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Wisdom, Love and Play:  
A Cistercian Preface to Le Jeu d'Adam

by  
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A thesis  
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## Abbreviations

- CC Corpus Christianorum, Continuatio Mediaevalis.  
Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 1971-.
- CF Cistercian Fathers Series. Spencer, Mass.,  
Washington, D.C., Kalamazoo, Mich.: Cistercian  
Publications, 1970-.
- DS Dictionnaire de Spiritualité. Paris: Beauchesne,  
1937-.
- PG Patrologia Graeca. Paris, 1857-66.
- PL Patrologia Latina. Paris, 1844-64, 1958-74.
- SC Sources Chrétiennes. Paris: Editions du Cerf,  
1943-.

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Chapter 1

Wisdom and Play:

Ideas Medieval and Modern

Near the beginning of Le Jeu d'Adam, an Anglo-Norman play of the twelfth century, there occurs a mimed scene which provides a quick summation of the singular and arresting approach taken by this play to the story of Adam and Eve.<sup>1</sup> Soon after the Salvator, the Figure of Christ, who represents God, has established Adam and Eve in wisdom, love and joy in paradise, the couple are seen wandering about this garden delighting themselves in its beauty and riches. Meanwhile demons scurry through the audience and around the garden, tempting the couple to eat the forbidden fruit, and by so doing to share in the devils' own game and play. As the story of Adam and Eve continues to unfold, we watch the fall and redemption of man presented in terms of wise and foolish, of divine, human and demonic playing. In its dramatic explication of the relation of wisdom and play, Le Jeu d'Adam suggests the influence of medieval spirituality on medieval religious drama, and may itself be illumined through an elucidation of this spirituality.<sup>2</sup> For, in the spirituality of the Cistercians, which like Le Jeu d'Adam is part of the legacy of the twelfth century, we encounter the first extensive medieval development of play as an attribute of wisdom.

Le Jeu d'Adam is first given consideration in light of Cistercian writings in Erich Auerbach's Mimesis. In his

chapter about this drama, he is concerned to define the context of ideas informing the simple, realistic style Le Jeu d'Adam shares in its vernacular sections with later vernacular drama.<sup>3</sup> The style of the vernacular drama locates it within a theological tradition that reconciles the presentation of "sublime" matter in a "simple, low style" by appealing to the relation between the humble and the sublime in the Incarnation. Christ descends in humility from heaven to become man, and so to be exalted, teaching us that humility is the only way to truth. Auerbach traces this tradition back to Augustine, who defends the simple style of the Scripture by arguing that it leads its hearers from its simple language to hidden, sublime truth, fostering in them the humility of Christ. In the twelfth century the Cistercians give renewed expression to this tradition in their mystical theology. St. Bernard, whose theology and literary style came to define Cistercian spirituality, establishes meditation on the human life of Christ as the first state in the soul's inner pilgrimage toward mystical union with God. The eternal is approached through approaching the humility of Christ's temporal existence. This understanding of the Incarnation, to which Auerbach attributes the style of Le Jeu d'Adam, is an essential feature of the Cistercian understanding of the

relationship between wisdom and play.

In the eleventh and twelfth centuries, Christian devotion finds a new focus: the human life of Christ. Whereas devotion to Christ had traditionally had as its object the triumphant divinity of Christ, in this period his human existence, especially his infancy and his Passion, begins to assume a new importance. These new currents of thought have their roots in the monastic spirituality of the eleventh century and in St. Anselm's new theology of redemption, Cur Deus Homo, which argues the essential role of the incarnate Christ in the redemption of man. In the writing of St. Bernard and his monks, meditation on Christ's humanity finds full expression, both in theory and practice. Bernard both defines the role of this form of devotion in the spiritual life and provides many meditations of his own, eloquent of strongly felt emotions.<sup>4</sup> Sandro Sticca, in his article "Drama and Spirituality", defines the distinguishing feature of this devotion as a "preoccupation with the tangible and immediate rather than with the symbolical and theological, a desire to embrace and express the divine by emphasizing the actual and concrete."<sup>5</sup> Meditation on Christ's humanity is characterized by an affective sensitivity to the physical, human dimensions of Christ's life, to which the devout monk

responds with tenderness, pathos and joy. This devotion to Christ's humanity involves these monks in a consideration of wisdom and folly, and, ultimately, contributes to an awareness of the playful dimension of wisdom. In the Incarnation and Passion of Christ, in his humiliation, the Cistercians embrace the foolishness which is the wisdom of God, the divine folly. In the Cistercian understanding of the wise folly of the Incarnation, wisdom finds itself in the company of play.

The foolishness of God, and of men who become fools for Christ's sake, is viewed from a new perspective in the writing of the Cistercians. André Derville, in his article "Folie de la Croix", demonstrates this by comparing the work of William of St. Thierry, Bernard's friend, with earlier medieval and patristic works. In these earlier interpretations of Pauline passages concerning the scandal of the cross and the absurdity of the gospel Derville finds one dominating idea developed: the idea of two opposing wisdoms, the folly of the world and the wisdom of Christ. In the writings of William, his conviction that wisdom is found through Christ's human life, especially his Passion, brings with it a new attitude to the folly of Christ, a desire to embrace and identify with this folly.<sup>6</sup> This longing to

identify oneself with the foolishness of God in the humility of the Incarnation is fully consonant with the foundational ideals upon which the Cistercian order was built, indicating how integral the conceptions of folly and wisdom are to Cistercian spirituality.

The Cistercian order originated in the late eleventh century as a movement of reform within the Benedictine tradition. This movement was born of a desire for poverty and solitude. The early Cistercians wished to restore the original spirit of Eastern monasticism, to return to a more pure observance of The Rule of St. Benedict and to a life more true to the Gospels. The evangelical poverty which the Cistercians sought was the "redemptive poverty inaugurated by the Incarnation."<sup>7</sup> Bernard teaches that "to follow the poor Christ" is to "overtake him in his Glory."<sup>8</sup> To find this poverty and solitude, Cistercians separated themselves from the world, planting monasteries in remote areas, introducing a more severe asceticism, simplifying the elaborate and rich liturgical ceremonies that had developed in monastic tradition, reintroducing manual labor into monastic life.<sup>9</sup> William, writing to the Carthusian monks, whose life was more eremitical and severe than that of the Cistercians, describes the monastic life as folly: ". . . do you . . . continue as you

began: fools for God's sake, through God's folly which is wiser than all men's, following Christ's leadership, make your own the humble art of ascending to heaven."<sup>10</sup>

Before entering further into a discussion of medieval conceptions of play and their development in the context of Cistercian spirituality, an excursion into modern theories of play can help to provide a point of critical reference for the earlier treatments. In these more or less contemporary studies of play we find an analysis of characteristics peculiar to the human activity of play, which, in medieval writing, one is obliged to infer from discussions of the theological or ethical significance of play. The works we will consider, both medieval and modern, have in common a desire to understand play as a meaningful human activity. In so doing, these various writers come to consider the relation between play and imagination. One of our writers who writes a theology of play, finds in play an expression of love. These elucidations of imagination and love as forms of play help shed light on discussions of the idea and role of play in Cistercian literature.

Johan Huizinga, in his pioneering book Homo Ludens, studied human play from an anthropological perspective. His work has become a starting point for many discussions of

play.<sup>11</sup> Huizinga attempts to isolate the characteristics of play, to recognize it as a distinct human activity. He begins with the rudimentary, common linguistic opposition of work and play, of seriousness and play. In the course of his examination of play he goes beyond this opposition, seeking to demonstrate how human culture is developed and formed "in and as play."<sup>12</sup>

We see that Huizinga isolates three "formal characteristics" of play: the activity of play is, first, free; second, it stands outside of "ordinary life"; and, third, it is temporary, limited in time and space. Play is not a necessary activity which we are compelled to engage in by the conditions of life. It is pursued voluntarily because it is enjoyed for its own sake. This quality of freedom and pure pleasure sets play apart from "ordinary life." Huizinga means by this that play is not concerned with the struggle for physical survival which dominates "ordinary life." Because play stands apart from these immediate and most pressing concerns, it has a quality of "only pretending" about it. As a suspension of the compelling demands of ordinary life, play is limited in time and space. It has a beginning and an end, a fixed form which can be repeated. It occurs within a "playground" with physical or imagined boundaries. Within

these limitations of time and space, play is ordered by a set of rules peculiar to itself. Huizinga summarizes these "formal characteristics" of play in the following way:

Summing up the formal characteristics of play we might call it a free activity standing quite consciously outside "ordinary" life as being "not serious," but at the same time absorbing the player intensely and utterly. It is an activity connected with no material interest, and no profit can be gained by it. It proceeds within its own proper boundaries of time and space according to fixed rules and in an orderly manner. It promotes the formation of social groupings which tend to surround themselves with secrecy and to stress their difference from the common world by disguise or other means.<sup>13</sup>

This distinction between a play world and the ordinary world raises the question of the relationship of these two worlds, particularly since the context of Huizinga's book is a discussion of human culture. Huizinga approaches the question by discussing our longstanding tendency to see play and seriousness as opposites. The free world of play is a temporary suspension of the difficult and serious business of

staying alive, and hence is a world of pretending. This antithesis he traces back to the Middle Ages which, he notes, "tended to express the two cardinal moods of life--play and seriousness--somewhat imperfectly by opposing folie to sense . . . ."14 However, Huizinga points out, the relationship of play and seriousness is a complex one: play stands outside the antithesis of wisdom and folly. He appeals in part to imagination as a form of play that reveals the inadequacy of this antithesis.. Huizinga argues that play "is a significant function--that is to say, there is some sense to it." In play there is something 'at play' which transcends the immediate needs of life and imparts meaning to the action."<sup>15</sup> He elaborates the "significant function" of play by examining the formative role of play in culture, dividing the function of play in culture into two categories: in the first, "play is a contest for something"; in the second, "a representation of something."<sup>16</sup> Representation involves imagination, the making of images. This is a dominant feature of child's play. It is also characteristic of language, of myth, and of ritual. All these activities involve the creation of another, imagined world alongside the ordinary one. Huizinga argues that civilization--"law and order, commerce and profit, craft and art, poetry, wisdom, and science"--has its roots in myth and

ritual: "All are rooted in the, primaeval soil of play."<sup>17</sup>

Eugen Fink, in "The Oasis of Happiness: Toward an Ontology of Play", and Mikel Dufrenne, in "Le Jeu et l'Imaginaire", each seek to define the ontological significance of play by elucidating its relation to imagination.<sup>18</sup> Again, though the distinction between play and the laborious world of reality is maintained, play is regarded as something more than an "interlude" in the serious business of life. Fink defines the relationship of play, a spontaneous activity which is not directed toward a goal, whose "existence is centered in itself," to the purposive, productive world it interrupts in terms of representation. He analyzes the structure of play by discussing the nature of the play world, of players, of play objects. A player enters a play world, in which he is at once a "real man who plays" and a "man created by [a] role," and, hence, he inhabits an imaginary world which yet has a real setting.<sup>19</sup> To understand the meaning of play, Fink finds it necessary to understand the imaginary, to uncover the meaning of illusion. Appealing to the relationship of a play world to a real one, Fink attempts to define the imaginary as an "objective, ontic illusion," insisting that play is more than a private, subjective product of human imagination. To demonstrate this, Fink draws an analogy

between play and things existing in nature which are at once real and unreal, such as the image of a tree reflected in water. This reflection is at once real, existing in nature as a product of the light affecting all natural things, and unreal, having no existence as a tree. Human play, like these reflections, is a "real mode of behavior" containing "a mirror image derived from behavior in the real world." In this mirror image, play things, or play objects become symbols representative of "the totality of objects," making every game "a confrontation with Being" and a symbolic act.<sup>20</sup>

Dufrenne, in his article "Le Jeu et l'Imaginaire", seeks to "open . . . the royal road of the imaginary" by re-evaluating the concept of play.<sup>21</sup> Dufrenne approaches his task by defining the essential traits of play common to its many forms, and by demonstrating that these traits all point to one conclusion: that the imaginary is "at the heart" of play. Three essential elements of play emerge from Dufrenne's analysis of various kinds of play: chance, accomplishment of desire, and the presence of the unreal. In play one waits always for unpredictable possibilities to be realized, for destiny to reveal itself. The accomplishment of desire, though desire has many objects, is always the accomplishment of one fundamental desire: to live another life, to inhabit

another world. Both this waiting for "the possible" to realize itself and this accomplishment of a desire for another life are complemented by the third characteristic of play: it happens "on the boundary of the real and the unreal." The playing of man, thus, as these characteristics reveal, "inaugurates" the imaginary.<sup>22</sup> Through play the realm of the imaginary can realize itself.

That play is located on the border of the real and the unreal--that play has at its heart the imaginary--accounts for the fundamental attitude of the player at play: ambivalence. The player maintains two seemingly diverse attitudes: he is, at once active and passive. In the games of the stadium and the theatre the player assumes a predominately active role, characterized by liberty, caprice, aggressivity, a will to power directed toward a toy over which the player has control, or toward an opponent. Games of chance and hazard place the player in a passive role, in which he becomes the toy, and is himself at stake in the game, played with by chance. This same passivity can be evident in games where the player takes an active role, if the player abandons his whole being with passion to the game, and so opens himself to "inspiration" or "enchantment." The actor becomes "possessed" by his role; the chess player delivers himself

to the inspiration of the game in as much as he lacks full control in the face of the unpredictable strategy of his opponent. This ambivalent attitude, especially the admission of passivity in active play, is possible only in the realm of the imaginary, of the unreal, and not in the realm of strictly rational activity.<sup>23</sup>

The "imaginary" Dufrenne defines as all that which is possible within Nature, a Nature that is the "mother" of both the real and the unreal. In play everything is feigned, creating a world of appearances or images which are not copies of the real, but rather symbolic revelations of the imaginary, of all that is possible in Nature. Play, then, is more than a toying with mere illusion, a flight from reality. For Dufrenne, it involves an encounter with Nature, with destiny.<sup>24</sup>

Jürgen Moltmann, in his Theology and Joy, ponders the possibility of knowing joy and freedom in the midst of a suffering world, of engaging in play which is more than a momentary and illusory escape from the serious, burdensome business of life.<sup>25</sup> From the perspective of theology Moltmann offers a critical assessment of those theories which define play according to the standards of productivity and utility governing the world of labor, and hence find in play

an activity which is characteristically meaningless and purposeless. To define play as a meaningless escape, Moltmann argues, is to perpetuate in play the "alienating" and estranging character of labor in the modern industrial world which defines the value of man according to his productive capacity. Moltmann offers a theological reevaluation of play, presenting play as a liberating force, which, instead of perpetuating the alienating structure of labor by providing momentary relief, is an activity of creative imagination.<sup>26</sup> To uncover and liberate the springs of creative, imaginative playing, Moltmann unfolds a theological conception of the world in which play becomes a world symbol. Within this theological evaluation play becomes, moreover, an expression of love. Moltmann approaches his theology of play by asking the question: "Why did God create the world?"<sup>27</sup> What is its purpose? This question proves to be in a sense unanswerable and reveals the appropriateness of play as a symbol of the divine creation. The world has no purpose, nor is it of any use to God, who is sufficient unto himself. The creation is a free, unnecessary act, rooted in the good will or pleasure of God. However, though the act of creation is free and unnecessary, it is not capricious, since it "corresponds" to the "deepest nature" of God, and

hence becomes meaningful. In the creation we find an expression of God's glory, of his loveliness, his beauty, his kindness which elicits a free expression of gratitude and love in man. Like God's action in creation, his action in the history of salvation cannot be wholly constructed in terms of a "purposeful, rational system." When Moltmann considers the redemption of man in Jesus Christ certain unanswerable questions spring to mind: "Why, of all people, Jesus of Nazareth?"<sup>28</sup> Again the words "good will" and "pleasure" are employed to account for this redemptive act. In the Incarnation God again chooses to display his glory to men, but this time through weakness which reveals that his glory is not only power but love--a transforming, creative love.

This account of divine creativity as play and of the element of play in redemption has implications for the meaning of human activity. The question "For what purpose does man exist?" frequently elicits answers which define the value of human life in terms of what a person does or makes. The theology of creation and redemption answers in the words, perhaps, of the Westminster Confession: "Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever," to delight, in other words, in existence itself.<sup>29</sup> Just as God takes pleasure in creation, revealing his glory through it, man

can freely "represent" himself before God in creative play; hence, "play as world symbol goes beyond the categories of doing, having and achieving and leads us into the categories of being, of authentic human existence and demonstrative rejoicing in it."<sup>30</sup> Creative playing which is an expression of joy in existence may potentially invade and transform the world of labor and utility. This playing of man, like the playing of God, is rooted in love. "The creative playing of men is always a playing with something which, in turn, plays with the player. Man plays with the waves of the ocean and they play with him. He plays with colours; sounds and words and also becomes their playmate. . . . This is true not only for the games in life, but also for the game of life."<sup>31</sup> This game of life is the "game of all-reversing grace" in which the "loser wins and the lost are saved, the poor are filled and the rich are left empty-handed; the game of eschatological surprises in which 'the first shall be the last and the last first.'" To play this game one must abandon "pride . . . [of] achievement" and respond in loving "wonder."<sup>32</sup> Moltmann's theology presents play, then, as a creative, imaginative freedom, which is yet not governed by caprice but by love, by good will, transcending rational, causal and utilitarian categories, and expressing "authentic

existence" rooted in divine being.

When we turn from anthropology and theology to literary theory and contemporary semiotics, we experience a shift of perspective. In Jacques Derrida's Of Grammatology, a work concerned with philosophy of language, play is once again considered in relation to "imagination" and "being" or "presence," but here play is wholly a matter of illusion.<sup>33</sup>

Derrida describes the way in which meaning is created in language as play, relocating the traditional locus of meaning in a text. Chance and illusion govern the infinite movement of sign and image. The chain of signs and images through which we experience our self-consciousness conspires to create the illusion of a central, constituting presence, an author of words. In fact, this author, constituted by a process of language, is, in reality, absent. Hence, for Derrida, there is no possibility that a written text contains a unified coherent meaning proceeding from an authorial centre. The reading of any text can reveal a contradiction which upsets the unity of the whole and itself reveals the playful, feigning, unpredictable movement of language. Moreover, where there are no authors there is no possibility of discovering any continuity of meaning from text to text, of reconstructing a literary history. To read a text appropriately,

then, is to attend to the playful process of language itself, as distinct from the playfulness of those who use language.

In these various contemporary and theoretical discussions of play two distinguishing characteristics of play recur in different ways: play involves the player in illusion and imagination, which in the thought of Dufrenne and Fink possesses symbolic significance; play involves also spontaneous enjoyment, fulfilled desire, and, in a theological context, can become an expression of love. When play is considered as an activity of creative imagination, as symbolic representation, or as an expression of love, it becomes, despite its seeming lack of purpose, an activity which gives meaning to human experience, possessing cultural, philosophical and theological interest. Within the categories of medieval theology, play also emerges as a significant activity, as an attribute of divine wisdom. As we come to consider the Cistercian writings, we will find the relationship of play and wisdom emerges in the context of discussion of love and imagination. This suggests a further point of intersection for a semiotician like Derrida with the medieval imagination concerning play. Both Derrida and the Cistercian writers of the twelfth century consider play in terms of the relation of "letter" and "spirit."<sup>34</sup> Yet where for Derrida

the self, the illusion of "being" and "presence," is created by the capricious play of language, for medieval theologians the letter is always transcended by the spirit: the individual plays with words and images in response to the much larger and more profoundly creative playfulness of divine love.

The patristic and medieval understanding of play has its origins in the biblical text. Three passages, in particular, prompt a consideration of the significance and meaning of human and divine play: Genesis 26:8, describing the love play of Isaac and Rebecca; 2 Kings 6:14-22, describing the dancing of David before the Ark; and Proverbs 8:30-31, describing the play of Wisdom before God. In the occasional treatment these passages receive in the writings of the Fathers, we encounter ideas emerging which will recur in the thought of the Cistercians. In the case of Proverbs 8, where the notion of play is deliberately muted both in translation and interpretation, Cistercian reinterpretation of this passage reveals the transforming light shed by Cistercian spirituality, in which play is a fundamental element of the relation of man and God, of man and the world, of the exegete and the biblical text.

Interpretations of Genesis 26:8, from those of Philo and

Clement of Alexandria to that of Augustine, will prove significant to later Cistercian thought.<sup>35</sup> In this passage King Abimelech sees Isaac playing with his wife Rebecca whom Abimelech had believed to be Isaac's sister. In the allegorizing interpretation of Philo and Clement, this passage teaches us that the mood of wisdom is joy and play. According to the etymology of the names, Isaac means laughter and Rebecca, perseverance. King Abimelech is wisdom, or the wise man, who perceives this inward mystery: laughter is the conjugal partner of perseverance in good, or, in Clement's interpretation, perseverance in Christ.<sup>36</sup> Clement offers an alternate interpretation in which Isaac who "died" and "rose again" at Abraham's hands is a figure of Christ as the incarnate child of God. Christ rejoices over salvation with the persevering Church as in a children's game. Abimelech also is Christ who from heaven looks through the "window" of his flesh, Isaac, at the joy of man in his salvation.<sup>37</sup> This relation between joy and wisdom, between joy and perseverance in good, or good will, will figure prominently in Cistercian thought.

Augustine, drawing upon this tradition, also finds in this passage a description of the Incarnation. He again sees in Isaac a figure of the Logos, the Word, Wisdom, but he is

concerned not so much with the joyous mood of Wisdom, but with the manner in which the Logos, amazingly, dwells in the temporal world of men in order to kindle love in the Church:

Whoever does this [reflects on the meaning of this allegory] will find that the true Isaac for a time concealed his majesty--in which, being of the divine nature, he was the equal of the Father--under the disguise of a servant; for only thus could our human weakness accept him, and it was his will to use this means to adapt himself to his spouse.

This being so, is it strange--nay, is it not most marvellously appropriate for the prefiguring of what was to come--that Isaac, this prophet of God, should have begun to play voluptuously so that his wife's love for him might thus be roused? After all, it was to dwell among us that the Word of God took on man's flesh.<sup>38</sup>

A recollection of Augustine's conception of the relation of the temporal and eternal worlds clarifies this image of play. Augustine defined the relationship of the temporal to the eternal as a relationship of sign and thing. All corporal and sensible things are signs which direct the mind to the invisible and eternal things of God. The wise man--and

wisdom is the love and contemplation of eternal things-- understands temporal signs rightly. He does not love them, or "enjoy" them, vainly for their own sake or for his own sake. Rather, when these temporal things enter his mind as images, he perceives their signification and uses them to enjoy God.<sup>39</sup> Man, himself the very image of God, is also to be loved for the sake of God. It is, moreover, in wisdom that the image of God is found: the trinity of mental faculties in the soul--memory, understanding, and will--become the image of God when they are directed towards God.<sup>40</sup> However, God is enjoyed in the temporal world "through a glass" or "in a dark manner." God is the transcendent creator of all things, eternal and immutable; the unity of his triune being is an ineffable mystery. He can only be known imperfectly through the things which signify him, and the words and images formed in the soul, for we do not see him as he is.<sup>41</sup> The wise man is wise precisely because he does not take the temporal world seriously in itself, but apprehends through it the mystery of divine being which is the soul's beatitude. Within this hierarchy of thing and sign, the temporal world which is sign offers always a partial revelation, a shadow or image of the reality, which while it reveals also conceals. Hence, in the Incarnation, God

conceals his glory behind human flesh and assumes the disguise of a servant, and so plays: In this act of humility and love, the Word pretends to be less than he is, concealing his overwhelming glory from the weakness of men, in order that they might learn to love one who shares their own nature. The incarnate Word plays in the temporal world, as Isaac plays with his wife, in order to draw men to himself, to make them wise--to teach them to enjoy God. Play in this context is then an expression of love and of the way in which images, the temporal world, approach reality, the eternal.

A second passage from Augustine illustrates an alternate and common patristic and medieval perspective of play which grows along side the perspective we have seen developing around Genesis 26:8. In this passage, Augustine describes temporal life as a play performed on a stage: "This life of ours is a comedy, imperilled as it is. For it is written: 'Naught but vanity is every man living.'"<sup>42</sup> This perception of play as the vanity of temporal things also has its roots in an awareness of the eternal and spiritual world beyond the temporal one. Augustine's awareness of the temporal world as source both of revelation and temptation means that its playing may be wise or vain.

Among the varying interpretations of 2 Kings 6:14-22, which describes David dancing and playing before the ark and Michal, his wife, scorning and mocking him, Gregory the Great's treatment of play as an image of humility and wisdom will prove most influential in later Cistercian writings.<sup>43</sup> David's dancing is interpreted in patristic exegesis as an exemplum of virtue. Ambrose, in his work On Penitence, and Jerome, in his commentary on Matthew's Gospel, both appeal to David's dancing in order to interpret a passage from Matthew: "We have piped to you, and you have not danced: we have lamented, and you have not mourned."<sup>44</sup> Dancing becomes an exemplum of ardent devotion in Ambrose, and of good work in Jerome.<sup>45</sup> By recalling David's dancing which signifies spiritual ardor, Ambrose is able to carefully distinguish the dancing referred to in the Gospels from "lascivious dances" and the "extravagances of the theatre."<sup>46</sup> In Gregory's Morals on the Book of Job, David's play exemplifies the virtue of humility, prompting a discussion of wisdom. In the biblical text play is associated with a self-imposed humiliation, a willingness to appear foolish for the sake of God. Gregory uses the incident to elucidate the relationship of wisdom and folly, of those people who belong to the kingdom of heaven and those who belong to the world. David,

a king chosen and exalted by God, humbles himself by dancing before the ark of God with the common people, and so overcomes pride with virtue. Michal, proud of her royal lineage, scorns such behavior, but is rebuked by her husband:

Before the Lord, who chose me rather than thy father . . . I will both play and make myself meaner than I have done, and I will be little in my own eyes [". . . ludam, et vilior fiam plus quam factus sum: et ero humilis in oculis meis"]<sup>1</sup>.

(2 Kings 6:21-22).

Gregory, in response to this passage, counsels that in order to be wise and to see wisdom, we must acknowledge ourselves to be fools, "learn praiseworthy folly," the humility which the world deems folly.<sup>47</sup> Hence, the playing of David becomes an image of wisdom.

In light of the reflections upon play and wisdom in these passages from the Fathers, one might expect the image of Wisdom playing before God in Proverbs 8:30-31, the most powerful image of Wisdom at play in the Scriptures, to have prompted more reflection upon these ideas. In fact, it does not. This image of Wisdom playing was, in the beginning, lost in the Septuagint and Old Latin translations. In these translations the Hebrew word meaning "playing" or "dancing"

is rendered as "rejoicing." The word "playing" is not restored until the fourth century in the translation of Jerome.<sup>48</sup> The Vulgate reads:

Cum eo eram, cuncta componens.

Et delectabar per singulos dies,

Ludens coram eo omni tempore,

Ludens in orbe terrarum;

Et deliciae meae esse cum filiis hominum.<sup>49</sup>

However, interpreters of this passage, wishing to combat the Arian heresy denying that Christ is consubstantial with the Father, prefer the reading "rejoicing" to "playing," gaudens to ludens. Salenius' commentary on Proverbs establishes a reading of this passage which survives into the Glossa Ordinaria:

Did Wisdom, that is, the Son of God, indeed play before the face of the Father like a child? . . . By no means. When it is said that he played, this must be understood as meaning that he rejoiced, and the words "He played before him all the days" mean that he rejoiced to be one with the Father, to be of one substance with him from the beginning, before all the days of eternity. But how did he play upon the earth always? Because even when the

time came for the earth to be made and for creatures to come into being, he rejoiced that for all time, remaining in the Father, he was that which he was and is.<sup>50</sup>

The reading is repeated by Bede, by Rabanus Maurus, and in the Glossa Ordinaria in Proverbia, which became a standard work from the middle of the twelfth century.<sup>51</sup> The playing of Wisdom on the earth in Proverbs is not considered in light of the ordinary usage of ludens until John of Ford, a Cistercian abbot, completes in the early thirteenth century the sermons on the Song of Songs begun by Bernard.

John discusses Proverbs 8:30-31 in the context of a sermon, not about the substantial unity of the Trinity, but about the love enjoyed within the Trinity. In the midst of this discussion he pauses to speak of God's love poured out in play everywhere in creation:

Not only in rational creatures, but even in those who are moved by appetite alone, we are perpetually being instructed by examples all around us, though they lose their value through their very frequency. Yet the Wisdom of God played before his Father's face over the whole expanse of the earth, and he plays also before the face of those who learn how

to join in Wisdom's play by rejoicing and feeling wonder. He presses upon our attention symbols and images of that high love, and they are not unworthy of it.<sup>52</sup>

To illustrate his point, John recalls Christ's own comparison of himself to a hen brooding over her chicks:

To take an example which the Wisdom of God used of himself, we see how the hen yearns over her chickens, how tenderly and how often she warms them against her breast, how repeatedly she gives birth. The keener her affection, the harsher her voice, and in a wonderful fashion, she yearns with affection towards her young in proportion to her hoarseness. What are we to make of the way she passes, as it were, wholly into a state of love, and shows this not only by rasping her voice, but by fluffing out her feathers, by drooping her body, by anxiously running to and fro, by constant service, by sleepless devotion? (14.6, p. 258; CC 17, p. 129)

He then continues to defend the playing of Wisdom in creation:

Perhaps you will call this kind of thing a game, and of course you are quite right, but it is a serious game. It is the Wisdom of God who is

playing and anyone who watches the game must see to it that he does not mock the player and hear: "We piped to you, and you did not dance." Let them rather play and dance and leap before the ark of the Lord, with the Wisdom of God the Father, who from the heights of his love uses the mirror of visible creation to send some brilliant rays of light down into our darkness. For there is no creature, rational or irrational, that is without a voice, none without a tongue. In the innate desires of their instinctive affections, all things speak to us of the ineffable mystery of eternal love, if only we take the trouble to notice. If we do not then all these things are dumb to us and we are deaf to them (14.6, p. 6; pp. 258-59).<sup>53</sup>

In this sermon we encounter a fresh perception of the passage from Proverbs. John sees Wisdom playing everywhere in the created world, revealing the mystery of God's love. God in his humility and love descends to play as a child making creation into a game of image and symbol. John responds with affective appreciation and in so doing plays with Wisdom like David dancing before the ark. We encounter here the influence of earlier conceptions of play: play is associated

with that which is foolish, which is lacking in seriousness. Yet this foolishness can be seen as wisdom when it reveals a true perception of the world: for Gregory David's playing reveals his humility, his proper understanding of himself before God, his refusal to take himself inordinately seriously. Augustine sees the temporal world as vanity, as something not to be taken seriously in itself, yet the Incarnation can also be seen as wise play, in which God in his amazing humility, uses humble things to reveal hidden and concealed truth. In keeping with this tradition John describes the images and symbols of the created world as game, making the created again the locus of the playful and foolish, yet he calls it a serious game, for it is a game played by Wisdom who calls men to himself through it. Yet in John's words we find something more: his description of Wisdom's play is animated by a delighted appreciation, a participation in the play he describes, unique among the discussions of play we have considered. His description of a chicken as an image of divine love, for instance, is related with humor, with imaginative freedom, with enjoyment. John's awareness of Wisdom's play and his own capacity to play with him by feeling joy and wonder are the fruit of the most radical features of Cistercian thought. Cistercian theology is, as Etienne Gilson has

so comprehensively illustrated in The Mystical Theology of St. Bernard, a theology of love, which attempts to understand the role of the human affections in the recovery of wisdom.<sup>54</sup>

Under Bernard's inspiration, monastic poverty and penance become the context of an affective love of God which alone brings the soul to mystical union with God.<sup>55</sup> This affective love of God is fostered by a joyous love of the incarnate Christ. Thus, this spirituality, embracing the foolishness of God, his humanity, with affective sensitivity and delight, fosters an awareness of the playfulness of wisdom such as we find in John's interpretation of Proverbs 8, where Wisdom not only reveals himself in the "instinctive affections" of irrational creatures, but Wisdom is perceived by one who responds to him affectively, rejoicing, wondering, exploring imaginatively.

This playing of Wisdom in creation which John describes is reflected in the Cistercian view of signs and images in the biblical text, and ultimately can be seen to affect the religious drama. In the devotional writings of these monks, it is the biblical text, most frequently the Gospels or the Song of Songs, which becomes the means through which God and the soul engage one another in loving play, evoking affection,

joy and wonder. In these meditations of the Cistercians we observe the imagination at play, so that the writer through his imaginative and loving participation in and recreation of the literal narrative ascends to its hidden mystery, just as John's imaginative and affective response to the created world unveils the mystery of Wisdom's play.

It is in this context, I think, that we may profitably consider Le Jeu d'Adam. I wish to suggest that in Le Jeu d'Adam an idea of play, echoing that of the Cistercians, shapes the drama both in its interpretation of the fall and redemption of man, and in its dramatic methods. Le Jeu d'Adam shares with Cistercian spirituality the conviction that play is an attribute of wisdom. The perception that joy and play spring from wisdom is the starting point of the drama's recounting of man's first folly and of his eventual redemption by Christ. Play and game, both wise and foolish, recurs throughout the story of Adam and Eve, of Cain and Abel, and of the succession of Old Testament prophets announcing the Incarnation and Passion of Christ. The idea of play becomes a unifying one, uniting the three sections of the play, affecting the patterns of imagery which develop through the length of the play, and its characterization and dialogue. The creation of a playful involvement with God

through the physical and human world present in Cistercian meditation is also found in Le Jeu d'Adam, in its employment of the human dimension of the biblical story and in its methods of creating imaginative participation in the audience. Finally, the idea of play is integral to the drama's comic structure and the comic effects of its dialogue. Le Jeu d'Adam invites its audience to participate playfully in a comic structure which culminates in the restoration of wisdom in Christ.

ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Willem Noomen, ed., Le Jeu d'Adam (Ordo Representacionis Ade), Les Classiques Français du Moyen Âge (Paris: Librairie Honoré Champion, 1971), p. 26. All further references to the play will be to this edition and will be noted in parentheses in the text by line and/or page number.

<sup>2</sup>For a summary discussion of relations between drama and spirituality in the Middle Ages, see Sandro Sticca, "Drama and Spirituality in the Middle Ages," Mediævalia et Humanistica, NS 4 (1973), 69-87. For a definition of spirituality, or spiritual theology, see Louis Bouyer, The Spirituality of the New Testament and the Fathers, Vol. I of A History of Christian Spirituality, trans. Mary P. Ryan (London: Burns and Oates, 1963), pp. vii-ix. Bouyer defines the study of spirituality as the study of dogma and doctrine in the subjective experience of the "religious consciousness" rather than "in the abstract."

<sup>3</sup>Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature, trans. Willard R. Trask (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953), pp. 143-73, esp. pp. 151-59.

