



CHAPTER TWO

LOVE'S GIFTS



A lover may freely accept from her beloved these things: a handkerchief, a hair band, a circlet of gold or silver, a brooch for the breast, a mirror, a belt, a purse, a lace for clothes, a comb, cuffs, gloves, a ring, a little box of scent, a portrait, toiletries, little vases, trays, a standard as a keepsake of the lover, and, to speak more generally, a lady can accept from her love whatever small gift may be useful in the care of her person, or may look charming, or may remind her of her lover, providing, however, that in accepting the gift it is clear that she is acting quite without avarice.

Andreas Capellanus

Among the 137 portraits of the Middle-High German love-poets or *Minnesänger* in the famous Manesse Codex is one in which the subject seeks to earn the love of a lady, not through knightly service or feats of bravery, but through the ostentatious display of things. Dietmar von Aist disguises himself as a travelling pedlar and arrives with his well-packed mule at the lady's castle to show off his wares (fig. 38). Dietmar's disguise involves him displaying a range of

37. Game with a hood. *Aumonière* made in Paris c. 1340. Couched gold and silver threads on linen, $6\frac{1}{4} \times 5\frac{1}{2}$ " (16 x 14 cm). Hamburg, Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe.

Gothic objects that are associated with women's bodies and examples of which still exist today in museums around the world. These luxury items – mirrors, belts or girdles, and purses – will be the focus of this chapter. The courtly pedlar holds out a brooch or clasp, in German *asp*, and thus a pun on his name ("Aist"), while his other hand holds the reigns and points to his mule, another playful allusion to himself (*Diet mar* means "the people's mule"). The lady, holding her lapdog in one hand, fingers the golden end of one of the hanging belts with her other. Representing the body and its parts, objects were more than fetishes in the modern sense:



38. Dietmar von Aist disguised as a pedlar woos his lady with his wares, from the *Manesse Codex*, Zürich, c. 1300. Heidelberg, Universitätsbibliothek, Cod. pal. Germ. 848, fol. 64r.

they served as social as well as sexual conduits of desire.

The important difference between a gift exchange and a commodity exchange is that a gift establishes a feeling or a bond between two people, while the sale of a commodity offers only a formal transaction. By presenting himself in the guise of a seller of things, Dietmar is in fact going against the courtly notion of the gift, given freely

and out of love, ironically playing a role that no lover would want to assume. Lovers were not meant to be merchants but nobles. There were two basic pictorial conventions for showing a person's ownership of things in the Middle Ages. The first had negative connotations and shows a figure who places things in a chest, hiding them, as it were, from public view as personal possessions. This was how the vice of Avarice was

carved on the cathedrals of Chartres and Amiens. The second is used to suggest items for display in a public rather than a private context and presents them hanging on a rail, as here. Each of the things displayed – girdle, purse, and mirror – has a powerful symbolic and social significance. It would be wrong to associate them solely with women, since men were just as likely to receive and wear girdles made of leather and sets of jewels, brooches, rings, collars, and chaplets.

In his description of the markets on the right bank of the Seine in Paris, the early-fourteenth-century writer Jean de Jandun described how “On display here were all the objects to adorn the different parts of the human body: for the head, crowns, chaplets, and bonnets, ivory combs for the hair, mirrors for looking at oneself, belts for the waist, purses to suspend from them, gloves for the hands, necklaces for the breast, and other things of this type which I cannot list, because I lack the Latin terms for these objects.” Images here outpace language’s capacity to describe them and commodities far outstretch any Latin vocabulary in the new phantasmagoric world of objects. But probably the most important fact we forget today about these costly gifts was their exclusivity in terms of social status. The prerogative of the nobility, a French royal ordinance of 1283 ordered that “no bourgeois or bourgeoise ... shall wear or be allowed to wear gold or precious stones or girdles of gold or set with pearls or coronals of gold and silver.” Such sumptuary laws, which were increasingly enforced throughout Europe by the end of the fourteenth century, as increased wealth brought social mobility and availability of commodities, were aimed especially at regulating lower-class female bodies from

becoming objects of fascination through their excessive fashion and at the same time keeping certain textiles, furs, and jewels as the exclusive symbolic property of the nobility. They were also gendered. In the *Yconomica* of the German canon Konrad von Megenburg (1309–74) women are described as having a greater right to costly dress and jewels, not only because they can preserve sumptuous raiment longer than a man since they labor less but “also it is more fitting that a woman should chain a man to her by her pleasing attire than the contrary, for a bird of freer flight requires the greater art in its pursuers.”

Medieval culture was a gift-culture similar in some ways to those studied by modern anthropologists such as Marcel Mauss. Nothing was handed over free from the implications of reciprocity and contract. Gifts were given and repaid under obligation. Ceremonial exchange knitted communities together but also bonded persons so that, both in matrimony and as a prelude to it, gifts were fundamental to the courtship process. Just as the troubadour Giraut de Bornelh (c. 1162–99) described, “If the fair one, to whom I am a gift, is willing to honour me,” the gift is most often represented as going from a man to a woman. But the gender of the gift itself is, as we shall see, more complicated. The objects of desire that Dietmar dangles before his beloved are lures but also in part representations of her own body. Women were circulated as a commodity and put up for sale to the highest bidder, as if just another item on the rack here. The beautiful fantasy objects discussed in this chapter are constructed in part in order to obscure or cover over the real, crude contingencies of the medieval marriage market.

THE MIRROR AND THE COMB

Mirrors were made of a variety of materials in the Gothic period, such as bronze (see fig. 13) and enamel (see fig. 35), but most surviving examples are made of the expensive and exotic imported material of elephant ivory. In the depiction of Dietmar the mirror is painted silver – but most medieval mirrors have lost their reflective glass interiors, leaving only their gleaming shells. A rare surviving pair that once opened and closed, like a modern powder-compact, shows eight pairs of lovers (fig. 39). Are these eight different stages in a single narrative as the great scholar of Gothic ivories Raymond Koechlin suggested? Or are they better understood as a multiplicity of “positions” that one could take up as one postured and positioned oneself before one’s mirror? Courtly objects, like court life itself, produced an intense refinement of gestures and expressions of emotion



39. Circles and circuits of desire. A pair of mirror cases made in Paris, c. 1320. Ivory, h. 4³/8" (11 cm). Paris, Musée du Louvre.

structured according to esthetic principles. These eight scenes are a catalog of the choreography of courtship around one of these significant symbolic objects – the chaplet. Chaplet-makers were an important guild in fourteenth-century Paris. Royal and noble lovers might have them made of gold and pearls, only fragments of which have survived, but even more ephemeral materials, flowers and natural greenery, evocative of springtime, sufficed for most couples. The couple represented on this pair of ivories play with a circular chaplet with all the anticipatory excitement that a contemporary couple might exhibit with a condom. Indeed in the same way the chaplet offered some kind of prophylactic barrier, at least symbolically. On one side the lady dangles it before the kneeling suitor who picks flowers to adorn it, while on the other she withdraws it behind her back, then places it above his head. She assumes the superior left position in all but one



40. The Virgin traps the unicorn. End of an ivory casket made in Paris, c. 1320. London, British Museum.

of the four scenes of the front and only when seated does she finally proffer him the circular crown on the bottom right of the back. The sexual meaning of this ring is made explicit in a sonnet by the late thirteenth-century Italian poet Dante da Maiano, who poses as a riddle: “A fair woman, in gaining whose favor my heart takes pleasure, made me the gift of a green leafy garland; and charmingly did she so; and then I seemed to find myself clothed in a shift she had worn; then I made so bold as to embrace her ... I will not say what followed – she made me swear not to.” Symbolizing love’s never-ending desire, the circular form of the chaplet is also a simulacrum of the mirror itself. On the edge of

an ivory box made in Paris during the same period the virgin who traps the unicorn holds an object that could either be a mirror or a chaplet above the beast’s head (fig. 40).

The chaplet was also associated with the hair and its coiffure, which makes it even more suitable as decoration for ivory combs. The same serrated leaves on the trees of the Louvre mirror cases also divide lovers on a beautiful two-sided ivory comb in the Victoria and Albert Museum, suggesting they might once have been part of the same set. One side of the comb, which amazingly has not lost any of its tines, includes a very similar central garlanding scene. As on the mirror, these couples seem to represent the various



41. Three courtly couples. Front of a comb made in Paris, c. 1320. Ivory, $4\frac{1}{2} \times 5\frac{3}{4}$ " (11.6 x 14.5 cm). London, Victoria and Albert Museum.

patterns and possibilities in love's performance rather than a sequential narrative (fig. 41). Two couples on the other side show the lady bestowing this same leafy crown upon the kneeling lover and then both holding the circular garland like a ring (fig. 42). This chaplet-grasping can also be seen in legal images from the same period. A youth presents a chaplet to a young girl in a very similar composition, before propositioning her to follow him in an illustration of the final *causa*, or case, in Gratian's *Decretum* (fig. 43). This describes how "A young man, through the use of gifts, attracted a certain girl without the knowledge of her father and invited her to dinner. After the meal the youth ravished this virgin. When this was found out the parents of the girl gave her to the young man. Provided with a dowry by the youth, she was publicly married to him." Instead of focusing on the legal outcome of the story and their marriage, the artist has emphasized the improper advances of

the youth using the garland. Unlike the sacred associations sometimes linked with them, as in St. Caecilia's garlands, those we see in ivories and miniatures are more often, like this, circular signs of the sexual.

A later mirror-back from Italy depicts the love-gift of a comb being presented to the lady (fig. 44). Since one of the things that distinguished a married from an unmarried woman was the looseness, style, and covering of her hair, the type of gift may be significant, encouraging beautification but also control of the beloved. A French royal account of 1316 describes four items bought for the royal family from Jean le Scelleur for 74 shillings: "1 mirror, 1 comb, 1 gravoir, and 1 leather case." Clearly objects now separated in glass cases in museums once fit snugly into leather cases such as that in the leather museum in Offenbach, which contains a stamped representation of lovers holding a heart and monsters on the outside. As



42. Three courtly couples. Back of a comb made in Paris, c. 1320. Ivory, $4\frac{1}{2} \times 5\frac{3}{4}$ " (11.6 x 14.5 cm). London, Victoria and Albert Museum.



43. The lure of the chaplet in Gratian's *Decretum*, Causa xxxvi, Paris, c. 1300. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, ms lat. 3898, fol. 361r.

well as the circular mirror and comb, such cases also had a slot for a *gravoir* – a long thin hairpin or parter for the hair also of ivory. Surviving examples show various poses of the desire-filled duo we have seen before, but one has carved at the tip a parting couple, a divided couple for dividing the strands of hair (fig. 45). Although there exist marginal images of young men combing their hair, as critiques of vanity – and there is the erotic combing of a man's hair by his female friend on the lid of a painted and gilded leather box (see fig. 55) – these objects were powerfully gendered. This is especially true of mirrors, which since antiquity had been linked with the secret spaces of a woman's toilet. The inscription on an intricately patterned boxwood comb in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, bears the inscription "Take pleasure." The fact that it also has two compartments with sliding covers used to contain makeup indicates that the plea-

sure taken here is in one's appearance. It is this association with personal beauty that has been forgotten in discussion of these objects, especially the ivories, which must be placed in the context of cosmetics. The medium of ivory is at once the crystalline cold incarnation of distance and transcendent whiteness (the lady's teeth are often compared to it) but at the same time a substance suggestive of the flesh – creamy, undulating, and soft – and probably, after wax, the most fleshlike of all artistic media. Women were encouraged to paint their faces with blaunchet or wheaten flour and used dangerous lead-filled cosmetics in order to fulfill the ivory-white ideal. In a poem by the monk of Montaudon (c. 1180–1215) the statues of the churches complain to God that there is not enough paint left to adorn them because of all "the ladies who use rouge and cream." Apart from these dots of red



44. The Gift of a Comb. Mirror-back made in North Italy, c. 1390. Ivory, $3\frac{7}{8} \times 3\frac{3}{4}$ " (9.8 x 9.5 cm). Baltimore, Walters Art Gallery.



