ye to grucche it, nyght ne day?
> And eek whan I sey 'ye,' ne say nat 'nay,'
> Neither by word ne frownyng contenance?
> Swere this, and heere I swere oure alliance.
> (11.351-7)

When she has passed the test by judicious grovelling they are wed, and in due time she produces a daughter. Though all would rather that she had borne a "knave," they were at least glad that she was not barren, and might yet have a son. But in spite of the strenuous testing which he exacted during the courtship, the marquis wants to test her further. The humane clerk disapproves: he says it is evil to put a wife to trial, in anguish and dread, when there is no need. But when Walter announces that her daughter is base-born and must be killed, Griselda's abjectness borrows religious imagery, as though she is her husband's creature as the Church teaches that we all are God's:

> Lord, al lyth in youre plesaunce.
> My child and I, with hertely obeisaunce,
> Been youres al, and ye mowe save or spille
> Youre owene thyng; werketh after youre wille.
> (11.501-4)

> And as a lamb she sitteth meke and stille.
> (11.538)

Her second trial is the pretended killing of her son who has just been weaned, proving again that a woman's whole usefulness is to get an heir and nurse him through the perils of infancy. The clerk

interjects another protest, implying that marriage is a sado-masochistic relationship if the man is lucky enough to find a masochistic woman:

> O nedelees was she tempted in assay!
> But wedded man ne knowe no mesure,
> Whan that they fynde a pacient creature.
> (11.621-3)

Her response to this new outrage is that even as she left her clothing at home when she came to him, so "Lefte I my wyl and al my libertee." She protests that she would *die* (1.656) to please her lord. Next, the marquis forges a papal bull which gives him permission to remarry. She declares that she never was lady or mistress, but his servant. She thanks God and Walter for holding her in honor so long as he did, since she is not worthy. She will live with her father as a widow, since no other man can supercede the mighty one who had her maidenhead. The magnanimous Walter allows her to take her dowry with her, but she points out that she came to him naked, and must appeal to him for a smock to wear as she goes, with bare feet and head, to her father's hut. Here the clerk interjects praise of his heroine. He says that most clerks write of Job and his humility, and praise women little, yet no man is as humble as a woman can be. The salt in her many wounds is the preparation of the bridal chamber for her successor. Finally, when she is asked how she likes Walter's new wife, she almost shows some spirit. She asks him not to torment his new wife, for she was fostered more tenderly and might not be able to endure adversity as Griselda herself can. We are reminded of the contrast between courtly behavior and the way a peasant woman may be treated.

The tale concludes by rewarding the masochistic wife with what was hers to begin with. Its conclusion denies that men expect such wifely behavior:

> This storie is seyd, nat for that wyves sholde
> Folwen Grisilde as in humylitee,
> For it were inportable, though they wolde;
> But for that every wight, in his degree,
> Sholde be constant in adversitee
> As was Grisilde.
> (11.1142-7)

But who can deny that male readers enjoyed the literal and not the theological import? The clerk claims to be advocating patience in general, not necessarily the wifely variety, yet even his pious moral tag *does* imply a great deal about woman's place:

> For, sith a womman was so pacient
> Unto a mortal man, wel moore us oghte
> Receyven al in gree that God us sent. . . .
> (11.1149-51)

As we lords of the earth are subject to God, our only Lord, so should women be subject to men. The hierarchy is clear.

Why was this tale of the lord who married the peasant girl so popular? She is the supermenial, the depth of servility. The clerk wistfully ends his tale by asking the "lordynges" to "herkneth er I go":

> It were ful hard to fynde now-a-dayes
> In al a toun Grisildis thre or two. . . .
> (11.1163-5)

Of course it is "ful hard"; he has been praising a woman impossible to emulate. What is not hard to understand is one reason for this antifeminism. Considering the servility demanded of the courtly lover by the great lady, it is no surprise that men living the courtly life of the times should eagerly embrace and exaggerate in their literature

the male-dominated society of the lower classes. Germaine Greer calls this impulse the opposite of lady-worship:

> The story reflects the general effect of the impact of lower-class mores on the attenuated and neurotic sexuality of the ruling class, albeit in a distorting mirror.[2]

This is just a glimpse at what it cost womankind for the few to be deified.

The early Tudor poem "The Nutbrowne Mayde"[3] provides an equally narrow view of the perfect mistress. Published first in 1502, this dialogue is framed with narrative which claims to be vindicating women from the charge of infidelity. The stanzas, in *conflictus* form, alternate between the knight and the maid. His refrain is, "I am a banished man." Her constant reply is, "I love but you alone." What it costs her to say this is even more of her will, her dignity, her personhood than Griselda paid. Her knight, to test her love, pretends to be banished. When she replies that it will grieve her if he goes into exile in the greenwood, he cynically states that she will find comfort in a day or two. To avoid this accusation of fickleness, she wants to go with him. But if she takes to the woods to "play," as he quickly points out, she will be called a wanton. However, her faithful love is devoid of shame; she will share his distress as a

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[2] *The Female Eunuch* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1971), p. 215.

[3] "The Nutbrowne Mayde," in *Medieval English Verse and Prose in Modernized Versions*, ed. Roger Sherman Loomis and Rudolph Willard (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1948), pp. 521-531. Line references given in text.

true lover should. He warns that she cannot live like a maiden in the greenwood, but in dread, like a thief. She insists that she will do so for the sake of his company alone. If he is taken and hanged, who will rescue her? She is feeble, yet she will fight off his enemies to save him from death. He then insists that she cannot endure the rough way and exposure to the weather. But she who shares his joy will also share his woe. He says there will be no meat or ale, no clean sheets, no shelter; a bad diet will make her pale and wan. When she offers no objection to losing her beauty, he states the terms under which he will take her with him: she must cut her hair to the ear and her kirtle to the knee, arm herself with a bow, and be ready, stripped of her femininity, by dawn. Yet when she acquiesces even to these things, he flatly refuses to take her, unreasonably citing the adage that women are soon hot and as soon cold. Now the nutbrown maid, only because she is *not* a peasant like Griselda, *almost* asserts herself:

> Oft ye prayed and long essayed
> Ere I you loved, pardee.
> (11.254-5)

She reminds him that she is a baron's daughter, who yet proved that she loves a squire of low degree. His arrogant rejoinder is the response of the wounded male ego: he has a fairer maid in the forest whom he loves more; and, to keep the peace, he had better not take the nutbrown maid. But our paragon of selflessness vows to be soft, kind, and courteous to the favored mistress, fulfilling all of her rival's commands, and being subject both to her and to the harem's owner; in fact, if he had a hundred women, she would beg to be one. This display

of feminine abjection finally makes her pass the test. Her owner reveals that he is not, after all, a banished squire, but an earl's son; and he offers her all his heritage and his name because she is meek, kind, and stable. The poem concludes with a pious tag even more blatant than the clerk's moral:

> For since men would that women should
> Be meek to them each one,
> Much more ought they to God obey
> And serve but Him alone.
> (11.357-60)

The implication of service and of the exclusivity of ownership, appropriate as it may be theologically, is simply another lesson to women about their place and to men about their sovereign rights.

Griselda's noble husband tests his peasant wife, but this premarital ritual is a test of a woman's submissiveness before an offer of marriage is made. The nutbrown maid is a baron's daughter, not a peasant's, yet both women are expected to be servile wives. These examples allow us to draw a distinction between a man's treatment of and expectations about a prospective or actual wife and a courtly lover's adulation of a married woman. The lady who is worshipped seems to be both relatively and absolutely free, yet she is in fact no more free than Griselda and has many of the same characteristics. Her virginity and therefore her value has already been claimed by her husband, and her honor is in his hands. She can demand and get unceasing adulation from the landless knight at her husband's court, but she must submit herself both to her husband and to the artificial code of courtly conduct. As God is to the husband, so is the husband to the wife, and wife (courtly mistress) to the hapless lover. There

is no mutual love and respect possible between a man and a woman in this heirarchy. Some of the roles women play are more pleasant than others, but all are restrictive.

In *The Allegory of Love*, C.S. Lewis summarizes the difference between courtly love and the marriage relationship.[4] According to Andreas Capellanus' codification, marital affection differs from *amor* in that marriage involves duty and necessity, which do not make the husband any nobler; marital love is not furtive; and jealousy, the essence of "true" (courtly) love, is a mere pest in marriage. The grand adulterous love of the middle ages,

> the love which is to be the source of all that is beautiful in life and manners must be the reward freely given by the lady, and only superiors can reward. But a wife is not a superior.

She gets her place from her husband. She is not a lady to him, but a mere woman, whose duty it is to obey her man. Lewis reminds us of how recent and how artificial courtly love is in his comments on Ovid. The joke of *The Art of Love* is that mere love is treated seriously--that one would write a treatise setting up rules for the nice conduct of illicit love. Religious awe is affected toward the god of love, a jealous god whose service is hard. Ovid's tone is mockingly serious about woman, the arbitress of man's fate. The conduct Ovid recommends to the apprentice lover is shameful and absurd, reflecting a ridiculous appetite. Yet in the middle ages, this conduct is recommended

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[4] *The Allegory of Love* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1938), pp. 6-12.

seriously. Lewis claims that such a consistent and lasting code as courtly love could not be merely a misreading of Ovid's tone. And although the mistress and the Virgin Mary are so closely identified, mariolotry did not create romantic love: it is likely that hymns to the Virgin were borrowed from love poetry. The medieval church hardly regarded sexual passion as noble. Rather, Lewis claims, romance is the feudalization of love, a borrowing of the male fidelities of the feudal hall. Vassalage and sworn brotherhood were intense emotions, transferred to women by "landless knights, predestined lovers of other men's wives." The form of the new feeling for women was both feudal and religious: humility, courtesy, adultery, the religion of love. The woman thus worshipped is like a mute and graven image, created by her adorer. There are no medieval poems in which she is the persona or in which she has a voice at all. This is not surprising, considering that lack of mutality lies at the core of courtly love. E.M.W. Tillyard describes the courtly code as an abstract ideal according to which "a well-bred man was expected to behave in a certain way to a well-bred woman, whether she were Margaret or Mary or Elizabeth, and whether or not Margaret or Mary or Elizabeth liked it."[5]

The pre-marital courtship of a maid, which was to become dominant with the fashion created by Petrarch in the Renaissance, had already begun in the Middle Ages. We have seen that until she grants

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[5]*The English Renaissance: Fact or Fiction?* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1952), p. 24.

her love and loses her virginity, the maid is like the great lord's lady: sovereign, god-like in her powers. After she grants her lover "grace," she is a Griselda, a nutbrown maid. She has another role, this one inferior. Neither role allows her her own honor or will, self-respect or personhood. It is interesting to reflect that the same woman may well have been treated as chattel by her husband and simultaneously worshipped by her courtly lover. The behavior of King Mark and Tristram seems to bear this out.

This figure of the mistress, then, is one which applies to women in several circumstances. She may be a maid, a wife, a great lady courted by a bachelor knight. What makes her a mistress is her perception of herself. If she is compliant, content to go from her father's ownership to that of another man, coy to her suitors, obedient to her husband, upholding her role as object of worship, she is what we will call a mistress. Except insofar as figures like Griselda and the nutbrown maid respond to the lines they are fed, the mistress is without a voice in medieval English poetry. She does not find her voice until the sixteenth century, in the complaints which we will examine in Chapter II, wherein she tells us that she has found too late what the results of her compliance are. The complaints with a woman persona amply illustrate the universally unfavorable position of the mistress when the lover has attained his sexual fulfillment and has no more use for courtly behavior.

But there is another stance which a woman could take, and indeed the woman persona in many an English poem did take: that of the *femme d'esprit*. Throughout the popular literature of the middle

ages in Europe we find her: amorous, argumentative, willful, witty, what the sixteenth century was to call "manly." She speaks in the songs of the folk tradition, and reflects far more accurately than Griselda and non-courtly life of the times. English songs share a common European folk tradition: the woman who is neither lady nor chattel, no one's mistress but her own, has her say. Germaine Greer reminds us of the doings of those who were not of the ruling class, who were not the objects of worship and had never heard that love is to convey moral exaltation:

> Books of husbandry listed the qualities a man should look for in a wife--health, strength, fertility, good-will and good-humor as well as her proper complement of household skills. He respected her as comrade and provided they were both healthy and strong they desired each other. The obsession of romantic love was simply irrelevant.[6]

The woman, for her part,

> agreed to treat him well, respect him and joyfully to do his will in bed, but there is no indication that she expected her life to be transfigured by love. She considered herself to be as others thought her, a sexual creature ready for mating.[7]

C.S. Lewis reminds us that before romance, before the first dawn of noble and ennobling love in twelfth-century Provence, love was what we find in ancient literature: "merry sensuality or domestic comfort."[8] That the sexually and emotionally mature woman could be considered abnormal, "manly," is only a measure of how much the

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[6]Greer, p. 215.

[7]Ibid., p. 217.

[8]Lewis, p. 4.

western world was caught up in the neuroticism of courtly love. Courtly love is one-sided, not mutual, giving only the male lover something to sing about while the mute object of worship sits on her pedestal like stone. So it is not surprising that lyrics with a woman persona should be of popular rather than courtly origin and should continue in the sixteenth century to be more prevalent in ballads, madrigals, and airs than in sonnets. The native tradition gives women a voice. E.M.W. Tillyard reminds us of how and when English poetry was transformed:

> However much of the folk-*rhythm* may have penetrated into the mass of the English lyric the old folk-*themes* of the love lyric underwent a fundamental change. In the folk-tradition it is the woman who makes the advances; in the new lyric tradition it is the man, according to the new courtly convention imported from the Troubadours.[9]

Far earlier than we sometimes suppose, and until far later, the native and courtly traditions coexisted; and in the native one the *femme d'esprit* has her say.

The popular tradition of the *femme d'esprit* is to be found all over northern Europe, in lyrics, *chansons*, and *frauenstrophen*. In Germany, Walther von der Vogelweide (c. 1170-1230) demonstrates the possibilities for great art inherent in artless folk song. Though his immediate predecessors are the *minnesingers* of courtly love songs, whose lyrics have a male persona and are carefully prescribed by convention, Walther returns to the *frauenstrophen*, and gives us

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[9]Tillyard, pp. 35-6.

directly the song of a *femme d'esprit*, too proud and triumphant in her love to be a haughty lady or cowed wife. Raymond Oliver catches the delicate quality of the emotion in his translation.[10] This woman is not playing a role:

Under the lime tree
On the heather,
Where we had shared a place of rest,
Still you may find there,
Lovely together,
Flowers crushed and grass down-pressed.
Beside the forest in the vale,
Tandaradei,
    Sweetly sang the nightingale.

I came to meet him
At the green:
There was my truelove come before.
Such was I greeted--
Heaven's Queen!--
That I am glad for evermore.
Had he kisses? A thousand some:
Tandaradei,
    See how red my mouth's become.

There he had fashioned
For luxury
A bed from every kind of flower.
It sets to laughing
Delightedly
Whoever comes upon that bower;
By the roses well one may,
Tandaradei,
    Mark the spot my head once lay.

If any knew
He lay with me
(May God forbid!), for shame I'd die.
What did he do?
May none but he
Ever be sure of that--and I,
And one extremely tiny bird,
Tandaradei,
    Who will, I think, not say a word.

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[10] *Poems Without Names: The English Lyric, 1200-1500* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1970), pp. 125-6.

In thirteenth century France "professional" poets like Walther produced literary imitations of folk songs. There is great variety in the major form described in detail by Helen Sandison,[11] the *chanson d'aventure*. The woman's lyric is framed by the courtly narrator-poet who ventures forth, usually on a May morning, and finds the singer, who is a woman in love. Only the frame is courtly rather than popular. The lyrics are of several distinct types. The wanton song is that of a frankly lustful woman who yearns for a man whom she finds attractive. In the *chanson de jeune fille* the poet meets a forsaken maiden whose lover has gone away or chosen another, or she has been seduced by a wanton young man or a clerk. She refers to the shame that awaits her and her fear of her parents' anger, but concludes with a proud resolve to waste no more thought on her faithless lover. Or her song may be of her love-longing: her parents interfere with her inclinations or she herself has prolonged her maidenhood by her too coy rejection of a suitor. The *chanson de toile*, which the woman sings as she spins, is the story of external obstacles to true love: her parents' disapproval of her choice, her separation from her lover by distance or by his going to the wars, or a misunderstanding. The *chanson de mal mariée* is a woman's rebellious soliloquy against the institution of marriage or her lament for her bondage to a husband whom she does not love. The *aube* is a morning song, sung by the woman when the lovers must part after a night of love. The *pastourelle*

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[11] *The "Chanson d'Adventure" in Middle English* (Bryn Mawr, Pa.: Bryn Mawr College Monographs, vol. XII, 1913), pp. 49-50.

involves the poet-narrator closely. Riding out, he meets a shepherdess whom he tried to seduce. There are many lewd versions of his success, but almost as many occasions when the witty shepherdess tricks him or puts him off.

Medieval English lyrics recall these French types closely enough for us to borrow the terms for these sub-genres of the *chanson d'aventure*. However, the relationship is not clear. Scholars have not found any proof of direct borrowing; therefore the theory of a common folk tradition is at least as likely. E.K. Moore points out that the English are adaptors, not slavish imitators:

> several [Harleian] poems recall special French types . . . but English poets seem reluctant to follow the patterns strictly, with the result that pure specimens are relatively rare. Though traces of the chanson de toile, pastourelle, and aube appear in popular ballad, the relations are far from clear.[12]

Moore sums up the influence of the trouvères on pre-Chaucerian poets; the biggest debt being for clichés and formulae, which are simply translated; and finds a different spirit in English poems. R.H. Robbins sees even less French influence in the big collections of the fourteenth century, finding only the ghost of the *chanson d'aventure* in refrain poems. Looking only for similarity of structure, he does not remark the similarity produced by the choice of a woman persona. Robbins claims that there is

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[12] *The Secular Lyric in Middle English* (1951; rpt. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1970), p. 46.

> not much which an English writer, acquainted with French and continental fashions in only a superficial way, could not have developed independently, perhaps assisted by a slight knowledge of the Latin literature of the church. By the fifteenth century the tricks and devices originally borrowed from France had become so native, that even a large body of verse showing signs of French influence would prove little, and there is no such corpus.[13]

Helen Sandison comments that later Elizabethan lyrics "reproduce the established types" of the *chanson d'aventure* in essentials of theme and structure, but alter them in spirit. She sees the major borrowing in the frame of pastoral lyrics (the "In the merry month of May" beginning) and in broadside ballads, pointing out that all minstrels love to eavesdrop.[14] The conclusion is obvious: that, aside from structure, poets from the twelfth to the sixteenth century borrowed native folk material rather than borrowing artful adaptations of it from other countries when they departed from the courtly love tradition.

Douglas L. Peterson suggests a convincing reason why so many "professional" poets returned to folk tradition in the face of courtly love.[15] Courtly love is a code of manners stressing intensity and conformity of feeling. It has limited use for psychology, reducing human experience to arbitrary and overly simplified postulates.

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[13]"Introduction," *Secular Lyrics of the XIVth and XVth Centuries*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1955) p. liii.

[14]Sandison, p. 98.

[15]*The English Lyric from Wyatt to Donne* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1967), pp. 198-9.

It takes for granted the sources and motivations of feelings, merely describing rather than analyzing them. We can argue from this that an alternative already existing in the folk tradition, love lyrics with a woman persona, encourages a more realistic view of erotic love, an analysis of its source and feelings, and a throwing out of the arbitrary and artificial postures of the courtly lover. Like the *chansons* and *frauenstrophen* which take the woman's point of view, English lyrics with a woman persona have a directness and economy of presentation which allows the frank and outspoken *femme d'esprit* her full scope. She is not at all respectful of her feudal relationship to the superior male. She does not think of herself as anyone's mistress but her own. In the following lyrics, arranged according to the types suggested by their French counterparts, we can trace three hundred years in the development of psychological realism which is the result of freeing the woman persona from her role as mistress.

I. THE WANTON SONG

The wanton song is a lure, a bait, sung by a lustful woman to or about the man who strikes her fancy. The theme of the maid with a bashful or ignorant lover is at least as old as Ovid's tale of the lascivious Salmacis wooing a bashful and reluctant Hermaphroditus. In Shakespeare's influential Ovidian poem, "Venus and Adonis," Venus is a wanton, wooing the reluctant and naive Adonis. But in the Middle Ages, independently of Ovid, poets also created these amorous *femmes d'esprit*. R.H. Robbins' collection of fourteenth and fifteenth

century secular lyrics contains several wanton songs.[16] "Careless Love" has a strange title, for the woman has not been abandoned, only ignored: "I love hym trywely and no mo-/ wolde god that he hyt knywe!" She has a modesty not found in Shakespeare's Venus:

> In places ofte when I hym mete,
> I dar not speke but forth I go;
> with herte and eyes I hym grete,
> so trywe of love I know no mo.

But she knows exactly what she wants:

> Wolde god that hyt were so
> as I cowde wysshe be-twyxt us too.
> (Robbins, No. 22)

In the same collection, a young woman sings a blazon of the beauty of not one chosen lover, but of all attractive serving men, describing unabashedly "A Young Girl's Ideal":

> His bonet is of fyne scarlett,
> Troly, loley,
> With here as black os geitt,
> Troly, lolye.
>
> His dublett ys of fyne satyne. . . ,
> Hys shertt well mayd and tryme. . . .
>
> His coytt itt is so tryme and rownde. . . ,
> His kysse is worth A hundred pownde. . . .
>
> His hoysse is of london black. . . ,
> In hyme ther ys no lack. . . .
>
> His face yt ys so lyk a man. . . ,
> Who cane butt love hyme than. . . .
>
> Wher-so-ever he bee, he hath my hert. . . ,
> And shall to deth de-part. . . .
> (Robbins, No. 35)

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[16] Hereafter cited as Robbins, poems cited in text by number.

Male lovers are fond a valuing a woman only for her physical appearance; here they may get a taste of how it feels to be so valued. We may not even assume that the singer is herself of the servant class, for she relinquishes the finer things of life for those attractive serving men:

> Of meet and drynk and feyr clothyng. . . ,
> by dere god I want none. . . .

Another from the Robbins collection, "Our Sir John," is decidedly after the fact, the song of a woman who is neither virgin nor wife, but who enjoys satisfying her appetite so much that she has not perceived how dangerous her position is:

> O Lord, so swett ser John dothe kys,
> at every tyme when he wolde pley;
> off hym-selfe so plesant he ys,
> I have no powre to say hym nay.
>
> ser John loves me and I love hym;
> the more I love hym the more I maye.
> he says, 'swett hart, cum kys me trym'--
> I have no powre to say hym nay.
>
> ser John to me Is proferyng
> ffor hys plesure ryght well to pay,
> and In my box he puttes hys offryng--
> [I have no powre to say hym nay.]
>
> ser John ys taken In my mouse-trappe:
> ffayne wold I have hem bothe nygth and day.
> he gropith so nyslye a-bought my lape,
> I have no pore to sa[y hym nay.]
>
> ser John geuyth me reluys rynges,
> With praty plesure ffor to assay--
> ffurres off the ffynest with other thynges:
> [I have no powre to say hym nay.]
>
> (Robbins, No. 26)

She is not only powerless against her own sexual appetite; she has been caught by his gifts and the power he has over her in that she

gave up her honor in giving in to him. A song from the Rawlinson MS[17] is another frank avowal of lust. It is another blazon, and though not of the young man's elegant clothing, it is not very ladylike:

> Grene flowryng age of your manly countenance,
> your youthe, your lustynes, and your delectable corage
> causythe me to have ytt yn remembrance.

The persona is not coy about her "amyable love," though her beloved has not yet made a declaration:

> How-be-ytt, dayly I am sory and sade
> and shalbe tyll I know more of your mynde,
> for my harte yn your mynde ys closyde;
> in my bodye ytt wyll nott abyde.

A song from an Elizabethan miscellany, *The Paradyse of dayntie devises*, shows how the use of the blazon by a woman is modified by a persona who is self-consciously playing the role of mistress. This persona is no wanton, but a "vertuous Gentle woman," as she informs us frequently. The situation of her love yearning is identical, but the frankness is gone. The way the persona speaks of herself is highly artificial, since she is playing a role. She announces that she is a free virgin, but she is bound to a code of conventional morality. She loves at all "onely for vertues sake." She is so busy disguising her natural feelings and setting herself apart in disgust from "they that for love sportes, the sweetest joyes doo tast," that we are made keenly aware of the contrast with the wanton song of the *femme d'esprit*. This artificial coyness is evident from the text:

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[17]Frederick M. Padelford, "The Songs of Rawlinson MS C. 813," *Anglia*, 31 (1908), No. 36.

I am a Virgine faire and free, and freely doe reioyce,
I sweetely warble sugred notes, from siluer voyce:
For which delightfull ioyes, yet thanke I courtesie loue,
By whose allmightie power, such sweete delites I proue,

I walke the pleasant fieldes, adornd with liuely greene,
And view the fragrant flowres, most louely to be seene:
. . . . . .
Among the which I choose, all those of seemeliest grace,
In thought, resembling them to my deare louers face.

His louely face I meane, whose golden flouring giftes,
His euer liuing Fame, to loftie skie vpliftes;
Whom louing me I loue, onely for vertues sake,
When vertuously to loue, all onely care I take.

Of all which freshe faire flowers, that flowre that doth appeare
In my conceit most like to him I hold so deare.
I gather it, I kisse it, and eake deuise with it,
Suche kinde of liuely speeche, as is for louers fit.

And then of all my flowres, I make a garland fine,
With which my golden wyer heares, together I doe twine:
And sette it on my head, so taking that delight,
That I would take, had I my louer still in sight.

For as in goodly flowres, myne eyes great pleasure finde,
So are my louers gyftes, most pleasant to my minde:
Vpon which vertuous gyftes, I make more sweete repast,
Then they that for loue sportes, the sweetest ioyes doo tast.[18]

All of these poets have chosen the same device: allowing a woman persona to blaze the beauty of her beloved. But the woman's attitude toward herself makes the difference between the convincing voice of the *femme d'esprit* and the clumsy rhetoric placed in the mouth of the mistress. But this is not to say that the genuine voice was lost by the time of the Elizabethan miscellanies. Another strain of the wanton

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[18] *The Paradyse of dayntie devises*, No. 41. Hereafter cited as *Paradyse*. Full bibliographical information for this and the other Elizabethan miscellanies is given in Appendix A.

song will demonstrate the continuity of the *femme d'esprit's* utterance.

Robert Henryson has followed the wanton tradition closely in his "Robene and Makyne."[19] Makyne is the wooer, another eager maid, and Robene the reluctant shepherd. She announces boldly that she has loved him for years, and will doubtless die if he does not respond. He is naive: "nathing of lufe I knaw." (l.10) Makyne undertakes to teach him love's law, but Robene has the worries usually reserved for female virgins:

> And we wald play us in this plane,
> They wald us bayth reproif.
> (ll.31-2)

She makes an explicit offer:

> And thow sall haif my hairt and haill,
> Eik and my madin heid.
> (ll.35-6)

But he is afraid that his sheep will stray if he busies himself elsewhere, exasperating boy! As the sun sets, he wants to hurry home. She begs now:

> my huny, robene, talk ane quhill,
> gif thow will do na mair.
> (ll.61-2)

But he responds,

> Makyne, sum uthir man begyle,
> ffor hamewart I will fair.
> (ll.63-4)

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[19]"Robene and Makyne," in *The Poems and Fables of Robert Henryson*, ed. Harvey H. Wood, 2nd ed. (1958; rpt. New York: Barnes and Noble, 1968), pp. 151-54. Line references given in text.

Finally, though, for no reason except that perhaps

> Be that sum pairte of mawkynis aill
> Outthrow his hairt cowd creip,
> (11.77-8)

he follows her and offers his love, magnanimously declaring that

> my scheip to morne quhill houris nyne
> Will neid of no keping.
> (11.87-8)

But Makyne shows a splendid pride:

> Robene, thow hes hard soung and say,
> In gestis and storeis auld,
> The man that will nocht quhen he may
> sall haif nocht quhen he wald.
> (11.89-92)

Robene offers an enticing picture of the warm, dry night, the private green wood, but he has lost his opportunity:

> For of my pane thow maid it play,
> and all in vane I spend;
> as thow hes done, sa sall I say,
> murne on, I think to mend.
> (11.109-12)

And serves him right, too. Unlike Shakespeare's Venus, Makyne is left with the satisfaction that her beloved knows what he has lost.

Englands Helicon offers an Elizabethan picture of Venus which shows that Shakespeare was not alone in making her a wanton. In "The Sheepheards Song of Venus and Adonis"[20] we are told the whole story of her love. She feels and behaves much as the other *femmes d'esprit* do. And though a matron's love for a young man is unseemly, and her sexual appetite and aggression clearly mark her as her own mistress,

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[20] *Englands Helicon*, No. 130. Hereafter cited as *Helicon*.

she is not being mocked by the poet. These delicate and delicious lines describe her affair, beginning with her own, and not the poet's, riding out on a lovely morning:

Venus faire did ride,
siluer Doues they drew her,
By the pleasant lawnds
ere the Sunne did rise:
Vestaes beautie rich
opend wide to view her,
Philomel records
pleasing Harmonies.
Every bird of spring
cheerefully did sing,

Paphos Goddesse they salute:
Now Loues Queene so faire,
had of mirth no care,
for her Sonne had made her mute.
In her breast so tender
He a shaft did enter,
when her eyes beheld a boy:
Adonis was he named,
By his Mother shamed,
yet he now is *Venus* ioy.

Him alone she met,
ready bound for hunting,
Him she kindly greetes,
and his iourney stayes:
Him she seekes to kisse
no deuises wanting,
Him her eyes still wooe,
him her tongue still prayes.
He with blushing red
Hangeth downe the head,
not a kisse can he afford:
His face is turn'd away,
Silence sayd her nay,
still she woo'd him for a word.
Speake shee said thou fairest,
Beautie thou impairest,
see mee, I am pale and wan:
Louers all adore mee,
I for loue implore thee,
christall teares with that downe ran.

Not only does the Queen of Love commend love to the naive boy, but nature joins her:

Him heere-with shee forc'd
    to come sit downe by her,
Shee his necke embrac'de
    gazing in his face:
Hee like one transformd
    stird no looke to eye her
Every hearbe did wooe him
    growing in that place.
Each bird with a dittie,
    prayed him for pitty
        in behalfe of beauties Queene:
Waters gentle murmour,
    craued him to love her,
        yet no liking could be seene.
Boy shee sayd, looke on mee,
Still I gaze vpon thee,
    speake I pray thee my delight:
Coldly hee replyd,
And in breefe denyed,
    to bestow on her a sight.

Adonis' argument is the one usually reserved for the maiden. And Venus' reply is the usual male lover's plea, to seize the day and do love's duty. *Because* he is fair he is to procreate rather than to waste his gifts. The roles are reversed:

I am now too young,
    to be wunne by beauty,
Tender are my yeeres
    I am yet a bud:
Fayre thou art, shee said
    then it is thy dutie,
Wert thou but a blossome
    to effect my good.
Every beauteous flower,
    boasteth in my power,
Byrds and beasts my lawes effect:
Mirrha thy faire mother,
most of any other,
    did my louely hests respect.
Be with me delighted,
Thou shalt be requited,
    every Nimph on thee shall tend:
All the Gods shall love thee
Man shall not reproue thee,
    Loue himselfe shall be thy freend.

Adonis feels the way so many maidens must, enclosed by a lover's unwelcome demands:

> Wend thee from mee *Venus*,
> I am not disposed,
> Thou wring'st mee too hard,
> pre-thee let me goe:
> Fie, what a paine it is
> thus to be enclosed,
> If love begin with labour,
> it will end in woe.

When he hears the hounds after a boar, he is eager to join the chase. Venus does not want him to pursue manhood by seeking physical danger, but she has made her case for the real source of manhood, and must let him go. Afterward, when

> Hunting sport was past,
> Loue her loue did seeke:
> Sight of him too soone
> gentle Queene shee gained,
> On the ground he lay
> blood had left his cheeke.

It is surely appropriate, as the details of myths so often are, that Adonis, who refused mature sexuality, was smitten in the groin by the most lustful of wild beasts.

The tone changes drastically, but not the basic voice, as we hear another wanton woman in John Skelton's early Tudor "Mannerly Margery Milk and Ale."[21] With spirited and vulgar words the persona dismisses her men now that she has been offered marriage:

> Ay, beshrew you! by my fay,
> These wanton clerks be nice alway!
> Avaunt, avaunt, my popinjay!
> What, will ye do nothing but play?
> Tilly vally, straw, let be I say!
> Gup, Christian Clout, gup, Jack of the Vale!
> With Mannerly Margery Milk and Ale.

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[21] *The Complete Poems of John Skelton Laureate*, ed. Philip Henderson (New York: Dutton, 1959), p. 24.

By God, ye be a pretty pode,
And I love you an whole cart-load.
Straw, James Foder, ye play the fode,
I am no hackney for your rod:
Go watch a bull, your back is broad!
Refrain.

Y wis ye deal uncourteously;
What, would ye frumple me? now fy!
What, and ye shall be my pigesnye?
By Christ, ye shall not, no hardely:
I will not be japéd bodily!
Refrain.

Walk forth your way, ye cost me nought;
Now have I found that I have sought:
The best cheap flesh that ever I bought.
Yet, for His love that all hath wrought,
Wed me, or else I die for thought.
Gup, Christian Clout, your breath is stale!
Go, Mannerly Margery, Milk and Ale!
Gup, Christian Clout, gup, Jack of the Vale!
With Mannerly Margery Milk and Ale.

In the later Elizabethan *Garland of Good Will*[22] the wanton's tone is not much subdued. The persona is no more refined than Makyne, and frankly shows that she does have a sexual appetite and a decided preference for *young* men. This "Maiden's Choice 'Twixt Age and Youth" is a *chanson de mal mariée*, the song of a wife married to an old man who "canst not give what I require," and is discussed with poems of that genre, but here we note that she sings of her longing and impatience for a tryst with her young lover. The refrain is:

O! sweet shepherd, hye thee,
For methinks thou stay'st too long.

Like Venus, she employs the usually male *carpe diem* argument, asking the sun to slow down, as she would not lose an hour. She invokes her

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[22]*The Garland of Good Will*, p. 107. Hereafter cited as *Garland*.

lover by Flora's banks, spread with flowers and surrounded by bird songs for his delight and to quicken his desire. She unblushingly states that

> If he give not me a fall,
> I would him coward call,
> And all unto my word would stand.

Nature and Venus conspire with her in her seduction. When he does appear, "like to young Adonis," she is without shame, or fear of the world's censure:

> On thy command I wholly rest;
> Do what thou wilt to me,
> Therein I agree,
> And be not strange to my request.

She returns to the youth and age motif:

> To Youth I only yield;
> Age fits not Venus' field,
> Though I be conquer'd, what care I?
> In such a pleasant war,
> Come meet me if you dare!
> Who first mislikes, let them cry.

Thomas Lodge contributes a wanton song to the *Helicon* in which a country lass, a "wanton wench," simpers and is squint-eyed in her longing for a lover. As so many pastorals do, Lodge's poem seems to be deliberately pointing up the ease and simplicity of rustic love in implied contrast to the difficulties built in to the courtly code. The maiden frankly yearns for a husband, and gladly takes the first man who happens by:

> A blithe and bonny Country-Lasse,
> heigh hoe bonny-Lasse,
> Sate sighing on the tender grasse,
> and weeping sayd: will none come woo me?
> A smicker Boy, a lither Swaine:
> heigh hoe a smicker Swaine:
> That in his love was wanton faine,
> with smiling lookes straite came vnto her.

When as the wanton Wench espied,
heigh hoe when she espied,
The meanes to make her selfe a Bride,
she simpred smooth like bonnie-bell:
The swaine that sawe her squint-eyed kinde,
heigh hoe squint-eyed kinde,
His armes about her body twin'd
and sayd, Faire Lasse, how fare ye, well?

The Country-Kit sayd, well forsooth,
heigh hoe well forsooth,
But that I have a longing tooth,
a longing tooth that makes me crie:
Alas (said he) what garres thy greefe,
heigh hoe what garres thy greefe?
A wound (quoth she) without releefe,
I feare a mayde that I shall die.

If that be all, the Sheepheard sayd,
heigh hoe the Sheepheard sayd,
Ile make thee wiue it gentle Mayde,
and so recure thy maladie:
Heereon they kist with many an oath,
heigh hoe many an oath,
And fore God *Pan* did plight their troath,
so to the Church apace they hie.

And God send euery pretty peate,
heigh hoe the pretty peate,
That fears to die of this conceite,
so kind a friend to helpe at last:
Then Maydes shall neuer long againe,
heigh hoe to long againe,
When they finde ease for such a paine,
thus my Roundelay is past.
(*Helicon*, No. 81)

John Bartlet's 1606 *Book of Aires* offers this lament of a maiden frankly yearning for a lover.[23] She is not vulgar, but she is spirited enough to know what she wants:

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[23]"Book of Aires," No. IX, in *English Madrigal Verse: 1558-1632*, 3rd ed., E.H. Fellowes, ed. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1967), p. 357. Hereafter cited as Fellowes.

A pretty duck there was that said
To whom shall I make moan?
I have been long a pretty maid,
And yet I lie alone.

Alone I lie in deep despair,
Which kills my lovely heart,
For none will my sweet joys repair,
Or play the lover's part.

A tickling part that maidens love,
But I can never get;
Yet long have sought, and still do crave,
At rest my heart to set.

This must be a solo air for a woman's voice--one wonders if it was ever sung "straight."

Thomas Campion's contribution to the tradition is the song of a woman teaching a boy how to love.[24] This is sophisticated poetry, but differs in tone from the primitive wanton song only in that the persona is an experienced woman, not a maid. She is honest enough, from her height of experience, to tell him the whole story of what it means to love a *femme fatale*, which she simply assumes she has the sexual power to be:

If thou longst so much to learne (sweet boy)
what 'tis to love,
Doe but fixe thy thought on mee, and thou
shalt quickly prove.
Little sute, at first, shal win
Way to thy abasht desire,
But then will I hedge thee in,
Salamander-like, with fire.

With thee dance I will, and sing, and thy
fond dalliance beare;
Wee the grovy hils will climbe, and play the
wantons there;
Other whiles wee'le gather flowres,
Lying dalying on the grasse,
And thus our delightfull howres
Full of waking dreames shall passe.

---

[24] *The Works of Thomas Campion*, ed. Walter R. Davis (Garden

When thy joyes were thus at height, my love should
turne from thee;
Old acquaintance then should grow as strange as
strange might be;
Twenty rivals thou should'st finde
Breaking all their hearts for mee,
When to all Ile prove more kinde
And more forward then to thee.