<sup>4</sup>Sticca, pp. 79-81. The major role played by Bernard and other Cistercian writers in developing the characteristically medieval devotion to the humanity of Christ with its emphasis on emotion and visual imagination is widely recognized. See, for example, Jacques Hourlier, "Humanité du Christ (Chez Les Spirituels Médiévaux)," DS 7 - 1, cols. 1053-1063, André Rayez "Humanité du Christ (Age d'or de la Dévotion Médiévale)," DS 7 - 1, esp. cols. 1065-1066, 1069, 1072, 1074-1075, 1086, and Jean Leclercq, The Spirituality of the Middle Ages, Vol. II of A History of Christian Spirituality, trans. The Benedictines of Holme Eden Abbey, Carlisle (London: Burns and Oates, 1968), pp. 196-200. Both these works discuss the general emergence of this new religious sensibility in the eleventh century and the role of the Cistercians in its development.

<sup>5</sup>Sticca, p. 81.

<sup>6</sup>"Folie de la Croix (Dans la Tradition)," DS 5, cols. 646-648.

<sup>7</sup>Jean Leclercq, OSB, "The Intentions of the Founders of the Cistercian Order," in The Cistercian Spirit: A Symposium in Memory of Thomas Merton, ed. M. Basil Pennington, OCSO, Cistercian Studies Series, No. 3 (Spencer, Mass.: Cistercian Publications, 1970), p. 113.

<sup>8</sup>Leclercq, "The Intentions of the Founders," p. 113.

<sup>9</sup>Louis J. Lekai, S. O. Cist., The White Monks: A History of the Cistercian Order (Okauchee, Wis.: Cistercian Monastery of Our Lady of Spring Bank, 1953), pp. 23-25; Leclercq, The Spirituality of the Middle Ages, pp. 187-91. The Cistercian Order is a response to what has been termed the "crisis of monasticism" in the late eleventh and twelfth centuries, a widespread dissatisfaction with traditional Benedictine monasticism, particularly with elaborate liturgical accretions and close involvement of monasteries with the secular world. The desire for renewal is expressed most radically in the eremitical movements of the eleventh century. The Cistercian Order attempts to renew and restructure the traditional Benedictine monastic community. See Leclercq, The Spirituality of the Middle Ages, pp. 127-30.

<sup>10</sup>The Golden Epistle: A Letter to the Brethren at Mont Dieu, trans. Theodore Berkeley, OCSO, CF 12 (Kalamazoo, Mich.: Cistercian Publications, 1980), I. 8, p. 10. This passage is quoted by John Seward in Perfect Fools: Folly for Christ's Sake in Catholic and Orthodox Spirituality (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), p. 49. In ~~this~~ work, Seward finds the Eastern tradition of seeing hermits and monks as fools

for the sake of Christ revived in the West in the eremitical movements of the eleventh century and in the Cistercian Order, which share a desire to recover the spirit of the desert fathers and of early Eastern monasticism. See Saward, pp. 48-79. See also Rowan Williams' chapter "Acrobats and Jugglers" in The Wound of Knowledge: Christian Spirituality from the New Testament to St. John of the Cross (London: Darton, Longman, and Todd, 1979), pp. 90-115.

<sup>11</sup>Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play-Element in Culture (Boston: The Beacon Press, 1950).

<sup>12</sup>Huizinga, "Foreward."

<sup>13</sup>Huizinga discusses the characteristics of play on pp. 7-13, concluding with this paragraph of summation.

<sup>14</sup>Huizinga, p. 6.

<sup>15</sup>Huizinga, p. 1.

<sup>16</sup>Huizinga, p. 13.

<sup>17</sup>Huizinga, pp. 4-5, 14-18.

<sup>18</sup>Eugen Fink, "The Oasis of Happiness: Toward an Ontology of Play," Yale French Studies, 41 (1968), 19-30; Mikel Dufrenne, "Le Jeu et l'Imaginaire," Esprit, 39 (1971), 79-96.

<sup>19</sup>Fink, pp. 20-24.

<sup>20</sup>Fink, pp. 26-29, 23.

<sup>21</sup>Dufrenne, p. 79.

<sup>22</sup>Dufrenne, pp. 83-89. Dufrenne summarizes his analysis on p. 89.

<sup>23</sup>Dufrenne, pp. 81-82.

<sup>24</sup>Dufrenne, pp. 90-95.

<sup>25</sup>Theology and Joy, trans. Reinhard Ulrich (London: SCM Press, 1973).

<sup>26</sup>Moltmann, pp. 30-36.

<sup>27</sup>Moltmann discusses this question on pp. 39-42.

<sup>28</sup>This question is addressed on pp. 47-49, 60-61.

<sup>29</sup>Moltmann, p. 42.

<sup>30</sup>Moltmann, pp. 45-46.

<sup>31</sup>Moltmann, p. 46.

<sup>32</sup>Moltmann, p. 47.

<sup>33</sup>Of Grammatology, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976). The idea of play is given diffuse development in Of Grammatology, emerging as an integral element of Derrida's major concepts: writing, difference, the trace, supplementarity. See, for example, pp. 7, 50-51, 56-57, 70-73, 242-47, 309-12. The idea of play is discussed more concisely and directly in "Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences," in Writing and Difference, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), pp. 278-93.

<sup>34</sup>See Derrida's use of the term on pp. 70-73 of Of Grammatology. It has for him not only the traditional theological implications, but also the implications of his discussion of the relation of writing to spoken language and self-consciousness.

<sup>35</sup>This discussion of patristic treatment of Genesis 26:8 depends on Hugo Rahner's Man at Play or Did you ever practice eutrapelia?, trans. Brian Battershaw and Edward Quinn (London: Burns and Oates, 1965), pp. 42-45, 48-50. The crucial Latin word here is jocus: ". . . vidit cum iocantem cum Rebecca uxore sua." See Biblia Sacra iuxta Vulgatam Clementinam, 6th ed. (Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 1982). All further quotations from the Bible in Latin will be from the Vulgate and will be noted in parentheses in the text.

<sup>36</sup>Philo, De Plantatione, 167-70, in Leopold Cohn and Paul Wendland, eds., Philonis Alexandrini: Opera Quae Super-sunt, Editio minor (Berlin, 1897), II, 156-57; Clement, Paedagogus, I.5.21; PG 8, cols. 275-276; Rahner, pp. 42-45.

<sup>37</sup>Paedagogus, I.5.22-23; PG 8, cols. 275-278; Rahner, pp. 48-49.

<sup>38</sup>Contra Faustum Manichaeum, XXII. 46; PL 42, cols. 427-428. The translation is from Rahner, pp. 49-50.

<sup>39</sup>De Doctrina Christiana, I.2-4; PL 34, cols. 19-21.

<sup>40</sup>De Trinitate, XIV. 12 and 15; PL 42, cols. 1048-1049,  
1051-1052.

<sup>41</sup>De Doctrina Christiana, I. 5-6; I.10; II.7; PL 34,  
cols. 21; 23; 39-40.

<sup>42</sup>Enarrationes in Psalmos, 127.15; PL 36, col. 1686.

This passage is quoted by Rahner on p. 41.

<sup>43</sup>2 Kings is 2 Samuel in modern versions of the Bible.

<sup>44</sup>Matthew 11:17, The Holy Bible, Douay Version, translated from the Latin Vulgate (Baltimore, Maryland: John Murphy Co., 1914). Unless otherwise indicated, all further quotations of the Bible in English will be from this version and will be noted in parentheses in the text.

<sup>45</sup>Ambrose, De Poenitentia, II.6.40-44; PL 16, cols. 507-508; Jerome, Commentaria in Evangelium S. Matthaei, II. 11.16-19; PL 26, cols. 72-73.

<sup>46</sup>La Pénitence, trans. Roger Gryson, SC 179 (Paris: Les Editions du Cerf, 1971), pp. 160-61.

<sup>47</sup>In Expositionem Beati Job Moralia, XXVII. 77-79; PL 76, cols. 443-446.

<sup>48</sup>This discussion of the history of interpretation of Proverbs 8:30-31 before John of Ford depends, again, on Rahner's Man at Play, pp. 19-23.

<sup>49</sup>"I was with him forming all things: and was delighted every day, playing before him at all times, playing in the world: and my delights were to be with the children of men."

<sup>50</sup>"Nunquid Sapientia, id est, Dei Filius, pueriliter ludebat coram Patre? Absit: sed quod dicit, ludens, intelligendum est, gaudens. Ludebat enim per singulos dies, id est, gaudebat se esse unum; id est, unius substantiae cum Patre, a principio, ex diebus aeternitatis. Quomodo ludebat omni tempore in orbe terrarum? Quia cum tempora orbis et creaturae esse coepissent, ipse Filius gaudebat, quia ipse quod erat, semper in Patre manebat." Expositio mystica in Parabolis Salomonis, PL 53, col. 974. The translation is from Rahner, pp. 22-23.

<sup>51</sup>Bede, Super Parabolis Salomonis Allegoria Expositio, I.8; PL 91, col. 966; Rabanus Maurus, Expositio in Proverbia Salomonis, I.8; PL 111, col. 710; Glossa Ordinaria in Proverbia, 8.31; PL 113, col. 109; see Rahner, p. 23. For a discussion of the status of the Glossa Ordinaria, see Beryl Smalley, The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages, 2nd. ed. (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1964), pp. 65-66.

<sup>52</sup>Sermons on the Final Verses of the Song of Songs, I, trans. Wendy Mary Beckett, CF 29 (Kalamazoo, Mich.: Cistercian

Publications, 1977), 14.6, p. 258. All further references to this work will be noted in parentheses in the text and will be referred to by sermon, section and page numbers, followed by reference to the Latin text, except where the Latin text appears in the endnotes. The critical Latin text is Super Extremam Partem Cantici Canticorum Sermones CXX, eds. Edmund Mikkers and Hilary Costello, CC 17 (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 1970): "Nec solum in rationali creatura sed in his quoque quae solo appetitu aguntur, domesticus assidue erudimur exemplis, quamquam ipsa assiduitate uiluerint. Ludit tamen sapientia Dei coram Patre suo passim in orbe terrarum, et coram illis quoque, qui ludenti sapientiae exultando atque admirando alludere didicerunt, et signa amoris illius superni ac similitudines non ignobiles ingerit oculis nostris." P. 129.

<sup>53</sup>"Tu forte istiusmodi ludos uocaueris et uere nimirum, sed ludos serios, quia sapientia Dei est quae ludit, uiderit spectator ludorum, ne ludenti illudat et audiat. Cecinimus nobis et non saltastis. Colludat potius ipse et saltet atque tripudiet coram arca Domini sapientia Dei Patris, quae a summo caritatis culmine radios quosdam lucidissimos per speculum creaturae uisibilis emittit usque ad has tenebras nostras." CC 17, pp. 129-30.

<sup>54</sup> The Mystical Theology of Saint Bernard, trans. A. H. C. Downes (1940; rpt. London: Sheed and Ward, 1955).

<sup>55</sup> Lekai, p. 40; Leclercq, The Spirituality of the Middle Ages, pp. 195-97.

Chapter 2

St. Bernard of Clairvaux:

Love, Play and Exegesis

The remarkable freedom and imagination of John of Ford's interpretation of Proverbs 8:30-31 has its inspiration in the spirituality and exegesis of Bernard of Clairvaux, whose writing rapidly became the formative model of the Order.<sup>1</sup> John expresses his indebtedness and admiration in his Prologue to his sermons:

Let me say, then, that I have the greatest desire to hasten after that famous man, and I refer to blessed Bernard . . . . Through the spirit of wisdom he merited to speak more beautifully than others of what he had so uniquely experienced through the spirit of charity (Prologue. 4, pp. 71-72; CC 17, p. 35).

Henri de Lubac has said that in the first decades of the twelfth century the word on everyone's lips regarding the Cistercian order was "nouveau-té."<sup>2</sup> In matters of exegesis, this "newness" took the form of putting "toute au service d'une expérience intérieure de plus en plus riche et subtile."<sup>3</sup> Bernard's exegesis struck his contemporaries with the freedom of its interpretation, with its witness to Bernard's own inner experience of God. Lubac recalls the description of Bernard's exegesis offered by his secretary and biographer, Geoffrey of Auxerre, who said of Bernard that he treated the

text so freely that "plutôt que la suivre, il semblait la précéder, pour la conduire où il voulait, lui-même suivant l'Esprit qui en est l'auteur."<sup>4</sup> In Bernard's exegesis, remarkable for its liberty and newness, we may find the origins of John's vision of Wisdom at play.

We may begin to understand how Bernard thinks of play by considering a letter written to his friend, Oger, a Canon Regular and former abbot. Bernard concludes this letter with a prayer for humility, presenting this virtue in the form of a striking image of play: Bernard--monk, abbot, theologian--describes himself as a jongleur, a vagrant entertainer. This portion of the letter is translated by Jean Leclercq in one of several articles he has written concerning the idea of play in Bernard's thought:

It is indeed most dangerous to hear things said about us that are greater than what we know to be in us. Who will grant me to be deservedly humiliated before men for as many right reasons as I am undeservedly exalted for wrong reasons? Then I could justly apply to myself the prophetic saying: "I was exalted, but I am brought low and am troubled," and that other, "I shall play for dance!

and demean myself even more". Yes, I will play, that I may be made game of. A good playing, by which Michal is angered and God is delighted. A good playing, which makes me a ridiculous spectacle to men but a most beautiful spectacle to the angels. A good playing, I say, by which we are made "the opprobrium of the complacent and the scorn of the proud." For what do we seem to worldlings to be doing but playing about, when we flee what they desire in this world and seek what they flee? We are like those jesters and tumblers who, with heads down and feet up, reverse human habits by standing or walking on their hands, and so draw all eyes to them. But ours is not childish play, or the playing of the theatre which with effeminate and shameful cavortings provokes lust and represents sordid acts. It is pleasing, decent, serious, seemly play, such as may delight the eyes of the heavenly onlookers. This was the chaste and religious game played by him who said: "We are made a spectacle to angels and to men." Let us too play this game now, that we may be made game of, confounded, humiliated, until He shall come who casts down the

mighty and exalts the humble, who will gladden us, glorify us, and exalt us for ever.<sup>5</sup>

Recalling patristic interpretations of David's dance before the ark as an exemplum of humility, Bernard conceives of the monastic life as a "pure and holy game," vividly employing the familiar antics of the jongleur, a low member of society from the monastic point of view, to make his point. Leclercq describes succinctly the nature of this play: "Ce jeu suprême . . . consiste à être fou aux yeux du siècle afin de plaire à Dieu, lequel connaît le secret des coeurs."<sup>6</sup> The apparent foolishness and play of the monastic life invites mockery. But, this play, far from being ridiculous, is at once joyous and serious, expressing a hidden understanding of oneself and the world pleasing to God, embracing a humility reminiscent of the incarnate Christ. For, Bernard, indeed, relates this image of play and folly to the Gospels in the last sentence of the letter. Leclercq notes a deliberately subtle and appropriately humble allusion in the word illudere, translated "to make game of," to Christ's subjection of himself to the mockery of the world. This same word is used in the Vulgate accounts of the mockery of Jesus by the soldiers of Pilate. The soldiers dress Christ in purple robes and a crown of thorns to make game of him:

Et genu flexo ante eum, illudebant ei, dicentes:  
 Ave rex Iudaeorum . . . . Et postquam illuserunt  
 ei, exuerunt eum chlamyde, et induerunt eum  
 vestimentis eius, et duxerunt eum ut crucifigerent.<sup>7</sup>

(Matthew 27:29-31)

Implicit in this vision of the monastic life is Bernard's understanding of its primary motivation: love. It is love which plays at penance, which, delighting in delighting God, abandons freely and joyously the pleasures of the world.

Bernard's enjoyment of his "good playing" pervades the passage. To suffer humiliation, to embrace humility, is to love God, and so to transform in "foolish" penance the folly and vanity of temporal life into wise, joyous and spiritual play.

In Bernard's On the Song of Songs, begun in 1135 and left unfinished at his death in 1153, this spirituality of play and enjoyment is everywhere present.<sup>8</sup> The idea of a joyous charity dominates the sermons, for, in Bernard's interpretation, this book describes the soul's enjoyment of a fulfilled and perfected love of God, intended for the mature and disciplined who through constant study, meditation and prayer are prepared to enter into marriage, into mystical union, with God.<sup>9</sup> This joyous charity extends itself to the

form of the text. Bernard conceives of the fabric of image and symbol in the text of the Song of Songs as play, apparently depicting a foolish, human story, and in reality concealing the story of joyous love of God. Play is articulated, again, in terms of foolishness and wisdom, in this context, in terms of the literal and the spiritual levels of the text. In the hands of an interpreter who loves God, the folly of the literal is transformed into a wise playing that leads to spiritual mystery.

Jean Leclercq has noted that despite the reputation Bernard has gained in our own time for austerity and aggressivity, contemporary accounts of his life and works such as that of Geoffrey of Auxerre frequently describe his spirituality rather as a joyous devotion, jucunda devotio. In the root of the word jucundus we encounter, again, the word jocus, jeu, "play."<sup>10</sup> In the first of these sermons, Bernard's own use of the word jucundus directs us toward the playing of the text and the playing of God and the soul that the text discloses. In this first sermon Bernard sets forth his understanding of the theme and style of the Song of Songs which will govern his interpretation of the text in the succeeding sermons. The word jucundus appears three times in the sermon.<sup>11</sup> It is used to describe the love

which the biblical text and the sermons celebrate and the figurative manner in which the book is written. This love song of Solomon is, Bernard teaches, "preeminently a marriage song telling of chaste souls in loving embrace ["*exprimens castos jucundosque complexus animorum*"], of their wills in sweet concord, of the mutual exchange of the heart's affections" (1.11; I, p. 7; PL 183, col. 789). The Song of Songs allegorically depicts the union of Christ and the soul, a union briefly enjoyed in mystical experience of God anticipating the eschatological marriage of Christ and the Church. The joy of this love which the Song of Songs seeks to communicate extends itself to the style in which it is written: "Here . . . are expressed the mounting desires of the soul, its marriage song, an exaltation of spirit poured forth in figurative language pregnant with delight" ["*exsultans in spiritu, jucundo composuit eulogio, figurato tamen*"] (1.8, I, p. 5; PL 183, col. 788). The text does more, in fact, than define and explain for the reader the love of God. The figurative style of the language seeks to provoke enjoyment, to arouse an emotion which can then be directed toward God. The text is so written that it may move the affections of those who read it, inspiring a desire to understand what is read. Speaking of the first verse of the Song of Songs,

"Let him kiss me with the kiss of his mouth," which surprises and puzzles by its abruptness, its apparent need of introduction, its unusual wording, Bernard says:

How delightful a ploy of speech this (or "a play of words," "et quidem jucundum eloquium"), prompted into life by the kiss, with Scripture's own engaging countenance inspiring the reader and enticing him on, that he may find pleasure even in the laborious pursuit of what lies hidden, with a fascinating theme to sweeten the fatigue of research. Surely this mode of beginning that is not a beginning, this novelty of diction in a book so old, cannot but increase the reader's attention. It must follow too that this work was composed, not by any human skill but by the artistry of the Spirit, difficult to understand indeed but yet enticing one to investigate (1.5; I, pp. 3-4; PL 183, col. 787).

The "countenance" of Scripture, its literal words and images, hides its treasure, and then entices the reader through its own strategies, arousing his desire for the concealed mystery, playing with him, moving him to enjoy his labors, in such a way that, like the secret of love it hides, the text can be

called jucundus. In his sermons Bernard accommodates himself with pleasure and appreciation to this playful manner of speaking of the text. In the next sermon he presents this kiss which begins the Song of Songs as a figure of the Incarnation: "the kiss . . . is . . . none other than 'the one mediator between God and mankind, himself a man, Christ Jesus'" (2.3; I, p. 10; PL 183, col. 790). Throughout these sermons, rather than writing a theoretical and systematic discussion of love as he does elsewhere, he speaks to his monks through the images of human love found in the Song of Songs attempting to quicken in them a sensitivity to and enjoyment of the strategies of the text, of the divine love whose playful character is revealed in these strategies, and of the playful and imaginative movement from figure to mystery.

A consideration of Bernard's theology of love, a theology which informs his understanding of how the text of the Song of Songs is to be read, will clarify further readings in his sermons.<sup>12</sup> A distinctive feature of this theology is its emphasis on the affections.<sup>13</sup> The goal of Bernard's theology of love, and the goal of his reading of the Song of Songs, is the recovery of wisdom. The affections play an essential role in this recovery, so much so that wisdom is

seen as the capacity to enjoy and experience God, both properties of the affections.<sup>14</sup> This has implications for how a text is read, for Bernard's understanding of the role of the affections in the recovery of wisdom will govern his understanding of how God and wisdom may be found and understood in a text. Wisdom is restored to the soul when the image of God is reformed in her. In keeping with his emphasis on love, Bernard defines the image of God primarily as the free will.<sup>15</sup> This image, deformed and enslaved in the fall, is reformed and freed when it conforms to the will of God. The recovery of likeness to God permits the intimate eschatological union with God for which the soul was created, and which she can, in her mortal condition, briefly anticipate in affective mystical union. This reformation of the image of God permitting loving union is also accomplished by love: when the voluntary and affective powers of the soul are directed wholly toward God charity is formed in the soul, and, hence, the image of God, for likeness is charity.<sup>16</sup> It is through charity, then, that the essential freedom of man is restored, restoring the soul's power to choose and enjoy what is good:

Charity . . . alone can turn the mind away from  
loving one's self and the world and fix it on

loving God. Neither fear nor love of self can change the soul. At times they change one's appearance or deeds, they can never alter one's character . . . . Charity converts souls because it makes them act willingly."<sup>17</sup>

To prompt this movement toward God, the grace of God acts upon the affective motion of the will, inspiring a desire for God. This affective love, which "tastes and experiences that the Lord is sweet," and so enables the soul to love God, Bernard identifies as the characteristic property of wisdom. In Sermon 50 of On the Song of Songs, commenting on the text "he has set love in order within me," Bernard discusses love which is action, practical love, and love which is feeling, affective love. The first belongs to reason and the second, which includes but goes beyond the first, to wisdom. Affective love is, Bernard teaches, "the wisdom by which all things are experienced as they are" (50.6; III, p. 35; PL 183, col. 1023):

But you, if you love the Lord your God with your whole heart, whole mind, whole strength, and leaping with ardent feeling beyond that love of love with which active love is satisfied and having received the Spirit in fullness, are wholly aflame

with that divine love to which the former is a step, then God is indeed experienced, although not as he truly is, a thing impossible for any creature, but rather in relation to your power to enjoy.

Then you will experience as well your own true self, since you perceive that you possess nothing at all for which you love yourself, except insofar as you belong to God: you pour out upon him your whole power of loving (50.6; III, p. 35; PL 183, col. 1023).<sup>18</sup>

This power of wisdom to enjoy God is, as we have already begun to see, the subject of the Song of Songs in Bernard's eyes. He teaches that the book offers "wisdom . . . to those who have reached maturity" (1.1; I, p. 1; PL 183, col. 785). The singular and exalted nature of the book is suggested in its title, which Bernard seeks to elucidate in Sermon 1. Solomon, Bernard writes, a man unique in wisdom, was able to write a song, celebrating a "holy love" which is gratuitous (1.8; I, p. 5; PL 183, col. 788). Unlike other biblical songs written in gratitude for some specific gift bestowed by God, this song, seemingly inspired by a "specific divine impulse," celebrates the soul's enjoyment of God himself, "the mutual exchange of the heart's affections" (1.11;

I, p. 7; PL 183, col. 789). Since it is through the affections that God is most fully understood and experienced, the words of the Song of Songs, speaking about God's love, are not to be understood by the unaided rational powers.

Bernard will, hence, frequently reiterate in these sermons the need for personal experience of the Word in order to understand the book:

Only the touch of the Spirit can inspire a song like this, and only personal experience can unfold its meaning. . . . Only the singer hears it and the one to whom he sings--the lover and the beloved. (1.11; I, pp. 6-7; PL 183, col. 789).

The movement from the literal surface to its spiritual meaning is a difficult one, which cannot be made except through participation, through opening one's being to the grace of God, which illumines both soul and text, giving inward experience of the hidden mystery:

For we are faced with a difficult task. The words that describe these visions or images seem to refer to bodies or bodily substances, yet they are means of conveying spiritual truths to us, and hence there must be a spiritual character to our enquiry into their causes and meaning. And who is

qualified to investigate and comprehend those countless affective movements of the soul caused by the presence of the Bridegroom dispensing his multiform graces? Yet if we turn our gaze to our interior, and if the Holy Spirit will be pleased to give us his light to see the fruits that by his action he constantly produces within us, I think we shall not remain entirely devoid of understanding about these mysteries (32.1; II, p. 134; PL 183, cols. 945-946).

The images of the Song of Songs, then, yield their meaning only as the soul experiences affectively what they conceal, only where there is an affective participation in hidden wisdom, a participation which is wisdom. The images entice and beguile the reader, prompting an enjoyment of the images which will be transcended by a joyous love of God, the affections accomplishing a movement from the image to its meaning which transforms the soul and begets understanding. The image itself plays an important role in this process, cooperating with the action of grace, since it is toward created, physical, familiar things that human affections naturally tend and through which they can be aroused. The Scriptures, Bernard teaches, speak to us through human and familiar

things, to which manner of speaking we must accommodate ourselves to understand rightly:

But let us, as we proceed with caution and singleness of purpose in our exposition of this sacred and mystical utterance, follow the example of Scripture, which speaks of the wisdom hidden in the mystery, but does so in words familiar to us, and which, even as it enlightens our human minds, roots our affections on God, and imparts to us the incomprehensible and invisible things of God by means of figures drawn from the likeness of things familiar to us, like precious draughts in vessels of cheap earthenware (74.2; IV, p. 86; PL 183, col. 1139).

Through humble and familiar things, to which we can respond, our affections are "rooted" in God and our minds "enlightened."

Bernard, as he attempts in his sermons to draw his hearers toward spiritual experience through the biblical text, seeks to elucidate the passage from the literal to the spiritual levels of this text. His sermons typically begin with a discussion, sometimes brief, sometimes of some length, of the literal level of the text, which is succeeded by a discussion

of its spiritual meaning.<sup>19</sup> The discussion of the literal level often invites and prompts an imaginative response from the reader, an imaginative recreation and elaboration of the situation described which sets forth the difficulties of interpretation and appeals to the reader's desire to uncover the text's spiritual implications. The interpretation of the text requires first an awareness of the foolishness of the literal level of the text, of its lack of seriousness, if interpretation stops at this level, a foolishness uncovered through imaginative recreation. The reader must perceive the literal as play and move beyond it to its serious import. Bernard discusses this matter in Sermon 61. In this sermon he is commenting on the verse "My dove in the clefts of the rock, in the crannies of the wall, show me your face, let your voice sound in my ears," which follows upon "The vines in flower yield their sweet perfume. Arise, my love, my bride, and come," already elucidated by Bernard. He invites readers to imagine for themselves the characters and events of which they read:

He acts like a bridegroom, but as one who is shy, who shrinks from public view and wants to enjoy his pleasures in an out of the way spot, "in the clefts of the rock and the crannies of the wall." Imagine

the bridegroom therefore saying: "Don't be afraid, my love, that this work in the vineyard to which we are urging you will prevent or interrupt the business of love. It will surely provide opportunities for that, which we both equally desire. The vineyards have walls, of course, and these are welcome shelters for the shy" (61.2; III, p. 141; PL 183, col.1071).

Then, before proceeding to uncover the spiritual meaning of the passage, he comments on the relationship of literal and spiritual meanings:

This is a word play. Why shouldn't I call it play? For where is the seriousness in all these words? The external sound is not worth hearing unless the Spirit within helps our weak understanding. Therefore let us not dally outside, lest we seem preoccupied with the allurements of lust, but listen with modest ears to the sermon on love that is at hand. And when you consider the lovers themselves, think not of a man and a woman but of the Word and the soul. And if I should say Christ and the Church the same applies, except that the word Church signifies not one soul but the unity or

rather unanimity of many (61.2; III, p. 141).<sup>20</sup>

The wording of the literal level of the text, as well as its corporal images, can contribute to its apparent folly. Bernard ponders at some length the meaning of the Bride's words, "My Beloved is mine and I am his," desirous to know what they reveal of the holy soul and her love for the Bridegroom, Christ. He attempts in his imagination to supply a clarifying context, to discern of whom and to whom the Bride speaks, all to no avail. The words still refuse to disclose a clear meaning:

I think it better to suppose she is speaking to herself, not to another, especially as her words appear abrupt and disconnected, insufficient to communicate knowledge to the hearer, which is the chief object of conversation. "My beloved is mine and I am his." Nothing more? The words hover--no, they do not hover; they fall. The hearer is left in suspense; he receives no communication, but his interest is aroused (67.2; IV, p. 5; PL 183, col. 1103).

The ultimate explanation of this bewilderment lies in the spiritual mystery which prompts the words, but of which words must always fall short. Bernard devotes the major portion of

this sermon to an elucidation of this relationship of word and sense. In the course of this explanation, Bernard explains how the process of moving from word to sense, from the foolish to the serious, is affective, the images and words of the text appealing to the affections and thus drawing them towards spiritual mystery. Because this movement is both affective and rooted in the literal, it too is playful. Bernard describes the verse as a banquet which pleases the senses, the affections and the mind. The words of the Bride nourish the mind in a peculiar way, not by disclosing their meaning, but by retaining an inaccessible secret, which teaches the mind humility, bringing about conformity of will rather than merely informing cognitively:

For her words are pleasant and lovely, bringing profit to the understanding, and they are deep in mystery. To what shall I compare them? They are like a banquet which excels all others, threefold, delicious to the taste, giving true nourishment, and rich in healing power. So is every word of the Bride; and while it is sweet to hear, it delights the affections and enriches the mind, nourishing it with its wealth of meaning and its deep mysteries. The spirit is filled with dread

even while it is stirred; the canker of pride swollen by learning is miraculously healed. But if anyone who imagines that he has a smattering of knowledge indulges in too close an inquiry, he will find his intellectual powers overcome and his whole mind reduced to subjection. How humbled he will be at her words, constrained to say "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is mighty and I cannot attain to it" (67.1; IV, p. 4; PL 183, col. 1102).

The words provoke a whole series of questions in Bernard's mind which he imagines himself addressing to the Bride, and which yield ultimately the spiritual insight which can heal the mind:

What are you to him? What is this intimate relationship, this pledge given and received? He is yours, you in turn are his. But are you to him what he is to you, or is there some difference? If you will, speak to us, to our understanding, tell us clearly what you feel. How long will you keep us in expectation? Is your secret to be for you alone? (67.3; IV, p. 6; PL 183, col. 1103).

Continuing to ask himself why the Bride speaks in this elliptical manner, he concludes that her words are an expression

of feeling: "it is the affectus, not the intellect, which has spoken" (67.3; IV, p. 6; PL 183, col. 1103). This spontaneous emotional outburst, uttered by the Bride just after the Bridegroom has left her, or just after she has experienced mystical union with the Word, contains a secret which can be understood only by those who have experienced the same love. Something has passed between the two which cannot be communicated by words: "Its reality is in the affections; it is not to be attained by reason but by affections by conformity [of will] [sic]" (67.8; IV, p. 12; PL 183, col. 1106). Nevertheless, the words of the Bride possess an aroma, an elusive fragrance, which permits their readers to sense and desire what they cannot understand. Comparing the words of the Bride with words of St. Paul, Bernard says:

Now the sweet savor of Christ is everywhere. Although he does not allow me to hear the ineffable words, yet truly he bids me desire them, and I may freely catch the fragrance of what I may not hear. For some unknown reason, what is hidden is most desirable, and we long most strongly for what is denied us. But now notice how it is the same with the Bride: how, like Paul in the passage we are considering, she does not reveal her secret, nor

yet leave it without mention, for she is pleased to give us some satisfaction, allowed us to catch the fragrance of the mystery which through our unworthiness or weakness she sees we are not fit to taste (67.7; IV, pp. 11-12; PL 183, col. 1106).

The words of the Bride hide within themselves a mystery inaccessible to language, but can yet attract the soul to that mystery. In fact, the hiddenness of the mystery, its partial disclosure, draws the soul to experience what her reason cannot otherwise penetrate. The puzzling, bewildering, inadequate words of the text, accommodated to our weak understanding, play with us, and in their playing, evoke the playful, affective response through which the text begins to yield its wealth.

We can also observe this affective and playful movement from the literal to the spiritual in Bernard's treatment of the images of the text. In the process of moving from the literal to the spiritual, Bernard responds to the affective appeal of the literal text, and imaginatively transfers the affectivity expressed in the images of human love to a spiritual idea capable of being transfused with this emotion. Returning to the image of the kiss, for instance, which Bernard

perceives as a figure of the Incarnation, we see him transferring the human emotion and tenderness of the literal images to the Incarnation. Indeed, it is the emotion which seems to create a relationship, a similarity between the image and the idea. Through this emotion, evoked first by the image of the Bride's longing for the Bridegroom's kiss, and kept alive by Bernard's vivid imaginative recreation of the longing of Israel for the coming of Christ, Bernard's reader is moved to perceive and respond to the love expressed in the Incarnation. The following passage in which Bernard imagines his biblical ancestors pleading with God for the incarnation of Christ, illustrates the affective relationship between text and interpretation:

If it be really true, as you prophets have said, that God has determined to show mercy, . . . let him establish a covenant of peace, an everlasting covenant with me by the kiss of his mouth. If he will not revoke his given word, let him empty himself, let him humble himself, let him bend to me and kiss me with the kiss of his mouth. If the mediator is to be acceptable to both parties, equally dependable in the eyes of both, then let him who is God's Son become man, let him become

the Son of Man, and fill me with assurance by this kiss of his mouth. When I come to recognize that he is truly mine, then I shall feel secure in welcoming the Son of God as mediator. Not even a shadow of mistrust can then exist, for after all he is my brother, and my own flesh. It is impossible that I should be spurned by him who is bone from my bones, and flesh from my flesh (2.6; I, p. 12; PL 183, col. 792).

The process of imagination reflected in this passage is essential to creating the affective movement from corporal image to spiritual reality which Bernard seeks to foster. Through the imagination the human affections are drawn closer and closer to God. The affective play evoked by the literal images becomes play of the imagination in the mind of the interpreter.

Finally, the soul's experience of God, to which the text leads the soul, is itself play. The text, as we have seen, arouses the affections to enjoyment and play, directing this emotion toward God. Moreover, images of love play in the Song of Songs become figures of the soul's relation with God, teaching the soul what she should feel and experience.<sup>21</sup>

Just as the kiss and the longing for the kiss leads the soul

to appreciate the emotional character and motive of the Incarnation, so the affectionate love play between the Bride and Bridegroom leads the soul to understand her experience of the Word and evokes this experience. The literal, human images of the text contain within them, thus, a joyous love of God. These images of love play are found in the text, first, in the many ways in which the Bridegroom appears to the Bride in order to attract her love. In a passage we read earlier, Bernard expressed the difficulty of understanding in the corporal images of this book the "countless affective movements of the soul caused by the presence of the Bridegroom dispensing his multiform graces" (32.1; II, p. 134; PL 183, cols. 945-946). He continues to describe the various ways in which the Bridegroom comes to the Bride:

You must already have noticed how often he [the Bridegroom] changes his countenance in the course of his love-song, how he delights in transforming himself from one charming guise to another in the beloved's presence: at one moment like a bashful bridegroom manoeuvring for the hidden embraces of his holy lover, for the bliss of her kisses; at another coming along like a physician with oil and ointments, because weak and tender souls still need

remedies and medicines of this kind, which is why they are rather daintily described as maidens (31. 7; II, p. 130; PL 183, col. 943).