45. Parting Lovers. Tip of a gravoir or hair-parter made in Paris, c. 1330. Ivory, h. $2\frac{3}{4}$ " (7 cm). Turin, Museo d'Arte Antica.

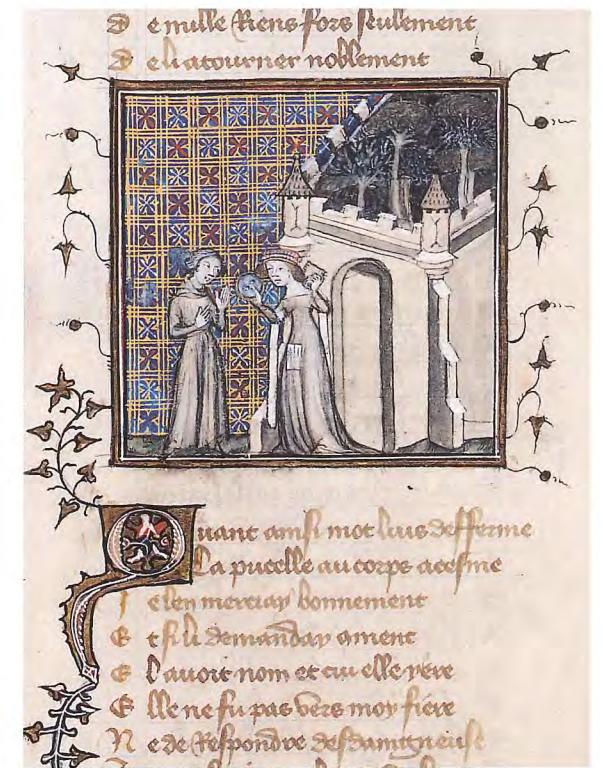
the beloved is always represented as ghostly. This was partly because she would never see the sun, being kept closely guarded behind closed doors, partly because women were considered physiologically cold in temperament but mostly because this was a visual convention of ideal feminine beauty that went back to antiquity.

In the first part of the most widely read and famous of all medieval love-poems, the *Roman de la Rose*, sometimes known as "the mirror for lovers," the dreamer is invited into the Garden of Love by a lovely girl holding a comb and mirror, as illustrated in this Parisian manuscript (fig. 46). The whole passage is worth quoting because it is very relevant for understanding ideals of female beauty, the positive image of the mirror and the comb, and, as we shall see, the very ladies represented on the ivories themselves. Conforming to the traditional formula of describing corporeal beauty, Guillaume's account begins at the top of the young girl's head, with her hair, and goes down to her feet, item by item, a veritable inventory of desire. We can compare this description of this ideal female visage with that of a large Parisian ivory statuette of this period (fig. 47):

She had hair as blonde as a copper basin, flesh more tender than that of a baby chick, a gleaming forehead, and arched eyebrows. The space between her eyes was not small but very wide in measure. She had a straight, well-made nose, and her eyes which were gray-blue, like those of a falcon, caused envy in the hare-brained. Her breath was sweet and savory, her face white and colored, her

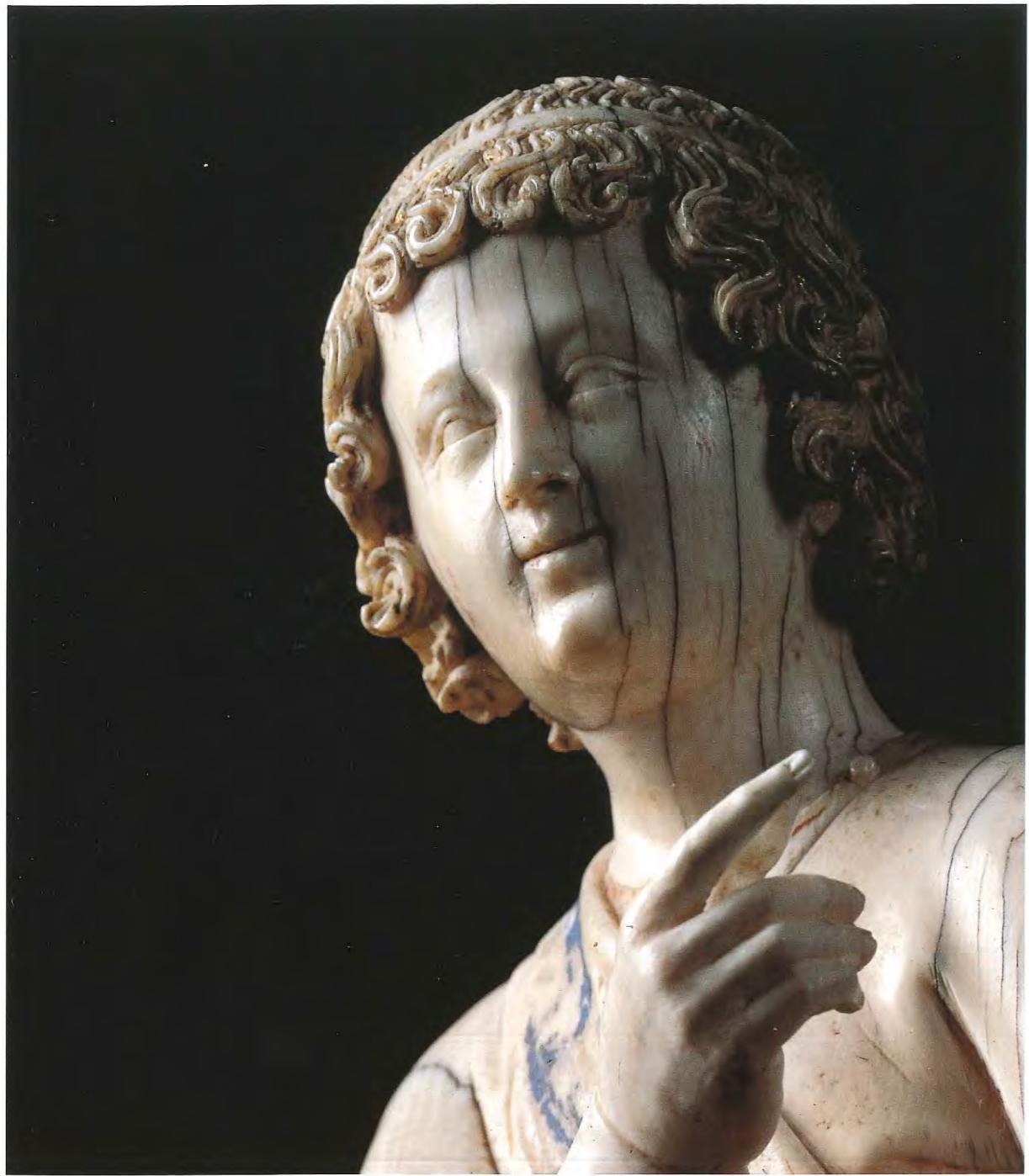
mouth small and a little full; she had a dimple in her chin. Her neck was of good proportion, thick enough and reasonably long, without pimples or sores. From here to Jerusalem no woman has a more beautiful neck; it was smooth and soft to the touch. She had a bosom as white as the snow upon a branch when it has just fallen. Her body was well-made and svelte; you would not have had to seek anywhere on earth to find a woman with a more beautiful body. She had a pretty chaplet of gold embroidery. There was never a girl more elegant or better arrayed ... Above the chaplet of gold embroidery was one of fresh roses, and in her hand she held a mirror. Her hair was arranged very richly with fine lace. Both sleeves were well sewn into a beautifully snug fit, and she had white gloves to keep her white hands from turning brown. ... By the time she had combed her hair carefully and prepared and adorned herself well, she had finished her day's work. "I am called Idleness," she said, "by people who know me. I am a rich and powerful lady, and I have a very good time, for I have no other purpose than to enjoy myself and make myself comfortable, to comb and braid my hair."

The delightfully dimpled face of the ivory statue, with its carefully coiffed curls and chaplet, while being close to that described by Guillaume de Lorris, is, however, not that of a courtly lady from a secular ivory, but that of the angel of the Annunciation. Angels are supposed



46. Idleness with her mirror and comb greets the lover outside the garden, from *Le Roman de la Rose*, Paris, c. 1380. Oxford, Bodleian Library, ms e Museo 65, fol. 7r.

to be sexless but often, as in the case of the angel-like God of Love himself, one gender sometimes predominates. The ideals of beauty and gesture that we think of as belonging to secular society permeated all Parisian products to the extent that in a handbook of student behavior a contemporary master of the University, John of Garland, urged young men to follow the examples of the statues they saw in churches as models of deportment. Just as these rough students modeled themselves on poised saints and androgynous angels in churches, the wealthy men and women of Paris who owned ivory mirrors and combs surely also learned to see them-



47. Beauty's face. Ivory statuette of the *Angel of the Annunciation*
made in Paris, c. 1280–1300. Paris, Musée du Louvre.

selves in these smoothly elegant although to us repetitive and formalized mannequins of desire. One has only to open a fashion magazine today to see these very same repetitions in the Paris fashion industry, played out with bodies just as impossibly idealized as those on medieval ivories.

THE GIRDLE AND THE PURSE

In the Provençal romance *Flamenca* of c. 1260 Flamenca's lover Guillaume owns a "great girdle" of Irish leather "with a buckle of French work: on it there was a full mark's weight of silver, even if you had allowed good weight, for it was a fair, rich, and delightful girdle." A silver-gilt buckle from such a belt, dating from c. 1200 and probably made for a man because of its narrow width, is a superbly cast and unusually complex example of the metalworker's art, of the same quality as the three-dimensional figures on Mosan metalwork (fig. 48). The chape, the oblong case of metal into which the end of the band of the girdle is fitted, shows a knight on his

horse, the flower of chivalry, followed by his page and approaching a standing lady whose arm is outstretched to touch his. The buckle shows the knight kneeling before his lady, who again lifts her hand to speak to him. The imagery of the meeting and homage of the two lovers recapitulates the binding and joining of the two ends of the belt into one, the active end, the male moving toward his own center in toward his right (as one thinks of it worn around his waist), but his lady, standing next to where the leather end would be penetrated by the tooth, is the fixed, immobile part. So even when the belt presented the binding of the lover to his lady, when it went around his own body it pinned her, as an object, to him and not vice versa.

Many medieval belts and girdles evoke in their decoration the divided human body – the notion of the rational human above the waist and the animal lust that drives what was described euphemistically as "below the waist." In Andreas Capellanus's *De Amore* the dialog between a man and a woman of the higher nobility involves a long scholastic argument about the relative mer-



48. A lady accepts her suitor. Buckle on a man's girdle
from the Mosan region, c. 1200. Silver-gilt, $3\frac{3}{4} \times 2"$ (9.5 x 5 cm).
Stockholm, Museum of National Antiquities.



49. A lady's belt made in Italy, late fourteenth century. Basse-taille enamel and gilding on silver, silver thread, gilt-silver buckle, cast and chased, 7'8" x 1" x 2¹/₄" (236.5 x 2.9 x 6 cm). The Cleveland Museum of Art.

its of the “upper part” and the “lower part” of a woman’s body. The lady argues in favor of the lower parts, which, like the foundations of buildings, she says, are worthier. The man argues that to take too much pleasure in the lower part is to make rational humans into animals. Although he admits that the “final cause” in Aristotelian terms lies in the lower parts, “it is impossible to obtain pleasure from the lower without that from the upper, unless a most inappropriate and shameful physical position is adopted.” The belt divides the beast from the beautiful woman according to this simultaneously misogynistic and erotic discourse. There are a number of



49a. (top) Lady playing a tambourine. Buckle on the lady's belt.