Thus thy silly youth, enrag'd, would soone my
love defie;
But, alas, poore soule, too late: clipt wings
can never flye.
Those sweet houres which wee had past,
Cal'd to minde, thy heart would burne;
And, could'st thou flye ne'er so fast,
They would make thee straight returne.

Another woman who initiates a naive lover into the rite of love is the clever Jenny of Robert Jones' 1609 book of songs, *A Musical Dream.*[25] At first Jenny is coy, assuming that Jockie knows that women mean "yes" when they say "no." But she soon abandons the "faint look" appropriate to a coy mistress for a "bold face" of a wanton:

On a time in summer season
Jockie late with Jenny walking,
Like a lout made love with talking,
When he should be doing. Reason
Still, he cries, when he should dally:
Jenny, sweet, sweet, shall I, shall I?

Jenny, as most women use it
Who say Nay when they would have it,
With a bold face seemed to crave it,
With a faint look did refuse it.
Jockie lost his time to dally,
Still he cries, Sweet, shall I, shall I?

She who knew that backward dealing
Was a foe to forward longing,
To avoid her own heart's wronging,
With a sign love's suit revealing,
Said: Jockie sweet, when you would dally,
Do you cry: Sweet, shall I, shall I?

City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1967), No. XVI, p. 151.

[25] *A Musical Dream*, No. VII, in Fellowes, pp. 589-90.

Jockie knew by her replying
That a 'no' is 'aye' in wooing,
That an asking without doing
Is the way to love's denying.
Now he knows when he would dally
How to spare: 'Sweet, shall I, shall I?'

An anonymous ballad is included in Rollins' edition of *The Pepys Ballads*, whose title indicates its origin: "The loving Virgins Complaint. Or, her desire to obtaine the love of a young man."[26] Even this late in the Renaissance the minstrel goes back to the genuine *chanson d'aventure*, supplying this frame:

One morning when bright *Sol*
Did first ith East appeare,
abroad I walked,
abroad I walked,
The Nightingale to heare.

Close by a pleasant Groue,
I heard a Maiden cry,
with sobs of sorrow,
with sobs of sorrow,
She wept most heartily.

The usual coy mistress scenario is reversed:

Ill fortune sure had I
to dote thus on a boy,
the more I loue him,
the more I loue him,
the more the foole is coy.

Like *Venus* Queene of Loue,
I woo my sweet *Adonis*,
but he is bashfull,
but he is bashfull,
all comfort from me gone is.

---

[26] *A Pepysian Garland: Black-Letter Broadside Ballads of the Years 1595-1639*, ed. Hyder E. Rollins (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1922), No. 59, pp. 76-81.

She spends three stanzas on a blazon of his beauty which is not the usual standard of masculine beauty, but a borrowing of conventional courtly imagery for women: his rare complexion, his eyes like lodestones that draw her to subjection, his lovely brown locks that snare her, his honey smiles that enthrall her. Her problem is his naivete:

> But all that breeds my care,
> Is that he is so young,
> he hardly knowes yet,
> he hardly knowes yet,
> what doth to loue belong.

His response to meeting her is to turn away with very maidenly "rosie blushes sweet." She does remember briefly what her role should be as she admits,

> I doe more than my sex
> will giue me leaue to doe,
> yet he is silent,
> yet he is silent,
> and knowes not how to woo.

The loving virgin is disdained, though she, like Venus, bends "the knees of my poore heart."

John Donne's contribution to the tradition is his only poem from the woman's point of view, "Breake of Day."[27] This is the closest example in English to the French *aube*, the song of the woman to her lover as day breaks and he prepares to leave her:

---

[27] *The Complete Poetry of John Donne*, ed. John T. Shawcross (New York: New York Univ. Press, 1968), No. 46, p. 106. Most critics contend that this is Donne's only poem in the voice of a woman, but Summers, in *The Heirs of Donne and Johnson* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1970), p. 25, claims that "Confined Love" has a woman persona and "argues wittily for absolute female promiscuity."

'Tis true, 'tis day, what though it be?
O wilt thou therefore rise from me?
Why should we rise, because 'tis light?
Did we lie downe, because 'twas night?
Love which in spight of darkness brought us hether,
Should in despight of light keepe us together.

Light hath no tongue, but is all eye;
If it could speake as well as spie,
This were the worst, that it could say,
That being well, I faine would stay,
And that I lov'd my heart and honor so,
That I would not from him, that had them, goe.

Must businesse thee from hence remove?
Oh, that's the worst disease of love,
The poore, the foule, the false, love can
Admit, but not the busied man.
He which hath businesse, and makes love, doth doe
Such wrong, as when a maryed man doth wooe.

This *femme d'esprit* has a wit suspiciously like Donne's own. She specializes in the *non sequitur*:

Why should we rise, because 'tis light?
Did we lie downe, because 'twas night?

She is arguing for the integrity and mutuality of love which Donne's male personae likewise insist on. How unlike a mistress she is in her demands. Precisely *because* she is not his property, making love to her is not a duty, not his business; and so it must not be hurried and perfunctory. Precisely because he is not "supposed to" be where he is, doing what he is doing, she can demand that he do it well. Insisting on the private integrity of their love, she chastizes him for his worldliness. She is a sexually and emotionally mature adult who has chosen to make love to the man she is with. It may be that the superiority of the poem as poetry is a function of the persona's own integrity and self-respect. We are hearing a real person speak, out of a specific and genuinely realized situation, to a person who

is not an object. Donne has used what he has learned about his own, male, point of view without forcing his woman persona into the false role of mistress, so there is no false note in the poem. If this woman can be termed a wanton, one can only hope that Donne never settled for less.

II. CHANSON DE JEUNE FILLE

The *chanson de jeune fille*, also a French *chanson d'aventure* form, is the lament of a forsaken or love-sick maiden. In the original form, the poet provides the frame, and offers advice and solace. A familiar English poem written before 1303, "Now sprinkes the sprai," corresponds closely to a French poem cited by Sandison,[28] yet in the latter the poet is the successful wooer. It is instructive to look at both poems to see how close they are in phrasing, structure, and detail, and yet how different in outcome:

No[w] spri[nke]s the sprai.
al for loue icche am so seeke
that slepen ine mai.

als i me rode this endre dai
o mi [pleyinge]
s[ei]h i hwar a litel mai
bigan to singge.
the clot him clingge
wai es him i louue l[on]g[in]ge
sal libben ai.
Nou sprinkes, etc.

L'autrier defors Picarni
jeur m'en alai,
une pastoure choisi
ke crioit 'hahai,
lasse, ke ferai?
jeu ai perdu mon ami:
jamais n'amerai
nullui de cuer gai.'

---

[28]Sandison, p. 47.

Son icche herde that mirie note
yider i drogh
i fonde hire [in] an herber swot
under a bogh.
With joie inogh.
son i asked thou mirie mai
hwi sinkes tou ai?
Nou sprinkes, etc.

than answerde that maiden swote
midde wordes fewe.
mi lemman me haues bi hot
of louue trewe.
he chaunges a newe.
thiif i mai it shal him rewe.
bi this dai.
Now sprinkes, etc.

Si tost com j'oi le cri
celle part tornai;
deles un arbre foilli
la belle trovai,
et li demandai
por coi k'elle dist ensi:
jamais n'amerai
nullui de cuer gai.

Et elle me respondi
'je le vos dirai:
Robins d'autrui ke de mi
prist chapel de glai.
si grant duel en ai
kel nel puis mettre en obli.
jamais n'amerai
nullui de cuer gai.

The French poet manages to console the *bergêre* with his love, but the "litel mai" is content to shake her fist sweetly and desire fervently that her false lover be dead and buried: may the clots cling to him! He probably did rue the day that he met this *femme d'esprit.*

One of the usual motifs of the *chanson de jeune fille* is a maiden's seduction by a wanton clerk, making her frankly refer to the shame that awaits her. Like the farmer's daughter and the travelling salesman in nineteenth century America, the clerk and the girl is a common motif throughout the middle ages. Some fourteenth-century English poems are more direct than the *chanson d'aventure.* The frame has disappeared, and the saucy maid speaks for herself. An early lyric, cited in the Robbins collection, is a rather coarse relating of what happens on a serving maid's holiday. She sings her joy that

Wybbe ne rele ne spynne ye ne may,
ffor joye that it ys holyday.

"Jacke" takes her by the hand, buys her ale, dances with her, but then he demands and gets his reward:

In he pult and out he drow,
and ever ye lay on hym yelow;
'by godus deth, thou dest me wow
upon this hey holyday!'

sone my wombe began to swell
as grete as a belle;
durst y nat my dame telle
Wat me betydde this holyday.
(Robbins, No. 29)

This is primitive in its directness and economy. We get a clear idea of the universality of the pregnant girl's predicament, but little idea of her feelings about herself and her seducer.

Another lyric from the fourteenth century which reveals more is about the foul deeds of "Jak, oure haly watur clerk" at a Midsummer Day's dance (Robbins, No. 28). When he came into the ring of dancers to choose the persona, she, to her later sorrow, thought on "no gyle." After he trips on her toes and steals a kiss, he offers her a gift of gloves if she will meet him after Evensong. It's the old story: she must go to his chamber to get the gloves, and, of course, "from hym mytte y nat go," so, there being no help for it, "jak and yc wenten to bedde":

he prikede and he pransede, nolde he neuer lynne:
yt was the murgust nyt that ever ye cam ynne--
thout y [on no gyle.]

Having no more use for her, the clerk allows her to go home at prime, to be met by her irate mistress who calls her a "stronge stumpeth." And by and by "my gurdul a-ros, my wombe wax out." Now she wears her apron high, as an Appalachian song has it, and the only comment she offers is the fatalistic "Evel yspunne euer it wole out," as though she, who thought on no guile, were the appropriate person to

bear the punishment. These crude tales may be meant to be cause for masculine mirth, but are they not clearly tales of the sexual exploitation of the weakest and most ignorant members of society?

Robbins' collection has an unusual *chanson* on the same theme which uses parts of the mass for the stages of seduction, no doubt to double the peals of male laughter. The *kyrie eleison* is a pun on the maid's name, Alison:

> As I went on Zol day in owr prosessyon,
> Knew I Ioly Iankyn be his mery ton.
> [kyrieleyson.]
>
> Iankyn be-gan the offys on the Zol day,
> and Zyt me thynkyt it dos me good, so merie gan he say
> Kyrieleyson.
>
> Iankyn red the pystyl ful fayr and ful wel,
> and Zyt me thinkyt it dos me good, as evere have I sel.
> [kyrieleyson.]
>
> Iankyn at the sanctus crakit a merie note,
> and Zyt me thinkyt it dos me good--I payid for his cote.
> [kyrieleyson.]
>
> Iankyn crakit notes an hunderid on a knot,
> and Zyt he hakkyt hem smaller than wortes to the pot.
> k[yrieleyson.]
>
> Iankyn at the angnus beryt the pax brede,
> he twynkelid, but sayd nowt, and on myn fot he trede.
> [kyrieleyson.]
>
> Benedicamus domino, cryst fro schame me schylde.
> Deo gracias thereto--alas, I go with schylde!
> k[yrieleyson.]
>
> (Robbins, No. 27)

There is something false about the tone of this poem, considering who the speaker is supposed to be. Another poem, "The Wily Clerk," also strikes a false note, for though the persona is worried about her reputation, her witty explanation of her pregnancy does nothing to shield or excuse her. Instead, it exonerates her worthless seducer:

This enther day I mete a clerke,
and he was wylly in hys werke;
he prayd me with hym to herke,
and hys cownsell all for to layne.

I trow he cowd of gramery,
I sall now telle a good skyll wy;
for qwat I hade siccurly,
To warne hys wyll had I no mayn.

qwan he and me browt un us the schete,
Of all hys wyll I hym lete;
Now wyll not my gyrdyll met--
a, dere god, qwat sal I sayn?

I sall sey to man and page
that I haue bene of pylgrymage;
Now wyll I not lete for no rage
With me a clerk for to pleyn.
(Robbins, No. 24)

Her only consolation is that she has learned from experience.

Still another maid is betrayed by her superior, this time a beguiling "Sir John." He manages to make her swear secrecy, then has his will of her. At least the pleasure is mutual. But then, when the usual practical considerations arise, the woman is left to cope with them:

The last tyme I the wel woke
Ser Iohn caght me with a croke,
he made me to swere be bel and boke
I shuld not tell [-ey.]

Yet he did me a wel wors turne,
he leyde my hed agayn the burne,
he gafe my mayden-hed a spurne
and rofe my kell -ey.

Sir Iohn came to oure hows to play
ffro euensong tyme til light of the day;
we made as mery as flowres in may--
I was begyled-ay

Sir Iohn he came to our hows,
he made hit wondur copious
he seyd that I was gracious
to beyre a childe-ey.

I go with childe, wel I wot;
I schrew the fadur that hit gate,
with-outen he fynde hit mylke and pap
a long while-ey.
(Robbins, No. 25)

A simple and much more moving lament of a forsaken maiden does not invite masculine laughter. Its tone is more like that of Elizabethan complaints, in that the persona's attitude is believable, appropriate to her circumstances:

Y Louede a child of this cuntre,
and so y wende he had do me;
now my-self the sothe y see,
that he is far.
Were it undo that is y-do
I wolde be-war.

he seyde to me he wolde be trewe,
and change me for non othur newe;
now ye sykke and am pale of hewe,
for he is far.
Were it undo that is y-do
I wolde be-war.

he seide his sawus he wolde fulfille,
therefore y lat him haue al his wille;
now y sykke and morne stille,
for he is far.
Were it undo that is y-do
I wolde be-war.
(Robbins, No. 23)

Elizabethan miscellanies offer several versions of the *chanson de jeune fille*. Many of the complaints in Chapter II offer examples of believable and consistent tone as women personae learn by reciting their wrongs not to think of themselves as mistresses. We notice in one lament from *The Arbor of amorous devises* that the *chanson*

d'aventure frame is still popular.[29] The poet overhears the woman's song:

> As late I lay within an Arbor sweete,
> the ayre to take amongst the flowers faire:
> I heard a Mayd to mourne and sorely weepe,
> That thither vsd to make her oft repayre.

The formal tone of this poem invites nothing but pity as the forsaken mistress sings her own death song. The poet catalogues the birds whom he observes singing the requiem in praise of her true heart and burying her. *Englands Helicon* offers, in one of Morley's madrigals, another sad song. This one, after a brief frame, is addressed directly to the deserted mistress' lover:

> In dewe of Roses, steeping her louely cheekes,
> *Lyrcoris* thus sate weeping.
> Ah *Dorus* false, that hast my hart bereft me,
> And now unkinde hast left me.
> Heare alas, oh heare me,
> Aye me, aye me,
> Cannot my beautie moove thee?
> Pitty, yet pitty me,
> Because I loue thee.
>
> Aye me, thou scorn'st the more I pray thee:
> And this thou doo'st, and all to slay me.
> Why doo then,
> Kill me, and vaunt thee:
> Yet my Ghoast
> Still shall haunt thee.
> (*Helicon*, No. 118)

This woman does not eschew her role of submissive mistress. She begs for pity, and continues to use her beauty as a snare. Yet though her only power is the power to haunt him, she will do that much to win her own self-respect.

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[29] *The Arbor of amorous devises*, No. 3. Hereafter cited as *Arbor*.

Thomas Campion's *Second Book of Airs*, c. 1613, includes the sad story of a maid without guile who learns too late that "too much kindness makes men freese."[30] Because she did not play the role of coy mistress, she has lost her lover to a rival, and her friends by losing her "honor." Again the tone asks the pity of the reader:

Good men, shew, if you can tell,
Where doth humane pittie dwell?
Farre and neere her would I seeke,
So vext with sorrow is my brest.
She (they say) to all is meeke,
And onely makes th'unhappie blest.

Oh! if such a Saint there be,
Some hope yet remaines for me:
Prayer or sacrifice may gaine
From her implored grace reliefe
To release mee of my paine,
Or at the least to ease my griefe.

Young am I, and farre from guile;
The more is my woe the while:
Falsehood with a smooth disguise
My simple meaning hath abus'd,
Casting mists before mine eyes,
By which my senses are confus'd.

Fair he is, who vow'd to me
That he onely mine would be:
But, alas, his minde is caught
With ev'ry gaudy bait he sees;
And too late my flame is taught
That too much kindnesse makes men freese.

From me all my friends are gone,
While I pine for him alone;
And not one will rue my case,
But rather my distresse deride:
That I thinke there is no place
Where pittie ever yet did bide.

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[30] *The Works of Thomas Campion*, No. IX, p. 95.

III. CHANSON DE TOILE

The *chanson de toile*, which, like these other forms, vanished in France long before the rise of the English lyrics, is, in purest form, the song of the noble-woman spinning in her chamber. In the introduction to his edition of Chartier's "La Belle Dame sans merci," Piaget points out that

> en chansons de toile, ce sont les femmes qui invariablement s'éprennent des hommes et qui font toutes les avances. On a pu justement charactériser cette lyrique par cette formule: indifférence des hommes, ardeur passionée des femmes.[31]

Piaget claims that, in the French as in the English tradition, it is only much later, with the *trouvères*, that men are the passionate ones and the worshipped woman's only fault is that "elle est sans merci." By the time of the Elizabethan miscellanies there is only a trace of the old form left. But in Tottel,[32] a poem entitled "Of the dissembling lover" sets the old scene:

> Girt in my giltlesse gowne as I sit here and sow,
> I see that thynges are not in dede as to the outward show.

Her lover came "wrapt in a craftye cloke" and left her sadder but wiser.

---

[31]Arthur Piaget, ed., "Introduction," *La Belle Dame sans mercy et les poêsies lyriques* (Paris: Librairie Droz, 1945), pp. xiii-ix.

[32]Tottel's *Songes and sonettes*, No. 243. Hereafter cited as Tottel.

An unusual variation with no trace of the courtly love tradition is found in *A Handefull of pleasant delites.*[33] This mocking song is set in the *chanson de toile* frame; the ladies work at spinning, and their song is described in a riming title as:

> The scoffe of a Ladie, as pretie as may be,
> to a yong man that went a wooing:
> He went stil about her, and yet he went without her,
> Because he was so long a dooing.

Here is the voice of a genuine *femme d'esprit*, more interested in her work than in playing at love with a wanton young man. As the other ladies point out, her answer "hath cut off his comb":

> Attend thee, go play thee,
> Sweet loue I am busie:
> my silk and twist is not yet spun:
> My Ladie will blame me,
> If that she send for me,
> and find my worke to be vndun:
> How then?
> How shall I be set me?
> To say loue did let me?
> Fie no, it will not fit me,
> It were no scuse for me.

Refusing to play the role assigned to her in the game of love, she is quite frank:

> If love were attained,
> My ioies were vnfained;
> my seame and silke wil take no hold:
> Oft haue I beene warned,
> By others proofe learned:
> hote wanton loue soone waxeth cold,
> Go now:
> I say go pack thee,
> Or my needle shal prick thee:
> Go seeke out Dame Idle:
> More fit for thy bridle,
> Mor fit for thy bridle.

---

[33] *A Handefull of pleasant delites*, p. 12. Hereafter cited as *Handefull*.

Cooly reasonable, this woman wants a straightforward proposal of marriage. Her flirtatious nature, her "Fancie," is controlled by her reason:

> Wel worthie of blaming,
> For thy long detaining,
> all vaine it is that thou hast done:
> Best now to be wandring,
> Go vaunt of thy winning,
> and tell thy Dame what thou hast won:
> Say this:
> Then say as I bade thee:
> That the little dogge Fancie,
> Lies chaste without moouing,
> And needeth no threatning,
> For feare of wel beating.
> For feare of wel beating.

Having publicly chastized her lover for his dallying, she is brisk and businesslike about her work, leaving the foolish courtly lover to "make much of thy pillow":

> The boy is gone lurking,
> Good Ladies be working,
> dispatch a while that we had done,
> The tide will not tarry,
> All times it doth varie,
> The day doth passe, I see the Sun,
> The frost bites faire flowers,
> Lets worke at due howres,
> Haste, haste, and be merie,
> Till our needles be werie,
> Till our needles be werie.
>
> Now Ladies be merie,
> Because you are werie:
> leave worke I say, and get you home,
> Your businesse is slacking,
> Your louer is packing:
> your answer hath cut off his comb.
> How then?
> The fault was in him sir,
> He wooed it so trim sir,
> Alas poore seelie fellow,
> Make much of thy pillow,
> Make much of thy pillow.

What is so unusual in this poem is that the roles are reversed. The idle person who has nothing to do but moon and flirt is the man. The person with other pressing concerns, with work to do in a larger world of which the love game is only a small part, is the woman. Except in the French pastourelle, such independence in a woman is rarely seen; the lives of most are centered in their relationships to men.

IV. CHANSON DE MAL MARIÉE

With the next sub-genre of the *chanson d'aventure*, the *chanson de mal mariée*, we enter the familiar ground of the Chaucerian marriage group, and the thick of the battle called the *querelle des femmes*. Helen Sandison distinguishes five types of the original French songs: the wife's uninterrupted lament; her dispute with her husband; her interview with her lover; her exchange of grievances with woman confidantes; and her lament which the poet interrupts with advice or consolation.[34] A variation is the protest of a prospective *mal mariée*, a girl about to be wedded to an unwelcome husband who does not suit her fancy. Some of these songs of unhappy wives are naive rebellion.[35] Only the later English poems, Sandison suggests, have a "strong tendency to satire, to broad comedy and burlesque, and a deliberately cynical attitude on the part of the eavesdropping poet. . . ."[36] The mutinous spirit of the French wife

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[34] Sandison, p. 12.

[35] Ibid., p. 51.

[36] Ibid., pp. 11-12.

has in it something of the naiveté of the folksong: "Even her adulterous thoughts are not consciously or deliberately immoral." And, further, "though the poets look upon the mismated woman with a slightly ironic smile, they [are not] satires . . . directed against the dissatisfied wives or against marriage as an institution." The wife's rebellion is because her husband is a *vilain*, a *jaloux*,

> who spies upon her, beats her, does not fulfill her desires; she thinks with regret of her wasted youth and good spirits; she rejects his loathed possession of her, for which her parents are responsible, and utters defiance. . . . She does not stifle the wish for the husband's death.[37]

The English wife is unlike the French; she is railing "less against the despised husband than against the binding institution of marriage." Yet the truth is that,

> in spite of her scorn for the 'churle,' her husband, she is usually of no higher rank, and certainly of no higher tastes, than he; standing with him as a mark for the cynicism of the poet, she is indeed unlike the dame of the French songs, wedded to a vilain, pitied and consoled, if not altogether respected, by the condescending poet.[38]

As we shall see, the manners of the English "ladies" are rude and boisterous, and their lovers are far below the social level of the consoling chevaliers.

The first English carol is a *chanson de mal mariée*; a young wife with an old husband has a lover nearer her age. This fragment gives us the gist of the complaint:

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[37]Sandison, pp. 12-13.

[38]Ibid., p. 52.

Alas how shold Y syng
Y-loren is my playng

Hou sold Y with that olde man
---- ----
To leven and ----- my leman
Sweetist of al thinge[39]

We can also fill in the story of the wife who wants to be a widow from this fragment:

Gayneth me no garlond of greene
But hit ben of wythoues ywroght.[40]

But we must turn to Chaucer's "Wyf of Bath's Prologue" to trace the development of the English *mal mariée*.[41] Rather than being a *tour de force*, the Wyf is in the tradition of the *femme d'esprit*, a counter to the courtly mistress and patient wife. Early in her prologue, the Wyf declares frankly that husbands too rarely satisfy their wives' desires, lusty appetites that Alison is not shy about:

Why sholde men elles in hir bookes sette
That man shal yelde to his wfy hire dette?
Now wherwith sholde he make his paiement,
If he ne used his sely instrument?
(11.129-32)

When she has managed to get a rich old husband in her power, when he has signed over all his land, she sees no more reason to please him. She rejects the usual restrictions which marriage places on women:

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[39]Hyder E. Rollins, "The Earliest Carols and the Franciscans," *Modern Language Notes*, 53 (1938), p. 241.

[40]Ibid., p. 242.

[41]*The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer*, pp. 76-84. Line references given in text.

We love no man that taketh kep or charge
Wher that we goon; we wol ben at oure large.
(11.321-2)

Nor does she understand why sexually satisfied husbands care what wives do with the remainder of their insatiable appetites:

Have thou ynogh, what than thee recche or care
How myrily that othere folkes fare?
(11.329-30)

Men must be misers, for they would rather waste a wife's extraneous lust than share it:

He is to greet a nygard that wolde werne
A man to lighte a candle at his laterne;
He shal have never the lasse light, pardee.
Have thou ynogh, thee than nat pleyne thee.
(11.333-7)

Is it woman's lasciviousness or man's sexual limitations and consequent anxiety that are being laughed at? Her desire is like a wild fire:

The moore it brenneth, the moore it hath desir
To consume every thyng that brent wole be.
(11.374-5)

She is surely being satirized when she freely and coarsely admits:

And after wyn on Venus moste I thynke,
For al so siker as cold engendreth hayl,
A likerous mouth moste han a likerous tayle.
(11.464-6)

Yet for all her uncontrollable lust, she is cooly practical when it comes to marriage. Her advice on the courting game should be heeded by all men:

With empty hand men may none hawkes lure.
For wynnyng wolde I al his lust endure,
And make me a feyned appetit.
(11.415-17)

Nor should a woman be satisfied once she gets a husband, but always be looking for the next:

> I holde a mouses herte nat worth a leek
> That hath but oon hole for to sterte to,
> And if that faille, thanne is al ydo.
> (11.572-4)

At the funeral of her fourth husband, the gat-toothed wyf notices lusty Jankyn and gives us a blazon of his beauty:

> whan that I saugh hym go
> After the beere, me thoughte he hadde a paire
> Of legges and of feet so clene and faire
> That al myn herte I yaf unto his hoold.
> (11.596-9)

She comments sagely on the plethora of legends of bad women:

> Who peyntede the Leon, tell me who?
> By God! if wommen hadde writen stories,
> As clerkes han withinne hire oratories,
> They wolde han writen of men moore wikkednesse
> Than al the mark of Adam may redresse.
> (11.692-6)

What is more devastating than those clerks' reason for refusing to praise women:

> Therefore no womman of no clerk is preysed,
> The clerk, whan he is oold, and may noght do
> Of Venus werkes worth his olde sho,
> Thanne sit he down, and writ in his dotage
> That wommen kan nat kepe hir mariage!
> (11.706-10)

We should also bear in mind that in Alison's mock-courtly tale the knight, charged with finding out what women most desire, finds that the answer is sovereignty over their husbands. The tale ends with this prayer:

and Jhesu Crist us sende
Housbondes meeke, yonge, and fresshe abedde,
And grace t'overbyde hem that we wedde.[42]

This is not a bitter attack on women. The Wyf of Bath is far from being unattractive, both as a woman and as a person. She is part of a long tradition of *femmes d'esprit*.

But what has the Wyf of Bath to do with lyric *chansons d'aventure*? She is the basis for William Dunbar's poem, "the tretis of the two mariit wemen and the wedo,"[43] which, though itself composed of 530 non-lyrical alliterative lines, has a structure precisely parallel to the old French *chansons*. The poet rides forth and overhears the confidantes' consciousness-raising meeting. The widow is advisor-in-chief, inciting the two brides to rebellion as she schools them in how to be *femmes d'esprit*. Around a marble table holding rich wines, the three splendidly attired and well-to-do ladies talk. The widow asks one wife if her marriage is happy. The answer gives us the full battery of complaints:

It, that ze call the blist band that bindis so fast
Is bair of bliss, and bailfull, and greit barrat wirkis.
(11.50-1)

And what is "barrat"? It can mean trouble, sorrow, grief, deception, fraud, contention, and strife, and doubtless means all of these in the context of marriage. Would she choose a different man? No, her

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[42] *The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer*, p. 88, 11.1258-60.

[43] *The Poems of William Dunbar*, ed. J. Schipper (Vienna: Kaiserliche Akademie der Wissenscaften, 1894), pp. 45-71. Line references given in text.

problem is the institution of marriage; were she out of these chains she would choose no man. The birds have a better law: they have both freedom of choice and freedom to change mates. Were she free she would be fashionable, arrayed in silks, seen at fairs and plays, at preachings and pilgrimages, "blowing my beauty abroad." She would find a *useful* man, eager and keen and strong, like a plowhorse who is willing to work, always pushing forward with great strength and force. But, having obtained him, she would immediately begin looking in kirk, market, and court for a man for the next year, when this one will be worn out. (11.60-88)

The second wife has a drone, a feeble, decayed churl, a wasted, impotent husband. When he kisses her he makes her sorrowful for two reasons: his beard is stiff as a boar's bristles, but his "instrument" is soft and supple as silk. He is, of course, jealous, even when he has no grounds. But whenever he does wax amorous, he pays a great fee: a kerchief, a gown richly furred, or a ring with rich jewels. And "Thus I sell him solace, thocht I it sour think." (11.89-144) This recital is greeted with laughter, but the widow asks that the wives be still more frank, since no spy is near. (This is the only time the reader is reminded of the frame.) At that invitation, the first wife describes her husband in more detail. He is huge and young, ostentatious and courtly. He tosses his head like a horse impatient of the bridle. Yet the truth is that he is faded and feeble from drink. He is like a dog who lifts his leg but cannot piss. He is full of fair words without deeds, a rich lusty shadow, for at the deed he droops. Always boasting of his

encounters, he at first gleams like gold, but turns out to be glass! Her advice is to get rid of a man before he grows faint. (11.145-245)

Finally, the widow proffers advice and tells her story. She was ever a shrew, but seemed sober and sweet, simple and without fraud. Her advice is to counterfeit good manners, though one be inconstant and cruel in mind--a meek tiger, an angel with a dragon's terrible tail. She has had two husbands and has made fools of them both with a lover to slake her lust. Her second was a merchant. She had only to remind him of his base birth to control him. Inverting all stereotypes, she crew on his dunghill like the victorious cock. He who was proud as a peacock was made a cuckold. She is the popingay, he the plucked heron. She bore the marriage bed with the "old horse" by imagining herself with another man. Now, a merry widow, she goes to kirk as a fox in lamb's fleece, looking with bowed head for the man with the brawniest calf of leg. She keeps a sponge to produce tears for her husband's friends, but has a discreet servant who meets her needs. She goes on pilgrimages like her literary cousin, to find barons, knights, and other blooming, youthful bachelors. (11.246-467) Having learned their lessons well, the three stay and drink all night until the narrator closes the poem by blandly describing the beauty of the spring dawn. (11.468-530)

Dunbar contributes two other poems to the tradition, satires of lower class women, mainly on the grounds of their intemperance rather than their lasciviousness. "The Ballad of Kynd Kittock" tells the story of a female taverner who dies of thirst, gets into

heaven by mistake, but gets back to her ale house in a happy ending. "The Twa Cummeris" are two female sots. One other, "Of the Ladyis solistaris at court," satirizes court ladies. "In Prays of Woman" is Dunbar's apology for his former offenses to the fair sex, but he concludes it with a sarcastic turn.[44]

Next in direct line is John Skelton's "The Tunning of Elinour Rumming"; but more in the *mal mariée* tradition, as opposed to mere abuse of coarse women, is "My Darling Dear, My Daisy Flower." In this little-known poem, the husband is the drunkard who is lullabied to sleep so the wife may skip off to her lover. The play on the sweet picture of the mother singing to her child is too well done not to quote in full. We are reminded that the *femme d'esprit* is a counter to the Madonna and all she represents:

> With lullay, lullay, like a child,
> Thou sleepest too long, thou art beguiled.
>
> My darling dear, my daisy flower,
> Let me, quod he, lie in your lap.
> Lie still, quod she, my paramour,
> Lie still hardely, and take a nap.
> His head was heavy, such was his hap,
> All drowsy dreaming, drowned in sleep,
> That of his love he took no keep.
> With hey lullay, lullay, like a child,
> Thou sleepest too long, thou art beguiled.
>
> With ba, ba, ba! and bas, bas, bas!
> She cherished him both cheek and chin,
> That he wist never where he was:
> He had forgotten all deadly sin.
> He wanted wit her love to win:
> He trusted her payment and lost all his pay;
> She left him sleeping and stole away.
> With hey lullay, lullay, like a child,
> Thou sleepest too long, thou art beguiled.

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[44] *The Poems of William Dunbar*, pp. 72-74.

The rivers rough, the waters wan,
She spared not to wet her feet;
She waded over, she found a man
That halsed her heartily and kissed her sweet:
Thus after her cold she caught a heat.
My love, she said, routeth in his bed;
Y wis he hath an heavy head.
With hey lullay, lullay, like a child,
Thou sleepest too long, thou art beguiled.

What dreamest thou, drunkard, drowsy pate?
Thy lust and liking is from thee gone;
Thou blinkard blowbowl, thou wakest too late,
Behold thou liest, luggard, alone!
Well may thou sigh, well may thou groan,
To deal with her so cowardly:
Y wis, pole hatchet, she bleared thine eye.[45]

John Davies gives us a pithy summary of the medieval *querelle des femmes* in his epigrams, published in the *Poetical Rapsody*.[46] The characteristics mocked in these poems are precisely those of the *femme d'esprit*. To the degree that the wife has a life and a will of her own, and is discontent with her lot, she is less than perfect from the male point of view:

The Wife

The first of all our Sex came from the side of man,
I thither am returnd, from whence our sex began.
I do not visit oft, nor many, when I doo,
I tell my minde to few, and that in counsaile too.
I seeme not sick in health, nor sullen but in sorrow,
I care for somewhat else, then what to weare to morrow.
(*Rhapsody*, No. 177, 10)

The widow who refuses to stop living because her husband has is mocked in this epigram. If she makes herself attractive and

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[45] *The Complete Poems of John Skeleton Laureate*, p. 22.

[46] *A Poetical Rapsody*. Hereafter cited as *Rhapsody*.

exaggerates the size of her inheritance in order to win another husband, she is much to blame:

The Widow

My dying husband knew, how much his death would grieue me
And therfore left me wealth to comfort and releeue me.
Though I no more will haue, I must not loue disdaine,
Penelope her selfe did Sutors entertaine.
And yet to draw on such, as are of best esteeme,
Nor yonger then I am, nor richer will I seeme.
(*Rhapsody*, No. 177, 11)

The maid frankly wants a husband and will not be coy. She has sexual needs greater than her desire for wealth, like a true *femme d'esprit*:

The Maide

I Marriage would forsweare, but that I heare men tell,
That she that dies a maide, must lead an ape in hell.
Therefore if fortune come, I will not mock and play,
Nor drive the bargain on, till it be driuen away.
Titles and lands I like, yet rather fancy can,
A man that wanteth gould, then gould that want's a man.
(*Rhapsody*, No. 177, 12)

The *Rhapsody* also offers a three-way debate by Davies true to its medieval heritage, "A Contention betwixt a Wife, a Widdovve, and a Maide." (No. 179) Wife and widow prepare to lead the procession to bring offerings to Astrea's shrine on her holy day, but are outraged by a "bould presumpteous maid" who "goe[s] before without respect of [them]." The maid rejoins that Astrea is a maiden, so she should by rights lead the dance:

Besides on all true virgins at their birth
Nature hath set a crowne of excellence,
That all the wiues and widowes of the earth
Should give them place and doe them reuerence.

The wife responds that she also was graced by nature, but sought

further perfection in marrying. The widow, of course, holds the third and highest degree of honor, for she has been both, and, though "most maids are Wardes, and every wife a slave,/ I have my livery sued and I am free." Her claim is that she is superior because she belongs to no man, the mark of a true *femme d'esprit*. Yet maidenhood wins the early rounds of the debate. Because it will admit no mate, "like majestie it selfe must sacred be." Wives and widows have power, but "mistresse of mine owne desires am I,/ When you rule others wills and not your owne." She is pointing out that while a manipulative, role-playing mistress can be the power behind the throne, as it were, she refuses all indirect, subversive, and imperfect ways to self-respect. The maid's argument is a compound of pride and self-righteousness. She is inordinately proud of her virginity, to which she attributes all her superiority. And yet the maid exhibits the attitudes of the *femme d'esprit*. It is her freedom that she extols, even though she pays the price of sexuality. She has enormous power: "Maides like the Earth, supported are of none." She knows, as well as any courtly mistress, that in abstention is power:

> Yet if I would be lou'd, lou'd would I be,
> Like her, whose vertue in the bay is seene;
> Loue to wife fades with satietie,
> Where loue neuer enioyed, is euer greene.

What, after all, is marriage but "a tedious yoake?" The maid is undismayed by the widow's countercharge that "What [is] virginitie, but sweet selfe loue?" Her virgin state is "like contentment in this life,/ Which all the world haue sought, but none enioyed." This

femme d'esprit is well aware of the reality of sexual politics: "Mayds loose their value, when they match with men." The widow describes her worthy husband, but the maid

> will scorne the man you praise so much,
> For Mayds are matchlesse, and no mate can beare.
>
> Hence it is that the Virgin neuer loues,
> Because like her, she finds not any wheare:
> For likenesse euermore affection moues,
> Therfore the Mayde hath neither loue nor Peare.

The maid emphatically wins the debate and presents the offering. Her victory is because of her "soueraigne spirit that will be thrall to none."

Tottel prints a typical product of the *querelle des femmes*, "An epitaphe written by W. G. to be set upon his owne grave." It seems that he was married to a *femme d'esprit*:

> Lo here lieth G. under the grounde,
> Emong the greedy wormes:
> Which in his life time neuer founde,
> But strife and sturdy stormes.
> And namely through a wicked wife,
> As to the worlde apperes:
> She was the shortnyng of his life
> By many daies and yeres.
> He might have liued long god wot,
> His yeres they were but yong:
> Of wicked wiues this is the lot,
> To kill with spitefull tong.
> Whose memory shall still remaine,
> In writyng here with me:
> That men may know whom she hath slaine.
> And say this same is he.
>
> (Tottel, No. 255)

It is followed, however, by an answer which points out the mutuality of the bad marriage:

If that thy wicked wife had spon the thred,
And were the weauer of thy wo!
Then art thou double happy to be dead,
As happily dispatched so.
If rage did causelesse cause thee to complaine,
And mad moode mouer of thy mone:
If frensy forced on thy testy braine:
Then blist is she to liue alone.
So, whether were the ground of others griefe,
Because so doubtfull was the dome:
Now death hath brought your payne a right reliefe,
And blessed by ye bothe become:
She that she liues no lenger bounde to beare
The rule of such a frowarde hed:
Thou that thou liuest no lenger faine to feare
The restlesse ramp that thou hadst wedde.
Be thou as glad therfore that thou art gone,
As she is glad she dothe abide.
For so ye be a sonder, all is one:
A badder match can not betide.
(Tottel, No. 256)

The miscellanies include songs of another kind of *mal mariée*, the bride-to-be who is claimed by a churl. She resents his jealous spying, rebels against her father's choice, regrets the vanished pleasures of girlhood, for which marriage is no compensation, and even longs for her own death or her bridegroom's. A maiden in *The Garland of Good Will* complains that

Crabbed age and youth
Cannot live together;
Youth is full of pleasure,
Age is full of care;
Youth's like summer's morn,
Age like winter's weather;
Youth is full of sport,
Age's breath is short.
(p. 107)

Earlier we saw that she is waiting for her young lover to join her, because

Like a loving wife,
So I lead my life,
Thirsting for my heart's desire;
Come, sweet youth, I pray,
Away, old man, away,
Thou canst not give what I require. . . .
(p. 108)

Englands Helicon has a song by Bartholomew Yong in which the singer complains that she did not marry her true love, but her father's choice. Her husband is full of baseless jealousy, for the man that she loved well is gone. She lost her love, not because of the ill luck she sings of, but because, "forgetting," she "was forgot." She pays for her contempt of true love with this forced marriage:

When that I poor soule was borne,
I was borne unfortunate:
Presently the Fates had sworne,
To fore-tell my haplesse state.

