

Enclosed Desires: A Study of the Wooing Group¹

Denis Renevey

The start of learning, thus, lies in reading, but its consummation lies in meditation; which, if any man will learn to love it very intimately and will desire to be engaged very frequently upon it, renders his life pleasant indeed, and provides the greatest consolation to him in his trials. This especially it is which takes the soul away from the noise of earthly business and makes it have even in this life a kind of foretaste of the sweetness of the eternal quiet.²

Psychological introspection is an important element in the Augustinian tradition of meditation. Augustine recognizes himself as a spiritual being and discovers God in the innermost reaches of his soul. Beyond his sinful nature, man could, through the practice of meditation, temporarily regain a glimpse of the bliss which characterized his prelapsarian life, being face to face with God. In the eyes of Hugh of St. Victor, for instance, meditation and its fruits were part and parcel of the general cursus of learning which he discussed in the *Didascalicon*, written in the late 1120s. The study of the liberal arts, the ratiocinative endeavours towards a better understanding of the world, belonged to a scheme which ultimately led to *ruminatio* on the creatures, to discover and decode the signs poured into them through the grace of God. The quest for and encounter with the creator went hand in hand with self discovery, positively revealed and transcended in a controlled but creative study of the world.

In 1081, Anselm of Canterbury sent six prayers and one meditation to Adelaide, the youngest daughter of William the Conqueror (see Figure 1).³ The letter

¹ I wish to express my thanks to my supervisor Dr. Vincent Gillespie, fellow of St. Anne's College, who read several versions of this chapter, and whose suggestions and comments in the course of my research have been invaluable. I am also grateful to Franck McGovern for reading this chapter and improving my English. I owe a great debt to the Berrow Foundation and the Swiss National Foundation, which made it possible for me to spend stimulating years at Lincoln College, Oxford, to do research for a D.Phil. degree.

² Jerome Taylor, trans., *The Didascalicon of Hugh of St. Victor* (1961; rpt. New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), p. 93.

³ Benedicta Ward, *The Prayers and Meditations of St. Anselm: With the Proslogion* (1973; rpt. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1988) (hereafter *Prayers and Meditation*); see especially p. 275.

which accompanied them gives some interesting hints as to how meditation was to be performed:

Let the soul of the sinner examine itself,
despise what it finds,
be humbled by what it despises,
in humiliation be filled with terror of the Last Judgement,
and in terror burst into tears and lamentation.⁴

In a typically syllogistic mode, Anselm propounds a total rejection of the self, on the premises that introspection reveals a sinful self, unworthy of its creator. The nineteen pieces which make up *The Prayers and Meditations* express in their own ways the state of humiliation and terror which characterizes the postlapsarian man when he confronts himself with the thoughts of his creator. Rejection of the self and demands of benevolence from intermediaries seem to be essential to the setting up of a mode of communication between the contemplative and God:

To you [St. John the Evangelist], blessed one, so loving and so loved of God,
this little man who is accused of God
appeals with prayers,
so that by the intercession of one so loved
he may turn from himself the threat of the wrath of God.⁵

Before the abyss which separates the contemplative and God, Anselm devises a chain made up of holy representatives, who, being intimate with God, may address him on behalf of the sinful soul. The deity ingests only the purified utterances which the mouthpieces for the fallen man have shaped from the wooing messages of the contemplatives.

However disparate those two approaches to meditation may seem, they often coalesce in later medieval writings. The fusion of elements from both traditions is conspicuous in a series of lyrical prose texts of the early thirteenth century, the Middle English Wooing Group.⁶ The Wooing Group is a collection of four texts,

⁴ Quoted in R. W. Southern, *Saint Anselm. A Portrait in a Landscape* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 104.

⁵ *The Prayers and Meditations of St. Anselm*, p. 157; see also S. Anselmi, *Opera Omnia*, vol. 3, ed. F. S. Schmitt (Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson, 1946), pp. 3–91.

⁶ W. Meredith Thompson, ed., *Pe Wohunge of Ure Lauerde*, EETS OS 241 (London: Oxford University Press, 1958); unless indicated, all references to the texts of the Wooing Group will be made from this edition; see also Richard Morris, ed., *Old English Homilies*, EETS OS 34 (London: Oxford University Press, 1868); see also Norman F. Blake, ed., *Middle English Religious Prose* (London: Edward Arnold, 1972), pp. 61–72, which is a much more serviceable edition; unfortunately, Blake edits only *Pe Wohunge*. For the dating of *Pe Wohunge of Ure Lauerde*, see Thompson, *Wohunge*, pp. liii–lxi; see also E. J. Dobson, *The Origins of Ancrene Wisse* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976). Dr. Bella Millett (private communication), of Southampton University, is currently working on the *Ancrene Wisse* and is inclined to put its date of composition later than the assumed date of 1190–1225.

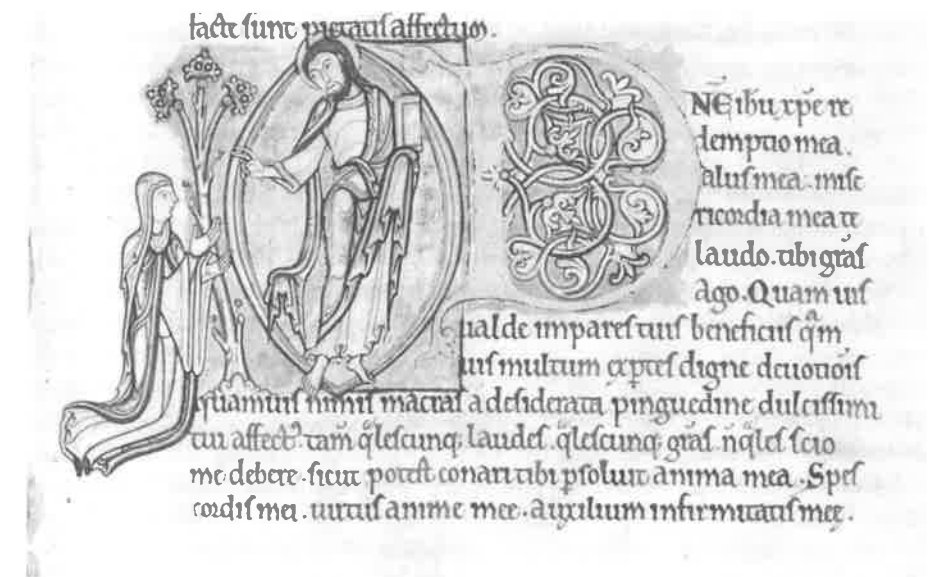


Figure 1. Bodleian Library, Oxford, MS Auct. D. 2. 6, fol. 156r (c. 1139–58). Illumination for St. Anselm's *Prayers and Meditations* depicting a supplicant female before Christ. Reproduced by permission of the Bodleian Library, Oxford.

namely *Pe Wohunge of ure Lauerde*, *On God Ureisun of God Almihti*, *On Lofsong of Ure Louerde*, and *On Lofsong of Ure Lefdi*.⁷ They are found in four early thirteenth-century manuscripts: London, British Library, MS Lambeth 487, MS Cotton Nero A. xiv, MS Royal 17 A. xxvii and MS Cotton Titus D. xviii.⁸ They are all lyrical prose pieces and have affinities with the *Ancrene Wisse* and the Katherine Group.⁹ The *Ancrene Wisse* and some of the texts of the Wooing

⁷ *On Ureisun of Ure Louerde* and *Pe Oreisun of Seinte Marie* are also transcribed by Thompson. The former is in fact an incomplete and slightly different version, in spelling and dialect, of *On Wel Swuðe God Ureisun of God Almihti*. The latter is also a fragmentary version of *On Lofsong of Ure Lefdi*; see Thompson, *Wohunge*, pp. 1–5, 19. In this paper, brackets, used to indicate alterations made by the original scribe, have been omitted here and some other abbreviations kept in the transcription have been silently expanded. Following Thompson, I have preserved medieval punctuation; semicolon stands for punctus elevatus.