49b. (bottom) A suitor and a lady. End of the lady's belt.

beautiful ladies’ belts from the Gothic period that play upon this horizontal division of the body, by depicting human-animal hybrids. An enamel belt in the Museum in Baden-Baden is made up of half-human monsters, male and female, who meet around the waist, in the style of the minute art of the great Parisian illuminator of monsters Jean Pucelle. A later example, this time Italian, also contains hybrids (fig. 49). The belt is more than seven feet long and is decorated with twenty-one tiny quatrefoils of translucent enamel on silver. Its end was designed to fall down to the hem of a garment, indicating that it was made for a woman. The buckle proper is in the form of

a woman playing a tambourine (fig. 49a). The engraved and enamel designs are arranged so that they will appear upright when worn. Half-bestial men, not women, are engraved on the reverse side, which was hidden against the woman’s body as it dangled down to the ground. Did the lady wearing this belt feel protected by its imagery? The final pendant suspended from the belt proper shows two scenes: in the first the male suitor seems a long way from the lady but on the lowest one he gets to embrace her at last (fig. 49b). If, as Marcel Mauss argued in his classic anthropological study *The Gift*, the ritual gift is “always possessed by the spirit of its giver,” to proffer a lady such an object was to be very intimate indeed, as intimate as the man represented grasping his own possession in this example.

The haughty lady wearing the pointed headdress of the late fifteenth-century Burgundian court dangles a similarly long golden girdle before a kneeling knight – as if in anticipation of removing it – in a superbly painted parade shield (fig. 50). Here the belt is more like a chain and the woman holds it with both hands as if about to remove it in order to give it to her knight or perhaps even to bind him with it. The inscription *vous*



50. “*You, or Death.*” Parade shield from Burgundy, fifteenth century. Tempera on wood, h. 32¹/₂ (83 cm). London, British Museum.

semi-magical protective power.

From the belt would hang the purse, a major accessory in both the male and female wardrobe, since clothes did not contain pockets at this period. Called *aumonières* there were no fewer than 124 craftspersons known as *faiseuses d'aumonières*.

ou la mort (“You or death”), and the skeleton who stands behind him like a macabre patron saint, does not mean that the young man is pining away in longing. Rather he has chosen the ideal lady as a symbolic shield to protect him in a forthcoming tournament. In 1480 a poor German knight called von Schaumburg received from his mistress, to whom he had pledged lifelong service, all the ornaments, jewels, and trappings so as to strike a figure at the tournaments of Franconia. Sometimes these gifts given as prizes at tournaments would contain the lady’s hair woven into the green girdle that the mysterious lady gives to Sir Gawain in the Middle English poem *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, and which binds him within the circle of female control, these items of dress were also associated with women’s



51. The purse representing the goods owned by a husband and wife in common, from a French copy of Justinian's *Digeste*, c. 1280. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, ms fr. 20118, fol. 266r.

monières sarrazinoises listed in the Parisian guild ordinances, a guild dominated, like all the stitching arts, by women. A small group of splendid examples of these embroidered purses survives, one in the Cathedral Treasury at Troyes and another in Hamburg (see fig. 37). Made in Paris around 1340, the Hamburg example is embroidered in couched gold and silver threads and still has its drawstring handle with which it hung from the belt. It depicts a game in a garden in which the lady has grabbed a youth by his hood and is pulling him toward her in an effort to crown him with a chaplet. The exact meaning of the girl grabbing her lover by the hood is unclear. In Chaucer's poem *Troilus and Criseyde* (c. 1382) the young girl asks the old man Pandarus about how he is faring in "love's dance;" bemoaning his lack of a lover, he replies: "I hope alwey byhynde ... Loke alwey that ye finde/Game in myn hood." This playful sexual allusion of the hood is also emphasized in the

common association of the drawstring purse and the female pudenda in its shape, function, and position on the body. In drawing her lover toward her this lady is not only in control of the phallus-shaped hood that she has in her grasp, but can also pull the strings of the purse shut. What looks like an innocent frolic in a garden is charged, like all gifts, not only with the challenge of conflict but also the possibility of refusal.

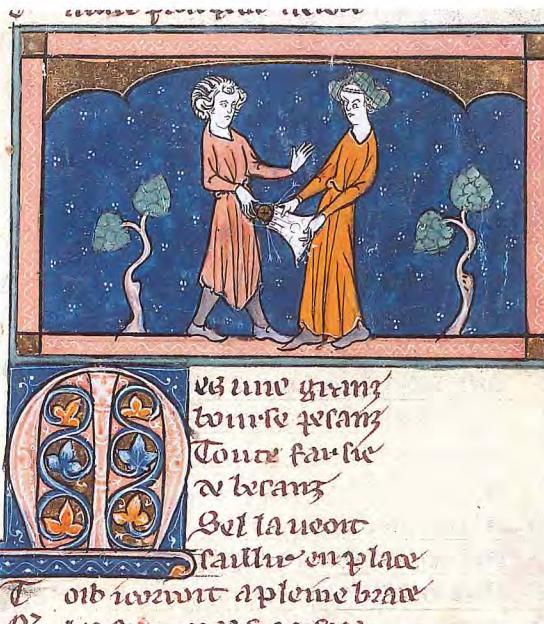
This image of the lady bestowing the gift of the chaplet upon her lover is interesting considering the literary sources that describe a lady giving a purse that she has embroidered herself. Although this example was probably created by a professional Parisian embroiderer, the lady would often present her own artwork. The *Roman de la Rose* argues: "A woman must be careful, no matter how much she claims a man as her lover, not to give him a gift that is worth very much. She may indeed give him a pillow, a towel, a kerchief, or a purse [aumonière] as long as they are not too expensive." The purse is one of the most charged signs in medieval art, dangling around the necks of the avaricious in Hell and a sign of monetary power. Goods owned jointly by husband and wife are symbolized by a similar large purse. In a copy of Justinian's *Digeste* in French (fig. 51) the purse changes its usual metaphorical association with the female vulva and becomes a playful pun on the male "sack" as the lady feels a man's "purse" in a contemporary miniature from the *Roman de la Rose* (fig. 52). This illustrates part of the long discussion of "Friend" who just before he describes the Golden Age when love was given freely, compares it to today's sad situation when women are more concerned with their lover's

material worth. "But if she saw a great heavy purse, all stuffed with bezants, rise up all at once, she would run to it with open arms; women are not so maddened that they would run after anything except purses." This lady is feeling for more than the "money," of course, as she fondles the bulging *aumonière* with its bubbles and fringes just like those in the Hamburg example. Some fourteenth-century French *aumonières* in the Musée National du Moyen Âge in Paris have marvelous hybrid monsters on them, reminiscent of the male purse swinging here below the waist in the animal "lower regions." When, in one of the French *fabliaux*, a wife prays that her husband be transformed into a veritable porcupine of phalluses, her husband wishes that she be fitted with as many purses, meaning vaginas. The more that

medieval objects can be linked to bodies, the more they can be brought to life again to perform the polymorphously perverse roles that they sometimes assumed.

THE CASKET AND THE KEY

Made of panels of stamped bronze fixed to a wooden frame, a Catalan casket with courtly lovers on its front is an example of a more mass-produced type of object from the end of the fourteenth century, adapting the same kind of imagery of the earlier wooden and ivory caskets in a different medium (fig. 53). Just as we know that ivory carvers created multiple examples of stock scenes that could be fitted in different combinations to form a casket, these stamped metal scenes are highly conventional "logos" of love. In the center a lover kneels with a falcon on his wrist; his beloved holds a bunch of flowers. The box with its metaphysics of opening and closing, interiority and outer surface, was always closely linked to the inviolable female body, open only to her husband-owner. This is true of chests of all sizes and types, from the small ivory caskets made in fourteenth-century Paris, through the slightly larger leather and wood *Kistlin* of fourteenth-century Germany to the trunk-size pairs of *cassone* chests used in the marriage ceremonies of Renaissance Florence. These items were usually bought by the groom and his family to transport gifts to his future bride or part of her dowry to him and then would serve as storage chests, furniture, or jewelry boxes in the couple's bedroom. Their imagery of control and containment makes them less private and secret objects than open



52. The lady feels the lover's "purse," from *Le Roman de la Rose*, France, c. 1280. Rome, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, ms Urb. 376, fol. 51v.



53. A lover, the beloved, and monsters. Casket from Catalonia, c. 1400. Stamped bronze panels on wooden frame, $3\frac{1}{2} \times 15 \times 4$ " (9 x 38 x 10 cm). Barcelona, Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya.

social signs of exchange and goods within a gift economy. As on the more intimate girdles, hybrids and monsters serve here as exemplars of the baser passions of the lower body; tamed, they now serve as protectors – like the centaur in this example. One should not forget the almost sacred status of property in medieval culture. Thefts and crimes against property were punished far more severely than crimes against the body, and much medieval art is not only to be seen as property in itself but as serving to protect it. Giving gifts was a serious business, as the three daughters-in-law of King Philip the Fair of France found out to their horror in a scandal that rocked the royal court in May 1314. Gifts that had first been given to them by their sister-in-law Queen Isabella, wife of the ill-fated Edward II of England, they had subsequently given to some young knights in their entourage.

Accused of having adulterous affairs, the princesses were incarcerated and their supposed lovers Philippe and Gaultier d'Aunay were publicly disemboweled in the Place de Grève in Paris. Anyone who doubts that the adulterous aspect of courtly love was only a fantasy should remember this instance when accusations of illicit behavior among the royal family were so ruthlessly punished.

The lady's taming and control of her suitor's animal passions helps explain the popularity of the theme of the wildman on the exterior of a number of German caskets. These gloriously shaggy creatures were used not only to represent the bestial side of human nature but by the later Middle Ages also came to articulate an early form of primitivism, a nostalgia for an earlier, ruder existence for those in the artificial courts of Europe who would later project similar myths

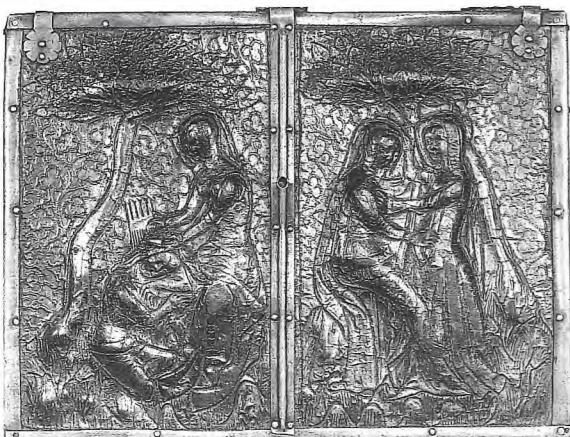
of the "simple life" on to their social inferiors. Two mid-fourteenth-century painted caskets, now in the Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe in Hamburg and in Cologne (fig. 54), depict a similar narrative in which a wildman of the woods battles with a young knight for possession of a lady. In the Cologne example he sits in a tree in the first scene contemplating the lady, as was the first stage in every proper lover's quest. To the right he rides after her and on the right end panel he is shown grabbing her. The young knight does not rush in to defend her with arms but produces instead a wedding ring, which he offers with an outstretched hand. The lady's choice is between the rough hairy monster representing sensuality and the refined courtly knight representing civility. In the Hamburg casket the young knight is rewarded for his valor by being crowned by the lady with a chaplet while two monsters, synonymous with the wild-

man's lust, cower in defeat. The odd thing about the Cologne version is that here the lady chooses the hairy wildman over the wimpish knight and ends up playing chess with her shaggy abductor on the last scene on the casket. The suitor who commissioned the casket, who may have been much older than his bride, was able to express his physical desire for her in the form of the hairy libidinous creature, while at the same time indicating that once his request was granted he was ready to be tamed. The wildman sits with a falcon on his wrist in the last scene, his brutishness turned to gentleness. The woman's role is not only to be an object of desire but to exercise civilizing influence over male sexual appetite. This object teaches both sexes their respective roles as regards courtly versus uncourtly behavior.

A Flemish leather casket brings together in one object a number of the themes and objects



54. The choice between the wildman and the knight. Casket made in Cologne, 1350–70. Painted oak, right end panel, $4\frac{3}{4} \times 9\frac{1}{4}$ " (12 x 23.5 cm). Cologne, Museum für Angewandte Kunst.