Titan his faire beames did hide,
Phoebe 'clips'd her siluer light:
In my birth my Mother died,
Young and faire in heauie plight.

And the Nurse that gaue me suck,
Haplesse was in all her life:
And I neuer had good luck,
Being mayde or married wife.

I lou'd well, and was belou'd,
And forgetting, was forgot:
This a haplesse marriage mou'd,
Greeuing that it kills me not.

With the earth would I were wed,
Then in such a graue of woes
Daylie to be buried,
Which no end nor number knowes.

Young my Father married me,
Forc'd by my obedience:
Syrenus, thy faith, and thee
I forgot without offence.

Which contempt I pay so farre,
Never like was paid so much:
Iealousies doo make me warre,
But without a cause of such.

I doo goe with iealous eyes,
To my folds, and to my Sheepe:
And with iealousie I rise,
When the day begins to peepe.

At his table I doo eate,
In his bed with him I lie:
But I take no rest, nor meate,
Without cruell iealousie.

If I aske him what he ayles,
And whereof he iealous is?
In his aunswere then he failes,
Nothing can he say to this.

In his face there is no cheere,
But he euer hangs the head:
In each corner he dooth peere,
And his speech is sad and dead.

Ill the poore soule liues ywis:
That so hardly married is.
(*Helicon*, No. 73)

In a song by Robert Jones, from *The Muses Gardin for Delights* (1611),[47] the fourteen-year-old daughter has a problem with both parents: her father wants her to marry an old man, and her mother wants her not to marry at all. This young woman is a true *femme d'esprit*, for she is healthy and eager for a young husband. She knows that because of her father's prerogative she has no choice of a husband, and because of custom women cannot woo; yet even so she would be mad to refuse a man. She cannot understand her mother's fears for her or

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[47] *The Muses Gardin for Delights*, No. XV, Fellowes, pp. 24-26.

her ambitions that she learn to do more than bear children. She thinks that her mother has forgotten the sexual appetite of youth, as indeed she doubtless has. The daughter, in the first bloom of healthy self-respect and appetite for life and sexual love, will soon learn that she "must not speake what I doe thinke,/ When I am drie, I may not drinke. . . ." But for the moment, she is a willful and spirited woman. Here is the marvellously realistic domestic scene:

My father faine would have mee take
A man that hath a beard,
My mother shee cries out 'Alacke'
And makes mee much afearde;
In sooth, I am not olde enough,
Nowe surely this is goodly stuffe!
Faith! let my mother burie mee
Or let some young man marrie me.

For I have liv'd these fourteene yeeres,
My mother knows it well,
What neede shee then to cast such feares,
Can any body tell?
Although young women doe not know
That custome will not let them wo,
I would be glad if I might chuse,
But I were madde if I refuse.

My mother bids me goe to schoole
And learn to doe some good,
'Twere well if shee would let the foole
Come home and sucke a dugge.
As if my father knew not yet
That maidens are for young men fit!
Give me my mind and let me wed
Or you shall quickly find me dead.

How soone my mother hath forgot
That ever shee was yong
And how that shee denyed not
But sung another song.
I must not speake what I doe thinke,
When I am drie, I may not drinke,
Though her desire be now growen old,
Shee must have fier when shee is cold.

You see the mother loves the sonne,
My father loves the maide,
What? would shee have me be a nun?
I will not be delaide,
I will not live thus idle still,
My mother shall not have her will,
My father speaketh like a man,
I will be married, doe what shee can.

Finally, Thomas Campion brings us full circle in his *Second Book of Aires* as this latter-day Wyf of Bath sings her song of insatiable lust:

A secret love or two, I must confesse,
I kindly welcome for a change in close playing:
Yet my deare husband I love ne'erthelesse,
His desires, whole or halfe, quickly allaying,
At all times ready to offer redresse.
His owne he never wants, but hath it duely,
Yet twits me, I keepe not touch with him truly.

The more a spring is drawne, the more it flowes;
No Lampe lesse light retaines by lighting others:
Is hee a looser his losse that ne'er knowes?
Or is he wealthy that wast treasure smothers?
My churle vows no man shall sent his sweet Rose:
His owne enough and more I give him duely,
Yet still he twits mee, I keepe not touch truly.

Wise Archers beare more then one shaft to field,
The Venturer loads not with one ware his shipping:
Should Warriers learn but one weapon to weilde?
Or thrive fair plants e'er the worse for slipping?
One dish cloyes, many fresh appetite yeeld:
Mine own Ile use, and his he shall have duely,
Judge then what debter can keep touch more truly.[48]

V. PASTOURELLE

The *pastourelle* is rare in English, perhaps because it is too political or too unchivalrous. In the French form, there is a great

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[48] *The Works of Thomas Campion*, No. XIX, p. 111.

contrast between the high state of the knight who sings his love boast and the low degree of the shepherdess whom he accosts so abruptly and impertinently. He offers arguments, flattery, and promises in his seduction. Helen Sandison points out that there is much variety to the maiden's reaction.[49] She may be pleased, afraid, or angry. If she is singing a Scottish *pastourelle* of a rather ribald era, her resistance is temporary and insincere. The dénouement of these poems is explicit; indeed the dialogue is only an excuse for it. If she protests, her reasons vary: it may be that she is too mean a maid for such a great gentleman, that she is faithful to her lover from her own class, that she fears desertion, or shame, or her mother's reaction. As we would expect, she often yields against her will. In English poems, her resistance is sincere and based on moral grounds unknown to her French counterpart. As William Powell Jones points out, even in the major French collection of *pastourelles* there are only 46 successful seductions as opposed to 42 failures to win the maid. And even if the knight is ultimately successful, there is at least a rudimentary debate, and the powerful aggressor is "baffled" in 28 poems.[50] Now this baffling comes straight from the figure of the *femme d'esprit* in popular literature. With some display of spirit, she may cry for help to her lover or a crowd of rustics, may tell the seducer of her fears of her parents and her punishment, may threaten him with violence, may even cry (though

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[49]Sandison, p. 62.

[50]*The Pastourelle: A Study of the Origins and Traditions of a Lyric Type* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1931), p. 7.

this is never effective). But with a display of *real* spirit she may taunt him in mockery, keep her integrity with clever repartee, or use his own ruse to deceive the deceiver by promising and then denying. Her cleverness and deception are hardly flattering to the cavalier lover; he would not boast about his failure to seduce her. Jones concludes that the maid's failure to repulse her seducer "is to be expected from the nature of courtly poems. That she often succeeds in baffling him or putting him off is noteworthy and highly significant."[51] For Jones, this significance is that the mocking ruses are the original theme of the genre, a popular motif of folk songs. Since the source of the *pastourelle* is not the school bucolic, there being no suggestion of pastoral idealism in the sordid seduction, it must be the folk theme of the baffled knight. With due acknowledgment to Ovid as the source of eroticism in the *pastourelle* and to the medieval love of debate, Jones delves into the feminine psyche for the true source of the form. He hypothesizes that this love adventure is a surfacing of the woman's secret and suppressed desires.[52] This sounds like the curious and exclusively male notion that all women secretly want to be raped. A more rational theory of his is that craft is the weapon of the weak. We can agree that, doubly oppressed by being both peasant and female, the maid is doubly proud that she can baffle the male of high rank. Jones reminds us of the classic humiliation of the great and powerful by malicious and shameful womanly deception: Solomon, Hipprocates, Aristotle ridden like a

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[51] Jones, p. 20. [52] Ibid., p. 40.

horse, Virgil hanging in a basket, David, Samson, even Adam, all were plagued by a *femme d'esprit*. Because of their reputation for great virtue, priests, monks, and clerks were likewise often baffled. Or perhaps it was merely the love of debate and strife and the defeat of power that made the *pastourelle* popular: "the same persons who delighted in the rivalry and repartee of a *dêbat* or in the humiliation of the defeated party in a *conflictus* would take keen pleasure in the chagrin of some exalted personage repulsed and baffled by the cleverness of a mere woman."[53] We have seen in Henryson's "Robene and Makyne" how the lover is refused and mocked; and that it is not uncommon for a *femme d'esprit* to be provoked because her lover has not made any advances. A seventeenth century French poem which Jones modestly summarizes instead of quoting tells of a maiden rudely ravished, but the gallant is wearied before he can satisfy her and must beg her pardon (!)[54] But whether the woman means to have the man or baffle him, she uses a peculiarly feminine form of wit. Long before Freud characterized women as masochistic, passive, and narcissistic, other men had done so. Patricia Spacks suggests that these qualities result from a woman's turning her anger in on herself. When she does use that anger against its real object, the man who is trying to impose his will on her, it is the impelling force for her wit. And as her anger is indirect, so is her wit: it is composed of indirection, evasiveness, deviousness

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[53]Jones, pp. 133-34. [54]Ibid., p. 177.

Only these qualities can combat masculine forcefulness; women early learn that victory can belong to the devious.[55]

Here are some English examples of the *femme d'esprit* getting her own way. First, from Robbins' collection, is a ribald tale of feminine deceit:

> Hogyn cam to bowers dore--
> hogyn cam to bowers dore,
> he tryld vpon the pyn for love,
> hum, ha, trill go bell--
> he tryld vpon the pyn for love,
> hum, ha, trill go bell.

Here, in abbreviated form, is the rest of old Hogyn's ill-fated adventure:

> Up she rose and lett hym yn--
> She had a-went she had worshipped all her kyn.
>
> When thei were to bed browgth--
> The old chorle he cowld do nowgth.
>
> Go ye furth to yonder wyndow---
> And I will cum to you with-in a throw.
>
> Whan she hym at the wyndow wyst--
> She torned owt her ars and that he kyst.
>
> Ywys, leman, ye do me wrong--
> Or elles your breth ys wonder strong.
> (Robbins, No. 36)

The Elizabethan *Handefull of pleasant delites* (pp. 39-42) offers a dialogue in which a *femme d'esprit* uses her wit to turn the lechery of a man to verbal abuse as he tries not to lose face. It is better to be accused of promiscuity as punishment for refusing him than to let him have his will. That she has almost no freedom

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[55]Patricia Meyer Spacks, *The Female Imagination* (New York: Knopf, 1975), pp. 24-28.

of choice is evident in how apologetic her refusal is. She disparages herself by saying that another woman "better may your heart delight." She must assure him that "beleeu me it greeus me, I may not haue you,/ To wed you and bed you as a woman shold be." The woman sounds as though she is humoring a dangerous and potentially brutal fellow who is not too bright and outweighs her by many pounds:

> Maid, wil you marie? I pray sir tarie,
> I am not disposed to wed a:
> For he that shal haue me, wil never deny me
> he shal haue my maidenhed a.
> Why then you wil not wed me?
> No sure sire I have sped me,
> You must go seeke some other wight,
> That better may your heart delight.
> For I am sped I tell you true
> beleeu me it greeus me, I may not haue you,
> To wed you and bed you as a woman shold be.
>
> For if I could, be sure I would,
> consent to your desire:
> I would not doubt, to bring about,
> ech thing you would require:
> But promise now is made,
> Which cannot be staide;
> It is a womans honestie,
> To keep her promise faithfully.
> And so I do meane til death to do,
> Consider and gather, that this is true:
> Choose it, and use it, the honester you.

The man's response is so irrational that one wonders if a stanza or two is missing:

> But if you seek, for to misleeke,
> with this that I haue done:
> Or else disdaine, that I so plaine
> this talke with you haue begone:
> Farewell I wil not let you,
> He fisheth wel that gets you.
> And sure I thinke your other friend,
> Will prooue a Cuckold in the end:
> But he wil take heed if he be wise,
> To watch you and catch you, with *Argus* eies,
> Besetting and letting your wonted guise.

Perhaps the man's response comes from his outrage that her fiancé allows her to be at large so that he could commit the original error of addressing her. This little fable warns the woman to mend her ways:

> Although the Cat doth winke a while,
> yet sure she is not blinde:
> It is the waie for to beguile,
> the Mice that run behind:
> And if she see them running,
> Then straightway she is comming:
> Vpon their head she claps her foote,
> To striue with her it is no boote.
> The seelie poore Mice dare neuer play,
> She catcheth and snatcheth them euery day,
> Yet whip they, and skip they, when she is away.
>
> And if perhaps they fall in trap,
> to death then must they yeeld:
> They were better then, to haue kept their den
> than straie abroad the field:
> But they that will be ranging,
> Shall soone repent their changing:
> And so shall you ere it be long,
> Wherefore remember well my song:
> And do not snuffe though I be plaine,
> But cherily, merily, take the same.
> For huffing and snuffing deserueth blame.
>
> For where you say you must obay,
> the promise you have made,
> So sure as I wil never flie,
> from that I haue said:
> Therefore to them I leaue you,
> Which gladly wil receiue you:
> You must go choose some other mate,
> According to your own estate.
> For I do meane to liue in rest,
> Go seek you, and leek you an other guest,
> And choose him, and vse him, as you like best.

A song by Thomas Ravenscroft published in a 1609 collection is a full-blown *pastourelle*.[56] In it the deceiver is deceived with the best

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[56] *Deuteromelia*, No. XXII, in Fellowes, p. 231.

methods of a *femme d'esprit*:

Yonder comes a courteous knight,
Lustily raking over the lay
He was well 'ware of a bonny lass
As she came wand'ring over the way.
Then she sang down a down, hey down derry.

Jove you speed, fair lady, he said,
Among the leaves that be so green;
If I were a king and wore a crown
Full soon, fair lady, shouldst thou be a queen.

Also Jove save you, fair lady,
Among the roses that be so red;
If I have not my will of you,
Full soon, fair lady, shall I be dead.

Then he looked east then he looked west,
He looked north, so did he south;
He could not find a privy place,
For all lay in the Devil's mouth.

If you will carry me, gentle sir,
A maid unto my father's hall,
Then you shall have your will of me
Under purple and under pall.

He set her up upon a steed,
And himself upon another,
And all the day he rode her by
As though they had been sister and brother.

When she came to her father's hall,
It was well walled round about,
She yode in at the wicket gate
And shut the four-eared fool without.

You had me, quoth she, abroad in the field,
Among the corn, amidst the hay,
Where you might had your will of me,
For in good faith sir, I never said nay.

Ye had me also amid the field,
Among the rushes that were so brown,
Where you might had your will of me,
But you had not the face to lay me down.

He pulled out his nut-brown sword,
And wiped the rust off with his sleeve,
And said: Jove's curse come to his heart,
That any woman would believe.

When you have your own true love,
A mile or twain out of the town,
Spare not for her gay clothing,
But lay her body flat on the ground.

We shall meet more of these *femmes d'esprit* when we consider anti-petrarchan poems in Chapter III, but here is a report of another of the species, in a madrigal which is also a pastourelle in brief:

A little pretty bonny lass was walking
In midst of May before the sun 'gan rise.
I took her by the hand and fell to talking
Of this and that, as best I could devise.
I swore I would, yet still she said I should not.
Do what I would, and yet for all I could not.[57]

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[57]John Farmer, *The First Set of English Madrigals: To Foure Voices (1599)*, No. XVI, in Fellowes, p. 104.

CHAPTER II

THE COMPLAINT OF THE MISTRESS

"And yet, full oft it dooth me good,
To haunt the place where he hath beene,
To kisse the ground whereon he stoode,
When he (alas) my loue did win."
(*A Handefull of pleasant delites*, p. 50.)

If many medieval lyrics eschew the courtly love tradition in favor of the greater realism of a *femme d'esprit*, there is a type of poem older than courtly love, the complaint of the mistress, which has much in common with the familiar courtly lover's complaint and yet, because of its origins and choice of persona, is so different and, in many examples from Elizabethan miscellanies, so superior to the stereotypes, that it should be examined in detail. The woman complainer's point of view, her attitude, her feelings, and her range of concerns are indeed a strange counterpart to the well-known male complaint. As a woman in love, she is a mistress rather than a *femme d'esprit*, but as she takes stock of what her faithful and submissive love has cost her, she often casts off her role as mistress. If we first look at a mediocre sample from Tottel's, the earliest of our miscellanies, we can then begin to discover how curious this poetic mode is and how unexpected its literary ancestors. The Ovidian and medieval tradition established, we can see how and to what extent Elizabethan complaints diverge from tradition, how they are stereotyped, which ones defy stereotyping, how many simply borrow the conventions of male complaints, and which poems genuinely capture the

female situation and accurately reflect female psychology. Finally, an examination of this material will reveal the increasing rhetorical skill of Elizabethan poets as they learn how to speak through a persona who is decidedly other than themselves.

A typical complaint from Tottel's miscellany is superscribed, "The lady forsaken of her louer, prayeth his returne, or the end of her own life."[1] Let us examine the full text to see how it differs from the sighs and tears of the disdained Petrarchan lover:

To loue, alas, who would not feare
That seeth my wofull state,
For he to whom my heart I beare
Doth me extremely hate,
And why therfore I cannot tell,
He will no lenger with me dwell.
  Did you not sewe and long me serue
Ere I you graunted grace?
And will you this now from me swarue
That neuer did trespace?
Alas poore woman then alas,
A wery lyfe here must I passe.
  And is there now no remedy
But that you will forgeat her,
Ther was a tyme when that perdy
You would haue heard her better.
But now that time is gone and past,
And all your loue is but a blast.
  And can you thus breake your behest
In dede and can you so?
Did you not sweare you loude me best,
And can you now say no?
Remember me poore wight in payne,
And for my sake turne once agayne.
  Alas poore Dido now I fele
Thy present paynful state,
When false Eneas did hym stele
From thee at Carthage gate.
And left thee sleapyng in thy bedde,
Regardyng not what he had sayd.

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[1] Tottel's *Songs and sonettes*, No. 222. Hereafter cited as Tottel.

Was neuer woman thus betrayed,
Nor man so false forsworne,
His faith and trouth so strongly tayed,
Vntruth hath alltotorne:
And I have leaue for my good will,
To waile and wepe alone my fill.
But since it will not better be,
My teares shall neuer blyn:
To moist the earth in such degree,
That I may drowne therin:
That by my death all men may saye,
Lo women are as true as they.
By me all women may beware,
That see my wofull smart,
To seke true love let them not spare,
Before they set their hart.
Or els they may become as I,
Which for my truth am like to dye.

We notice immediately the weakness of its shifting point of view: the woman speaker talks both *of* her lover and *to* him, sometimes apostrophizing, and sometimes issuing a warning to a particularized audience of women. Her reproaches and the tears borrowed from the conventional male complaint are all too familiar. The very regularity of the meter and the all-too-inevitable rhymes make us smile. But there is something unusual here which is the result of the initial conception of writing a complaint from the position of a forsaken lady rather than a disdained lover.

The persona perceives the irony of how the tables have turned as a result of her yielding to her lover's courtly wooing:

Did not you sewe and long me serue
Ere I you graunted grace?
And will you this now frome me swarue
That neuer did trespace?

At the moment that she gave her virginity, she became his thrall, who, even if she does not "trespass," is totally in his power. In

giving him her grace she became vulnerable in precisely the way he was before:

> And I have leaue for my good will,
> To waile and wepe alone my fill.

Though her sarcasm is almost lost in conventional tripe about drowning in her own tears, the lady does end on this note:

> That by my death all men may saye,
> Lo women are as true as they.

This is an extraordinary amount of pluck for a woman to have who, though ruined, will interject into tired pleas for pity a sharp-tongued retort. But then, as we have seen, the final lines lapse into conventional warning. This poem does not have a consistent point of view, nor do conventions borrowed from the courtly lover's complaint do much to move us. But there are some things here that could never be said by a man. Where did this complainer come from? Let us begin our investigation with Dido: the Tudor lady claims to empathize with Dido for the first time; she now knows how betrayal feels. Since it is highly unlikely, or at least not to the purpose here to prove, that a woman poet wrote this complaint, we might well ask what prompted a male poet to try on this alien mask. Who speaks for Dido and why?

In *The Hous of Fame*, Chaucer is describing the walls of the Temple of Venus, painted with scenes from the *Aeneid*.[2] When he comes to the description of Aeneas' desertion of Dido, Chaucer abandons

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[2]"The Hous of Fame," *The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer*, ed. F. N. Robinson, 2nd ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1957), Book I, ll.239-432.

Virgil and takes the heroine's point of view. Ovid takes over; his *Heroides* are so obviously in Chaucer's mind that he cites eight of its other epistles as parallels to Dido's plight. It is not unlikely, then, that Chaucer's Creseyde is a far more subtle and lifelike character than Boccaccio's because of the influence of Ovid. For what it is worth, John Dryden's considered opinion is that Ovid describes a woman's passions better than Virgil.[3]

A closer look at Ovid's work reveals that he is doing a new thing in non-dramatic poetry. In the *Amores* he treats the love of a man for a woman lightly (though his amused cynicism is misunderstood by later courtly lovers); but in the *Heroides*, the love of a woman for a man is a serious matter.[5] It may be that he is simply aware that men are often cads, because he has what L.P. Wilkinson calls

> an unusual inclination to see things from [the woman's] point of view. . . ; a tender side to his nature which gave him an interest in the weaker sex and a certain insight into what their feelings might be.[6]

It could be, however, that he is unromantic about love, a realist

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[3]"An Account of the Ensuing Poem," prefixed to "Annus Mirabilis" in *Of Dramatic Poesy and other Critical Essays*, ed. George Watson (New York: Dutton, 1962), vol. 1, p. 99.

[4]Publius Naso Ovidius, *Amores*, trans. Guy Lee (New York: Viking, 1968).

[5]Publius Naso Ovidius, *Heroides*, trans. Howard Jacobson (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1974). Cited by number in the text.

[6]*Ovid Surveyed* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1962), pp. 34-35.

with the rest of the classical world. C. S. Lewis points out in *The Allegory of Love* that, before courtly love, love was an uncommon theme in literature and that, far from being a noble passion, it "seldom rises above the level of merry sensuality or domestic comfort, except to be treated as a tragic madness which plunges otherwise sane people (usually women) into crime and disgrace." In classical literature, "maidens pray that the gods protect them from it."[7] A third possible reason for Ovid's unusual use of the woman persona may be his love of and skill in rhetoric. He had at his disposal an ordinary subject, legendary heroines, and an ordinary method, the imaginary letters taught by the schools of rhetoric. From the two he formed a new genre in the *Heroides*, which are best described as dramatic monologues in epistle form. Wilkinson claims that the rhetorical is the major motive, that "the *Heroides* were probably not intended to move; they are a display of virtuosity designed to entertain." Ovid's audience were connoisseurs of rhetoric, not wanting to weep over Dido's experience but to take pleasure in recognizing details of the traditional story and in noting how dexterously they are used.[8] Viewed in this light, Ovid is making a *tour de force* out of a school exercise in *ethopoeia*. Wilkinson can picture Ovid as "the star of the declamation school" to whom the legendary situation is given and who, assuming the character of the

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[7]C. S. Lewis, *The Allegory of Love* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1938), p. 4.

[8]Wilkinson, p. 38.

heroine, proceeds to make every point that can be made. Viewed purely as rhetoric, the *Heroides* are dry invention indeed. One couplet makes a point, the next few develop it, and then "the poet's unflagging fertility will produce another point--everything in neat and water-tight compartments."[9] The poet/orator uses every commonplace, searches the story for its peculiar motives and literary sources, exploits the whole life and family connections of the heroine; and all to the end of scoring debating points. Wilkinson further posits that beyond the influence of rhetoric, Ovid loved to set himself a problem and then treat it exhaustively, unable to be selective even if he spoils his poem. Wilkinson credits the *Heroides* with far more psychological subtlety than other ancient literature, but charges that there is little variety in how these women react to similar situations.[10] We may agree that the epistolary form has limitations, such as the lack of realism caused by choosing a point in the story when a letter is plausible and the sophisticated language and reasoning power given to the more barbaric or naive heroines. But it is hard to credit Wilkinson's contention that

> The poet must feel genuinely for the suffering woman, and must beguile us to enter into his feeling. He may succeed once, but when he solicits our sympathy for one woman after another, we begin to suspect his.[11]

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[9]Wilkinson, p. 37.

[10]Ibid., p. 36.

[11]Ibid.

A matter more pertinent than his "sincerity" is his poetic skill. By exploring situations from a point of view (a woman's) that is not personal, Ovid becomes a master of mimesis. He is the poet as maker, creator of something other than himself, for he consciously separates himself from his personae. We get an enormous range of feminine attitudes in the *Heroides*. There are examples of wifely excellence, such as the faithful Penelope and the tender, gentle Hypermnestra; Briseis is forgiving, willing to be a slave, not a wife, if Achilles will only take her back; Dido is in despair at her abandonment; Helen is vain about Paris' proposition; Laodamia is full of wifely solicitude and Phyllis of loving trustfulness. But by no means are these women all weak and pitiful mistresses. Phaedra is full of love's madness, immodest, without standards, answering all of Hippolytus' objections with the amoral equation of virtue and pleasure. Hypsipyle, deserted by Jason for the sorceress Medea, is angry more than pitiful. Hercules' wife, when he has completed his labors and has abandoned her for a mistress, complains that the wife of a mighty lord is an ill-mated steer yoked miserably at the plough. They sound like *femmes d'esprit*. We see another complaint against the double standard when Canace, who bore her brother's child, is handed all the blame and a sword with which to commit suicide while the father of the child is permitted to live. Hero sounds like a true *femme d'esprit* when she complains that, while men have brave tasks to do, women are denied them and can only love.

The women writing these epistles are heroic figures which E. K. Rand suggests are "made over for the light of common

day";[12] the pathos is human and contemporary. After characterizing the *Heroides* as studies of women's moods, Rand speculates that other poets had moved uneasily away from the inner workings of women because they are mysteriously different from the emotions of men. Ovid stands alone, but for Euripides, in his acute understanding of women. The sound psychology of the *Heroides* demonstrates Ovid's ability to imitate many types of women; these include a wife, sister, step-mother, servant, shepherdess, queen, trusting girl, vengeful woman, ingenue, and passionate women in love. Ovid deprecates his own sex in the comic Aeneas and Jason. His women can be either frank or artful, complex or subtle, as they utter their longings, their casuistries, their wrongs.

Before we abandon Wilkinson's criticism of this "desert of debating points," let us record this remark about Ovid's narrative skill: "the heroines are far more pathetic when they simply tell their story than when they utter strings of reproaches and arguments, regrets and lamentations."[13] But perhaps a contradictory remark of the critic is just as true: "It is easy to see how . . . Ovid had such an immense influence on Renaissance art. There is a plastic quality about his work. He catches the significant moment or attitude or gesture and imprints it on our mind."[14] What he "catches," what he represents, is what we recognize as the reality

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[12] *Ovid and His Influence* (Boston: Marshall Jones, 1925), pp. 20-25.

[13] Wilkinson, p. 41. [14] Ibid., p. 76.

of human psychology, not the illusion of romantic love. The immediacy of poems that precisely record the exact moment, the specific occasion, is their greatest difference from the songs of courtly lovers.

There is a tradition that spans many centuries in which poets write Heroides, purposely giving the woman in love her own poetic voice. The Beatrices and Lauras speak up in the sonnets of Elizabeth Barrett Browning and the poems of Emily Dickinson. Ovid's persona has a voice that seems spontaneous, instinctive, artless; on the other hand, the voice of the courtly lover is highly artificial, a product of culture and code, formal, artful in both the sense of classical and meaning to deceive. Ovidian complaints are not *about* the lover. They do not make an object of him, celebrating his beauty and his smile. Rather they are about the speaker. They seem so real because "you" is a real person, not an object. Ellen Moers says that the woman in love is sentimental, too responsive to her own feelings, whereas the male lover's feelings are too abstract and conventional to seem real.[15] The male chooses imagery of his beloved's resistance, denial, betrayal: images of ice; whereas the woman speaks of fire. She often consciously reverses the norms of male/female sexual imagery. Women personae are often more physical than men. Whereas the courtly lover avoids physicality, preferring to sing of the glance of an eye, the woman celebrates the touch, even

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[15] *Literary Women: The Great Writers* (New York: Doubleday, 1976), p. 163.

if it is a violent one.[16] For all of these reasons as well as the verisimilitude required by the epistle form, the speaker and her feelings seem very real. Many of these peculiarly feminine feelings are found in sixteenth century miscellany poems, close echoes of Ovid's heroines. One of the *Heroides* (XIII) is a letter from Laodamia to Protesilaus. The writer is explaining her feelings to her husband, who is off fighting the Trojan war. Her main message is that she wants him back safely. She fears for him, warns him to be careful, gives him the feminine advice to fight defensively, only in order to stay alive. She imitates, in her gloomy mood and rude attire, the battle conditions he is living in. She does not dress her hair or wear gold robes. A poem in Tottel by Surrey comes very close to these feelings. It is a "Complaint of the absence of her louer being vpon the sea." (No. 19) The persona is not writing to her lover, but does achieve a degree of realism in addressing an audience of other ladies, those who "have your pleasures in exile." She makes his danger seem very real, and shows how much her own happiness is bound up in his safe return:

> My loue and lord, alas, in whom consistes my wealth,
> Hath fortune sent to passe the seas in hazarde of his health.
> Whome I was wont tembrace with well contented minde
> Is now amidde the foming floods at pleasure of the winde.
> Where God well him preserue, and sone him home me send.
> Without which hope, my life (alas) wer shortly at an end.

He is clearly the "stay of [her] welfare" whose presence can bring "a truce atwixt me, and my care." She speaks very concretely of strong feeling: "with absence how I burn." Ovid's Sappho is burning

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[16]Moers, p. 168.

for her lover (a man--she has seen how limited the love of women is) who has gone to Sicily. In a letter to him (XV) she describes her disordered hair and mean garment, and tells him that she will not adorn herself with scent and rings because there is no one to please. In her grief she rents her robes, beats her breast, and, shrieking, pulls out her hair. An Elizabethan letter in *The gorgious Gallery*[17] is very like Sappho's passionate display. The situation is similar, since it is "A letter written by a yonge gentilwoman and sent to her husband vnawares (by a freend of hers) into Italy." In fourteeners that are intrusively regular, the poet builds the appeal with admirable consistency of point of view. We wade through tears for the first ten lines, explained at length as the cause of the quivering hands and blurred lines. This is a trick of verisimilitude straight from the *Heroides*. The absent husband is called a tiger with a stony heart, a perjured wight, and yet she will repeat her griefs in an attempt to get him back:

> My smeared face through endles teares, vnpleasant doth appeare:
> My slepes vnsound with vgly dreams, my meats are vayn of taste
> My gorgious rayment is dispised, my tresses rudly plaste.

Like Ovid's heroines, this Tudor lady uses other indirect appeals. She asks, "what luckles star? what frowning god aboue/ What hellish hag? what furious fate hath changd our former loue?" Then there is an apostrophe to the malicious Italians, whose "dainty trulls" have

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[17] *The gorgious Gallery of gallant Inventions*, p. 28. Hereafter cited as *Gallery*.

apparently welcomed her husband as they did Sappho's lover, and Aeneas after he abandoned Dido. But Elizabethans did not have to borrow scenarios from classical stories. When a Tudor gentleman wanted to desert his wife and child, he sailed for Italy, the haven for degenerate Englishmen. The poet did not have to force the allusion to Dido. In other ways this gentlewoman is more like Hyspsipyle, who writes to Jason in the sixth of the *Heroides* after he has deserted her for Medea. She tries to win him back by reminding him of her lineage, her dowery, the twins she has just borne him. The Elizabethan lady says, "Thou needes not shame of mee thy spouse, whose byrth not low is found." She does not spare him other reminders:

> Yea minde her well who did submit, into thine onely powre,
> Both hart and life, and therwithall, a ritch and
> wealthy dowre:
> And last of all which greeues mee most, that I was
> so begylde,
> Remember most forgetfull man, thy pretty tatling
> childe.

A few lines later the poem reminds us of Ovid's portrayal of Medea in her letter to Jason (XII), in which she describes herself as a simple maid ensnared by his clever words, and uses her children to try to get him back. The Elizabethan writer says:

> I speake in vayne, thou hast thy will, and now sayth
> *Aesons* sonne,
> *Medea* may pack vp her pypes, the golden Fleese
> is wonne:
> If so, be sure *Medea* I will, shew forth my selfe
> in deede,
> Yet gods defend though death I taste, I should
> distroy thy seede.

She is too abject to threaten him. Defensive, she can only say, "I

know no thing, wherin I dyd offend." Like Ovid's Medea, she claims to be simple and without guile, her only weapon being her very weakness:

> Oh that I had for to entice, a Seyrens flattering songe.
> But out alas, I haue no shift, or cunning to entreat. . . .

She can only assure him of a blameless welcome should he return: "Return would make amends for all, and bannish former wronge. . . ," and of gentle winds and a happy port:

> Beholde the gentill windes doo serue, so that a
> frendly gayle,
> Would soone conuay to happy Porte, thy most desired
> sayle. . . .

This image is appropriate: the man is the one who ventures into the world and the woman is the stationary port who can only wait, rooted to one spot by her timidity and by her function as the bearer of children. Even the Sirens must lure men to the place where they must stay; they cannot pursue. But because this deserted wife is alone in the world, she images her defenselessness in this way:

> Lyke as the tender sprig doth bend, with euery
> blast of winde,
> Or as the guideless Ship on Seas, no certaine
> Porte may finde.
> So I now subiecte vnto hope, now thrall to carefull
> dread,
> Amids the Rocks, tween hope and feare, as fancy
> mooues, am led. . . .

She is "at sea" without a man to guide her, without the port of a man's love and care which the mistress finds necessary to her existence. She is without the rational faculty which her man supplies; without a will, she is buffeted by her "fancy." She has no understanding of his reason for leaving her, so she can only try to describe

her own feelings and end with her blessing and a declaration of her love:

> What doost thou thinke in *Italy*, some great exployt to win?
> No, no it is not *Italy*, as sometimes it hath bin:
> Or doost thou loue to gad abroad, the forrain costes to vew,
> If so, thou hadst not doone amisse, to bid mee first adew:
> But what hath bin the cause, I neede not descant longe,
> For sure I am, meane while poore wench, I only suffer wrong.
> Wel thus I leaue, yet more could say: but least thou shouldst refuse,
> Through tediousnesse to reede my lines, the rest I will excuse:
> Vntill such time as mighty *Iove* doth sent such luckye grace,
> As wee therof in freendly wise, may reason face to face.
> Till then farwell, and hee thee keepe, who only knowes my smart
> And with this bill I send to thee, a trusty Louers harte.

Another lady, like Ovid's Medea, complains in *The gorgious Gallery* that her simple nature was taken advantage of by a sophisticated and treacherous man:

> Pardy, it is but little praise,
> To thee that art a man:
> To finde so many crafty wayes,
> To fraude a poore woman.
> (*Gallery*, p. 28)

But there is another strain in the poem that yet another Ovidian heroine has sung before. In Phyllis' letter to Demophoon (II) she acknowledges that she is false to herself in defense of her seducer. She cannot bring her besotted heart to feel that he has wronged her. The Elizabethan mistress informs her seducer that his actions are clearly base in the eyes of the world, yet that she cannot bring herself to blame him:

All they that here this same,
   Wyll spit at thy false deede:
And bid, fie on thy cursed name,
   And on thy false seede.

That shewest so to the eye,
   And bearest so false an hew:
And makest all women cry,
   Lo, how ye men be vntrew?

But yet to excuse thee now,
   To them that would thee spot:
Ile say, it was not thou,
   It was mine owne poore lot.

Another of Ovid's heroines reminds her lover that she suffers not for wronging him but for pleasing him (XXI). Again the Elizabethans echo this ironic fact. In the poem we have been citing the persona says;

Was never woman of more troth
   Then I have ben to thee.

And thou to leaue mee so,
   And canst no iust cause tell:
. . . . . .
But I for my true hart,
   Get nought but greefe agayne.

Another motif found both in Ovid and the miscellanies is expressed by Oenone in a letter to Paris (V). She reminds him that she loved him when he was a slave, not known to be Priam's son. She reminds him of the past pleasures of their simple, pastoral love. Then she warns him that Helen, his new love, will probably not be faithful, considering her recent history. A pastoral complaint from *Englands Helicon* uses the same arguments. The nymph, addressing her false shepherd, warns him about his new love:

But one thing now I will thee tell,
   That much thy pacience mooues:
That though *Diana* dooth excell
In beautie, yet she keepes not well
   Her faith, nor loyall prooues.

Thou then hast chosen, each one saith,
Thine equall, and a shrow:
For if thou hast vndone thy faith,
Her Loue and Louer she betrayeth,
So like to like may goe.[18]

A final example of Ovid's direct influence is that of the passionate letter from Ariadne to Theseus (X) when he has used her to escape from Crete and then abandoned her on an island. She is in exile for her treachery to her homeland, and now her very motive for the treason has betrayed her. Ariadne compares Theseus to wild beasts, only the beasts are more gentle; she raves about his perjury and tears out her hair in anguish. A complaint in Tottel's miscellany has the same tone:

A cruell Tiger all with teeth bebled,
A bloody tirantes hand in eche degre,
A lecher that by wretched lust was led,
(Alas) deflowred my virginitee.
(No. 299)

Thus we see that, in the Ovidian tradition, the woman persona has found a voice, often a passionate and always a real one. But let us trace the influence of Ovid from the middle ages to the sixteenth century to see the metamorphosis of the woman in love.