He goes on to describe the Bridegroom as a traveller and companion on a journey, as a father, and as a king. Moreover, as this passage suggests, the Song of Songs records various visits and departures of the Bridegroom to the Bride, in which he playfully offers and then withdraws his love, and the joy and longing with which she responds to these visitations. Prompted by these visits and absences in the literal images of the text, Bernard describes the inward visitations of the Word, evoking in the soul joy and ecstasy, and the subsequent departures, which leave the soul longing for God:

Return, she says. Clearly he whom she calls back is not there, yet he has been, not long before, for she seems to be calling him back at the moment of his going. So importunate a recall shows great love on the part of the one and great loveliness on the part of the other. Who are these who are so taken up with charity, these unwearying lovers, whose passion drives them on and gives them no rest? It is my task to fulfill my promise, and

apply this passage to the Word and to the soul,  
 but to do this at all worthily I admit I need the  
 help of the Word himself (74.1; IV, p. 85; PL 183,  
 col. 1139).

These emotions felt by the Bride in the Song of Songs correspond to the effect of grace on the soul:

Indeed, when the soul is aware of the influence of grace she acknowledges the presence of the Word; but when she is not, she mourns his absence, and again seeks his presence, saying with the prophet, "My face has sought you; your face, Lord, I will seek." How could she do otherwise? For when so sweet a bridegroom withdraws from her she cannot desire any other, nor even think of another. It must be that when he is absent she seeks him ardently, and when he goes away she calls him back (74.2; IV, p. 87; PL 183, col. 1139).

In these returns and departures, the Word practices a "pious pretense" in order to draw the soul to himself and to express his own love. In fact, God, immutable and omnipresent never leaves the soul, but only pretends to do so, the character of his visitations of grace reflecting the love play of the Bridegroom:

Perhaps it was for this very reason that he withdrew, that the more eagerly she recalls him, the more closely she will cleave to him. For he once pretended that he was going further, not because that was his intention, but because he wanted to hear the words "Stay with us, for evening is coming on." And another time, when the apostles were in a boat pulling on the oars, he walked on the sea, making as though he would pass them by, not because he intended to, but to try their faith and draw out their prayers. Then, so the Evangelist says, they were troubled and cried out, thinking that he was a ghost. This kind of pious pretense [*"piam simulationem"*], this saving gift, dispensed by the Word when in the body does not lose its effect when the Word in spirit employs it in his own spiritual manner in dealing with a soul devoted to him. He makes to go past, desiring to be held back, and seems to go away, wishing to be recalled; for he, the Word, is not irrevocable; he comes and goes according to his own good pleasure, visiting the soul at daybreak and then suddenly putting it to the test. His going is part of his own purpose,

and his return is always part of his own will;

both are within his infinite wisdom. His reasons

he alone knows (74.3; IV, p. 88; PL 183, col. 1140).

So the Word plays with the soul, and, in this mortal life, will always do so. The dissemblance of the Word, his returns and departures, the varying "countenances" that he shows the soul, reveal to us that we "see in a mirror dimly and not yet face to face" (31.8; II, p. 131; PL 183, col. 944).

Speaking of spiritual union, Bernard says:

Not yet have I come round to saying that he has appeared as he is, although in this inward vision he does not reveal himself as altogether different from what he is. Neither does he make his presence continuously felt, not even to his most ardent lovers, nor in the same way to all. For the various desires of the soul it is essential that the taste of God's presence be varied too, and that the infused flavor of divine delight should titillate in manifold ways the palate of the soul that seeks him (31.7; II, pp. 129-30; PL 183, col. 943).

Through these images from the Song of Songs, through the images Bernard's own imagination draws from the Gospels, he seeks to draw the soul to an understanding and experience of

this affective play.

We encounter play, then, in both the literal and spiritual levels of the text, and in the process of interpretation through which the words yield their meaning. The play and foolishness of the literal text contain within them the hidden wisdom, the joyous play of God and the soul. Through its human, affective appeal, by means of its weakness, by partially withholding, partially disclosing its meaning, by arousing the reader's desire to understand and experience what is read, the literal text teaches the soul to play. So, Bernard extends his affective response to the images of the Song of Songs, a response which initiates understanding, into his own sermons and interpretations, recreating images and creating new images as he ascends affectively to the spiritual mystery, transcending the weakness of the text by the grace of God. As the hidden wisdom, the spiritual experience which the text fosters, is born in the soul, the soul discovers that the Word plays with her, inwardly and spiritually, as he played with her through the words of the text.

As might be expected, Bernard's perception of play affects the whole way he orders his sermons. Jean Leclercq's various articles on this theme, especially his "Essais sur l'esthétique de S. Bernard," elucidate this matter. Leclercq

finds Bernard's joyous devotion and sense of play very much in evidence in the rhetoric and structure of his sermons:

Et l'on disait de lui que sa dévotion était joyeuse: iucunda devotio. Iucunda: dans ce mot, il y a le terme locus, qui veut dire "jeu": une dévotion enjouée, une manière de prêcher les exigences du royaume de Dieu qui sait jouer avec les mots, les images, les comparaisons, les figures et les paraboles.<sup>22</sup>

In his essay on the aesthetics of Bernard exploring the relationships between truth and beauty, Leclercq discusses Bernard's propensity to develop ideas by putting into motion a play of sound and images. Bernard, Leclercq argues, habitually gathers ideas around one controlling idea in such a way that room is left for "la liberté d'invention" which fosters "tout un jeu de réminiscences bibliques, de ressemblances verbales, de sonorités qui s'appellent et se répondent." Patterns of sound, rather than being merely decorative, serve to "faire progresser la pensée."<sup>23</sup> Imagery operates in a similar way. Images rarely exist in isolation; rather, one image prompts another so that whole "chains" of images are formed and the development of thought emerges through the free play of imagination. Recalling sound patterns, Leclercq

says of the image patterns: "On verra qu'elles s'appellent et, en quelque sorte, s'accrochent ou s'agrafent les unes aux autres selon un processus déjà observé à propos des jeux de mots."<sup>24</sup> Through these chains of images, Bernard's ideas emerge. Leclercq goes on to note:

Il suffit parfois d'un jeu d'images très concrètes et . . . presque terre-à-terre, pour faire penser aux expériences les plus sublimes. . . . On s'est élevé d'un groupe d'images à un groupe d'idées, d'une position du corps à une attitude spirituelle.<sup>25</sup>

This play of images which Leclercq describes may be illustrated by looking at the rest of Sermon 61, which, as we have seen, discusses the text: "My dove in the clefts of the rock, in the crannies of the wall." The controlling theme of his sermon, Bernard tells us, will be love. When he begins to develop the spiritual meaning of the verse he offers an interpretation of the image which will dominate the rest of the sermon: the rock is understood to be Christ, and the clefts of the rock, the wounds of Christ. Through deft movements from one biblical image to another, among which the cleft rock serves as a touchstone, Bernard develops his theme: the Incarnation is seen to reveal the hidden mystery of God's love and so to draw men to God, so that the weak, by

emotionally and volitionally identifying themselves with the foolishness of God, are filled with a transcendent and victorious joy. In the movement from image to image, Bernard's affective response to the first image, the literal image from the Song of Songs, continues to be felt throughout the sermon. It is this emotion which draws him from image to image, prompting his choice of image and interpretation.

His first image is an image of hiding--the dove in the cleft of the rock--which has a strong affective appeal, heightened intensely when the cleft rock becomes the wounds of Christ.

Beginning by recalling the parable of the man who builds his house upon the rock, upon Christ, Bernard develops the rock as an image of rest and security. The weak find their rest particularly in the wounds of Christ. A meditation on weakness and the forgiveness of sins leads to a presentation of the humanity of Christ, of his wounds, as an assurance of sympathy and compassion. In the rock, the secure and strong hiding place, the weak will find a hidden love:

The nail cries out, the wound cries out that God is truly in Christ, reconciling the world to himself.

"The iron pierced his soul" and his heart has drawn near, so that he is no longer one who cannot sympathize with my weaknesses. The secret of his heart,

is laid open through the clefts of his body; that mighty mystery of loving is laid open. . . (61.4; III, pp. 143,44; PL 183, col. 1072).

The desire for refuge and the appeal of a hidden love which gives refuge continue to inform the images of the sermon.

In a startling combination of two images, Bernard goes on to talk about God's righteousness as a cloak ample enough to cover all sin in men and "a treasury of loving kindness," stored in the clefts of the rock. This image of hiddenness brings to mind another image: Moses placed in the cleft of the rock so that he might see the back of a hidden God.

Evoking again a generous and condescending love, through which God both reveals himself and conceals what man is too weak to look upon, this image leads naturally to further discussion of the humanity of Christ, which is the back of God. An emotionally charged image of Christ being mocked by Herod reintroduces this subject: "This contemplation of his back is no small favor; not to be despised. Let Herod despise him; but the more despicable he shows himself to Herod, the less I shall despise him" (61.6; III, p. 145; PL 183, col. 1073).

The word "back" brings to Bernard's mind another verse through which he continues to speak of a lowly despised Christ; who shows man not his glory but his gentleness

on the cross. A verse from the Psalms, "the back of his back is like pale gold," Bernard reads as a reference to Christ's pallor in death:

Why should he not grow pale in death? Better pale gold than glittering brass; "the foolishness of God is wiser than men." Gold is the Word, gold is wisdom. This gold discolored itself, concealing the form of God and displaying the form of a servant (61.7; III, p. 146; PL 183, cols. 1073-1074).

Bernard brings his meditation on the phrase, "My dove in the cleft of the rock" to a conclusion by commenting on the dove, the Church, the weak one, who responds to the hidden love of God revealed in Christ, identifying herself with his foolishness first in meditation and then in reality:

. . . she hears [the words]: "My dove in the clefts of the rock," because all her affections are preoccupied with the wounds of Christ; she abides in them by constant meditation. From this comes endurance for martyrdom, for this her immense trust in the Most High (61.7; III, p. 146; PL 183, col. 1074).

Returning to the image of the cleft rock, Bernard describes how the martyr finds joy in the midst of pain through love of

God, by hiding his soul in the heart and wounds of Jesus. The weak who seek rest in the wounds of Christ find, in identification with his sufferings, a joy which transcends pain and weakness, a joy shared with Christ through whom their weakness is overcome:

From the rock therefore comes the courage of the martyr, from it obviously his power to drink the Lord's cup. And this intoxicating cup--how wonderful it is! Wonderful, I say, and sweet ["jucundus"], no less to the commander looking on than to the conquering soldier. "For the joy of the Lord is our strength." Why shouldn't he be joyful to hear so brave a testimony? (61.8; III, pp. 147-48; PL 183, col. 1074).

Through the chain of images, which accumulate affective power as the sermon continues, Bernard seeks to evoke an affective response to hidden love of God revealed in the humanity of Christ, drawing the reader from image to reality, to the joy of Christ with which the sermon concludes. His own affective response to the Song of Songs leads him to play with images in the same manner as he experiences the text he elucidates playing with him.

The subject of this sermon leads us to one last feature

of Bernard's playful spirituality, one suggested in Bernard's letter to Oger: the relationship between play and the Incarnation. In Sermon 31, Bernard concludes, while discussing the many forms in which the word appears to the soul, that we live in the shadow of Christ's humanity:

Just as we say that our ancestors possessed only shadows and images, whereas the truth itself shines on us by the grace of Christ present in the flesh, so also no one will deny that in relation to the world to come, we still live in the shadow of the truth, unless he wishes to deny what the apostle asserts: "our knowledge is imperfect and our prophecy is imperfect"; . . . (31.8; II, p. 131; PL 183, col. 944).

In the Incarnation, as in the images of Scripture, God reveals himself in human, familiar, earthly things. The playing of the Word and the soul revealed and made appealing by the images of the Song of Songs is part of living in the shadow of Christ, in a world where God cannot yet be seen as he is:

We are in the shadow as long as we walk by faith and not by sight; and therefore the righteous man who lives by faith is in the shadow. . . . Nor am

I unaware that the apostle while still living in the flesh said: "Even if we did once know Christ in the flesh, that is not how we know him now."

But, this was his privilege. We, however, who have not yet merited to be rapt into paradise, into the third heaven, let us meanwhile be fed with the flesh of Christ, let us honor his mysteries, follow his footsteps, preserve the faith, and we will certainly be living in his shadow (48.6-7; III, pp. 17, 19; PL 183, cols. 1015-1016).

Moreover, it is preeminently the human life of Christ that evokes the affective response to God that heals the spirit and fosters an awareness of play. Bernard describes meditation on Christ's human life:

The soul at prayer should have before it a sacred image of the God-man, in his birth or infancy or as he was teaching, or dying, or rising, or ascending. Whatever form it takes this image must bind the soul with the love of virtue and expel carnal vices, eliminate temptations and quiet desires. I think this is the principal reason why the invisible God willed to be seen in the flesh and to converse with men as man. He wanted to recapture the

affections of carnal men who were unable to love in any other way, by first drawing them to the salutary love of his own humanity, and then gradually to raise them to a spiritual love (20.6; I, p. 152; PL 183, col. 870).

The human life of Christ, because he is the perfect image of God, possesses preeminently the power to heal the human affections, which move naturally toward human things. The compassion, the love, the meekness, the suffering of Christ draw these tender affections to themselves.<sup>26</sup> The love of Christ's humanity is hence an essential stage in the soul's progress. It is supremely the means by which the temporal world ceases to be temptation, and draws the soul to God. Love of Christ's humanity leads the soul towards a more spiritual and mystical love, and finally, to vision of God:

. . . memory is a pleasure for those who seek and long for God's presence, not that they are completely satisfied but that they may long all the more for him that they might be filled.<sup>27</sup>

Hence, in Sermon 61 it is by identifying with the "foolishness" of God, with his humanity, by taking refuge in his weakness, in his wounds, that the soul comes to experience a transcendent joy. This form of devotion permits and, indeed,

renders desirable an outpouring of the affections toward the human, physical world. It is the property of the affections, which naturally are drawn to human things, to enjoy and play. The fruits of this form of meditation are richly evident in Bernard's sermons on the Song of Songs, where affective response to the corporal images of the text yields an awareness of the playing of the text with the soul, of the playing of Christ with the soul, and initiates a play of imagination in the writer, the ultimate goal of which is the restoration of wisdom.

The awareness of play that we find in Bernard's understanding of the spiritual life and of spiritual reading finds its way, as we have seen, into the works of other Cistercian monks who write under his inspiration. One of these, William of St. Thierry, who, against his friend Bernard's wishes, eventually left his abbacy in the Benedictine monastery of St. Thierry to become a Cistercian monk at Signy, wrote his own Expositions on the Song of Songs, conceived during his first visits to Bernard at Clairvaux.<sup>28</sup> A brief summary of three images of play in William's Expositions reveals the salient features of Bernard's perception of play, and an affective sensibility reminiscent of Bernard. In one of these images, we begin to see intimations of the relevance

of Bernard's theology to the drama.

First, William conceives of the Song of Songs as an allegorical drama, a play requiring actors, dialogue and action.<sup>29</sup> In this drama the affections of the soul and the graces of Christ that inspire them are presented as characters in conversation and action, so that the literal argument, describing the love of King Solomon and his wife, the daughter of Pharaoh, yields a spiritual sense, describing the love of Christ and the soul:

Now this song is written in the manner of drama and in dialogue style, as if to be recited by characters and with action. Just as various characters and various actions appear in the recitation of dramas, so in this song characters and affections seem to combine to carry through this trafficking of love and the mystical contract of the union of God and man.<sup>30</sup>

This drama is so written that it draws the soul to experience the love of God it celebrates. Like Bernard, William's spirituality fosters an affective love of God, this affectivity enabling the soul to delight and enjoy God, and to understand him in the highest way possible, while mortality and the weakness of the flesh prevent the reason from seeing God as he is.

The "metaphors of divine love" in the text, though they share man's poverty, also arouse and direct his love and desire, until the drama which is read becomes the inner drama of the soul. Concluding a vision of the perfect, fulfilled contemplative love he longs for, William writes: -

In the meantime let my poor and miserable love, struggling and groping, follow as it is led and yearn as it is called, through these metaphors of divine love and its own imperfection, toward your perfection. As long as it walks by faith and not by sight, may it use devoutly and wisely these rudiments it has acquired, until this outward dramatic allegory ["parabola dramatis"] becomes in it a true story. Then all will be able to see, in your light, how much the devotion of the simplest lover surpasses, in your judgement, the prudence of the most learned thinker; for where reason draws back, devout love itself will become its own understanding (I.144, p. 115; SC 82, p. 304).

Images of play found in the text of the Song of Songs help reveal the nature of this inner drama between the soul and Christ which the text evokes. The pattern of visitations and departures on the part of the Bridegroom, and the

corresponding experience of the Bride, in whom joy and delight alternate with intense longing, draws the soul towards a God who plays with her in order to create in her a love which reflects the purity and strength of his own. Commenting on the lines, "Return, my Beloved! Be like a roe or a young hart upon the mountains of Bethel," William writes:

And, indeed, as we have already said above, by analogy with what takes place in fleshly love, we perceive a certain sense of experience as regards spiritual love and the affection of Bridegroom and Bride. Often the Bridegroom seems to play the game of wanton love with the Bride; repeatedly he snatches himself away from her love with violence and then restores himself again to her desires. Sometimes he withdraws and departs as if he would not return, to make her seek him with greater ardor; and sometimes he returns and comes where she is, as if he would remain forever, the more sweetly to invite her to receive his kisses. Sometimes he stands behind the wall and looks through the windows, to arouse his lover's desire by letting himself be seen with his charms, but not wholly, and letting his calls and invitations be heard, but

from a distance (II.180, p. 147).<sup>31</sup>

In this drama, the reader sees enacted the joy and play of the affections, and is drawn by the drama to find the same events in his own being.

The recurrent image in the Song of Songs of the Bridegroom as a gazelle or a hind prompts in William further reflection on the play of God and the soul. The visitations of Christ to the soul occasion the soul great joy: "Holy happiness springs up in the conscience; the understanding is lively, zeal is fervent, love is enlightened, the spirit grows merry in God" (II.182, p. 148; SC 82, p. 370). The biblical image of the Bridegroom "leaping upon the mountains, skipping over the hills" provides William occasion to express this merriment in an expansive vision of Christ's joy in his work of salvation, in his gift of the grace of contemplation to the soul, and in the soul's joy and wonder in contemplation. The contemplation of God, the affective union which the Song of Songs celebrates is conceived of as a dance, as joyous play. We observe in William's ecstatic, emotionally charged vision of God and the soul, in which through one image he conceives a sweeping vision of the emotional character of Christ's action in history, in individual souls, and of the soul's corresponding response of wonder and awe,

William's own imagination at play, moving his readers' affections through his images.

As for the leaps of the Bridegroom, it is to them the prophet refers when he says: "He has rejoiced as a giant to run the way. His going out is from the end of heaven, and his circuit even to the end thereof."

When, therefore, the Bride contemplates the Bridegroom's going out from the end of heaven and his circuit even to the end thereof, and between these two poles sees him coming from heaven into the womb, from the womb into the manger, from the manger to the cross, from the cross into the sepulchre and from the sepulchre into heaven--does she not wonder at his marvellous leaps, as it were, over the heights of such great works, which are comparable to lofty mountain peaks? And when, by the breath of his love, the Bridegroom pours into the understanding of certain great men faith in these leaps, what is he doing save leaping upon the mountains? But leaping upon the mountains, he skips over the hills; for this understanding passes over the heads of many who are in the body of the

faithful. As the Bridegroom comes to the Bride, therefore, he leaps upon the mountains and skips over the hills, when he raises some souls to the heights by the grace of contemplation and assigns to others a place in the lower regions of necessary activity. These are the leaps and bounds by which men of earth raise themselves to heaven, when from the consideration of God's works and his great bounty to us, the charity of God is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who is given to us. By the love of the Spirit, the leaps of human efforts do, indeed, soar from the depths to the heights; but it is from above, from the Father of lights, that they receive the force to attain their effect. This is why, when holy exultation is felt by souls who leap, the impulses are a sort of dance of the mind which surpasses man's experience and manner of acting; its liveliness and loftiness are greater, in proportion to the sweetness of the experiences which draw the soul to leap (II.149-50, pp. 122-23; SC 82, pp. 316-19).

While William of St. Thierry lived his own life somewhat removed from the English context to which we must now direct

our attention, his development of Bernard's exegesis is illuminating and a bridge to further developments in twelfth century Christian aesthetics. In order to imaginatively recreate the biblical text, and so to experientially grasp its meaning, William of St. Thierry conceives of the text as drama. His casting of his text in the form of drama is suggestive of some possible relations between the Bernardine play of imagination and the "playing" of contemporary religious drama. These relations become clearer in the writings of an English Cistercian contemporary of Bernard and William, Aelred of Rievaulx.

#### ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>The dominating presence of St. Bernard, Abbot of Clairvaux from 1115 to 1153, in the religious and political life of his time is well known, especially his notorious role in the affairs of Abelard and in the Second Crusade, and his passionate apology for Cistercian monasticism. More important for our subject is the widespread influence he exerted through his remarkable literary gifts, an influence attested to by his contemporaries, and his role in the history of Christian spirituality. Bernard is credited with turning a small and failing order into one which flourished rapidly and exerted considerable influence all over Europe (Leclercq, The Spirituality of the Middle Ages, pp. 187, 190; Lekai, pp. 34-40; Gilson, p. 1). This he accomplished partly by providing for his monks a theology of the monastic life. Jean Leclercq has said that Cistercian monasticism is distinguished by having created for the first time a "school of spirituality." The word "school" was itself much used by the Cistercians of themselves, recovering the use of the word in The Rule of St. Benedict, and consciously opposing the growing body of schools of secular learning in the twelfth

century (Gilson, pp. 60-67). The formation of this "school" or "theology of spirituality" Leclercq attributes to Bernard, particularly to his doctrine of charity and to his formulation of the spiritual life as a reformation of the image of God in the soul (The Spirituality of the Middle Ages, pp. 187, 196-98, 218-20).

<sup>2</sup>Exégèse Médiévale: Les Quatre Sens de l'Écriture

(Paris: Aubier, 1959), II, 583.

<sup>3</sup>De Lubac, II, 582. In his chapter "La Tropologie Mystique," de Lubac discusses the exegesis of Bernard as the flowering of monastic exegesis. He argues that where patristic exegesis emphasized the allegorical or mystical sense, defining truth and doctrine, monastic exegesis developed the tropological or moral sense, which he describes as an "interiorization" of the allegorical sense (II, 549-620).

<sup>4</sup>De Lubac, II, 585.

<sup>5</sup>"Grande revera periculum, audire quemquam de se supra quam sentit in se! Quis dabit mihi apud homines tantum de veris digne humiliari, quantum vel de falsis datum est indigne exaltari? Illam mihi vocem propheticam iure assumerem: Exaltus autem, humiliatus sum et conturbatus, et illud: Ludam, et vilior fiam. Ludam scilicet, ut illudar. Bonus ludus, quo Michol irascitur et Deus delectatur. Bonus ludus,

qui hominibus quidem ridiculum, sed angelis pulcherrimum spectaculum praebet. Bonus, inquam, ludus, quo efficimur opprobrium abundantibus, et despectio superbis. Nam revera quid saecularibus quam ludere videmur, cum, quod ipsi appetunt in hoc saeculo, nos per contrarium fugimus, et quod ipsi fugiunt, nos appetimus? More scilicet ioculatorum et saltatorum, qui capita misso deorsum, pedibusque sursum erectis, praeter humanum usum stant manibus vel incedunt, et sic in se omnium oculos defigunt. Non est hic ludus puerilis, non est de theatro, qui femineis foedisque anfractibus provocet libidinem, actus sordidos repraesentet; sed est ludus iucundus, honestus, gravis, spectabilis, qui caelestium spectatorum delectare possit aspectus. Hoc casto et religioso ludo ludebat qui dicebat: Spectaculum facti sumus angelis et hominibus. Hoc ludo et nos interim ludamus, ut illudamur, confundamur, humiliemur, donec veniat qui potentes deponit et exaltat humiles, qui nos laetificet, glorificet, in aeternum exaltet." Letter 87, 12; PL 182, col. 217; quoted and translated in "The Theme of Jesting in St. Bernard and his Contemporaries," Cistercian Studies, 9 (1974), 8-9.

<sup>6</sup>"Essais sur l'esthétique de S. Bernard," Studi Medievali, 9 (1968); 708. Bernard here identifies himself with the tradition of folly for Christ's sake. Leclercq defines

the salient characteristics of the holy fool in "'L'Idiot' à la lumière de la tradition chrétienne," Revue d'Histoire de la Spiritualité, 49 (1973), 291-93, 297-98: the holy fool lives in the world according to principles that are radically alien to it, embracing suffering and isolation with joy, living in a spirit of childlikeness, humility and simplicity that give the fool a freedom of spirit and prophetic force in relation to the world. See also Seward, pp. 58-79.

<sup>7</sup>"And bowing the knee before him, they mocked him, saying: 'Hail, King of the Jews . . . . And after they had mocked him, they took off the cloak from him, and put on him his own garments, and led him away to crucify him." Leclercq, "The Theme of Jesting," p. 14.

<sup>8</sup>The dating of the sermons is discussed in Jean Leclercq, "Introduction," On the Song of Songs, IV, trans. Irene Edmonds, CF 40 (Kalamazoo, Mich.: Cistercian Publications, 1980), pp. xi-xii. For a discussion of the influence and widespread dissemination of Bernard's On the Song of Songs in the twelfth century, see Jean Leclercq, Monks and Love in Twelfth Century France: Psycho-Historical Essays (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), p. 53; 60, n.69; 121; 129.

<sup>9</sup>On the Song of Songs, I, trans. Kilian Walsh, OCSO, CF

4 (Kalamazoo, Mich.: Cistercian Publications, 1971), I.7, pp. 4-5; PL 183, cols. 787-788. Bernard's sermons on the Song of Songs are translated in four volumes by Kilian Walsh and Irene Edmonds, CF 4, 7, 31, 40 (Kalamazoo, Mich.: Cistercian Publications, 1971, 76, 79, 80). All further references to this translation will be noted in parentheses in the text by sermon and section, and then by volume and page number. All quotations of the Song of Songs are taken from these translations of Bernard's sermons. Except where the Latin text appears in the endnotes, the appropriate reference to the Patrologia Latina will also be included in parentheses in the text. For purposes of consistency, references in this thesis to Latin texts of patristic and medieval works are wherever possible to the Patrologiae Cursus Completus, Series Latina, ed. J. P. Migne, 221 vols. (Paris, 1844-64, 1958-74), and to the continuation of this work in Corpus Christianorum, Continuatio Medievalis (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 1971-). The critical edition of Bernard's works is Sancti Bernardi Opera, eds. J. Leclercq, C. H. Talbot and H. M. Rochais, 8 vols. (Rome: Cistercian Publications, 1957-77).

<sup>10</sup>"La Dévotion Joyeuse," in Saint Bernard, Homme d'Eglise (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1953), p. 237; "A l'école de S. Bernard: De l'humour à l'amour," in Témoins de

la Spiritualité Occidentale (Paris: Les Editions du Cerf, 1965), p. 269. Jean Leclercq notes that the word jongleur comes also from the Latin jocus in "'Ioculator et saltator': S. Bernard et l'image du jongleur dans les manuscrits," in Translatio Studii, Manuscript and Library Studies honoring Oliver L. Kapsner, O.S.B., ed. Julian G. Plante (Collegeville, Minn.: St. John's University Press, 1973), p. 125.

<sup>11</sup>Leclercq, "La Dévotion Joyeuse," p. 242.

<sup>12</sup>Leclercq summarizes Bernard's spiritual theology more fully in The Spirituality of the Middle Ages, pp. 194-99.

<sup>13</sup>For a discussion of affectivity in the spirituality of the Middle Ages, see Jean Chatillon, "Cor et Cordis Affectus (Cordis Affectus au Moyen Âge)," DS 2-2, 2288-2300. Chatillon notes that the twelfth century witnessed the birth of an affective spirituality, and discusses the role of Bernard and other Cistercian writers in providing a theological and psychological theory of the place of the affections in the spiritual and moral life.

<sup>14</sup>The relation of wisdom and affectivity in Cistercian thought is discussed in Hilary Costello, "John of Ford and the Quest for Wisdom," Cîteaux, 23 (1972), 141-159.

<sup>15</sup>The cornerstone of Bernard's theology of love is his concept of the image of God in the soul. Love, indeed, is

the means of the reformation of this image. Bernard follows the traditional Augustinian definition of the image of God, but with a difference of emphasis. In the words of Bernard McGinn, in his Introduction to On Grace and Free Choice, Bernard "differs from his great predecessor in stressing human freedom rather than human intellection as the precise locus of the image" (Treatises III, trans. Daniel O'Donovan, CF 19 (Kalamazoo, Mich.: Cistercian Publications, 1977), p. 33; see also Gilson, pp. 46-52 and Williams, pp. 114-15. Bernard discusses the image of God chiefly in On Grace and Free Choice, PL 182, cols. 1001-1030 and in Sermons 80-85 of On the Song of Songs, PL 183, cols. 1166-1194). This is not to imply that Bernard devalues the intellectual faculty of the soul. Rather, in response to the intellectual climate of the secular schools, he is insistent that the intellect accompany and serve the love of God.

<sup>16</sup>Sermon 83.2-3; IV, p. 182; PL 183, col. 1182.

<sup>17</sup>On Loving God, in Treatises II, trans. M. Ambrose Conway, OCSO, and Robert Walton, OSB, CF 13 (Washington, D.C.: Cistercian Publications, 1974), XII.34, p. 126; PL 183, cols. 995-996.

<sup>18</sup>See also Sermon 85; IV, pp. 195-210; PL 183, cols. 1187-1194.

<sup>19</sup> This is often pointed out by translators of Cistercian writing in the tradition of Bernard. See Mother Columba Hart, trans.; Expositions on the Song of Songs, by William of St. Thierry, CF 6 (Shannon, Ireland: Irish University Press, 1970), p. 10, n. 31.

<sup>20</sup> "Hic litteralis lusus. Quidni dixerim lusum? Quid enim serium habet haec litterae series? Ne auditu quidem dignum quod foris sonat, si non intus adjuvet Spiritus infirmitatem intelligentiae nostrae." PL 183, col. 1071.

<sup>21</sup> De Lubac discusses the relation of love and exegesis in patristic and monastic writing, particularly the tradition of Origen, Gregory, and Bernard. He remarks that exegesis which searches for the living Christ through the biblical text, rather than an impersonal truth, is marked by love. In this tradition, reading can be described in terms of the love play of the Song of Songs (II, 592-94). Speaking of the "drame de la vicissitude" of the exegete's search for Christ through the enigma of the biblical text and of Christ's alternating presence and absence, Lubac says: "Meux que ses prédécesseurs, Bernard chante le Jeu divin; mais il le chante comme eux--comme le chante avec lui, sur un mode plus calme, son ami Guillaume de St. Thierry, comme le chanteront bientôt à la suite un certain nombre de ses disciples, un Gilbert de

Hoyland, un Aelred de Rievaulx . . . ." (II, 594-97).

<sup>22</sup>"De l'humour à l'amour," p. 269; "Essais sur l'esthétique," p. 709.

<sup>23</sup>Leclercq, "Essais sur l'esthétique," p. 706.

<sup>24</sup>Leclercq, "Essais sur l'esthétique," p. 718. Leclercq discusses imagery on pp. 715-22.

<sup>25</sup>Leclercq, "Essais sur l'esthétique," p. 721. In a similar vein, Christine Mohrmann makes the following comments about the relation of emotion and style in Bernard's writing: "D'une manière générale, c'est la tension spirituelle plus ou moins grande qui constitue, pour ainsi dire, l'élément régulateur du style de saint Bernard. La fréquence des éléments du style figuré,--parallélismes, antithèses, jeux de mots et de sons, images, métaphores--, augmente à proportion d'une tension intérieure qui résulte, selon les cas, de l'enthousiasme religieux, de la colère, de la ~~colère~~ bouleure, de la tendresse ou d'autres mouvements de l'âme; ce rigoureux ascète est un passionné. Son style reflète exactement ce qui se passe en lui, ses transports mystiques aussi bien que ses accès d'indignation, sa joie et sa souffrance. A mesure que le niveau s'élève, le style devient plus orné et plus mouvementé." "Observations sur la langue et le style de Saint Bernard," in Sancti Bernardi Opera, II, XXV.

<sup>26</sup> On Loving God, in Treatises II, III.7, pp. 98-100; PL 182, col. 978; IV.11-13, pp. 102-106; PL 182, cols. 980-982.

<sup>27</sup> On Loving God, in Treatises II, IV.11, p. 103; PL 182, col. 980.

<sup>28</sup> J. M. Déchanet, OSB, "Introduction," Exposition on the Song of Songs, p. x, n. 14.

<sup>29</sup> William derives his conception of the Song of Songs as drama from Origen's Commentary on the Song of Songs. See The Song of Songs: Commentary and Homilies, ed. and trans. R. P. Lawson, Ancient Christian Writers, No. 26 (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1957), Prologue, p. 21; PG 13, col. 61. However, the emphasis on inner, affective identification of the soul with the "dramatic allegory" of the biblical text, in which William follows Bernard, gives the dramatic structure of the Song of Songs and its imaginative recreation a new dimension in William's Expositions. Compare, for example, Origen's Commentary, III.11; III (IV).13 and 15; Lawson, pp. 205-206, 229-38, 246-54; PG 13, cols. 167-171, 178-184, 188-193. See also Déchanet, pp. x, n. 14; xiii-xiv; Gilson, p. 216, n. 7; de Lubac, II, 596.

<sup>30</sup> Preface, 8, p. 9. All references to the Expositions in translation are to the Cistercian Fathers Series edition,

and will hereafter be noted in parentheses in the text. All quotations of the Song of Songs are also from this translation. The Latin text is found in Exposé sur le Cantique de Cantiques, ed. J. M. Déchanet, OSB, 82 (Paris: Les Editions du Cerf, 1962). References to this work will also be noted in the text, unless the Latin text appears in the endnotes:

"Scribitur autem Canticum hoc in modum dramatis et stylo comico, tanquam per personas et actus recitandum; ut sicut in comoediis recitandis personae diversae, et diversi actus, sic et in hoc Cantico concurrere sibi videantur personae et affectus, ad peragendum susceptum negotium amoris, et mysticum contractum divinae et humanae conjunctionis." SC 82, p. 80.

<sup>31</sup>"Etenim, sicut jam supra diximus, ut ex usu carnalis amoris circa spiritualem amorem, et affectum Sponsi et Sponsae aliquem sentiamus experientiae sensum, videtur saepe Sponsus Sponsae quasi lasciviente amore alludere . . . " SC 82, pp. 366, 368.