55. Lovers around the lock of the heart.
Lid of a casket from Flanders, c. 1400. Moulded and incised leather over wood, $8\frac{1}{2} \times 6\frac{1}{2}$ " (21.6 x 16.5 cm). New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

discussed in this chapter, the exchange of gifts as well as the girdle and the box. Such caskets were made of soaked and softened leather that was molded and shaped around a core to create three-dimensional figures, this very technique suggestive of the fleshly encounters they often depict. On the lid is the unusual scene of the lady combing her lover's hair, and on the front around the lock she slips him the girdle from around her waist (fig. 55). This example also shows how we have to treat these objects as shifting and multivalent signs of corporeality rather than as crude sexual symbols. Here we cannot simply see the box as the woman's body and the keyhole as the point of penetration. The great heart that surrounds the keyhole is the gift of love from lover to beloved, ironically articulating the chaste and noble aspirations of the higher form of love that he presents to her. In a later chapter we shall return to this theme of unlocking the lover's heart in more detail. Here suffice

to say that the heart over the lock represents the lady's control over her lover. In Chrétien de Troyes's late twelfth-century poem *Yvain*, the hero rejected by his beloved Laudine returns in disguise and tells her: "Lady, you carry the key/ and have the casket in which my happiness/is locked." The imagery on this box celebrates the reciprocity of the gift – she combs his hair, he gets to embrace her, he gives her his heart, she gives him her girdle, he presents her with this object, and in accepting it becomes incorporated into his and the box's imaginary universe of relationships and rituals. The beloved holds the imaginary key to his heart but the suitor is more likely to have kept the key to the box itself.

As well as gifts, caskets were used to relay messages of love in the form of letters. A gorgeous grisaille drawing preserved on a fragment of parchment shows two messages being delivered to two women who have the undulating concave bodies created out of arcs of swelling voluminous drapery and tubular breastless torsos that were fashionable in the late fourteenth century (fig. 56). On the left one message is delivered by an older bearded man, who takes it out of his long tubular hood, and on the right a young beardless messenger opens a *layette* or casket in which dispatches and letters were sent, before another lady who is combing her long tresses. The older man may be feeling for the key to the lady's treasure that she has given the poet and which hangs around his neck, as recounted in Guillaume de Machaut's poem *Le Livre du Voir-Dit*, which we have already seen illustrated (see fig. 17). If this were so the two beauties represented in this drawing are Toute Belle and the ancient Queen Semiramis, who

abandoned braiding her hair during a threat to her kingdom. The flaccid hood of the old man hints at the loss of potency that haunts this poet's work. Rather than a piece of a model-book we might see this long strip of parchment as the visual equivalent of a love-poem – which in the Middle Ages was sometimes written on long strips of parchment to be used in performance – and which was inspired by Machaut's work, to be sent as a message not from a poet but from an artist to the double-lady of his dreams.

It is too simple to see representations of medieval lovers as "reflections" of "courtly love" that we imagine people practiced, rather as we practice "safe sex." The images in this book are expressions of less tangible desires, more equivocal cultural codes, and private fantasies. They are not pictures of everyday life in the Middle Ages. To think that would be like imagining that a thousand years from now people would be able to estimate everyday experience and people's appearance today from the images in current

fashion magazines. We all realize that the latter are fantasies, idealizations, and distortions we find desirable. This drawing – a fantasy on the part of an artist – is an instance of how we cannot always find evidence of the exact social function of a medieval image. Yet the ritual it depicts clearly bears some relation to social practices and probably shows us how the caskets we have been looking at might be used. Not stationary objects in museums, but as "movables," boxes were themselves shifted and used to transmit messages, both in themselves and on themselves.

Opening and closing actions, together with the emphasis upon female hair that makes this drawing richly suggestive of male erotic desire, also form the culmination of the sixth panel of the famous series of tapestries in the Musée du Moyen Age, the other five of which depict the senses (fig. 57). Here within a tent glistening with golden tears that also seem like little spurting flames of fire, the lady stands between her two bestial supporters, the lion and



56. Two messengers and two ladies. Pen and ink drawing on parchment, Paris, c. 1400.
Berlin, Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Kupferstichkabinett.



57. *The Lady's Desire (?)*. Detail of the sixth hanging from *The Lady with the Unicorn*, a set of six tapestries made in France or the Southern Netherlands, c. 1500. Cluny, Paris, Musée du Moyen Age.

the unicorn, with a female servant who holds before her an open casket. Questions that have perplexed scholars for so long – exactly who is this woman in the six tapestries and to whom is she sending or from whom is she receiving this gift – overlooks how love functions most often as a fantasy, in which one gives something which does not exist, to someone created in one's imagination. The gift is the only real thing. The only real person in this scenario, as we have seen before in the tapestry representing *Sight*, is the patron, Jean Le Viste himself. The lady here who stands before her tent, it has been argued, is in the act of renouncing the five senses that have been represented in the other five tapestries, casting aside worldly glamor for a higher ideal of her own free will (*A mon seul desire*). This woman is not renouncing but neither is she taking. Rather she seems to be in the midst of giving, putting a jeweled necklace in the box and entwining it with an intimate item of her own clothing. By sending to her beloved a gift of her love, leaving her neck white and bare, she is combining two of the charged symbols of the body we have discussed in this chapter, the girdle, which like the necklace surrounded her own flesh, and the box that will carry her secret. What has not been noticed is that compared with the other women in the series this lady has short, even scraggy hair hanging down in a way that no courtly lady would have allowed, except for the fact that it signals her having cut off her own locks to weave them into the pearl and jeweled necklace that she places in the box. She has, as

in many literary and even some historical sources of the period, made the gift of her own hair to her lover. Rather there is an erotic charge of bare flesh against velvety rich textile, as in the description of Largesse in the *Roman de la Rose* whose “neck was disclosed, since, not long before, she had made a present of her neck-clasp to a lady. However it did not suit her badly that her collar was open and her throat disclosed so that her soft flesh showed its whiteness against her chemise.”

We return again to the key question asked throughout this study. Whose desire is being represented here? The motto placed on the tent above the lady's head has been translated in many different ways: “To my desire alone,” “To my own desire,” “To my only desire” – or even “In accordance only with my will.” Can this motto really refer to this lady's *own desire* to renounce her bodily senses for a higher love, when, as an object within this particular scheme, she can have no desire of her own? However you want to interpret these enigmatic words inscribed on the tent above her, they point beyond the tapestry to someone and somewhere else – to Le Viste, the patron. In many ways each of the six tapestries enacts the identical auto-eroticism of the unicorn looking in the mirror in the tapestry of *Sight*. Even if she does renounce the pleasures of the five senses for “my only desire” within the inexorable and paradoxical masculinist logic of the medieval image, her only desire (her desire for him) is actually *his* desire (for himself) and not really hers at all.



CHAPTER FOUR

LOVE'S SIGNS



80. A lady with a dog and a falcon and the offering of the heart. Tapestry made in France or the Southern Netherlands, c. 1400. Paris, Louvre.

Sometimes we observe falcons of slight build pin down by their courage large pheasants and partridges just as a boar is frequently cornered by a hound of modest size.

On the other hand we observe many noble falcons and peregrines frightened by the grubbiest sparrows and often routed by a kestrel. So if the kite or kestrel is found to be spirited and bold, diverging from its parents' class it deserves to be honoured with the perch of the goshawk and to be carried on the left forearm of a knight.

Andreas Capellanus

This argument is made in Andreas Capellanus's treatise by a man of the middle class who claims his right to woo a lady of higher social rank than himself, using animal and bird analogies to argue his case. Just as any bird can act with the bravery of a falcon – the noble bird used in the exclusively aristocratic sport of falconry – any man can develop the nobility to love higher than his station. These symbols are more than coincidental but part of the visual as well as the verbal language of love. Just as the hunting bird represents the nobler aspirations of the lover, others "who wish to indulge their lust with every

woman they see" are compared to "a shameless dog" and are unmoved "by man's true nature, which makes us distinct from all animals by the difference of reason." One superbly preserved tapestry shows a pair of lovers in the usual flowery *locus amoenus* with a stream running down the center (fig. 80). Here are included all the symbols of love discussed in this chapter – the animals such as the falcon, dog, and rabbit as well as the various flowers and the focal symbol of the heart. It is the lady who is seated on the ground who bears the beautiful specimen of a falcon on her left hand, a sign of her nobility and her hunting role in this relationship. In her



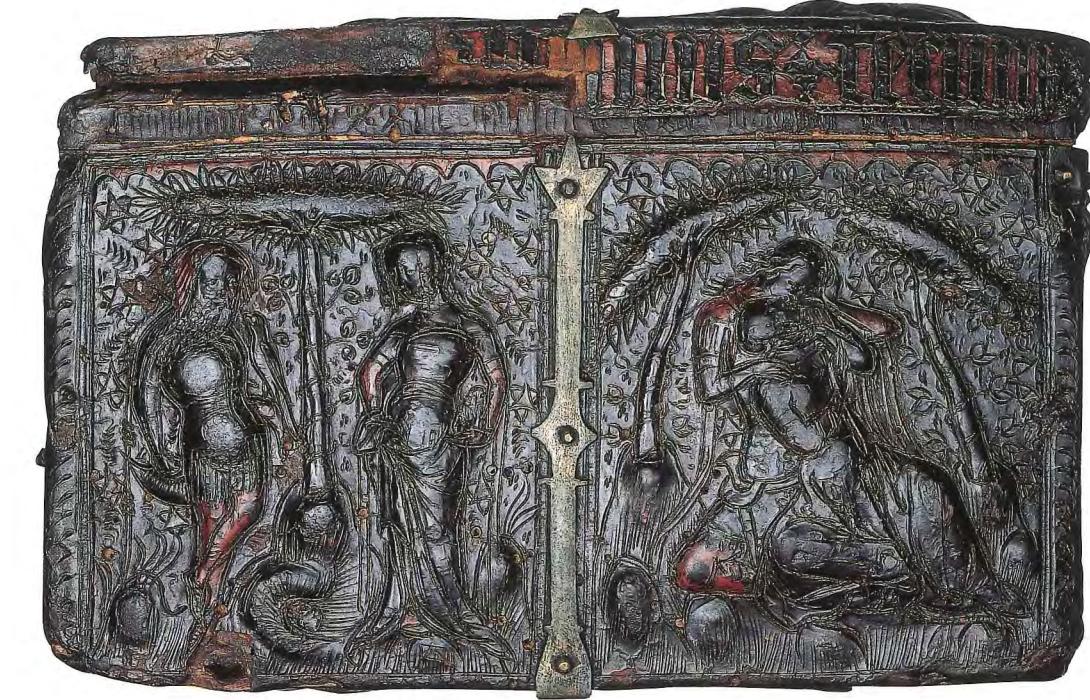
81. Konrad von Altstetten as hunter and hunted,
from the Manesse Codex, Zürich, c. 1300. Heidelberg
Universitätsbibliothek, ms Cod. pal. Germ. 848, fol. 249v.

other hand she holds a flower, sign of her virginity and the gift she might bestow upon her lover. Her suitor is of equal rank and strides toward her with one great leg stretched out, holding a tiny heart like a sweetmeat between his fingers. The bird of prey turns to eye the small red object. Despite these violent intimations of falcons ripping into pieces of human flesh, the whole point of this heart symbolism is to express the spiritual rather than the physical part of the lover's suit, since he is proffering that intangible and organless aspect of himself – his love. The physical aspect of this relationship is

evoked by the other animals in the garden, especially the lapdog that jumps at the lady's flower. This was the position that every lover longed to be in and small furry animals such as dogs and squirrels, which were also kept as pets, were common signs of male sexuality. Other intimations of animal passions are woven into the tapestry in the form of three rabbits, which in Old French were known as *con* – literally spelling the name of the female sexual organs. The menagerie of meanings – zoological, biological, and even magical – that surrounds these two lovers is a way of making explicit what cannot be depicted, of presenting the experience of love through a secret, symbolic language.