⁸ See Thompson, *Wohunge*, pp. xi–xv.

⁹ References to *Ancrene Wisse* will be made from *Ancrene Riwle*, trans. M. B. Salu (1955; rpt. Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1990), and J. R. R. Tolkien, ed., *Ancrene Wisse: Edited from MS Corpus Christi College Cambridge 402*, EETS OS 249 (London: Oxford University Press, 1962); for a general survey and bibliography of the "AB group," see Roger Dahood, "Ancrene Wisse, the Katherine Group, and the Wohunge Group," *Middle English Prose*, ed. A. S. G. Edwards (1984; rpt. New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1986), pp. 1–33; see also Bella Millett and Jocelyn Wogan-Brown, eds., *Medieval English Prose for Women. Selections from the Katherine Group and Ancrene Wisse* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990); Bella Millett, *Annotated Bibliographies of Old*

Group address explicitly the specialized anchoritic world.¹⁰ In her book, *Anchorites and their Patrons in Medieval England*, Ann K. Warren points out the growing interest during the thirteenth century in anchoritic devotion, characterised by a general increase in the number of recluses, unparalleled at any other time, and with a large female bias (four women to one man).¹¹ Surviving information shows an increase in the number of anchorites in England from the twelfth to the thirteenth century, from 96 (48 females, 30 males, 18 indeterminates) to 198 (128 f., 37 m., 38 ind.), whereas the fourteenth century shows only a very small increase (16).¹² Historical data supports the view that some of the religious devotional literature of the thirteenth century was produced to satisfy this new audience. The anchorite, following the tradition of the desert fathers, chose to seek God in solitude and isolation, in a *recluserium* attached to a parish church or in a cell in the wilderness but within a reasonable distance of human fellowship.¹³ In fact, the texts of the Wooing Group are among the first Middle English works to demonstrate the practicability of mysticism outside the monastery.

The importance of Anselm in the emergence of affective piety is considerable.¹⁴ Besides setting some of the most typical characteristics of Middle English mysticism, like the devotion to the name of Jesus, *The Prayers and Meditations* provide information as to the ways in which meditations distance themselves from their biblical nucleus in the course of their transmission.¹⁵ The *Prayers* were sent to Adelaide, the young daughter of William the Conqueror, and were accompanied by a letter giving directions as to their employment.¹⁶ The *cura mulierum*, appearing in England with Anselm but emerging most intensely between 1170 and 1240, seems to be directly dependent on the increasing importance of female patronage and devout reading.¹⁷ When male clerical and

and *Middle English Literature*, Vol. 2: *Ancrene Wisse, the Katherine Group and the Wooing Group* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1996).

¹⁰ For an historical description of the world of anchorites, see Ann K. Warren, *Anchorites and their Patrons in Medieval England* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985); see also Rotha Mary Clay, *The Hermits and Anchorites of England* (London: Methuen, 1914).

¹¹ Warren, *Anchorites*, pp. 19–20.

¹² Warren, *Anchorites*, p. 20.

¹³ For a description of the anchoritic cells and their inhabitants, see Clay, *Hermits and Anchorites*, pp. 1–84; see also Warren, *Anchorites*, pp. 29–41.

¹⁴ For a brief but stimulating and clear study of the background to the emergence of affective piety in the eleventh century, see Ward, *Prayers and Meditations*, pp. 27–59.

¹⁵ See Southern, *Saint Anselm*, pp. 91–112; see also Ward, *Prayers and Meditations*, p. 277.

¹⁶ See Ward, *Prayers and Meditations*, p. 275.

¹⁷ See B. P. McGuire, *Friendship and Community: the Monastic Experience*, Cistercian Series 95 (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1988), p. 388; see also Southern, *Saint Anselm*, p. 99. Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Auct.D.2.6. contains fine artistic illustrations for Anselm's *Prayers and Meditations*, half a dozen of which represent a supplicant female figure (see Figure 1) before Christ, the Virgin, or the Child and the Virgin. It is likely that Anselm was the instigator of the illustrations. He must therefore have been aware of the impact of visual representations towards introspection and the rise of affective piety. For a

monastic concern for the direction of women became most acute, the literary theme of friendship and brotherhood within monastic orders, especially the Cistercians, was no longer a matter of concern. St. Bernard brought his brothers and aristocratic friends to Clairvaux. With them, courtly behaviour entered the monastery and provided, transposed to a religious level, new ways to live and voice the spiritual experience.¹⁸ The emergence of the theme of Jesus as lover-knight, a common topos in the late medieval period, owes much to the aristocratic leanings of the first Cistercians. Whatever the background of the author of *De Wohunge*, the brotherhood theme, which partakes in the psychological changes required for the anchoritic life, suggests familiarity with and insight into its spiritual values.¹⁹ There is deep concern in *De Wohunge* for an appropriate transfer of the values of brotherhood and friendship to the anchoritic world.²⁰ "And zette ouer al ðis; kinde makes sibbe frend euchan to luene oðer."²¹ This statement marks the beginning in the process of reassessment of the secular love values listed at the beginning of the lyric. *De Wohunge of Ure Lauerd* arouses the recluse emotionally by reminding her of her secular life prior to her enclosure. The recluse is forced to confront the most outstanding moments of her secular life against those promised by and meditated upon during the anchoritic life. The theme of Jesus as lover-knight is prominent in that text, and it is essentially as a counterpart to it that the feudal world – with which the recluse was most certainly associated – is depicted:²²

Ah noble men & gentile & of heh burðe ofte winnen luue lihtliche cheape. for ofte moni wummon letes hire mensket þurh þe luue of wepmon þet is of heh burðe. Þenne swete iesu up o hwat herre mon mai i mi luue sette. hwer mai i gentiller mon chese þen þe þet art te kinges sune þat tis world wealdes.²³

Instances where wealth, beauty, good manners, and courage appear in the text indicate the strategic importance of those utterances, deployed by the narrative

detailed study, see Otto Pächt, "The Illustrations of St. Anselm's Prayers and Meditations," *JWCI* 19 (1956), pp. 68–83.

¹⁸ See Jean Leclercq, *Monks and Love in Twelfth Century France* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979).

¹⁹ Anselm's expressions of friendship in his letters are intense with emotion and personal experience, unlike anything else during his time; for a useful discussion of the theme of friendship in Anselm, see Southern, *Saint Anselm*, pp. 138–165.

²⁰ See Rosemary Woolf, "A Middle English Classic," *Essays in Criticism* 11 (1961), pp. 210–214; the author reviews Sheperd's edition of part six and seven of *Ancrene Wisse* and points out the idea of friendship present in the text but neglected in Sheperd's introduction.

²¹ Thompson, *Wohunge*, p. 21.

²² See Rosemary Woolf, "The Theme of Christ the Lover-Knight in Medieval English Literature," pp. 99–117 in *Arts and Doctrine: Essays on Medieval Literature*, ed. H. O'Donoghue (London: Oxford University Press, 1986); see also Rosemary Woolf, *The English Religious Lyric in the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), pp. 44–55.