The men of the Middle Ages attributed moral purposes to Ovid; they were compelled to do so if they were to read his poetry at all. Thus, the author's intentions in writing the *Heroides* were seen as condemnation of illicit love, illustrations of how severely one is punished. Wilkinson claims that the *Ars Remedia* was actually

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[18] *Englands Helicon*, No. 111. Hereafter cited as *Helicon*.

considered an aid to chastity![19] We would expect Chaucer to have far more concern for morality than Ovid, and to make his characters more serious and responsible. Yet where but from Ovid's Helen came his subtle presentation of Creseyde's yielding to Troilus, and where his challenge to courtly love in Troilus' song at the end of that poem? Chaucer's didactic age is responsible for the tone of the *Legend of Good Women*, but many of the stories are from the *Heroides*. They also appear in Gower's *Confessio Amantis*. And then there are legends of bad women, the full flowering of which is a famous poem from a popular Elizabethan collection, the legend of Jane Shore from the *Mirrour for Magistrates*. It is no task at all to span the centuries between Chaucer and the *Mirrour* if we follow the career of one bad woman, Creseyde herself, and watch her metamorphosize into Jane Shore.

Creseyde's reputation, first established for English readers by Chaucer, went through many transformations before 1600. According to Hyder Rollins, early Tudor poets read only the first three books of Chaucer's poem and thus glorified Creseyde as the highest type of complaisant sweetheart, as though unaware of her later perfidy.[20] Thus she is exalted as the model mistress in a poem in Tottel's miscellany and in one of the *Handefull of pleasant delights*. But as Rollins also points out, Robert Henryson's *Testament of*

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[19]Wilkinson, p. 85.

[20]"The Troilus-Criseyde Story from Chaucer to Shakespeare," *PMLA*, 32 (1971), p. 389.

Cresseid, published by Thyne in 1523 with Chaucer's poem (in fact between it and the *Legend of Good Women*), was not only attributed to Chaucer, but no distinction was made between the two treatments, Chaucer's of Troilus' tragedy and Henryson's of Cresseid's.[21]

Since Chaucer's poem ends with the telling of Troilus' grief, Henryson's male narrator wants to find out the destiny of the fair Cresseid. He tells us that Diomeid divorced Cresseid when he tired of her, forcing her to walk the streets like a harlot. Rollins claims that sixteenth-century poets almost certainly had no knowledge of the original Boccaccio story.[22] Henryson's complaint[23] is framed with a sympathetic narrator and is the direct discourse of a life-like, suffering woman. As he tells of her fate, the narrator pities Cresseid and tries to excuse her as far as he may. When, in a dream, she is tried by a court of the seven planets and given the punishment of leprosy, the poet again breaks in, calling the judgment too cruel and malicious: why is there no mercy for the sweet, gentle, and amorous Cresseid? Installed in a house of lepers, Cresseid begins her testament in her own voice. For seven rime royal stanzas she complains of her hard lot. She curses the fates that transformed her adorned chamber with its elegant appointments to a leper colony of straw beds, and her princely food and clothing to rags and moldy food which she must beg for. Her clear voice is

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[21] "The Troilus-Criseyde Story from Chaucer to Shakespeare," p. 395.

[22] Ibid., p. 405.

[23] "Testament of Cresseid," in *The Poems and Fables of Robert Henryson*, ed. H. Harvey Wood, 2nd ed. (1958; rpt. New York: Barnes and Noble, 1968), pp. 105-126.

hoarse, her figure and face are deformed. She asks the ladies of Greece and Troy to attend to her misery, to make of her a mirror of how fickle is fortune. The moral ends the dramatic monologue: beauty is a fading flower and praise is as the wind. Not until line 546 does she begin to blame her own faithlessness for her misfortune. In her prosperity, she had counted small the love, the faithfulness and gentleness of Troilus. She climbed high on the wheel of fortune by being a wanton. (Rollins explains that since Henryson did not know the rules of courtly love, he makes her a wanton with Troilus, too.) She even appreciates the irony in Troilus' defense of women when her mind "in fleschelie foull affectioun/ Was inclynit to lustie lecherous." She calls on all lovers to beware of false women--most are steady as weathercocks in wind.

In the second, 1563, edition of the *Mirror for Magistrates* appears one of the most popular of the "tragedies," Thomas Churchyard's "Shore's Wife."[24] She has much in common with Henryson's Cresseid, as we shall see. The tragedy of Jane Shore was written during Edward's reign. Churchyard was "attached to the household" of the Earl of Surrey, and himself testifies that he contributed poems to Tottel's miscellany. Apparently because of Churchyard's antipathy to William Baldwin, Jane Shore speaks her own introduction in the 1587 edition instead of letting the narrator supply the usual prose link.[25]

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[24]*Mirror for Magistrates*, ed. Lily B. Campbell (1938; rpt. New York: Barnes and Noble, 1960). Line references in text.

[25]"Introduction," *Mirror for Magistrates*, pp. 39-42.

In it she says that Baldwin is disdainful "to searche the secrets of wanton women" and she praises Churchyard, "who hath more experience both in defending of womens honour, and knowes somwhat more of theyr conditions and qualityes."[26]

But what is a female ghost doing in a book full of kings? True to Tudor ideas, the *Mirrour* was just that, "a glass wherein the present might see and learn the patterns of conduct which had brought happiness or unhappiness to nations and to men in the past." History served as political teaching and was being taken over by the poet because he could perform "more delightfully, more directly, and hence more effectively than could the historian."[27] That these were mostly histories of powerful men makes the inclusion of Jane Shore's story remarkable, for these were meant to teach the divine right of kings, to deter rebellion and undue ambition. But further, they made kings accountable to God for tyrannous behavior, and they graphically display God's punishment: rebellion, loss of the kingdom, remorse of conscience, and an ignominious death. There is a direct and rigid relationship made between sin and punishment "by way of offering a deterrent to sin." Biographies are not chosen for their historical importance, but for their usefulness in teaching. They "substituted an analysis of divine justice for the older philosophizing on the uncertainty of fortune."[28]

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[26]*Mirror for Magistrates*, p. 372.

[27]Lily B. Campbell, ed., "Introduction," *Mirror for Magistrates*, pp. 49-51.

[28]Ibid., pp. 54-56.

Jane Shore is not a magistrate, she is the concubine of Edward IV, who is stripped of her indirect political power, her goods, and her reputation when Richard becomes king; and is made to do open penance. She dies the ignoble death of a street beggar. Like those of the men, her temptations were "glory," (1.15) and "pompe"; (1.17) she rails against fortune's "whyrling whele," (1.28) and diagnoses her sin as climbing too high. Yet she realizes that her importance is small compared to kings and princes, and knows her complaint will only be heard because

> I heare the liues and falles of many wyghtes;
> My tale therfore the better may be heard,
> For at the torche the little candle lightes.
> Where Pageantes be, small thinges fil out the sightes.
> (11.51-54)

Unlike the famous men in the collection, Jane Shore, though base-born, can boast of nature's gifts which are peculiarly useful to a woman. Her face is "fyld . . . with fauour freshe and fayer." (1.69) She blazons her own beauty, yet blames it for causing her grief. Hers is the peacock's pride, and yet part of her "sin" is love for the king. (1.99) She claims that she did not love her husband, a common enough situation in an age when

> Before my time my youth they did abvse:
> In maryage, a prentyse was I bound,
> When that meere loue I knewe not howe to use.
> (11.107-9)

Though she knows that forced marriage does not excuse her adultery, she does make bold to ask, "Who is in fault?" (1.118) Love has nothing to do with force. It "serves but those that feele sweete fancies fyt." (1.133) She, a mere woman, is so weak that she cannot

be blamed for not withstanding the princely siege; his weapons being the offers of ease and wealth. Along with this conventional metaphor of love and war is the equally conventional use of hound and master for woman's relation to man. (11.80-81) Yet this excuse is inconsistent with her next boast, that "I gouerned him that ruled all this land . . . ; (1.173) With my sweete wordes I could the Kyng perswade . . . ; (1.177) I had the arte to make the Lyon meeke." (1.181) Jane Shore admits that she had the peculiarly feminine kind of power that men are wise to fear, yet she claims to have used it well: to plead for the common man, to save the guiltless, to get justice for the poor, and to eschew bribes. She paints Richard III as a tyrant who "falsely fayned, that I of counsayle was/ To poyson him . . . ." (11.295-6) For ten stanzas Richard's villainy is painted and a warning is issued to all rulers to beware of meting out unjust punishments. Jane Shore claims that had her own punishment been meant as

> a warning for the rest,
> I had small cause such fault in him to finde,
> Such punishment is vsed for the best:
> But by yll will and power I was opprest.
> (11.352-5)

This leads her, illogically, to a concluding warning, not to humankind but to women, "both maide and wyfe," to defy the wanton ways of the world, not to trade on or trust their beauty or the tenuous power they may have over a man. (1.388)

Later, Jane Shore's story appears in ballad form with an even closer connection to Henryson's heroine. In the *Garland of good will*, the lamentation of Shore's wife is incongruously set to a lively tune

called "the hunt is vp."[29] Her audience is invoked in the first line: "Listen faire Ladies/ Unto my misery." And yet its appeal seems to be not to ladies but to bourgeois wives, for she gallops through the major episodes of her story, only pausing to bewail in bad enough verse her forced marriage and temptations: "My beauty caused many Gallants to salute me." What she makes the most of is the contrast between the sumptuous "dishes dainty" and her begging dish, her "riche attire" and her "rotten rags," her "body soft" and the vermin-eaten vestige of what the king had often embraced, and her bed of down and "stinking straw." None of the larger issues of political power are dealt with--only the pathetic details of her shame and disgrace. In this version it is hardly a mighty fall. Her sins are reduced to the one sin most women have the power to commit: adultery. The moral of this broadside ballad is domestic indeed; she is so close to her audience that she names her residence as "the Flower-de-Luce in Cheapside."

An even more shockingly narrow and moralistic treatment of a glamorous heroine is Helen's complaint in *The gorgious Gallery*. (p. 81) Far from moving the pity of the reader, it is placed in her mouth as total self-condemnation. Douglas Bush calls the poem a sermon, "with a mere prefatory hint of narration," in which a bad woman admits her errors in "lurid language."[30] The title alone, "The reward of

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[29] *The Garland of Good Will*, No. 2. Hereafter cited as *Garland*.

[30] *Mythology and the Renaissance Tradition in English Poetry*, 2nd ed. (1932; rpt. New York: Norton, 1963), p. 52.

Whoredome by the fall of Helen," warns us that here is no poet honestly trying to think the thoughts and feel the emotions of his persona. We are constantly jarred by the transparent clumsiness with which Helen is made to call herself vile and filthy, a trull, a flirt, possessed of an immodest mind, puffed up with pride, and lewd. Her prim little moral is even more unlikely:

> If I had vsde my gifts in vertues lore,
> And modest liud, my prayse had bin the more.

Virtue in a woman is chastity; vice is immodesty and lewd behavior. There seems only one way for a woman to be evil, since beauty is her only capital. It is highly unlikely that *any* woman, much less Helen of Troy, would mouth the party line of the wholly male point of view.

Another miscellany poem is closer to the tradition we have been tracing: the reply of Cressida to Troilus' complaint. As are Jane Shore and Helen of Troy, the personae of this doublet are entrenched complainers. Yet Cressida's is not a sob-sister ballad nor a moral diatribe against women. If Troilus' complaint is conventional and moralistic, Cressida's reply approaches much more closely an attempt at psychology as the poet enters the heart and mind of the woman who had become a byword for unfaithfulness. The poems appeared in the 1580 edition of the *Paradyse of dayntie devises*.[32] They do not keep to the spirit of either Chaucer or Henryson, but instead reflect the popular idea of the unfortunate woman.

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[31] *The Paradyse of dayntie devises*, Nos. 116, 117. Hereafter cited as *Paradyse*.

Troilus' epithets for his lost love are vivid: she is "gadding," "catterwaling," and "coy." He reports that she is called worse things by others: a "common Gill." His complaint is rather cool and impersonal in tone; even her uncle would be more grieved than Troilus is here. The poet's motive seems to be purely didactic, conveying the universal male message to the female:

> But all good women by her shame,
> May learne what Catterwaling is.
> For wandring women, most men say,
> Cannot be good and goe astray.

The poet goes on to emphasize his moral and further domesticates and destroys the drama. It is a warning against flirtation spoken by the preacher, defender of the male prerogative:

> It is not womens exercise,
> To straye or gadde in field or towne;
> Men count them neyther good nor wyse,
> They blot and blemish their renowne.
> They hurt their fame, they please their foe,
> And greeves their friend to see them so.
> (*Paradise*, No. 116)

"A Replye" (*Paradise*, No. 117) is in some ways just as conventionally didactic; for Cressida claims that she was compelled to leave Troy because Troilus did not wive her. Had he pitied her, used "rightfull force" to keep her, guarded well his right, all would have been well. She would have welcomed the male prerogative. She uses the concept of male honor to her advantage in defending herself: he who would "blaze" her "plague" has small courtesy, he has won no honor in feigning that she was the cause of her downfall. Her final barb is that "they that noble minded bee,/ Will rue the case and pittie mee." She readily admits that his morality is sound: "To gadde and runne doth blot the name," yet she was not the cause. We are a long way from Henryson here, into a bourgeois world of narrow morality.

Rewarding as it is to trace the reputations of these famous heroines, this exercise merely establishes how thoroughly a moralized form of Ovid was in vogue. Wilkinson points out that in the 1560's "select transformations from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* were exhibited in confectionary" at dinners.[32] George Turberville translated the *Heroides* in 1567, and henceforth Ovidian stories were spun out with rhetorical and Italianate embroidery, commonly in ballad form. By 1597, with Drayton's *Heroicall Epistles*, Ovid had been thoroughly unmoralized mainly due to the influence of Marlowe's "Hero and Leander" and Shakespeare's "Venus and Adonis." Poets were applying his techniques to contemporary characters and situations, as Chaucer had done before. Complaints of Elizabethan women are as uncourtly as Ovid's or Henryson's, and the reason is the same: their technique came from the great body of formal rhetoric, little changed over the centuries, which tended to fuse oration and poetics. Psychological realism overcomes convention as poets learn how to control choice of persona, audience, purpose, and tone. Sixteenth-century poets had been schooled in an art that Ovid was not only a master of, but for which he was an important model. Early in the English Renaissance, Erasmus had recommended the *Heroides* as an aid in the exercise of letter-writing and all of his works as major masterpieces of rhetoric for use in schools.[33] The national system of education for which the humanists were responsible formed these Tudor poets. There is a direct and clear connection between the

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[32]Wilkinson, p. 201.

[33]Ibid., p. 200.

rhetoric books and the complaints of women in love. J.W.H. Atkins even claims that the complaint genre is a literary type new to the middle ages, evolving from Geoffroi de Vinsauf's popular rhetorical manual. Here the classical apostrophe is called "exclamatio," an interpolation in a narrative directed to some object and meant to heighten the emotional effect of the story by a dramatic show of feeling. Atkins theorizes that from this formal pause in a narrative, it soon was employed in isolation, giving rise to a "new" literary type: the complaint.[34] While it is true that Chaucer interpolates love epistles in *Troilus*, and Henryson allows Cresseid's testament to stop the narrative, in fact her complaint is the major excuse for the narrative and Chaucer buries many well-established lyric forms in his poems. A.K. Moore points out that the *complainte* is a well established French form in the middle ages, and certainly Chaucer's own *Booke of the Dutchess* is an English version of the male complaint.[35] It is difficult to weigh the relative influence of rhetoric books and poetic tradition in trying to account for the phenomenon of the woman's complaint, but it is safe to say that Tudor poets read both the *Heroides* and the rhetoric books.

Though it seems far from poetry, the rhetorical notion of persuasive argument seems to be behind the separation of poet and

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[34]J.W.H. Atkins, *English Literary Criticism: The Medieval Phase* (London: Methuen, 1952), p. 105.

[35]Arthur K. Moore, *The Secular Lyric in Middle English* (1951; rpt. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1970), p. 40.

persona. Michael Murrin argues that the new Tudor poetry was the end result of rhetorical experimentation, and that this poetry's only difference from oration is its form; he calls it rational discourse, "rhymed reason."[36] John Shawcross describes the use of rhetoric by Gascoigne and Wyatt, Daniel, Drummond, and Greville as a forensic pose. Needing new forms, these poets adopted a rhetorical stance in which they took control of the material; they chose point of view, "strategy," techniques and devices; they manipulated theme and form; they became makers. And as their craft improved, it became artful enough to hide its art. Whatever a complaint by a woman persona is, Shawcross claims that it is not "spontaneous, highly emotive, directly candid personal experience." It is an object made by an artful advocate.[37] The forensic pose is advocacy: defending or accusing someone's course of action or thought. It is presenting a case to be judged; its aim is to get the auditor to agree. The poets who wrote the *Mirror for Magistrates* thought of themselves as lawyers, advocates of their poems' personae. The first editor, William Baldwin, explains to the reader of the 1559 edition that he, as interlocutor, is the judge, as Boccaccio (and presumably Lydgate) had been before, and the poets are the advocates:

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[36] *The Veil of Allegory* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1969), p. 176.

[37] John T. Shawcross, "The Poet as Orator: One Phase of His Judicial Pose," in *The Rhetoric of Renaissance Poetry from Wyatt to Milton*, ed. Thomas O. Sloan and Raymond B. Waddington (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1974), p. 5.

> To make therfore a state mete for the matter, they al agreed that I shoulde vsurpe Bochas rowme, and the wretched princes complayne vnto me: and tooke vpon themselues, euery man for his parte to be sundrye personages, and in theyr behalfes to bewayle vnto mee theyr greuous chaunces, heuy destinies, and wofull misfortunes.[38]

In Thomas Wilson's *Arte of Rhetorique*, Tudor poets are given detailed directions for this advocacy, the "exhortation of pity." The underlying rhetorical principle is that we persuade best by appealing to the emotions. First Wilson establishes the aptness and high morality of "mouing pittie, and stirring men to shewe mercie": "Likewise, we may exhorte men to take pitie of the fatherlesse, the widowe, and the oppressed innocent, if we set before their eyes, the lamentable afflictions, and tyrannous wrongs, and the miserable calamities, which these poore wretches doe sustaine."[39] Whether the woman persona asks for her lover's pity or that of her audience, we can see where the notion of direct appeal comes from. It is the duty of the jury or audience to feel pity because "Christes goodnesse towardes man [stirs] vs to love our neighbours most intierly."[40] Having established that the job of the poet/orator is to move affection, Wilson tells him how to affect pity: "the beautie of amplifying, standeth most in apt mouing of affections." The poet is encouraged thoroughly to describe and analyze the sad plight of his subject.

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[38] *Mirror for Magistrates*, p. 69.

[39] Thomas Wilson, *Wilson's Arte of Rhetorique (1560)*, ed. G.H. Mair (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1909), p. 65.

[40] Ibid., pp. 131-132.

And affections, passions, are defined as "a stirring or forsing of the minde, either to desire, or els to detest and loth any thing, more vehemently then by nature we are commonly wont to doe." If we are callous about the hard lot of a mere woman, rhetoric will change our feelings. Moreover, as human beings and Christians, "we reioyce, we be sorie, or wee pittie an other mans happe."[41] Again, we must be reminded of the humanity we share with women. In a manner reminding us that *suasio* originated as oratory in a court of law, Wilson adds detail to Quintilian's directions about the dramatic nature of this rhetorical mode:

> In mouing affections, and stirring the Iudges to be greeued, the waight of the matter must be set forth, as though they sawe it plaine before their eyes, the report must be such, and the offence made so hainous, that the like hath not bene seen heretofore, and all the circumstaunce must thus be heaped together: The naughtiness of his nature that did the deede, the cruell ordering, the wicked dealing, the malicious handling, the tyme, the place, the manner of his doing, and the wickednesse of his will to haue done more. The man that sustained the wrong, how little he deserued, how well hee was esteemed among his neighbours, how small cause he gave him, how great lack men haue of him. Now, if this not be reformed, no good man shall liue saufe, the wicked will ouerflow all the world. . . .[42]

Wilson amplifies his instructions to show not how to make a given set of facts more pitiful, but how to choose the facts, how to invent a person and a situation which will bring an audience to tears. The crime should be great: murder rather than a beating. The perpetrator should be, not a ruffian, but a gentleman, to grieve us the more.

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[41] Wilson, p. 131.

[42] Ibid., pp. 131-132.

The crime should not be committed against a "sturdie fellow," but a helpless person, a woman heading the list. It should be done, not "chauncemedly," but "vpon a prepensed minde, and wilfully." Even the time, a holy day or at night rather than noon, makes a difference. The manner is important: the cowardly, secret act is most despised.[43] The many gentlemen addressed in complaints who have abandoned their mistresses or wives are obviously drawn from this model. One miscellany poem is the complaint of a woman who has been raped and then murdered "for cloking of his crime." It seems to have been conceived to move pity in exactly the ways Wilson suggests:

> A cruell Tiger all with teeth bebled,
> A bloody tirantes hand in eche degre,
> A lecher that by wretched lust was led,
> (Alas) deflowred my virginitee.
> And not contented with this villanie,
> Nor with thoutragious terrour of the dede,
> With bloody thirst of greater crueltie:
> Fearing his haynous gilt should be bewrayed,
> By crying death and vengeance openly,
> His violent hand forthwith alas he layed
> Vpon my guiltles sely childe and me,
> And like the wretch whom no horrour dismayde,
> Drownde in the sinke of depe iniquitie:
> Misusing me the mother for a time,
> Hath slaine vs both for cloking of his crime.
> (Tottel, No. 299)

Wilson has not yet suggested that the victim speak for him/herself. The advocate must "bring the same affections in [his] own harte, the which we would the Iudges should beare. . . ." He must "vtter such passions outwardly, and from his heart fetch his complaints in such sorte, that the matter may appear . . . greeuous . . . and . . .

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[43]Wilson, p. 132.

hainous." Wilson embroiders this instruction with an analogy to fire: the orator, on fire, will light the others, and "a fierie stomacke causeth euermore a fierie tongue." He must honestly hate vice, and yet deliberately feign, for he is only an advocate: " a weeping eye causeth much moisture, and prouoketh teares." The last word on this rhetorical strategy, a plea for brevity, is likewise sound drama: "though a vehement talke may mooue teares, yet no arte can long holde them." Far from advising a spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings, Wilson declares that he has "taught men to be sorie."[44]

In all of these directions we have advice for the lawyer, orating in court to get redress of his client's grievances. But later Wilson says that a more subtle device, *etheopoeia*, is the figure most effective in setting the matter "before the eyes of men." *Etheopoeia* is the figure wherein "wee imagine a talke, for some one to speake, and according to his person, we frame the oration."[45] Other rhetoric books treat this figure in more detail. William Webbe, in *A Discourse of English Poetrie* (1586), borrows Horace's instructions for handling a persona: "Every person must be fitted accordingly, and the speech well ordered: wherein are to be considered the dignity, age, sex, fortune, condition, place, Country, etc. of eche person." Furthermore, many personae are already fitted out with stereotyped characteristics: "Every one must observe . . . *convenientiam*, fitnesse as it is meete and agreeable every where a man to be stoute, a woman

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[44]Ibid., pp. 133-34.

[45]Ibid., p. 179.

fearefull, a seruant crafty, a young man gentle."[46]

Abraham Fraunce, in *The Arcadian Rhetorike* (1588), tells us that

> Prosopopoia is a fayning of any person, when in our speach we represent the person of anie, and make it speake as though he were there present: an excellent figure, much vsed of Poets, where in wee must diligentlie take heede, that the person thus represented have a speach fit and convenient for his estate and nature.[47]

Richard Rainolde gives the most detailed definition of the art of creating a persona. He goes back to what "Quintilianus saieth": that *Ethopoeia* is imitation, called *mimesis* by the Greeks. In such a method, "speache is feigned to be given" by someone not the poet. He makes distinctions among three sorts:

> The firste [is] a imitacion passiue, whiche expresseth the affection, to whom it perteineth: whiche altogether expresseth the mocion of the mynde, as what patheticall and dolefull oracion, Hecuba the quene made, the citee of Troie destroyed, her housbande, her children slain.[48]

This sort would be expression of feeling, with no exposition, inviting psychological realism and analysis of the persona's feeling. The second is called "a morall imitacion, the whiche doeth set forthe

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[46]William Webbe, "A Discourse of English Poetrie" (1586), in *Elizabethan Critical Essays*, ed. G. Gregory Smith (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1904), I, 299.

[47]Abraham Fraunce, *The Arcadian Rhetorike (1588)*, ed. Ethel Seaton, Luttrell Society Reprints, No. 9 (Oxford: B. Blackwell, 1950), p. 85.

[48]Richard Rainolde, *The Foundacion of Rhetorike (1563)*, The English Experience, No. 91 (New York: Da Capo Press, 1969), n.p.

onely, the maners of any one." If the persona merely recites his actions, the result would be like Helen's incongruous sermon, which simply lists her sins. But the third "setteth forthe, bothe the maners and the affection." When we are told not only the actions, but also the feelings and motivations of the speaker, we are truly asked to enter his/her point of view, as the poet had to in order to make his poem.

We have by 1589 a statement in George Puttenham's *The Arte of English Poesie* which gives instructions to the love poet a variance with Sidney's "look in thy heart and write":

> And because loue is of all other human affections the most puissant and passionate, and most generall to all sortes and ages of men and women, so as whether it be the yong or old, or wise or lowly, or high estate or low, none ever could truly bragge of any exception in that case: it requireth a firme Poesie variable, inconstant, affected, curious, and most witty of any others, whereof the ioyes were to be uttered in one sorte, the sorrowes in an other, and, by the many formes of Poesie, the many moodes and panges of louers throughly to be discouered; the poore soules sometimes praying, beseeching, sometime honouring, avancing, praising, an other while railing, reuiling, and cursing, the sorrowing, weeping, lamenting, and in the ende laughing, reioysing, and solacing the beloved again, with a thousand delicate deuices, odes, songs, elegies, ballads, sonets, and other ditties, mooving one way and another to great compassion.[49]

When Puttenham discusses "forms of lamentations," his approach is not the poet as advocate for the aggrieved party nor the poet as imitator of the feelings of a victim. He speaks of the poet as physician, "not

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[49]George Puttenham, "The Arte of English Poesie" (1589), *Elizabethan Critical Essays*, II, 46-47.

onely by applying a medicine to the ordinary sicknes of mankind, but by making the very greef itself (in part) cure of the disease."[50] Thus the complainer is given a purpose--she is trying to ease her feelings by uttering them. Puttenham concentrates on the effects the complaint will have on the audience, and stresses the moral responsibility poets exercise. He insists that, although there are many causes of sorrow, some, such as loss of reputation, are not worthy to be imitated in poetry, since they are the victim's own fault and can be amended by his own effort. However, slander is often aimed at innocent women. There are many miscellany poems in which a man speaks in defense of a defamed woman, and one in which she speaks for herself. *A Handefull of pleasant delites* offer "The lamentation of a woman being wrongfully defamed."[51] There is only one way to slander a woman because she has only one kind of honor to lose: her chastity. And her detractors are in every case "spiteful men." The woman persona of the *Handefull* poem addresses herself to an audience of other defamed women:

> You ladies falsly deemd,
> of anie fault or crime:
> Command your pensiue harts to help
> this dolefull tune of mine:
>
> For spiteful men there are,
> that faults would fain espie:
> Alas, what heart would heare their talke,
> but willingly would die.

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[50] Puttenham, p. 49.

[51] *A Handefull of pleasant delites*, p. 56.

This is not a very vigorous defense. The persona seems unwilling to assert her innocence outright:

> I waile oft times in woe,
> and curse mine houre of birth,
> Such slanderous pangs to me oppresse,
> when others ioy in mirth:
> Be like it was ordaind to be my destinie.
> Alas what heart would heare their talk,
> but willingly would die.

Her passivity is apparently thought appropriate to a woman. What defense she offers is little more than a catalogue of good women who, like herself, have "guiltlesse been accusde"

> For verie spite, although that they,
> their bodies never abusde.

Susanna, of course, is the first example. Another is the Duchess of Savoy, accused by a man whom she refused her love. The persona offers an accurate analysis of the motivation of these men, but her willingness to be a victim is nothing short of masochism:

> Such false dissembling men,
> stoong with *Alectos* dart:
> Must needs have place to spit their spite,
> vpon some guiltlesse hart:
> Therefore, I must be pleasde,
> that they triumph on me,
> Alas what heart would heare their talk,
> but willingly would die.

The persona prays that God will strike down her detractor as he did these other slanderers, but meekly allows for the alternative that their minds will be amended:

> Therefore, Lord, I thee pray,
> the like death downe to send,
> Vpon these false suspected men,
> or else their minds t'amend:
> As thou hast done tofore,
> vnto these persons three.
> Alas what heart would heare their talk,
> but willingly would die.

Puttenham recommends that other causes of sorrow, which the victim has not brought on himself, can well be cured by "acting them out," as, death, a "just sorrow," is relieved by elegaic lament. Love, surprisingly, is one of the few just causes for sorrow, since it is apparently an involuntary emotion; such laments may include "the trauails and torments of loue forlorne or ill bestowed, either by disgrace, deniall, delay, and twenty other wayes, that well experienced louers could recit." That "noble Poets sought by their arte to remove or appease" the sorrows of love is to be applauded, since

> there is no frailtie in flesh and bloud so excusable as it, no comfort or discomfort greater than the good and bad successe thereof, nothing more naturall to man, nothing of more force to vanquish his will and to inuegle his judgment. . . .[52]

Indeed, as we hear the complaints of these women we may agree that no discomfort is greater, that nothing can take away their will so effectively as love. For many, the complaint is a way of making the utterance of grief its cure. These women have lost their lovers because they thought of themselves as mistresses. Their expression of grief often moves them to take the position of the *femme d'esprit* when they have thoroughly analyzed their feelings. But not many of these poems are successful *mimesis*. Let us first look at complaints in which the poet has simply transferred the stereotypes of the courtl lover's complaint to the mouth of a woman.

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[52]Puttenham, pp. 49-50.

A poem in *The Paradyse of dayntie devises* (No. 26) is a catalogue of commonplaces. The juxtaposition of opposites so popular with the Petrarchan lover is simply put into the mouth of the woman in love. The persona sings of pleasure and pain, joy and care, freedom and imprisonment. Other conventions are merely transferred to her. Her lover is in possession of her heart, as so many men complain, and he disdains her, which is usually the role of the mistress. She is his servant and bondsman, just as the lover claims to be in his own complaint. Her audience is not even designated as women but as "youth," and her purpose is to warn all young people what grief love may bring if one loves in vain. If pronouns were changed, if the persona were addressing a mistress, the poem would make perfect sense as the complaint of a male lover. It is perhaps unusual that a man would be so much on the defensive, for the persona does say that "neuer once he could me blame, except from louing him too much." And she has a bit more pride than many Petrarchan lovers, for she is finished with the relationship: "And lest he glorie at my paine, I wyl attempt to cloke my woe." But this is not an earnest attempt at the kind of mimesis taught by Ovid and the rhetoric books:

> If pleasures be in painefulnesse? in pleasure dooth my body rest,
> If ioyes accorde with carefulnesse? a ioyfull hart is in my brest:
> If prison strong be libertie? in libertie long haue I been,
> If ioyes accord with miserie? who can compare a lyfe to myne.
> Who can vnbind that is sore bound? who can make free that is sore thrall
> Or how can any meanes be found? to comfort such a wretch withall?

None can, but he hath my hart, conuert my paines
to comfort then,
Yet since his seruant I became, most like a bondsman
haue I beene:
Since first in bondage I became, my woorde and deede
was euer such,
That neuer once he could me blame, except from
louing him too much.
Which I can iudge no iust offence, nor cause that
I deserud disdayne,
Except he meane through false pretence, through
forged loue to make a traine
Nay nay alas, my fained thoughts my frended and my
fained ruth
My pleasures past my present plaints, shew wel I
meane but to much truth:
But since I can not him attaine, against my
wil I let him goe,
And lest he glorie at my paine, I wyl attempt
to cloke my woe.
Youth, learne by me, but doo not proue, for I
haue proued to my paine,
What greeuous greefes do grow by loue, and what it
is to loue in vaine.

The mistress who complains in *A Handefull of pleasant delites* sings a tetrameter ballad "To the tune of, Raging loue." (p. 50) The poet has learned a little from the rhetoric books; the persona's purpose is to express her grief and gain the sympathy of an audience of women:

Though wisdom wold I should refrain,
My heaped cares here to unfold:
Good Ladies yet my inward paine,
So pricketh me I haue no holde:
But that I must my griefe bewray,
Bedewed in teares with doleful tunes,
That you may heare, and after say,
Loe, this is she whom love consumes.

But she does not cure her pain by expressing it. She almost manages to get angry, which might have affected a cure, but can only say "alas":

My grief doth grow by my desire.
To fancie him that stormes my woe:
He naught regards my flaming fire,
Alas why doth he serue me so?
Whose fained teares I did beleeue,
And wept to heare his wailing voice,
But now, alas, too soon I preeue,
Al men are false, there is no choice.

She then uses an argument peculiarly feminine. She asks for justice, reward for her submissive love. The woman who thinks of herself as a mistress is convinced that her abject worship will inspire the same in her beloved. Yet, as we shall see again and again, it never does:

Had euer woman such reward,
At anie time for her goodwill?
Had euer woman hap so hard,
So cruelly for loue to spill?
What paps (alas) did giue him food,
That thus vnkindly workes my wo?
What beast is of so cruell moode,
to hate the hart that loues him so?

We are then given a description of her distraught state, identical to that of the Petrarchan lover. She mourns as the turtledove, her sleep is unsound, and she weeps in streams. That love can be a madness in mistresses is illustrated by this mistress' favorite relief:

And yet, full oft it dooth me good,
To haunt the place where he hath beene,
To kisse the ground whereon he stoode,
When he (alas) my loue did win.
To kisse the Bed whereon we laye
Now may I thinke vpon my paine,
O blisful place full oft I say:
Render to me my loue againe. . . .

In describing her lover's disdain and the pleasure he takes in her pain, the persona is taking over the usual male stereotype:

He loues to see my watered eyes,
and laughes to see how I do pine. . . .

She ends with another appeal to her audience of "comly Dams," warning them to beware the fickleness of men. To the degree that she is not simply a substitute for the male point of view, she is a mistress "whom loue consumes."

A poet represented in *The gorgious Gallery* has learned the Ovidian trick of using a letter to provide a complaint with a purpose. The lady pens an epistle directed to her lover, "wherin shee most earnestly chargeth him with Ingratitude."[53] The poem has an odd mixture of tones because the rhetoric is in some places that of the conventional male complaint but sometimes startlingly appropriate to the speaker, and, indeed, "earnest." The poet does realize that when he puts the pen in the hand of a forsaken mistress only some of the male formulae will work. He can have her begin with a standard denunciation:

> O wretched wight whom hensfoorth may I trust
> All men both falce and fell I will them painte,
> If thou (vnkinde) bee cruell and vniust
> Whom I alwayes so faythfull held and quainte. . . .

He must modify another courtly formula, the warning to the woman that her beauty is marred by her coldness, and must change the blazon from fair cheeks and bright eyes to what is attractive about a man:

> Wherfore (vnkinde) since that on liue
> A worthier wight of prowes ne beauty,
> Ne that by much to thee that doth ariue,
> In cumly porte ne genorositie.

But then the lady begins analyzing her lover's motives, a thing unheard of in a courtly poem. It occurs to her that he is afraid that "It may

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[53] *The gorgious Gallery of gallant Inventions*, p. 53.

bee sayd thou has serbillitie." So she assures him that those who mock him can be answered from higher moral ground:

> Then say that who of fayth is holden stable:
> There may to him none els bee comparable.

The lover himself has written that no virtues or beauty matter without fidelity. She points out the irony in his accusation of her falseness when in fact she is thoroughly besotted:

> For write ye not that vertues haue no grace
> Wheras this trust and stablenesse doth want,
> As other things, though much of cumly face:
> Cannot be seene, where gladsome light is skant.
> A mayd to false for thee, an easie case,
> Whose Idol, Lord and God thou werst most puisant
> Whom with thy wordes it easly had bin donne,
> To make beleue both colde and darke the sonne.

This hyperbole is common to courtly lovers, but rash indeed in the mouth of a woman. She has abandoned her role as the object of worship and is his thrall, ironically guaranteeing that their former relationship cannot be resumed. She makes the plea for justice which is the trademark of a mistress:

> Cruell, what offence hast thou for to bewayle,
> The killing of thy loue if thou not repent?
> If yee accompte so light of fayth to fayle:
> What other sinne can make thy harte lament?
> How treate you foes, if mee ye doo assayle?
> That loues thee so, with such cruell torment:
> The heavens iustles, I will say to bee:
> In case they shew the iust revenge of mee.

In stanza five she calls his "monstrous vice" ingratitude, and reminds him that this is what caused the fall of Lucifer:

> If of offences all, that monstrous vice
> Ingratitude, do most a man offend,
> And if for that, an Angell of great price,
> Was forced to Hell, from heauen to dissend:
> If great offence, great chastisement entice
> When to reforme, the hart doth not him bend,
> Take heed sharp skourge that God on thee not send
> Thou art to mee vnkinde, and doost not mend.

The poet has muddled the argument, for this new charge implies that the lover, in ceasing to worship his mistress, is a rebel against her god-like prerogative when in fact she has abandoned that prerogative by revealing her true feelings to him. Stanza six adopts without change the courtly lover's charge that the lady is a thief. In a tone suddenly witty, she accuses him of withholding her heart, retaining goods he no longer has a claim upon:

> If these also, besides some other spot
> I haue (vnkinde) wherof thee to accuse,
> That thou my hart with holdst, I meane it not,
> I speake of thee that madest thee myne by lot,
> And robbest mee since, against reason which I must
> Restore (vnkinde) for well thou wottest it playne,
> They shalbe damned that others goods retaine.

The mistress ends the complaint with the unconvincing threat that she will die in his disgrace, and again inverts the usual relationship in the last couplet:

> My death, geuen then, when I stoode in thy grace,
> No wight had dyed in halfe so happy a case.

This is an image of the woman as worshipper and the man as god-like. To die in God's grace is to have all bliss; to die without it is damnation. This ingenious hyperbole might have worked if the poet's rhetorical pose were consistent, but as we have seen, the poet sometimes inverts the positions of courtly lover and mistress and sometimes retains their conventional roles. In both cases the mistress is playing a role, and perhaps for this reason the letter fails in its several objects: to gain the lover's pity and the reader's.

There is more designed to move our pity in a complaint appearing in *Howell's Devises*, addressed by a mistress "to her louer, that made

a conquest of her, and fled, leauing her with childe."[54] The situation is contrived to be as pathetic and persuasive as the style books enjoin a poet to be; and the pathos is increased, as we shall see, by the lover's reply. The persona begins, not by asking the sympathy of her audience, but by seeking an audience to whom a disgraced woman can "commit my secret teares":

My heart the Mountaynes sight,
    and hollow *Eecho* feares.
I doubt the *Dryades*,
    amids the Forrest chase,
And thinking on the Seas,
    I dread the Marmayds grace.