Chapter 3

The English Cistercians:

A Playful Imagination

Le Jeu d'Adam is widely thought, for reasons of language and versification, to have been written in England in the third quarter of the twelfth century.<sup>1</sup> The presence of the Cistercian Order in England is, hence, of particular importance to this play. The Cistercians were, in fact, very active in England, experiencing rapid growth particularly during the lifetime of Bernard. Between 1128, which marked the first Cistercian foundation in England, and 1153, which saw the death of Bernard, thirty-six Cistercian abbeys were built in England.<sup>2</sup> The Cistercian literary tradition in England may be represented by the works of three abbots. Aelred, abbot from 1147 to 1167 of Rievaulx, the centre, with Fountains, of Cistercian life in England, was known to his contemporaries as the "Bernard of the North."<sup>3</sup> He offers perhaps the most original development of Bernard's ideas in England. His meditations on the life of Christ are of particular relevance to our subject. Gilbert of Hoyland, abbot of Swineshead from about 1150 to 1172, and John, abbot of Ford from 1191 to 1214, undertook to complete Bernard's unfinished sermons on the Song of Songs. The writings of these men demonstrate extensive continuity with Bernardine thought and exegetical methods, and, in the case of Aelred, a development of Bernardine tradition particularly significant for the

medieval vernacular drama. Again, the monastic search for wisdom is, for these monks, an essentially affective pursuit rooted in the humanity of Christ. In matters of exegesis, this affectivity gives to the imagination, and moreover, to the imagination at play, a primary role.

In Aelred of Rievaulx, as he appears to us through the eyes of a contemporary biographer, Walter Daniel, we encounter a man possessed of a remarkably affectionate and loving temperament, well disposed to appreciate and foster the Bernardine doctrine of love. Walter Daniel describes him as a man of "extreme delicacy of feeling, condescending to the weakness of all, nor did he think that any who besought him for charity's sake should be saddened."<sup>4</sup> Recalling a typical scene in Aelred's abbacy, a group of monks gathered in conversation in Aelred's infirmary cell, Daniel admires Aelred's encouragement of warm, affective relationships among his monks, and his accommodation of human frailty to a spiritual end:

For every day they came to it and sat in it, twenty or thirty at a time, to talk together of the spiritual delights of the Scriptures and of the observance of the Order. There was nobody to say to them, "Get out, go away, do not touch the Abbot's

bed"; they walked and lay about his bed and talked with him as a little child prattles with its mother. He would say to them, "My sons, say what you will; only let no vile word, no detraction [sic] of a brother, no blasphemy against God proceed out of your mouth." He did not treat them with the pedantic imbecility habitual in some silly abbots who, if a monk takes a brother's hand in his own, or says anything that they do not like, demand his cowl, strip and expel him. Not so Aelred, not so.<sup>5</sup>

Not surprisingly, then, in Aelred's exegesis of Scripture, we find the play of imagination we encountered in Bernard, with its affective movement from the weakness of the literal text to an inner, figurative meaning. In a small treatise, Jesus at the Age of Twelve, an interpretation of passages in the Gospels describing Christ's childhood, Aelred, employing Bernard's exegetical methods, approaches the biblical text by way of the "spiritual imagination."<sup>6</sup> This idea is further explored in Part III of A Rule of Life for a Recluse, which discusses the practice of meditation.<sup>7</sup> Yet, the Bernardine imagination undergoes in these works an interesting transformation. In Jesus at the Age of Twelve, Aelred provides one of the earliest sustained literary examples of

a meditation on Christ's humanity. His subject permits him considerable liberty in responding to the literal level of the text which he exercises with enthusiasm, recreating imaginatively and at length this literal story by responding to its affective appeal. This play of imagination in Aelred's meditations produces a recreation of the biblical text that is more dramatic than Bernard's, in the sense that it gives more expansive development of human interaction, of conflict and dialogue. One translator suggests that Aelred is the first to systematically employ in a literary work, Bernard's idea of meditating "sicut praesens," of imaginatively projecting one's presence into the literal world of the biblical text.<sup>8</sup> This habit of meditation would later characterize Franciscan spirituality, whose contribution to medieval vernacular drama has been explored by several critics.<sup>9</sup> Describing a popular thirteenth century work widely used by medieval dramatists, Meditations on the Life of Christ, John Fleming has noted the radical new features of the style of this work. The story of Christ is seen not in the manner of "frozen, iconic, stone, tableau" but as "kinetic, lively, and malleable scenes [of] mimetic theatre."<sup>10</sup> Discussing the indebtedness of the Franciscans to Bernardine exegesis, and the differences between these two traditions, Fleming notes that

Bernard does not create the "sustained and coherent literal texture" that characterizes Franciscan literature."<sup>11</sup>

Bernard's imagination, indeed, creates a rapid and poetic movement from the literal to the figurative, from image to image, distinct from the style of the Meditations. Aelred's meditations, however, approach more closely a "sustained . . . literal texture." We have seen William of St. Thierry respond to the dramatic character of the Song of Songs. Aelred in his treatment of the Gospels also responds to the dramatic potential of the text, moving even closer to a recreation of the literal level of the biblical text which anticipates the Meditations, a work that played a formative role in the development of later vernacular drama.

Aelred's association of wisdom, affectivity and play is rooted ultimately in his concept of God. We might recall here that John of Ford, when he witnessed the instinctive affections of animals saw divine love at play. This perception echoes Aelred's meditations on the charity of God, on its affective character, and on its relation to the instinctive affections of God's creatures.

In keeping with the Cistercian heritage which nourishes him, Aelred finds that the word "charity" most perfectly defines the essence of God, for love is the substantial unity

which binds together God's triune being. The joy with which this charity is characteristically offered and received within the Trinity reveals its strongly affective nature, for in the created world through which God is analogically understood the enjoyment that accompanies love is the property of the affections. The love of Father, Son and Holy Spirit is marked by enjoyment, and rest, by a complete absence of involuntary and laborious effort. This perception of God's love is expressed in Aelred's Mirror of Charity, his earliest work, written in 1142-43 at the request of St. Bernard, whom Aelred had met while on his way to Rome in 1140.<sup>12</sup> Amédée Hallier, in his book; The Monastic Theology of Aelred of Rievaulx, locates the "theological apex" of the Mirror of Charity in Aelred's perception of the relation between God's act of creation in Genesis, particularly his resting on the seventh day, and St. John's statement, "God is charity."<sup>13</sup> Aelred draws this relationship by explaining "how God's resting and His love are one and the same."<sup>14</sup> In God's love, the essence of his triune being, perfect rest and peace are enjoyed:

And Our Lord tells us that the Father loves the Son and discloses to Him all that He does, and that it is because He keeps His Father's commandments

that He lives on in His love. The Father for His part points to His beloved Son in whom He is well pleased. Now the delight that the Father and Son take in each other is nothing else than their mutual love and embrace in which each rests in the other. This is the one thing that belongs to them both, or rather it is in this that they are one. And the delight and joy which they take in each other is called the Holy Spirit, because He is common to the Father and Son by proceeding from both of them, being consubstantial with them.<sup>15</sup>

Aelred offers this perception of the joy and delight that characterize love in his attempt to understand the significance of the seventh day of creation and the wording of the passage in Genesis which describes it. The seventh day of creation, he explains, is a symbol of God's eternal rest, just as the first six days are symbols of the mutability of created things, for the morning and evening of each of the six days is specified, while no mention is made of the morning and evening of the seventh day. This teaches us that God's creativity is not undertaken because he needs to find delight and satisfaction in created things. The rest and satisfaction which God enjoys on the seventh day are not the

result of completed exertion and a need fulfilled in creation, but are rather rooted in his own eternal being. They are signs of the mutual love enjoyed eternally in the Trinity. Hence God's creative activity is wholly voluntary, wholly unnecessary, an overflowing of God's love: "Love is His only reason for creating, guiding and planning all things from beginning to end, and that is why we read of His rest at the end of the story of creation" (I.13, p. 20; I.19, CC 1, p. 35).

The creation itself naturally bears witness to this charity of God marked by delight and repose: "If you were to look at every creature from the beginning of creation to the end of time--whether it were the most radiant angel or the tiniest worm--you would see in it signs of God's goodness and His overflowing love" (I.15, p. 22; I.21, CC 1, p. 37). To describe how the love enjoyed in the Trinity is expressed in the created world which has its source in God's love, Aelred directs his attention to the instinctive affections shared by irrational and rational creatures, coming in his Spiritual Friendship to attribute playfulness to these affections. The created world is a harmonious and beautiful order in which things naturally move to their proper places where they come to rest. A stone, for instance, when thrown

falls again to earth. An animal maintains the order of creation by fulfilling its natural instinctive desire to eat and avoid harm, thus finding peace (I.15, p. 22; I.21, CC 1, pp. 37-38). In Spiritual Friendship, returning to the question of the imaging of God's love in creation, Aelred uses play as an image of the enjoyment that accompanies the affections. In this work, Aelred speaks of how the affective love of friends for each other draws them to love and knowledge of God. God's love is mirrored in the context of this work on friendship in the social relationships that unite even inanimate things:

He has willed, moreover, for so his eternal reason has directed, that peace encompass all his creatures and society unite them; and thus all creatures obtain from him, who is supremely and purely one, some trace of that unity. For that reason he has left no type of beings alone, but out of many has drawn them together by means of a certain society.<sup>16</sup>

The animal realm is a "picture of friendship," an "image of society and love" which delights Aelred:

How they run after one another, play with one another, so express and betray their love by sound

and movement, so eagerly and happily do they enjoy their mutual company, that they seem to prize nothing else so much as they do whatever pertains to friendship (I.55; pp. 62-63).<sup>17</sup>

Behavior, sound and movement expressive of play are seen as signs of love and delight, of the affective enjoyment accompanying friendship, which, in turn, mirrors divine love.

Aelred's fundamental conviction that "God is charity," his emphasis on delight and repose as characteristics of this charity, and his perception of this joyous charity overflowing in the instinctive affections and the play of creatures, all inform his practice of meditation on Christ's humanity, giving it the characteristics of play we have seen emerging in Bernard's exegesis. In keeping with Cistercian tradition, the end toward which meditation is directed is the reformation in the soul of the image of God: charity, characterized by delight and repose. The affections, which give the soul the capacity for enjoyment, play a primary role in this reformation. Through affective experience of God, the soul comes to reflect the charity that is the essence of God. Hence, meditation on the humanity of Christ is intended to stimulate the soul's longing for God, moving her toward joyous, affective experience of God. The soul's affective

response to the text takes the form of imaginative participation, recreating the Bernardine play of imagination. Recalling the biblical stories in her "spiritual imagination" the soul imagines herself as a participant in the story, intently and emotionally engaged by the events and people remembered, a practice which fosters the soul's inner and joyous participation in the charity of God--her imaging of God. We see in the familiar forms of this meditation Bernard's elucidation of how the images of the Song of Songs are to be read, which is, in turn, of course, profoundly affected by Bernard's devotion to the humanity of Christ. The affections initiate a play of imagination through which the literal text recreates its hidden spiritual meaning in the interpreter.

The subject of Aelred's imagination, as well as its joyous affectivity, contributes to its playful character. Aelred perceives meditation on the human life of Christ as wise folly. Bernard, we may recall, found the artistry of the Holy Spirit had created in the Song of Songs a foolish literal story which in the spiritual imagination became spiritual play leading the mind to God. Analogously, Christ's humanity is the foolishness of God.

In the engagement of the imagination in meditation, the soul becomes as a child, embracing the weak and childlike,

and finding that wisdom is gained through foolishness. Aelred speaks with warm approbation and humility of the childlike, and of the soul's attraction to the physical, human dimensions of Christ's life, for this meditation is adapted to our human weakness. Childlike, we can understand only what is revealed to us through the temporal world of which we are a part. It is for the strong and mature to contemplate Christ as he is, to gaze upon the eternal and spiritual. To meditate on Christ's human life is to meditate on him in his weakness and so to be healed of our weakness:

With David I must admit that the knowledge of God as He is in Himself is too wonderful for me to grasp, too lofty for me to attain. Meanwhile, O Lord Jesus, I will embrace Thee who didst become a little child for me. In my weakness I clasp Thee who didst become weak for me. A mere man, I embrace the God made man, the God who became a man as poor as I am, and came into Jerusalem seated on a humble donkey. I embrace Thee, O Lord, because Thy lowly state is my greatness, and Thy weakness is my strength. The foolishness of God is my wisdom (I.6, pp. 9-10; I.7, CC 1, p. 21).

In a sermon on Christ's nativity Aelred praises the value of

the affective response elicited by Christ's life, itself full of examples of Christ's own affectivity, encouraging freedom of emotional expression:

Your sadness, Lord Jesus, means more to me than all the joys of the world. The tears you shed at the death of a friend are sweeter to me than the fortitude of philosophers who think a wise man ought not to be moved by affection. Sweeter to me is your food and drink in the midst of sinners and publicans than the rigid abstinence of the Pharisees. The odor of your ointments is above all aromatic spices. How much it means to me to see the Lord of majesty show himself in physical movements and human feelings, not like the strong but like the weak. How much this strengthens me in my infirmity.<sup>18</sup>

Because the incarnate Christ in "his physical movements and human feelings" is like the weak, the soul can find wisdom in foolishness and the childlike.

Finally, and again reminiscently of the forms of play in Bernard's sermons, this meditation is seen as the work of grace in the soul, and so is governed by the pattern of unpredictable and playful "visitations of grace" interspersed with

periods in which Christ seems to be absent. Meditation thus becomes a game, a "spiritual contest" with Christ, initiated by the soul's identification with various figures peopling Christ's human life. In the third book of Jesus at the Age of Twelve Aelred describes contemplative union and the struggle of the soul to attain to it. In contemplative union, toward which meditation leads, the soul ascends to the "heavenly Jerusalem" where she finds revealed "to the gaze of the pure mind the Bridegroom himself who looking out as it were through the lattice-work, is more comely than the sons of men." In this state the "images of outward things have disappeared" so that "with ardent longing she raises the face of her heart in all its beauty to look upon him whom she loves" (III.20, pp. 27-28; CCl, p. 267). Even in contemplation the elusive appeal of the lattice seems to partially hide the Bridegroom. In the ardent and persistent prayer that precedes joyous reunion, Christ is even more elusive, stimulating the soul's longing:

How you moan, how you are on fire, how you seek him whom your soul loves, and, impatient in your love, long to see him whom you love. How you now cajole, now, to stimulate greater desire, are gently indignant. Now you accuse him of delay,

now you complain that you are scorned, now you profess that you are unworthy of his visitation, and then again you presume on that goodness of his which you have experienced so often. Now, as if unable to hold out any longer, you try to conquer his delays by a certain spiritual wrangling or by struggling with him. What tears then, what groans, what sighs, what words. Now your eyes are heavy with tears and are raised to heaven with deep sobs; now your hands and your arms are stretched out; now you accuse your soul of sloth by beating your breast. Meantime words are uttered without beginning or end, incoherent, inconsistent, paying no heed to the meaning or the laws of any language. At one moment the words express your feelings, at the next moment your feelings stifle the words. Jesus to be sure, loving as he is, is glad to be overcome in such a contest (III.21, p. 28; CC 1, pp. 268-69).

The play of imagination in Aelred's meditations, so reminiscent of Bernard, nevertheless finds its own distinct forms. We have seen imaginative play take the form in Bernard's sermons of a poetic, metaphoric flight of

emotionally related images. Aelred's meditations are based on the narrative of the Gospels, rather than the poetry of the Song of Songs. Moreover, in Jesus at the Age of Twelve and in A Rule of Life, Aelred deals with the historical, allegorical and tropological levels of the text in three separate sections, dividing Jesus at the Age of Twelve, for instance, into three books, each dealing with a different level of meaning. In the meditations, in the historical sense, the imagination gives shape primarily to the dramatic dialogue and interaction of the characters in the literal level of the text. This is, of course, a vital element of Bernard's imagination, but it receives concentrated and extensive development in Aelred's writing, changing the shape of the meditations. Dramatic images predominate and the rapid play of the mind between literal and figurative meaning in Bernard's work gives way to a more slowly paced movement in Aelred's, evident in the division of the materials.

Jesus at the Age of Twelve and A Rule of Life provide illustrations of the forms of play and imagination in Aelred's meditation. Jesus at the Age of Twelve was written between 1153 and 1157 at the request of Aelred's friend, Ivo, and is fittingly concerned with the appeal of Christ's childhood.<sup>19</sup> The spiritual imagination begins in the historical sense of

the Scripture, finding its inspiration in the appeal of the emotionally moving characteristics and actions of Christ and their physical expression. Aelred begins his meditation on Jesus' childhood by imagining his friend Ivo at his prayers:

. . . you have before the eyes of your heart the sweet likeness of that dear boy . . . with a certain spiritual imagination you reproduce the features of that most beautiful face . . . you rejoice in the gaze of those most charming and gentle eyes bent upon you (I.1, p. 4).<sup>20</sup>

As the meditation continues Aelred dwells at length on those elements in the narrative which appeal most strongly to the affections, attracting the soul through their charm or arousing compassion through their pathos. He attempts to evoke in his recreation of the text an enjoyment in the imaginative process and a delight in Christ. He imagines, for instance, the company of people on the road to Jerusalem competing for the child's attention:

We may imagine then that on that journey the boy Jesus granted the sweetness of his presence now to his father and the men with him, now to his mother and the women in whose company she was. Let us consider, I beg, how great was their happiness to

whom it was given to see his face for so many days and to hear his words, sweet as honey; to contemplate in a human being, in a boy, certain signs of heavenly powers shining forth, and to intersperse their conversations with reflexions on the mystery of the wisdom which saves. The old are amazed, the young are lost in admiration, and boys of his own age are kept from mischief by the seriousness of his behavior and the weight of his words. For I think that the grace of heaven shone from that most beautiful face with such charm as to make everyone look at it, listen to him and be moved to affection. See, I beg, how he is seized upon and led away by each and every one of them. Old men kiss him, young men embrace him, boys wait upon him. And what tears do the boys shed when he is kept too long by the men? How do the holy women complain when he lingers a little longer with his father and his companions? Each of them, I think, declares in his inmost heart: "Let him kiss me with the kiss of his mouth" (I.5, pp. 8-9; CC 1, p. 253).

The intensity of the soul's imaginative and emotional

involvement in the story leads to a high degree of participation. Aelred converses freely with the characters he brings before his mind's eye, addressing questions to them, supplying answers and urging various actions upon them. Imagining Mary's reunion with Jesus in the Temple after their three day separation, he entreats her:

Tell me, my dearest Lady, Mother of my Lord, what were your feelings, your surprise, your joy, when you found your dearest son, the boy Jesus, not among boys but among teachers, and beheld the gaze of all eyes bent on him, everyone eagerly listening to him, while the little and the great, the learned and the ignorant alike told of his wisdom and of the answers he gave? "I found," she says, "him whom my soul loves. I held him fast and would not let him go." Hold him fast, dearest Lady, hold fast him whom you love, cast yourself upon his neck, embrace him, kiss him and make up for his absence during three days with increased delight. "Son, why have you behaved so to us? Behold, your father and I have been looking for you in sorrow" (I.8, pp. 11-12; CC 1, p. 256).

The reference to the Song of Songs serves to remind us of how

closely Aelred's treatment of the Gospels is related to Bernard's treatment of the Song of Songs. Bernard's imaginative and literal evocation of the human lovers of the Song of Songs which precedes his mystical interpretation is here reenacted with intense participatory involvement, and will be extended in length and detail. In A Rule of Life, written between 1160 and 1162 for his sister, Aelred takes this participatory role even further, urging the soul at prayer to take an active role in the narrative.<sup>21</sup> In his discussion of the historical sense in this work, Aelred draws his sister's attention to scene after scene from Christ's life, beginning with the Annunciation and ending with the appearance of Christ to Mary Magdalen at the tomb. Recalling the events which preceded the Lord's passion, Aelred writes to his sister:

But now we must rise and go hence. Where to? you ask. To be sure, to accompany the Lord of heaven and earth as he rides on an ass; to marvel at the great things which are done on your behalf and mingle your praise with that of the children, crying out: "Hosanna to the Son of David, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord." Now then go up with him into the large upper room, furnished

for supper, and rejoice to share the delights of the meal which brings us salvation. Let love overcome shyness, affection drive out fear, so that he may at least give you an alms from the crumbs of that table when you beg for something. Or stand at a distance and, like a poor man looking to a rich man, stretch out your hand to receive something, let your tears declare your hunger (III.31, p. 86; CC 1, p. 668).

This imaginative participation of the soul in the biblical text leads her to engage in a variety of speculations about Christ's activities and their motivation. The soul, in her anxiety to understand fully the events in Christ's life, soon asks questions of the characters which exceed the boundaries of the text and extend it imaginatively. The meditation will consist of the familiar chain of images created as the affections respond to and participate, freely and with enjoyment, in the text. While the imaginative process is familiar, the imaginative extension of the literal level of the text is carried out in much more length and detail. The soul desires to know all that is possible of the literal feelings, thoughts, conversations and unspecified actions of the characters. The number of unanswered questions the

narrative raises quickly multiplies, deepening the soul's emotional engagement and strengthening her longing for God, for what is hidden. Practical considerations prompted by Christ's physical circumstances assume a seemingly exaggerated importance. How was it that Jesus became lost in the first place? Why wasn't his absence noticed sooner? Through the soul's concern for the physical hardships and difficulty facing Jesus, love is aroused. Aelred begins his narration of the boyhood journey of Jesus to Jerusalem by imagining the questions Ivo might pose to Christ and Mary:

Then, I imagine, you cry out with heartfelt devotion: "O dear boy, where were you? Where were you hiding? Who gave you shelter? Whose company did you enjoy? Was it in heaven or on earth, or in some house that you spent the time? . . . Indeed, my Lady, if you will allow me to say so, why did you lose your dearest Son so easily . . . why were you so late in noticing that he was missing?"

(I.1-2, pp. 4-5; CC 1, p. 250).

Later he offers possible answers to these questions and many others raised as the narrative continues:

When they all arrive in the Holy City having enjoyed this pleasure [*Cum hac igitur iucunditate*

ingredientibus cunctis sanctam civitatem"]<sup>6</sup>, watch, I beg, the devout and holy competition there is between one family and another as all are anxious to be granted his most lovable and charming presence I "cunctus desiderantibus sibi eius dulcissimam ac iucundissimam praesentiam indulgeri"]<sup>1</sup>.

Happy the one who wins. Perhaps it was for this reason that, when the celebrations were over and they set about their return, the boy Jesus stayed on in Jerusalem without his parents' knowledge.

For everyone thought that he was with someone else, since he was loved by all and sought for by all, and his parents did not know that he was not there until at the end of a day's journey, they looked for him among their kindred and friends, going from family to family of those who had gone up with them . . . . Where were you, good Jesus, during those three days? Who provided you with food and drink? Who made up a bed for you? Who took off your shoes? Who tended your boyish limbs with oil and baths? . . . . It is attractive to form opinions or conjectures or surmises on all these matters, but it is wrong to make any rash

assertions. What shall I say, my God? Did you, in order to conform yourself to our poverty in everything and take upon yourself all the miseries of our human lot, beg for alms from door to door as one of the crowd of beggars? Who will grant me a share in those crusts you obtained by begging, or at least let me feed on the remains of that divine food? But to venture on a loftier and more recondite hypothesis, on the first day perhaps he presented himself before his Father's gaze, not to take his seat at his side but to consult his wishes as to the ordering of the redemptive work he had undertaken (I.6-7, pp. 9-10; CC 1, pp. 254-55).

Where the biblical narrative is silent or puzzling, the soul enjoys to imagine what Christ thought or experienced without taking its musings overly seriously. The purpose of such speculations is to encourage devotion not formulate doctrine. This same imaginative involvement prompts, in A Rule of Life, the inclusion of legends which move us to love God. Aelred offers the example of the legend which tells us that the thief to whom Jesus promised a place in paradise while they both hung on crosses had saved Jesus' life when he was a

child fleeing from Herod in Egypt. "So, in order," Aelred teaches, "to kindle love I consider it worthwhile to accept this legend as true, without making any rash assertions as to its authority" (III.30, p. 82; CC 1, p. 664).

Since the end of the spiritual imagination is the restoration of the image of God, of charity, in the soul, the soul's engagement in the story should lead finally not to a merely pleasant emotional experience but to a conversion of the soul and an encounter with the living Christ, which transcends the text. The affective enjoyment and the freedom of conjecture through which the soul involves itself in the literal story is the means by which she enters into a relationship with Christ, itself characterized by play, and intended to reform in her the image of God. Aelred's meditations on the passage relating the visit of the prostitute to Jesus in the house of Simon, which occurs in the third book of Jesus at the Age of Twelve, best illustrate this. This story is chosen to exemplify the goodness of God which arouses the affections. Jesus is imagined as surpassingly gentle, pleasant and compassionate. The writer encourages the sinner in her outpouring of repentance and sees her as the forerunner of other sinners, leading them to experience what she has experienced:

Kiss, I say, those feet, press your fortunate lips to them, so that after you no sinner may be afraid of them, no one, whatever crimes he has committed, may flee from them, no one may be overcome by the consciousness of his unworthiness. Kiss them, embrace them, hold them fast, those feet venerated by angels and men alike (III.26, p. 34; CC 1, p. 273).

The example of this woman leads the soul at prayer to a similar repentance:

What are you about, my soul, my wretched soul, my sinful soul? There certainly is the place for you safely to shed your tears, to atone for your impure kisses, to pour out all the ointment of your devotion free from fear, without any touch or movement of vice to tempt you. Why do you hold back? Break forth, sweet tears, break forth, let no one check your flowing. Water the most sacred feet of my Saviour, of my Champion. I do not care if some Pharisee mutters, if he judges me unworthy to touch the hem of his garment. Let him mock, let him laugh and jeer, let him turn his eyes away, let him hold his nose, for all that I will cling

to your feet, My Jesus . . . (III.27, p. 34; CC 1, p. 274).

Describing the same scene in A Rule of Life, Aelred counsels the soul to participate to such a degree that she seems to encounter the living Christ through the story. The figures of the imagination gain an independence of will which transforms their relationship into a game, a spiritual contest that is played out through the medium of the biblical text and resembles the "holy competition" for the presence of the child Jesus described earlier (I.6, p. 9; CC 1, pp. 665-66). In this contest Christ first evades the soul's approach so that "he may rejoice in being overcome," his pretended evasion serving to deepen their eventual joy. The soul is urged to "strive with God as Jacob did" so that God may rejoice:

It will seem to you sometimes that he averts his gaze, closes his ears, hides the feet you long to touch. None the less be insistent, welcome or unwelcome, and cry out: "How long will you turn your face away from me? . . . Give back to me, good Jesus, the joy of your salvation. . . . He will certainly not refuse his feet to a virgin when he gave them to a sinful woman to kiss"

(III.31, p. 84, CC 1, p. 666).<sup>22</sup>

The whole imaginative process culminates, then, in this ultimately joyous game played with Christ, and, indeed, participates always in this play. From his initial joyous conception of the face of the Christ-child, through the foolish recreation of the literal story of his life, evoking affective and playful love for the risen and invisible Christ, Aelred plays through the spiritual imagination with the biblical text and with God through the text.

We will return to one passage from Jesus at the Age of Twelve as a final illustration of the dramatic quality of the play of imagination in the text:

Tell me, my dearest Lady, Mother of my Lord, what were your feelings, your surprise, your joy, when you found your dearest son, the boy Jesus, not among boys but among teachers, and beheld the gaze of all eyes bent on him, everyone eagerly listening to him, while the little and the great, the learned and the ignorant alike told of his wisdom and of the answers he gave? "I found," she says, "him whom my soul loves. I held him fast and would not let him go." Hold him fast, dearest Lady, hold fast him whom you love, cast yourself

upon his neck, embrace him, kiss him and make up for his absence during three days with increased delight. "Son, why have you behaved so to us? Behold, your father and I have been looking for you in sorrow" (I.8, pp. 11-12; CC 1, p. 256).

The dialogue between Christ and Mary continues in this manner, interspersed by elaborations and explanations by Aelred.

6 The meditation is, clearly, always pushing toward the spiritual significance beneath the literal, a significance which will be fully elaborated in the second and third books of the treatise. The dynamic of the interaction between Mary and Jesus in this incident is conceived of in terms of the pattern of Christ's presence and absence in the soul described in the Song of Songs. In an earlier example, Aelred sees hovering in the child Jesus the mystery of divine wisdom. It is indeed this movement from the literal to the spiritual that is the essence of play in Cistercian literature: the literal, in its weakness, is always at play in relation to the spiritual. The awareness of play, and the forms of imagination play creates, are themselves produced by the desire to transcend the literal and the imagined. Yet, at the same time, this first book of Jesus at the Age of Twelve, exploring the historical sense, imagines and

elaborates a sustained literal picture of the child Jesus visiting Jerusalem in the company of men and women. Aelred's intense and emotional participation in his text, a participation that can lead him to become a character or actor in the events as he seeks God beyond the text, creates a meditation that approaches the "kinetic, lively, and malleable scenes in the mimetic theatre" that Fleming refers to in later Franciscan literature and later medieval drama.<sup>23</sup> The structure of the first book of Jesus at the Age of Twelve and his recounting of Christ's life in A Rule of Life are less poetic than Bernard's sermons, depending more on dramatic encounters of characters, on dialogue and events, than on an associative chain of image and metaphor to carry the mind of the interpreter beyond the literal to a spiritual encounter with God. The familiar Bernardine play of imagination from literal to figurative meaning here approaches more closely the form of medieval vernacular drama.

The English sermons on the Song of Songs offer no striking developments of the Bernardine tradition, but they do further demonstrate the extent to which this tradition was comprehended, admired and nourished in England. These sermons also offer glimpses of a lively humor very much in keeping with the sense of spiritual play that animates them.

Gilbert of Hoyland, for instance, wrote 48 sermons on the Song of Songs, beginning shortly before 1153 and still attempting to complete Bernard's project at his death in 1172.<sup>24</sup> The Bernardine emphasis on the role of affectivity in the spiritual life and on the role of the simple, child-like and weak in reaching the highest spiritual mystery determine Gilbert's approach to his subject matter. Like Bernard, Gilbert expresses this affectivity and this delight in the humble in terms of play, both in his interpretation of the images of the Song of Songs and in his understanding of the language of the biblical text.

In his eulogy for Aelred in Sermon 41, Gilbert's admiration for Aelred reflects the essence of the Cistercian ideal:

His simple teaching and milk-clear exposition often swept his listener's spirit unaware into the intoxicating transport of a mind beside itself. . . . He chose material easy to work with but you could feel in his words the passion of inebriating grace.<sup>25</sup>

The style Gilbert admires in Aelred's sermons is, of course, rooted in the Cistercian devotion to the humanity of Christ. Speaking of the "wisdom" of "little ones" who humbly contemplate the Incarnation of Christ, Gilbert says that the

Incarnation, particularly the cross, arouses greater affection than the more exalted mysteries of Christ, and hence is to be highly valued (20.4-5; II, pp. 253-54; PL 184, cols. 104-105). The affections, moved by the humble, the child-like and the weak, have the capacity to transport the mind to the highest mysteries.

Gilbert's search for the "passion of inebriating grace" in the images and language of the Song of Songs leads him to a perception of the playing of the text and of the soul. Gilbert begins his sermons with a theme borrowed from Bernard. His text describes the Bride's search for the Bridegroom. Gilbert predictably expounds the by now familiar pattern of the soul's inner experience of Christ's presence and absence. This affective experience he finds reflected in the language and images of the text, which in their illogical and affective movement reflect the fawnlike behavior of Christ:

The longings of love are not of one form. So their expression is not bound by a chain of logic. In love affection blurts out, then checks its words, for affection does not always remain in one self-consistent mood. Even the Bridegroom himself is compared to a fawn, and rightly, because he so

deludes, so eludes his beloved. Hence the change in her lacks neither sequence nor logic. Her cries, though changing so suddenly, do not break the link as long as they echo her changed affections (I.1; I, pp. 43-44).<sup>26</sup>

While the word play in the translation in the Latin root ludere is not present in the Latin text, this translation accurately reflects the sense of the passage, and the context of the rest of the sermons. In succeeding sermons, the presence of Christ is described as play and holiday. Commenting on Song of Songs 3:2, in which the Bride seeks the Bridegroom through streets and squares, Gilbert teaches that the squares, planted with the tree of Wisdom, are places of play, holiday, and festivity, and hence, represent "the nimble leaps of contemplation":

" . . . in squares [people] gather to enjoy a holiday. For in the squares are both the throng and the chorus of those at play and so the celebration of a happy holiday takes place in the squares.

Good are those squares in which the spirit, inspired with spry enough agility, exercises itself for nimble leaps of contemplation" (5.6; I, p. 89).<sup>27</sup>

Gilbert's sermons also reflect the Bernardine capacity to think in an affectively linked chain of images. This is evident in, for example, Sermons 35 to 41, based on verses in the Song of Songs in which the Bride is described as an enclosed garden. Gilbert uses the image of the garden throughout these six sermons. He begins with a governing metaphor in which the heart or soul is compared to a garden of delight planted by Christ. This garden becomes primarily an image of spiritual joy, and hence, echoes the play and festivity of the squares planted with wisdom of Sermon 5. The succeeding sermons employ this metaphor with considerable development and elaboration. Sermon 39, for example, seeks to use this image, with imaginative play, to define the inner, affective freedom of the soul. Using the verse "Begone, O north wind, and come, O south wind, blow through my garden and let its perfumes fill the air," Gilbert discusses the contrast between inner bondage and inner freedom, between the Law and the spirit and grace of the Gospel, in this context, a contrast between a bored, tedious participation in the "letter" of monastic observance and spiritual joy, the north wind representing the law, and the warm southern wind, the Spirit of Pentecost. The exploration of the relation of grace to the mind, and of inner freedom,

becomes charged with the affective associations of images of garden, of perfume, of warm and chill winds. A few selected passages will suffice to evoke an already familiar pattern:

Execute your command, good Jesus; dispatch the south wind from heaven and conduct it into your garden, into the soul of your bride. By this gentle breeze dispel boredom, dispel sadness from her feelings. For each is a misery and each resembles the north wind; each fetters the mind, as it were, bars access to the current of pure joy (39.1; III, p. 467; PL 184, col. 203).

Hearts free from this truly harsh north wind pour themselves out more generously in contemplation and in love of God. "You did not receive," says Paul, "the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you received the spirit of sonship in which we cry: 'Abba, Father'." The former was the spirit of the north wind, the latter of the south; the north grievous, the south gracious . . . . The north wind brings torture, the south brings rippling laughter. The north is a menace, the south brings waves of caresses and delights.

"I will ask my Father," says the Lord, "and he will give you another Paraclete"; this is to invite the south wind and bid it come blow through his garden. "Blow through my garden and let its perfumes fill the air" (39.2; III, pp. 468-69; PL 184, col. 204).