²³ Thompson, *Wohunge*, p. 24. For a Modern English translation of the Wooing Group, see Anne Savage and Nicholas Watson, trans., *Anchoritic Spirituality: Ancrene Wisse and Associated Works*, The Classics of Western Spirituality (New York: Paulist Press, 1991).

voice for an audience which, like that of the *Loue Ron* of Thomas of Hales, is impressed upon by images which ingratiatingly refer to a forsaken world. The pervasiveness of the strategy throughout the text suggests an audience which has just left the secular world for the anchorhold. Rather than disposing of the affective data accumulated during the secular life, the narrative voice fosters its transfer onto the person of Christ. In the *De Diligendo Deo*, Bernard of Clairvaux sets up a system whereby the contemplative may move first from lustful carnal love to carnal love towards the person of Christ.²⁴ The next three degrees of love lead the contemplative away from carnality. The texts of the Wooing Group concentrate almost exclusively on the first degree of love described by Bernard and exemplified most elaborately in sermons 2 to 8 of the Song of Songs, where, from the *Osculetur me oscululo oris suis* verse, a typology of the body of Christ is established.²⁵ The senses need to be reoriented, reconditioned to perceive and decode the spiritual messages. In order for the senses to speak spiritually, the contemplative needs to guard each of them by metaphorically appropriating the wounds of the Lord and using them as spiritual unguents to heal and protect the senses from temptation.²⁶ Jesus is the most precious of love-tokens:

For oðre largemen ȝiuen þise uttre þinges. bute þu swete iesu for me ȝef beseluen. þet tin ahne heorte blod ne cuðes tu wið halde. Derre druri ne ȝef neauer na lefmon to oðer.²⁷

In *On God Ureisun of God Almihti*, the comparison becomes more moral in tone and engages the reader to pause and ponder on his choice of the spiritual life. There is an interesting use of practical mercantile imagery which, when compared to the slightly more abstract terms of bondage in love of *Pe Wohunge*, suggests a less refined audience than that for which the latter was written. The two prose meditations are in many respects the most alike of the group. It is clear that a close authorial relationship exists between the two texts.²⁸ However, the spiritual journeys on which each text invites its audience to embark differ in many ways from one another. *On God Ureisun* dispenses with most of the courtly imagery and presents Jesus clothed in the love imagery of the Song of Songs; *Pe Wohunge* instead blends the same imagery with secular love practices. Yet in both the affective tone characteristic of the exordium and expressing the

²⁴ See Jean Leclercq and H. M. Rochais, eds., *S. Bernardi Opera*, vol. 3, *Tractatus et Opuscula* (Turnholt: Brepols, 1963), pp. 109–154.

²⁵ See Kilian Walsh, trans., *The Works of Bernard of Clairvaux*, vol. 2, *On the Song of Songs II*, Cistercian Fathers Series 4 (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1971), pp. 8–52.

²⁶ See Douglas Gray, *Themes and Images in the Medieval English Religious Lyric* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972), pp. 122–145; see also Douglas Gray, "The Five Wounds of our Lord," *Notes and Queries*, vol. 208 (1963), pp. 50–51, 82–89, 127–134, 163–168.

²⁷ Thompson, *Wohunge*, p. 22.

²⁸ Thompson, *Wohunge*, p. xxiv, conjectures that *On God Ureisun of God Almihti* is either a repetition of *Pe Wohunge* by its female writer, or an imitation of it by a nun to whom *Pe Wohunge* would have been passed on.

relationship between the contemplative and God is featured in an identical semantic mould:

Iesu swete iesu. mi druð. mi derling. mi drihtin. mi healend mi huniter. mi haliwei. Swetter is munegunge of þe þen mildeu o muðe.²⁹

The exordium of *On God Ureisun* is very similar in tone:

Iesu soð god soð godes sune. Iesu soð god. soð mon. & soð meidenes bern. Iesu min holi luue. Mi sikere swetnesse. Iesu min heorte. mine soule hele. Swete iesu mi leof. mi lif. mi leome. min healewi. min huniter. þu er al þet ich hopie.³⁰

The hymn *Jesu Dulcis Memoria*, attributed in the medieval period to Bernard of Clairvaux but likely to have been composed in an English Cistercian house, lends some of its phrasing and affective tone to both texts.³¹ The pervasive influence of the Latin hymn on both Anglo-Norman and Middle English literature has been pointed out by Hope Emily Allen.³² The presence of the hymn in the liturgy for the office of the feast of the name of Jesus, celebrated on 7 August, facilitated the spread of the cult of the Holy Name throughout England. Most expressions of the cult were couched in Anglo-Norman in the thirteenth century; thus the Wooing Group represents a very early instance of mystical expression in the English vernacular which, in addition to its affiliations with the "AB group," looks to similar expressions written in either Latin or Anglo-Norman on English soil.

The typology of the body of Christ in *On Lofsong of Ure Louerde* is short of the more detailed descriptions of *Pe Wohunge*. The process of transformation is, however, explicit and is expressive of the fundamental affective changes which the contemplative has to undergo:

þeo sterke stremes & þet flod þet fleaw of þine wunden. moncun uor to helen; clense & peasch mine sunfule soule þuruh þine fif wunden iopened o rode. wið neiles uor driuene & seoruh fulliche forduttre. hel me uor-wunded þuruh mine fif wittes wið deadliche sunnen. & opene ham heouenliche king toward heouenliche þinges.³³

²⁹ Thompson, *Wohunge*, p. 20.

³⁰ Thompson, *Wohunge*, p. 5.

³¹ For instance, "sweter is munegunge of þe" is directly derived from *Jesu dulcis memoria* (see Thompson, *Wohunge*, p. 43); see André Wilmart, "Le 'Jubilus' Dit de St. Bernard," *Storia e Letteratura*, 2, ed. André Wilmart (Rome: Edizioni de storia e letteratura, 1944); see also Malcolm Robert Moyes, *Richard Rolle's Expositio Super Novem Lectiones Mortuorum*, vol. 1, Salzburg Studies in English Literature, 92:12, ed. James Hogg (Salzburg: Institut für Englistik und Amerikanistik, 1988), pp. 34–37 and pp. 45–67.

³² See Hope Emily Allen, "The Mystical Lyrics of the Manuel des Pechiez," *Romanic Review* 9 (1918), pp. 154–193; see also Denis Renevey, "Anglo-Norman and Middle English Translations and Adaptations of the Hymn Dulcis Jesu Memoria," *The Medieval Translator* 5, ed. Roger Ellis and René Tixier (Brepols, 1996), pp. 264–283.

³³ Thompson, *Wohunge*, p. 11.

The cross receives conspicuous attention with regard to its mobility in the physical and spiritual space of the contemplative. It dashes in, overlooking the world: "& turn to þe worlde þi wurðfule rode ðet þu spreddest þe on. beo mi scheld & mi warant on euche half."³⁴ Symbolically, the cross contains the whole story of Jesus in his humanity.

Conscientious and systematic endeavours towards an affective identification with Christ in his humanity are supported by St. Paul's statement (Galatians 2:20): "ich liuie nout ich; auh crist liueð in me."³⁵ This motto appears twice in the Wooing Group; union in Christ is indeed one of the key-elements of the group.³⁶ Further reading on the body of Christ secretes a gloss on the Song of Songs 2.6 (8:4) inspired by Bernard of Clairvaux and Aelred of Rievaulx:

Auh leue me ðet ich mote soðliche seggen wið þe meiden þet of þe seið þeors wordes. Mi leofmonnes luft erm halt up min heaued heo seið. & his riht erm schal bi-clupen me abuten. let me beo þi leouemon & siggen ase heo seið. leof wið þi luft erm. ðet is. wið þine wordliche zeouen hold up min heaued ðet ich þuruh to muche wone ne falle i fulðe of sunne. & leof wið þin riht erm. þet is in heuene wið endeleas blissen biclupe me abuten.³⁷

On Lofsong of Ure Louerde moves away from the devotion to the wounds to concentrate on the spiritual decoding of the terms of love. In contrast to such reading, *De Wohunge* expects an audience which still needs to come to terms with the gory physicality of the wounds and the sombre episodes of the passion. The understanding of the necessity for the passion of Jesus to save mankind is mixed with the feeling of guilt resulting from the realization of the audience's responsibility for that painful sacrifice. The literary and psychological subtlety of *De Wohunge* owes much to the careful management of those two sentiments.