THE HUNT

Both men and women are depicted as falconers in medieval art and the falcon itself could be used as a metaphor of either the lover, the lady, or even Love itself in poetry of the period. When the lady is shown holding the bird of prey, as in the tapestry, it usually means that (within the amatory fiction at least) she has her lover under her power. When a man holds the falcon, however, it does not necessarily mean that he is in control of the love situation. One of the most splendid pages of the Manesse Codex shows the poet Konrad von Altstetten holding a falcon feeding on a small piece of meat used as part of the lure on his elegantly gloved hand (fig. 81). Who is feeding on whom here and who is really in control? The bird surely represents his lady who has her arms around her prey and feeds on him with her kisses. She is in the dominant spatial position in the image, but, like Konrad's fal-



82. A knight and a lady, and a couple embrace, on the side
of the "Talbot" casket, Flanders, c. 1400. Incised and moulded leather over wood,
10 x 7½ x 5" (25.5 x 19 x 12.5 cm). London, British Museum.

con, she is actually the object of his manipulation. The lady is also equated with the falcon as in Gottfried's *Tristan*, which describes Isolde as "exquisitely formed in every part ... as if love had formed her to be her own falcon" and her figure is described as "free and erect as a sparrow hawk's." Although the falcon is the bird of prey it has been tamed to hunt by its master. The poet is presented here as both hunter and hunted, orchestrating his own engorgement by the beautiful bird that looms above him.

A more direct use of the falconer image can be seen in the so-called Talbot casket said to have belonged to the Englishman John Talbot, Earl of Shrewsbury (1388–1453). On one side a

falconer is offering the bird a piece of meat from a purse at his belt while the lady stands aloof. On the other she has taken the bait in one of the most wonderfully entwined and animal kisses in fourteenth-century art (fig. 82). A twelfth-century German poem described how "Women and falcons are easily tamed, if you lure them the right way, they come to meet their man." The gesture with the purse is here what stirs the lady's attention and in the scene alongside she is shown "under" her lover as the "caught" prey, in the position of Konrad in the Manesse Codex. Here the falcon would seem even more directly to represent the male hunter's luring of the lady.



A woman is shown as an expert falconer in a tiny enameled gold brooch (fig. 83). For the aristocracy, used to the daily handling of these splendid birds, this scene would have been recognizable as that part of the falcon's handling where it is trained to rest on the leather glove of its master or mistress, by offering it a *bechin* or tiny morsel of fresh meat tied to the lure on the falconer's hand. Also visible here is the long cord, the *créance* or *filière*, that kept the bird in check during training. Training the falcon involved getting the bird first to accept human beings, which involved using a hood to blindfold the creature and calm it and then letting it fly off to hunt, but always tethered by the leash or *créance*. Progressing slowly, the training of birds took tremendous patience and sensitivity to the creature's moods on the part of its handler. No wonder it became the pre-eminent symbolic system for articulating relationships between men and women. Disgruntled wives would complain that their husbands cared more for their falcons than for them, but in fact the language used by both men and women by which they learned to articulate their desires was often based on the pleasant pastime of the hunt.

An embroidered *aumonière* showing the return of a lover to his lady also subtly expresses the sensuous relationship between falcon and falconer (fig. 84). This fragment of a velvet pouch with applied linen is superbly embroi-

dered with silver-gilt thread and silks, satin, stem, and split stitches ornamented with sequins and cabochons. On the back is a more standard image of a falconer but the front is almost a "close-up" on the delicate relationship between the creature being trained and its mistress. The lover here, his enormously long arms flapping out like wings and a hood on his shoulder, is assimilated to the noble bird who has to become used to being hooded, that is, having his eyes covered to induce calm and relaxation.

Flying back into her arms, as described in a contemporary poem which elaborates on this analogy between the lady and the falconer, this hawk-eyed youth stares at his mistress who puts a hand on his shoulder as if to stop him while holding the *créance* in her other hand. "The falconer knows full well how to call him back to the lure, to which he now returns to take his pleasure." Clarity of vision was one of the bird's defining

characteristics, for it had to be able to see its prey or its master or mistress from a long distance away. Although a man might have worn such a purse, its unusually direct and strong female subject-position and its focus upon the lady falconer as the point of return for the flighty bird suggest that this was probably a lady's *aumonière*, woven by one of the greatest nameless embroideresses of the fourteenth century.

That the rabbit was associated with the female and the dog with the male is made explicit in one of the most beautiful pages



83. A lady and falcon capture the lover's heart. Gold and enamel brooch made in France, c. 1400. Berlin, Kunstgewerbemuseum.



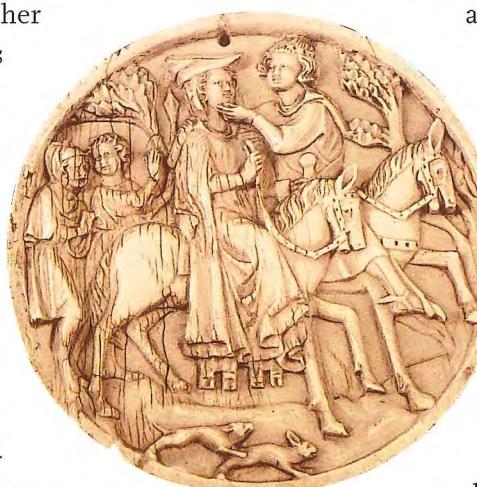
84. The falcon's return. Embroidered *aumonière* made in France, c. 1320. Silks and silver-gilt thread on velvet with applied linen, $8\frac{1}{4} \times 7\frac{3}{4}$ " (21 x 20 cm). Lyon, Musée de Tissus.



of a late thirteenth-century songbook or *Chansonnier* (fig. 85). Here a complex motet for three voices by Pierre de la Croix about love's sorrows and delays is introduced by a similarly complex visual scheme. The most upper voice, the *triplum*, opens with the phrase "S'amours" and shows a pair of seated lovers, each of whom pets or strokes their respective animal to arousal while simultaneously stretching out a hand to touch the other. The lady fondles her own smirking rabbit and her lord's thigh while he strokes his puppy and places his white-gloved hand on the lady's shoulder. In the adjacent letter "A" of the lower, slower musical line known as the *duplum*, which was sung at the same time as the *triplum* to the left, sits an isolated and disconsolate lover. His dejected figure contrasts with the words sung here: "At the rebirth of the joyous season, I must begin a song, for true love, whom I desire to serve, has given me reason to sing. He caught me in his gentle, laughing game and now I can think of nothing else but her ..." A single songbird next to him represents perhaps his plaintive lone voice compared with the conjugations of quadrupeds going on alongside. The small "E"

85. A lover with a dog and a lady with a rabbit, from a *Chansonnier*, Paris, c. 1280. Montpellier, Bibliothèque Universitaire de Médecine, ms H196, fol. 270r.

below him on the left of the second column is not illustrated but represents the third "part" in this three-voiced song, the *tenor*, which consists of the repeated word in Latin, *Ecce!* "Look!" near where hunters have sighted a stag in the beautifully drawn *bas-de-page* scene. The medieval musical theorist Johanees de Grocheo claimed that such motets cannot be appreciated by the common people, but are "for the learned" and "those seeking subtleties in the arts." Just as it was a challenge to hear this motet being sung with its three separate strands of multiple voices, we are urged to look hard at this complex layered visualization of amorous passion. Each part singing different words, the page presents a multiplicity of visual subject positions – the lover and his lady, the isolated lover, and the hunters below.



86. Lovers go off hunting.
Mirror case made in Paris, c. 1320. Ivory, h. 5" (12.5 cm).
London, Victoria and Albert Museum.

As the predominant blood-sport of the nobility in medieval Europe, hunting provided a whole host of signs for structuring human power relations. There was even a medieval poem of a lady allegorically represented as a stag, the anonymous *Li Dis Dou Cerf Amoroeus*, in which the lady, figured as a deer, is chased by hounds personified as "thoughts," "memories," and "desires." In another poem of 1332, Jean Acart de Hesdin's *L'Amoureuse Prise*, it is the male narrator who is pursued by the beauties of women in the guise of dogs named "pleasure,"



87. The dog as sign, on the lid of a French fourteenth-century ivory casket showing scenes from the romance of the *Châtelaine de Vergi* 9 x 4¹/₄ x 3³/₄ (22.6 x 10.8 x 9.7 cm). London, British Museum.

"will," "thought," and "hope." The lover can be both the hunter and the hunted. The dog has pounced on the rabbit in the lower part of an ivory mirror case showing a young couple starting off on a hunt (fig. 86). In the Old French version of Virgil's *Aeneid*, the *Roman d'Eneas* (c. 1160), when Lavinia's mother tries to persuade her daughter that Aeneas, being a sodomite, is not worthy of her love, one way she puts this is to say that he has disdain for the *pel de conin* or "rabbit fur." It reminds us of the description in the *Roman de la Rose* of those "delicious games of love" which include how "Here in the wood you may hear the dogs barking in chase of the rabbit." The violence of this metaphor is interesting for in reality, as in the ivory carving, the dog pouncing on the *con* does not desire to copulate with it, but to kill and devour it.

To some extent the appearance of animals here serves to disguise or euphemize the sexual

act – to keep it a secret. The dog is used as a sign in the actual process of an adulterous affair in the popular romance of the *Châtelaine de Vergi* carved in ivory on the lid of a casket (fig. 87). We already saw this story played out in the bedroom of the Palazzo Davanzati in Florence (see fig. 63) but here in miniature it serves to keep closer to the body the secret of a box. In the first of the eight quatrefoils the lady, seated with her lap-dog, explains to her kneeling lover the plan by which they could meet in secret; in the second they shake hands in agreement that she will send her little lapdog out to signal that the coast is clear, as she is doing in the third scene below. In the next quatrefoil the dog is a little furry witness to their meeting, jumping up on the knight's side of the bed as if in sympathy with the young man as he embraces his lady.

The most animal-obsessed and animate objects of the art of love are those most intimately

connected with the body. A variety of beasts appear on a fragment of the upper part of a lady's leather shoe, found in London during the nineteenth century but thought to be French work of c. 1400 (fig. 88). A young girl beats a dog on the left and a young man offers a mirror to a monkey on the right, marginal images of male lust and female vanity being brought under control, in contrast to the pair of lovers seated beneath a tree in the central roundel. Here an older lover offers a lady a gift in the form of a small circular object. Whereas today the lady's shoe has become a symbolic object of male fetishism, this medieval leather shoe, with its images of animal chastisement, had in addition to any erotic fascination a more complex discursive moral content. It was "readable" to the lover as he knelt down at his lady's feet in his proper subservient position, but it was also visible to the woman who wore it. The shoe impressed her authority to regulate the animal passions of her suitor, and was perhaps a gift from one of them, with its inscription *Amour merci je vous en prie*.

Even more closely connected to the lady's body than her shoe was her ring. A large fifteenth-cen-

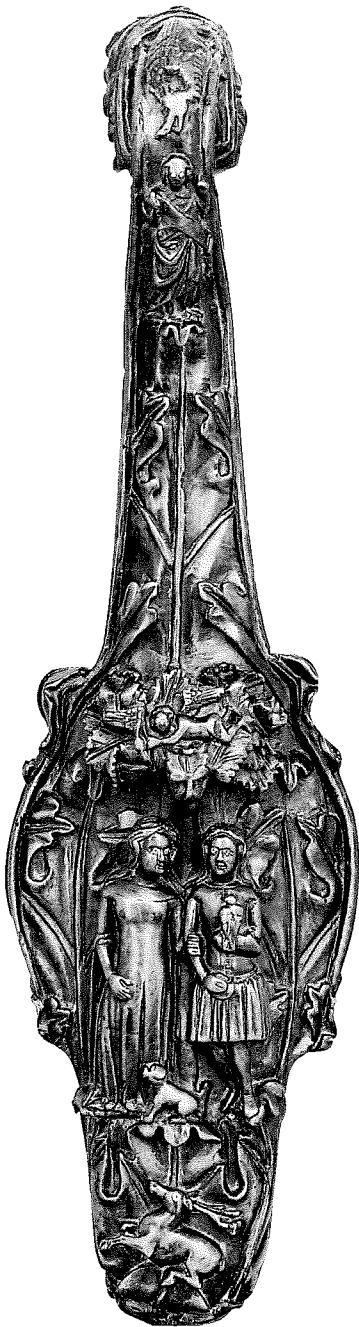


88. A dog, a monkey, and a lion, and the lover offers the lady money. Fragment of a lady's leather shoe made in France, c. 1400. London, British Museum.