O gentle south wind, truly desirable, by whose breath the horrid face of winter frost dissolves and the springtime of jocund freshness smiles in gardens [*et jucundae novitatis verna temperies arridet in hortis*], yes, and a new summer and autumnal fruitfulness! Yes; for in the diffusion of perfumes is meant the ripening of harvests. See how good and how pleasant [*quam jucundum*] it is to wait in chambers and in gardens for this breath of perfume so fragrant, renewing and recreating the fruits of the Spirit, pouring out its aroma, scattering its bouquets. Send this Spirit to us, O Lord, to clothe our little garden with a new countenance after the horror of the north wind, and to change our grief into joy (39.5; III, p. 473; PL 184, col. 206).

Like John of Ford with his hens, Gilbert's sense of affective and imaginative play sometimes leads him to treat his images, often drawn from the familiar agricultural world around him, with humor. Lawrence Braceland, in his introduction to his translation of Gilbert, draws attention to this sense of the comic in Gilbert's sermons.<sup>28</sup> One of the humorous examples he selects, found in the group of sermons addressed to a community of nuns, concerns an image of a carriage used to distinguish between two types of nuns. To one nun, Christ is a burden, and to the other, he is a joy, a contrast which anticipates the discussion of law and grace in Sermon 39. The nun to whom Christ is a burden is compared in humorously graphic terms to an old cart loaded with hay:

So your faith seems to you like a cart-load of hay, for under its weight you creak and groan and complain "as a wagon creaks when loaded with hay."

Christ is not a load of hay, but a flower and a fruit and a tree of life, a tree which gives fruit in due season and are you willing to wait? (17.2; II, p. 220; PL 184, col. 88).

The nun who finds her burden light is then compared to the glorious coach of Solomon. One can imagine the disgruntled and tired nun conceding a reluctant smile at the analogy.

The sermons of John of Ford were written later than the probable dates of Le Jeu d'Adam, begun sometime after 1172 and completed shortly before his death in 1213.<sup>29</sup> Nevertheless, in John of Ford's sermons we see the completion of the cycle of sermons on the Song of Songs and a continuing response to the tradition begun by Bernard, particularly a continued association of wisdom, love and play. These sermons are again a fabric of emotionally charged images reflecting the Cistercian conviction that God is understood primarily through love. Among them are two striking images of wisdom at play--in the words of Christ and in the Incarnation.

One of these images, John's treatment of Christ's comparison of himself to a hen, we have already seen: Christ's identification with a hen is, in John's mind, exemplary of play and humor, but of play which is revelatory of the most serious spiritual mystery--divine love. John's search in this image for wisdom in the childlike and the foolish, and, hence, in play, pervades his sermons. Rather than identifying himself with the experience of the Bride, as is the habit of other commentators, he places himself in the humble and childlike position of the daughters of Jerusalem, who attend the Bride and seek her maternal guidance (Prologue.3,

p. 69; CC 17, p. 34; 8.1, p. 162; CC 17, p. 80). Christ himself is seen in his Incarnation as a "seeker after littleness" whose weakness confounds the proud and mighty (9.2-3, p. 181; CC 17, pp. 89-91). A child himself, Christ is presented as taking particular delight in the innocence of children. Describing the innocents killed by Herod, the 144,000 virgins around the throne of God, John says:

The lamb of God is thronged about with companions, closely conformed to him in every way, so that even that period of Christ's life may have those who play and rejoice with him, who follow him wheresoever he goes; Praise the Lord, you children, since you have rich matter for praise!

Lovely is the perfect praise and graceful eulogy that sounds on your virgin lips which no lie or stain of lust has defiled. Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings you have made perfect praise, O my Lord, Lamb of God, so that in the heavenly melody there may sound and resound in your ears, as harmonious as sweet, the tune of your little ones (3.2, p. 100).<sup>30</sup>

Ultimately, not only Christ's playful use of metaphor, revealing his identification with the weak and childlike,

but also the Incarnation itself becomes in John's mind an example of Wisdom at play. Christ is once more presented as the figure of wisdom from Proverbs in the context of a discussion of the wise folly of the Incarnation. Wisdom, the artificer, the creator of the world, is also the skillful artificer of man's salvation:

Since you were wisdom, the fashioner of all things, with wonderful and delicate craft you have fashioned a salvation adapted to the blind and sickly. The world did not have the wisdom to know you in the invisible light of your wisdom, so it seemed proper to your honor to enlighten the blind and to cure the sick by means of a foolishness. You were a great light hidden in the bosom of your Father; you came forth from your retreat into our marketplace (7.5, pp. 155-56; CC n, pp. 76-77).

This wise folly of the Incarnation becomes a vivid image of Wisdom at play in another sermon in which John uses the image of David dancing before the ark amidst mockery, an image of play in monastic tradition, to define the meaning of the Incarnation and the cross:

Have you opened wide your mouth about him, daughter of Saul? Have you thrust out your tongue at

him, daughter of Canaan and not of Judah? Have you reproached the king of glory for dancing naked before the ark? For you said, wagging your head at him: "How the king of Israel honored himself today, uncovering himself before the eyes of his servant's maids, as one of the vulgar fellows shamelessly uncovers himself!" Yes inglorious in your eyes, blinded by the lowliness of that nakedness. But blessed are the eyes of the bride who in the total emptying of her Solomon, crowned with a crown of thorns, not only took no scandal, but all the more eagerly, all the more lovingly, ran to his embrace and threw herself into his arms!

(5.3, pp. 128-29; CC 17, p. 63).

John's use of biblical images of play--2 Kings 6:14-22 and Proverbs 8:30-31--returns us to those texts which were the subject of our initial discussion of medieval ideas of play. In the context of Cistercian spirituality and biblical exegesis, we have seen these passages gain new and revitalized meaning. In John's discussion of the hen as an image of love, the personified figure of Wisdom at play and David dancing before the ark become exemplums of the relation of mind and imagination to the images of creation, to

the words of the Bible and to God. Indeed, the idea of play is given in Cistercian spirituality a new valuation, becoming a joyously affirmed attribute of wisdom. We can now explore further the relation of the Cistercian play of imagination and word to medieval drama by turning our attention to Le Jeu d'Adam.

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Noomen, pp. 6-7; Grace Frank, The Medieval French Drama (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1954), p. 76. The English context of the play is also suggested by the devil's temptation of Adam. Le Jeu d'Adam shares this adaptation of the biblical text with the Anglo-Saxon Genesis B. See Rosemary Woolf, "The Fall of Man in Genesis B and in the Mystère d'Adam," in Studies in Old English Literature in Honor of Arthur G. Brodeur, ed. Stanley B. Greenfield (Eugene: University of Oregon Books, 1963), pp. 187-99.

<sup>2</sup>David Knowles, The Monastic Order in England: A History of its Development from the Times of St. Dunstan to the Fourth Lateran Council, 940-1216, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), pp. 246-47.

<sup>3</sup>Knowles, p. 240. Summary discussions of Aelred's life and spirituality, and of his significance in the religious life of England can be found in Knowles, pp. 239-45, 257-66 and in Leclercq, The Spirituality of the Middle Ages, pp. 205-208. Aelred, like Bernard, was active in the religious and political life of England, and gained considerable renown and influence within and outside monastic circles. He

was, notably, much in demand as a preacher. See also Dom Alberic Stacpoole, "The Public Face of Aelred," The Downside Review, 85 (1967), 183-99.

<sup>4</sup>Quoted by Knowles, p. 258.

<sup>5</sup>Quoted by Douglas Roby, "Introduction," Spiritual Friendship, by Aelred of Rievaulx, CF 5 (Washington, D.C.: Cistercian Publications, 1974), p. 13.

<sup>6</sup>In Treatises, The Pastoral Prayer, trans. Theodore Berkeley, OCSO, CF 2 (Spencer, Mass.: Cistercian Publications, Inc., 1971), I.1, p. 4. The critical Latin text is Aelredi Rievallensis Opera Omnia, I: Opera Ascetica, eds. A. Hoste, O.S.B. and C. H. Talbot, CC 1 (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 1971), in this instance on p. 250. All further references to this work will be to these editions and will be noted in parentheses in the text by book, section and page number, except where the Latin text appears in the endnotes.

<sup>7</sup>In Treatises, The Pastoral Prayer, trans. Mary Paul Macpherson, OCSO, pp. 79-102. The Latin text is found in CC 1, pp. 637-82. All references to this work will be to these editions and will be noted in parentheses in the text by book, section, and page number, except where the Latin text appears in the endnotes.

<sup>8</sup>Theodore Berkeley, Treatises, The Pastoral Prayer,

p. 4, n. 6.

<sup>9</sup>David L. Jeffrey, "Franciscan Spirituality and the Rise of the Early English Drama," Mosaic, 8, No. 4 (1975), 17-46; John V. Fleming, An Introduction to the Franciscan Literature of the Middle Ages (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1977), pp. 235-62; Sticca, pp. 76-79, 82-83; Auerbach, pp. 162-73; Glynne Wickham, Early English Stages 1300-1660 (London: Routledge and Kegan, 1980, 1981), I, 313-14; III, 128-34, 189. These works discuss the influence of the Franciscans on the development of vernacular drama, not only in the forms of their spirituality, which are affective and incarnational, but also in their use of vernacular languages and popular culture, and in their use of drama and dramatic techniques in evangelistic preaching missions.

<sup>10</sup>Fleming, p. 250.

<sup>11</sup>Fleming, p. 252.

<sup>12</sup>Roby, p. 9.

<sup>13</sup>Amédée Hallier, OCSO, The Monastic Theology of Aelred of Rievaulx: An Experiential Theology, trans. Columban Heaney, OCSO, Cistercian Studies Series, No. 2 (Spencer, Mass.: Cistercian Publications, 1969), pp. 34-36.

<sup>14</sup>The Mirror of Charity: The Speculum Caritatis of St. Aelred of Rievaulx, trans. Geoffrey Webb and Adrian Walker

(London: A. R. Mowbray and Co., Ltd., 1962), I.14, p. 21.

The critical edition of the Latin text is in CC 1, in this instance, I.20, p. 36. All further references to this work will be to these editions and will be noted in parentheses in the text by book, chapter and page number, except where the Latin text appears in the endnotes.

<sup>15</sup>The language of joy and delight is here reminiscent of Bernard. The translation tends to summarize and does not reflect the style of the Latin, which communicates in its phrasing, after the manner of Bernard, the emotion of the writer: "Haec mutua Patris Filiique dilectio amor suavissimus, gratus complexus, caritas beatissima, qua Pater in Filio, Filius repausat in Patre: haec plane, haec utriusque imperturbabilis requies, sincera pax, aeterna tranquillitas, incomparabilis bonitas, unitas indiuisibilis; hoc utriusque unum, immo in quo uterque unum, dulce, suaue, iucundum, sanctum dicimus Spiritum: qui et idcirco creditur hoc sibi uocabulum proprie assumpsisse, quod esse constat utriusque commune" (I.20; CC 1, p. 36).

<sup>16</sup>Spiritual Friendship, trans. Mary Eugenia Laker, SSND, I.53, p. 62. The critical Latin text is found in CC 1, in this instance on p. 298. All further references to this work will be to these editions and will be noted in

parentheses in the text by book, section and page number, except where the Latin text appears in the endnotes.

<sup>17</sup>"Ita se sequuntur; ita colludunt sibi, ita motibus simul et uocibus suum exprimunt et produnt affectum; tam auide et iucunde mutua societate fruuntur, ut nihil magis quam ea quae amicitiae sunt curare uideantur" (CC 1, p. 298).

<sup>18</sup>Sermones de Tempore et de Sanctis, 2, quoted in For Criste lue: Prayers of Saint Aelred, Abbot of Rievaulx, ed. D. Anslem Hoste, O.S.B., trans. Sister Rose de Lima (The Hague: M. Nijhoff, 1965), p. 28; PL 195, col. 226.

<sup>19</sup>The dating of Jesus at the Age of Twelve is discussed by David Knowles, "Introduction," Treatises, p. xi.

<sup>20</sup>"... cum ante oculos cordis tui illa dulcis pueri dulcis in corde uersatur imago, cum illum speciosissimum uultum spiritali quadam imaginatione depingis; cum oculos illos suauiissimos simul ac mitissimos in te iucundius radiare persentis" (CC 1, p. 250).

<sup>21</sup>Knowles, "Introduction," Treatises, p. xi.

<sup>22</sup>"Luctare cum Deo sicut Iacob, ut ipse se gaudeat superari" (CC 1, p. 666). Cf. Bernard's On the Song of Songs, 3.2; I, pp. 16-17; PL 183, cols. 794-795; 12.7; I, pp. 82-83; PL 183, col. 831.

<sup>23</sup>A comparable passage from Meditations on the Life of

Christ is illuminating here: "That evening, wishing to go from house to house as opportunely as possible, she looked for Him, asking, "Have you seen my Son? And you, have you seen my Son?" And she was in pain from sorrow and ardor. Crying, the old Joseph followed her. But they found nothing, and you yourself can imagine that they had no peace, especially the mother, who loved Him most intimately. Although she was comforted by the acquaintances, this could not console her. Was she then to lose Jesus? Watch her and pity her deeply, for her spirit is anguished as never before since she was born. Thus we should not become agitated when we have tribulations, since the Lord did not spare the mother but permitted trouble to come to His own as a sign of His love. Therefore it is necessary for us to have them. Finally the Lady shut herself into her room, turning to prayers and tears all night. . . . The mother said these and similar things in her anguish about her beloved Son that night. Very early the next morning they left the house to look for Him in the neighborhood, for one could return by several roads; as he who returns from Siena to Pisa might travel by way of Poggibonsi or Colle or other places. Therefore they searched on other roads, asking acquaintances and friends. And on not finding Him the mother was anguished, hopeless

and disconsolate. On the third day, returning to Jerusalem, they found Him in the temple, seated among the doctors. On perceiving Him, she was cheered, almost restored, and knelt in tears to thank God. When the boy Jesus saw her, He came, and she received Him in her arms, clasping Him tightly, kissing Him gently, pressing Him to her cheek, and holding Him to her bosom. In this way she restored herself, for she could not have spoken while she was overcome with emotion. Then she looked at Him and said, "Son, why have you done this to us? Your father and I looked for you in sorrow"

(Meditations on the Life of Christ: An Illustrated Manuscript of the Fourteenth Century, trans. Isa Ragusa, eds. Isa Ragusa and Rosalie Green (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), pp. 87-89). This passage develops in a more sustained and chronological way the literal experience of Mary, with less frequent development of the story's theological and spiritual implications. Yet, the incident of Jesus' journey to Jerusalem is, on the whole, treated more briefly and without Aelred's tendency to present several possible stories, and to explore the whole narrative fully. The experience of Jesus is, for instance, treated very briefly in the Meditations, and that of the other travellers not at all. The author of the Meditations acknowledges his debt to

Bernard frequently. See, for example, the Prologue, pp. 1-5, and, for further examples, the Index, p. 459.

<sup>24</sup>Sermons on the Song of Songs, I, ed. Lawrence C.

Braceland, SJ, CF 14 (Kalamazoo, Mich.: Cistercian Publications, Inc., 1978), p. 53, n. 1.

<sup>25</sup>Gilbert's sermons are translated in Sermons on the

Song of Songs I, II, III, ed. and trans. Lawrence C. Braceland, SJ, CF 14, 20, 26 (Kalamazoo, Mich.: Cistercian Publications, 1978-79). All further references to this work will be to this edition and will be noted in parentheses in the text by sermon and section, and then by volume and page number. This reference will be followed by the reference to the Latin text in the Patrologia Latina, unless the Latin text appears in the endnotes: 41.6: III, p. 497; PL 184, cols. 217-218. Braceland prints all prayers in the Sermons in italics. Quotations of the Song of Songs are from these translations.

<sup>26</sup>"Affectus in amore loquitur, et verba interrumpit:

quia nec ipse sibi semper in uno statu cohaeret. Jure et ipse sponsus hinnulo comparatur, sic fallens, et sic fugiens dilectam" (PL 184, col. 11).

<sup>27</sup>". . . in plateis, feriatio quaedam ad jucunditatem.

In plateis enim chorus est et conventus ludentium, Ergo

vacationis et laetitiae usus in plateis est. Bonae quidem plateae, in quibus alacri satis agilitate in leves contemplationis saltus animus se spiritualis exagitat" (PL 184, cols. 34-35).

<sup>28</sup>Braceland, "Introduction," pp. 12-15; 37-38, n. 42.

Mohrmann notes Bernard's use of images from the contemporary world around him: "Le style de Bernard doit encore son éclat aux métaphores multiples qui l'avivent. A chaque instant une pensée abstraite, une expérience spirituelle, évoquent une comparaison, et il s'agit plus seulement de ses images, usuelles ou traditionnelles, dont la Bible a, de tout temps, enrichi la littérature chrétienne; elles sont personnelles, et directement empruntées au monde créé. Bernard possède une âme éminemment contemplative, mystique; mais il demeure extrêmement sensible à tout ce qui l'entoure. Cette aptitude à concrétiser les réalités abstraites est l'un des traits dominants de son style: par là il appartient pleinement au moyen âge. Souvent empruntées à la vie de tous les jours, ses images sont très parlantes. Elles viennent de menus détails de l'existence, ou de la nature--animée et inanimée--, ou de la vie des paysans, des vigneron, des manants et des nobles; elles sont souvent d'une fraîcheur charmante. Ce ne sont pas de simples ornements de style:

en permettant de saisir ce qui semble échapper à l'expression humaine, en illustrant ce qui paraît à peine compréhensible, elles remplissent, dans la spiritualité de Saint Bernard, une fonction essentielle" (p. xxx). See also Leclercq, Monks and Love in Twelfth Century France, pp. 89-93, 102-105.

<sup>29</sup> Hilary Costello, "Introduction," Sermons on the Final Verses of the Song of Songs, I, pp. 8-9, 18.

<sup>30</sup> "Stipatur agnus Dei simillimis et conformibus sibi consodalibus suis, ut habeat etiam illa aetas Christi, quibus colludat et condelectetur quique eum quocumque ierit" (CC 17, pp. 49-50).

Chapter 4

Le Jeu d'Adam: Mankind at Play

The Latin word ludus first appears in the nomenclature of religious drama in the twelfth century. A play of St. Katherine performed in England early in the twelfth century is described as a ludus. A play written by Hilarius bears the title Ludus super Iconia Sancti Nicolai. A play from the Cathedral School of Beauvais is entitled Danielis ludus. The Anti-Christus from Teqernsee is described as a ludus in the stage directions. In the Carmina Burana manuscript of the early thirteenth century the word appears in the rubrics of a nativity play and in the titles of two plays about the Passion and Resurrection: Ludus breviter de Passione and Ludus, immo exemplum, Dominice Resurrectionis.<sup>1</sup> The word ludus also begins to appear in the twelfth century in discussions, both condemnatory and laudatory, of religious theatre. Gerhoh of Reichersberg uses the term in his denunciation of religious drama, condemning the transformation of churches into theatres, into the contexts of the mimed ludi. He is concerned with the relation of imagined action to reality, and, particularly, with the participation of audience and actor in the drama. He denies the illusory status of the drama, arguing that the mimicry of evil involves participation in evil and questioning whether dramatic illusion can be distinguished from reality.<sup>2</sup> Conversely, in his life of

St. Thomas à Beckett, William Fitzstephen finds twelfth century London superior to classical Rome in the sanctity of her drama:

Lundonia pro spectaculis theatralibus, pro ludis scenicis, ludos habet sanctiores, representationes miraculorum quae sancti confessores operati sunt, seu representationes passionum quibus claruit constantia martyrum.<sup>3</sup>

Several students of medieval drama have speculated about the implications of this problematic word for our understanding of medieval theatre. The word had a broad range of meaning, embracing a variety of forms of secular entertainment, contests and games, among them theatrical presentations.<sup>4</sup> We might recall, here, Bernard's use of the term to refer to the entertainments of the jongleurs. This led E. K. Chambers to conclude that the term referred not primarily to the dramatic nature of the plays but to the substitution of "recreation" for "devotion" in the play's "intention," and, hence, suggested a gradual secularization of the plays.<sup>5</sup> Later scholars, such as Rosemary Woolf and Glynne Wickham, have found in this word the suggestion of an increasingly self-conscious awareness of the liturgical plays as drama, rather than as extensions of a liturgical office. It is

noteworthy that Gerhoh of Reichersberg seems more concerned with the mimic and illusory qualities of the ludi than with their capacity to entertain. Woolf speculates that the increased knowledge of Roman theatre in the twelfth century may have sparked a perception of liturgical drama as plays and spurred their dramatic development.<sup>6</sup> In a discussion of the addition of the relatively rare words representatio and ludus to the much more common titles ordo, officium, and processio, Wickham suggests these additions may be indicative of a theatrical quality entering liturgical plays that caused their role in relation to the liturgy to change. He notes, along with changes in nomenclature in the twelfth century, a movement of liturgical plays to the periphery of services and an increasingly didactic element in the rubrics, citing Ordo Representationis Ade, or Le Jeu d'Adam, Ad Representandum Conversionem Beati Pauli Apostoli, Ludus Danielis, and the Anti-Christus as examples. Wickham suggests the development in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries of a religious dramatic tradition alongside the liturgic one, sanctioned by the Church, but having a more didactic intention, and a more theatrical, mimetic, game-like style, to which the term ludus was appropriate.<sup>7</sup>

The word ludus becomes in the fourteenth century a very

important one in vernacular drama, where it is translated by the vernacular terms jeu, pley, gomen, spiel. The reference of the term ludus to both drama and recreation in general continues in these vernacular words, and in the form and subject matter of vernacular plays. Kolve, in his book The Play Called Corpus Christi, has shown that the idea of play gives the English cycle play generic definition, defining the nature and status of dramatic illusion in relation to spiritual and historical reality, and determining the manner in which sacred history is transformed into drama. Play, game and comedy become a major element of the retelling of biblical stories, drawing our attention to the game-like nature of the drama itself. The trial and Passion of Christ is, for instance, made into a game by those who mock, try and crucify him.<sup>8</sup> Indeed, already in the late twelfth century, the French vernacular play Le Jeu de Saint Nicolas, written about 1200, calls itself a game and takes as its subject games human and divine, the human games in the play pointing towards the game played between God and Satan in history, and suggesting that the play itself participates in this divine game.<sup>9</sup>

The terms ludus and jeu, then, and with these terms the idea of theatrical play and game, and the related idea of

mimicry, are already associated with the religious drama in the twelfth century. The presence and use of the term raises the question of the role of entertainment and game in the religious theatre, and of the nature and status of dramatic illusion. It is in this context of ideas that we may profitably consider the Anglo-Norman play Le Jeu d'Adam. The play consists of a series of liturgical responsories, sung by a chorus, outlining, first, the story of Adam and Eve, then, of Cain and Abel, and finally recording the words of a host of prophets announcing the coming of Christ. These responsories are each given dramatic enactment and interpretation in the vernacular. In the case of Adam and Eve and of Cain and Abel, this vernacular interpretation shows a high degree of theological awareness and of dramatic and mimetic skill. Originally entitled Ordo Representacionis Ade, in keeping with its liturgical associations, the play has more commonly been called by its critics Le Jeu d'Adam or Le Mystère d'Adam, titles designed to represent the play's largely vernacular medium. The title jeu is appropriate, however, in another way, for this drama is self-consciously concerned with the idea of play, with play and game in human behavior, and with the question of dramatic playing. The first of our two

chapters about Le Jeu d'Adam will accordingly consider, in light of Cistercian spirituality, the drama's use of the idea of play and game to interpret the chief events of mankind's spiritual history: the creation, fall, and redemption. The second chapter will consider the play's dramatic method and its approach to dramatic illusion in the context of the idea of play and game which figures so largely in the drama's understanding of man and God.

In its use of the idea of play to interpret the creation and fall of man and his anticipated redemption by Christ, the drama echoes the emphases of Cistercian spirituality, and may be more easily heard within the context of this spirituality. Le Jeu d'Adam shares with Cistercian spirituality an association of wisdom, love and play. In Cistercian spirituality, we have witnessed a pursuit of wisdom in the human and divine capacity for love, and a cultivation of affective and emotional love with a propensity toward play, enjoyment and laughter. The pursuit of wisdom in affective love yields the perception that wisdom is characterized by play. A similar association of wisdom with love and play occurs in Le Jeu d'Adam when this work attempts to recreate and explicate the inner, psychological drama of the

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creation, temptation and fall of man.

While the word "wisdom" and related words--sapience, saver, sage--do not begin to appear significantly in the play until the temptation scenes, the dominating presence of this idea in the play is felt already in its initial scene. In this scene, the Figura, Christ, offers "conseil" to a newly created Adam and Eve, inviting them to listen to "ma raison." Throughout the play characters, in true and deceptive imitation of the Figura, become bearers of good and bad "conseil" and masters of good and bad schools. The devil, for instance, ironically adopts these words in his temptation of Eve, claiming to know "toz les conseils de parais" and praising a complaisant Eve for having, unlike her stubborn husband, gone to a "bone escole," his own (210, 220, pp. 34-35). Abel's first instructive words to Cain echo the counsel of the Figura and elicit Cain's mockery of Abel's "raison" and "doctrine," though Abel pleads with Cain that he believe "mon conseil" (612-13, p. 55; 629, p. 56). The prophets, like Abel and the Figura, plead with their audience to listen to their reason and counsel. Abraham, for instance, begins with the injunction "or entendez tuit ma raison" and Jeremiah with the words "OÛz de Deu sainte parole/Tot'vus qui estes de sa scole" (746, p. 65; 855-56,

p. 70).<sup>10</sup> One of the play's central concerns, then, is to define good reason, good counsel, wisdom, and, in the temptation and fall, their opposite, foolishness.

The Figura first teaches Adam and Eve what wisdom is by teaching them who they are: they are made in the image of God. In the play, as in Cistercian spirituality, this means primarily that they are made to love God. Echoing a central Cistercian idea, the play conceives, as Tony Hunt has pointed out, of the creation, fall and redemption of man in terms of man's imaging of God.<sup>11</sup> In Cistercian spirituality, the history of man's fall and redemption is considered in terms of his imaging of God, of the creation, damage, and restoration by Christ of the image and likeness of God in the soul. The first words the Figura speaks to Adam describe how the Figura has created him out of the earth in God's own image and likeness:

Fourmé te ai

De limo terre.

.....

Je te ai fourmé a mon semblant;

A ma imagene t'ai fait de terre:

Ne moi devez ja mais mover guere.<sup>12</sup>

(1-2, 4-6, p. 20)

Later, the Figura will condemn the sin of Adam and Eve by accusing them of violating this fundamental principle of their creation:

Jo te formai a mon semblant!

Por quei trespassas mon comant?

Jo toi plasmai dreit a ma ymage!

Por ço me fis cel oltrage?<sup>13</sup>

(407-10, p. 45)

The initial dialogue between the Figura, Adam and Eve elaborates what it means to be made in the image of God, emphasizing their capacity for love of God. The understanding of the image of God in the play is undergirded by the Augustinian conception of the image of God as a trinity of faculties: memory, understanding and will. Later in the play, Adam, lamenting his exile from paradise, demands of himself: "Ou fu mon sens? Que devint ma memoire, / Que por Satan guerpi le roi de gloire!" (531-32, p. 51).<sup>14</sup> However, the emphasis of the Figura's instructions, reflecting, as Hunt points out, that of Bernard, is on defining the will, on establishing its essential freedom and on orienting the will and desire of Adam and Eve to love of God and each other.<sup>15</sup> The Cistercians were concerned, as we have seen, to establish the primary role of the will, the capacity to love, in their

concept of image, and placed less emphasis on the capacity for intellectual cognition. Similarly the Figura sees reason always in relation to the will, defining good reason as that which issues in the love of God. In the following passage the Figura explains to Adam that he has been given the gift of free will:

En vostre cors vus met e bien e mal :  
 Ki ad tel dun n'est pas liëz a pal.  
 Tut en balance ore pendiez par egal,  
 Creez conseil : que soiet vers mei leal.

Laisse le mal e si te pren al bien.  
 Tun seignor aime, e ouec lui te tien,  
 Por nul conseil ne gerpisez le mien :  
 Si tu le fais, ne peccheras de rien.<sup>16</sup>

(65-72, pp. 22-23)

Adam responds with thanksgiving for this free will and a promise to offer it to God: "En toi servir metrai ma volonté" (76, p. 23). The emphasis upon will and love is felt throughout the Figura's counsel to Adam and Eve. His first words to Adam after he has told Adam he is made in God's image instruct Adam to obey God and to love Eve. The Figura establishes at some length the law of marriage which

will establish love and harmony between the couple (9-25, pp. 20-21). The following words of the Figura to Eve and her response display further the playwright's concern with the disposition of the will towards God, in which sens is directed toward love, toward harmony with the will and pleasure of God:

Co garde tu, nel tenez en vain.

Si vos faire ma volenté,

En ton cors: garderas bonté.

Aims e honor ton creator,

E moi reconuis a seignor.

A moi servir met ton porpens,

Tut ta force e tot tün sens.

Adam aime e lui tien chier :

Il est marid e tu sa mullier;

A lui soies tot tens encline,

Nen issir de sa discipline.

Lui serf e aim par bon coraje,

Car ço est droiz de mariage.

Se tu le fais bon adjutoire

Jo te mettrai od lui en gloire.<sup>17</sup>

(26-40, p. 21)

To these words Eve responds:

Jol frai, sire, a ton plaisir,  
 Ja n'en voldrai de rien issir.  
 Toi. conustrai a seignor,  
 Lui a paraille e a forzor.  
 Jo lui serrai tot tens feül,  
 De moi avra bon conseil.  
 Le ton pleisir, le ton servise  
 Frai, sire, en tote guise.<sup>18</sup>

(41-48, pp. 21-22)

Thus, in this opening scene, the Figura establishes Adam and Eve in wisdom by teaching the reason and will to love God, a wisdom which the devil will seek, in the temptation scenes, to pervert.

Having shown Adam and Eve their nature and so enabled them to possess it, the Figura makes them a promise: joy will forever accompany good will. Just as the patristic interpretation of the play of Isaac and Rebecca establishes the relation of laughter and perseverance in good, perceived by the wise man, and just as in the Cistercian elucidation of the inner, spiritual life, joy and play accompany love of God, in Le Jeu d'Adam love of God is expressed in delighted play. The word plaisir is used in association with God and with his ordering of the created world. We have heard Eve

agreeing to submit herself to God's pleasure, to God's will.

God speaks of the joy and delight which will characterize the life of Adam and Eve if they maintain their good will:

Tu iers en joie, ja ne te lassaras,

E en deduit ja dolor ne savras.

Tute ta vie demeneras en joie,

Tut jors serra, nen estrat pas poie.<sup>19</sup>

(55-59, p. 22)

This joy takes concrete form in the garden of paradise which the Figura has planted for Adam and Eve:

De cest jardin tel dirrai la nature :-

De nul delit n'i trovrez falture.

N'est bien al mond que covoit criature,

Chescons n'i poisset trover a sa mesure.

Femme de home n'i avra irur,

Ne home de femme verguine ne frellr.

Por engendrer n'i est hom peccheor,

Ne a l'emfanter femme n'i sent dolor.

Tot tens vivras, tant i ad bon estage :

N'i porras ja changer li toen eage.

Mort n'i crendras, ne te ferra damage.

Ne voill que isses, ici feras manage.<sup>20</sup>

(89-100, pp. 24-25)

Presenting Adam and Eve this paradise, the Figura, with a gesture, says, "De tot cest fruit poez manger par deport" (101, p. 25). They may eat the fruit of the garden, with the single exception of the forbidden fruit, in pleasure and play, "par deport." The word deport as well as the word deduit can refer not only to pleasure and delight, but also to games and entertainment. The Anglo-Norman Dictionary lists, as well as the more general senses of deduit, such as "pleasure" and "merrymaking," more specific forms of play and merriment, such as "a pleasant story," or "a joke." The word deport has the sense of "delight," "entertainment" or "solace."<sup>21</sup> Likewise, the word joie is also resonant in Old French with the idea of play, a resonance which can be expressed by playing on the sound of the words: joie, joir, juir, jeu, joir, juer, joer.<sup>22</sup> The words deport, deduit and joie occur throughout the play, reflecting its concern with the idea of enjoyment and play, and with the theological meaning of play.

After the Figura has departed, we witness a mimed scene in which we first see Adam and Eve at play: they wander

about the garden taking a seemingly delight in it: "Tunc vadat Figura ad ecclesiam et Adam et Eva spacientur honeste delectantes in paradiso" (p. 26).<sup>23</sup> Into this mimed scene another form of play is introduced in anticipation of the temptation scenes that follow, providing a glimpse of how the play will develop these ideas. Various devils appear running about the platea, making, we are told, gestures appropriate to devils, and eventually going up to paradise to show Eve the forbidden fruit, as if tempting her (p. 26). The manner of this running about and gesturing on the part of the devils becomes more clearly defined as the play continues and the devils' behavior is more specifically described. The devils characteristically present cheerful and rejoicing faces in their temptations, though they may show long faces to each other when their efforts meet with frustration: "Tunc recedat Diabolus et ibit ad alios demones, et faciet discursum per plateam; et facta aliquantula mora, hylaris et gaudens redibit ad temptandum Adam . . ." (p. 31).<sup>24</sup> When the devils' ploys finally succeed, they are pleased to carry Adam and Eve off to hell with a great dance, loud banging of pots, emissions of smoke and much hilarity (pp. 55-56). Satan in his verbal temptations of Adam and Eve seeks in the same manner to seduce them into exchanging the wise and joyous

play of the garden for his own foolish and counterfeit forms of play. As the innocent creation of Adam is expressed in the play and delight of paradise, so also the temptation and fall continue to be interpreted in terms of play and game.

It is in Satan's mouth that Adam's choice between good and evil is presented as a choice between two forms of play. Satan's temptation is presented as an attempt to teach Adam new ways to enjoy the garden. Adam's response to the devil's first question, "Que fais, Adam?" is "Ce vif en grant deduit" (113, p. 26). This assertion becomes the focal point of the devil's strategies. In the dialogue which follows, he uses various ploys to dissuade Adam of this conviction, and to persuade him to seek new joys. A few lines later, the devil tells Adam, "Tu as li bien, ne seiez joïr" (125, p. 28). The devil appoints himself master of this knowledge.

Mockery of the joy of the garden becomes one of the major ploys in the devil's re-education of Adam. In this mockery, we see that the devil perceives the life of Adam and Eve as play, and attempts a reinterpretation of this play. He makes game of Adam's innocent delight, attempting through verbal manipulation to transform in Adam's mind the joy of the garden into vain and foolish amusement. We see this tactic beginning to emerge in the first temptation of

Adam. The devil in this temptation begins to persuade Adam that he could make his condition better. His opening gambit exemplifies his approach:

Diabolus: Estas tu bien?

Adam: Ne sen rien que m'enoit.

Diabolus: Poet estre mielz.

Adam: Ne puis saver coment.