On Lofsong of Ure Lefdi, a paraphrase of Marbod of Rennes's *Oratio ad Sanctam Mariam*, combines those two sentiments too.³⁸ Moreover, the intercessory role played by the Virgin Mary stresses emphatically the second and leads

³⁴ Thompson, *Wohunge*, p. 11.

³⁵ Thompson, *Wohunge*, p. 12; see also *Ancrene Riwe*, p. 156.

³⁶ Thompson, *Wohunge*, p. 8.

³⁷ Thompson, *Wohunge*, p. 13; see Bernard of Clairvaux, *On the Song of Songs III*, trans. Killian Walsh and Irene M. Edmonds, Cistercian Fathers Series, 31 (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1979); Bernard writes: "Therefore, as adversity and prosperity are usually designated by the left hand and by the right, it seems to me that here the left may be interpreted as the Word's threat of punishment, the right as his promise of the kingdom" (Sermon 51), p. 46; see also Aelred of Rievaulx, *Spiritual Friendship*, Cistercian Fathers Series, 5 (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1977), pp. 76–77, where Song of Songs 2:6 marks the climax of Christ's kiss to the soul; see also Aelred de Rievaulx, *L'Amitié Spirituelle*, ed. J. Dubois (Bruges: Edition Charles Beyaent, 1948), pp. xxxiv–xxxv.

³⁸ Marbod of Rennes's poetry has been little studied so far. John Boswell, *Christianity, Social Tolerance and Homosexuality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980) pp. 247–249, brushes a portrait of Marbod and provides English translations of three poems (Appendix 2, pp. 370–371). For a review and polemical discussion of Boswell's depiction of Aelred, see B. P. McGuire, *Friendship and Community*.

to straightforward confession, with a long list of sins, which the anchorite seems to have performed in thought only. *On Lofsong of Ure Louerde* is Anselmian in the way in which the sinful soul confesses and acknowledges its frailties from the onset.³⁹ The discourse is that of submission and fear before the deity. Like most of the *Prayers and Meditations* of Anselm, recognition of the self entails its rejection as an entity unworthy of engaging in a proper relationship with the deity. Thus the Virgin Mary becomes an important element of this relationship in her role as intercessor:

Godd of alle godd ful. haue merci of me & iher mine bonen. þuruh þe selie bonen of þine milde moder & seint iohanes ewangeliste. & alle þine halewen. forȝif me mine sunnen þet ateliche beoð & grisliche i þine eihsihðe.⁴⁰

The intercessory role of the Virgin fades away as the narrative voice moves on and petitions for the pouring in of spiritual love. The lack of confidence is, however, well instanced by the petitions for a councillor and is indicative of a recent spiritual awakening. The reference to and quote from Augustine's *Confessions* on attachment to earthly love bear witness to a strong Augustinian influence.⁴¹ The way in which the quote is introduced suggests its continued and prolonged reading, sustained in the mind as an important key to understanding the contemplative life. The affective engagement which takes place when writing and reading the lyrical prose occasions the unlocking of the meaning of the Augustinian quote. It is only through the edifying lore dispensed throughout the text that one eventually comes to realize the unfruitful paradox of joining love to earthly things:

uor nu ich understonde hu soð hit is ðet seint austin seið in his boc. uniseli is ðet is wið luue to eni eorðlich þing iteied.⁴²

On God Ureisun of God Almihti, not surprisingly, shows a similar interest in the topic of earthly and spiritual love. The assurance in the tone of the voice, and the setting of the statement in the first quarter of the text, are, however, revealing of a more complex spiritual modulation. The introspective and metaphorical vocabulary contributes to this more in-depth approach, resulting from the pervasive deployment of the imagery of love as a means of defining the relationship between the soul and God. Jesus is the light, and its radiance has powerful effects on the soul: "aliht mine þeostri heorte. ȝif mi bur brithnesse. & brihtte mine

³⁹ See Thompson, *Wohunge*, p. 10.

⁴⁰ Thompson, *Wohunge*, p. 11.

⁴¹ The reference is to Augustine's *Confessions*, Book 4, chapters 6 and 9; note that *Hali Meiohad*, p. 14, lines 4–10, draws on the same passage; Bella Millett, *Medieval English Prose for Women*, pp. xx–xxi, argues convincingly that such precise verbal parallel is evidence of direct connection between *Lofsong* and the latter.

⁴² Thompson, *Wohunge*, p. 14.

soule þet is suttī. & make hire wurðe to þine swete wuninge".⁴³ Localization of earthly and spiritual love in the human body is signified metaphorically:

for ich wot mi leofmon. der ich so cleopien þe. ðet fleschlich luue & gostlich.
eorðlich luue & heouenlich; ne muhen onone wise bedden in one breoste.⁴⁴

"Bedden" means literally to go to bed, sleep together, share the nuptial bed, become man and wife; figuratively, it means to dwell harmoniously (in one's breast).⁴⁵ The impending literal sense of the word "bedden" in the above mentioned passage echoes twelfth-century uses of the imagery of the Song of Songs to express the mystical *unio*.⁴⁶ However, "bedden" here serves not to define the *unio*, but rather to circumscribe the inner state which could lead to it. If the lyrical prose text does not expose the ecstatic state of the mystical experience, its craftsman however demonstrates his ability to inject its vocabulary in a proper context. Important moral points, significant to the degree of spiritual deployment delineated in the text, are thus set out.

On God Ureisun of Ure Lefdi, discarded by Thompson from the Wooing Group for dubious reasons,⁴⁷ is the only text to concentrate on the cult of the Virgin Mary, and it is the first thirteenth-century lyric to do it in such an expansive mood.⁴⁸ Rosemary Woolf has no doubt that the poem, which she

⁴³ Thompson, *Wohunge*, p. 5.

⁴⁴ Thompson, *Wohunge*, p. 5.; note that the expression enjoyed relative popularity within the "AB group," as we find the expression again in *Hali Meioðhad*, p. 21: "for ne muhen h nanas weis beddin in a breoste"; see also *Hali Meioðhad*, p. xx.

⁴⁵ See *Middle English Dictionary*, vol. 1, ed. Hans Kurath (Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1956), p. 682.

⁴⁶ See for instance William of St. Thierry, *Exposé sur le Cantique des Cantiques*. Sources Chrétiennes, vol. 82, ed. J.-M. Déchanet (Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1962), pp. 220–225; for a survey of the medieval commentary tradition on the Song of Songs, see Friedrich Ohly, *Hohelied-studien: Grundzüge einer Geschichte der Hoheliedauslegung des Abendlandes bis um 1200* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1958); see also E. Ann Matter, *The Voice of My Beloved: The Song of Songs in Western Medieval Christianity* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990); see also Ann W. Astell, *The Song of Songs in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1990).