89. The lady with a squirrel. Gold ring with sapphire setting made in France, fifteenth century. London, British Museum.

tury French gold ring set with a sapphire has a squirrel incised inside, another of the small furry pets of the lady's lap (fig. 89). Images are here combined with even more sophisticated and furtive forms of wordplay in two inscriptions linking love to grammatical exercises. On the outside appear the words *une dame nominative a fait de moy son datif par la parole genitive en depit de l'accusatif* and inside, next to the lady holding a leashed squirrel with one hand and a bunch of acorns in the other, is the inscription *tm [on] amour est infinitive ge veu estre son relatif*. The first inscription thus means that the ring has been given to a named lady as her possession despite her opposition – "A nominative lady has made me her dative by the genitive word despite the accusative." The more secret inside inscription, "love is infinite for her relative," suggests that this was a witty wedding ring since the lover has now become a relative of the lady, happy within her "unending" or "infinitive" circle. It has more innuendo still, since



90. Lovers with a dog, a falcon, and a stag, carved on a *mandora* or *chitarino* made in North Italy, c. 1420. Boxwood, rosewood, 1. 1'2" (36 cm). New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

the squirrel was often euphemistically used to describe the penis, as in the French *fabliau L'Esquiriel* where Robin searches in the "belly" of his beloved for nuts eaten the day before; when asked to explain to the girl what that bulge is in his clothes, he replies that it is the squirrel coming out of its hole. The male is "inside" the ring, worn next to the skin of the lady's finger where she has the squirrel on a leash enjoying his infinite supply of nuts. The nut or kernel also represents the secret, or truth, contained within something. The large sapphire on the front of the ring was, by contrast, thought to "make a man chaste" and "cool internal heat," which adds yet another magical dimension to this multi-faceted finger-ring.

Another suggestive late medieval object from the point of view of animal signs is the little cousin of the guitar, a stringed instrument called a *mandora* or *chitarino*, made in Milan around 1420 (fig. 90). It has been described as the perfect nuptial gift for a bride. The rosewood instrument, carved deeply at the back, shows yet another variant of two lovers beneath a tree. The lady stands on the left, her lapdog yapping at her feet. In this case it is the male suitor who holds a falcon in one hand and puts his other hand "where his money is," that is, on the purse at his belt and on his sex, as if guaranteeing his potency in the future. A small naked Amor fires an arrow down at the lady from the tree above and a startled stag leaps below. Toward the top stands a severe-looking figure with one hand upraised and a scroll in the other, looking like a prophet who has accidentally stumbled out of an altarpiece on to a musical instrument by mistake. But of course there is no mistake. He stands above for a purpose, to sanction the union carved below, adding

the blessing of the Christian God to the pagan God of Love. Can we gender this object? On the front of the peg box is carved the small seated figure of a woman plucking an instrument shaped just like this one, suggesting the object's original use. In showing once again the female control over male sexual appetite, the lovers on its back appear like reformulations of Adam and Eve in Eden, except that here the daughter of Eve has the serpent literally in her hands and "plays" him, for the curving head of the instrument is carved so as to represent, from the side, a monstrous dragon.

In this zoo of conflicted natures and animal appetites it is important not to see these signs as having any one single or uniform meaning. That these could change according to the gender of the viewer is suggested by what remains the most extensive literary work of the Middle Ages linking love to animal forms, the *Bestiaire d'Amour*, written by Richard de Fournival (1201–60), chancellor of the Cathedral of Notre-Dame at Amiens, book collector, and licensed surgeon. His *Bestiary of Love* uses animals such as the lion and the beaver as symbols, not of Christ as in the traditional Bestiary, but as arguments of his own desire. In manuscripts of this work we see not only miniatures of the respective animals but Richard arguing with his lady, using *paroles et paintures*, that is, words and pictures. As well as the dog, Richard uses the wolf, viper, crow, weasel, and crocodile to describe the love of women. Elaborating on the traditional association of love with the eyes, it is compared with the crow picking out men's brains through the eye sockets. Trained as a cleric to see women as leading man astray, Richard desires the lady only insofar as she accepts the animal's maternal role,

nurturing him like a mother. But Richard did not have the last word. In a text that appears after that of his in a number of manuscripts there appears the Response to the *Bestiaire* in which the lady gets to answer back, refusing all his metaphors and using the same animals to make opposite arguments: "Although the crow seizes man through his eyes ... although Love captures man and woman through the eyes, it does not follow from that that the crow resembles Love. Say, rather, that one must with the eyes of the heart, compare it to hate." In swooping down from the sky, the falcon, she reminds Richard, "strikes death into its victim." Likewise she sees the unicorn asleep in the lap of a virgin not as an image of a man trapped by the lures of women but as a warning about the guile of such creatures to entice their way into women's affections through beguiling speech. The lady knows all too well that the male writer is using the combination of words and images (*dites et peintes*) to argue his case and that clerics like Richard use learning to "overtake unknowledgeable people." "For this reason," she says, "I call them birds of prey, and would do well to be protected against them." In the *Response* woman is seen as the victim of male tyranny, aggression, and deceit. This literary work, which may have been penned by a learned lady in response to Richard's own text, is important testimony to how the animal symbolism discussed in this chapter might be resisted by those who were most objectified by it.

A beast not mentioned in the *Bestiary of Love* is the griffin, a powerful mythical creature, which comes between the lover and his lady in a superb Swiss tapestry (fig. 91). The young man holds a scroll reading: "schone frowe. begnudent mich



91. The griffin protects the lady. Tapestry made in Basel, c. 1460 (detail).
Whole tapestry, 3'5¹/₄" x 4'10¹/₄" (1.05 x 1.48 m). Berlin, Kunstgewerbemuseum.

mit Eurer Liece" ("Lady bestow upon me your love"), and she replies: "der Griffe betüttet. mir den list. dz. rehter liebe. nim uf erden ist" ("The griffin here tells me of the trick that true love on earth no more exists"). Half-eagle and half-lion, griffins were the fierce signs of unchastity and faithlessness. They also appear on contemporary German love-caskets as guardians and protectors of the contents. In the tapestry the beast not only guards the treasure of the lady's body like a monstrously oversized lapdog, but stands between her and her would-be lover. The images dealt with in this book idealize human relationships to suggest that controlling one's lover is as easy as

keeping a pet dog in check. Perhaps it is only the terrifying griffin in this tapestry with his eagle's head and leonine body that gives us a better sense of the fear of sexual violation felt by many women in the Middle Ages. This lady, like the woman who replies so wittily to Richard de Fournival, knows that men will try any trickery to get what they want. If the beauty of the falcon and the aristocratic experience of using real animals provided a rich resource of animal signs for various dynamics of male desire, it was imaginary animals, fantastic beasts like the unicorn and the griffin, that provided not only protection but also something of a sympathetic subject-posi-

tion for women. This is not because women, as a number of scholastic writers of the period were to argue, should themselves be seen as deformed monsters. It was because like these strange, beautiful, and hybrid creatures they too were so often the impossibly imaginary and constructed objects of fantasy.

THE ROSE

In the *Roman de la Rose*, immediately following the description of the Fountain of Love at the center of the garden, in which proud Narcissus gazed, the poet describes how "Among the thousand things in the mirror, I saw rosebushes loaded with roses; they were set off to one side surrounded by a hedge. I was seized by so great a desire for them that not for Pavia or Paris would I have left off going there where I saw this splendid thicket." Intoxicated by their perfume he singles out one bud "that was so very beautiful that, after I had examined it carefully, I thought that



92. The lover yearns to pluck the rose,
from *Le Roman de la Rose*, Paris, c. 1380. Oxford,
Bodleian Library, ms e. Mus. 65, fol. 22r.



93. The game of the rose and lovers playing chess,
on the end of a painted wood casket made in Konstanz,
c. 1320. Zürich, Schweizerisches Landesmuseum.

none of the others was worth anything beside it." In the poem the lover cannot reach the rose at this point in the text because of the thorns surrounding it and has to wait until the very end of the poem; one illuminator shows what the rose represents – not only the lover looking at the flower of his desire but its incarnation as a lovely girl wearing a flowery chaplet (fig. 92).

Flowers of one kind or another are present on almost every image in this book, either as the backgrounds to tapestries or as the borders of manuscript pages. Flowers should never be considered merely decorative elements in medieval art, whether they appear growing in stone in cathedrals or as they luxuriate in the trellises between texts. On one of the ends of a painted wooden casket, which has scenes of hunting and feasting on its other faces, a lord and lady are shown playing chess (fig. 93). The young man, falcon in hand, is watching attentively as the lady makes the first move. Right in the center of the image is one of the studs holding the box together.



94. The lady plucks the rose, one of four fragments of a tapestry set showing *Figures in a Rose Garden*, Southern Netherlands, c. 1450–55. Wool, silk, and metallic yarns, 9³/₄" x 10'8" (2.89 x 3.25 m). New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art.



95. The lady plucks phallus-fruits from a tree.
Wood casket probably made in Basel, early fifteenth century.
Villingen-Schwenningen, Franziskanermuseum.

er, which the artist has wrought as a six-petaled flower. Covering the red and white checkerboard it makes clear what are the stakes of this game. The lady's lapdog has given up already and snoozes below the flower and the gameboard.

Compared with such intimate and playful objects, we might think that tapestries would be more formal and public in their presentation of love. Rulers such as Philip the Bold, Duke of Burgundy, spent far more money on tapestries than on paintings because these complex woven objects were part of the princely magnificence and splendor of the fifteenth-century courts. But they could become highly personalized objects too, often moving with their owners from one castle to another. Bearing not only family arms but personal love-mottoes, they could create eternal spring on freezing winter nights, their thousand-flower backgrounds enveloping beds, boudoirs, and even the bodies that moved against them and which seemed almost to take part in the woven world of unicorn-hunts and garden frolics. The

figures set in a rose-garden in a set of four enigmatic tapestries from the Southern Netherlands are nearly life-size. In the center of one a lady plucks a rose from a bush, pushing it through the hat of a young male figure who stands before her, so that it appears framed by a dark nimbus (fig. 94). Is this an erotic game in which the sign of the chaplet and hood of an earlier period has been replaced by the voluminous velvets of these great Burgundian hats and headdresses? The recipient of the rose here fares better than the standing gentleman on the right who grasps the thorny stem of the same bush from which the lady plucks the flower. This type of triangulation of desire in which a woman is placed between two men is here worked into a variation on the traditional theme of love's two branches – pleasure and pain.

Flowers need not always signify the female body. On the short end of a German casket a lady is carved in the act of plucking not roses but penises, which grow together with their pendulous fruits on a tree, and collecting them in a



96. Pierre Sala presents his heart to a Marguerite (daisy), from his *Emblèmes et devises d'amour*, Lyon, c. 1500. London, British Library, ms Stowe 955, fols 5v–6r.

sack (fig. 95) – a rare instance of the visualization of a woman's own sexual desire through the objectification of her partner. Her desire is seen as equal to the man's, for on the other end of the casket he stands next to a tree bursting with leaves in the shape of vaginas.