What shall I trust the Skyes?
    then me the windes bewray:
Poore soule whom Iove denyes,
    eche caytife doth betray.

But her heavy heart seeks the relief of telling her grief:

Ha heavy hart, thy meede,
    O tell, tell out thy minde:

She will "ponder" aloud the villainy of her lover to an audience which will decide the blame, and so she uses Wilson's methods:

Ponder his fylthie deede,
    that left his shame behinde.

And lyke a Cowarde fledde,
    fearing the chylde vnborne:
Whose mother hee should wedde,
    that hath the Babe forsworne.

Was euer Mayde so madde,
    that might her fayth forgo?
Was euer boy so badde,
    to vse a mayden so?

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[54] *Howell's Devises*, pp. 64-66.

His teares did me beguyle,
    and cleane opprest my powre,
As doth the Crocodile,
    in seeking to deuoure.

For several stanzas she directly addresses the cowardly lover, who has fled to wicked Italy:

What hath thy Country done,
    or natiue soyle anoyde:
To force thee it to shonne,
    wherein thy Louer ioyed.

No forrein Hauen can hide,
    ne colour thine intent:
If lyfe in Babe abide,
    that doth thy fault present.

And when thy fame hath worne,
    within th' *Italian* coste:
Thou shalt be laught to scorne,
    of them that loude thee moste.

She will have revenge, and expects the gods to aid her:

The Gods will haue a share,
    in gyuing him his hier:
That faythlesse falsly sware,
    and prooude himselfe a lier.

Unlike the courtly lover who threatens unconvincingly to die of a broken heart, this woman will act in a passion of rage:

And I thy mortall foe,
    by fylthie lust beguylde:
To wreake me of my woe,
    will slay thy silly childe.

In stead of quiet graue,
    wherein his corse should rest:
Thy Impe his hearse shall haue,
    in bowels of a beast.

My daintie tamed wombe,
    that to thy share befell:
Shal finde no doubt a tombe,
    amids the mayds in hell.

Consistent with all the other miscellany complaints, the child is male and is his rather than hers or theirs. And in this case he partakes of his father's fiendish nature.

So we do not mistake his hypocrisy, the lover's reply is labelled, "Being burdened to fayne his good will, he aunswereth thus." And the answer is a patently ridiculous Petrarchan complaint, with all of the usual ingredients:

> If mine thy little care,
> if thine my restlesse state,
> If thine the brunts is brest I beare,
> of mine to loue or hate.
> Then trie thou shouldst to true,
> that falsshood naught did frame:
> Though now my smarts thou list not rue,
> but makes my griefe thy game.
> But out alas I die,
> this change is nothing so:
> For I in languishe still doe lye,
> and fawne on thee my foe.
> Who smiles to see my smarte,
> and laughes when I doe weepe:
> Regarding naught my faythfull harte,
> yet from me dost it keepe.
> Thus harte to faine vnskilde,
> in being whole is broke:
> In health is hurte, aliue is kilde,
> by dinte of dolors stroke.
> And being mine, is stolne,
> and led by lyking lust:
> Doth leave the waye of certaine stay,
> and leane to tickle trust.
> Thou sayst I doe not loue,
> would God thou didst not lye:
> Such fond affects may nothing moue,
> such one thou sayst as I.
> The Sages sure were wise,
> yet forced now and then:
> By flashing flames of *Cupids* fyre,
> to shewe themselues like men.
>
> (*Howell's Devices*, p. 67)

In face of the facts, that she is carrying his child and that he is gone, it is strange to hear how he languishes and fawns, infuriating to hear that his "health is hurte."

Another woman persona comments more directly on Petrarchan wooing in her complaint. Included in *The gorgious Gallery*, it displays how "the Lady beloved exclaymeth of the great untruth of her lover." (p. 28) She reflects on the process of a typical courtship:

> Would god I had neuer seen,
> the teares of thy false eyne
> Or els my eares ful deaf had bin
> That herd those words of thine
>
> Then should I not haue knowne
> Nor chosen to my part:
> So many euils in one
> To kill my poore true hart.
>
> As now in thee I finde,
> Who bidst mee from thee go:
> As false and full unkinde,
> Alas why doost thou so?

She knows too late that the courtly lover, shamelessly weeping, his golden tongue spouting persuasive rhetoric, is a sham. Like the others, this woman appeals to the code for justice:

> Was neuer man so false of othe,
> To none as thou to mee
> Was neuer woman of more troth
> Then I haue ben to thee.
>
> And thou to leaue mee so,
> And canst no iust cause tell:
> But wilt thou spill with wo,
> The hart that loves thee wel.

She has played the role perfectly, being weak, helpless, and simple-minded, and chastizes him for playing the one assigned to him too well:

Pardy, it is but little praise,
To thee that art a man:
To finde so many crafty wayes,
To fraude a poore woman.

She uses the imagery of animals obedient to their master to describe her submissive role. Here she is a hawk, subject to the whims of her keeper:

To lure mee to thy fist,
To ease thy feigned payne:
And euer when thou list,
To cast mee of agayne.

If there is any doubt that the Elizabethan woman saw herself as chattel once she yielded to a man, this comparison to a hound and a horse must lay it to rest:

The wretched hound that spendes
And serueth after kinde:
The Horse that tredeth the beaten ways
As nature doth him binde

In age yet findes releefe,
Of them that did him wo:
Who in their great mischeefe,
Disdayne not them to know.

Thus they for wo and smart,
Had ease vnto their paine:
But I for my true hart,
Get nought but greefe agayne.

Without pause, however, the next stanza indulges in Petrarchan clichés:

The weary and long night
doth make mee dreame of thee,
And still me thinks with sight,
I see thee here with mee.

And then with open armes,
I strayne my pillow softe:
And as I close mine armes,
mee thinkes I kisse thee ofte.

But when at last I wake
And finde mee mockte with dremes
Alas, with moone I make
    My teares run down like streames.

These tears dissolve in anger which prevails for two stanzas:

All they that here this same,
    Wyll spit at thy false deede:
And bid, fie on thy cursed name,
    And on thy false seede.

That shewest so to the eye,
    And bearest so false an hew:
And makest all women cry,
    Lo, how ye men be vntrew?

But the last stanza's tone is most astonishing of all:

But yet to excuse thee now,
    To them that would thee spot:
Ile say, it was not thou,
    It was mine owne poore lot.

The shift of tone proves how tentative the poet feels about the art of *mimesis*. The poem is like a beginning exercise in rhetoric, the poet piecing together all the appeals and arguments that come to mind on the subject of the jilted lady, without regard for psychological consistency. He forgets that a real human being is supposed to be speaking. Never violating the notion of decorum, he nonetheless fails to create a speaker in whose reality we can believe.

When a poet of Surrey's stature decides to do an exercise in *ethopoeia*, when he sets himself the rhetorical problem of imagining how a woman might feel and what she might say while waiting for her lover's return, we see that in spite of his use of the usual courtly (and male) conventions, we are far closer to a believable woman persona. In one of his poems, "Complaint of the absence of her louer being vpon the sea," (Tottel, No. 17) the lady appeals to an audience of women to satisfy decorum:

O Happy dames, that may embrace
The frute of your delight,
Helpe to bewaile the wofull case,
And eke the heavy plight
Of me, that wonted to reioyce
The fortune of my pleasant choyce:
Good Ladies, help to fill my moorning voyce.

The complaint is not complicated by any lack of sympathy between the lovers; she is grieving in his absence but knows he will return. The persona simply uses all the usual commonplaces and conceits of the courtly convention. She imagines his point of view: his ship's freight is his memory of her, his gales are sighs, she is his sweet port:

In ship, freight with rememberance
Of thoughts, and pleasures past,
He sailes that hath in gouernance
My life, while it wil last:
With scalding sighes, for lack of gale,
Furdering his hope, that is his sail
Toward me, the swete port of his auail.

Waiting for him, she dreams of his eyes, that neo-platonic "food" of lovers, but she is far more passionate than a coy mistress because his "absent flame" makes her burn:

Alas, how oft in dreames I se
Those eyes, that were my food,
Which somtime so delited me,
That yet they do me good.
Wherwith I wake with his returne,
Whose absent flame did make me burne.
But when I find the lack, Lord how I mourne!

The picture presented by the next stanza is a wonderfully realized little drama. We see and overhear a real woman as she stands at her window looking out to sea:

When other louers in armes acrosse,
Reioyce their chiefe delight:
Drowned in teares to mourne my losse,
I stand the bitter night,
In my window, where I may see,
Before the windes how the cloudes flee.
Lo, what a mariner loue hath made me.

When there is a storm, she fears for the safety of her "swete fo," who in love's battle has won "the spoyle of my hart":

And in grene waues when the salt flood
Doth rise, by rage of winde:
A thousand fansies in that mood
Assayle my restlesse mind.
Alas, now drencheth my swete fo,
That with the spoyle of my hart did go,
And left me but (alas) why did he so?

The anxiety of the one who must wait rather than act is the genuine voice of a woman:

And when the seas waxe calme againe,
To chase fro me annoye.
My doutfull hope doth cause me plaine:
So dreade cuts of my ioye.
Thus is my wealth mingled with wo,
And of ech thought a dout doth growe,
Now he comes, will he come? alas, no no.

Though she suffers in some of the same ways as the courtly lover, she turns to her own point of view conventional conceits like the tears and the martial imagery, creating a consistent and believable tone.

Surrey has another poem in Tottel (No. 19), in fourteeners this time, with the same superscription. In this version (and the several versions convince us that this was probably a standard school exercise), the invocation helps to define the persona's situation, for the audience is more carefully selected.

Good Ladies, ye that haue your pleasures in exile,
Step in your foote, come take a place, and moorne
with me a while
And such as by their lordes do set but little price,
Let them sit still: it skilles them not what
chance come on the dice.
But ye whom loue hath bound by ordre of desire
To loue your lords, whose good desertes none other
would require:
Come ye yet ones again, and set your foote by mine,
Whose wofull plight and sorrowes great no tong may
wel define.

But the poem is far too literal; it is largely a flat description of her hopes and fears, her dreams and doubts:

My loue and lord, alas, in whom consistes my wealth,
Hath fortune sent to passe the seas in hazarde of
his health.
Whome I was wont tembrace with well contended minde
Is now amidde the foming floods at pleasure of the winde.
Where God well him preserue, and sone him home me send.
Without which hope, my life (alas) wer shortly at an end.
Whose absence yet, although my hope doth tell me plaine,
With short returne he comes anon, yet ceasith not
my payne.
The fearfull dreames I have, oft times do greue me so:
That when I wake, I lye in doute, where they be true,
or no.
Sometime the roring seas (me semes) do grow so hye:
That my dere Lord (ay me alas) me thinkes I se him die.

But then there is a curious little drama: she is "playeng" that he has returned and she has gone to meet him with "his faire little sonne." Here is the script:

And with a kisse, me think, I say: welcome my lord,
my knight:
Welcome my swete, alas, the stay of my welfare.
Thy presence bringeth forth a truce atwixt me,
and my care.
Then liuely doth he loke, and salueth me againe,
And saith: my dere, how is it now, that you haue
all thys paine?

This query brings forth her tears, and she realizes she has only been dreaming. We need no other evidence of the extent to which the poet

is consciously using rhetoric. Here Surrey has set up his *ethopoeia* and within the mind of his feigned persona has further projected an imaginary dialogue.

Tottel includes another such set piece among poems by uncertain authors (No. 190). It is superscribed, "The ladye praieth the returne of her louer abidyng on the seas." These uninspired fourteeners are addressed to the lover directly, though since this is not an epistle it is hard to understand how he will hear the complaint:

> Shall I thus euer long, and be no whit the neare,
> And shal I styll complayn to thee, the which me
> will not here?
> Alas say nay, say nay, and be no more so dome,
> But open thou thy manly mouth, and say that thou
> wilt come.

She fears, on the one hand, his death, and, on the other, that he will "slip [his] trouth" as a hound slips his leash and not come at all. Considering how unsure of his love she is, her fantasy of his return is pitiful:

> And then I shall lift vp to thee my little hande,
> And thou shalt thinke thine hert in ease, in helth
> to se me stand.

The poet slips out of character imagining that the lover, newly returned from the dangers and perils of the high seas, would be overcome with relief that *she* is well. The plea ends with the unconvincing threat of suicide if he does not return:

> To please bothe thy false hart, and rid my self from wo,
> That rather had to dye in trouth then liue forsaken so.

This is an appeal that is totally devoid of coyness or pride, yet its frankness fails to make it good *mimesis*. We do learn something of the mistress' helpless, abject position. The only thing she can do,

besides weep and dream, is to offer him her dependent "little" self if he can and chooses to return.

There is another common convention taken over by women personae: the pastoral complaint. One poor attempt at this and one wonderful lyric should show the range of achievement. A "pastoral dittie" in *Englands Helicon* (No. 45) is at once too artful and too clumsy to be effective. The first stanza is the frame, in which a narrator tells us that a grieving nymph under an ash tree is tuning her lute, preparing to sing her woe to another nymph. The frame and the preparation take away the dramatic immediacy gained by lyrics without any intrusion, as does the appeal to an obviously imaginary audience:

> A Carefull Nimph, with carelesse greefe opprest,
> vnder the shaddow of an Ashen tree:
> With Lute in hand did paint out her vnrest,
> vnto a Nimph that bare her companie.
> No sooner had she tuned euery string:
> But sob'd and sigh'd, and thus began to sing.
>
> Ladies and Nimphs, come listen to my plaint,
> on whom the cheerefull Sunne did neuer rise:
> If pitties stroakes your tender breasts may taint,
> come learne of me to wet your wanton eyes.
> For Loue in vaine the name of pleasure beares:
> His sweet delights are turned into feares.

Then she catalogues the griefs of a courtly lover, not a shepherdess:

> The trustlesse shewes, the frights, the feeble ioyes,
> the freezing doubts, the guilefull promises:
> The feigned lookes, the shifts, the subtill toyes,
> the brittle hope, the stedfast heauines.
> The wished warre in such vncertaine peace:
> These with my woe, my woes with these increase.

She accuses Cupid of smiling at her grief which he hears as he lies on his mother's lap. In the poem's best line, she tells Cupid, "Thy fire from heauen before the hurt I spide." She was happy in love, but it led her only to the poem's worst lines:

But he on whom to thinke, my soule still tyers:
In bale forsooke, and left me in the bryers.

This must be the world's crudest attempt to remind us that this is a pastoral poem. But artfullness, too, mars the poem, for the glib rhetoric of the last stanza takes away any strong emotion we may earlier have attributed to the singer. She simply gets bored with her own grief:

Thus Fancie strung my Lute to Layes of Love,
    and Love hath rock'd my wearie Muse asleepe:
And sleepe is broken by the paines I proue,
    and euery paine I feele dooth force me weepe.
        Then farewell fancie, loue, sleepe, paine,
                and sore:
        And farewell weeping, I can waile no more.

George Peele contributes to the *Helicon* a far better pastoral complaint: the lament of Oenone when Paris has forsaken her (No. 149). Ovid treats the same moment in the life of the same shepherdess, but his Oenone storms and rants in angry reproaches and outrage that Paris, a lowly shepherd, should have his head turned by the goddesses and desert her for a wanton. Peele has learned the art of understatement in the restrained and evocative beauty of his lyric:

Melpomene the Muse of tragicke songs,
With mournfull tunes in stole of dismall hue,
Assist a sillie Nimphe to waile her woe,
    And leave thy lustie company behind.

This lucklesse wreathe becomes not me to weare,
The Poplar tree for tryumph of my loue,
Then as my joy, my price of loue is left;
    Be thou vncloathed of thy louely greene.

And in thy leaues my fortunes written be,
And then some gentle winde let blow abroade,
That all the world may see, how false of loue,
    False *Paris* hath to his *Oenone* beene.

In *The Arbor of amorous devises*, a forsaken woman singing a lullaby to her child is an example of *mimesis* at its finest.[55] "A sweet lullabie" is a moving piece of poetry, a complete and convincing dramatic scene. In the first stanza we overhear the situation:

> Come little babe, come silly soule,
> Thy fathers shame, thy mothers griefe,
> Borne as I doubt to all our dole,
> And to thy selfe vnhappie chiefe:
> Sing Lullabie and lap it warme,
> Poore soule that thinkes no creature harme.

The mother sees the irony in the infant's tears:

> Thou little thinkst and lesse doost knowe,
> The cause of this thy mothers moane,
> Thou wanst the wit to waile her woe,
> And I my selfe am all alone:
> Why doost thou weepe? why doost thou waile?
> And knowest not yet what thou doost ayle.

Her impulse is not Medea's. She clings to her "onely joy" since she can have no other now:

> Come little wretch, ah silly heart,
> Mine onely joy what can I more:
> If there be any wrong thy smart,
> That may the destinies implore:
> Twas I, I say, against my will,
> I wayle the time, but be thou still.

Ironically, the infant smiles when he is told that "father false is fled away":

> And doest thou smile, oh thy sweete face,
> Would God himselfe he might thee see,
> No doubt thou wouldst soone purchase grace,
> I know right well for thee and mee:
> But come to mother babe and play,
> For father false is fled away.

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[55] *The Arbor of amorous devises*, No. 13.

And yet far from reproaching the father to the son, she is sure that if he were to return after her death his "gentle heart" and "noble mind" would yield to the child:

> Sweet boy if it by fortune chance,
> Thy father home againe to send,
> If death do strike me with his launce,
> Yet mayst thou me to him commend:
> If any aske thy mothers name,
> Tell how by loue she purchast blame.
>
> Then will his gentle heart soone yeeld,
> I know him of a noble minde.
> Although a Lyon in the field,
> A Lamb in towne thou shalt him finde:
> Aske blessing babe, be not afrayde,
> His sugred words hath me betrayde.

She goes far in making her lover's behavior seem the normal and pratseworthy prerogative of a gentleman, perhaps in the hope of making her own yielding less reprehensible, and ends her song in peace:

> Then mayst thou ioy and be right glad,
> Although in woe I seeme to moane.
> Thy father is no Rascall lad,
> A noble youth of blood and boane:
> His glancing lookes if he once smile,
> Right honest women may beguile.
>
> Come little boy and rocke a sleepe,
> Sing lullabie and be thou still,
> I that can doe nought else but weepe,
> Wil sit by thee and waile my fill:
> God blesse my babe and lullabie,
> For this thy fathers qualitie.

Compared to the antics of the courtly lover, who suffers from paleness, loss of appetite, and sleeplessness when his mistress is disdainful, the sufferings of abandoned, ravished, pregnant, cradle-rocking, even murdered women seem very real. The poet abandons the courtly tradition when he follows Wilson's prescription for moving

pity, and if he also uses *prosopoeia*, allows the woman to speak directly, the result is a highly dramatic poetry having much in common with the *Heroides*. These Elizabethan poets have various degrees of skill in handling the persona and applying appropriate rhetorical strategy, but we may reach several conclusions. One is surely that the poet's degree of success in mimesis is largely determined by whether he tries to adapt male conventions or makes the imaginative effort to create language and imagery appropriate to the situation of his woman persona. The second conclusion is paradoxical: the more immediate and vivid the situation, the more dramatically it is realized, the more understated and therefore real it seems. The women who speak out of a vacuum are the ones who rant and rave; the ones who convince us of their feelings are overheard. Third, it is clear from these many examples that woman complainers are mistresses every one. They are placed in all-too-believable situations by poets more familiar with a mistress' attitudes than those of a *femme d'esprit*. The way they feel about themselves is what has gotten them into difficulties with the men around whom their lives revolve. In the next chapter we will hear from women who are decidedly not complainers-after-the-fact.

CHAPTER III

LA BELLE DAME SANS MERCI

"If all the world and loue were young,
And truth in euery Sheepheards tongue,
These pretty pleasures might me moue,
To liue with thee, and be thy loue."
(*Englands Helicon*, No. 138)

In examining the woman persona's contribution to anti-petrarchanism, let us not begin at the beginning, but at the twilight of the age of courtly love. By 1638 cavaliers could be gallant, but they could and did mock the courtly lover, as Sir John Suckling does here:

Why so pale and wan, fond lover?
Prithee why so pale?
Will, when looking well can't move her,
Looking ill prevail?
Prithee why so pale?

Why so dull and mute, young sinner?
Prithee why so mute?
Will, when speaking well can't win her,
Saying nothing do't?
Prithee why so mute?

Quit, quit, for shame; this will not move,
This cannot take her;
If of herself she will not love,
Nothing can make her:
The devil take her![1]

This cynically superior mockery of courtly wooing is mostly on the pragmatic grounds that it is not effective. But Suckling has made an

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[1]Sir John Suckling, "Song" from *Aglaura*, in *English Poetry of the XVII Century*, ed. R. F. Brinkley, 2nd ed. (New York: Norton, 1942), pp. 378-9.

important point here: "If of herself she will not love,/Nothing can make her." He is suggesting that perhaps the whole courtly approach of worshipping the lady-object is at fault. Perhaps women are not what men perceive them to be; perhaps some of them refuse to be objects and idols and demand a more honest relationship. Much further back in the courtly tradition, women personae have done far more than merely suggest the hypocrisy of the lover's pretty words and conventional posturing. Speaking for themselves, they have profound objections to the whole code.

An important early model of the woman's objections is a French poem of the fifteenth century, Alain Chartier's "La Belle Dame sans merci," which was popular enough to be translated into English by Ros in 1460, only 36 years after it was written. It is a *jeu d'esprit*, a debate of amorous request and resistance. Arthur Piaget, who has edited the original poem, comments that, for the passionate and worshipful *trouvères*, woman has only one fault: "elle est sans merci."[2] Chartier's woman is of this convention, yet the modern editor considers her some sort of anomaly:

> l'héroïne du poème d'Alain Chartier, quoique jeune et jolie, refusait d'entrer 'au service d'Amours'; elle prétendait être franche et rester franche. C'était une dame contre nature.[3]

The poem, however, was much imitated, initiating a whole cycle of "fastidieux débats ou dialogues entre un amoureux et sa dame."[4] The

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[2]Arthur Piaget, ed. "Introduction," Alain Chartier, *La Belle Dame sans mercy et les poesies lyriques* (Paris: Librarie Droz, 1945), p. viii.

[3]Ibid., p. xi. [4]Ibid., p. xiii.

fashion was expanded to include complaints and invectives against her cruelty and against love, but the direct discourse of the woman was heard less and less as she became the mute idol whose role it was to resist without voicing her objections. But in England the *femme d'esprit* survived through the centuries, as we shall see, and continued to tell her wooer exactly what she was resisting. Let us first listen to La Belle Dame in French, and then examine the English version before we trace her heritage.

A typical response to the lover's "belles parolles" is this stanza:

> Contre vous ne desdaing n'attaine
> N'euz je onques ne n'y vueil avoir,
> Ne trop grand amour ne grant haine,
> Ne vostre priveté savoir.
> Ce cuider vous fait parcevoir
> Que poy de chose peut trop plaire
> Et vous vous voulez decevoir,
> Ce ne vueil je pas pour tant faire.[5]

Her assertiveness is obvious in this statement:

> Choisisse qui voudra choisir.
> Je suy franche et franche vueil estre,
> Sans moy de mon cuer dessaisir
> Pour en faire .j. autre le maistre.[6]

She understands all too well that mastery is a masculine preserve. If she is to be "le maistre" of her own life, she must not put it into the hands of a man. Throughout the French poem, the woman picks up the glorious abstractions that usually make the courtly lover so persuasive, words like honor, courage, grief, hope, fealty, "courtesie," grace,

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[5]Chartier, stanza XXXII, p. 11.

[6]Chartier, stanza XXXVI, p. 12.

mercy, and makes them sound far too grand for "l'amour." Her responses are deflating, to say the least. A close reading of Ros' fifteenth century translation[7] will make clear both the convention of verbal seduction and the witty mockery of La Belle Dame.

Ros employs a double frame. His persona, the translator, overhears the report of the sorrowful lover of the original who overhears in turn the conversation of "Lamant" and "La Dame." In third person, then, we are told of the emotional state of the smitten lover. He is totally in the lady's power, as a boy is under a schoolmaster's:

> his scholemaister hadde suche auctorite
> that alle the while he bode stille in the place,
> Speke could he not; but vp-on hire beaute
> he lokid stille with righte a pituous face. . . . (11.137-40)

The source of the lady's power is, of course, her beauty. The lover is caught by the power of his own driving lust: "he driewe to hir allone/ which he most dredde of lyuyng creature" (11.163-4). His dread is merely that she will frustrate his urges. He is vulnerable, and she knows all about the source of his vulnerability: that his courtship is verbal. Thus, when the poet shifts to direct dialogue, the lover's first complaint is

> But whanne I speke aftir my best avise,
> ye sett it nought, but make ther-of a game. . . . (11.255-6)

Yet he still uses words, the only way he knows to move her. There follows a torrent of ardent protestations of devotion: "For I am hoole submytt to your seruise" (1.234); and "I can not deserue/to haue your

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[7]Sir Richard Ros, trans., *La Belle Dame Sans Merci*, ed. Frederick J. Furnivall, Early English Text Society, No. 15 (London: Trübner, 1866). Line references in text.

grace, but ay to lyve in drede,/yet suffre me you to loue and serue . . ." (11.237-9); and, most pitiful of all, "love hath me bounde with-oughtyn wage or mede" (1.243).

The lady's first response is spoken

> fulle softe and demurely,
> with-oute chaungyng of coloure or corage,
> Noo thyng in haste, but mesurably. . . .
> (11.246-8)

The maddeningly calm and rational words are:

> To lyve in woo he hath grete fantasie
> and of his herte also hath sliper holde,
> that only for the biholdyng of an yee
> Can not abide in peas, as Resoun wolde.
> (11.261-64)

She explains that she feels neither disdain nor love nor hate for him. And she wittily points out that his sickness causes few to die; men only say so in order to get the remedy:

> This sikenes is righte easy to endure;
> but fewe puple it causith for to dye;
> but what thei mene, I knowe it verry sure,
> Of more comforte to drawe the Remedye;
> Such ben ther noughte pleynyng ful pitously
> that fele, god wote, not alther grettest peyne;
> And, if so be, love hurte soo greuously,
> less harme it were, one soroufulle, than tweyne.
> (11.293-300)

His response is, of course, that her cooperation will produce two joys, not two sorrows. He will "pleasure" her: "my seruice to doo for your plesance" (1.306). But she has no patience with such sophistry. She knows exactly what his "service" amounts to, for after all the word is used by farmers to describe what a bull does for a cow. She insists on her freedom:

> Of love I seke nothir plesance, ne ease,
> nor grete desire, nor righte grete affiance;
> (11.309-10)
> . . . . . .
> fre am I now, and fre I will endure;
> [rather than] To be ruled by manes gouernance. . . .
> (11.314-15)

She is not only not sure that the grand passion exists, but even if it does, she wants no part of it since, for a woman, it entails loss of will and freedom. The lover insists that love makes ladies the lords and rulers and their lovers only humble "homagers." But words will not persuade her that what she knows is false:

> Ladies be not so symple, thus I mene,
> Soo dulle of witte, so sottid of folye,
> That for wordes which seide are on the splene,
> In faire langage peynted ful plesantlye
> (11.325-28)

they will give in to what is, after all, only lust. They know that the language of seduction is "subtille," "sharp in worsching," and full of "desceite" (11.341-3). For La Belle Dame, to love is to walk into a trap:

> Ye may not me constrayne, ne yit righte noon
> Aftir your lust to love, that is but veyne. . . .
> (11.359-60)

She keeps her freedom because her will is free:

> For strengthe, ner force, may nat atteyne certayne
> a wille that stant enfeffyd in Fraunchise.
> (11.363-64)

It is interesting that she uses the term "enfeifed" to describe her freedom, indicating that it is far more than sexual freedom but freedom in the most personal, and thus most political sense.

La Belle Dame next responds to the oaths of the lover with what will become a familiar charge--that men swear falsely and that women

who trust them are sorry:

> Ye and othir that swere suche othis faste,
> and soo condempne and cursen too and froo,
> ful sekerly ye weene your othes laste
> No lenger thanne the wordis ben a-goo;
> and god and eke his seyntes laughe alsoo;
> In suche sweryng ther is no stedfastnesse,
> and these wretchis that have ful trust ther-too,
> Aftir, thei wepe and waylen in distresse.
> (11.373-80)

He takes this distress to mean loss of reputation, and responds that he would rather die than stain her honor. But La Dame insists that he is a hypocrite, "a kurresshe herte, a mouthe that is curteise" (1.389). He is like a cur in several senses. Not only is he below considerations of honor, but he is lustful as an animal. When he changes his tack to pray for grace to ease his hurt, to relieve him of the pains of love, it is clear to the lady that the notion that love is pain really means that lust is physical discomfort if it is not relieved.

When the lover explicitly asks for her pity, the lady reasons out a careful response:

> Pyte of righte aughte to be resonable,
> and to no wighte of grete dysauantage;
> Thereas is nede, it shulde be profitable,
> and to the piteous shewyng noo dammage;
> yf a lady doo soo grete outrage
> to shewe pyte, and cause hir owen debate,
> Of suche pyte cometh dispetous rage,
> and of the love also right dedly hate.
> (11.453-60)

In short, pity, that noble sentiment, should not be a disadvantage to the one who offers it, but it is to a woman who gives in to a man. The lover points out that her cruelty will defame her. Clearly she is damned if she does and damned if she doesn't. Her pity would just as surely defame her:

It myghte be called pyte manerles,
and aftirward, if I shulde lyve in woo,
Thanne to repente it were to late, I guess.
(11.474-6)

She mocks in a lighter tone about lovers' threats that they will die for love:

One curseth faste, another dooth menace,
yet dieth none, as ferre as I can see.
(11.663-4)

She is now not even responding to the individual man she is debating with, but talking about lovers in the aggregate, making the cruel charge that men are all alike. She reveals another fear in another response--that men make conquests of women in order to boast about them:

I nyl not hate myn herte for othris sake;
weepe thei, laughe thei, or syng, this I warante,
for this matier soo weel to vndertake
that none of you shal make ther-of avaunte.
(11.729-32)

Her penultimate reply is that she will stay clear of men's snares. She has finally moved to first person plural, speaking for all women:

I have noo power you to doo greuaunce,
ner to punysshe non othir creature,
but to eschiewe the more encombraunce,
to keep vs fro you alle, I holde it sure;
Fals semblance hath a visage ful demure
lightly to catche the ladies in a waite;
where-fore we must, if that we wil endure,
Make right good watche: loo this is my conceite.
(11.773-80)

Her last word is her cruellest, because truest: "There hurteth you noo thyng but youre conceyte" (1.791).

The French poet, oblivious of the fact that his Belle Dame has taken over the poem, ends it by having the cruel fair turn away from the lover and begin dancing again, whereupon the lover tears his hair

and dies! Ros adds a warning to his translation: do not be like La Belle Dame. How is it that this male creation can speak so freely and accurately of the courted woman's point of view, can so wittily mock the pomposity and conceit of the courtly lover, and yet can be merely a tool in a poem in which the lover dies for love and not of humiliation? It is almost as though the truth can only be spoken if it is retracted in the next breath. Anyone reading the poem with sympathy for the lover's feelings must be misreading, regardless of the frame and the conclusion.

Let us next examine a native English example of a woman's mockery of her lover. In this as in other poems, the retraction takes the form of her eventual acceptance of the lover, leaving us with just as inconsistent and confusing a tone: what is the male poet's attitude? Whose side is he on in the great debate? A poem which is a parody of courtly complaint is "The Craft of Lovers,"[8] whose title indicates its sympathy for the woman. It is Chaucerian--a fifteenth century rime royal poem of alternating stanzas--and has been attributed to Lydgate. The narrator announces that his theme is how false and crafty lovers are in their "eloquent langage." In response to the lover's first stanza of typically courtly adulation, the lady says:

> Certes sir your painted eloquence,
> So gay, so fresh and eke so talcatife,
> It doth transcend the wit of dame Prudence,
> For to declare your thought or to discrive,
> So gloriously glad langage ye contrive,
> Of your conceit, your thought, and your entent,
> I will beware for drede or I be stent.

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[8]"The Craft of Lovers," in *The Works of the English Poets*, ed. Alexander Chalmers (London: J. Johnson, 1810), I, 558-60.

She is afraid that his eloquence will persuade her against her better judgment. Her response to a typical blazon of her beauty is:

> What availeth sir your proclamacion,
> Of curious taking, not touching to sadnes,
> It is but winde, flattering, and adulacion,
> Imesurable thought of worldly wildnes,
> Which is cheife cause of ghostly feblenes,
> Your wil, your thought, your double entendement,
> I will beware of drede, or I be shent.

We soon hear more of what his will is and his double intent. She stops the critique of his language in order to give him a moral lesson, translating, as it were, his high language of suing for grace to the language of lust and sexual conquest:

> O comberous thought of mans fragility,
> O fervent will of lustes furious,
> O cruel corage causing adversity,
> Of womens corrupcion and eke contrarious,
> Remember man that chaunge is perilous,
> To breke the virginity of virgines innocent,
> Wherfore beware wankind or thou be shent.

When the lover casts his eyes to heaven and asks Jesus to "convert" his lady to love, her response to his hypocritical piety is:

> Me semeth by langage ye be some protestate
> Or else some curious gloser disceuable. . . .

She has asked his name, and our lover now becomes an allegorical figure:

> My name is trew loue of carnal desidery,
> Of mans copulacion the very exemplary,
> Which am one of your seruaunts of pleasaunce. . . .

But the lady has seen no evidence that true love exists:

> I have sought true loue of yeres great proces,
> Yet found I neuer loue but for a season,
> Some men be diuerse and know no gentilnes,
> And some lacke both wisedome and reason,
> In some men is trust, in some men is treason,
> Wherfore I will conclude my auisement,
> And ever beware for drede that I be shent.

It is clear that her objection is to hypocrisy, not to the honest giving and receiving of pleasure. She then asks two riddling questions:

> What thing is pleasure of sweetnesse,
> And is most bitter in final succesSon?
> Or what thing giveth man occasion
> In tender age for to be concupiscent?

The lover's answer is from Ovid, who

> Saith that desire of worldly concupiscence
> As for a time is sweete in his worching,
> And in his end he causeth great offence:
> Notwithstanding my lady dame Prudence,
> Green flowring age, a manly countenaunce
> Causeth ladies to have it in remembraunce.

While she does admit that his "goodly answer" would convert women to delight in "natural pleasaunce," she still wants to know why "mens langage wol procure and transuert/The will of women and virgines innocent." If women were given a free choice to accept or reject a plain proposition, they would not be giving up their wills in accepting it. If he would state his intentions frankly, she would "Unto your pleasure . . . be at your call,"

> But euer I feare of chaunces casuall,
> Of fraude, disceipt, and langage insolent.

Finally, she is persuaded that he is "true loue," that he does not deceive or dissemble; finding in him no duplicity, the lady gives her heart. However, her change is not nearly so believable as her previous caution had been. He is still offering only hyperbolical assurances and empty words. She has no reason to trust his last words more than his first. It is as though the poet permits his woman persona to talk about the craft of lovers but cannot think of any but a conventional conclusion. He returns to his frame, and the last stanza gives us the

chanson d'aventure setting:

> Whan Phebus fresh was in chare splendent,
> In the moneth of May erly in a morning,
> I hard two louers profer this argument.
> . . . . . .
> O potent princesse conserue true louers all,
> And grant them thy region and blisse celestiall.

These two poems illustrate an attitude which is much in evidence in the later Elizabethan literature. In their negative responses to courtly wooing, La Belle Dame and the Chaucerian debater are not precursers of anti-Petrarchanism in its familiar form but of a more complex and important trend. Let us first look at the anti-Petrarchanism of men, and then draw a distinction between this attitude and that of the woman persona.

R. H. Robbins points out that

> Throughout the fifteenth century the early conventional descriptions of the physical beauty of the beloved continued unchanged [from the old French tradition and English lyrics], and in addition assumed an inverted form of sarcastic antagonism and a belittling of those very characteristics which less embittered poets still praised.[9]

It is obvious that into the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the blazon of a woman's beauty was a poetic duty, a set school exercise. It had become so formalized and so far from reality that poets became impatient with the convention, as Shapespeare does in Sonnet 130 ("My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun."). But though Shakespeare's persona is mocking the convention, he is still making an object of the woman, still hoping to flatter and woo her with his sonnet. That his

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[9]Rossell Hope Robbins, "Two Middle English Satiric Love Epistles," *Modern Language Review*, 37 (1942), p. 418.

picture of the lady is more credible should not lead us to assume that the persona is anything other than a sophisticated courtly lover trying to conceal his real motives behind clever rhetoric. In the *Defense of Poesy*, Sidney calls for more sophisticated rhetoric, not a more honest courtship:

> But truly many of such writings . . . , if I were a mistress, would never persuade me that they were in love; so coldly they apply fiery speeches, as men that had rather read lovers' writings, and so caught up certain swelling phrases . . . , then that in truth they feel those passions.[10]

Sidney, too, is merely calling for more skill in poetic wooing, more credible use of the same ruse, a toning down of the Petrarchan language which had become so patently overingenious. Indeed, Spenser complains in one of his *Amoretti* that

> when I plead, she bids me play my part,
> and when I weep, she says tears are but water:
> and when I sigh, she says I know the art,
> and when I wail she turns herself to laughter.[11]

His persona wants a new way to win the lady whom he wishes to possess, but it does not occur to him to try honestly to address a person rather than an object. He does not understand the basis of the woman's objections.

The responses of the *femmes d'esprit* which we shall look at in this chapter are not simply female versions of the same criticisms of

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[10]Sir Philip Sidney, "A Defense of Poesy," *The Renaissance in England*, eds. Hyder E. Rollins and Herschel Baker (Boston: D. C. Heath, 1954), p. 622. Hereafter cited as *Rollins Anthology*.

[11]Edmund Spenser, "Amoretti" No. 18, in *The Poetical Works of Edmund Spenser*, eds. J. C. Smith and E. de Selincourt (1992; rpt. London: Oxford University Press, 1963), p. 565.

courtly love. The women are condemning the convention not as a convention nor for its artificiality but because it is only a way of men's getting at them by using a mode which has no truth to its claims. They are objecting on a deeper level to a dishonest process used by men to conceal their real feelings and motives. The *femme d'esprit* refuses to be an object, and her nay-saying is a far more profound attack on courtly love than the familiar anti-Petrarchanism of sophisticated men.