⁴⁷ Thompson, *Wohunge*, p. xvi, note 1, gives the following reason: "*On God Ureisun of ure Lefdi* (also in N) is not here included, because it is in rhymed and metred couplets, and is in other ways very different from this group." The presence of *On God Ureisun of ure Lefdi* in MS Cotton Nero A. XIV, with most of the other Wooing Group texts and one version of *Ancrene Riwle*, accounts for my inclusion of the poem within the Wooing Group. However, I demonstrate in the course of this paper that the original audience for this poem was not anchoritic.

⁴⁸ There are two editions available: Richard Morris, ed., *Old English Homilies*, EETS OS 34 (London: Oxford University Press, 1868), pp. 190–199 (with facing translation) and Carleton Brown, *English Lyrics of the Thirteenth Century* (1932; rpt. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1950), pp. 3–8; for brief literary studies of the lyric, see F. W. A. Müller, *Mittelenglische geistliche und weltliche Lyrik des 13 Jahrhunderts* (Halle: N. Niemeyer, 1911), pp. 52–57; Gray, *Themes and Images*, pp. 148–149; Woolf, *English Religious Lyric*, pp. 114–158.

defines as "a unique example of passionate praise and prayer at a startlingly early date," was written for religious women.⁴⁹ The poem is a celebration of the Virgin Mary as Queen of Heaven, a doctrine which was usually preceded by her Assumption in narrative sequences.⁵⁰ The imagery of the Song of Songs, especially that used in the Office of the Assumption, describes the court of heaven, where the Virgin Mary reigns with her son:

Al þin hird is i-schrud mid hwite ciclatune.
And alle heo beoð ikruned mid guldene krune.
Heo beoð so read so rose so hwit so þe lilie.
And euer more heo beoð gled and singeð þuruhut murie.
Mid brihte zimstones hore krune is al biset.
And al heo doð þet ham likeð. so þet no ðing ham ne let.
Bi leoue sune is hore king and þu ert hore kwene.⁵¹

There is a great number of echoes from the hymns, responses and antiphons which make up the liturgy for the feast of the Assumption. The first verse from the hymn *Ave Maris Stella (dei mater alma atque semper virgo)* is paraphrased in *On God Ureisun of Ure Lefdi*:

Swete Godes moder softe meiden and wel icoren.
Pin iliche neuer nes ne neuermore ne wurð iboren.
Moder þu ert and meiden cleane of alle laste.⁵²

Hali Meioðhad, a treatise in praise of virginity belonging to the Katherine Group, speaks of the motherhood and virginity of Mary in similar terms.⁵³ The mother of Christ becomes the model around which the narrative voice builds up its didactic and edifying themes. Elsewhere, virgins are considered equal to angels in terms of virtue and, accordingly, are entitled to have glimpses of the heavenly life, in which they will take part after departing this world.⁵⁴ There is no internal evidence in *Hali Meioðhad* to indicate the nature and identity of the original audience. However, as Bella Millett has pointed out, "the evidence found in the 'AB group' suggests that they may have been recluses."⁵⁵ The case for an original female anchoritic audience is more difficult to make for *On God Ureisun of Ure Lefdi*. Internal evidence indicates monastic authorship and the narrative

⁴⁹ Woolf, *English Religious Lyric*, p. 117.

⁵⁰ Italian paintings of this subject show the Virgin Mary being crowned by her son, surrounded by members of the heavenly hierarchy; see for instance Coronations of the Virgin by Lorenzo Monaco, Gaddi and Jacopone di Cione in The National Gallery, London.

⁵¹ Morris, *Old English Homilies*, p. 193; see also M. Lawley, ed., *Breviarum ad Usum Insignis Ecclesie Eboracensis*, vol. 2, Surtees Society, vol. 75 (1882), pp. 476–486.

⁵² Morris, *Old English Homilies*, p. 195.

⁵³ Bella Millett, ed., *Hali Meioðhad*, EETS OS 284 (London: Oxford University Press, 1982), pp. 7, 22, etc.

⁵⁴ Millett, *Hali Meioðhad*, p. 6.

⁵⁵ Millett, *Hali Meioðhad*, p. xxiii.

voice expresses sentiments which an English monk could have developed during, and been inspired from, his devotions to the Virgin Mary as queen of heaven.⁵⁶ However, the presence of this lyric in MS Cotton Nero A. XIV, alongside the *Ancrene Riwe*, *On God Ureisun of God Almihti*, *On Lofsong of Ure Lefdi*, and *On Lofsong of Ure Louerde*, besides a few other texts, suggests a later female readership.⁵⁷ The poem, originally expressing individual monastic feelings, was appropriated for an audience made up of recluses, possibly that one for which MS Cotton Nero A. XIV, or an earlier copy, was compiled.

"Our dear Lady St. Mary, who ought to be the model for all women . . ."⁵⁸ says the *Ancrene*-author, addressing the three recluses. *On God Ureisun of Ure Lefdi* answers the demands for a complete display of the attributes of the Virgin Mary as model for the anchoritic life.⁵⁹ Not only is the audience shown what the heavenly life may be but references are also made to her great sorrow during the passion.⁶⁰ When the tone of the narrative voice becomes more personal, the vocabulary, reminiscent of secular love lyrics, evokes psychological insights about bondage which apply equally to secular love, monastic or anchoritic enclosure:

Vor o þe is al ilong mi lif and eke min heale.
Vor þine luue i swinke and sike wel ilome.
Vor þine luue ich ham ibrouht in to þeoudome.
Vor þine luue ich uorsoc al þet me leof was.⁶¹

The exordium alludes to the practicality of the devotion, among other things bowing and kneeling, which the narrative voice later uses as a valuable token in its demand to the Virgin for forgiveness: "þu miht forzelden lihtliche mine gretunge. Al mi swinc and mi sor and mine kneouwunge."⁶² The above imagery is directly derived from devotional practices to the Virgin Mary, turned from practical experience into telling poetry, coloured by secular love motifs: "Biouren þine uote ich wulle ligen and greden. Vort ich habbe uorziuenesse of mine

⁵⁶ For a survey of Marian devotion in the medieval period, see Hilda Charlotte Graef, *Mary, a History of Doctrine and Devotion*, 2 vols. (London: Sheed and Ward, 1963–1965); see also Mary Clayton, *The Cult of the Virgin Mary in Anglo-Saxon England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

⁵⁷ See Thompson, *Wohunge*, pp. xi–xii.

⁵⁸ Salu, *Ancrene Riwe*, p. 33.

⁵⁹ See also Aelred of Rievaulx, *La Vie de Recluse. La Prière Pastorale*, Sources Chrétiennes 76, ed. Charles Dumont (Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1961), pp. 83–85, where Mary, the mother of God, leads a choir of virgins, following the lamb wherever he goes in the heavenly Jerusalem; for an English translation, see Aelred of Rievaulx, *Treatises and the Pastoral Prayer*, Cistercian Fathers Series 2 (1971; rpt. Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1982) (hereafter *A Rule of Life*).

⁶⁰ See Morris, *Old English Homilies*, p. 195.

⁶¹ Morris, *Old English Homilies*, p. 195.