More conventional flowers that are still the staple of Valentine cards and love-gifts appear everywhere in the *Emblèmes et Devises d'Amour*, a little book of love poems by the royal courtier Pierre Sala, written in gold ink on purple-stained parchment for his beloved Marguerite Bullioud, whom he had loved since childhood. When he gave this book to her as a gift around 1500 she was actually married to someone else – Antoine Bautier, the king's treasurer – and only after his

death in 1506 was Marguerite free to marry Pierre. Also extant is the manuscript's wooden carrying case decorated with flowers of red leather, fitted with rings so that Marguerite could wear it hanging like a purse from her girdle. The case as well as the pages of the book are filled with the letter "M" for Marguerite. The intensely personal nature of this manuscript as a gift of love is shown in the very first miniature in which Pierre is shown placing his heart inside a giant Marguerite (fig. 96). The painter from Lyon who created this page left the face of Pierre blank here so that a more accomplished illuminator and expert portraitist, Jean Perréal, might add it, just as he added his beautiful miniature portrait at the end of the manuscript. But this never hap-

pened. This little book, while it looks back to the symbolic language of flowers and hearts in the art of love of the medieval period, also looks forward to the Renaissance in that it presents the portrait image of the beloved, constantly before the eyes of his mistress, as a crucial image of selfhood. The unfinished face of Pierre in this miniature stands as a lovely emblem of how the lover (unlike his lady) needs to be more than an empty slate waiting to be filled in. Marguerite, unlike Pierre's particular personality that fills this manuscript, remains a flower.

THE HEART

That the "heart-shaped" symbol we still use today is, as we all know, not actually shaped like the muscle that pumps blood through our bodies, should alert us to the deeply symbolic ways in which all parts of the human body are manipulated as signs in culture. One of the most superb Parisian ivory mirror cases usually called "the offering of the heart" was carved before this symbol became a universal one, so it looks less heart-shaped (fig. 97). Holding his organ in uplifted hands snug in the folds of his cape, the kneeling lover surrenders it to the standing lady, who bends slightly, her left arm extended in acceptance and her right arm crowning him with a chaplet. The kneeling presentation resonates with the image of the Magi approaching Christ with gifts, but also evokes a far more central and important rite in Christian life. This is the transformation of God's own body in the miracle of the Mass itself, when, during transubstantiation, matter is turned into the very body of Christ. An *elevatio* of the heart trans-

forms it from matter into spirit, from a bodily organ into an eternal bond. The host was not just an object of veneration and adoration, and so here too it is not the woman's body that is the focus but the lover's love. The lady's body becomes the altar table on which Christ's bloody death and resurrection are celebrated, as an analog to the lover's suffering and sacrifice.

This would be a "chaste" reading of the ivory, one in accordance with the important motif carved on the left of the two grooms beating the lovers' horses that is a sign of their having tamed their lower animal passions. An alternative understanding of this same ivory would see the heart here less as a disembodied pseudo-sacred symbol and instead as a deeply corporeal and lascivious piece of palpitating flesh, akin to the way in which the heart appears in contemporary literature as a constantly translatable organ of appetite, moving from lover to lady and back



97. The offering of the heart. Ivory mirror case from Paris, c. 1320. London, Victoria and Albert Museum.

again. In *Cligés*, written by Chrétien de Troyes in the twelfth century, the hero and heroine undergo extensive heart-swapping, so that at one point the heroine Fenice describes her heart as now being lodged in that of her lover Cligés, where it is a slave to his. Sometimes equated with the phallus, the heart was synonymous with the male's "courage." If the kneeling suitor here is presenting the lady with a symbol for his own member, the chaplet, she in preparing to place it over his head is the sign for her own body. The heart was far more than a pumping mechanism. It was the source of life's vitality, the seat of sensation, the fount of feeling, thought, and even memory (as we still say "to learn by heart") so that in centering the self there people were locating their desires within the middle of their bodies, whereas modern people tend to place everything higher. The animal spirit, an instrument of the outer and inner senses, was thought to be located in the brain; natural spirit, the instrument of nutrition, rested in the liver; and the most subtle part of the blood, called by doctors and philosophers the vital spirit, resided in the heart. The spirit accompanied the individual soul from the transmission of life from the father to the infant in fertilization to its re-ascent toward salvation and could leave the body in states of ecstasy. When the lover removes his heart and

presents it to his beloved we are witnessing the medieval equivalent of an out-of-body experience.

The heart was also crucially linked to the eyes in medieval doctrines of love: beauty strikes through the eye and direct to the heart. In manuscripts of the *Roman de la Rose* the miniature immediately following that of the lover looking at the rose often shows him being struck in the eye by the arrow of the God of Love and then becoming his vassal, culminating in a scene depicting the God of Love locking the lover's heart (fig. 98). This key is much larger than that described in the text but draws attention to the radical violence of the act:

Then from his purse he drew a small, well-made key made of pure refined gold. "With this," he said, "I shall lock your heart, and I require no other guarantee.

My jewels are under this key; it is smaller than your little finger, yet it is the mistress of my jewelbox, and as such its power is great." Then he touched my side and locked my heart so softly that I hardly felt the key. "I wish and command you to put your heart in a single place so that it be not divided, for I do not like diversion. Whoever divides his heart among several places has a little bit of it everywhere ... Take care, how-



98. The God of Love locking the lover's heart, from *Le Roman de la Rose*, Paris, c. 1380. London, British Library, Add. ms 42133, fol. 15.

ever, that you do not lend it; for if you had done so, I would think it a contemptible act; give it rather as a gift with full rights of possession and you will have greater merit.

This passage is of great relevance to understanding many of the caskets and coffers with their locks and hearts over the keyhole that are reproduced in this book (see fig. 55). The heart is both a gift given by a man to a woman, as in the tapestry showing a pair of lovers (see fig. 80), and is equated with wealth, like jewels or gold, stored in a chest. The lover's imagining his heart as a phantasmatic object, a part-object that can metonymically stand for the gift of his whole being or self in love, might at first seem like a dangerous ploy for the male to use. Making him into a vulnerable and dependent figure in conflict with the actual codes of male superiority, the exposing of his heart might seem like a self-emasculation. But within the logic of the gift this presentation of the center of the self to the other



99. The offering of a heart, and the lover offers the lady cash, from the *Alexander Romance*, Bruges, 1344, under the direction of Jean de Grise. Oxford, Bodleian Library, ms Bodl. 264, fol. 59r.

foreclosed any threat of vulnerability and detonated the danger of female usurpation of the male role. For it is predominantly men who end up taking out their hearts and shoving them into the hands of their beloveds. More than wearing their heart on their sleeve they presented it at every opportunity, whereas in images, as in the lyrics and Romances, women tend to keep their hearts more privately to themselves. The margins of the Bodleian *Alexander Romance* show two contrasting scenes on the lower parts of an opening that are often described as the lady offering her heart to her lover contrasted with a lady being tempted by the offer of a purse (fig. 99). But it would be rare to see an image in which the lady's heart is exposed so blatantly. It is surely an image of the lady accepting the gift of the heart of her lover, his gesture of touching his breast indicating the source of the organ. The lady looks carefully at the proffered gift in one case and in the other rightly turns away. The contrast here is between love and money, between an elevated spiritual love proffered and



100. "With All My Heart." Padlock made in France, fifteenth century. Gold, diam. 7/8" (2.2 cm). London, British Museum.

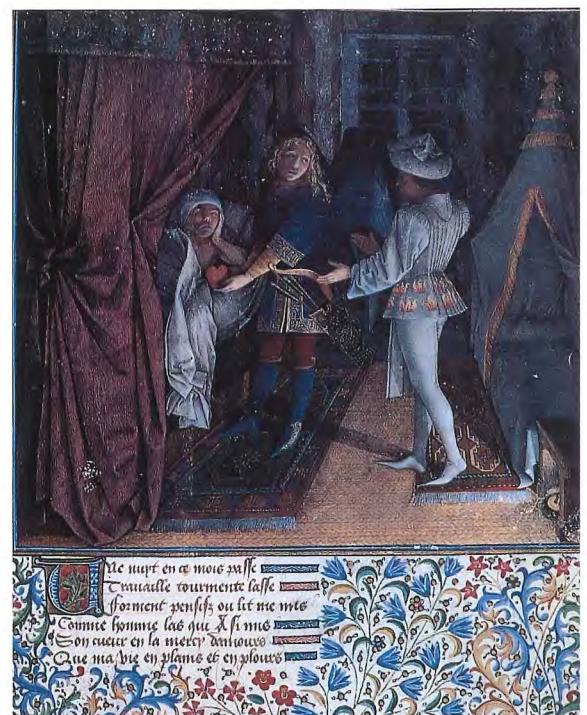
accepted in the guise of the heart and a base, physical offer of money.

Although the heart is the greatest gift of the self, it is only an image, a sign that has no guarantee of authenticity. The author of the French translation of Ovid's *Art of Love* made this point clear:

The author says, and it is true, that one who wants to begin his love affair well must pretend that he is prepared to do every service, every wish, and every private duty that he can for his lady. Because of this the youths say in their songs that they want to show their loves that they are prepared in word and deed. They sing this in their little song: "To serve my lady/I have given my heart and myself."

Likewise, the images and objects described here did not necessarily represent true feelings

but provided a series of conventions that could be adopted and used when necessary. Whatever was locked by the tiny gold padlock that bears the inscribed motto *de tout mon cœur* ("with all my heart") it was secured by the idea of the heart's wholeness and truth (fig. 100). An enameled gold brooch in the British Museum dating from c. 1425 bears the inscription *Je suis/Vostre/sans/partier* ("I am yours inseparably"), again suggesting that the heart was given by a lover to his or her beloved to represent feelings of eternal attachment. But the day after giving such heart-felt gifts the feelings of one or the other could have changed. Objects in this sense are less fickle than people, the golden heart is more durable in its



101. Barthélémy d'Eyck
Desire Takes the Heart, from the *Livre du Cœur d'amours épris*, Aix-en-Provence, c. 1460–70. Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Cod. Vind. 2597, fol. 2r.



102. A lady grates her lover's heart. Casket made in Basel, c. 1430. Wood. Basel, Historisches Museum.

embodiment of desire than those whose feelings it might, for a time, express.

The heart can undergo transformation, sensitive to every slight and vulnerable to the most exquisite torments of the lady's fingers. On one wooden casket, right next to a great lock, the lady performs an unusual chore that looks at first as if she is scrubbing her lover's heart clean on a scrubbing-board, but she is being even more cruel than this. She is grating it into a mortar (fig. 102). Her inscription, *das herze din lidet pin*, refers directly to this action ("The heart suffers pain"). Nothing could be further from the flat abstraction of the modern heart-shaped symbol than the vulnerable fleshy object being tortured here. Seen as an inevitable part of the love-process, this lover's agony was not so much a form of masochism, which is played out for pleasure, but rather a form of prayer, submitting one-

self to the higher power of the *jungfrei[lin]* whom the lover addresses with her own speech scroll.