Diabolus: Vols le tu saver?<sup>25</sup>

(114-16, p. 26)

Gradually the devil draws Adam towards a consideration of the benefits of the forbidden fruit. When Adam refuses the fruit, the devil, condemning him for a fool in his parting words, uses the word deduit to ironically mock Adam's stubborn adherence to the joy of paradise:

Adam: Noel frai pas.

Diabolus: Or oëz deduit!

Nel feras?

Adam: Non!

Diabolus: Kar tu es soz! \*

Encore te membrera des moz.<sup>26</sup>

(170-72, p. 31)

The word deduit draws our minds back to Adam's recent assertion, "Ce vif en grant deduit." Adam's refusal is a word of

wise delight from the perspective of the Figura and his paradisaical provision. The devil's scornful and mocking tongue stands the word on its head, using it to make Adam's refusal look foolish, hollow, joyless. In the devil's opening words to Adam in his second attempt at persuasion, the devil resorts to fuller mockery of the joy of Adam. His words here recall Bernard's description of how the wicked, lacking spiritual understanding, mock and make game of the play of the wise. In a sense, the devil invites Adam to be a Michal scorning the dancing of David. Appealing to Adam's pride and self-will, the devil suggests that the garden offers meagre delight and that Adam is merely a "provender," a menial serf, one without property, wholly dependent on a lord. Adam, the devil suggests, idles away time in vain amusements:

Adam, que fais? Changeras tun sens?

Es tu encore en fol porpens?

Jol te quidaï dire l'autrer :

Deus t'a fait ci sun provender,

Ci t'ad mis por mangier cest fruit.

As tū donch altre deduit?<sup>27</sup>

(173-78, p. 32)

When Adam insists he lacks nothing, the Devil persists in mocking his foolishness, inviting Adam to "autre deduit,"

"altre deport," other entertainment, other games, better pleasures than those God has given:

Ne munteras james plus hølt?

Molt te porras tenir por chier

Quant Deus t'a fet sun jardenier!

Deus t'a fet gardein de son ort,

Ja ne querras altre deport?

Forma il toi por ventre faire?

Autre honor ne te voldra atraire?<sup>28</sup>

(180-86, p. 32)

In his attempt to reinterpret the play of the garden, the devil goes so far as to suggest that the Figura's prohibition against eating the forbidden fruit is a lying trick, designed to conceal the fruit's surpassing benefits, and so he introduces a strong element of game into his description of the garden:

Adam: Colui tres bien me devia.

Diabolus: Sez tu por quoi?

Adam: Jo certes non.

Diabolus: Jo te dirrai ja l'achaison.

Del altre fruit rien ne li chalt.

Et manu ostendat ei fructum vetitum dicens Ade.:

Fors de celui qui pent en hølt :

Co est le fruit de sapience,

De tut saveir donte science.

Diabolus: Se tu le manjues, bon le fras.<sup>29</sup>

(152-59, p. 30)

This reinterpretation of the joyous provision of the garden as a trick played on Adam and Eve becomes even more vivid in the temptation of Eve, and the language more clearly the language of tricks and games. As the devil discredits, here, the joy of the garden, he seeks to supplant this joy with "altre deport," the forbidden fruit. Having tried to convince Adam of his assertion "Tu as li bien, ne seiez joïr," he tries to teach Adam this enjoyment by offering him the fruit of wisdom, capable of conferring knowledge, power and great benefits, surpassing the good of any other fruit. "Se tu le manjues," the devil continues, "bon le fras." The devil's verbal somersaults offer Adam a choice between vain, deceptive amusements and learning to enjoy the garden's true good.

The first and crucial choice between good and evil is thus presented in Le Jeu d'Adam as a choice between varying forms of delight, joy, and play. The dialogue between Adam and the devil is a dialogue about joy, delight and play, both good and evil. Adam must exercise wisdom, must choose

what is good, by perceiving the nature of the games being played, by distinguishing the wise games from the foolish. The devil is bent upon confusing wisdom with false joy. As part of his verbal strategy he constantly casts the debate about the "deduit" of the garden in terms of wisdom and folly: the forbidden fruit is the fruit of wisdom; refusal to taste it is foolish. Adam is frequently accused by the devil of folly for refusing to pursue his own good; the word saver appears frequently in the dialogue tempting Adam to new and forbidden knowledge, playing upon the idea of wisdom.

This distinction between wisdom and folly, good and evil, vain and wise play continues to be a distinction between good will and bad. Play and enjoyment in Lè Jeu d'Adam, whether wise or foolish, are associated with the will. The joy and delight offered by the devil, the alternate way of enjoying the garden, is rooted in self-will, in self-love. In the act of eating the forbidden fruit Adam sets his will against God's, enjoying what God has forbidden, exchanging arrogant love of self for love of God. The devil makes frequent appeals to the will of Adam, sprinkling his conversation with questions such as "Voldras l'oir?" or "Creras me tu?", and awakening Adam's interest in pursuing his own private good: "Poet estre mielz . . . . Vols le tu saver?" (126, 131, p.

28; 115-16, p. 26).<sup>30</sup> Where wisdom and love yield joy, delight and play, so also do self-will and folly yield their own games. The drama's concern with the psychology of the will, and with the joy which is the fruit of the will continues, thus, to shape the dialogue of the temptation scenes.

The devil, in his attempts to transform the wise play of the garden into folly, himself plays, exemplifying the forms of foolish play throughout these scenes. The behavior of the devil, as he instructs Adam and Eve, is set against the "deduit" of the garden, heightening the contrast between the good and evil, wise and foolish play defined in his verbal manipulations. In his behavior, the devil sets his own will against that of God, teaching a doctrine that subverts the will of God. His self-willed play, rather than expressing the love and harmony established by God in the garden, takes the form of lies, tricks, pretense and treachery. In his manner and bearing, the devil makes pretense of good will, of love, of innocent joy, echoing deceitfully the innocence of Adam and Eve, and inviting their trust. The devil is ingratiating and pleasing. He comes with cheerful face, with assurances of his good will, of profit and joy to be gained from his company. This pretense of love hides other tricks. His conversation with Adam is characterized by ruse.

He dresses up, as we have seen, self-will as wisdom, spiritual joy as folly. He accuses God of the deceit and trickery that are his own stock in trade. His tricks often take the form of mockery: he makes game of the pleasure of Adam in the garden; he chastizes Adam's insistent love and fear of God as folly. The devil's games, for all that they masquerade as the delight and joy of paradise, conclude in the unseemly hilarity of escorting a hapless Adam and his descendants to hell. Those who go to school to him learn to play in the same treacherous manner. When the devil finally succeeds in tempting Adam and Eve to self-will, their self-will issues in foolish play, just as their love of God issued in the joy of the garden.

In the devil's temptation of Eve, we see Eve leave behind her the innocent play of the garden to learn the games of the devil, and in so doing, precipitate the fall from grace and paradise. She makes, as the Figura had predicted, a fool of herself: "Jol di a toi e voil que Eva l'oié, / Se nel entent, donc s'afoloie" (59-60, p. 22).<sup>31</sup> The devil's strategies are markedly similar to those he employed with Adam, though he is more flattering, and, in keeping with Eve's subordinate position, seeks to undermine her relationship with Adam as well as with God. He attempts again to

teach a new way of enjoying the garden, and to confuse false delights and benefits with wisdom. In the context of this temptation Eve is, like Adam, asked to preserve her innocence by having the wisdom to distinguish between true and false forms of play. Her failure to do so results in her adoption of new delights and amusements. Ingratiating, seductive, full of good will, the devil successfully draws Eve to be his accomplice by treating her to a flattering comparison of herself to Adam, praising among other things, her wisdom:

Tu as esté en bone escole  
Jo vi Adam, mais trop est fols.

(220-21, p. 35)

Mais neporquant tu es plus sage,  
En grant sens as mis tun corrage.  
Por ço fait bon traire a toi  
Parler te voil.<sup>32</sup>

(233-36, p. 35)

Having muddled her idea of wisdom, the devil then persuades her that the garden, seemingly a place of joy, is in reality the context of a great trick played on Adam and Eve by God:

Jo vus acoint d'un grant engin  
Que vus est fait en cest gardin :

Le fruit que Deus vus ad doné  
 Nen a en soi gaires bonté;  
 Cil qu'il vus ad tant defendu,  
 Il ad en soi grant vertu:  
 En celui est grace de vie,  
 De poëste e de seignorie,  
 De tut saver, bien e mal.<sup>33</sup>

(243-51, p. 36)

Eve is here called upon to perceive the trick the devil is playing on her, to see through his verbal ruses, to preserve the love which joins her to Adam and God. She is, however, gradually drawn into these ruses and games herself. The devil easily extracts from her a promise of secrecy early in the conversation, violating her loyalty to Adam and God. He strengthens his position by evoking in Eve a sense of grievance against Adam and superiority to him, again meeting with little resistance (213-42, pp. 34-36). The self-will which the devil evokes in Eve soon leads her to new pleasures. This becomes apparent in the words Eve speaks immediately after the devil has presented her the forbidden fruit, which contain a play on the words saver and savor, words related to each other etymologically.<sup>34</sup> Eve is here as much attracted by the taste and physical beauty of the fruit as by its

capacity to confer wisdom and power, and is prepared to consider the delight she might find in it: "Quel savor a?"

(252, p. 36). The word saver, with its connotations of reason and wisdom, contrasts sharply with savor, describing the fruit in terms of its physical appeal. The contrast ironically reveals the full implications of the devil's words.

The devil's invitation to the forbidden fruit is an invitation to self-indulgence and self-willed pleasure, a self-indulgence which extends to desire for knowledge and power.

Eve goes on to express her pleasure in looking at the fruit:

"Ja me fait bien sol le veer" (260, p. 37). Her comment is worlds apart from Adam's first expression of wonder and gratitude at the sight of the garden: "Mult par est bel" (225,

p. 24). The wording of her statement expresses her self-interest, her absorption in her own will and desire. We witness Eve being drawn into the vain, foolish amusements of

which the devil accused Adam, her being occupied with the pleasure of eating. Adam, in his first innocence, expresses

the folly of the act Eve contemplates: "Por une pome se jo gerpis t'amor,/Que ja en ma vie par sens ne par folor" (109-10, p. 25).<sup>35</sup>

In the following scene between Adam and Eve, in which the forbidden fruit is finally tasted, we see Eve's inner:

fall from grace, the gradual corruption of her will, continue to take the form of play and game. When the devil flees at Adam's arrival, having not quite brought her to the point of eating the forbidden fruit, she adopts in her conversation with Adam the tricks she has learned from the devil. In the initial exchange between Adam and Eve there is a problem in the line attribution. The scribe accords two consecutive portions of dialogue to Eve and so disrupts the sense of the passage. This problem has met with essentially two solutions.<sup>36</sup> Noomen, in his edition of the text, adopts the simplest of these, which involves the attribution of a single line to Adam:

Adam: Di moi, muiller, que te querroit

Li mal Satan? que te voleit?

Eva: Il me parla de nostre honor.

Adam: Ne creire ja le traïtor!

Il est traître.

Eva: Bien le sai.

Adam: E tu coment?

Eva: Car l'asaiai.

De ço quen chat me del veer?

Adam: Il te ferra changer saver.

Eva: Nel fra pas, car nel crerai

De nule rien tant que l'asai.

Adam: Nel laisser mais venir sor toi,

Car il nest mult de pute foi!

Il volst traïr ja son seignor .

E s'oposer al Des halzor.

Tel paltonier qui ço ad fait

Ne voil que vers vus ait nul retrait.<sup>37</sup>

(277-92, p. 38-39)

In the manuscript the line "il te ferra changer saver" is left allocated to Eve. Erich Auerbach persuasively defends the alternate attribution of these lines which involves more extensive changes to the manuscript:

Adam: Di moi, muiller, que te querroit

Li mal Satan? que te voleit?

Eva: Il me parla de nostre honor.

Adam: Ne creire ja le traïtor!

Il est traïtre, bien le sai.

Eva: Et tu coment?

Adam: Car l'esai!

Eva: De ço que chalt me del veer?

Il te fera changer saver.

Adam: Nel fera pas, car nel crerai

De nule rien tant que l'asai.

Nel laisser mais venir sor toi .

Car il est mult de pute foi.

Il volt traïr ja son seignor,

E soi poser al des halzor.

Tel pältonier qui ço ad fait

Ne voil vers vus ait nul retrait. <sup>38</sup>

Auerbach argues that the tone and characterization in the version of the text retained by Noomen is inappropriate to the character of Adam and Eve, and does not take into account the motive behind the action of the serpent. He argues that Eve is governed by instinct, that she is without moral sense, and therefore incapable of making statements such as "bien le sai," or of claiming experience. The version used by Noomen accords her, thus, too much rationality. Auerbach argues that it is precisely this rational incapacity in Eve that the serpent responds to. Realizing that Eve will lose the battle of words, the moral argument, with Adam, the serpent persuades her to offer him not words, but the completed act, in which she displays an unprecedented "independence of will," and so gains mastery of the situation. He proposes, thus, a reading in which Eve is openly defiant and morally naive, is initially silenced by Adam's reason, and is finally aided in her thoughtless willfulness by the action of

the serpent.<sup>39</sup> However, if we look at the preceding scene, we see that Eve has vowed secrecy to the devil, and is, moreover, strongly convinced by the devil's persuasions, harboring the desire to eat the apple, though hesitant to do it in Adam's presence. She has been taught by the devil to whom she has been a responsive student to be deceitful and to trust in her own wisdom. Moreover, the drama is concerned with the opposition of trickery and deceit to honest joy and delight. In the Cain and Abel portion of the drama, Cain, as we will see, deceives his brother Abel in much the same way as Eve can be seen to deceive Adam in this scene, offering agreement when he means harm, hiding folly and self-will under the pleasing disguise of wisdom and love. If we follow Noomen's line attribution and consider the element of game and trick in the conversation, the dialogue can be seen to conform in tone and characterization with the earlier parts of the play. Adam when he sees Eve and Satan together is immediately suspicious and aggressive, having already been well acquainted with the devil. Eve answers his questions by putting the situation in a good light, her pleasing words echoing those of the devil: "Il me parla de nostre honor." Adam is not at all softened. "Ne creire ja'le traïtor!/Il est traïtre." Eve takes Adam aback completely by agreeing

with him: "Bien le sai." Adam continues to be suspicious: "Et tu coment?" Unable to get anywhere, he at last contents himself with a comprehensive condemnation of the devil. At this point the snake appears to Eve, offering her the forbidden fruit which she accepts. The devil is nowhere in sight and Eve is seemingly perfectly in accord with her husband's opinion of the devil. The apple is offered by a snake who has no obvious relation to the devil. Adam is faced, as Auerbach has so sensitively demonstrated, by a startling assertion of will on the part of Eve, and finds her more difficult to resist than Satan.<sup>40</sup> After his initial strong refusal, he becomes doubtful: "Est il tant bon?" The whole proceeding has the quality of trickery about it, the devil adopting a disguise, and through it succeeding with Adam where his verbal subterfuge failed. Later, Eve will claim to the Figura that the serpent tricked her (442, p. 47). She proceeds in this scene to use manipulation reminiscent of the devil, who, when Adam showed reluctance to know the devil's secrets, aroused curiosity by pretending to remove the temptation, to refuse to share his knowledge. Eve says to a still reluctant Adam, "Lai le," to which Adam immediately responds, as he responded to the devil, "Nen frai pas." She then uses the same gentle mockery she learned

from the devil who called her hesitation childish: "Del demorer fai tu que las." Assured by Eve of the benefit and goodness of the fruit she precedes him in tasting, Adam finally succumbs, vulnerable to Eve as he is not to the devil: "Jo t'en crerra, tu es ma per" (295, 297-98, 313, pp. 40-41).<sup>41</sup> In this scene Eve through lies, through verbal games she learned from the devil, leads Adam to foolish enjoyment. We have seen the emphasis on taste in Eve's attraction to the fruit, an emphasis which finally makes its appeal also to Adam:

Eva: Gusté en ai. Deus, quele savor!

Unc ne tastai d'itel dolçor!

D'itel savor est ceste pome!

Adam: De quel?<sup>42</sup>

(303-306, p. 41)

The resonant word play on saver and savor recurs in this scene. A little earlier Eve assures Adam of the benefits conferred by the apple:

Adam: Est il tant bon?

Eva: Tu le saveras.

Nel poez saver si'n gusteras.<sup>43</sup>

(295-96, p. 40)

Finally, Adam and Eve exchange the joy and play of the garden

for the other forms of play taught and exemplified by the devil.

In the scenes of judgement and expulsion which follow the disobedience of Adam and Eve, the joy of paradise turns to misery and pain, revealing how treacherous and deceptive were the devil's words, "Tu as li bien, ne seiez joïr." The idea of joy and enjoyment, and now, of their converse, pain and suffering, continues to dominate these scenes. The joylessness and shame of Adam and Eve first speak to the Figura of their sin, causing him to wonder:

Tu n'avois rien l'autrier  
 Dunt tu duses vergunder,  
 Or te voi mult triste et morne :  
 Mal sen joïst qui ensi sojorne.<sup>44</sup>

(395-98, p. 45)

Adam and Eve utter long and bitter laments over their folly. After their exile from paradise to till the reluctant soil of earth, Adam's lament for the lost paradise contains a painfully ironic reversal of the devil's words. Adam has scarcely enjoyed paradise before losing it:

Oi, paradis! tant bel maner!  
 Vergier de glorie! tant vus fet bel veer!  
 Jotez en sui par mon pecchié, par voir,

Del recovrer tot ai-perdu l'espoir!

Jo fui dedenz, n'en soi gaires joïr,

Creï conseil chi me fist tost partir.

Or m'en repent, droit est que m'en aïr;

Co est a tart, rien nen valt mon sospir!<sup>45</sup>

(523-30, p. 51)

Immediately before Adam's lament for a lost paradise, there occurs a mimed scene in which Adam and Eve plant wheat in a plot of ground. While they are resting, the devil comes to plant weeds, which, when Adam and Eve discover them, cause great grief. In the context of the devil's ploys in paradise, this has the character of ruse.<sup>46</sup> This mimed scene anticipates the story of Cain and Abel which follows, in which we see the fields and meadows of earth become the context of man's deceptions, reminiscent of those of the devil.

The drama's interpretation of the story of Cain and Abel echoes the emphases of the interpretation of the story of Adam and Eve. The subject of the story is now the fallen world. The image of the garden, now the fields of the earth, continues to play a central and unifying role. The brief biblical account of Cain and Abel is cast as an argument between the two about how this garden, the earth, is to be

enjoyed, echoing the similar debate between Adam, Eve and the devil. Abel seeks to recover the lost joy of paradise, to cultivate the earth, God's provision, in harmony with God. He opens the play with a sermon reminiscent of the counsel of the Figura, providing a reasoned apology for the love of God and man. Abel attempts to establish loving harmony between himself, his brother, and God, and so to avoid the folly of his parents. This is to be accomplished by offering a part of the fruit of the earth to God as an act of love and obedience instead of reserving it all for the satisfaction of their own bellies, after the covetous manner of their parents:

Seum tot tens subject al criator,  
 Ensi servum que conquerroms s'amor,  
 Que nos parenz perdirent par folor.  
 Entre nos si soit bien ferm amor!

Si servum Deu que li vienge a plaisir.  
 Rendom ses droiz, nen soit riens del tenir,  
 Se de bon cuer le voloms obeïr  
 N'averont nos almes pòür de perir.

Donum sa disme e tute sa justise,  
 Primices, offrendes, dons, sacrifice.

Si del tenir nos prent acoveitise  
 Perdu serroms en enfer sen devise!

Entre nos deus ait grant dilection,  
 N'i soit envie, n'i soit detraction!<sup>7</sup>  
 Por quei avra entre nus dous tençon?  
 Tote la terre nos est mis a bandon!<sup>47</sup>

(595-610, pp. 54-55)

Cain, on the other hand, is most interested in being the kind of gardener the devil falsely accused Adam of being. We hear his self-indulgence and self-will in his mocking and derisive response to Abel's reasoning:

Beal frere Abel, bien savez sermoner,  
 Vostre raison asaer e mustrer!  
 Vostre doctrine si est qui'l voille escoter,  
 En poi de jorz avra poi que doner!<sup>48</sup>

(611-14, p. 55)

He goes on to insist that he will do as he pleases with his goods. Even his affirmation of fraternal love subtly threatens that Abel had best abandon the subject of gardening:

De nus amer nature nus enseigne,  
 Entre nus dous n'ait nul que se feigne.  
 Qui entre nus comencera la guerre,

Tres bien l'achat, ke droiz est qu'il s'en  
pleigne!<sup>49</sup>

(619-22, p. 55)

As the play continues, and Abel persists in his sermons, Cain's self-will begins to express itself in the pretence, lies, and tricks of the devil. Self-will and evil in the fallen world emerge once more as game. The conversation continues with its emphasis on the desire for good, for joy, on the will of Cain and Abel. Abel begins with a frequently repeated, and later, in Cain's mouth, ironic, form of address, "bel frere." The word is richly significant in light of the story of Adam and Eve, in which the garden, a place of goodness and beauty, becomes the context in which man learns how goodness and beauty are to be loved, wisely or foolishly. The words bel and bien, resonant with meaning conferred by the Figura and Satan, are played upon ironically throughout the dialogue of Cain and Abel, touching again and again upon the question of how one loves and enjoys. Here Abel invites Cain to moral good in words that echo the devil's quite different temptation:

Abel: Chaim, bel frere, entent a moi!

Chaim: Volentiers; ore di de quoi?

Abel: Co est de ton pru.

Chaim:

Tant m'est plus bel!<sup>50</sup>

(623-25, p. 55)

When Abel pursues his conviction that they please God with offerings and so win his love, Cain, we are told in the stage directions, makes a pretence of agreement with Abel's reasoning, a pretence of wisdom:

Bel-frere Abel, mult as bien dit!

Icest sermon as bien escrit,

E jo crerai bien ton sermon.

Alom offrir, bien est raison!

Quoi offriras tu?<sup>51</sup>

(639-43, p. 56)

He loses his temper, though, when Abel demands he give God his best grain, mocking this advice as fable and madness and reserving his best grain for his supper. When Cain's meagre offering is refused by God, he becomes possessed by jealous and irrational anger, but quickly conceals this and comes to Abel, we are told, craftily, with the intention of killing him.

At this climactic moment of the play, we are offered an image of pastoral play which is a startling and dramatic reversal of the joy of paradise. Cain offers to Abel friendship, the affection Abel had promised could be between them,

suggesting they go to play together in the meadows. The playwright provides this action drawn from the biblical text with the motive of affection, play and leisure:

Chaim: Bel frere Abel, issum ça fors!

Abel: Por quoi?

Chaim: Por deporter nos cors

E por regarder nostre labor,

Cum sunt credi, s'il sunt em flaf :

As prez puis en irrums,

Plus leegier apres en serroms.

Abel: Jo irrai avec toi ou tu voldras.

Chaim: Or en vien donc, bon le fras.

Abel: Tu es mi freres li ainez,

Jo ensivrai tes volentez.

Chaim: Or va avant, jo irrai après

Le petit pas, a grant relais. <sup>52</sup>

(667-78, pp. 58-59)

The game, however, is fratricide. When they arrive in the fields, Cain's next words are "Abel! morz es!" The "enjoyment" and "relaxation" of Cain and Abel in the meadows contrasts vividly with the first delight of Adam and Eve in paradise. In this scene, the fall of man yields treacherous play, presenting itself in the guise of wisdom, love and joy.

We see in the contrast between this scene and the original provision of the garden how the drama interprets the story of mankind's fall from innocence to guilt. This murder scene also has figural implications which lend the garden context and the depiction of play further resonance. Abel's murder prefigures that of Christ, a relation suggested when Abel kneels and genuflects toward the East as Cain kills him, having committed his soul to God in words reminiscent of Christ on the cross.<sup>53</sup> The transformation of the joyous garden of Adam and Eve into a place where play and game have become murder here describes also the sacrifice of Christ, and so the idea of play and game is extended to the redemption of man by Christ. This prefiguration anticipates the prophet play in which the redemption is announced more fully.

In the prophet play, the drama's concern with joy and play continues to be evident. This last section of the drama, consisting of a series of prophets who in monologues deliver their prophecies to the audience, is less dramatic in its structure than earlier portions of the play. The series of prophecies is only once interrupted by a Jew, who enters into debate with Isaiah and creates the kind of dramatic dialogue present in earlier sections of the play.<sup>54</sup> Accompanying this difference in presentation, the enactment of forms of play

that accompany good and bad will is less full and vivid. The emphases of the earlier section of the play continue, however, to be felt in the themes and structure of this portion of the drama.

The joyous restoration of paradise is intimated in the images of the prophet play. The garden imagery of earlier sections continues to pervade the drama. In these prophetic utterances images of the growth, fertility and fruition of the earth are used of Christ's Incarnation and of the redemption of Adam and Eve. The earth becomes a fruitful garden in which reason is restored, release from prison and pain effected, singing and joy rediscovered, all in the person of Christ. The prophets announce that new fruit will be given to man, the fruit<sup>e</sup> of life, Christ. This imagery is not present in the pseudo-Augustinian Sermon Against Jews, Pagans and Arians, Concerning the Creed, upon which the prophet play is based. The author of Le Jeu d'Adam takes the liberty of changing the prophecies put in the mouth of some of the prophets, and of deleting and adding some prophets. A significant number of these changes introduce the imagery of the garden into the prophet play. We see this, for instance, in the addition of Abraham and Aaron, and in the new prophecies accorded David, Jeremiah and Isaiah.<sup>55</sup> Abraham speaks of his

seed, Isaac, and ultimately, Christ, whom Isaac prefigures and who will free Adam and Eve from their sin (763-65, p. 65). Aaron appears carrying a rod with fruit and flowers, which possesses the odor of salvation and will remove all sorrow. This rod represents the heir who will come from his lineage, who will take upon himself man's nature without carnal engendering, and who will be the fruit of salvation (775-82, p. 66). David picks up the same motifs, proclaiming that truth will rise out of the earth. The earth will give its wheat when Christ comes, the bread which will save Eve's children (783-90, p. 67). Jeremiah commands righteous men to make their ways straight as furrows, to have clean hearts free of evil. If they do so, the son of God will come to dwell with them, descending to the earth like a mortal man (861-76, p. 71). Isaiah's prophecy concerns the root of Jesse, which will send forth a flowering rod signifying that a virgin shall bear a child, the fruit of the tree of life, who will restore Adam to paradise (877-82, 913-30, pp. 71, 73-74).

Once in this long series of prophets, this imagery of the joyous restoration of the garden is challenged, in the person of a Jew who interrupts Isaiah. This Jew clearly follows in the footsteps of the devil, Adam, Eve and Cain. He

lacks spiritual awareness, or wisdom, and so makes the prophecy of Isaiah into jest and fable. Isaiah tells the Jew he has an evil heart and has been badly schooled. The Jew's ill will takes the form typically ascribed to the Jews: he understands only the letter of the law, the letter of the prophecy, and not the spirit. He takes Isaiah's prophecy literally and therefore finds it to be nonsense. Just as Adam finally failed to understand and enjoy the garden wisely, so the representative Jew fails to understand the prophecy. Like Eve and Cain who pursued selfishly the physical pleasures of the garden, the Jew contents himself with the literal sense of the text. At this level, Isaiah's prophecy seems to deal with a flowering plant on which the Holy Spirit will rest:

Ore vus dirrai merveillus diz :  
 Jessé fera de sa raiz,  
 Verge en istra, qui fra flor  
 Qui ert digne de grant unor.  
 Saint esspirit l'avra si clos  
 Sor iceste flor iert sun repos.<sup>56</sup>

(877-82, p. 71)

The Jew mocks this prophecy as fable and jest: "Est ço fable ou prophecie? . . . Est ço a certes ou a gas?" (884, 888, p.

71).<sup>57</sup> He mocks Isaiah as a mad old soothsayer, and, in this spirit, begs him to continue the prophecy, emphasizing its ludicrous nature, the physical images of the text, and the absurdity that anything could be born of them:

Or nus redi ta vision,  
 Si ço est verge ou baston,  
 E de sa flor que porra nestre.  
 Nos te tendrom puis por maistre,  
 E ceste generacion  
 Escuterai puis ta lecçon.<sup>58</sup>

(907-12, p. 73)

Isaiah responds with another prophecy, replacing mockery with wonder:

Or escutetz la grant merveille!  
 Si grant n'oi' mais oreille,  
 Si grant nen fu onc mais oi'e  
 Des quant comenza ceste vie!

Ecce virgo concipiet in utero et pariet filium et  
 vocabitur nomen eius Emanuehl.

Pres est li tens, n'est pas lointeins,  
 Ne tarzera, ja est sor mains,

Que une virge concevera,  
 E virge un filz emfantera.  
 Il avra non Emanuhel,  
 Message en iert saint Gabriel.  
 La pucele iert virge Marie,  
 Si portera le fruit de vie,  
 Jhesu, le nostre salvaor,  
 Qui Adam trarra de grant dolor  
 Et remettra en paraïs.  
 Iço que vus di, de Deu l'ai apris :  
 E ço iert tot acompli par veir,  
 En ce devez tenir espeir!<sup>59</sup>

(913-30, pp. 73-74)

Playing upon the words verge and virge, Isaiah teaches that the flowering of the root of Jesse, the virgin, will bring forth through the Holy Spirit the fruit of salvation, Christ. The Jew cannot get beyond the literal images and words, and therefore, sees them as fruitless, puerile play, as foolishness and nonsense. Thus we see the foolish jesting of the Jew set in contrast with the wise joy of the restored paradise. Isaiah, the master of the school, understands things rightly and spiritually, wisely, and is hence able to perceive in these images the redemption of man through the birth

of Christ.

The idea of joy, amusement, play and game lies, then, at the heart of the drama's interpretation of the story of Adam and Christ. This idea is, indeed, a source of considerable unity in the play's literary structure. The theme of play affects the characterization in the drama: the self-willed strategies of the devil, Eve, Cain, the Jew and even Adam contrast with the serenity and joy of the innocent Adam, Abel, the prophets, and the Figura. Play is evident in the quality of the dialogue, in its verbal ironies and stratagems, and in the play of the characters with each other created through this dialogue. The idea of play also affects, as we have seen, the use and choice of imagery in Le Jeu d'Adam, giving its pervasive imagery of garden and earth a theological resonance. The "plot" of the play, moving from the creation and fall of Adam and Eve to the fallen world of Cain and Abel and finally toward the anticipated redemption of man, describes the loss and restoration of joy.<sup>60</sup> Underlying this literary structure is the perception, articulated in the twelfth century by the Cistercians, that wisdom and love are made manifest in play. Foolish, vain, puerile play in the behavior of the characters is seen as a corruption of a wise delight rooted in love of God, so that the creation, fall

and redemption can be seen as a story about innocent play  
corrupted.

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Rosemary Woolf, The English Mystery Plays (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972), p. 35; p. 350, n. 53, 54, 55; V. A. Kolve, The Play Called Corpus Christi (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1966), p. 12.

<sup>2</sup>Woolf, p. 35; Richard Axton, European Drama of the Early Middle Ages (London: Hutchinson University Library, 1974), p. 31; Karl Young, The Drama of the Medieval Church (1933; rpt. Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1967), II, 524-25.

<sup>3</sup>"London in place of shows in the theatre and stage-plays has holier plays, wherein are shown forth the miracles wrought by Holy Confessors or the sufferings which glorified the constancy of Martyrs." Woolf, p. 29; p. 349, n. 25.

<sup>4</sup>Kolve, p. 12; Axton, p. 33, Woolf, p. 35.

<sup>5</sup>E. K. Chambers, The Mediaeval Stage (1903; rpt. London: Oxford University Press, 1963), II, 104.

<sup>6</sup>Woolf, p. 29.

<sup>7</sup>Wickham, I, 149; III, 176-79.

<sup>8</sup>Kolve, pp. 8-32, 145-74, 175-205.

<sup>9</sup>Carolyn L. Dinshaw, "Dice Games and Other Games in Le Jeu de saint Nicolas," PMLA, 95 (1980), 802-811. The medieval

concept of theatre as play is also discussed in Martin Stevens, "Illusion and Reality in the Medieval Drama," College English, 32 (1971), 448-64, and G. Gauvin, "Rite et Jeu dans le Théâtre Religieux Anglais du Moyen Age," Revue d'Histoire du Théâtre, 29 (1977), 128-40.

<sup>10</sup>The drama's recurrent use of the word conseil is discussed by Tony Hunt, "The Unity of the Play of Adam (Ordo Representacionis Ade), I and II," Romania, 96 (1975), esp. 498-99, 521-22; James C. Atkinson, "Theme, Structure and Motif in the Mystère d'Adam," Philological Quarterly, 56 (1977), 36-39.

<sup>11</sup>Hunt, pp. 378-80, 497-98. Genesis 1-3, which occupies so much of Le Jeu d'Adam, is not one of the primary subjects of Cistercian imagination, which takes as its subject most frequently the Gospels or the Song of Songs. Nevertheless, Cistercian spirituality is rooted in the narrative of the creation and fall by virtue of its concern with the image of God, with the creation, fall and restoration of this image. It is noteworthy that Bernard, echoing the Epistle to the Hebrews; describes Christ as the "figure of the Father's substance" ("figura substantiae Patris") when he attempts in On Grace and Free Choice to define how Christ restores the image of God in man (Treatises III, X.32-35, pp. 88-91; PL 182,

cols. 1018-1020). Christ, because he is the figure of God, is able to reform the image of God in man: "that very form came, therefore, to which free choice was to be conformed, because in order that it might regain its original form, it had to be reformed from that out of which it had been formed" (Treatises III, X.33, p. 89; PL 182, cols. 1018-1019). This suggests that the playwright's use of the term Figura may derive in part from his interpretation of the fall as a deformation of the image of God which can only be rectified by Christ. See Lynette Muir, Liturgy and Drama in the Anglo-Norman Adam, Medium Aevum Monographs, NS 3 (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1973), pp. 15-16.

12

"I moulded you

From earthly clay.

.....

I've given you a living soul,

And formed you like myself in all.

Made you from earth in my own form;

You never should be my enemy"(p. 8).

Translations of the Adam and Eve and of the Cain and Abel portions of Le Jeu d'Adam provided in the endnotes are taken from Richard Axton and John Stevens, trans., Medieval French Plays (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1971). These will be noted

by page number in parentheses after the quotation. The line numbering in the translation corresponds to that of Noomen's edition.

<sup>13</sup>"I made you in my likeness; why

"Have you transgressed the law I gave?

I moulded you in my own image;

Why have you outraged me thus?" (p. 28).

<sup>14</sup>"Where was my wisdom, where my memory,

That I for Satan left the King of Glory?" (p. 34).