⁶² Morris, *Old English Homilies*, p. 197.

misdeden."⁶³ Secular love attitudes translate fittingly the characteristic determination and total involvement of ascetic practices. There is reason to believe that such attitudes contributed to the inclusion of this English lay among other pieces written specifically for female recluses.⁶⁴ Moreover, the topic of the poem, sometimes directly inspired from the liturgical office for the Feast of the Assumption,⁶⁵ bears witness to the importance of the contemplative life, for which this liturgical feast and the anchoritic life share an equal concern.⁶⁶ *On God Ureisun of Ure Lefdi* and *On Lofsong of Ure Lefdi* are interesting instances where the monastic and clerical literary contexts can be adjusted to the specialized anchoritic world, by means of paraphrase, gloss, translation, or/and simply new MS contextualization of the original pieces.⁶⁷ The passages which are found concurrently in several texts of the "AB group" are most likely to have Latin originals.⁶⁸

There were several liturgical forms for the enclosing of anchorites, the earliest extant being *Ad Recludendam Anchoritam*, in a fragmentary pontifical of the twelfth century.⁶⁹ Ceremonies of enclosure were generally performed by the bishop.⁷⁰ Stress was put on the necessity of the devotee to renounce and be dead to the world. In the Exeter Rite, extreme unction was performed and in the Sarum Use a mass for the dead, in anticipation of physical death and as a means of solidifying the force of the symbolic ritual of enclosure.⁷¹ One section of the

⁶³ Morris, *Old English Homilies*, p. 199.

⁶⁴ I agree with E. J. Dobson, *Origins*, p. 154, who sees no evidence that the Wooing Group was written by a woman; both Eikenkel and Thompson are inclined to believe that the Wooing Group was written by (a) female author(s); see E. Eikenkel, "Eine englische Schriftstellerin aus dem Anfange des 12. Jhrh.," *Anglia*, 5 (1882); see also Thompson, *Wohunge*, pp. xxiii–xxiv.

⁶⁵ See Clayton, *Cult of the Virgin Mary*, pp. 52–89.

⁶⁶ For examples of the use of the Martha and Mary story to explicate the active and the contemplative lives within the monastic literary tradition, see *A Rule of Life*, p. 74, note 70; see also Francis Steele, "Definitions and depictions of the active life in Middle English literature of the thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, including special reference to *Piers Plowman*" (Oxford D.Phil., 1979).

⁶⁷ See George Kane, *Middle English Literature* (London: Methuen, 1951), p. 134, where he describes *On God Ureisun of Ure Lefdi* as a "full scale exercise of the Bernardine tradition."

⁶⁸ For a study of those parallels in the "AB group," see Millet, *Hali Meidhad*, pp. xviii–xxii; Thompson, *Wohunge*, pp. xv–xxiv; see also W. Vollhardt, "Einfluss der lateinischen geistlichen Litteratur auf einige kleiner Schöpfungen der englischen Ubergangsperiode," diss. University of Leipzig, 1888, especially pp. 48–52.

⁶⁹ See London, British Library, MS Cotton Vespasius D, xv, f. 61–65; see also in Cambridge, the Clifford Pontifical, Corpus Christi College, the Chichele Pontifical, Trinity College, the Sarum Manual, St. John's College, the Russell Pontifical, University Library; there are also three published offices: *The Liber Pontif*, ed. R. Barnes; *York Pontif*, Surtees Society 61; *Sarum Manual*, Surtees Society 63 (quoted in Clay, *Hermits and Anchorites*, p. 94).

⁷⁰ For a study of the role of the bishop towards anchoritic practices, see Warren, *Anchorites*, pp. 53–91.

⁷¹ See Clay, *Hermits and Anchorites*, pp. 93–94, 193–198; Francis D. S. Darwin, *The English*

Exeter office contains a reading from Isaiah 26:20: "Go, my people, enter into thy chambers, shut thy doors upon thee: hide thyself a little for a moment, until the indignation pass away."⁷² The Martha and Mary story from St. Luke's Gospel stresses in the liturgical ritual of enclosure the importance of contemplation. It is likely that mention of the Martha and Mary story in *Ancrene Wisse* enthruses an affective recollection of the enclosure ceremony and recalls the anchoresses to their duties as maidens of Christ.⁷³ Some of the most significant moments in the life of Christina of Markyate, the twelfth-century hermit, took place during the feast of the Assumption, where the liturgical office also recalls the Martha and Mary story (Luke 10:38–42). Her amanuensis stages a scene where Christina and her sister Margaret re-enact the story in the presence of an unknown hermit: "... so that if it had been possible to see Jesus sitting down you would recognize another Mary and another Martha."⁷⁴ From this blue print experience, from this opaque vision of Jesus, garbed in the habit of a hermit, Christina, affectively inebriated, prepares herself for a new and clearer vision, where Christ in majesty appears in the church of St. Albans.⁷⁵ The impressive rendering, recreation, and inspiration for new visions which some parts of the liturgical office stimulated in Christina of Markyate point to the importance of the texts which participated in the making of this liminal experience. They carry a profound and everlasting meaning to the individual engaged as the main actor of this happening.⁷⁶

The anchoritic rule composed by Aelred of Rievaulx for his sister demonstrates the psychological changes required for the solitary life.⁷⁷ The *De Institutione Inclusarum* supplies prescriptions for the regulation of the external man,

Medieval Recluse (London: SPCK, 1944), p. 71; Alexandra Barratt, "Anchoritic Aspects of Ancrene Wisse," *Medium Aevum*, 49 (1980), 32–45; and Henrietta Leyser, *Hermits and the New Monasticism: A study of Religious Communities in Western Europe 1000–1150* (London: Macmillan, 1984).

⁷² See Clay, *Hermits and Anchorites*, p. 94; all references to the Bible are to the Douay translation of the Vulgate.

⁷³ See Salu, *Ancrene Riwe*, pp. 183–184.

⁷⁴ C. H. Talbot, ed., *The Life of Christina of Markyate: A Twelfth Century Recluse* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959), p. 183.

⁷⁵ See Talbot, *Life of Christina*, pp. 185–189.

⁷⁶ The affective impact made by the liturgical passage which contextualises an important religious decision is evidenced elsewhere. Rolle became officially a hermit on the vigil of the feast of the Assumption; the Mary and Martha story were part of the office for the liturgy of that feast. I deal with the importance of the liturgy for the feast of the Assumption on Rolle in my D.Phil. dissertation, "The Moving of the Soul: the Roles of Metaphors of Love in the Writings of Richard Rolle and Antecedent Texts of the Medieval Mystical Tradition" (Oxford D.Phil., 1993).

⁷⁷ For a survey of the religious literary tradition in England and the important role played by Aelred of Rievaulx, see Moyes, *Rolle's Expositio*, pp. 27–42; see also L. E. Rogers, ed., "An Edition of British Museum MS Harley 2372 (*Advice to Recluses*)" (Oxford B.Litt., 1933); see especially pp. 30–98, which look at all the Middle English rules and focus on their didactic aspects.

prescriptions for the purification of the vices, and a meditation.⁷⁸ The latter is divided into three parts, the first of which, dealing with the humanity of Christ, is most extensive. Aelred advises his sister to adorn her cell with only the images of the savior on the cross, surrounded with images of the Virgin Mary and the virgin John. The role of the images is clearly defined by Aelred:

Haec tibi incentivum praebeant caritatis, non spectaculum vanitatis. Hinc enim omnibus ad unum necesse est ut conscendas, quoniam unum est necessarium. Illud est unum quod non invenitur nisi in uno, apud unum, cum uno, apud quem non est transmutatio, nec vicissitudinis obumbratio.⁷⁹

Let those things serve to increase your charity, not to provide empty show. From all of them you must ascend to unity, for only one thing is necessary. That is the one thing, the unity which is found only in the One, by the One, with the One with whom there is no variation, no shadow of change.