We can see evidence of this difference in attitude in early poetry. One major objection which women voiced was to the eloquent flattery of the blazon. R. H. Robbins has published two poems from the Rawlinson manuscript dating from the second half of the fifteenth century which are parodies of the blazon. One is a mocking letter of a woman to her lover, in five stanzas of rime royal, and the other is her lover's eight-stanza reply. The letter form was a stereotyped pattern by then, but the many contemporaneous love epistles do not blazon the beauty of the lover's mistress. They rather tell the troubles of the lover, his desire to please and serve, and his petition for favors. So this pair is innovative in combining the catalogue of charms with the love letter. To this set of devices is added a directness of language which Robbins calls "refreshing and brutal."[12] He mentions only in passing that the poems have two rare literary features: that they are the doublet form, the second poem replying to the first; and that in the first, a woman addresses her lover. It is remarkable that the first poem is hers, that

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[12]R. H. Robbins, "Two Middle English Satiric Love Epistles," p. 421.

she sets the tone and the level of diction, that, for a change, she is not merely responding to the advances of a man. In her "skorne" of the lover, she has deliberately chosen what he calls the most uncourteous and crabbed language, thereby mocking the elegant language of courtly flattery. Here is the text:

To my trew loue and able
As the wedyr cok he is stable
Thys letter to hym be deliueryd
Vnto you most froward this lettre I write
Whych hath causyd me so longe in dyspayre
The Goodlynesse of your persone is esye to endyte
For he leuyth nat that can youre persone appayre
So comly best shapyne of feture most fayre
Most fresch of contenaunce euyn as an Oule
Ys best and most fauoryd of ony odyr foule

Youre manly visage shortly to declare
Your forehed mouth and nose so flatte
In short conclusyon best lykened to an hare
Of alle lyvyng thynges save only a catte
More wold I sey yf I wyst what
That swete vysage ful ofte is be-shrewyd
Whan I remembre of som baud so lewd

The proporcion of your body comende wele me aught
Fro the shuldre downe behynde and beforne
Yf alle the peyntours in a land togedyr were soght
A worse coude they not portrey thogh alle they had
it sworne
Kepe wele your pacience thogh I sende you a skorne
Your Garmentes upon you ful gayly they hynge
As it were an olde gose had a broke wynge
Your thyghes mysgrowen youre shankys mych worse
Whoso beholde youre knees so crokyd
As ych of hem bad odyr Crystes curse
So go they outward youre hammys ben hokyd
Such a peyre Chaumbys I never on lokyd
So vngoodly youre helys ye lyfte
And youre feet ben crokyd with euyl thryfte

Who mygth haue the loue of so swete a wyght
She myght be rygth glad that euer she was borne
She that onys wold in a dark nyght
Renne for your love tyl she had caught a thorne
I wolde hyr no more harme but hangyd on the morne

That hath ij good eyen and j-chese here suche a make
Or onys wold lyft up here hold for youre sake

Youre swete love wyth blody naylys
Whyche fedyth mo lyce than quaylys[13]

This is a double inversion of a convention, since it is a parody, it is applied to a male's beauty of person, and it is written by a woman. The froward lover is compared, conventionally, to a weathercock for constancy. The animal imagery is less conventional; he is compared to an owl, that most ill-favored of all fowl to the taste of the middle ages. His visage reminds the writer of a hare or a cat. We are told what has caused her sharpness of tongue:

That swete vysage ful ofte is be-shrewyd
Whan I remembre of som baud so lewd.

She has seen beneath his hypocritical sweetness the lust that underlies courtly wooing. She speaks of ill proportion with the perspective of an artist, and does not hesitate to attack his thighs, shanks, knees, and hocked hams. Now that he is exposed as a hypocrite and a sham, he is hamstrung in more ways than one. Only on a dark night when his ugly hypocrisy would be hidden would a woman run for his love, but all she would catch would be a thorn, instrument of his lust, and all the affliction and annoyance that proceeds therefrom.

The lover's reply is rather lame. He misses the point she is trying to make in her choice of rude language, and can only answer in kind:

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[13]Ibid., p. 416.

You for to medyl with any retoruacion
To me ye haue sent a lettre of derusion
Endyghted ful freshly with many coryous I-clause
Werfore I thanke you as I fynde cause

The Ynglysch of Chaucere was nat in youre mynd
Ne tullyus termys wyth so gret elloquence
But ye as vncurtes and Crabbed of kynde
Rolled hem on a hepe it semyth by the sentence
And so dare I boldly withoute eny offence
Answere to your letter as fallyth to the purpose
And thus I begynne construe ye the glose.[14]

His counterattack is more detailed but less original. The lover takes all his cues from her as he blazons her appearance, but all he is doing is describing her ugliness with as much untruth as he had before described her beauty. Her head is large, her forehead round, her eyes staring. Her outsized breasts, belly, and nose remind us only that delicate smallness was the male's ideal of feminine beauty. Her nostrils would be perfect candle snuffers in the church--how witty! She has yellow teeth, set too far apart, and her breath is sweet as the elder tree. Her attire and graceless dancing are also noted. But the concluding couplet reveals the sour grapes:

Youre owne love trusty and trewe
You have forsake cause of a newe.

He does not understand the ground of her objection to him, assuming that she is simply an inconstant woman. It is easier to deal with her crude language and catalogue of his lack of charms if this is simply a way to reject him for another, rather than to recognize that she is demanding a new and more honest basis for the relationship.

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[14]Ibid., p. 417.

A letter in an Elizabethan miscellany, *The Forrest of Fancy*, shares many of the elements of the older poem.[15] It is "A Letter written by a yong maiden to a Louer of hers, wherein she detecteth the trechery of many men, and their great dissimulation." It is highly unflattering, and though it does not catalogue the lover's lack of physical charms, it picks up the *femme d'esprit*'s theme of men's deceptive flattery. Here is more animal imagery, and some strong minded and well deserved abuse:

> The crow would seeme a milk white swan to be,
> So likewise would the pratling rooke appeare,
> Like Iunos byrd, which cannot well agree,
> For kind bewrayes his craft, this is most cleare
> yea Copper oft in Siluer is inclosde,
> In glittering gold, great store of drosse doth hide,
> In purest shels, as triall hath disclosde,
> Carnels corrupt, themselues full often hide,
> The wily wolfe we diuerse times do fynde,
> In sheepes skin cloathde, and eake the dusty wall,
> with hangings faire is hid, in humaine kinde,
> We also see the like effect to fall,
> For many a one there is, that makes a show,
> Of perfect loue, when he meanes nothing lesse,
> Men seeke to bring poore women to their bow,
> And in the end to leaue them in distresse.
> And for because I thought you one of those,
> Whose pleasure is pore women to deceiue,
> With tatling tong you flatteringly can glose,
> As by your deedes I dayly do perceave,
> I sent to you a flower for Flatterers fit,
> Regarding naught how ye the same would take,
> So free am I from biting on the bit,
> As yet not drencht in Lady *Venus* lake.
> If ought beside be done that you like ill,
> And that the same in euill part you take,
> Goe seeke your mendes you may whereas you will.
> I reke you naught, this aunswere doe I make,
> And though before, offence were none committed,
> yet this your writing fond would it procure,
> which hath full well with your demeanour fitted,

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[15] *The Forrest of Fancy*, sig. D1^{r} - D1^{v}.

Being rude, and imprudent, and ill to indure.
No more I neede at this time here to say,
For well you may by this my minde perceiue,
yet of one thing I warne you by the way,
That with vaine hope your selfe you not deceiue,
And so to conclude, I bid you adue,
wishing you aduisedly my letters to view.

This letter is indeed "a flower for Flatterers fit." The woman is responding to his own epistle, which is in her view "rude, and imprudent, and ill to indure." This is clearly another "young maiden" who will not play the game of courtly love. She sees him as a crow with a "tatling tong," a "wily wolfe" who "flatteringly can glose." There is no hint of coyness, no opening left for the lover to resume his courtship:

If ought beside be done that you like ill,
And that the same in euill part you take,
Goe seeke your mended you may whereas you will.

The marvel is that even a *femme d'esprit* would dare so to anger a man, since her reputation is in his hands if she has proceeded even this far into the courtship. Even to give a lover audience is, after all, to put one's honor in his hands. Other women are more prudent.

A much more moderate refusal of courtship is printed in the same miscellany.[16] Another long title describes the situation: "A yong Gentlewoman wrighteth this for aunswere to a Gentlemans letter, that craued her love and exhorteth her to keepe promise with him, wherein excusing her selfe, by her ouer yong yeres, and his vnhabillitye, she prayeth him to cease of his sute." She begins with her most frontal attack, showing her sophistication in the face of his verbal wiles. She

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[16] *The Forrest of Fancy*, sig. $M1^{r}$ - $M2^{v}$.

refuses him not in spite of his role but *because* he plays his role so well:

> Though in your writ you rome and raunge,
> aboute the bushe a while,
> And vse huge heapes of needelesse wordes,
> my sences to begyle.

But then, with great courtesy, she makes him believe that her refusal is beyond her power:

> Because it is not in my power,
> to doe it, though my wil,
> were wholy bent therto: but in
> their handes whose prudent skill,
> and wisdome great is such,
> as knowing what for me,
> Moste meetest is; to your demaund
> will never once agree. . . .

Duty binds her to obey the wishes of her guardians. Another purely practical consideration, reminding us of how mercenary women must be in entering the marriage marketplace, is that

> your welth likewise is very small,
> as you your selfe confesse,
> And mine not great, and am right sure,
> it would be so much lesse,
> If

[and now the three motifs combine]

> following fancyes flattering words,
> or faigned vows, I should
> Contrary doe to friendes desyre,
> and that which worst I would,
> Their love and fauour lose thereby,
> Therefore cease of your sute. . . .

This model of mature prudence sets reason at odds with desire. She is anxious to smooth ruffled feathers:

> Content yur selfe with reasons rule,
> and doe no blame impute
> To mee at all, whose tender age

is her best defense against his persuasions. She assures him that she will not marry until "ryper yeares" give her the practical shrewdness

> To choose a wise and prudent mate,
> That walkes in vertues way:
> Prouiding therewithall,
> that welth doe neuer want,
> sufficient alwayes to maintaine,
> the fruicte of such a plant:
> For wheras liuing lacking is,
> to maintaine such estate,
> Their perfect loue will soone peruert,
> to cruell cancred hate,
> And whereas rooted rancour raignes,
> all things to ruine runne,
> yea vertue chaungde to vice must yilde
> decay they cannot shunne. . . .

It begins to sound more and more like a selection from a young lady's manual on how to break off a foolish match, written, of course, by an unlascivious version of Samuel Richardson. As much as anything, the writer is trying to persuade herself that reason and prudence are the only defenses against the rashness of lust. Only Jane Austen's sensible heroines are at once so high-minded and so shrewd about money.

As careful as our writer is not to offend her young man, she must join the chorus of women who protest Petrarchan wiles, though adding that, of course, *he* is not a false lover:

> But though I know right well, the vse
> of many men to be,
> With flattering wordes, and styled phrase,
> as did *Aeneas* he,
> To *Dido*, and false *Demophon*
> to *Phillis* faire his friend,
> For to deceiue vs silly soules,
> that neuer hurt pretend,
> But credite all their cloked craft,
> that beares a simple shoe,
> Till we be caught in *Cupids* snare,
> so fast, that forth to goe
> we haue not power, and then vnkind
> they leave vs in the lash,

A iust reward no doubt for such
as will be ouer rash
In that they take in hand, yet I,
not iudging so of you,
But thinking that your loue profest
both perfect is and true,
Doe yeelde you thankes therefore,
and humbly pardon craue,
For that I may not giue consent,
to that you seeke to haue. . . .

She must, however, mention one more matter before she concludes. It seems that the lover *is* using tricks and threats:

As for the promise which so much
you vrge me for to keepe,
Assuring me by breache thereof,
to runne in daunger deepe,

she responds boldly to this blackmail of her reputation:

No promise haue I made, whereon
you may so much take holde,
I am right sure, but that I may,
to breake the same be bolde,
But if I had, yet euery one
would iudge you farre vnwise,
To challenge any at my handes,
in whome it nothing lyes
For to performe the same, sith of
my selfe nothing I haue. . . .

This is indeed a useful lesson in how alternately to blame an eager lover and to apologize to him in order to extricate oneself from a compromising situation. This evidence should leave no doubt that for a woman to allow herself to be addressed, in however courtly a fashion, is dangerous to her honor. She will not be courted twice. We may only hope that this subtle and clever model did serve to extricate rash young women from the snares of hypocritical young men.

Men are not loathe to blame women for their weakness. When a man objects to the flattery of women, he does so on rather perverse

grounds. A poem from Richard Braithwait's 1631 *The English Gentlewoman* is followed by such a comment.[17] The poem is aptly titled "Mounting Hyperboles":

> Skin more pure than Ida's snow,
> Whiter far than Moorish milk;
> Sweeter than Ambrosia too,
> Softer than the Paphian silk,
> Indian plumes or thistle-down,
> Or May-blossoms newly-blown,
> Is my mistress, rosy-pale,
> Adding beauty to her veil.

In the poem's note women are blamed for being conceited rather than men for being bombastic:

> An excellent piece of complimental stuff to catch a self-conceited one. Many you have of your sex who are too attentive auditors in the report of your own praises. Nothing can be attributed to them which they hold not properly due unto them. Which conceits many times so transports them as, Narcissus-like, they are taken with their own shadows, doting on nothing more than these encomiastic bladders of their desertless praises. Let me advise you, whose discretion should be far from giving light ear to such airy Tritons, to disrelish the oily compliments of these amorous sycophants.

Two poems in Tottel's miscellany illustrate the Petrarchan lover's cunning use of persuasive language and the witty lady's answer.[18] The lover rings all the changes on the fire and ice metaphor for his lust and her chastity. His basic message is,

> So hath your coldnesse caused me,
> To burne in my desire.

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[17]Richard Braithwait, "The English Gentlewoman" (1631) in *Poems, Chiefly Lyrical, from Romances and Prose-Ttacts of the Elizabethan Age*, ed. Arthur H. Bullen (London: John C. Nimmo, 1890), p. 84. Hereafter cited as Bullen.

[18]Tottel's *Songs and Sonettes*, Nos. 287, 288. Hereafter cited as Tottel.

In the perverse manner of Petrarchan lovers, he loves, above all, to suffer, and he is enjoying her lack of response:

> So can your tong of frosen yse,
> From whence cold answers come:
> Both coole the fire and fire entice,
> To burne me all and some.

The lady's answer is bold and sophisticated. She mocks his metaphor and yet responds in kind. That she would use a Petrarchan conceit to mock conceited language makes this a devastating refusal. First she calls his ploy "your borrowd meane to moue your mone, of fume withouten flame. . . ." She compares him to a blacksmith, who must learn a lesson in

> how either to maintaine
> Your fredome of vnkindled coale, vpheaped all in vaine:
> Or how most frutefully to frame, with worthy
> workmans art,
> That cunnyng pece may passe there fro, by help of
> heated hart.

His supply of Petrarchan language is "the forge wherin the fume of sighes doth mount aloft." He is plying a "semble," using a clever ploy which she sees through. She advises him to learn his craft better, to learn "By worke of smithes both hand and hed a cunnyng key to make" which, she promises, will be the key to her heart. She is not objecting so much to his making an object of her as she is to his lack of skill in the making.

Robert Greene contributes another witty attack on Petrarchan seduction in a doublet of sonnets.[19] The first, spoken by a man, seems to be an invitation to take him as her second lover:

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[19]Robert Greene, in Bullen, p. 38.

On women Nature did bestow two eyes,
Like heaven's bright lamps, in matchless beauty shining,
Whose beams do soonest captivate the wise,
And wary heads, made rare by art's refining.
But why did Nature, in her choice combining,
Plant two fair eyes within a beauteous face,
That they might favour two with equal grace?
Venus did soothe up Vulcan with one eye,
With th' other granted Mars his wished glee:
If she did so who Hymen did defy,
Think love no sin, but grant an eye to me;
In vain else Nature gave two stars to thee:
If then two eyes may well two friends maintain,
Allow of two, and prove not Nature vain.

The woman does not offer objections to his manner of wooing, but defends her fidelity and honor with a clever use of the same conceit:

Nature foreseeing how men would devise
More wiles than Proteus, women to entice,
Granted them two, and those bright-shining eyes,
To pierce into men's faults if they were wise;
For they with show of virtue mask their vice.
Therefore to women's eyes belong these gifts,
The one must love, the other see men's shifts.
Both these await upon one simple heart,
And what they choose, it hides up without change.
The emerald will not with his portrait part,
Nor will a woman's thoughts delight to range;
They hold it bad to have so bad exchange:
One heart, one friend, though that two eyes do choose him,
No more but one, and heart will never lose him.

We hear direct ridicule of Petrarchan conceits in a collection printed in 1614 called *Galateas Sonnets* by William Drummond of Hawthornden.[20] The woman persona complains, in the first sonnet, that her lover brings his rhymes and songs in vain since they are decked with "withered flowers," old conceits. If he is in love, it must be with some

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[20]William Drummond of Hawthornden, "Galateas Sonnets," in Lu Emily Pearson, *Elizabethan Love Conventions* (1933; rpt. New York: Barnes and Noble, 1966), p. 185.

"Grecian Mistresse dead," for his sighs are old, old sighs. True love is not found in fables, she claims, so he must be dissembling. The concluding couplet says it all:

> I can not think thou are tane with my lookes;
> Thou did but learne thy love in lovers books.

Here again, she is not objecting to his hypocritical flattery, but to his lack of originality in artifice. In Sonnet B, the lady proclaims that she wishes no further "sugred speech" to "infect" her ears. She is sick of his anguished pining, his sleepless nights, his tears. She makes the solemn charge against Petrarchan lovers that their poetic flights add to their own fame and not that of their mistresses. She is not objecting to the basic problem: that she is being made into an object, an idol to be worshipped.

A song from Thomas Campion's *Fourth Book* is a light and witty mockery of the courtly lover with the same motifs:

> Think'st thou to seduce me then with words that
> have no meaning?
> Parrots so can learne to prate, our speech by
> pieces gleaning:
> Nurses teach their children so about the time
> of weaning.
>
> Learne to speake first, then to wooe; to wooing much
> pertayneth:
> Hee that courts us, wanting Arte, soone falters when
> he fayneth;
> Lookes a-squint on his discourse, and smiles when
> hee complaineth.
>
> Skilful Anglers hide their hookes, fit baytes for
> every season;
> But with crooked pins fish thou, as babes doe
> that want reason;
> Godians onely can be caught with such poore tricks
> of treason.

Ruth, forgive me, if I err'd from humane hearts
compassion
When I laught sometimes too much to see thy
foolish fashion:
But, alas, who lesse could doe that found so
good occasion?[21]

Here her only complaint is that if a lover must follow the fashion, he can at least be a skillful artificer. She laughs at his clumsy attempt at wooing, the way he sneaks a look at his notes, but would make no objection to the skillful use of the same wiles. By instructing her would-be lover in the art of skillful angling, in telling him to hide his hooks and find the appropriate bait for the various kinds of fish, she is only giving advice in how to be a more successful courtly lover. The tone of this poem is far more like the man-to-boy advice of Suckling's "Why so pale and wan, fond lover?" than like the genuine expression of a woman's point of view.

Greene includes a song in *The Groatsworth of Wit*[22] which objects to these verbal wiles on more basic grounds. The woman persona sings:

Fie, fie on blind fancy!
It hinders youth's joy:
Fair virgins, learn by me
To count Love a toy.

When Love learned first the ABC of delight,
And knew no figures nor conceited phrase,
He simply gave to due desert her right,
He led not lovers in dark winding ways;
He plainly willed to love, or flatly answered no:
But now who lists to prove, shall find it nothing so.

Refrain.

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[21] *The Works of Thomas Campion*, ed. Walter R. Davis (Garden City: Doubleday, 1967), No. 18, p. 186.

[22] Robert Greene, in Bullen, p. 39.

For since he learned to use the poet's pen,
He learned likewise with smoothing words to feign,
Witching chaste ears with trothless tongues of men,
And wronged faith with falsehood and disdain.
He gives a promise now, anon he sweareth no:
Who listeth for to prove, shall find his changing so.

Refrain.

She is asking not for better artifice, but for real honesty in the male/female relationship. She will not countenance the hypocrisy of hidden motives, but insists that a man should return to pre-courtly times when men "plainly willed to love, or flatly answered no," and allowed women to do the same.

Drummond's Galatea offers a basic objection to courtly wooing on several grounds. She wonders why love should engender regret for a woman, why passion should put out the light of reason, why women who love are subject to basest lust. To give in to a man is to "live in languish, spoiled of all delight." It is to be miserable, to abdicate one's will, to be led blindfolded in ways that are destructive of a woman's best interest:

If it be love to wish that all the Night
Wee spend in sad regreats with waking eies,
And when the sunne enpurples all the skies
To live in languish, spoiled of all delight?
If it be love to wish that Reasons light
In our wake Minds by passion darkened be,
Till Heaven and Earth do scorne our miserie,
Whilst blindfold led we nere doe ought aright?
If it be love to wish our chastitie
May subject be unto a basse desire,
And that our harts heale a more cruell fire,
Then that Athenian in his Bull did frie?
Then sure yee love; but causers of such woes
No lovers be to love, but hatefull foes.[23]

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[23]Drummond, cited in Pearson, p. 186.

Ben Jonson's outspoken women personae in *Under-Wood* have a far different way of dealing with the courtly convention. In a much more sophisticated fashion than the medieval letter, they use the device of cataloguing the charms of the mistress and applying it to the man. It is far more demeaning to make an object of a man than it is merely to describe how ugly he is. These poems are a rare illustration of a complete turning of the tables. One poem is a catalogue of the charms and properties which a man must have if he would win the *femme d'esprit*:

Of your Trouble, *Ben*, to ease me,
I will tell what Man would please me.
I would have him if I could,
Noble; or of greater Blood:
Titles, I confesse, doe take me;
And a woman God did make me,
French to boote, at least in fashion,
And his Manners of that Nation.
    Young I'l'd have him to, and faire,
Yet a man; with crisped haire
Cast in thousand snares, and rings
For *Loves* fingers, and his wings:
Chestnut colour, or more slack
Gold, upon a ground of black.
Venus, and *Minerva's* eyes
For he must looke wanton-wise.
    Eye-brows bent like *Cupids* bow,
Front, an ample field of snow;
Even nose, and cheeke (withall)
Smooth as is the Billiard Ball:
Chin, as woolly as the Peach;
And his lip should kissing teach,
Till he cherish'd too much beard,
And make *Love* or me afeard.
    He would have a hand as soft
As the Downe, and shew it oft;
Skin as smooth as any rush,
And so thin to see a blush
Rising through it e're it came;
All his blood should be a flame
Quickly fir'd as in beginners
In loves schoole, and yet no sinners.

'Twere to long to speak of all,
What we harmonie doe call
In a body should be there.
Well he should his clothes to weare;
Yet no Taylor help to make him
Drest, you still for man should take him.
And not thinke h'had eat a stake,
Or were set up in a Brake.
Valiant he should be as fire,
Shewing danger more than ire.
Bounteous as the clouds to earth;
And as honest as his Birth.
All his actions to be such,
As to doe nothing too much.
Nor o're-praise, nor yet condemne;
Nor out-valew, nor contemne;
Nor doe wrongs, nor wrongs receave;
Nor tie knots, nor knots unweave;
And from basenesse to be free,
As he durst love Truth and me.
Such a man, with every part,
I could give my very heart;
But of one, if short he came,
I can rest me where I am.[24]

Another of Jonson's *femmes d'esprit* says volumes about male hypocrisy by bluntly stating her simple requirements, summed up in her pun on "parts":

For his Mind, I doe not care,
That's a Toy, that I could spare:
Let his Title be but great,
His Clothes rich, and band sit neat,
Himselfe young, and face be good,
All I wish is understood.
What you please, you parts may call,
'Tis one good part I'ld lie withall.[25]

The superficial humor of this is the shock value of such a frankly "wanton" woman. But it is also a commentary on the nature of courtly

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[24] *The Poems of Ben Jonson*, ed. Bernard H. Newdigate (Oxford: B. Blackwell, 1936), No. 9, pp. 97-8.

[25] Ibid., No. 10, p. 98.

love. This woman says exactly what the courtly lover *means* behind all his golden words: that he wants to possess an attractive object and use her to satisfy his lust. Chrétien's code clearly states that the end of man's love is possession. He is correct. But he goes wrong when he says that the man is ennobled by love and the woman rendered affable and gentle. Any delay in the possession of his desire makes the lover more and more of a sham as he flatters and promises. A woman who can see through his hypocrisy is not affable but witty, amused, angry, outraged, or, like this *femme d'esprit*, cooly cynical.

Other modes of courtship are rejected by women personae for other reasons. An examination of responses to pastoral wooing and the use of the *carpe diem* argument which so often accompanies it will round out our picture of the *femme d'esprit*.

The pastoral tradition has long been, for men, a retreat into love, an erotic idyll. In masculine fantasies the shepherdess is the totally compliant mistress who enters into hedonism without hesitation. The virginal shepherdess is the personification of simple innocence and idyllic sweetness. But by the sixteenth century, she is an ambivalent figure who can be either virgin or whore, by which the swains mean either compliant or witty. Her refusal is another occasion for a man to voice his sufferings, using what he hopes is a poignant contrast between his perfect natural surroundings and his frustrated urges to procreate as all nature is doing. The male persona typically uses this contrast, the tricks of the courtly lover, and the classic *carpe diem* argument. The reply of the "unnatural" *femme d'esprit* to these three ploys further defines her attitudes. Let us first establish the masculine picture of

the ideal shepherdess, and then examine poems in which she refuses to be what he expects.

Poems in which the shepherdess is praised treat only the narrow subject of love, and treat it strictly from the male point of view, presenting a peculiarly masculine fantasy. Just as pastoral poetry with a broader scope implies a comparison between rustic simplicity and a complex society, so in these love poems the easy gratification of country love is much to be preferred over the regulatory code of courtly love. Praise of the shepherdess is implied dispraise of the women of the court, but also dispraise of any woman who says no. A song by Thomas Campion, which appears in his 1601 *Book of Airs*,[26] is a blatant form of contrast between the shepherdess and the sophisticated woman. It is no accident that he calls his Amarillis "the Nutbrowne lasse." She continues the tradition of the compliant mistress:

> I care not for these Ladies
> That must be woode and praide;
> Give me kind Amarillis
> The wanton countrey maide;
> Nature art disdaineth,
> Her beautie is her owne;
> Her when we court and kisse,
> She cries, forsooth, let go:
> But when we come where comfort is,
> She never will say no.
>
> If I love Amarillis,
> She gives me fruit and flowers,
> But if we love these Ladies,
> We must give golden showers.
> Give them gold that sell love,
> Give me the Nutbrowne lasse,
> Who when we court and kisse,
> She cries, forsooth, let go:
> But when we come where comfort is,
> She never will say no.

---

[26] *The Works of Thomas Campion*, No. 3, p. 22.

These Ladies must have pillowes,
And beds by strangers wrought,
Give me a Bower of willowes,
Of mosse and leaves unbought,
And fresh Amarillis
With milke and honie fed,
    Who when we court and kisse,
    She cries, forsooth, let go:
    But when we come where comfort is,
    She never will say no.

Many poems in the miscellanies portray a simple, happy, natural love relationship in implied contrast to the artful complexities of the actual male/female relationship. Many are echo verses, lyric pastoral dialogues between lovers for whom the only barriers to living happily ever after are external ones like her youth or the opposition of parents. Morality nods in these poems--love is sanctioned, and even the woman herself is enough of a hedonist to take no thought for the morrow. *A Handefull of pleasant delites*[27] gives us a dialogue song called "A faithfull vow of two constant louers" which mentions the enemies of true love only to defeat them:

Shall distance part our loue,
    or daily choice of chaunge?
Or sprites below, or Gods aboue,
    have power to make vs straunge:
No nothing here on earth,
    that kinde hath made or wrought,
Shall force me to forget
    goodwill so dearely bought,
And for my part I vow,
    to serve for terme of life:
Which promise may compare with her,
    which was *Vlisses* wife.
Which vow if I doo breake,
    let vengeance on me fall,
Eche plague that on the earth may raigne,
    I aske not one, but all.

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[27] *A Handefull of pleasant delites*, p. 63.

Though time may breede suspect,
    to fill your hart with toyes:
And absence may a mischefe breede,
    to let your wished ioyes:
Yet thinke I haue a troth,
    and honesty to keepe:
And weigh the time your loue hath dwelt,
    within my hart so deep.
. . . . . .
But all is one with me,
    my heart so setled is!
No friend, nor foe, nor want of wealth,
    shall neuer hurt in this. . . .

Englands Helicon offers yet another amorous idyll in "Phillidaes loue-call to her Coridon, and his replying."[28] Their love play, which she initiates, is the mutual giving of luscious pastoral gifts of pipes and flowers, stockings and bonnets, ending only in an external event: the approach of her mother.

Coridon, arise my *Coridon*,
    Titan shineth cleare:
Who is it that calleth *Coridon*,
    who is it that I heare?
Phillida thy true-Loue calleth thee,
    arise then, arise then;
        arise and keepe thy flock with me:
Phillida my true-Loue, is it she?
    I come then, I come then,
        I come and keepe my flock with thee.

Heere are cherries ripe my *Coridon*,
    eate them for my sake:
Here's my Oaten pipe my louely one,
    sport for thee to make.
Heere are threeds my true-Loue, fine as silke,
    to knit thee, to knit thee
        a paire of stockings white as milke.
Heere are Reedes my true-Loue, fine and neate,
    to make thee, to make thee
        a Bonnet to with-stand the heate.

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[28] *Englands Helicon*, No. 46. Hereafter cited as *Helicon*.

I will gather flowers my *Coridon*,
to set in thy cap.
I will gather Peares my louely one,
to put in thy lap.
I will buy my true-Loue Garters gay,
for Sundayes, for Sundayes,
to weare about his legs so tall:
I will buy my true-Loue yellow Say,
for Sundayes, for Sundayes,
to weare about her middle small. . . .

This catalogue of pastoral pleasures which each promises to the other is turned into a swain's invitation to love in Christopher Marlowe's justly famous lyric, "The Passionate Sheepheard to his loue." It is printed in both *The Passionate Pilgrim* and *Englands Helicon*. In the earlier miscellany "Loues answere" (actually the woman's answer) is this quatrain:

If that the World and Loue were young,
And truth in euery shepheards toung,
These pretty pleasures might me moue,
To liue with thee and be thy Loue.[29]

The *Helicon* prints the full six stanzas of Raleigh's nymph's reply to the shepherd's proposal (No. 138). The tone is a serious critique of the pastoral idyll in the light of reason and its sure knowledge of mutability. The pastoral ideal has two levels of metaphor--happy, innocent love, and the season of spring with nature's benevolent bounty. The reply is a reminder that there are few May mornings compared to winter ones, that youth and beauty do not last. The nymph would rather be wooed with an old-age pension plan than a honeyed tongue. The lovely things of the natural world are briefly ripe in folly, but rotten in

[29] *The Passionate Pilgrim*, n.p.

reason, in the real world governed by inexorable time. The very charms by which she has attracted him will be lost by her yielding to his desires. The delights offered by one human being to another are of a transient paradise which all of us possess already each May. These delights offered by a man to a woman are called "pretty pleasures." Juxtaposed with the reply, the proposal sounds like an adult offering toys to a child. It is especially appropriate that a woman make the reply. She is well aware that the only things he values in her are the most transient: her youthful beauty, her innocence, and her virginity. Not only her future happiness, but, indeed, her most basic security rests in her marriage contract. As we have seen, even young and naive women are cool and level-headed when asked to become dependent on a man. Jane Austen's women have cash register eyes: How much money? Where will we live? How will we pay the bills? Will we be warm and fed in winter? And the "we" is not the two adults so much as the woman and her even more dependent children, who only she seems to remember will inevitably result from her yielding. We see the contrast between the appeal to fancy and the appeal to reason if we read Marlowe's poem (*Helicon*, No. 137) alternating with Raleigh's reply (*Helicon*, No. 138), stanza for stanza:

> Come liue with mee, and be my love,
> And we will all the pleasures proue,
> That Vallies, groues, hills and fieldes,
> Woods, or steepie mountaine yeeldes.
>
> If all the world and loue were young,
> And truth in euery Sheepheards tongue,
> These pretty pleasures might we moue,
> To liue with thee, and be thy loue.

And wee will sit vpon the Rocks,
Seeing the Sheepheards feede theyr flocks,
By shallow Riuers, to whose falls,
Melodious byrds sing Madrigalls.

Time driues the flocks from field to fold,
When Riuers rage, and Rocks grow cold,
And *Philomell* becommeth dombe,
The rest complaines of cares to come.

And I will make thee beds of Roses,
And a thousand fragrant poesies,
A cap of flowers, and a kirtle,
Imbroydred all with leaues of Mirtle.

The flowers doe fade, and wanton fieldes,
To wayward winter reckoning yeeldes,
A honny tongue, a hart of gall,
Is fancies spring, but sorrowes fall.

A gowne made of the finest wooll,
Which from our pretty Lambes we pull,
Fayre lined slippers for the cold:
With buckles of the purest gold.

Thy gownes, thy shooes, thy beds of Roses,
Thy cap, thy kirtle, and thy poesies,
Soone breake, soone wither, soone forgotten:
In follie ripe, in reason rotten.

A belt of straw, and Iuie buds,
With Corall clasps and Amber studs,
And if these pleasures may thee moue,
Come liue with mee, and be my loue.

Thy belt of straw and Iuie buddes,
Thy Corall claspes and Amber studdes,
All these in mee no meanes can moue,
To come to thee, and be thy loue.

The Sheepheards Swaines shall daunce and sing,
For thy delight each May-morning,
If these delights thy minde may moue;
Then liue with mee, and be my loue.

But could youth last, and love still breede,
Had ioyes no date, nor age no neede,
Then these delights my minde might moue,
To liue with thee, and by thy loue.

Another occasion on which the woman responds to the *carpe diem* argument with reason is one of Sidney's songs, "Astrophell to his Stella" (*Helicon*, No. 108). Sidney frames the dialogue with a shady grove, full of the wanton music of birds and the pied beauty of May flowers. The lovers have been practical enough to be oppressed with cares, have wept together over the obstacles to their love; but now, when both are beyond words and tears, love itself breaks the silence, and Astrophel blazes his mistress with neoplatonic splendor: her beauty of body and face surpasses all but the beauty of her mind. He kneels on the ground to beg her favors, but his request, for all the high-minded tone, is the usual one:

> Graunt (ô deere) on knees I pray,
> (Knees on ground he then did stay)
> That not I, but since I loue you,
> Time and place for me may mooue you.
> Neuer season was more fit,
> Neuer roome more apt for it.
> Smiling ayre alowes my reason,
> The birds sing, now vse the season.

After more of this artful persuasion, reason and reality enter in the form of Stella's all but impossible response:

> While such wise she loue denied,
> As yet loue she signified.

This high-minded lady is on the side of the tyrant Honour. Though she echoes his extravagant language, she makes it clear that she will not be placed in a position in which "I should blush when thou art named." She does not calm his passion, but she does leave the grove alone and with her virginity intact. Here are the words of the tactful *femme d'esprit*:

Astrophell, said she, my Loue,
Cease in these effects to proue.
Now be still, yet still beleeve me,
Thy greefe more then death dooth greeue me.
If that any thought in me,
Can tast comfort but of thee,
Let me feede with hellish anguish,
Ioylesse, helplesse, endlesse languish.
If those eyes you praised, be
Halfe so deere as you to me:
Let me home returne starke blinded
Of those eyes, and blinder minded.
If to secret of my hart
I doo any wish impart:
Where thou art not formost placed;
Be both wish and I defaced.
If more may be said, I say
All my blisse on thee I lay.
If thou loue, my loue content thee,
For all loue, all faith is meant thee.
Trust me, while I thee denie,
In my selfe the smart I trie.
Tirant, honour dooth thus vse thee,
Stellaes selfe might not refuse thee.
Therefore (deere) this no more moue,
Least, though I leaue not thy loue,
Which too deepe in me is framed:
I should blush when thou art named.

A much more common *carpe diem* argument is illustrated by another song from Sidney's *Astrophel and Stella*, the first poem in *Englands Helicon*. The persuasions are presented with virtually no opposition, only the faint protestations of the coy maiden. It is a dialogue only because the woman supplies the last line of the refrain. Through most of the poem, she is merely the object of the speaker's desires, the one who must be persuaded. After each stanza, to his request that she "Take me to thee, and thee to me," the lady predictably replies, "No, no, no, no, my Deere, let be." But the last stanza of the poem is a more complex and more important interchange. The scene is set by the lover in every detail and the circumstances particularized with care: it is

night; the stars provoke thoughts of love; danger is kept away by good care; and even "Jealousie it selfe dooth sleepe." They are among a fine bed of flowers which help him woo, and the moon provides just the right amount of light. When she starts at a noise, he claims that it was only a mouse. Not only are all asleep in the house, but they seem to whisper in their sleep, "young folks, take time while you may." To another time-honored objection, fear of her mother, the lover offers the reassurance that she is abed and satisfied that her daughter is writing letters. "Niggard Time," who has granted a rare "large offer," will not again frame things so well for them. The lady is unmarried and marriage is not what is being proposed, so she is unmoved by his pleas for reward for his pain and his reassurance that time and place are right, that they are safe and alone. Even his best appeal fails to storm the fortress of her virginity: the fact that the human condition is to be subject to mutability. But, finally, in the last stanza, he reminds her of the starkest fact of the human condition: "Soone with my death I will please thee." And her reply is the same but the meaning is reversed: "No, no, no, no, my dear, let be." The lover's last and successful argument is surely more than the maudlin claim typical of courtly lovers that she will not be satisfied until he dies of a broken heart. The poet may be punning on "death," making a ruse also a promise: soon (you are almost persuaded) with my death (the climax of love-making) I will please thee (bring about thy "death"). We are meant to hold both meanings of death and also the contrast of life and death in our minds at once: the "death" of making love is life-enhancing as well as procreative. She finally agrees to this rather more honest and

profound idea. Stella has demanded and gotten an honest admission of her lover's motives, and she freely chooses to give and take pleasure.

Another example of the grounds of the *femme d'esprit*'s refusal of love is in a dialogue by Bartholomew Yong (*Helicon*, No. 95). A shepherdess named, appropriately, Diana, does not give in to any of the usual persuasions and tells the lover exactly why. The shepherd calls her "sweete foe," insists that

> There is no hart so fierce and hard
> That can so much torment a soule.