<sup>15</sup>Hunt, p. 379. See also Jean C. Payan, "Idéologie et Théâtralité dans l'Ordo Representationis Adae," Etudes Anglaises, 25 (1972), 25; Maurice Accarie, "Theologie et Morale dans le Jeu d'Adam," Revue des Langues Romanes, 83 (1978), 126; Per Nykrog, "Le Jeu d'Adam: Une Interprétation," Mosaic, 8, No. 4 (1975), 10-11. Nykrog discusses the play's treatment of the idea of knowledge. He argues that the devil offers in the forbidden fruit not solely knowledge of good and evil, of moral corruption, but rather a general knowledge of creation independent of God that will confer power and mastery over the world. He finds this interpretation of Genesis a particularly resonant one in the intellectual climate of the twelfth century, in which the secular schools articulated a concept of reason and knowledge which Bernard

criticized for its independence from faith (pp. 9, 12-13, 16). In the play, it is the Figura who offers reason which is defined as moral discernment. Thus, a central conflict of the play is Adam's choice between two opposing views of reason and knowledge. The play's use of the word "school" to refer to two differing attitudes to reason also becomes resonant in the context of the debate between schools presided over by masters such as Abelard, and the Cistercian "school of charity" defended by Bernard.

16 "Within yourselves I put both good and evil;  
 To give you this is still to leave you free.  
 Weigh everything in balance fairly now;  
 Accept this counsel--keep your faith with me!  
 Put aside evil, and give your mind to good.  
 Love your good lord, and firmly hold to him.  
 For no one else's counsel turn from mine;  
 If you observe it, then you'll never sin" (p. 10).

17 "Attend, and listen carefully:  
 If you desire to take my part,  
 You'll harbour goodness in your heart.  
 Honour me, Creator, God!  
 Acknowledge me to be your Lord!  
 My service must be all your thought,

All your wisdom, all your strength.

Love Adam, hold him dear as life--

He is your husband, you his wife.

To him remain obedient;

Don't go beyond his government.

Serve him and love him well, then sure

You'll be to keep the marriage law.

If you make him a good help-meet,

With him in glory you'll be set" (p. 9).

18."I will do, Lord, as you command;

I shall not wish to stray beyond.

I'll recognize your sovereign sway;

As mate and master him obey.

I'll always serve him faithfully:

He'll have the best support from me.

Your pleasure and Your service, Lord,

I shall in everything perform" (p. 9).

19."You shall be happy, never tired at all,

Full of delight, you never shall know pain.

In joy the days of all your life you'll lead,

Exist for ever, your life not short but long;" (p. 10).

20."The nature of this garden I'll recount:

No joy is lacking here as you will find;

Whatever good things men in the world desire  
Here can be found in measure and in kind.

No woman shall a husband's anger know,  
No husband for his wife feel fear or shame;  
The act of love is not for man a sin;  
Nor shall a woman here give birth in pain.

You'll live for ever, in this marvellous place  
And not grow any older. Have no fear  
Of death here, for it cannot do you harm.

I wish you not to leave; your home is here!" (p. 12).

<sup>21</sup> Anglo-Norman Dictionary, ed. Louise W. Stone, William Rothwell and T. B. W. Reid, 3 fascicles (London: The Humanities Research Association, 1977-83).

<sup>22</sup> Dictionnaire de l'Ancienne Langue Française et de tous ses dialectes du IX au XV siècle, ed. Frédéric Godefroy et al., 10 vols (1885; rpt. Vaduz, Liechtenstein: Scientific Periodicals Establishment, 1961).

<sup>23</sup> "Then shall God go into the church, while Adam and Eve walk up and down, innocently delighting in Paradise" (p. 13).

<sup>24</sup> "Then let the Devil retreat; and he shall go to the other devils and shall run about the 'place,' and after a little while he shall come back, happy and glad, to tempt Adam. . . ." (p. 17). Richard Southern discusses the meaning

of the word platea in Le Jeu d'Adam in The Medieval Theatre in the Round (London: Faber and Faber, 1957), pp. 228-35.

He concludes that the word refers to the public square before the church where the play was performed. He suggests that the terms per plateam and per populum are synonymous (p. 233).

25 "Satan All well with you?

Adam I feel nothing amiss.

Satan It could be better.

Adam I can't imagine how.

Satan Do you want to know?" (p. 14).

26 "Adam I will not.

Satan A fine thing to hear!

Why won't you?

Adam No!

Satan You are a fool.

One day you'll say, 'He told me so!'" (p. 17).

27 "Well, Adam?--will you change your mind?

Are you still set in your stupid ways?

I meant to say the other day,

God has made you a mere dependant;

And put you here to eat his fruit.

Do you have any other fun?" (p. 17).

28 "Have you got no ambition, man?

You set a value on yourself

'Cause God has made you his--gardener!

God's made you keeper of his garden:

Don't you want anything else from life?

Did he make you just for belly-joys?

Hasn't he anything higher in store?" (pp. 17-18).

29 "Adam That one he's quite forbidden me.

Satan Do you know why?

Adam Indeed I don't.

Satan I'll tell you what the real cause is.

He doesn't care about the rest--

And with his hand let him point to the forbidden  
fruit, saying to Adam:

Satan Only this fruit that hangs up high:

This is the fruit of Knowledge, this

Gives insight into everything.

If you eat this, you will do well" (p. 16).

30 Nykrog notes the recurrent use of the verb vouloir in the play. See pp. 10-11.

31 "I tell you this, and wish that Eve may hear;

If she does not, she does herself a wrong" (p. 10).

32 "You have been very well brought up.

I've seen Adam--but he's a fool" (p. 19).

"All the same, you are the one with sense,  
Mature and wise to the finger-tips.  
Obviously you're the one to deal with;  
I'd like a word" (p. 20).

<sup>33</sup>"You are the victims of a trick,  
A trick--worked in this very spot.  
The fruit which God has given you--  
There's hardly any goodness in it;  
The fruit you aren't allowed to eat  
Has in it most amazing power--  
The very gift of life itself,  
Of strength, and of authority,  
Of all knowledge, both good and evil" (pp. 20-21).

<sup>34</sup>Axton, p. 126. The Latin root of both words is sapere.

See Dictionnaire de l'Ancien Français jusqu'au milieu du XIV siècle, ed. A. J. Gremais (Paris: Librairie Larousse, 1968).

Willem Noomen comments on the presence of word play in the recurrence of key words in the drama--jardin, delit, fruit, traïtor, folor, soz--in "Le Jeu d'Adam: Etude Descriptive et Analytique," Romania, 89 (1968), 160-61.

<sup>35</sup>"If for one apple I reject your love,

Then all my life I'll pay for being mad" (p. 13).

<sup>36</sup>The problem and possible solutions are discussed by S. Etienne, "Note sur les vers 279-287 du Jeu d'Adam," Romania, 48 (1922), 592-95.

<sup>37</sup>Adam Tell me, Eve, what was he after,  
That devil Satan? What did he want?

Eve He spoke to me of our well-being.

Adam Now--don't believe a word he says,  
He's a traitor, I know he is.

Eve How do you know?

Adam I've tried him out.

Eve What does it matter if I see him?

Adam He'll influence the way you think.

Eve He won't, you know, I shan't believe  
A thing he says until I've tried it.

Adam Don't let him come near you again!  
He's not a person one can trust;  
He wanted to betray his master  
And put himself in the high command.  
I shouldn't like that kind of blackguard  
To come crawling to you for help" (pp. 22-23).

<sup>38</sup>Auerbach, p. 143.

<sup>39</sup>Auerbach, pp. 148-51.

<sup>40</sup> Etienne, pp. 594-95. Noomen argues that Eve in this passage is not deceptively easing Adam's fears, but openly asserting her independent capacity to judge for herself the character of the devil. See "Etude Descriptive et Analytique," pp. 186-87.

<sup>41</sup> Eve Well, leave it!

Adam I won't.

Eve You're a coward to put it off" (p. 23).

<sup>42</sup> Eve I've tasted it. Oh, God! The flavour!

I've never tasted such a sweetness.

This apple has a taste like . . . like . . .

Adam Like what?" (pp. 23-24).

<sup>43</sup> Adam Is it so good?

Eve You'll see it is.

You'll never know unless you taste" (p. 23).

<sup>44</sup> "There was nothing the other day  
Of which you needed feel ashamed,  
And now I see you sad and grey;  
There's no joy in such a life" (p. 27).

<sup>45</sup> "Ah!--Paradise, our glorious residence,  
Garden of bliss, beautiful to our sense!  
Exiled I am indeed because of sin;  
I've lost all hope of getting back again.

I was inside, yet scarcely did enjoy;  
 Followed advice which brought me banishment.  
 Now it's too late--what use is it to sigh?  
 Though I repent, I have my punishment" (pp. 33-34).

<sup>46</sup>Axton, p. 116.

<sup>47</sup>"My brother Cain, the two of us are brothers,  
 We are the sons of that first man on earth;  
 'Adam' was his name; and 'Eve' was our mother's.  
 In serving God let us now show our worth!  
 In everything our God we must obey:  
 So let us serve Him and win back His love,  
 Which our own parents lost so foolishly;  
 Our mutual friendship firm as His above!  
 Let us serve God in ways that best Him please,  
 And holding nothing back, give Him His dues.  
 If, loyal-hearted, we obey Him well,  
 We need not fear to lose our souls in hell.  
 We'll render tithe and all His just demands:  
 First fruits and offerings, gifts and sacrifice.  
 But if the greed of holding ties our hands,  
 We shall be lost in hell, past help of grace.  
 Between us two let loving-kindness reign,  
 No covetousness nor slander intervene.

How should there any quarrel rise between

Us two, who have the earth as our domain?" (p. 36).

48. "Good brother Abel, you're very good at preaching,  
 Know how to make a decent speech, no doubt;  
 But, anyone who listens to your teaching,--  
 It won't be long before he's cleaned right out!"

(p. 37).

49. "Nature instructs us we should love each other:  
 Between us two let there be no pretence!  
 Who ever starts a fight against a brother  
 Will pay for it--he can have no defence!" (p. 37).

50. Abel Good brother Cain, listen to me!

Cain I'm listening. Go ahead. What is it?

Abel It's for your good.

Cain That's all the better"

(p. 37).

51. "It's true, good Abel, all you've said;  
 That speech was beautifully made.  
 I'll certainly take your words to heart:  
 It's right to sacrifice--let us depart!  
 What will you offer?" (p. 38).

52. Cain Well, brother! Let us go outside.

Abel What for?

Cain To take some relaxation,  
 And have a look round at our crops,  
 See how they're growing--if they're in flower.  
 Let us be off back to the fields;  
 We'll feel the better for it, later.

Abel I'll go with you, wherever you want.

Cain Well, come on then! You won't regret it.

Abel You are my elder brother, so--  
 I'm happy to observe your wishes.

Cain You go in front, I'll come behind,  
 Strolling along, quite at my ease" (pp. 39-40).

<sup>53</sup> Axtan, pp. 117-18; Hunt, pp. 383-85.

<sup>54</sup> Muir speculates on the possibility that a group of Jews are present on the stage during the prophet play. She suggests that this may be implicit in the word sinagoga and in the addresses of the prophets to the Jews. Daniel, for instance, begins his prophecy with the words, "A vus Judei, di ma raison" and is directed to point towards the Jews as he speaks (827, p. 69). Muir also suggests the possibility that the audience are cast in the role of the Jews. In either case, the dramatic quality of the play would be enhanced (pp. 33-34).

<sup>55</sup> The sermon is printed by Young, II, 125-31, and

translated by Edward N. Stone, A Translation of Chapters XI-XVI of the Pseudo-Augustinian Sermon Against Jews, Pagans and Arians, Concerning the Creed, also of the Ordo Prophetarum of St Martial of Limoges, University of Washington Publications in Language and Literature, Vol. 4, No. 3 (Seattle, Wash: University of Washington Press, 1928), pp. 195-214. The adaptation of the Sermon in Le Jeu d'Adam is discussed by Muir, pp. 8-12; Noomen, "Etude Descriptive et Analytique," pp. 152-54.

<sup>56</sup>"Now will I tell a wondrous thing:

From Jesse's root a Rod shall spring,  
 Shall burgeon and bear flower withal,  
 Whereto great honour shall befall;  
 The Holy Spirit shall enclose

This flower, and shall thereon repose" (p. 196).

All translations of the prophet play provided in the endnotes are from Edward N. Stone, trans., Adam: A Religious Play of the Twelfth Century, University of Washington Publications in Language and Literature, Vol. 4, No. 2 (1926; rpt. Seattle, Wash: University of Washington Press, 1928), pp. 159-99.

These will be noted by page number in parentheses after the quotation. The line numbering in Stone's translation corresponds to that of Noomen's edition.

57 "Is this a tale, or prophecy

. . . . .

Speak 'st thou in earnest, or in jest?" (p. 197).

58 "Come now, re-tell thy vision, quick!

If 't was a rod, or but a stick,

And what its blossom shall engender;

Then due respect to thee we'll render,

And all the present generation

Will listen to thy dissertation" (pp. 197-98).

59 "Then, this great marvel shall ye hear;

--Such ne'er was told to mortal ear,

To such a marvel never man

Hath listened since the world began:

'Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and  
his name shall be called Immanuel.'

The time is near, within your ken,

Not tarrying or distant, when

A virgin shall conceive, most fair,

And, virgin still, a son shall bear;

His name shall be Emmanuel.

Saint Gabriel shall the message tell;

The maid shall Virgin Mary be,

She'll bear the fruit of Life's own tree,

Jesus, our Saviour, who shall bring  
 Adam from dole and suffering,  
 And him to Paradise return.  
 That which I speak from God I learn;  
 All this shall surely be fulfilled,  
 And ye thereon your hope shall build" (p. 198).

<sup>60</sup>The play's unity is one of the principal subjects addressed in critical studies. See Atkinson, pp. 27-42; Hunt, pp. 368-88, 497-527; Muir, pp. 113-17; Noomen, "Etude Descriptive et Analytique," pp. 163-80; O. B. Hardison, Christian Rite and Christian Drama in the Middle Ages: Essays in the Origin and Early History of the Modern Drama (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1965), pp. 258-61; W. C. Calin, "Structural and Doctrinal Unity in the Jeu d'Adam," Neophilologus, 46 (1962), 249-54; William J. Beck, "The Medieval Doctrine of Hope in the Mystère d'Adam," French Review, 45, Special Issue No. 3 (1971), 30-40; Maurice Accarie, "L'Unité du mystère d'Adam," in Mélange de langue et de littérature médiévales offerts à Pierre Le Gentil, Professeur à la Sorbonne, par ses collègues, ses élèves et ses amis, eds. Jean Dufournet and Daniel Poirion (Paris: S.E.D.E.S. and C.D.U. Réunis, 1973), pp. 1-12.

Chapter 5

Le Jeu d'Adam:

Spiritual Play and Dramatic Games

That Le Jeu d'Adam approaches the creation, fall and redemption of man by addressing the nature of joy, amusement, game and play raises an intriguing question: does this approach to the subject serve also to give theological meaning to the dramatic medium? Richard Axton has found in Le Jeu d'Adam a combination of liturgical dramatic conventions with popular forms of drama and entertainment embraced by the term ludus. In his book European Drama of the Early Middle Ages, Axton examines the relation of audience to actor and play in extant dramatic texts to find traces of popular and secular forms of drama and entertainment. He looks at medieval references to the entertainment of mimes and jongleurs, and at the use of mimic theatrical conventions in three early vernacular comic plays to uncover a tradition of mimicry in secular dramatic texts. Among the wide range of entertainment offered by mimes and jongleurs, including such things as acrobatics and juggling, Axton notes the presence of mimicry, of improvisation on stock plots and characters, and of trick and disguise.<sup>1</sup> In Le Jeu d'Adam he finds these popular and ludic conventions chiefly represented in the devils, who unlike other characters in the play, are permitted considerable freedom of movement and licence to improvise. Whereas the words and gestures of other characters are carefully prescribed in

the text, the behavior of the devils, including Satan, though he also speaks prescribed dialogue, consists of improvised mime. They run freely through the playing area making appropriate gestures and also through the audience, "per populum" (pp. 26, 33).<sup>2</sup> The hilarity of their behavior participates in the comic trick Satan succeeds in playing on Adam and Eve. This incorporation of recognizably ludic dramatic conventions in a liturgical framework suggests that the drama's interpretation of the story of Adam and Eve is partially a means of relating the games of theatrical presentation to the play's theological and devotional concerns, giving these games a theological valuation and orientation. If we explore further the dramatic methods and conventions in the play, we will see that the play uses distinctly non-liturgical means of involving the audience with the play, and of drawing the audience toward God, of inspiring devotion, methods which finally depend on the idea of game. The new form of devotion evoked in the play is similar in many ways to forms of devotion developed and practiced by the Cistercians. The dramatic form of Le Jeu d'Adam and the theological and devotional implication of this form are, again, illumined by Cistercian discussion of the biblical text in relation to the love of God. These relations between the play and Cistercian thought

suggest that the Cistercians contributed to the fund of literary and theological ideas that made the vernacular religious theatre of Le Jeu d'Adam, with its unusual synthesis of game and liturgical devotion, possible.

An estimation of the liturgical elements present in the play provides the necessary foundation for an exploration of its departures from these dramatic conventions and of its introduction of game into a liturgical context. The play is intimately attached to the liturgy, since its framework of choral responsories is drawn from the liturgy of Septuagesima and from the pseudo-Augustinian Sermon Against the Jews, the basis for the liturgical prophet plays. Lynette Muir offers an explanation of the combination of this sermon, usually associated with Advent liturgy, with the responsories concerning Adam, Eve, Cain and Abel:

The lections and responsories in Adam belong to the opening chapters of Genesis which was begun at Septuagesima and continued into Lent: the pericopes included the stories of Noah, Abraham and the Patriarchs, including Moses; in Passantide the prophecies of Jeremiah led up to Easter. This sequence seems to have been in the mind of the author of Adam and to have suggested the general pattern

of the play.<sup>3</sup>

In response to Muir's assessment, Glynne Wickham has suggested that the play's major concern is to encourage penitence in anticipation of Lent and Easter, and has proposed a reason for the play's performance outside the church building that affirms its liturgical function, rather than suggesting its value as entertainment makes it alien to the normal liturgical setting:

It is also for this reason, in my view, that the play is devised for presentation in the churchyard so that Jeremiah may urge the audience to learn to repent and, in doing so, to make themselves worthy to enter the church itself.<sup>4</sup>

He quotes in this context a passage from Jeremiah's prophecy in which Jeremiah, gesturing towards the church door, presents the conditions for entrance, the church representing, at the same time, the heavens from which the Figura comes:

OÛz de Deu sainte parole,  
 Tot vus qui estes de sa scole,  
 Del bon Judé la grant lignee,  
 Vus chi estes de sa maisnée!  
 Par ceste porte volez entrer  
 Por nostre seignor aourer.

Li sires del host vus somont,  
 Deu de Israel del ciel lamont :  
 Faites bones les vos voies,  
 Soient droites cumme raies,  
 Soient netz les voz curages,  
 Que vus nen vienge nuls damages.<sup>5</sup>

(855-66, p. 70)

Le Jeu d'Adam also retains something of the style and dramatic conventions of liturgical drama. This element of the play has recently received attention from several critics wishing to redress the emphasis of earlier criticism on the representational, human and psychological qualities of the play.<sup>6</sup> Chiefly, Willem Noomen in his reassessment and new edition of the play has argued that the play is more strongly related to the liturgy than to any later vernacular cycle plays, and that the liturgical responsories are an integral structural element in the play. He argues that the vernacular sections of the play function like tropes, translating and developing the liturgical readings. The structure of the prophet play with its succession of brief, slightly developed monologues and close semantic parallels to the Latin choral responsories, reflects, in Noomen's assessment, the fundamental structure of the play. The stories of Adam and Eve, of

Cain and Abel, use more supple and fully developed dialogue, incorporating a bulk of new material, to the same end.<sup>7</sup> Jean Payan argues that the play is more lyric than dramatic. He also considers that the prophet play, often seen as a disappointing and uncharacteristic conclusion to the play, reflects in its style the most characteristic features of the play. There is, he argues, less dialogue than is commonly supposed in the play, and often a succession of monologues even in the exchanges of the Figura, Adam, Eve and the devil. He finds the play to be fundamentally lyric and static in its dramatic method.<sup>8</sup> Tony Hunt, while affirming the play's psychological subtlety, has examined the extensive use of figural motifs in the play's structure, emphasizing the symbolic and iconic dimensions of character and action. We will return to this element of the text later at more length. One example will suffice here: the figural relationship of Adam and Christ, the New Adam, is reflected in the play's emphasis on both Adam and Christ coming from the earth, which we have seen in the Figura's account of Adam's creation and the prophets' account of Christ's Incarnation.<sup>9</sup> These critical assessments of the play draw our attention to those formal elements which tend toward the lyric, the symbolic, and the static. This is reflected in the costumes and staging of the play. The

costumes, the priestly robes of the Figura, the red and white garments of Adam and Eve, of Cain and Abel, anticipating Easter, the typical iconographic dress of the prophets, all have symbolic significance. The carefully prescribed and formal gestures of the characters, with the exception of the activities of the devils, suggest the style of liturgical drama and a liturgical desire to maintain the decorum appropriate to the subject matter and style.<sup>10</sup> The stage directions tell us, for instance, that whenever paradise is mentioned, the character speaking shall look and gesture toward it.

Yet, despite these lyric, symbolic and liturgical qualities, Le Jeu d'Adam uses dramatic methods which are not characteristically liturgical ones and which establish distinct relations between audience, actor, and play, relations which have a transforming effect on the liturgical conventions in the play. This play involves and affects its audience in different ways than liturgical drama; and ultimately establishes relations between its audience and God in different ways. The play, first, clearly offers not only a symbolic reenactment of liturgical material but also an interpretation and explanation of it, incorporating in the dialogue considerable exegetical and theological material. The play's intentions

are clearly didactic as well as devotional.<sup>11</sup> In this, Le Jeu d'Adam departs from liturgical dramatic forms. Mary Marshall, in her article "Aesthetic Values of the Liturgical Drama," has pointed out that liturgical drama is characteristically not didactic or interpretive. Defining drama as any context in which impersonation of characters occurs, Marshall describes liturgical drama as "presentational" rather than "discursive." Liturgical drama involves "a direct presentational form which represents sacred story concretely by dramatic methods, without allegory or theology or didacticism."<sup>12</sup> The style of this drama she describes as "formalized and poetic" rather than "realistic," employing in its costumes and properties an iconic symbolism, which consists of "formalized suggestion" rather than representation or recreation.<sup>13</sup> Le Jeu d'Adam, when it offers interpretation as well as inspiration to devotion, establishes relations between audience and play which are not symbolic and ritual ones. Because Le Jeu d'Adam is didactic and interpretive, it demands a reasoned volitional and emotional response rather than the more purely emotional and volitional one evoked by a non-didactic and highly symbolic liturgical drama.<sup>14</sup> The play asks that the mind be engaged by the idea of wisdom, as we have seen in examining the play's interpretation of the

biblical text. The problems of moral choices and their consequences is presented in the play and invites rational engagement. The audience is, thus, made conscious of their own moral, volitional and emotional response, both in relation to the play and to God. The interpretation of human behavior in the play extends to the audience, who are also interpreted by the play: they as well as God are the subject of what transpires before them. While the liturgy exists primarily for the sake of God, offering its sacrifice of praise, the human element plays a much more significant role in Le Jeu d'Adam. However, the self-consciousness evoked by the play remains always a consciousness of the self in relation to God, a consciousness of the act of love.<sup>15</sup> Just as in the play's discussion of the image of God, reason is primarily the capacity to choose to love God or not, so the play itself presents its audience with the same moral choice, a choice which is in the terms of the play the essence of human nature. Le Jeu d'Adam shares the devotional motive of the liturgy: the evocation of love and worship. Other, and again non-liturgical, dramatic conventions used in the play serve to realize these didactic, interpretive, and devotional intentions: the use of play and game and the dramatic representation of human psychology.

The devils, in their freedom of movement, play a significant role in establishing and defining the relation between the audience and the action set before them. These characters are extra-biblical and not essential to the action of the play, certainly not in their numbers, nor in their excursions from hell into the audience, nor in their antics in hell, making noise and smoke. They serve a theatrical function: they make the drama affect the audience in certain ways. Players of games themselves, they invite the audience to take part in the game before them, to play. The devils' function is to tempt, to present diabolical games and pleasures to mankind, to drag men and women to the dancing and games of hell. Their excursions about the platea and among the audience suggest to the audience that they ought to see themselves as objects of temptation. The story of Adam is, of course, the story of all people, just as his hope of redemption is the hope of all. The audience is taught by the devils that the choices made by Adam and Eve are also their own choices. They are taught in the play to understand those choices and are invited to respond, in imagination, play and game, as they watch, but also in reality. The devils' games, within the context of the whole drama, appeal to the will, inviting it to contrition, penance and restoration. Indeed,

the idea of play is related within the context of the drama's interpretation of its story to the desire and action of the will, to the question of moral choice. The play itself teaches the audience something about amusement and games, about how one plays, about how the will may playfully discover joy rather than vanity, tricks, deceit and treachery. The play thus articulates a relationship between play and wisdom as it draws its audience through play and game toward wiser choices.

Like the drama of the liturgy, then, Le Jeu d'Adam demands emotional and volitional involvement from its audience. The diabolical games establish the manner of the audience's participation in the drama, a participation distinct from that evoked by the liturgical drama and requiring different dramatic forms. Whereas in the context of liturgy emotion is evoked by symbol and ritual, and is thus enabled to transcend the human and be absorbed in the divine, here the audience is invited to see themselves in Adam, to identify with what is recognizably human. Adam and Eve possess recognizably human characters and motivation; they make human choices in a situation which, while it has symbolic implications, is also human and familiar. Le Jeu d'Adam draws its audience toward an interpretation of self in play and game. This interpretive

play is effected through representational, or mimetic, dramatic conventions, enabling the audience to identify with the human situation presented before them, particularly with its inner human psychology.

The "realism" of Le Jeu d'Adam has been one of its most noted attributes. Urban T. Holmes, defining "realism" as the attempt to give accurate imitation of ordinary and actual reality, including such things as speech and conversation, has suggested that the temptation scenes of Le Jeu d'Adam, and Le Jeu de Saint Nicolas are the only two vernacular works of the twelfth century which might possibly be considered to be "realism."<sup>16</sup> Auerbach, using a similar definition of realism in his Mimesis, finds in Le Jeu d'Adam an example of the marriage of the real human world with sublime mystery characteristic of medieval vernacular religious drama:

[The drama] speaks humili sermone to the simple and pure in spirit. It situates the sublime event within their everyday lives, so that it is spontaneously present to them. Yet it does not forget that the subject matter is a sublime one; it leads from the simplest reality directly to the highest, most secret, and divine truth.<sup>17</sup>

The story is sublime in that it presents "the starting point

of the Christian drama of redemption."<sup>18</sup> The impression of an immediate and familiar reality Auerbach situates largely in the play's depiction of a domestic situation, involving a husband, a wife and a seducer, a situation which would "strike deep roots in the mind and emotions of any random French contemporary."<sup>19</sup> Other critics have noted the establishment of feudal relations between God and the various characters, and the use of feudal language, which also help locate the play in a familiar Norman world.<sup>20</sup>

The "realistic" representation of the human condition in Le Jeu d'Adam is, as Auerbach suggests, and Richard Axton states explicitly, largely a product of the language of the play and of its characterization, its concern with motivation, volition, rational choice and emotion. The play certainly tends toward the representational in some of its staging of the story. The stage directions, for instance, clearly call for an attempt to represent in the staging the beauty and delight of the garden (p. 17). The murder of Abel is carefully staged, and the torments of hell vividly evoked with noise and smoke, chains and manacles (pp. 53-54, 62-63). Balaam speaks his prophecy seated on an ass (p. 68). Yet, as Axton points out, these efforts at dramatic representation are not sufficient to evoke a strong sense of human reality:

The 'realism' of this extraordinarily human play is functional; there is no concern to represent the mise-en-scène or the teeming physical reality of contemporary everyday life. The eternal truths are located firmly in the medieval world chiefly through the language of the characters. The wonderfully supple dialogue expressing intentions, relationships and feelings of the characters, creates a network of social assumptions and religious attitudes that are those of a Norman culture in its feudal, clerical and courtly aspects.<sup>21</sup>

Le Jeu d'Adam is concerned with the image of God in man, with its damage and recreation, depicted through characters and their interaction, through dialogue and monologue. The realization of human reason, human volition, human emotion in the language of the play creates a strong impression of a human, familiar world. While the play contains considerable elements of monologue, or exchanges which come close to being a series of monologues, such as the prophet play, Adam's long laments, even parts of the initial exchanges of the Figura, Adam and Eve, yet the play also contains vivid dialogue, chiefly in the temptation scenes, and in the fatal argument of Cain and Abel. In these scenes, with their relatively

short speeches and rapid interchanges, we see the characters respond to each other, act upon each other through the words they speak, often with considerable psychological subtlety. We witness in the temptation scenes the slow, inner transformation of Adam and Eve through the verbal manipulations of the devil. We witness the building of Cain's extreme self-will toward murder. The fact that the speeches are poetry in no way hinders their representation of the dynamics of conversation, of the inner processes of thought and feeling of the characters. Moreover, such lyric passages as Adam's long laments are moving representations of his psychological experience of grief and anger.

Michel Mathieu, in his article "Distantiation et Emotion dans le Théâtre Liturgique au Moyen Age," offers illuminating discussion of the different way in which language is used in Le Jeu d'Adam than in the Latin liturgical drama.<sup>22</sup> He discusses how the language of Le Jeu d'Adam is representational and demonstrates that this facilitates an emotional identification with the drama. He discusses the use of gesture and language in liturgical drama, pointing out developments in this drama which share to some extent the techniques of Le Jeu d'Adam as well as differences between them. Using three examples of Quem queritis plays from ninth to thirteenth

century manuscripts, he notes that in the earliest plays words and gestures, choral responses, dialogue and mimetic action are only formally related to each other, creating emotional distance between the audience and the "actors," and an awareness that the "actor" is at once priest and actor. Word and gesture in this context serve not to represent, but to point toward a mystical reality, inviting "pure and simple acceptance."<sup>23</sup> The characters impersonated in these plays begin to have dramatic existence and to be capable of provoking emotional identification only when gesture responds to word and word to gesture. He cites the following example from a thirteenth century manuscript:

Hic ostendat crucem et dicat: Maria!

Quae, ut audierint, cito se offerant pedibus ejus  
clamando: Rabonni.<sup>24</sup>

He notes also that words begin to predominate over gesture in some plays, serving to paraphrase an action, a gesture, an attitude. He finds in this use of language a tendency to recreate how an emotion is experienced or lived, how an action takes place, rather than to simply suggest or point to its existence. These developments, he finds, also tend to foster more emotional identification.<sup>25</sup> These comments on the liturgical plays illumine Mathieu's discussion of Le Jeu

d'Adam, which he finds uses language in such a way that it creates strong emotional identification and radically different effects than the liturgical drama. First, the play is written in the vernacular, rendering the play closer to the audience. This effect is intensified by the play's performance outside the church band by the clerks' impersonation not of saints, but of the common man.<sup>26</sup> Moreover, Mathieu finds that where in the liturgical plays an action or situation is presented inadequately by a gesture or a verbal phrase, in this play the action "transpires" through the language. We have seen how the brief mimed scene of the temptation becomes fully translated into dialogue:

Le verbe devient l'élément essentiel de la signification, mais il ne dit plus l'acte, celui-ci transpire à travers lui, à son insu, il cesse d'en être la transcription malaisée, pour en devenir vraiment une de ses faces, la plus importante.<sup>27</sup>

This representational "anchoring" of the action of the play "in the body of the actor" creates the possibility of strong emotional identification.<sup>28</sup> The unity of word and gesture which creates emotional identification is present also in Le Jeu d'Adam, enhanced by the emotional effect of the dialogue. These gestures retain a formal, symbolic quality, yet they

can also be expressive of the psychological and emotional condition and relationship of the characters. The gesture of Adam while he defends himself to the Figura after eating the apple is exemplary. After having been accused of transgression by the Figura, Adam stretches one arm towards the Figura and one towards Eve and makes his excuse. His words echo the gesture, revealing it to be an accusation of both the Figura and Eve:

La femme que tu me donas,  
 Ele fist prime icest trespas;  
 Donat le moi e jo mangai.<sup>29</sup>

(417-19, p. 46)

Word and gesture are expressive of Adam's thought and feeling, of his shame, his desire to hide, to deflect attention from himself. The Figura responds at once to both word and gesture: "Ta moiller creistes plus que moi" (423, p. 46). His words give the gesture new meaning, using it to clarify Adam's moral choice and his moral failure, making the self-deluding gesture revelatory of truth. The gesture thus becomes a dynamic part of the verbal interchange between the characters. That the playwright often intends words, gesture and facial expression to be emotionally expressive is indicated in the stage directions. Adam while speaking his

first lament after eating the apple is intended to simulate intense grief: "et maximum simulans dolorem incipiens lamentacionem suam" (p. 41).<sup>30</sup> The deceitfulness of the devil is indicated in facial expressions shown to the audience, but not to Adam: the devil shows his disappointment to the other devils and the audience when his temptation of Adam meets with defeat (p. 33). Such acts as the murder of Abel and the toil of Adam and Eve on earth are staged to be emotionally moving (pp. 50, 62-63). Thus, while the representational qualities of the staging are not the primary means of creating an impression of human reality, the staging of the drama is often made to evoke emotional response to the human situation depicted in the drama, especially in the gestures and movements of the characters. The evocation of emotional response to the human is also evident in the image of the humanity of Christ in the prophet play. The prophecies emphasize the marvellous humility of Christ's Incarnation and Passion. Jeremiah and Daniel speak of his descent to earth, of his becoming like mortal man, of his suffering, in order to recreate the Edenic paradise. Solomon, for example, offers a moving depiction of the ignobility of Christ's Passion:

Cil que sunt maistre de la loi

Occirunt lui par male foi;

Contre justise, encontre raison,

Mettrunt le en cruz cume laron.<sup>31</sup>

(807-810, p. 68)

In the prophecy of Habakkuk, the emotional response the prophecy is to elicit is exemplified by the prophet himself who raises his hands toward the church, simulating wonder, and speaks fearfully, calling his prophecy a "grant merveille." He thus teaches the audience to respond with wonder to his description of Christ's birth, of the Christ's child's discovery by shepherds and kings in a crib among beasts, again emphasizing Christ's humility in contrast with his divine and heavenly origin (841-54, pp. 69-70). Here, again, the situation of the drama outside the church has theological resonance and serves to evoke devotion in the audience. The redemptive humanity of Christ is presented to the audience in the world they inhabit as an event to be awaited with wonder and hope.

The dramatic conventions of this play depart, then, distinctly from the conventions of liturgical drama: the play offers a didactic interpretation of human action; this interpretation is conveyed through representational techniques, particularly in the recreation through dialogue of dynamic human character, of thought, motivation and feeling in motion. These didactic and representational elements encourage

rational and emotional identification with the human.