(*A Rule of Life*, p. 740)

Elsewhere Aelred calls the cross the *speculum christiani*, the mirror of truth painted on the cross.⁸⁰ The meditation which is part of the rule evokes the passion of Christ and explicates the image of Christ crucified both as support for the textual message as well as its ultimate signified. Text and image explain and complement one another in awakening the *affectus mentis* of the contemplative. The climactic engagement with both text and image is facilitated by the manipulative exhortations of the narrative voice:

At tu, virgo, cui maior est apud Virginis Filium confidentia a mulieribus quae longe stant, cum Matre virgine et discipulo virgine accide ad crucem, et per-fusum pallore vultum cominus intueri. Quid ergo? Tu sine lacrymis, amantissimae dominae tuae lacrymas videbis? Tu siccis manes oculis, et eius animam pertransit gladius doloris?⁸¹

But you, virgin, who can feel more confidence with the Virgin's Son than the women who stand at a distance, draw near to the Cross with the Virgin Mother and the virgin disciple, and look at close quarters upon that face in all its pallor. What then? Will your eyes be dry as you see your most loving Lady in tears? Will you not weep as her soul is pierced by the sword of sorrow?

(*A Rule of Life*, p. 90)

The geography of the altar scene of the *reclusorium* is represented in the climax of the meditation. Fully integrated within the rule, the meditation captures and looms from some of the prescriptions described in the first two parts of the rule. It is very likely that the Wooing Group shows an almost equivalent degree of dependence towards the *Ancrene Wisse*. The latter is immediately followed by the Wooing Group in MS Cotton Nero A XIV, with the exception of *Pe Wo-*

⁷⁸ See Aelred, *La Vie de Recluse*, pp. 42–43.

⁷⁹ Aelred, *La Vie de Recluse*, p. 106.

⁸⁰ *Serm. I*, in *Ramis Palm.*, PL 195, 263 D (quoted in Aelred, *La Vie de Recluse*, p. 14).

⁸¹ Aelred, *La Vie de Recluse*, p. 138.

hunge. MS Cotton Titus D. XVIII, the only extant MS to contain the entire *Wohunge*, displays the meditation between some texts of the Katherine Group, preceded by the *Ancrene Riwe*.⁸² *A Talkyng of the Love of God*, a fourteenth-century compilation of *On God Ureisun of God Almihti* and *Pe Wohunge*, precedes the *Ancrene Riwe* in two devotional and para-mystical anthologies, the Vernon Manuscript (Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Engl Poet.a.1) and the Simeon Manuscript (London, British Library, MS Add. 22283).⁸³ It is significant to note that linguistic uniformity was imposed on the texts of those anthologies by the copyists, writing in a dialect from the area of north Worcestershire and/or Warwickshire. That the texts under scrutiny were kept close together at such a late period after their composition is revealing of their intimate relationship, based on linguistic grounds, but also on the interdependence of topics.⁸⁴ The numerous textual relationships which are shared with all the texts of the "AB group," more especially here with the *Ancrene Riwe* and the Wooing Group, coincide with a growing interest in a religious center for the provision of edifying reading material to an increasing anchoritic audience within its vicinity. There is no evidence nor any need to suggest that one author is responsible for the whole of the "AB group."⁸⁵ On the other hand, it is very likely that the original audiences for the Wooing Group were following or aware of the prescriptions contained in the *Ancrene Wisse*. What is certain then is that both writers and audiences of the "AB group" shared an interest in the anchoritic life.⁸⁶ Mention of the *reclitorium* and its objects in the meditations are revealing of this common interest. The physical stricture involved in the secluded life allows for the emergence of meditative writing which carefully appraises the economy of the objects of the *reclitorium* as potential meditative tools.⁸⁷

⁸² For a description of the manuscripts, see Thompson, *Wohunge*, pp. xi–xiii. With related interest to this part of the chapter, see Savage and Watson, *Anchoritic Spirituality*, pp. 28–32.

⁸³ See Sister M. Salvina Westra, *A Talkyng of Pe Loue of God* (The Hague: M. Nijhoff, 1950).

⁸⁴ See A. I. Doyle, *The Vernon Manuscript: A Facsimile of Bodleian Library, Oxford, MS Eng. Poet a.1* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1987), especially p. 11; see also Doyle, "The Shaping of the Vernon and Simeon Manuscripts," *Chaucer and Middle English Studies*, ed. Beryl Rowland (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1974), pp. 328–341: Doyle points out the close relationship of the Vernon version of *Ancrene Riwe* with that of MS Nero A. XIV and hints at the fact that *A Talkyng*, preceding the *Roule of Reclous*, is also made up in parts from some of our two Wooing Group pieces, one of which is in Nero A. XIV. Doyle thus argues for a common source of intermediate date and locality. See also the revised version of the above article in *Studies in the Vernon Manuscript*, ed. Derek Pearsall (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1990), pp. 1–13.

⁸⁵ See S. R. T. O. d'Ardenne, ed., *Pe Liflede ant te Passiun of Seinte Iulienne*, EETS OS 248 (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), pp. xl–xlvi.

⁸⁶ The *Ancrene*-author gives two examples of the solitary life of Christ in his survey of Old and New Testament solitary figures; see Salu, *Ancrene Riwe*, p. 71.

⁸⁷ See Nicholas Watson, "The Methods and Objectives of Thirteenth-Century Anchorite Devotion," *The Medieval Mystical Tradition in England*, IV, ed. Marion Glasscoe (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1987), pp. 132–153.

Building imagery features pervasively in devotional and mystical writings. In the *Didascalicon*, Hugh of St. Victor compares divine scripture to a building, with special reference to its foundation and structure.⁸⁸ Richard of St. Victor follows on by setting up an architectonic of the mystical life based on the monumental ark of the covenant.⁸⁹ Mnemonic visualization of the building allows for a careful memorization of the six degrees of the contemplative life. The *De Doctrina Cordis*, written in the thirteenth century and used by beguines in the Low Countries, employs the family house as an allegorical matrix for the expression of inward feelings and spiritual modes of behaviour.⁹⁰ The strictly didactic nature of those treatises prevents the audience from empathising with the imagery. In contrast, the *reclitorium* imagery partakes significantly of the affective strategies in moving the soul to the love of God. Christina of Markyate and her biographer reveal the constraints of the secluded life in a utopian depiction of the *reclitorium* as an enclosure surrounded by transparent high fences.⁹¹ Rather than reacting against the fundamental design of the anchorhold, the *Ancrene Wisse* and the Wooing Group exploit it to strengthen the *affectus mentis* towards God in his humanity.⁹² The pilgrimage of desire is dependent on and limited by the *reclitorium* and its objects as visual adjuncts to facilitate meditation. The *Ancrene*-author, well informed about the geography of the *reclitorium*, provides exercises contingent upon the advantages provided by the specific *reclitorium* of the three anchoresses. As they are able to participate in the celebration of the mass from the *reclitorium*, spiritual reading and appropriate responses translate some of the most telling rituals of the ceremony.⁹³

After the kiss of peace in the Mass, when the priest communicates, forget the world, be completely out of the body, and with burning love embrace your

⁸⁸ See Taylor, *Didascalicon*, pp. 140–144.

⁸⁹ See Richard of St. Victor, *The Twelve Patriarchs: The Mystical Ark: Book Three of the Trinity*, trans. Grover A. Zinn, *The Classics of Western Spirituality* (New York: Paulist Press, 1979), especially pp. 149–370.

⁹⁰ For a Middle English version of the work, see Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Laud misc. 330, fols 1r–70v; see also Lee Patterson, *Negotiating the Past* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1987), pp. 127–141; but see also G. Hendrix, "Onderzoek naar het oeuvre van 'Gerardus Leodiensis,'" *Ons Geestelijk Erf* 56 AFL 3–4 (1982), 300–341; Hendrix (see French summary, p. 334) attributes the authorship of the work to Hugh of St. Cher, in view of the numerous parallels which he pointed out between the *De Doctrina* and Hugh of St. Cher's *Postillae*.