He is sure that love will kill her cruelty with remorse; he asks why she will not remedy his "louing smart" and how she can so torment his mind. He even asks the old question, "And to what end thy beautie keepe?" She has possession of a valuable commodity, if one values a lover's temporary adulation. He asks how she dares to mock him and her reply, he claims, is more mockery. But her argument has to do with reason and free will. She is not merely mocking. She has resolved "her life to passe,/Neyther to loue, nor to be lou'd." Her reason controls her passions: love is but a will and "free-will dooth admit no force." Reason binds her fast "to keepe such daunger from my hart." The danger, of course, is that love may bring sorrow. She is a realist. This shepherdess sends her lover packing with no coy retorts, no insinuating comments. She does not in fact mock her wooer--she answers his lust with cold reason. Here is the text:

The cause why that thou doo'st denie
    To looke on me, sweete foe impart?
Because that dooth not please the eye.
    Which dooth offend and greeve the hart.
What woman is, or euer was,
    That when she looketh, could be mou'd?
She that resolues her life to passe,
    Neyther to loue, nor to be lou'd.
There is no hart so fierce and hard
    That can so much torment a soule:
Nor sheepheard of so small regard,
    That reason will so much controule.
How falls it out Loue dooth not kill
    Thy crueltie with some remorce?
Because that Loue is but a will,
    And free-will dooth admit no force.
Behold what reason now thou hast,
    To remedie my louing smart:
The very same bindes me as fast,
    To keepe such daunger from my hart.
Why doo'st thou thus torment my minde,
    And to what end thy beautie keepe?
Because thou call'st me still vnkinde,
    And pittilesse when thou doo'st weepe.
Is it because thy crueltie
    In killing me dooth neuer end?
Nay, for because I meane thereby,
    My hart from sorrow to defend.
Be bolde so foule I am no way
    As thou doo'st think, faire Sheepheardesse:
With this content thee, that I say,
    That I beleeue the same no lesse.
What, after giving me such store
    Of passions, doo'st thou mock me too?
If aunsweres thou wilt any more.
    Goe seeke them without more adoo.

Another example of the *femme d'esprit*'s talking back is a witty set of four statements and replies, also the work of Yong, between an enamoured shepherd and a scornful woman (*Helicon*, Nos. 113-116). This is one of the *Helicon* pieces that is pastoral only by insertion of the name "shepherd." The woman begins the dialogue by announcing her disdain for his love malady:

Young Sheepheard turne a-side, and moue
Me not to follow thee:
For I will neither kill with loue,
Nor loue shall not kill me.

The shepherd, clever fellow, pretends to be upset that his love offends her, but flatteringly claims that he has no choice; her power is so great that he loves "of force" because "all loue to thee dooth tend." He begs to be permitted to complain, or else to have her end his life, which would "fulfill [her] great disdaine." Insisting upon a response from her, he is determined to make her suffer: since he must continue to love, she must perforce continue to grieve. Her response is matter of fact. She will not humor him:

Me thinks thou tak'st the worser way,
(Enamoured Sheepheard) and in vaine
That thou wilt seeke thine owne decay,
To loue her, that dooth thee disdaine.
. . . . . .
Followe not her that makes a play,
And iest of all thy greefe and paines.

His last response is more empty flattery: he hates himself because she abhors him. He would never have been in this predicament if

viewing thee, I sawe thee not,
And seeing thee, I could not loue thee:
Dying, I should not liue (God wot)
Nor liuing, should to anger moove thee.

But in view of the facts,

it is well that I doo finde
My life so full of torments, for
All kinde of ills doo fit his minde
Whom thou (faire Mistresse) doo'st abhoore.

He ends his plaint in masochistic joy in his pain, Petrarchan lover to the end.

Thomas Lodge's conventional pastoral love complaint (*Helicon*, No. 38) compares the sorrow of the turtle dove and the love sickness

of Polipheme with the male persona's superior woe. His major wish is the adolescent, "Oh how would *Phoebe* sigh, if she did looke on me?" The last stanza is a conventional courtly mixture of arrogance and self-pity:

> Beyond compare my paine,
> yet glad am I:
> If gentle *Phoebe* daine,
> to see her *Montan* die.

"Phoebes Sonnet, a replie to Montanus passion" (*Helicon*, No. 39), is worth the sickly poem which occasioned it. Her motto is the sprightly refrain:

> Downe a downe,
> thus *Phillis* sung,
> By fancie once distressed:
> Who so by foolish Loue are stung
> are worthily oppressed.

Her story is in the form of a myth/allegory, borrowing types from the *Romance of the Rose*, and preaches the adulteration of "pure" love by "fancie," shortlived romantic feelings. The two stanzas follow:

> When Loue was first begot,
> And by the mothers will:
> Did fall to humane lot,
> His solace to fulfill.
> Deuoide of all deceite,
> A chast and holy fire:
> Did quicken mans conceite,
> And vvomens breasts inspire.
> The Gods that saw the good,
> That mortalls did approoue:
> With kind and holy moode,
> Began to talke of Loue.
>
> But during this accord,
> A wonder strange to heare:
> Whilst Loue in deede and word,
> Most faithfull did appeare;
> False semblance came in place,
> By Iealousie attended:

And with a double face,
Both loue and fancie blended.
Which made the Gods forsake,
And men from fancie flie:
And Maydens scorne a make,
Forsooth, and so will I.

The objection of this *femme d'esprit* is to the hypocrisy, the "false semblance" of lovers. Though the code of courtly love insists that jealousy keeps its flames bright, this woman has enough common sense to object to such a shallow and demeaning emotion. The "double face" of love is part love and part "fancie," which can mean caprice, whimsy, or illusion--a superficial sexual attraction.

A dialogue song from *Englands Helicon* (No. 125) is a debate between two shepherdesses about which sex is more deceptive. It presents the many roles played by both men and women when love is considered a courtly game. The first four lines of the stanza are spoken by a nymph who objects to the deception practiced by men; the second four point out that women also play false roles:

Fie on the sleights that men deuise,
heigh hoe sillie sleights:
When simple Maydes they would entice,
Maides are yong mens chiefe delights.
Nay, women they witch with their eyes,
eyes like beames of burning Sunne:
And men once caught, they soone despise,
so are Sheepheards oft vndone.

If the man is treacherous, the woman is full of guile, reminding us that Ovid has taught women to deceive the deceivers:

If any young man win a maide,
happy man is he:
By trusting him she is betraide,
fie vpon such treacherie.
If Maides win young men with their guiles,
heigh hoe guilefull greefe:
They deale like weeping Crocodiles,
that murther men without releefe.

An instance of a particular shepherd's unfaithfulness is sung in stanza three:

> I know a simple Country Hinde,
> heigh hoe sillie Swaine:
> To whom faire *Daphne* prooued kinde,
> was he not kinde to her againe?
> He vowed by *Pan* with many an oath,
> heigh ho Sheepheards God is he:
> Yet since hath chang'd, and broke his troath,
> troth-plight broke, will plagued be.

But the maiden, it seems, deserves the treatment she got:

> She had deceaued many a Swaine,
> fie on false deceite:
> And plighted troath to them in vaine,
> there can be no greefe more great.
> Her measure was with measure paide,
> heigh hoe, heigh hoe equall meede:
> She was beguil'd that had betraide,
> so shall all deceauers speede.

In showing each other that members of both sexes play roles and practice hypocrisy, the two women finally agree that it is the hypocrisy of men and the coyness of women which are to be eschewed and a more honest basis found for the male/female relationship.

The pastoral mode is a way of wearing a mask which renders the complex simple. Certainly the complexities of human love are simplified when a man as a simple shepherd urges a woman to make love while she may, and a woman is given a shepherdess' simple choices. William Empson points out what should be obvious by now: that one of the salient characteristics of the Elizabethan period is its liberal use of masks. He claims that "conscious artifice, the deliberate playing of a role through a mask, may be of the utmost importance . . . to the exploration

of human possibilities."[30] Shakespeare's disguised women are using their masks to explore ways to escape the role of mistress. Rosalind, her love at court complicated by her role, can even become the wooer in the freedom of Arden. She can act out the truth. Julia, in *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, and Viola in *Twelfth Night* are explicitly contrasted with Silvia and Olivia, Petrarchan idols. In their disguises, the *femmes d'esprit* cannot play feminine games, and so the love they win is not whimsical worship, but based on honest openness. The mistresses are debased by their own base tactics.

One could argue that Shakespeare's comedies turn mistresses into *femmes d'esprit*. Germaine Greer comments that the plays "clear away the detritus of romance, ritual, perversity and obsession" before the happy endings are allowed.[31] In *A Midsummer Night's Dream* the obsession of courtly adulation leads to hallucination, exorcised only when the characters regain control on reality. Bassanio's courtly love of Portia in *The Merchant of Venice* has a more honest and rational basis after she has played the role of judge. Her wit and independence make her a model of the *femme d'esprit*. The witty Beatrice rebels against the role of mistress. Romeo overhears Juliet's confession of love, so she need not be coy. Indeed, these central Elizabethan plays consistently use the motif of presenting women the choice of playing the role of mistress

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[30]William Empson, *Some Versions of the Pastoral* (Norfolk: New Directions, 1960), pp. 74-5.

[31]Germaine Greer, *The Female Eunuch* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1971), p. 219.

or choosing instead what Shakespeare implies is the better way: that of the *femme d'esprit*.

CHAPTER IV

WOMAN'S IMAGERY AND LANGUAGE

"Loue in my bosome like a Bee,
dooth suck his sweete:
Now with his wings he playes with me,
now with his feete."
(*Englands Helicon*, No. 100)

The language and imagery which the woman personae use in Elizabethan miscellanies set these poems apart in tone, in theme, and in significance from the other love poetry of the age. If we can agree that poems are about the speaker rather than about what the poet is saying, it is obvious that imagery tells us much about the persona. Point of view is enormously important to the woman speaker. Simone de Beauvoir points out that "A man would never get the notion of writing a book on the peculiar situation of the human male. . . . A man never begins by presenting himself as an individual of a certain sex; it goes without saying that he is a man." This, she claims, is because "masculinity is the norm, humanity is male."[1] This is certainly true of poetry. Poets are male who speak through a male persona about the male view of the world, as though it were the only perspective. We assume a totality in the vast range of life presented by the male persona, and, conversely, a perspective limited in the extreme from the woman persona. She is concerned only with her femaleness; she has no

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[1]Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, trans. H. M. Parshley (New York: Knopf, 1953), p. xv.

existence apart from her relationship to men, and, excluded from so much of life in a man's world, she has no knowledge of or interest in the larger world. Male-oriented more than self-oriented, women seem not to exist apart from men. Their imagery and language are all bound up in their relations to men. We must take into account that these poems are about love, and the subject dictates a narrow range of interest. But, even so, miscellany poems with a woman persona are almost *all* about love. There is one about friendship, and one about loss of reputation (but the latter is in fact loss of sexual reputation and, therefore, concerns male/female relations closely), but almost a hundred are *about* the persona's relation to a man. Male personae in the miscellanies sing of their love of God and friends as well as of women and present the full range of human concerns in the larger world. They talk about their relation to time and mortality, to nature, to fame, and to worldly success. They take journeys and fight wars and have adventures. In their love poetry they are certainly woman-oriented, but even in this context, their range of ideas and vehicles of metaphor are much wider.

A passage in Raleigh's "The Ocean to Cynthia"[2] illustrates how narrow the love interest is and how much at odds with other masculine values. The persona has gone traveling, true to the inclinations of the Renaissance male:

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[2]Sir Walter Raleigh, in *The Renaissance in England*, eds. Hyder E. Rollins and Herschel Baker (Boston: D. C. Heath, 1954), p. 321. Hereafter cited as *Rollins Anthology*.

To seek new worlds for gold, for praise, for glory,
To try desire, to try love severed far,
When I was gone she sent her memory,
More strong then were ten thousand ships of war,

To call me back, to leave great honor's thought,
To leave my friends, my fortune, my attempt,
To leave the purpose I so long had sought,
And hold both cares and comfort in contempt. . . .

Love is narrow, too exclusive in its demands, too domesticating for the men who were overlords of the earth. The woman who stands at the window waiting for her lover to return from the sea would never dream of joining him in his great adventure. She waits passively, unmoving as a magnet, appealing to his lower nature. She wants security, not glory.

A poem by Robert Greene[3] summarizes the difference between the masculine and feminine range of interest. It is "Philomela's Ode" and expresses the contrast in showing the woman's preference:

Sitting by a riverside
    Where a silent stream did glide,
Muse I did of many things
    That the mind in quiet brings.
I gan think how some men deem
    Gold their god, and some esteem
Honor is the chief content
    That to man in life is lent.
And some others do contend
    Quiet none like to a friend.
Others hold there is no wealth
    Compared to a perfit health.
Some men's mind in quiet stands
    When he is lord of many lands.
But I did sigh, and said all this
    Was but a shade of perfit bliss,
And in my thoughts I did approve
    Nought so sweet as is true love.

The love of woman is not to be compared to the love of God in Sidney's famous renunciation:

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[3]Robert Greene, in *Rollins Anthology*, p. 381.

> Leave me, O Love, which reachest but to dust,
> And thou, my mind, aspire to higher things.
> Grow rich in that which never taketh rust,
> Whatever fades but fading pleasure brings.[4]

Though neo-platonism provides much of the impetus for male love poetry, we should note that love of a woman's beauty of body was to lead to love of her virtue, and thence to love of the ever more abstract and metaphysical. In contrast, a woman's love longing is for the physical presence of her lover. The women whom we have identified as mistresses are not, in their imagery and language, destroying or even seriously challenging the old, man-created myths about women.

The most obvious difference between male and female personae in Elizabethan poetry is the language of the women. They often call our attention immediately to their femaleness and their corresponding inadequacy to express themselves. This figure of rhetoric is called *diminutio*, self-disparagement, and is an exaggeration of the classical method of engaging the audience on the speaker's side[5]--but it is made expecially necessary in the case of a woman persona *because* she is a woman. We find in poems from the miscellanies withdrawings and qualifications, apologies for the persona's presumption, delicacies of sensibility, constant acknowledgments of limitations, such as are unknown in the male persona's point of view.

The poets who created these women personae had a basis in rhetorical theory for exaggerating these devices. Rosamond Tuve points

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[4]Sir Philip Sidney, in *Rollins Anthology*, p. 330.

[5]J. W. H. Atkins, *English Literary Criticism: The Medieval Phase* (London: Methuen, 1952), p. 203.

out that rhetoricians had distinguished certain figures as feminine, "thought to give elegance and gracefulness as over against pith or depth of conceit." She goes on to show that classic and Elizabethan rhetoricians alike make this distinction of gender

> between figures approved for grace and exquisiteness and figures approved for force and dignity. The notion that the faculty called judgment or understanding is masculine, is, of course, time-honored. Cicero's division between masculine and feminine beauty finds a parallel or an application in the division between figures of words, which are effeminate and musical, and figures of thought or sentence, which are manly and martial. These are Peacham's adjectives. . . . Devices that concern the very structure in which the thought is embodied . . . would especially lend convincingness or majesty.[6]

We find that the mistress who speaks in miscellany poems does not claim to offer thought or reason--much less majesty--in her words. She is artless, her words are formless; to the soft body belongs the soft mind. Her language is of self-deprecation, self-doubt. As she sounds her heart, she does not claim to understand life. She articulates her inarticulateness.

One such woman persona does not claim a mind at all, is all heart, and that heart a *tabula rasa*, soft wax waiting for a man's seal of approval: "So deepe therin, ingraued is your looke,/As never may bee wyped from that place."[7] A shepherdess begs an audience with an equally unlettered shepherd who is assumed to be articulate only because he is male: "Faustus, if thou wilt reade from me/these fewe and simple

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[6]Rosamond Tuve, *Elizabethan and Metaphysical Imagery* (1947; rpt. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), p. 139.

[7]*A gorgious Gallery of gallant Inventions*, p. 61. Hereafter cited as *Gallery*.

lines . . . ."[8] Another self-proclaimed illiterate claims to lack "skill my sorrowes heere to paint."[9] Women are childlike in their artlessness. Oenone must ask the muses' help in singing her tragic song because she is a "sillie Nymphe."[10] This adjective is otherwise reserved for infants and children, those "sely babes." Another woman persona is only "embouldned" to write because the muses will aid her.[11] In invoking the muses, she is using a convention common enough to the male, but a male persona does so with different import. The muses are women because women are the inspiration for the writing men do. A male invocation is a stock image of self-deprecation and deference to goddesses who are much like the Beatrices and Lauras who inspire poetry. In fact, the muses are often passed over in favor of the direct inspiration of the mistress herself. Sidney's third sonnet in *Astrophel and Stella* says:

> Let dainty wits cry on the sisters nine,
> That, bravely mask'd, their fancies may be told;
> . . . . . .
> in Stella's face I read
> What love and beauty be, then all my deed
> But copying is what in her Nature writes.[12]

Astrophel uses *diminutio* in Sonnet 74:

> I never drank of Aganippe well,
> Nor ever did in Shade of Tempe sit,
> And muses scorn with vulgar brains to dwell;
> Poor layman I, for sacred rites unfit.

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[8] *Englands Helicon*, No. 111. Hereafter cited as *Helicon*.

[9] *Helicon*, No. 45.

[10] *Helicon*, No. 149.

[11] *Gallery*, p. 116.

[12] Sir Philip Sidney, in *Rollins Anthology*, p. 325.

But, nonetheless, "my verse best wits doth please" because he does have inspiration: "My lips are sweet, inspired with Stella's kiss."[13]

However, when women invoke the muses, it is purely a means of self-deprecation: they do not seek another's woman's inspiration, but her help in articulating what they already feel. Because the muses are women, they can provide help in expressing feelings peculiar to women. No woman calls on Apollo or her lover. A few call upon mythic prototypes for aid: Dido or Penelope understand what feelings they are trying to articulate.

Male personae use a formula of apology for their poetry which is little more than a conventional nod to modesty. Spenser's *Amoretti* contain phrases like "my rude musick"[14] and "my tuneless harp."[15] Drayton's *Heroic Epistles* are "these harsh-tuned cadences I sing."[16] But in *Idea's Mirror*, Drayton betrays how empty of meaning the formula is, for though he calls his work "these rude, unpolished rimes," in sonnet six he boasts that "I to thee eternity shall give" by means of his "immortal" poetry:

> So shalt thou fly above the vulgar throng,
> Still to survive in my immortal song.[17]

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[13] Ibid., p. 328.

[14] "Amoretti," in *The Poetical Works of Edmund Spenser*, eds. J. C. Smith and E. de Selincourt (1912; rpt. London: Oxford University Press, 1963), No. 38, p. 568.

[15] "Amoretti," No. 44, p. 569.

[16] Michael Drayton, in *Rollins Anthology*, p. 343.

[17] Ibid., p. 426.

In contrast to this, a woman writing an elegy in the *gorgious Gallery*[18] protests far too much. With articulate elegance she insists that

> With Poets pen, I doo not preace to write,
> *Minervas* mate, I doo not boast to bee.

She is a frustrated illiterate:

> Wit wants to will: alas! no skill I haue.

She even makes an explicit comparison between the sexes:

> Eche man doth mone, when faythfull freends bee dead,
> And paynt them out, as well as wits do serue:
> But I, a Mayde,

lack wit, lack mind, lack art, lack any self-respect. Her apologies continue redundantly: "My wits be weake. . . . My phrase doth serue but rudely to recite." She calls her elegy "my slender arte" and "these ragged rymes." She is only daring to mourn her friend in verse because no one else will. She is so apologetic that she offers an overnice conceit: if only she had died along with her beloved

> Then had it been that I poore silly Dame,
> Had, had no need to blot this scratched scroule:
> Then Virgins fist, had not set forth the same.

She is poor (weak and helpless); she is silly, of course. Her paper is scratched because she is so marginally literate. She has no *right* to be articulate. The "Virgins fist" is presumably used only to copy out pious sentences into a commonplace book. It is virginal because women, if they learn to write at all, have little use for this activity, and none whatsoever for any invention which goes beyond mere copy work. To

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[18] *Gallery*, p. 116.

proclaim one's inadequacy is a useful defense against the criticism which she apparently expected, so she must spend half of her lines defending her temerity for writing the other half. Other women freely acknowledge male superiority for reasons we have already discussed: one may demand gentlemanly behavior and justice from one's superior:

> Pardy, it is but little praise,
> To thee that art a man:
> To finde so many crafty wayes,
> To fraude a poore woman.[19]

There is no doubt that every one of these personae speaks consciously as a woman. They beg their audiences to let them have a say, aware of how little the woman's point of view has entered history. To make a record is to rescue one's sex from oblivion, to give it a voice. Though we can assume that male poets created these women personae, we can imagine that their motivation was to tell Oenone's side of the story, since only Paris' had been told, or Helen's, or Creseyde's, or, by extension, that of any pretty mistress or sad shepherdess.

Trapped as they are in the narrow world which the poet imagines their femaleness to be, these women personae make frequent use of the language of bondage--metaphors of slavery. They do not touch on any subject which is independent of their relationship to men, since they are by law and custom bound to a man. Having no separate identity, no independence, they have no concern for a world they are not permitted to participate in. From the woman's point of view, courtship is the record of what is *done to* her: what is offered by lover to father and

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[19] *Gallery*, p. 28.

father to lover, how she is manipulated by both. In only one poem all of these words are used by a woman: "prison," "sore bound," "thrall," "seruant," "bondsman," and "bondage." She is so much in her lover's power that she makes an unseemly defense:

> Since first in bondage I became, my woord and deede was euer such
> That never once he could me blame, except from louing him too much.
> Which I can judge no just offense, nor cause that I deservd disdayne.[20]

She has been so well trained in slave mentality that she believes that slaves are loveable. Other women assume, as we have seen, that servility will inspire like servility in a man. Some women complain that the situation is reversed: that she who was once served by a courtly worshipper has, in giving in, become the servile one.

For a man, courtship is a limited period of time in which he must pretend to courtly worship in order to win eventual possession of its object. He uses the imagery of bondage, but in a different way from a woman. Both claim that love is out of their control, but the man is in fact in control of his own life, while the woman really is helpless. If his courtship succeeds, he gains total mastery over the relationship. If it should fail, all he has lost is his pride. But if a woman gives in, she puts her honor and her will, her body, and her self in possession of the conqueror. It is not surprising that so many of these personae appeal to justice:

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[20] *The Paradyse of dayntie devises*, No. 26. Hereafter cited as *Paradyse*.

And thou to leave mee so,
And canst no iust cause tell.[21]

Always the property of some male, a woman is described in one poem as the "ward" of her father in maidenhood, a "slave" to her husband the rest of her life. Only the widow casts off her "livery" and has freedom.[22] The slave lives in constant terror of losing the protection and the very life support given by her master. One fearful woman asks, "And will you this now from me swarve/That neuer did trespace?"[23] Women whom we have identified as mistresses willingly and knowingly give up their "freedom" for the prison term called marriage: "And for my part I vow,/to serue for terme of life."[24] The voluntary prisoner or slave is often so because of infantile inadequacies. One woman persona is a willing "thrall" because her weak and dependent sense of self is like the tender sprig that bends to every blast of wind or a guideless ship with no certain port.[25] So lost and aimless is she in the big and alien world that she happily becomes the port for *his* sail: let the male venture out, and return to his earthbound container if and when he will.

When another woman persona talks about being "from favour cast,"[26]

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[21] *Gallery*, p. 28.

[22] *A Poetical Rapsody*, No. 179. Hereafter cited as *Rhapsody*.

[23] Tottel's *Songes and Sonettes*, No. 222. Hereafter cited as Tottel.

[24] *A Handefull of pleasant delites*, p. 63. Hereafter cited as *Handefull*.

[25] *Gallery*, p. 74.

[26] *Paradyse*, No. 63.

we are reminded that any slave's master is absolute lord of her life, tyrannical if he wants to be, whimsical and unjust in whether he notices, ignores, or rejects his possessions. When another woman once admits that "my loue you doo possesse," she calmly compares the relationship to the oath of feudal fealty:

> The fayth by othe, that subiects doo confesse,
> To their new prince, is seldom stronger seene:
> No fyrmer state than that . . . ,
> Of kinge, ne keyser hither to hath been.[27]

This acknowledgment of his control over life and death is then expanded to worship: "Whose Idol, Lord and God thou werst most puisant." When we remember the large number of medieval poems which are laments of seduced servant girls, we are reminded of how compliant women are taught to be. True femininity is naivete, uncritical obedience, and respect, all childlike qualities. The female servant is the perfect sex object, and the primary one in this early poetry. Like a child, except that she is conveniently sexually mature, she cannot demand that a man take responsibility for her swollen belly. She dares vent her impotent anger only when it is too late.

Far more surprising than this language of bondage are the instances in which *femmes d'esprit* refuse slavery. One asserts that "Loue is but a will,/And free-will dooth admit no force."[28] This woman sees, at least for the moment, that she does have choice, control over her feelings and thus control over her own life. Another, after the fact, sees that her bondage is caused by her desire:

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[27] *Gallery*, p. 61. [28] *Helicon*, No. 95.

This greefe which I feele so rife,
(wretch) I doo deserve as hire:
Since I came to put my life
in the hands of my desire.[29]

In personifying desire, she graphically shows that, as sure as his sexuality confers power to the male, female sexuality is danger to the woman. She can choose freedom or bondage, but this means a choice of unnatural virginity or sexual fulfillment.

One very explicit form of bondage is male possession of the woman's physical self. The proof that women are not in charge of their own bodies is that the surest way to "defame" a woman is to accuse her of using her body as she pleases. One woman, accused like the Biblical Suzanna, puts it this way:

A thousand good women,
have guiltlesse been accusde:
For verie spite, although that they,
their bodies never abusde.[30]

It is the abuse of the property of another to use it as one pleases. Men often protect each other's property rights, motivated by assuring the paternity of their children. Women no more than cattle are permitted to be "at large" sexually; all have owners. One woman persona refers to "My daintie tamed womb,/that to thy share befell."[31] Her source of generation sounds almost like a separate thing, not part of her identity and personhood, but an asset that belongs to some male or another. An exceedingly unfeminine woman persona of a Campion song[32]

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[29] *Helicon*, No. 103.

[30] *Handefull*, p. 56.

[31] *Howell's Devises*, p. 64.

[32] *The Works of Thomas Campion*, ed. Walter R. Davis (Garden City: Doubleday, 1967), No. 19, p. 111.

compares her body to a spring that her husband draws from, calls it his lamp, his treasure, his sweet rose. Her rebellious suggestion is that it will not hurt him if another draws from his spring, if his lamp lightens another, if his rose's scent is smelled by other men. She declares, "mine own Ile use." One's body is a potent symbol of one's self. This *femme d'esprit* is acting as though she has a self.

Closely allied to this subject-object relationship between men and women is a very physical attribute: her beauty. It is seen by a woman as her only power, yet to the degree that men regard women for their beauty they transform women into objects. When the Countess of Pembroke says that "her beauty was no foode for clownes," she implies that her heroine is an object for male consumption, and that her value is based entirely on her degree of beauty.[33] Feminine power is thus the power to choose among masters. For a brief time during courtship, the virgin, because she is "beauty's rose," is a "soueraigne spirit," "thrall to none." But beauty is a treacherous possession. Whereas the virgin is an angel descended to a fair house, the wife is a soul tied to a body; and the widow, no more thrall to a man, is a soul departed into bliss.[34] The depth of woman's subjugation and yet of her wisdom in knowing the source of her power is sounded in this plea: "Cannot my beautie move thee?/Pitty, yet pitty me."[35] Women are often spoken of by male personae strictly in terms of their physical beauty. They are called jewels, or jewel boxes, the degrading synecdoche of taking their

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[33] *Helicon*, No. 127. [34] *Rhapsody*, No. 179.

[35] *Helicon*, No. 118.

genital organ to stand for the whole person. Women personae in the miscellanies do this to themselves, reducing themselves to a jewel that men are mad to obtain. Shore's wife calls herself "the king's chief jewel, my body soft."[36] Maids as jewels lose their value when they "match with men." Virgin daughters are preferred above mothers as pearls are better than mother of pearl. If the wife is a richly set diamond, and a widow a jewel in a cabinet, the maid is the richer jewel because unset.[37] Underlying this imagery is not the sensuous delight of the *Song of Solomon*, but the marketplace concern for virginity as a commodity. A woman's only morality is her "vartue," as Pamela would put it. One way this is expressed is in women's praise of virginity: the maid is an angel, and to marry is to fall from a pure state into sin. Maidenhood is variously described by the maid in a *Rhapsody* poem as incorruption on this spotted earth, the purest gold with no alloy (another economic image), the sweetest flower, a pearl, a crystal glass that angels use for a mirror, and Diana's fountain, clear and cold. The speaker describes herself as a commodity: "a spotless garment never worn," whose only use, paradoxically, is to be used.[38]

Virginity, that cold and negative quality, that absence of maturity, that incompleteness, is contrasted with the fire, the warmth, the positive life force of mature sexuality. A *Rhapsody* poem is a dialogue between the lover's flaming heart and his lady's frozen breast.[39]

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[36] *The Garland of Good Will*, No. 2. Hereafter cited as *Garland*.

[37] *Rhapsody*, No. 179.

[38] Ibid.

[39] Ibid., No. 45.

This woman has been taught to think of herself as an object, a commodity only valuable in its immature state. Perversely, her snow enflames him. Naturally, she desires to know "desire's sweet flames." A poem in Tottel[40] uses a large range of images of fire and ice, softness and hardness. A blacksmith wants to melt and shape the object of his desires. It is a dialogue between the smith and the object: the woman accuses him of borrowing his flames (coals of passion) from Vulcan. He sees her attitude as cold water thrown on his flames to quench them. He wants to soften her metal (heart), to convince her to yield to his hammer, to become what he wants her to be. He will fashion a cunning key to her heart. She does not agree that her coldness is quenching his heart, but claims that it is banking the fire, making it last, which she understandably wants: casual lust is trouble for women.

The real problem with beauty, from a woman's point of view, is that it is a perishable commodity. Physical beauty begins to fade as soon as it reaches its peak; this makes a woman valuable on the marriage market for only a brief time. But her value also depends upon a metaphysical beauty: the beauty of innocence. She is worthless if she has been used. Virginity is her only moral virtue. Imagery in the miscellanies connects beauty and innocence explicitly. *The Phoenix Nest* has a poem translated from Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* which, like the central allegory of the *Romance of the Rose*, compares virginity to a rose.[41] While it is still untouched, it is beloved of nature:

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[40]Tottel, No. 288.

[41]*The Phoenix Nest*, p. 101. Hereafter cited as *Phoenix*.

> The aire thereon, and ruddie morne doth smile,
> The earth and waters, fauours it that while. . . .

But once the rose is plucked,

> The grace that earth, and heauen thereon did cast,
> With beautie, favor, love, and all, is past.

As if this metaphor were not explicit enough, the audience of ladies is told that a maiden's flower, "more deere than eie, or life," this "prize," once lost, loses for her "loue and liking," and all esteem. This is only fair warning. Male personae through the centuries have mourned the loss of beauty and innocence, and, therefore, value these while they last: "Death is the mother of beauty," Wallace Stevens reminds us even today.[42] The basis of the *carpe diem* argument is natural mutability. And yet when women are warned, as in the rose poem above, to keep their virginity (and, therefore, their virture), it is as though the loss of that virginity would be an unnatural event, not the inevitable heart of the natural process, mutability. Why does a woman lose her value, her beauty, her virtue when she succumbs to her mature sexual desires outside of marriage? One reason is found in the economics of sexuality.

The economics of marriage, so much the subject of fiction from *Pamela* to the present, is acknowledged freely by these sixteenth century women personae. One woman warns another not to "driue the bargain til it be driven away."[43] Marriage is reduced to haggling for price and value.

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[42]Wallace Stevens, *The Palm at the End of the Mind: Selected Poems and a Play*, ed. Holly Stevens (New York: Vintage Books, Random House, 1972), p. 7.

[43]*Rhapsody*, No. 177.

In another poem,[44] the wife's heart is indentured, with love's covenants written on it, an overly nice way to talk about the terms of the bill of sale that has passed between her father and her husband. In another poem, the lover writes letters which are "embassadours" trying to work out an international trade agreement: "To treate in hast for to procure her to a better trade."[45]

Many of the concerns of the larger world are used as metaphorical vehicles for the relationship between men and women. One very ordinary metaphor in Elizabethan verse is martial imagery for the battle of the sexes. Normally, male lovers are soldiers who besiege and/or assault the castle which is a woman's virtue. Her surrender may be voluntary, coerced in the form of seduction, or forced by a rapist. The fall of the male's "enemy" is her ravishment, making her his victim, too, for the result is that he sacks the "town" and takes her honor hostage. Thus, the woman persona's martial metaphors are defensive: she fears encroachment, fights to preserve her freedom. Her vocabulary is of battle and endurance. She wins small and temporary victories, but seems to suffer from a compulsion to lose. Like a literal castle, a woman is earthbound, passive, forced to take the defensive, and far from impregnable if her enemy, the active, offensive, and wise agent, can find the key to her defenses or can simply batter down the door with sheer physical strength. One untrustworthy defense which she has is "Beauties famous fort."[46] As Astrophel tells Stella, "Leave to Mars the force of

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[44] *Rhapsody*, No. 179.

[45] Tottel, No. 242.

[46] *Handefull*, p. 16.

hands,/Your power in your beauty stands."[47] But, while women do have this one weapon, men's weapon is wisdom, which turns out to be superior. Beauty is "a two-edg'd sword, a trusty shield" in that "No force resists a lovely face,/Both fire and sworde to Beautie yield."[48] Yielding, as the lady knows well, means coming under the influence of. Beauty fans the fire of man's lust and makes him want to use his sword. He yields, but, as another woman persona points out, "You yelde, but for to winne and conquer me."[49] Not only is the lover-warrior hostile to his victim, he is deceitful as well. A poem in Tottel[50] elaborates on the adage that all's fair in love and war:

> And whom they so besege, it is a wonderous thing,
> What crafty engins to assault these wily warriors bring.
> The eye as scout and watch to stirre both to and fro
> Doth serue to stale her here and there where she doth
> come and go.

Once a man's interest is aroused, he guards his enemy and circumscribes her freedom. To accomplish her surrender, he displays his power in case she thinks she has a fighting chance:

> Then come they to the larme, then shew they in the fielde,
> Then muster they in colours strange that wayes to
> make her yeld
> Then shoote they batrye of, then compasse they her in,
> At tilt and turney oft they strive this selly soule
> to win.

This martial pageantry is not all metaphor: the male does display himself in these ways, shooting off the battery of flattery and promises and tilting, not with the lady herself, but with other males to show his

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[47] *Helicon*, No. 1.

[48] *Rhapsody*, No. 124.

[49] *Paradise*, No. 78.

[50] Tottel, No. 242.

dominance. The worst rebuke that Cresside could give Troilus is that, though her "feeble force" could not withstand the king's order, he should have used "right full force to keepe his owne" and "garded well his right."[51] Other women surrender cheerfully. One says, "Though I be conquer'd, what care I?/In such a pleasant war."[52] Another besotted and conquered persona says:

> So that you neede not fortifie your hould,
> With Towre of Ditch, least others win it should.
> For though you set, no Souldiers for defence,
> For all assaults, this one may yet suffise:

that she will love her overlord faithfully.[53] Still another, bemoaning the lag in her courtship, longs for "the wished warre in such vncertaine peace."[54]

Closely allied to martial imagery is the imagery of the hunt. Hunting and war are closely linked in literature, and especially in the language describing the male/female relationship. Unlike in the actual sport of hunting, in sexual relationships the chase is perpetual and mutual. The woman may be either hunter or hunted. If she is the prey, she speaks of herself as a timid, fearful herbivor. She displays some masochism in embracing her role of helpless submissiveness, suffering as a victim. Her flight often initiates and intensifies pursuit. One wonders how much she wants to escape when she is the one who brings

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[51] *Paradise*, No. 117.

[52] *The Garland of Good Will*, p. 107. Hereafter cited as *Garland*.

[53] *Gallery*, p. 61. [54] *Helicon*, No. 45.

about the chase. It is simply a truism in the poetry of the miscellanies that "men seeke to bring poore women to their bow."[55] One clever lover is described by a woman as a woodman who "knowes how for to lodge his dere."[56] In one poem the lover is a hawk, and the woman a small bird who is his prey. He complains, "The swifter I followe, then you fly awaie." She replies, "Swift hawks in their flying, oft times misse their pray." His hostile reminder is, "Yet some killeth dedly, that flie to the marke." But she, still free, answers, "You shall touche no feather, thereof take no carke."[57] She is full of the unusual tererity of a *femme d'esprit*, but, nonetheless, seems to be both initiating and intensifying his pursuit.

There is a considerable body of imagery in which the woman is the bird of prey and the man her master, the falconer. T. R. Henn tells us, in *The Living Image*, that the female of the hawk or falcon is the one trained because she is a third larger and heavier than the tiercel, or male. She is graceful, wild, inscrutable, mysterious, much as a woman is to a man. Henn points out that there are often sexual overtones in the relationship between falcon and falconer. A Haggard is a wild hawk, difficult and inconstant. The falconer who can tame her becomes her owner, trainer, controller, teacher, master.[58] The best known of the images of the woman as hawk is in *Othello*. At the point in

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[55] *The Forrest of Fancy*, sig. D1^{r}.

[56] Tottel, No. 242. [57] *Paradise*, No. 73.

[58] T. R. Henn, *The Living Image: Shakespearian Essays* (London: Methuen, 1972), p. 16.

Shakespeare's play when Othello has been made to realize that Desdemona may or may not be docile, faithful, obedient to her husband and master, Othello says,

> If I do prove her haggard
> Though that her jesses were my dear heartstrings,
> I'ld whistle her off and let her down the wind
> To prey at fortune.[59]

If, that is, Desdemona does prove unfaithful, loses her whole worth as a wife, she will be abandoned (flown downwind, a sure way to lose a hawk) and forced to find her own prey (doubtless as a prostitute). Henn points out that the metaphor works out even in detail. Jesses are "light leather thongs permanently fixed to the hawk's legs and ending in light silver rings, the varvels, on which the owner's initials were stamped."[60] Those jesses might be Othello's heartstrings, but his ego is as much involved as his softer feelings: they are the seal of his ownership, proof of the marriage contract. But Henn does not note that women personae use this image too, and from their point of view the falconer's control is to be lamented, as in this poem from the *gorgious Gallery*. The falconer has the power and skill

> To lure mee to thy fist,
> To ease thy feigned pain.
> And euer when thou list,
> To cast mee of agayne.[61]

The taming of the only bird which can be tamed "sets up a special bond" according to Henn. It is "the product of endless patience, understanding,

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[59]"Othello," in *The Riverside Shakespeare*, ed. G. Blakemore Evans (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1974), III.iii.264-67. All other references to Shakespeare are from this edition.