Through ludic dramatic conventions a relationship is defined between the didactic interpretation of the play, its representation of the human, and the audience. Indeed, the dialogue which has so vital a role in recreating human experience and evoking emotional identification, has the quality of play about it. This is evident in the presence of verbal strategies and ruse, initiated by the devil and soon learned by other characters. It is also evident, in another mode, in Adam's simple joy in the garden, in his words "Mult par est bel" and "Ce vif en grant deduit"; in the wonder of Habakkuk at Christ's Incarnation; and even in Abel's response to Cain's threats to kill him, "Del tut me met a son [God's] plaisir" (82, p. 24; 113, p. 26; 696, p. 61). Emotional involvement with the human is invited by the devils in play; through the dialogue this affectivity can be experienced as play. The drama of Le Jeu d'Adam depends then on the presence of game for its dramatic effects, and, it in turn, gives game and play theological value. This is reinforced by the play's relating of game and play, of joy and enjoyment, to the moral action of the will. Through the employment of play and game the introduction of representation of human experience, of the self, into a liturgical context

becomes, finally, a way of leading the will to the divine.

In contrast to Auerbach's discovery in the play of a harmonious union of the sublime and the humble or real, Mathieu finds a "rupture" between the liturgical and the dramatic. The emotion evoked by the play is no longer, he finds, "sublimated" in the liturgical and ritual, but rather "consumed in a dramatic catharsis." The choir does not possess the function of putting the action in perspective.<sup>32</sup> Mathieu argues, thus, that in Le Jeu d'Adam the "sign" or image draws attention to itself instead of the "thing" to which it should direct the mind. However, if we look even at the dramatic and vernacular portions of the play, it is evident that the play is everywhere concerned with evoking love of God; the "realism" of the play, inviting identification, has, always, a symbolic implication. Richard Axton remarks, for instance, the unity of human and symbolic meaning in the murder of Abel, a unity which also harmoniously joins the ludic, representational conventions of the play with the symbolic and liturgic qualities of much of the play's gesture, costume and staging:

The author's "realism" is almost always in the service of doctrinal symbolism. Thus the lifelike quarrel of Cain and Abel, the skillful evocation of

Cain's envious cunning, his ill-concealed fury,  
freeze into a tableau at the moment of Abel's  
death:

Then shall Abel genuflect towards the East. And  
he shall have a pot hidden in his clothes, which  
Cain shall strike as if he were really killing Abel.  
Abel, moreover, shall lie prostrate, as if dead.

The repeated demand for verisimilitude here (with  
the added horror of red blood on the white garment)  
is part of a total vision of Abel as sacrificial  
victim, whose murder prefigures that of Christ.<sup>33</sup>

As its audience witnesses the vivid human drama of the  
temptation and fall of man, they are often made aware of the  
larger, figural implications of this action, so that the lit-  
eral event is seen always to have symbolic and spiritual im-  
plications. Tony Hunt offers extensive analysis of the fig-  
ural structure of the play in his article "The Unity of the  
Play of Adam (Ordo Representacionis Ade)."<sup>34</sup> He points out  
that the Pentateuch forms part of the Septuagesima liturgy  
anticipating Easter because of its typological implications.  
According to the principles of figural interpretation, events,

or characters from the Old Testament, living under the Law, are seen to prefigure the fulfillment of the Law in the story of Christ, of grace and redemption, in the New Testament.<sup>34</sup> Adam thus prefigures Christ, the New Adam. Hunt suggests that the expansion of the temptation scenes and their division into three parts is intended to prefigure the temptation of Christ. Adam's relation to Christ is made clear in his lament for his sin, in which he himself anticipates the grace which will redeem him:

N'en serraï trait por home nê,

Si Deu nen est de majestê.

Que di jo, las? Pourquoi le nomai?

Il me aidera? Corocê l'ai.

Ne me ferat ja nul aïe,

For le filz que istra de Marie.<sup>35</sup>

(377-82, pp. 43-44)

The mention of Mary serves to remind us, as Hunt points out, that Eve prefigures Mary, as Adam does Christ.<sup>36</sup> This point is further emphasized in the Figura's prophecy to Eve that she will crush the serpent's head, a prophecy derived from the biblical text, and commonly understood to refer to Mary's conception of Christ which confounds the devil.<sup>37</sup> The marriage of Adam and Eve was also seen to prefigure the relation

of Christ and the Church. Hunt argues that this figural association, rooted in Paul's analogy between marriage and the relation of Christ to the Church in his Epistle to the Ephesians, underlies the "lei de mariage" in Le Jeu d'Adam.

This use of figural associations persists in the Cain and Abel play and in the prophet play. Abraham, for instance, describes his sacrifice of Isaac, prefiguring the sacrifice of Christ.<sup>39</sup> The audience is thus drawn always toward love of Christ, an evocation which culminates in the prophet play, in which Christ's redemption of man through his Incarnation and Passion is fully announced. The play seeks to lead its audience through and beyond the action it represents toward the humanity of Christ and the rites of Easter.

Christ himself appears in the play as the Figura. This has implications for the playwright's understanding of his dramatic medium and its desired effects upon his audience. In the stage directions which introduce the play, Christ is described first as the Salvator and then as the Figura, the latter designation persisting in the rubrics of the play. Kaske has found in this term an allusion to the Epistle to the Hebrews, in which Christ is described in relation to God as "figura substantiae eius." God is represented in the play in a figure, that of his son, Christ, solving the problem of

the representation of the invisible God.<sup>40</sup> It is Christ who became incarnate and who can thus represent God in physical form. This designation of Christ as Figura suggests, as Kolve has remarked, the playwright's awareness of the status of the dramatic medium he is using, and his desire to distinguish between image and reality.<sup>41</sup> It is likely that the theologically astute spectator, hearing the actor in priest's robes announce to Adam and Eve "Je te ai fourmé a mun semblant/A ma imogene t'ai fait de terre," would perceive the dramatic implications without benefit of stage directions, especially in the context of solemn liturgical singing of the biblical text. The priest, too, as Bernard points out, is only made in the image of God, and only provides an image of the Figura, Christ, who is the Image of God. The audience's playful involvement in the text is to be undertaken with an awareness of the play's status as image and sign. Like the use of figural motifs, the play's awareness of its illusory nature directs the audience beyond the drama towards the reality it points to. The play and game of the devils which the audience is invited to share finally moves the audience beyond the drama, beyond the image which is seen to be image, toward reality. This diabolical playing, while it invites participation and engagement in the drama, perhaps also is

intended to contribute to the audience's awareness of the drama's status as image and illusion. While the illusion of identification between the actor and his role that Mathieu notes in the play is not complete, nor of a kind to create dramatic catharsis, the use of more representational dramatic techniques makes it more imperative that the play keep the audience aware of its status as image.

The play's use of the image of the garden also fosters and anticipates in its audience a lively awareness of the relation of the literal and the spiritual. This awareness is suggested already in the devil's manipulative assessment of Adam's life in the garden. Mocking Adam's pleasure in the fruit of the garden as nothing more than the life of a beggar occupied with eating, the devil argues that Adam does not know how to enjoy the garden and needs to eat of the fruit of wisdom. The devil's jests and gibes direct attention clearly to the true nature of the garden. Adam and Eve's enjoyment of the garden is exemplary of inner love and wisdom learned from God. The pleasure of the garden tells not of God's physical provision only but also of his provision of reason and love through which Adam and Eve know joy and avoid sorrow. The raised and decorated platform which is paradise becomes more than a physical structure. This transfusion of

the literal with spiritual significance becomes more vivid in the prophet play, where, in the language of the play, the garden is identified with Christ, and, in the prophecy of Jeremiah, with the inner condition of the heart (863-64, p. 70). Here, again, the Jew, echoing the words of the devil, mocks what he fails to understand, taking, as we have seen, the prophecies of Isaiah literally. Likewise, Cain's lack of spiritual understanding turns the garden into a place of gluttony, cupidity and treachery, and Abel's murder anticipates the redemption of the garden in Christ. The audience is drawn beyond the literal object they see represented before them toward spiritual and figural understanding, and, ultimately, to the humanity of Christ. The affective appeal of the literal garden is translated into love of God. The play demands of its audience spiritual awareness; unlike the Jew, they should not have a bad heart and make vain jests. Rather, they should exercise their capacity, extolled by the Figura at the beginning of the play, to discern and choose between good and evil. This discernment of the will between good and evil involves in the play, as it did for Bernard and many before him, a discernment between the literal and the spiritual.

The dramatic representation of the biblical stories in

Le Jeu d'Adam is not, then, incomparable with its liturgical framework. The drama creates an awareness of drama as image leading to reality through its figural structure, through the game-like relations of audience and play. Tony Hunt describes the relation of the vernacular portions of the play to its liturgical responsories thus:

Its great impact derives from the contrast of the sublime, liturgical text echoing the Biblical narrative and the extremely realistic, earthy dialogue emphasizing Man's weakness, the sinfulness of common people like the audience. These registers are linked respectively with the twin concerns of Septuagesima and Easter, the sinfulness of Man and the redemptive sacrifice of Christ. In its sinfulness the audience is made powerfully aware of the sublimity of that sacrifice and of the whole divine plan of human history.<sup>42</sup>

In the twelfth century, Cistercian spirituality articulates a theology and undertakes exegesis that introduces the human world, in its psychological and physical dimensions, into the sphere of religious devotion. In their elucidation of the self and its psychological response to God, the Cistercians create and provide theological justification for new

forms of devotion, new ways of approaching God. A play such as Le Jeu d'Adam suggests the relevance of this thought beyond the mystical and ascetic concerns of the monastic cloister. Like the liturgy and monastic spirituality, Le Jeu d'Adam attempts to inspire love of God, worship, and directs its didactic interpretation of the biblical text to this end. It uses in some ways traditional liturgical dramatic modes of leading the soul to God, yet chiefly employs radically different dramatic methods to affect its audience and draw them to God. In these methods, in the play's remarkable capacity to represent human behavior, and to make this representation the agency of devotion, in the manner in which the play creates psychological involvement in its story, it suggests its dependence on Cistercian spirituality.<sup>43</sup>

The representation of the human in Cistercian meditation on the humanity of Christ, particularly as it appears in the work of Aelred, shares some of the qualities of Le Jeu d'Adam. The Cistercians are concerned not primarily with recreating imaginatively a physical, everyday reality, but with imaginative experience of volition and emotion as these occur in the literal, physical world. Meditation on the humanity of Christ is always shaped by the psychology of the image of Christ, and by interest in how the image may be affected,

recreated through the imagination. The human world of these meditations is made kinetic, fluid, dramatic, and playful through this concern with volition and emotion. The meditations are concerned with the effects of one imagined character upon another, with creating a dynamic emotional and volitional interaction between the characters which has the capacity to transform the will of the one who meditates. This form of meditation naturally permits a lively perception of the relation between inner motivation, feeling and thought, and the outward gesture, action or word; a perception Mathieu finds evident in Le Jeu d'Adam. Moreover, the play's familiar and human interchanges between characters, inviting emotional and volitional identification from the audience, are rooted in the play's theological concern with the image of God in man. The opening scene of the play establishes this concern, and the audience watches the characterization and interaction of Adam, Eve, Satan, Cain, Abel, even Isaiah and the Jew grow out of their definition as creatures made in the image of God.

The emphasis on joy and play in Cistercian discussions of the will, of the capacity to love, so pervasive a subject of Cistercian thought, is, as we have seen, shared by Le Jeu d'Adam in its interpretation of the story of mankind. This

interest in volition, love and enjoyment shapes in Cistercian writing the concept of the relation of self and the text. A similar understanding of the will in the interaction of drama and audience is present in Le Jeu d'Adam. In Cistercian spirituality, the will and affections are directed toward God through an affective participation in the human world. The mode of this participation is, moreover, play. The affections naturally play and enjoy, the more so since they respond to the literal image, which is no more than play in relation to the spiritual. Le Jeu d'Adam also invites in its audience involvement of the will and emotional identification with the human drama it enacts, and invites this participation in play and game, the element of play participating in the drawing of the audience toward God.

Like Cistercian spirituality, then, Le Jeu d'Adam is concerned with how a text can please, can be enjoyed, can play, and, at the same time, be directed toward the spiritual, the enjoyment joined to spiritual understanding, and yielding wisdom. It remains to consider more closely the nature of the play evoked by the drama in its audience. The manner of the drama's playing, orchestrated as it is by diabolical games, may seem, in some respects, very different from the play invited by a Cistercian text. The drama may appear to

play at evoking fear, terror, and, with them, repentance.<sup>44</sup> While Bernard teaches that fear is the beginning of wisdom and that love and fear are the twin affections that lead to God, the playfulness of a Cistercian text is rooted in an affective love drawn to God most commonly by the appeal of images of goodness, beauty, loveliness, pathos.<sup>45</sup> A consideration of the action of the devils within the context of the play's structure and dialogue reveals, however, that it is not primarily the terrors of hell but love of God which the devils evoke in their audience. The invitation to play is not an invitation to horrified delight in imagined terrors that serve as reminders of a bitter spiritual reality. The play is more theologically and dramatically subtle than this. The opening scene of the play establishes in the minds of its audience the love of God for his creatures, the love of the first man and woman for God, and the rootedness of all joy in this mutual love. The audience is also made aware of the nature of their humanity: they are created in the image of God to love him. Even as the story of the fall, of the pain and sorrow of Adam is told, moving in its pathos, the redemption of Adam by Christ is figurally kept before the audience. The play invites the audience, certainly, to contrition, but it also invites them to consciousness of their redemption by God.

This knowledge allows the audience the freedom to play with the devils, not in perversely delighted terror, but with the perception that the games of the devil, within the dramatic context, lead to the joy of the garden and the love of God.<sup>46</sup>

As the preceding discussion intimates, the drawing of the audience to God through the play of the devils depends on the play's structure as comedy. It also depends on the comic and humorous elements in the play. The comic structure of the play is evident in the play's figural structure and in the use of the garden image. Tony Hunt has said that the typological implication of the various characters and events indicate that the play is not a "tragedy of Man's sin, but an announcement of Christ's Redemption."<sup>47</sup> This comic movement toward redemption and reconciliation unfolds in conjunction with the idea of play and enjoyment. This is evident in the image of the garden, evocative of love and play. The joy of the garden, which begins and ends the play, and the anticipated redemption of man expressed in this image, give the play the mood as well as the structure of comedy. The last image of the play, is, despite the incomplete manuscript, a fitting conclusion: in the prophecy of Nebuchadnezzar, Christ comes to earth to rejoice and sing with the three children in the fire, bringing the long procession of people

led into hell to the delight of the devils to a symbolic and comic resolution (931-44, pp. 74-75).<sup>48</sup>

The play also contains comic elements consonant with its reconciliatory aims. These comic elements are not primarily the "low" comedy, boisterous and physical, that we associate with later vernacular drama.<sup>49</sup> The closest the play comes to vigorous physical humor is the devils' conducting of victims to hell, beaten, in chains, and amid diabolical rejoicing. Given the spirit of game in which these proceedings are enacted, they may have provoked laughter. The presence of verbal irony is, however, the most characteristic comic element in the play. This irony is a feature of the representational nature of the dialogue in the play, and the humor it evokes of considerable theological and dramatic import in the play. An example of this irony occurs in the dialogue of Eve and the devil:

Diabolus: Celeras m'en?

Eva: Oïl, par foi!

Diabolus: Iert descovert!

Eva: Nenil par moi!

Diabolus: Or me mettraï en ta creance,  
Ne voil de toi altre fiance.

Eva: Bien te pois creire a ma parole.

Diabolus: Tu as esté en bone escole!

Jo ví Adam, mais trop est fols.<sup>50</sup>

(215-21, pp. 34-35)

Eve's assertion that the devil can trust her word while she is almost in the same breath breaking her word to the Figura by swearing secrecy to the devil is deliciously and humorously ironic. Likewise, the devil's assurance that she has been to a good school brings ironically to mind the memory that she has indeed been to a good school, that of the Figura, before exchanging it for a demonic one. The ironies embedded in the dialogue invite laughter at her folly. Cain's irrational anger at Abel, unresponsive to Abel's gentle reason, represents a self-will so extreme and foolish it becomes absurd. Cain's accusation to Abel of treachery is an obvious and ironic reversal of the true state of affairs (652, p. 59). We have already noted the ironic use of the word bel in Cain and Abel's conversation. Later, the jests of the Jew are offered, ultimately, at his own expense. Indeed the humor evoked by the devils' conduct of their victims to hell is likely designed to be ironic rather than slapstick. Given the repeated requests for dignity and decorum in the stage directions, and despite the greater licence given the devils, it is doubtful that the playwright would have smiled on

attempts to exploit the knock-about possibilities of the situation. Hell is, rather, presented to an already enslaved and abused Adam and Eve as a place of joy and dancing, an ironic and fitting conclusion to their cupidinous search for false pleasures.

These comic elements in the drama affect the nature of the audience's play. The devils, in their tempting excursions from hell, engage the audience in the play of the ironic dialogue and situations in the drama. The dialogue is, as we have noted, made to accommodate such a playful engagement. And in this ironic dialogue the nature of play and game, true and false, is made clear. The play, in its comic movement toward restoration and in its ironic portrayal of foolish games, draws the audience through laughter to love of God. The play evoked by the strategies and games of the dialogue is knowing play, instilling wisdom.

The forms of comedy in Le Jeu d'Adam are again illuminated by the use of humor and the comic in Cistercian spirituality. We have seen in two examples from the writings of Gilbert of Hoyland and John of Ford that humor arises from their enjoyment of the biblical text, from the sense of play that pervades their exegesis. The relation between ironic humor, joy and love is more clear in the thought of Bernard.

In his article on humor and love in the thought of Bernard, Jean Leclercq demonstrates the pervasive presence of humor in Bernard's spirituality, and finds its motive to be love and affection. This affective humor he uncovers in the humorous and ironical "caricatures" of The Steps of Humility and Pride, a meditation based on The Rule of St. Benedict, and, hence, concerned with the life of penance.<sup>51</sup> In this treatise on humility, Bernard describes, in a series of twelve caricatures of a monk's progress, the twelve steps of pride, the psychological and moral process by which a monk gradually gives himself to sin. The purpose of these descriptions is to enable the reader to recognize the signs of pride in himself and thus to come to true self-knowledge.<sup>52</sup> Indeed, in a postscript to the monk who had requested the treatise of Bernard, Bernard anticipates his friend's complaint that Bernard has described the steps of pride rather than of humility by saying that he has more knowledge of the steps of pride in himself than of humility. He argues, however, that the description of pride will show the way to humility (XXII.57, p. 82; PL 182, col. 972). The opening pages of the treatise define humility as a just self-knowledge, a consciousness of one's lowliness (I.2, p. 30; PL 182, col. 942). This self-knowledge becomes, in turn, the ground of

mercy and of true knowledge of others. Christ is here the example, since by embracing in humility human experience, he learned mercy in that he learned to share man's misery (III. 6-7, p. 34-36; PL 182, cols. 944-945). The humorous portraits of pride are understood in this context of ideas. They are offered in love and affection by one who has learned mercy through knowledge of himself. The portraits invite similar self-knowledge, similar self-recognition, and, at the same time, in their humorous and ironic castigation of sin, invite their reader up the ladder of humility toward love of God and love of man. The same principle of identification operates here as we have seen in meditation on the humanity of Christ, though the context is different: the sinners who are the point of identification do not inhabit the world of Nazareth and Jerusalem; the attractive, ideal figure of Christ is not the centre of the action. The monks are invited to see themselves in these human portraits, to laugh, to know contrition, and to move beyond these portraits to humility, the condition of heart necessary to meditation and mystical love (VII.20-21, pp. 47-50; PL 182, cols. 952-954). The following example describes the fifth step of pride, singularity, which follows upon boasting, and depicts a monk whose pride has turned his ascetic life to absurdity:

When a man has been bragging that he is better than others he would feel ashamed of himself if he did not live up to his boast and show how much better than others he is. The common rule of the monastery and the example of the seniors are no longer enough for him. He does not so much want to be better as to be seen to be better. He is not so much concerned about leading a better life as appearing to others to do so. He can then say "I am not like the rest of men." He is more complacent about fasting for one day when the others are feasting than about fasting seven days with all the rest. He prefers some petty private devotion to the whole night office of psalms. While he is at his meals he casts his eyes around the tables and if he sees anyone eating less than himself he is mortified at being outdone and promptly and cruelly deprives himself of even necessary food. He would rather starve his body than his pride. If he sees anyone more thin, anyone more pallid, he despises himself. He is never at rest. He wonders what others think about the appearance of his face and as he cannot see it he must only guess whether it is rosy or wan

by looking at his hands and arms, poking at his ribs, and feeling his shoulders and loins to see how skinny or fleshy they are. He is very exact about his own particular doings and slack about the common exercises. He will stay awake in bed and sleep in choir. After sleeping through the night office while the others were singing psalms, he stays to pray alone in the oratory while they are resting in the cloister. He makes sure that those sitting outside know he is there modestly hidden in his corner, clearing his throat and coughing and groaning and sighing. Some of the more simple-minded are misled by his worthless singularities and, judging by his actions which they see and not seeing the hidden intentions, they canonize the unfortunate man and confirm him in his self-delusion (XIV.42, pp. 70-71; PL 182, col. 965).

Ironic and satiric humor is, here, redemptive, motivated by charity and affection, and having as its aim reconciliation with God. The end of penance is reconciliation, its mood for Bernard fundamentally that of joy and comedy.

The comic and ironic elements of Le Jeu d'Adam can be seen to take much the same form and have the same purpose as

these portraits of Bernard, contributing to the comic, reconciliatory movement of the play which points always toward the redemptive humanity of Christ. Eve serves as an example.

In her curious, vain and willful movement toward sin so vividly recreated in the dialogue, the audience may clearly recognize their own human nature, yet they are also invited through irony to laugh at it, to be amused, to see through it and all the devil's ploys. The audience is drawn to self-recognition, but in their recognition are moved toward reconciliation and love of God, the comic and ironic portrayal in harmony with the comic, reconciliatory structure of the play, laughter joining longing for the joy of the garden. The use of comic irony plays an essential role in the drama, making the sinful yet humanly appealing characters who draw the audience towards themselves lead them also toward God, a use which Bernard and his followers, with their desire to join the human and the divine, understood and practised. Gilbert's analogy between reluctant nuns and creaking hay carts is, for instance, offered in the same spirit as Bernard's portraits. The entertaining comic and mimic elements of the play need not be seen, then, as alien to its theological and devotional concerns; rather, the playful combination of the comic with representation of the human world sustains these

concerns.<sup>53</sup>

Thus the invitation to redemptive love of God, an invitation with which Bernard also begins his treatise, permits in the audience of the drama or in listening monks the freedom for laughter and play, though this laughter is always aware of penance, of contrition, and embraces the ironic. The play invites the audience to play with the devils in the spirit of love and enjoyment represented in the garden. That pathos joins the comic in affecting the audience is, of course, also true. Adam's long lament expressing his pain, sorrow and contrition is an emotional and moving evocation of his fallen condition, shared by the audience. Yet, this lament fittingly points to comic resolution in Christ, for contrition leads to restored joy. The playful movement of the will, of the soul's love and affection, toward God, and indeed, toward herself and others, embraces pathos and ironic, comic laughter, as well as the joy which concludes the divine comedy.

In the twelfth century, then, the theological perception, that wisdom and love may unfold as play, a perception rooted in patristic tradition, comes to fruition both in the spirituality and exegesis of the Cistercians and in the vernacular drama. In Cistercian spirituality the idea of play gains

a theological and literary meaning, and informs an imaginative recreation of the human drama of the biblical text and of the inner drama of the soul. In Le Jeu d'Adam, we witness an early dramatic use of similar ideas. This play teaches its audience how a human and comic world may wisely play at evoking love of God. That this idea of play continued to bear fruit and to be theologically and dramatically meaningful in the Middle-Ages is evident in the spirituality and drama of the Franciscans, and in the mystery cycles of the fourteenth century. Le Jeu d'Adam is a remarkable and early example of a dramatic tradition which would endure and develop until the close of the Middle Ages.

ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Axton, pp. 13, 17-24, 33, 46-47.

<sup>2</sup>Axton, pp. 115-16.

<sup>3</sup>Lynette Muir, "Adam," Proceedings of the Leeds Philological and Literary Society: Literary and Historical Section, 13, Pt. 5 (January 1970), 156, quoted by Wickham, III, 37.

<sup>4</sup>Wickham, III, 37; cf. Chambers, II, 78-79, 90-91.

<sup>5</sup>"The holy word of God now hear,  
All who are of his school, give ear,  
All righteous Judah's mighty race,  
Who in his household have a place:  
Ye all shall enter by this door,  
Our Lord to worship, evermore;  
The Lord of Hosts to you doth cry,  
The God of Israel, from on high:  
Make good<sup>a</sup> your ways, amend each one,  
Let them be straight as furrows run,  
And let your hearts be clean, withal,  
Lest any evil you befall" (p. 196).

<sup>6</sup>The psychological skill of the play is emphasized by

Frank, pp. 77-80; Auerbach, pp. 146-51; Woolf, "The Fall of Man in Genesis B and in the Mystère d'Adam," pp. 187-99; William C. Galin, "Cain and Abel in the 'Mystère d'Adam'," Modern Language Review, 58 (1963), 172-76.

<sup>7</sup>Noomen, "Etude Descriptive et Analytique," pp. 146, 153-55, 159-63.

<sup>8</sup>Payan, pp. 27-28.

<sup>9</sup>Hunt, pp. 373-77.

<sup>10</sup>Axton, pp. 115-16; Bruce McConachie discusses the symbolic use of the right and left sides of the playing area in "The Staging of the Mystère d'Adam," Theatre Survey: The American Journal of Theatre History, 20 (1979), 27-42.

<sup>11</sup>The didacticism of the play is emphasized by Wickham, III, 176-77; David M. Parry, The Play of Adam: Drama, Art and Society in the Twelfth Century, M.A. Thesis, University of Victoria, 1974, pp. 8-13; Accarie, "Theologie et Morale dans le Jeu d'Adam," pp. 123-42; Atkinson, pp. 27-42; Axton, p. 115; Noomen, "Etude Descriptive et Analytique," pp. 166-67, 180.

<sup>12</sup>"Aesthetic Values of the Liturgical Drama," in Medieval English Drama: Essays Critical and Contextual, eds. Jerome Taylor and Alan H. Nelson, Patterns of Literary Criticism, No: 11 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972), p. 33.

<sup>13</sup> Marshall, pp. 36-37.

<sup>14</sup> Marshall, pp. 30-31.

<sup>15</sup> The idea of self-knowledge is proposed as a central theme by Calin, "Structural and Doctrinal Unity in the Jeu d'Adam," pp. 249-54, and denied by Noomen, "Etude Descriptive et Analytique," pp. 164-65.

<sup>16</sup> Urban T. Holmes, "Realism in Twelfth Century Literature," Esprit Créateur, 5 (1965), 193-200. See also Hunt, p. 501; Calin, "Cain and Abel in the 'Mystère d'Adam'," p. 175.

<sup>17</sup> Auerbach, p. 156.

<sup>18</sup> Auerbach, p. 151.

<sup>19</sup> Auerbach, p. 151.

<sup>20</sup> Muir, pp. 113-14; Noomen, "Etude Descriptive et Analytique," pp. 169-70, 177; Calin, "Cain and Abel in the 'Mystère d'Adam'," pp. 174-75; Parry, pp. 61-77; Axton, pp. 118-29.

<sup>21</sup> Axton, p. 129.

<sup>22</sup> Michel Mathieu, "Distanciation et Emotion dans le Théâtre Liturgique au Moyen Age," Revue d'Histoire du Théâtre, 21 (1969), 95-117.

<sup>23</sup> Mathieu, pp. 97-98.

<sup>24</sup> Mathieu, pp. 104-105.

<sup>25</sup> Mathieu, pp. 108-109.

<sup>26</sup>Mathieu, p. 111.

<sup>27</sup>Mathieu, p. 112.

<sup>28</sup>Mathieu, p. 112.

<sup>29</sup>"The woman whom you gave to me,

She was the first to do this thing;

She gave it me and then I ate" (p. 28).

<sup>30</sup>"Then simulating the greatest possible grief he shall begin his lament" (p. 24).

<sup>31</sup>"The masters of the law t' will be

That slay him, most unlawfully;

Against all justice, all belief,

They'll crucify him, like a thief" (p. 193).

<sup>32</sup>Mathieu, pp. 113-14.

<sup>33</sup>Axton, pp. 117-18.

<sup>34</sup>Hunt, p. 370. Auerbach also emphasizes the figural structure of the play. See pp. 156-58.

<sup>35</sup>"No one will come to rescue me,

Unless it be mighty God himself.

What am I saying? Why name Him?

Will He help, when I've angered Him?

No one will ever send me aid,

Except the son of Blessed Mary" (p. 26).

Hunt, pp. 373-76.

<sup>36</sup> Hunt, pp. 376-77.

<sup>37</sup> Pierre Gardette, "Latin Chrétien radix, Ancien Français raiz (Jeu d'Adam, vers 489 and 878)," in Etudes de Langue et de Littérature du Moyen Age offertes à Félix Lecoy (Paris: Librairie Honoré Champion, 1973), pp. 139-46.

<sup>38</sup> Hunt, pp. 381-83.

<sup>39</sup> Hunt, pp. 383-88.

<sup>40</sup> Hebrews 1:3; R. E. Kaske, "The Character 'Figura' in Le Mystère d'Adam," in Medieval Studies in Honor of Urban T. Holmes, Jr., ed. John Mahoney and John E. Keller, University of North Carolina Studies in Romance Languages and Literature, No. 56 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1965), pp. 104-106.

<sup>41</sup> Kolve, p. 31. Auerbach suggests that the use of the term Figura is prompted by the figural structure of the play (pp. 156-57). Muir notes that the term is not used in this sense in the Vulgate. Rather, the word forma is used in Pauline discussions of the figural relation of Adam and Christ (p. 16).

<sup>42</sup> Hunt, p. 527.

<sup>43</sup> Sticca discusses the important role of medieval spirituality in providing a context for religious drama, a "religious zeitgeist and theological attitude which [preparès]

the proper milieu for [a] play to be articulated and manifested" (p. 69). The spiritual climate to which the Cistercians responded and which they helped to create anticipates in some ways the conditions to which the Franciscans responded. The twelfth century witnessed a widespread desire for spiritual renewal. Something of the Franciscan motive to convert the laity to God which shaped their literature is evident in the cloistered monastic culture of the Cistercians. Unlike the Benedictines, who recruited members principally from among children raised in their own monastic schools, the Cistercians did not have such schools. Rather, they recruited members from among lay or clerical adults. This fact accounts in part for Bernard's careful elucidation of the gradual process of the soul's return to God, and for his use of imagery and metaphor from the human and contemporary world (Leclercq, Monks and Love in Twelfth Century France, pp. 9-12, 101-105). Jean Payan discusses the emergence of an individual piety fostering contrition and penance among the laity in the context of his discussion of Le Jeu d'Adam. He argues that the "renaissance du théâtre" must be seen in this context (p. 20). See also M. D. Chenu, O.P., "Monks, Canons, and Laymen in Search of the Apostolic Life" and "The Evangelical Awakening," in Nature, Man, and Society in the Twelfth

Century: Essays on New Theological Perspectives in the Latin

West, eds. and trans. Jerome Taylor and Lester K. Little

(Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), pp. 202-38, 239-69.

<sup>44</sup>Axton, for instance, feels that the role of the devils, "objects of doctrinal terror," is primarily "exemplary" (pp. 115-16).

<sup>45</sup>Sermon 23.14; II, pp. 37-38; PL 183, cols. 891-892.

<sup>46</sup>I am indebted for this insight to Elaine Goertzen Stewart.

<sup>47</sup>Hunt, p. 374. Whether the play is tragic or comic is a point of critical debate. See Beck, pp. 30-40; Axton, p. 118; Muir, pp. 120-21; Accarie, "L'unité du mystère d'Adam," pp. 1-12, and "Theologie et Morale dans le Jeu d'Adam," pp. 123-42.

<sup>48</sup>Muir suggests the possibility that the text of the play is complete. She notes that it is customary for liturgical plays to end with a canticle, which Nebuchadnezzar's prophecy facilitates, and that there are only twenty-five lines of writing on this last page of the play in the manuscript, rather than the normal twenty-eight (p. 13).

<sup>49</sup>Frank, pp. 83-84; Auerbach, pp. 158-62.

<sup>50</sup>"Satan You'll keep it quiet?"

Eve Of course I will.

Satan It'll get out.

Eve It won't through me.

Satan I put myself into your hands;  
For me your word is good enough.

Eve You will be safe--I've promised you.

Satan You have been very well brought up.  
I've seen Adam--but he's a fool" (p. 19).

<sup>51</sup>"De l'humour à l'amour," pp. 271-74.

<sup>52</sup>The Steps of Humility and Pride, in Treatises III, trans. M. Ambrose Conway, OCSO, IX.27, pp. 55-56; PL 182, cols. 956-958. All further references to this work will be to these editions and will be noted in parentheses in the text.

<sup>53</sup>Wickham suggests that the emergence of comedy in religious drama occurs with the representation of the human, and of the humanity of Christ (I, 313). He discusses the "genesis" of medieval comic theatre in III, 173-201. See also Kolve, pp. 145-205. Guy de Mermier also discusses the humor arising from the human foibles of Eve in "L'Adorable Perversité Féminine: Son Comique et sa Fonction dans le 'Mystère d'Adam' and 'Courtois d'Arras'." Studi Francesi, 63 (1977), 481-86. He perceives this comedy as integral to the serious

aims of the play, but argues that the comedy also produces in its audience an ambivalent attitude to Eve's sin.

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## ABSTRACT

In this thesis I propose to explore some relations between medieval spirituality and medieval drama, particularly as they suggest some twelfth century origins of the medieval concept of theatre as play and game. I will seek first to uncover in Cistercian spirituality a concept of literary and spiritual play which has dramatic implications. In light of this spirituality, I will discuss the thematic concerns and the dramatic methods of the Anglo-Norman play Le Jeu d'Adam.

The first chapter is introductory, seeking to define the idea of play, first in modern discussions of play, then in the occasional emergence of the idea in patristic writing, and finally introducing the formulation of this idea in the writings of the Cistercians. In this chapter I will consider how, in these various works, play is defined as a meaningful activity, in medieval terms as an attribute of wisdom. I will also begin to discuss the theological ideas which prompt a renewed and more fully developed understanding of the patristic idea of play: the Cistercian doctrine of love and Cistercian devotion to the humanity of Christ.

The second and third chapters are concerned with some

literary and theological ideas of the Cistercians. In the second chapter I will discuss the origins of the Cistercian concept of play in the theology and exegesis of Bernard of Clairvaux, especially in his On the Song of Songs. The third chapter considers the English context of Le Jeu d'Adam, especially Aelred of Rievaulx's meditations on the Gospels. In these meditations, which depend on the exegetical practices of Bernard, Aelred reveals an imagination which is at once playful and dramatic.

The fourth and fifth chapters explore the idea of theatrical play in Le Jeu d'Adam. In the fourth chapter I will discuss how Le Jeu d'Adam interprets the creation, fall and redemption of mankind in terms of play and game rooted in wisdom and love, reflecting ideas developed by the Cistercians. The fifth chapter is concerned with the dramatic methods of Le Jeu d'Adam, their dependence on the idea of play, and their kinship with the forms of imagination present in Cistercian texts.