The most compelling of all medieval images of the travails and suffering of the male heart is the first miniature in the superbly illuminated manuscript of the *Livre du cœur d'amours épris* written by King René of Anjou in 1457 (fig. 101). The dream poem describes how one night the God of Love takes the poet's heart from his breast and hands it to the Page, "Ardent Desire," who has risen from his little bed next to that of his master, his hands open to receive it. All that gives away the role of Desire here are the tiny flames of desire that light up his short skirt, which reveals his shapely white-tighted legs. In the rest of the poem the heart, personified as the knight Coeur, will fight various battles until it finds favor with the lady, who is something of an absence throughout the poem and its illustra-

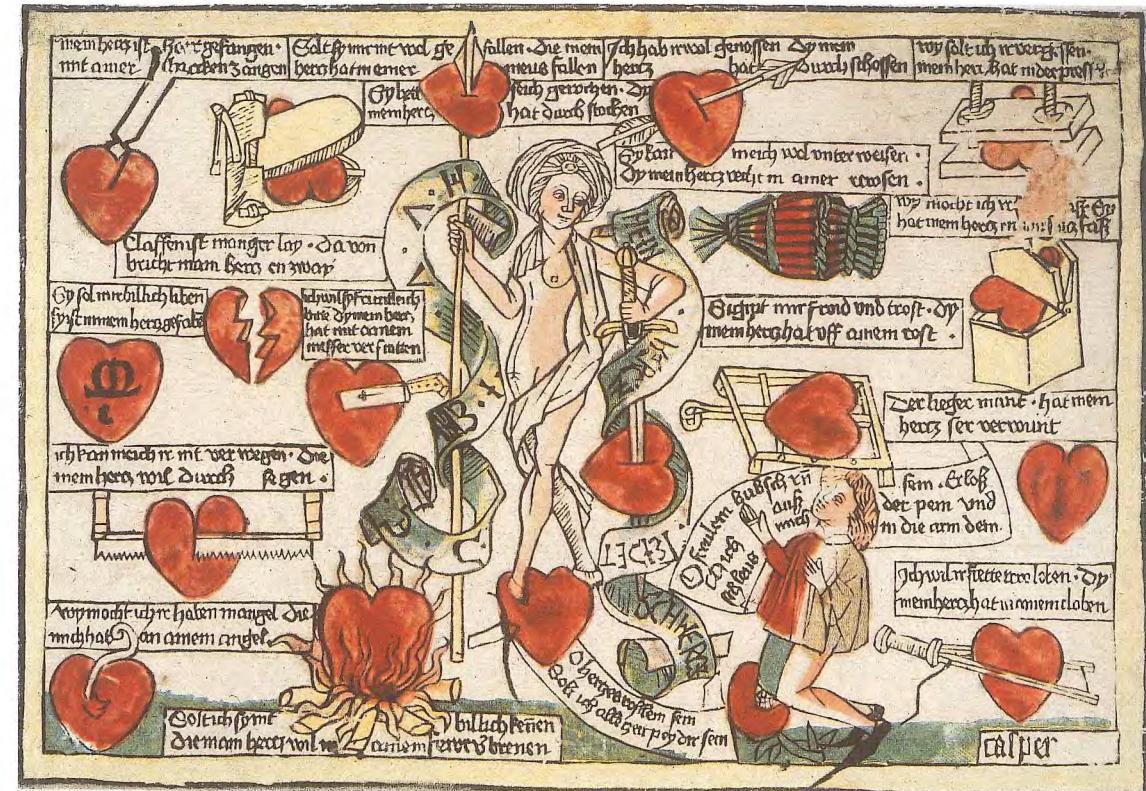


103. *Songs from the Heart*, from the *Chansonnier de Jean de Montchenu*, Savoy, c. 1475.
Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, ms Rothschild 2973, fols 3v–4r.

tions. The talented illustrator Barthémy d'Eyck seems far more interested in the gentle gazes and gestures that take place between males than the end of the quest: the preening perfection of homosocial rather than heterosexual desire. What happens in the delicate shadows of this great canopied bed is the sensuous handling of crimson flesh by male hands, those of the Self, Love and Desire.

Since the heart was associated with memory as well as love it is not surprising that a number of heart-shaped prayerbooks existed in the fifteenth century. But there is also a superb heart-shaped *Chansonnier* that contains fifteen French and thir-

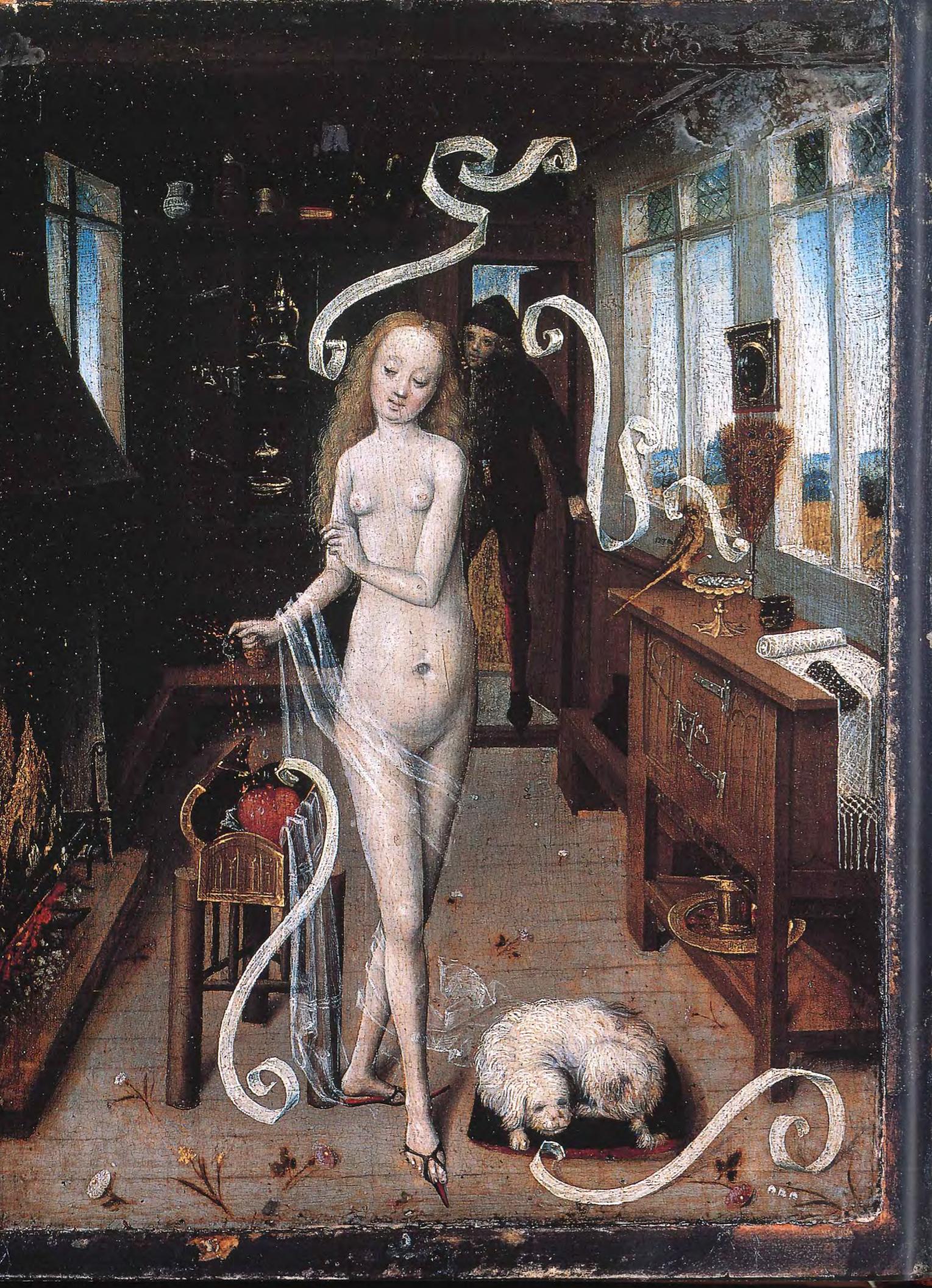
ty Italian chansons by great composers of the time, such as Dufay and Busnois (fig. 103). The miniature of an interior with a strolling couple seems ill-fitted on to the curving page, but perhaps it is because it cuts a hole into the heart, into the shape that we want to see as always whole and inviolable, that makes it so disturbing. For its owner it would have evoked the heart as a sacred as well as a sensuous storage place, a coffer of memories, songs, and images "learned by heart." But this unusual manuscript belonged not to a knight but to a high ecclesiastic from Savoy, Jean de Montchenu, and was made for him just before he became Bishop of Agen in 1477. If this example seems to do violence



104. Master Caspar of Regensburg
Frau Minne's Power over Men's Hearts, 1479. Woodcut. Berlin, Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Kupferstichkabinett.

to the integrity of the heart it is nothing compared with a colored German woodcut by Master Caspar of Regensberg, which displays the brutal tortures of the lover's unfortunate organ (fig. 104). No fewer than eighteen hearts are pummeled, squeezed, sawn in half, pressed with thumb-screws, and speared like so many kebabs by Frau Minne. The inscriptions in German refer to the power of women over men's hearts. No image better represents the fantasy of pain and fragmentation that men constructed and enjoyed and which served to reverse the real situation and make women the rulers not only of men's bodies but of their souls as well.

The most remarkable two-dimensional representation of this power is a little anonymous panel-painting often called *The Love Charm* (fig. 105). A naked girl with long blonde hair has captured a bleeding heart in a chest and with one hand kindles the flames of love over it with a tinderbox and with the other quenches its fire with drops of water from a sponge. All the themes that we have seen before, of love running hot and cold, all the intervisual associations of objects as diverse as coffers, hearts, dogs, birds, flowers, and mirrors are brought into play within this space, except that their symbolic efficacy is now held together by the translucent web of painted



reality. The object of desire stands by the hearth, the site of female power and control totally naked, her transparent shift serving to reveal rather than conceal her voluptuous body. Like a parody of the Annunciation, which we often forget is an image of sacred love, in which the Virgin Mary conceives the Christ Child, the young girl looks demurely down. Here however the subject of desire, the young male visitor, has no wings but has to open the door to peek within.

What he sees inside has been identified by some scholars as a depiction of traditional fertility rites of the night of St. Andrew, which took place on 30 November. But anyone can see that yellow corn is ripe for the harvest outside the girl's window and that this is therefore midsummer magic. If it does represent a moment in the erotic calendar it is more likely to be the Feast of St. John, which was celebrated on 28 June. Lighting bonfires, picking aphrodisiacal herbs, and binding one's lover were all part of the pagan rites of summer's beginning that galvanized communal energy for the coming harvest. A sixteenth-century writer describes in a poem the magical substances that a prostitute keeps in her chamber, including "the kindling wood from the fires of St. Jean," as well as a parrot, a bird evocative of lust, which here in the painting perches on a tray of sweetmeats. The enchantress has cast her spells to make the young man fall in love with her. The realism of the depiction lures us into thinking that this is a record of some actual folkloric rites, but it is just as much a fantasy on the part of a male artist as are the other images in this chapter. The magic here lies not in what is represented but in how it

105. *The Love Charm*, made by an anonymous Rhenish painter, late fifteenth century. Oil on panel, 9½ x 7" (24 x 18 cm). Leipzig, Museum der Bildenden Kunste.

is represented – the new medium of oil paint that makes every spark and droplet, every fold of flesh, apparent to our senses in new ways.

The besotted boy's mundane, almost vacant look is perhaps the first instance in Western art of the pornographic gaze, especially since we the viewers from outside the picture are urged to identify with him, lured as though we were his external double, to stare into this mirror. His gaze is surely meant to mirror that of the viewer outside this picture, a male observer who can enjoy this objectified image that is supposedly luring him to her by the magic spell but which is doing so in reality through the new magic of paint. It was probably made to hang in a private room similar to this one. As is usual, the male subject of desire seemingly captured by the image of a desired object is in control both of making the picture and of observing it. Here a woman is represented not as weaving textiles to sustain the disavowal of her deficient body, but weaving a series of magic spells that allow it to be uncovered. The author of the fourteenth-century *Ménagier de Paris* uses the ominous term *ensorclere* or bewitch to describe a wife's way of gaining control over her husband. This painting would be better called "the young witch" since it bears witness to the beginning of that disturbing and dangerous set of associations that, over the next two centuries, will lead to the trial, torture, and execution of thousands of bodies like the young girl's here, a murderous form of institutionalized Early Modern misogyny, more irrational than anything that took place during the Middle Ages.

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THE MEDIEVAL ART OF LOVE

OBJECTS AND SUBJECTS
OF DESIRE

MICHAEL CAMILLE

HARRY N. ABRAMS, INC., PUBLISHERS

Il y commence le .x. iure des propriétés qui tient de la matière de quoy toutes choses matérielles sont faites. Et vu ce que le prologue de cestui .x. iure soit compte le premier chapitre. Car il definiue moult bien engendral de la dicta matière. Le premier chapitre de la matière de quoy les choses matérielles sont faites.

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Frontispiece: "How Material Things are Made," from Bartholomeus Anglicus,
Livres des Proprietez des Choses, Paris, c. 1400. Wolfenbüttel, Herzog-August-Bibliothek.

Page 6: Hieronymous Bosch, *Inside the Bubble of Love*, detail of *The Garden of Earthly Delights*, c. 1510. Madrid, Prado.

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