[60]Henn, p. 17. [61]*Gallery*, p. 28.

and in classical hawking, some cruelty."[62] We can see each of these in a typical Renaissance courtship cum seduction. The process of taming is called "manning the hawk," which is a curious counterpart to a young man wiving, that is, choosing a wife. Again, the woman is object, the man subject. The bond between falcon and falconer is established by food, repeated handling, familiarity with the voice and gestures of the man, whose alien nature must frighten the wild creature. Henn's description of the manning makes a pertinent point:

> Once caught, and fitted with jesses and varvels, the bird was temporarily blinded by sewing together the eyelids (seeling). . . . Once blinded, the bird is starved, watched by day and night, denied sleep; until she finally surrenders, and begins to take food and to submit to caresses from her master. This, except for the blinding, is the sequence of events in *The Taming of the Shrew*.[63]

Henn cites a seventeenth century manual called *The Gentleman's Recreation* which even calls the hawk coy:

> "And when you perceive her pretty quiet, take her gently to your Fist, stroaking her with a Feather. If she be troublesome and very coy, set her down again, and take her up a second time about an hour after, and so continue til you have gained her love. . . ."[64]

In *Much Ado*, Hero says of Beatrice, that *femme d'esprit*,

> I know her spirits are as coy and wild
> As haggards of the rock.
> (III.i.35-6)

A woman persona in a miscellany poem[65] tries to dissuade a man from another woman who is a "wanton." The "trull" is spoken of, not as a majestic falcon, but as a predator who eats the kill of others. She

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[62]Henn, p. 24. [63]Ibid., p. 25. [64]Ibid., p. 39.

[65]*Howell's Devises*, p. 74.

is called a "Bussard blind" and a "carron [carrion] kyte," full of the peacock's "peeuishe pride," though the peahen seems to have none: is the persona calling this woman manly? At any rate, "to base she is for thee to lure and call," reminding us that a lure is what courtship is before women are hooded and manned. The lover is told,

> Thy foode to fine her fylthy gorge to fill,
> Of daintie pray to judge, she hath no skill.
> By course of kinde, she doth for carren craue.
> Be rulde by me, her diet let her have.

Not only are her appetites base, implying that such carnivorous women actually have sexual appetites, but so are her habits:

> Doe way the Kyte, that so doth scratch and scowle,
> My Keeper kepe henceforth some finer fowle.

It sounds like some trouble with pecking order in the mews. Because this "kyte" is a "dunghill byrde," the lover/falconer is urged to "call home thy hart" as he would call his hunting dog.

In another hunting metaphor, a bitter woman compares herself to a man's faithful dog and horse:

> The wretched hound that spendes
> And serveth after kinde:
> The horse that tredeth the beaten ways
> As nature doth him binde
> In age yet findes releefe,
> Of them that did him wo.[66]

But women, just as much the dumb and brutalized servants of men, tamed and domesticated, are simply discarded when their biological usefulness or beauty are gone.

The horse is normally used as an image of fear or of manly lust. In Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis* (11.259-70), a stallion breaks his

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[66] *Gallery*, p. 28.

reins, crushing the bit with his teeth, thus controlling what he was controlled with, in order to pursue the jennet. In the poetry of the miscellanies with a woman persona, the woman is the horse, domesticated and controlled. In one poem, the saucy lady suggests to a man that another woman would be "more fit for thy bridle."[67] Here the bridle is the yoke of possession. Another woman boasts that she is not in love: "So free am I from biting on the bit."[68] In another, the woman suggests that her lover "plaie on the bitt" if he has any gumption.[69] The control exercised over a horse by its rider is a perfect image of wifehood. Hermoine, in *The Winters Tale*, says:

> Our praises are our wages; you may ride's
> With one soft kiss a thousand furlongs, ere
> With spur we heat an acre.
> (I.ii.91-3)

From the world of animals, there are yet other common images in the miscellanies. A truism often found is that "the Cocke always commaunds the Henne."[70] The hen who has any spirit can reverse this situation if she "cuts off his comb"[71]--emasculates him, as Delilah did. Women are not always the larger, wilder, crueler birds. They are often represented as the beautiful and exotic, soft and sensuous, small and timid species. If they are maidens, they are still free, secure in the woods, and, if wise enough, they will remain that way, though the list of dangers is long:

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[67] *Handefull*, p. 12.

[68] *Forrest of Fancy*, sig. D1^{r}.

[69] *Paradise*, No. 73.

[70] *Helicon*, No. 147.

[71] *Handefull*, p. 12.

Which neuer hand could touch, nor net could take.
Nor whistle could deceive nor bait alure,
But free vnto themselves do musicke make.

Freedom is the opposite of sexual fulfillment, for to fall in love is to be "kept in golden cages," to warble their love, escaping only into widowhood. While it might be nice to be a turtledove with a mate, or a turtledove alone, the maid, neither wife nor widow, glories in being a phoenix, making no nest for motherhood, but unique and alone, requiring no male to perpetuate herself.[72] What a peculiarly female fantasy! More true to life is the image of the woman as a nightingale, who is Philomel, "abused by a king."[73]

Women personae compare themselves to a variety of other animals, all diminutive in size as they feel themselves to be in relation to men. Men are more sinister than swarming bees, since they seek prey rather than being loyal eunuchs for their queen:

As rounde about a hive the bees do swarme alway,
So rounde about the house they prese therin
they seke their pray.[74]

Then there is the cat and mouse game. The cat is the husband, who is cuckolded by his wife the mouse. But if she is caught, she will die. Mice are warned not to stray and range in the field.[75]

Fishing, though not as exciting or "manly" as hunting, yet offers much sexual imagery. One woman in a Campion song sees women as bait: "But, alas, his mind is caught/With ev'ry gaudy bait he sees."[76]

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[72] *Rhapsody*, No. 179. [73] *Helicon*, No. 147.

[74] Tottel, No. 242. [75] *Handefull*, p. 39.

[76] *The Works of Thomas Campion*, No. 9, p. 95.

T. R. Henn cites an example of the woman angler. Cleopatra says,

> Give me mine angle; we'll to the river; there--
> My music playing far off--I will betray
> Tawny-finn'd fishes: my bended hook shall pierce
> Their slimy jaws; and as I draw them up,
> I'll think every one an Antony,
> And say, "Ah, ha! you're caught."
> (II.v.11-16)

But sometimes the man is the angler and the woman the fish, as in *Much Ado*:

> The pleasant'st angling is to see the fish
> Cut with her golden oars the silver stream,
> And greedily devour the treacherous bait;
> So angle we for Beatrice.
> (III.i.26-29)

It is said of another *femme d'esprit*, "he fisheth wel that gets you."[77] A woman persona in *Englands Helicon* complains that "the pleasant baite doth hide the harmfull hooke."[78] A man would say that a woman's beauty is the bait, but the woman of this poem says,

> Loue is the baite, whose taste the fish deceives,
> And makes them swallow downe the choking hooke.

The paradox in Donne's poem, "The Baite,"[79] is that "thou thyself art thine own bait": she catches herself. In angling for a man, she uses her beauty as a bait, but is herself caught by the power of her own desires.

It is well established by now that, from the woman's point of view, love is not unmitigated delight. In fact, in her language and

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[77] *Handefull*, p. 39. [78] *Helicon*, No. 151.

[79] *The Complete Poetry of John Donne*, ed. John T. Shawcross (New York: New York University Press, 1968), No. 27, pp. 82-3.

imagery, the woman persona treats love like a disease. Rather than calling the French pox Cupidity, we name it after Cupid's mother: venereal disease. At the very least love impairs a woman's beauty. While male lovers complain of ill health in the form of poor appetite and a wan face, women are more concerned with losing their only asset. In one miscellany poem, Venus says to Adonis, "Beautie thou impairest,/see mee, I am pale and wan."[80] This is hardly a condition to be in when one wants to win a man. Another woman persona complains, "Loe, this is she whom love consumes."[81] This implies that her beauty and vitality are being eroded; she is fuel for the fire, an object with a fast-disappearing identity. In other poems from a woman's point of view, love is a malady for which a remedy is sought,[82] a disease to be eased,[83] a "sore mishap."[84] The absence of a lover may be a wound: "And for my wound no cure I find, but hope of good return."[85] Or it may be that the woman's malady, her pain and disease, is her virginity, and her "wound" is her fear that she will die a maid.[86] In a merry mood, Diana's virgins sing:

> Fie on Loue, it is a toy,
> *Cupid* witlesse, and a boy,
> All his fires,
> And desires,
> Are plagues that God sent from on hie:
> To pester men [sic] with miserie.[87]

Far more serious than a plague that pesters is this description by

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[80] *Helicon*, No. 130. [81] *Handefull*, p. 50.

[82] *Helicon*, No. 96. [83] Ibid., No. 142. [84] Ibid., No. 45.

[85] Tottel, No. 19. [86] *Helicon*, No. 81. [87] Ibid., No. 84.

another woman persona:

> When women knew no woe,
> but liu'd them-selues to please:
> Mens fayning guiles they did not know,
> the ground of their disease.
> Unborn was false suspect,
> no thought of iealousie:
> From wanton toyes and fond effect,
> the Virgins life was free.
>
> At length men vsed charmes,
> to which what Maides gave eare:
> Embracing gladly endlesse harmes,
> anone enthralled were.
> Thus women welcom'd woe,
> disguis'd in name of loue:
> A iealous hell, a painted show,
> so shall they finde that prove.[88]

Love devours and destroys. A frequent image of men's deceit says:

> His teares did me beguyle,
> and cleane opprest my powre,
> As doth the Crocodile,
> in seeking to devoure.[89]

Love is a poison in another poem:

> And strongest poisons oft the taste delight. . . .
> Loue is the poison mixt with sugar so,
> As might by outward sweetnesse liking win,
> But as the deepe ore'flowing stops thy breath,
> So poyson once receiv'd brings certaine death.[90]

The metaphor within a metaphor of drowning is just as applicable to the woman who gives in to love. Another virgin complains to Diana about "the hurt the wretched Traitor wrought." She asks:

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[88] *Helicon*, No. 89.

[89] *Howell's Devises*, p. 64.

[90] *Helicon*, No. 151.

> But Ladie say, is Loue of such a force,
> That onely death must heale the desperate wounds
> In heauenly thoughts hath Reason no remorce
> In cure of loue was neuer comfort found.[91]

Alas, no cure. A woman may fall out of love, but not out of the suffering it causes her sex one way or another. The paradox for women is that self-gratification is self-destruction. Again, the woman is the victim. Feelings seem to be more dangerous to women than to men, since they lack other occupation.

Cupid is often the agent of this victimization. He is the personification of the operations of love. Along with Venus and Diana, he is a major source of imagery in the miscellany poetry. Rosamond Tuve clarifies what she means by Renaissance allegorization of myth when she points out that ancient myths were looked upon "neither as toys nor as part of history, but as sets of symbols embodying universally meaningful notions." She reminds us that "dozens of Elizabethan poems use ancient myth allegorically in order to discuss not the affairs of dead deities but certain living and troublesome ideas."[92] Love is, of course, mythologized since it shares the characteristics of all subjects of myth: it is unreasonable, strange, and perplexing. Douglas Bush points out that "in the whole body of lyrical verse Cupid exceeds all other deities in the frequency of his appearance--his nearest rival is his mother. . . ."[93] He is addressed or referred to in innumerable male

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[91] *Brittons Bowre of Delights*, No. 35. Hereafter cited as *Brittons Bowre*.

[92] Tuve, p. 160.

[93] *Mythology and the Renaissance Tradition in English Poetry*, 2nd ed. (1932; rpt. New York: Norton, 1963), p. 228.

lovers' songs as an annoying child, a hostile tyrant, blamed, as Ovid blames him, for the wounds and golden flames of love. But women also are his victims, and their relationship to him and to his arrows is subtly different.

Lodge's lovely madrigal from his verse romance *Rosalinde* is included in *Englands Helicon*.[94] Rosalinde sings of the violation of her body, the presumptuous way that love takes over her physical being so that it is no longer her own, no longer subject to her will. She calls Cupid a wanton, because he makes her give in to her sexuality:

Loue in my bosome like a Bee,
    dooth suck his sweete:
Now with his wings he playes with me,
    now with his feete.
Within mine eyes he makes his nest,
His bed amidst my tender brest,
My kisses are his daily feast,
And yet he robs me of my rest.
    Ah wanton will ye?

And if I sleepe, then pierceth he,
    with pretty slight:
And makes his pillow of my knee,
    the liue-long night.
Strike I my Lute, he tunes the string,
He musique playes if I but sing,
He lends me every louely thing,
Yet cruell he my hart dooth sting.
    Whist wanton, still ye.

Else I with Roses euery day
    will whip ye hence:
And binde ye when ye long to play,
    for your offence.
Ile shut mine eyes to keepe ye in,
Ile make you fast it for your sinne,
Ile count your power not woorth a pin.
Alas, what heereby shall I winne
    If he gaine-say me?

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[94] *Helicon*, No. 100.

What if I beate the wanton boy
    with many a rod?
He will repay me with annoy,
    because a God.
Then sit thou safely on my knee,
And let thy bower my bosome be:
Lurke in mine eyes, I like of thee,
O *Cupid*, so thou pitty me,
    Spare not, but play thee.

No man complains of such intimate contact with the boy child--all that is necessary to set off a man's sexuality is an appropriate object which Cupid must merely provide. So this intimacy, this lovemaking of a naked boy, reminds us that for a woman, a very physical maleness is the source of erotic feeling. Cupid is an archer hunting prey; his weapons are arrows, piercing and penetrating the soft and passive breast of a woman. His favorite victims are members of Diana's train, those sexually asleep members of her court who have affronted love by not yielding to him voluntarily. A lyric in *Brittons Bowre of Delight*,[95] "Diana virgin, her complaint to the Goddesse Diana," uses this scenario. The nymph addresses Diana as one "in whom the fire of Nature hath no force." Virginity is unnatural, and yet is revered by former virgins. Diana violates the code of nature, fostering rebellion. Again we see how stark a woman's choice is: freedom or sexual fulfillment, Diana or Venus. Instead of the religion of love, Diana's train worships virginity:

Whose heauenly eye beholds those silly imps,
Whose ruthfull harts do sue for thy remorce.
Vouchsafe, oh saint, from that pure hand of thine,
Some pities helpe, to this poore hart of mine.

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[95] *Brittons Bowre*, No. 35.

Again we see that virtue is a physiological fact. To be cold, to want passion, is the opposite of the fully sexual Venus. Female morality is female frigidity. The persona has obviously sinned against her saint, yet she will not blame herself, for the will to love, a physical force, takes over her rational will:

> Was it my fault that *Cupid* found the meane,
> First to creepe in, into thy quiet Court,
> My hope was cleare, my comfort had bene cleane,
> From any hap of such vnhappie hurt:
> But well I see amid the greatest cares,
> A sudden heart may slippe in vnawares.

She has underestimated the power of the naked manchild:

> Alas, alas, full little did I thinke,
> The little thing had had so great a power:
> I thought him blind when he did onely winke,
> And sweet his thoughts, that fall out deadly sower.

She concludes the stanza asking the virgin's help against the power of love, pleading that she is a faithful follower caught by the infiltrator:

> But since I was thus trapped in this traine,
> Once set my heart at libertie againe.

Again and again the choice is underlined: freedom or sexual maturity. Virginity and identity are lost together. A woman's nobility is only premarital. The nymph clarifies the conflict in asking Diana how powerful the foe is:

> But Ladie say, is Loue of such a force,
> That onely death must heale the desperate wounds
> In heauenly thoughts hath Reason no remorce
> In cure of loue was never comfort found
> Hath *Cupid* force to come and coniure thee,
> Oh no, alas, it is to conquer mee.

The conflict is between the will and the traitorous emotions, reason and the conjuring power of love's illusions. It is simple misfortune that love laid siege on her, and she has no defense. She contrasts her

faith in the religion of virginity to the self-delusion that is the religion of love:

> T'was I, t'was I that onely had the hap,
> To take the hurt the wretched Traitor wrought:
> T'was onely I, that caught the secret clap,
> While carefull faith with cruell fancie fought.
> T'was I Diana, and t'is onely I,
> Whom thou must helpe, or els I yeeld to die.

The *Helicon* sums up the myth of virginity with the song of Diana and her virgins: "Then love there is no vainer thing,/for Maydens most unfitting."[96] This disdainful attitude is the bane of Venus and her son. Another *Helicon* song has Diana and her nymphs bathing and mocking: "Fie on *Venus* flattering eye."[97] They then mock the joy and pain of love himself, who is eavesdropping:

> Fie on Love, it is a toy,
> Cupid witlesse, and a boy.

But Cupid "silly stole these Maydes among." He uses love's weapon, a child's toy, but full of the power and terror of male sexuality, to penetrate their virgin bodies:

> His bowe of steele, darts of fire,
> He shot amongst them sweete desire,
> Which straite flies
> In their eyes,
> And at the entraunce made them start,
> For it ranne from eye to hart.

Not only are the maidens aroused and afflicted with desire, but Diana herself is made to love Endimion. Venus' comment is, "None so chast to check desire." Blushing, the virgin train

> With sighs all
> Shew their thrall,
> And flinging thence, pronounc'd this saw:
> What so strong as Loues sweete law?

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[96] *Helicon*, No. 89. [97] Ibid., No. 84.

Venus' law is far greater than the power of Diana, and more powerful than what C. S. Lewis calls Cupid's "refined sentiment." She is, after all, a real Olympian, and inherited a gravity Cupid never had. She is a planet, a real source of influence, because she is, Lewis reminds us, the sexual appetite which is a natural fact.[98] Venus tells Adonis in a *Helicon* poem about her law: "Lovers all adore mee."[99] She is closely aligned with nature's procreative powers. We are reminded that Adam and Eve, given dominion over the natural world, are themselves to increase and multiply, following nature's law. When Adonis protests that he is "yet a bud," too immature for passion, Venus responds:

> Fayre thou art, shee said
> then it is thy dutie,
> Wert thou but a blossome
> to effect my good.
> Every beauteous flower,
> boasteth in my power,
> Byrds and beasts my lawes effect.

One of *Howell's Devises*[100] further clarifies the meaning of Venus and her court. In a medieval dream frame, the poet has a vision of a fair pavilion peopled by Venus and her worshippers:

> Beset about with Ladies true,
> Which did to her such seruice due,
> As fewe I deeme, the like hath seene,
> Idone to any earthly Queene.

Their beauty is not the purity of virginity, but the maturity of adult sexuality, as we see when they are compared to Helen, the voluptuous matron:

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[98] C. S. Lewis, *The Allegory of Love* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1938), p. 121.

[99] *Helicon*, No. 130.

[100] *Howell's Devises*, p. 80.

Her Nimphes all they were,
Of such comely cheere,
Helens face, may giue place,
Where they appeere.

As Diana has suitors who come to her court, virgins who have fallen in with the enemy, so Venus hears the complaints of women who want love. The first is married to an old man, wasting her youth and passion:

Haue pyttie on her painefull plight,
Whose lyfe is led without dellight,
In sighes and sorrows still:
My youth saide she with age I waste,
For wealth my Parents me so plaste,
God knoweth against my will.

This unhappy lady is a true follower of the religion of love, for even wealth is not so important as sexual fulfillment. Therefore, Venus is "enclynde, with wylling mynde/To peise the playntes. . . ." Another woman asks that of her grace the goddess of love would grant her sexual fulfillment: "my wished choice [of men]." Others, all women, call on Venus to right their wrongs:

Some out doe crie on ielousie,
And some of great vncourtesie,
With teares complaine, that finde disdaine
Where they have loued faythfully.
Another sorte, doe eke resorte,
Exclayming lowde on false reporte,
Whereby their fame, and Noble name
Without desert, oft brute doth blame.
And some Ladies say,
Their Lords runne astray,
Whose wanting, and scanting
Oft works their decay.

The poet would like to join the throng, and ask "My Ladies loue to graunte," but great thunder awakens him, perhaps because only women have access to the goddess.

In another miscellany poem, Venus is a wanton, practiced in the art of love. With Adonis,

> Him she seekes to kiss,
> no devices wanting,
> Him her eyes still wooe,
> him her tongue still prayes.[101]

But it is more than wantonness that sexually experienced women are charged with. They are witches, the opposite of angelic virgins, able to "witch" with their eyes and use "unholy guiles" to win men, as one woman says of another.[102] In defense of women, Dame Beautie tells a lover that he is unfair to accuse his beloved of using supernatural devices:

> Her beautie thee bewitcht,
> thy minde that erst was free:
> Her corps so comely framd, thou saiest,
> did force thee to agree:
> . . . . . .
> It was not she that did thee wound,
> although thou seest her face:
> Ne could her beautie so,
> inchaunt or vex thy sprites,
> Ne feature hers so comely framde,
> could weaken so thy wits.[103]

He is the victim of natural, not supernatural, appetites.

The battle between chastity and love is mythologized in a riddling dream vision in *The Phoenix Nest*.[104] Within the medieval frame of a poet dreaming in an orchard, a mighty war is fought:

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[101] *Helicon*, No. 130.

[102] *Helicon*, No. 125.

[103] *Handefull*, p. 16.

[104] *The Phoenix Nest*, p. 31.

Great wars me thought grew late by strange mishap,
Desire had stolne out of Dianaes traine,
Hir darling deere, and laid on Venus lap,
Who, Cupid sware should neuer backe againe.
Ere he would so loose all his harts delight,
He vow'd to die, wherewith began a fight.

Diana shot, and Cupid shot againe:
Fame sounded out hir trumpe with heauenly cheare:
Hope was ill hurt, despite was onely slaine:
Diana forst in fine for to retire.
Cupid caught fame, and brought hir to his frend:
The trumpet ceast, and so my dreame did end.

Chastity's darling is Fame, which Desire (Cupid) steals. The opposing principles fight over Fame, but only despite (the naysaying of chastity) is slain. Diana/Chastity retires, and Fame now belongs to Love.

The conflict of Venus and Diana in these miscellany poems is a consistent presentation of a woman's choices: the law of love or the religion of virginity. The dichotomy is seen most clearly in Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, and the conflict between Venus and Diana is even resolved in that poem.[105] Spenser helps us see how these goddesses are used in the lyrics of the miscellanies and in doing so clarifies the dichotomy we have noted between reason and "fancie," the choice of the *femme d'esprit* and that of the mistress.

Eric Laguardia points out that in the third book of the *Faerie Queene* the virtue of chastity is presented as a compromise between Venus and Diana, who stand in opposite relationships to the two sides of human nature, the animal and the spiritual. There is divine order and purity, no change at all, in the Platonic ether which Diana

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[105]"The Faerie Queene," Booke III, in *The Poetical Works of Edmund Spenser*, eds. J. C. Smith and E. de Selincourt (1912; rpt. London: Oxford University Press, 1963).

represents. But this mutable world, ruled by Venus and nature, is disordered and corrupting. The conflict is between the spiritual and the natural, human reason and human sensuality. Diana is the image of the renunciation of nature; Venus is demonic, nature's lowest dimension. Diana is rational; Venus is sensual.[106] The burden is on the female of the species to corrupt or save the male, reminding us of the Genesis myth. It is easy to see in the Venus/Diana dichotomy something of the old typology of Eve and the Virgin Mary. The church fathers conveyed to the middle ages and beyond the notion that Eve's temptation of Adam was sexual, and that Mary crushed *that* serpent under her heel with parthenogenesis, transcending nature. According to Laguardia, *carpe diem* poetry is a major manifestation of this conflict. A chaste woman hears a naturalistic argument--the doctrine of love which calls virginity waste. It contends that virginity is only appearance; it has no being. It is not a virtue precisely because we are born with it.[107]

The two goddesses represent the two opposing principles in Spenser's poem, but they have a measure of kinship. Venus, looking for her son, hints that Cupid is being hidden by Diana's train of nymphs. Kathleen Williams tells us that "the quarrel is smoothed over, but the suggestion that a hidden relationship exists between Diana's followers and Cupid is firmly established." Williams further notes that "Cupid

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[106]Eric Laguardia, *Nature Redeemed: The Imitation of Order in Three Renaissance Poems* (London: Mouton, 1966), p. 31.

[107]Laguardia, p. 37.

shoots with the arrows of Diana, Diana with the arrows of Cupid; a kind of complicated interchange is set up in which chastity becomes a weapon of love, or uses love as a weapon."[108] We notice again how hostile the imagery is, how like the hunt or warfare. Two other women are types of the mistress and the *femme d'esprit*, the twins adopted by the two goddesses, Amoret and Belphoebe. They are complementary principles, who should not have been separated. Amoret is the passive woman, wholly submissive. Belphoebe is like the Amazon huntress who rears her. Busyrane, who enthralls Amoret, takes his allegorical character from Ovid's *Ars Amatoris*. Williams sums this up as

> the conception of love as hostility and deceit, a perpetual strife in which *concordia* is seen as no more than the momentary defeat of one cruelty by another. Ovid's Busiris is an illustration of the theme that love is the result of deceit, which should be avenged by deceit. . . . The victim is equally the hunter and should, as victim, suffer. . . .[109]

That suffering and cynicism are bound up in the role-playing of courtly love is a notion that Spenser recognizes, and so he rejects this artifice in his search for chastity. His resolution of the conflict built into human nature is the redemption of nature (Venus--the sexual appetite) rather than the transcending of her. Britomart is the figure of completed and integrated human nature. She does not have to choose between the erotic and the virginal. The "chaste desire" that she chooses is "erotic love governed by chastity and sanctified by the

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[108]Kathleen Williams, "Venus and Diana: Some Uses of Myth in the *Faerie Queene*," *English Literary History*, 28 (1961), p. 109.

[109]Williams, p. 114.

sacrament of marriage."[110] She is both mistress and *femme d'esprit* in that she is dependent and self-sufficient, full of both chastity and passion. Venus and Diana are met in her, and thus she is neither destroyer nor victim.

A woman's choices do not constitute a narrow subject at all. In the dichotomy we have traced between virginity and passion, chastity and lust, are larger questions of morality, rationality, free will, mutability, and humanity's place in the created and eternal worlds. Spenser's vision reminds us that all of the major preoccupations of the age appear in lyric poetry with a woman persona. These poems, with their unusual point of view, clarify the issues, argue for Spenser's resolution of them, and present women as fully human beings.

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[110] Laguardia, p. 32.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

PRIMARY SOURCES

The following 18 Elizabethan miscellanies are not included in the general bibliography and are referred to in the text by short title only so that the reader may find complete information in one place. For each of the miscellanies, I here reproduce the complete title page of the edition I have used. Roman type is indicated by roman type, italics by italics, and black letter by underscored roman type. The entry number in Pollard and Redgrave's *Short Title Catalogue* is given, and the microfilm reel number. The year of each Renaissance edition is indicated. There is a full note of the most useful modern edition, if any.

[Ornament] / THE ARBOR OF / amorous Devises. / Wherin, young Gentlemen / may reade many plesant fancies, and fine devises: And / *thereon, meditate divers sweete Conceites, to court* / the love of faire Ladies and Gentlewomen / By N. B. Gent. / [Ornament] / Imprinted at London by Richard Iohnes, dwelling at the / signe of the Rose and Crowne, neere Saint Andrewes / Church in Holborne. / 1597. /

Copy: Huntington, no. 14115

STC 3631 microfilm 178

Edd: 1597

Modern Ed.: Hyder E. Rollins, ed. *The Arbor of amorous devices*, 1597. 1936. Rpt. New York: Russell and Russell, 1968.

A BANQVET / OF DAINTIE CON- / *cejts.* / Furnished with verie delicate and choyse inven- / tions, to delight their mindes, who take pleasure in / Musique, and there-withall to sing sweete Ditties, / either to the Lute, Bandora, Virginalles, / or anie other Instru- / ment./ *Published at the desire of bothe Honorable and / Worshipfull personages, who have had copies / of divers of the Ditties heerein / contained.* / [ornament] / written by *A.M.* Servaunt to the Queenes / *most excellent Maiestie.* / Honos Alit Artes. / AT LONDON / Printed by *J. C. for Edwarde White,* / and are to be sold at the signe of the Gunne, at / the little North doore of Paules. / Anno. 1588. /

Copy: British Museum, Huth 38

STC 18260 microfilm 1424

Edd.: 1588

Modern Ed.: None.

Bel - vedêre / OR / THE GARDEN OF THE MVSES. / *Quen referent Musae vivet dum robora tellus, / Dum coelum stellas, dum vehet amoris aquas.* / [ornament] / Imprinted at London by *F. K.* for *Hugh Astley,* dwelling at / Saint *Magnus* corner. 1600. /

Copy: Huntington, no. 32117

STC 3189 microfilm 176

Edd.: 1600, 1609

Modern Ed.: None.

BRITTONS / BOWRE OF / Delights. / Contayning / *Many, most delectable and fine devices,* / of rare Epitaphes, pleasant Poems, Pastorals and Sonets / By N. B. Gent. / [Device: Droit et Loyal] / Imprinted at London by Richard Ihones, at the / Rose and Crowne neere Holborne / Bridge, 1591. /

Copy: Huntington

STC 3633 microfilm 1340

Edd.: 1591, 1597

Modern Ed.: Hyder E. Rollins, ed. *Brittons bowre of delights, 1591.* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1933).

ENGLANDS / HELICON. / Casta placent duperis, / pura cum veste venite, / Et manibus puris / sumite fontis aquam. / [Long rule] / [Device: McKerrow 112B] / [Long rule] / AT LONDON / Printed by I. R. for *Iohn Flasket*, and are / to be sold in Paules Church-yard, at the signe / of the Beare. 1600. /

Copy: British Museum C39 E48

STC 3191 microfilm 237

Edd.: 1600, 1614

Modern Ed.: Hyder E. Rollins, ed. *England's Helicon: 1600, 1614.* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1935), 2 vols.

ENGLANDS / Parnassus: / OR / The choysest Flowers of our Moderne / *Poets, with their Poeticall comparisons.* / Descriptions of Bewties, Personages, Castles, / Pallaces, Mountaines, Groues, Seas, / Springs, Rivers, &c. / *Whereunto are annexed other various discourses,* / *both pleasaunt and profitable.* / [Ornament] / Imprinted at London for N. L. C. B. / and T. H. 1600. /

Copy: Huntington, no. 60524

STC 378 microfilm 276

Edd.: 1600

Modern Ed.: Facsimile. The English Experience, no. 216. (New York: Da Capo Press, 1970).

FLOVVERS / OF EPIGRAMMES, OVT OF / sundrie the moste singular au= / *thours selected as well* / auncient as late / writers. / Pleasant and profitable to the ex= / pert readers of quicke / capacitie: / By Timothe Kendall, late of the Uni= / versitie of Oxford: now student / of *Staple Inne* in *London.* / Horatuis. / Aut prodesse volunt, aut delectare poet ae / Aut simul & incunda, aut idonea diceie vitae. / Imprinted at London / in Poules Churche- yarde, at the / signe of the Brasen Serpent, / by Ihon Shepperd. / 1577. /

Copy: Huntington, no. 61897

STC 14927 microfilm 251

Edd.: 1577

Modern Ed.: None.

THE FORREST OF / *Fancy*. / WHEREIN IS CONTEINED VE- / ry prety Apothegmes, and pleasaunt histo- / *ries, both in meeter and prose, Songes, Sonets,* / Epigrams and Epistles, of di- / *verse matter and in di-* / *verse man-* / *ner.* / VVith sundry other divi- / sis, no lesse pithye then pleasaunt and / profytable. / *Reade with regard, peruse each point well,* / *and then give thy judgement as reason shall move thee* / *Fore eare thou conceive it, twere hard for to tell,* / *If cause be or no wherefore to reprove me.* / [Long rule] / *Imprinted at London* by / Thomas Purfoote, dwelling in Newgate / Market, within the new Rents, / at the signe of the / *Lucrece.* / 1579. /

Copy: Huntington

STC 4271 microfilm 952

Edd.: 1579, 1579

Modern Ed.: None.

THE / GARLAND / OF / Good Will. / Divided into three parts: Containing / *many pleasant Songs, and prety* / poems, to sundry new / Notes. / With a Table to finde the names of all the Songs. / Written by T. D. / [Device: Thou shalt labor till thou returne to duste] / Imprinted at London for *Robert Bird*, at the Bible / in Saint Lawrence Lane 1631. /

Copy: Bodleian 8° L79. ART.

STC 6554 microfilm 1269

Edd.: 1593, 1596, 1629, 1631

Modern Ed.: James Henry Dixon, ed. *The Garland of Good Will* (Percy Society vol. XXX, 1851).

A gorgious Gallery, / *of gallant Inuentions.* / Garnished and decked with / *diuers dayntie deuises, right* / delicate and delightfull, to re= / create eche modest minde / withall. / First framed and fashioned in / sundrie formes, by diuers worthy / workemen of late dayes: and now, / ioyned together and / builded up: / By T. P. / Imprinted at London, / *for Richard Iones.* / 1578. /

Copy: Bodleian, Malone 464a

STC 20402 microfilm 1114

Edd.: 1578

Modern Ed.: Hyder E. Rollins, ed. *A Gorgeous Gallery of Gallant Inventions (1578).* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1926).

A Handefull / of pleasant delites, / Containing sundrie new Sonets / and delectable histories, in / diuers kindes of Meeter. / Newly deuised to the newest tunes / that are now in use, to be sung: / euerie Sonet orderly pointed / to his proper Tune. / With new additions of certain Songs, / to verie late deuised Notes, not / commonly knowen, nor / vsed theretofore, / By Clement Robinson, / and diuers others. / AT LONDON / Printed by Richard Ihones: dwel- / ling at the signe of the Rose / and Crowne, neare / Holburne Bridge / 1584. /

Copy: British Museum c.39. b.46.

STC 21105 not yet microfilmed

Edd.: 1584

Modern Ed.: Hyder E. Rollins, ed. *A Handful of Pleasant Delights (1584).* Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1924).

H. / His Deuises, for his owne / *exercise, and his* / Friends pleasure. / [Long rule] / *Vincit qui patitur.* / [Long rule] / [Ornament] / *Imprinted at London, in* / Fleetestreate, beneath the Conduit, / at the signe of the Saint Iohn / Evangelist, by H. / Iackson. / [Long rule] / ANNO. 1581. / [Long rule] /

Copy: Bodleian, Malone 342

STC 13875 microfilm 467

Edd.: 1581

Modern Ed.: Walter Raleigh, ed. *Howell's Devises (1581).* Tudor and Stuart Librarys, vol. I (Oxford: Clarendon, 1906).

THE PARADYSE / of daynty devises, / aptly furnished, with sundry pithie and learned inuentions: / deuised and written for the most part, by M. Edwards, / sometimes of her Maiesties Chappel: the rest, by / sundry learned Gentlemen, both of honor, / and worshippe. / viz. / S. Barnarde. Iasper Heyvvood. / E. O. F. K. / L. Vaux. M. Bevve. / D. S. R. Hill. / M. Yloop, with others, / [Device: McKerrow 172] / IMPRINTED AT LON- / don by Henry Disle, dwellyng in / Paules Churchyard, at the Southwest doore / of Saint Paules Church, and are there / to be solde. / 1576. /

Copy: Huntington

STC 7516 microfilm 337

Edd.: 1576, 1578, 1580, 1585, 1590, 1596, 1600, 1606

Modern Ed.: Hyder E. Rollins, ed. *The Paradise of Dainty Devices: 1576-1606.* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1927).

THE / PASSIONATE / PILGRIME. / *By W. Shakespeare.* / [Ornament] / AT LONDON / Printed for W. Iaggard, and are / to be sold by W. Leake, at the Grey- / hound in Paules Churchyard. / 1599. /

Copy: Huntington, no. 59001

STC 22342 microfilm 470

Edd.: 1599, 1599, 1612

Modern Ed.: Facsimile of 1612 ed. Folger Shakespeare Library Publications. (New York: Scribner's, 1940).

THE / PHOENIX / NEST. / Built vp with the most rare / and refined workes of Noble / *men, woorthy Knights, gallant / Gentlemen, Masters of / Arts, and brave / Schollers.* / Full of varietie, excellent inuen- / tion, and singular / delight. / *Neuer before this time published.* / Set foorth by R. S. of the Inner Temple / *Gentleman.* / Imprinted at London, by / Iohn Iackson. / 1593. /

Copy: British Museum, Huth 42

STC 21516 microfilm 1033

Edd.: 1593

Modern Ed.: Hyder E. Rollins, ed. *The Phoenix Nest (1593).* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1931).

A / POETICAL RAPSODY / *Containing, / Diuerse Sonnets, Odes, Elegies, Madrigalls, / and other Poesies, both in Rime, and / Measured Verse.* / Neuer yet published. / *The Bee and Spider by a diverse power, / Sucke Hony & Poyson from the selfe same flower.* / [Ornament: McKerrow, 379] / *Printed at London by V. S. for Iohn Baily, and / are to be solde at his Shoppe in Chancerie lane, / neere to the Office of the six Clarkes.* / 1602. /

Copy: Folger

STC 6373 microfilm 643

Edd.: 1606, 1608, 1611, 1621

Modern Ed.: Hyder E. Rollins, ed. *A Poetical Rhapsody: 1602-1621.* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1931). 2 vols.

A SMALE / handfull of fragrant / Flowers, selected and gathered / *out of the lovely garden of sacred scrip* -/ tures, fit for any Honorable or / woorshipfull Gentelwo- / man to smell unto. / Dedicated for a Newe= / yeeres, gyft, to the honorable / *and vertuous Lady, the Lady* / Sheffeeld. / By N. B. / *Imprinted at London, by* Richard Iones. And are to be solde / at his shop, at the South= / west doore of / Paules. / 1575. /

Copy: Huntington 59551

STC 3695 microfilm 178

Edd.: 1575

Modern Ed.: None.

SONGES AND SONETTES, / *written by the ryght honorable Lorde* / *Henry Howard late Earle of Sur= / rey, and other.* / Apud Richardum Tottel. / 1557. / *Cum privilegio.* / [Colophon] Imprinted at London in flete strete / within Temple barre, at the sygne of the / hand and starre, by Richard Tottel / the fift day of June. / An. 1557. / Cum privilegio ad impri- / mendum folum. /

Copy: Bodleian Arch. G. f. 12 (1).

STC 13860 microfilm 513

Edd.: 1557, 1557, 1557, 1559, 1559, 1565, 1567, 1574, 1585, 1587

Modern ed.: Hyder E. Rollins, ed. *Tottel's Miscellany: 1557-1587*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1965) 2 vols.

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VITA

A native Philadelphian, Barbara McCarter Bloy was graduated from the Philadelphia High School for Girls. She was granted the B.A. degree from Maryville College. After earning an M.A. degree at the University of Tennessee, she was an instructor there for several years before pursuing her Ph.D.

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