⁹¹ See Talbot, *Life of Christina*, pp. 164–165 (quoted in Linda Georgianna, *The Solitary Self* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1981), p. 40); for an account of Christina's unconventional and imposed anchoritic life, see pp. 37–42.

⁹² See Alexandra Barratt, "Anchoritic Aspects of *Ancrene Wisse*," pp. 32–45; she points out passages which demonstrate the influence, among others, of Aelred's *De Institutione Inclusarum*, as well as two Carthusian books, Guigo's *Consuetudines* and Adam of Dryburgh's *Liber de Exercitio Cellae*.

⁹³ Salu, *Ancrene Riwe*, p. 13.

beloved who has come down from heaven to your heart's bower, and hold Him fast until He has granted you all that you ask.⁹⁴

The *Ancrene*-author also combines visual representations and mental pictures of the cross to foster some of the most important daily devotions, i.e., meditations on the cross and Jesus' suffering and the meditations to the Virgin Mary. Suggestions are made for alterations, omissions, or compositions of new prayers and meditations.⁹⁵ The provision of meditative prayers needs not be followed too rigidly. The author explains: "Say this prayer, if you have it, or another, to the Holy Trinity if you will."⁹⁶ He later suggests that the anchoresses make written copies on a scroll of the prayers which are not written in the books.⁹⁷

Be Wohunge of Ure Lauerd describes the crucifixion and the passion with a female narrative voice, which stands either for the Virgin Mary herself, a virgin having the Virgin for model, or the soul. Mariological interpretations of the Song of Songs, as well as descriptions of her coronation and enthronement, allow the author a certain ambiguity in the use of registers guiding the narrative. By doing so, the anchoritic audience can affectively engage with the text and easily simulate the role of the Virgin, especially if the courtly love motifs remind her of her former life. Female identity is specified in line 84:

And hwa is frerre þen þu? for first þu makes al þis werld & dides hit under mine fet. & makedes me lauedi ouer alle þine schaftes þet tu schop on eorðe. Bote Ich hit rewli for dide þurh hut mine sunnes.⁹⁸

Position of authority over the created world has been lost through sin by the anonymous virgin. Elsewhere, allusion is made to coronation and enthronement, again transferred to the same anonymous anchoritic audience:

And tu þet erst me 3ef al þe seluen; þu hafdes me heht mi lefmon to þe 3iue al me seluen. to rixlen o þi rihthond crunet wið þeseluen.⁹⁹

There is none of that affective involvement in *On Lofsong of Ure Ledfi*, where the role of the Virgin Mary remains essentially intercessory, reminiscent of the three prayers to the Virgin by Saint Anselm.¹⁰⁰ In *Be Wohunge*, elements of both

⁹⁴ Salu, *Ancrene Riwe*, p. 14; for a summary of the meaning of the kiss to Aelred, see McGuire, *Friendship and Community*, p. 314; see also Aelred's *De Iesu Puero Duodenni* (quoted in McGuire, *Friendship and Community*, pp. 327–328).

⁹⁵ See Salu, *Ancrene Riwe*, p. 18: "I am well pleased if you say others besides those, such as Paternosters and Aves, psalms and prayers, as many as you like, in ways of your own. Each may say them in the way she likes best, and so also when you say versicles from the Psalter, when you read English or French books, and when you make holy meditations."

⁹⁶ Salu, *Ancrene Riwe*, p. 11.

⁹⁷ Salu, *Ancrene Riwe*, p. 18.

⁹⁸ Thompson, *Wohunge*, p. 22.

⁹⁹ Thompson, *Wohunge*, p. 22.

¹⁰⁰ See Ward, *Prayers and Meditations*, pp. 107–126; the beginning of this lyric shares similarities with the beginning of the first prayer of St. Anselm.

secular and heavenly court depictions allow for a simple affective transposition on the part of the audience. It is noteworthy that depictions of Christ in majesty appear pervasively in the first part of the text. The refrain-like motto, "A Iesu swete iesu lemiue þet te luue of þe beo al mi likinge,"¹⁰¹ is found within this particularly enticing courtly context. However, while the expression of the desire is fixed within this recurring pattern, the narrative moves back to the episodes leading to the crucifixion. The strength of the affective commitment is measured as the narrative moves nearer to the most gory details of the humanity of Christ. At this stage, identification with both the mother of God in sorrow and Jesus on the cross is specified through an understanding of the anchoritic life as a figurative passion. It is necessary for the anchorite to balance up her status and wealth to that of Jesus. The *reclitorium* imagery is recalled in several instances to maintain this identification with the most important episodes of the humanity of Jesus. The audience is made to feel the comfort of the *reclitorium* in comparison with the coming of Christ on earth, in a house without walls.¹⁰² Jesus becomes the symbol of the anchoritic life, devoid of any earthly comfort: "ne hafdes in al þis world hwer wið þet blisfule blodi bodi þu mihtes hule & huide."¹⁰³ For the anchorite, the crucifixion becomes the meeting point at which she is able to direct her affective potential. The visual representation of the cross within the *reclitorium*, on the altar, supports the affective identification unlocked by the meditation.¹⁰⁴ As the final episodes of the passion draw near – those which the visual representation contain most perceptibly – the narrative voice conveys the pain and horror that is felt by means of a sequence of short sentences, affective outbursts, and exclamations expressed for the first time in the present indicative. The "cruci-fiction," guided by means of an elaborate interplay of rhetorical techniques, effects the fusion of the different voices called upon by the textual strategy: the historical voice which reported the events, the narrative voice which rearranges them for the meditation and the voice of the reader which is given the opportunity to reinvent and experience the most forceful episodes:

A hwat schal i nu don? Nu min herte mai to breke. min ehne flowen al o water. A nu is mi lefmon demd for to deien. A nu mon ledes him forð to munte caluarie to þe cwalm stowe.¹⁰⁵

The affective tone runs in this mode till blood and water flow from the body,

¹⁰¹ Thompson, *Wohunge*, p. 21.

¹⁰² Note the almost word for word similarities of some of the sentences describing the poverty of Christ in *Be Wohunge*, pp. 28–29; and Salu, *Ancrene Riwe*, p. 115 (Salu, *Ancrene Wisse*, p. 133); see also Aelred, *A Rule of Life*, p. 71.

¹⁰³ Thompson, *Wohunge*, p. 29; see also Salu, *Ancrene Riwe*, p. 115.

¹⁰⁴ For a study of the shift from meditations on texts to meditations on (mental) images in the later Middle Ages, see Vincent Gillespie, "Strange Images of Death: the Passion in Later Medieval English Devotional and Mystical Writing," *Zeit, Tod und Ewigkeit in der Renaissance Literatur*, Band 3, *Analecta Cartusiana* 117, ed. James Hogg (Salzburg: Institut für Anglistik und Amerikanistik, 1987), pp. 111–159.

¹⁰⁵ Thompson, *Wohunge*, p. 33.

pierced by the lance of Longinus. The wounded heart becomes the paradigm against which other demonstrations of love can be gauged. Incision into the heart's center reveals avenues for new modalities of knowledge and reading:

A swete iesu þu oppnes me þin herte for to cnawe witerliche & in to reden trewe luue lettres. for þer i mai openlich seo hu muchel þu me luuedes.¹⁰⁶

The signs constituting the perceived body of Christ have metaphorical meaning. Their understanding depends on the propensity of the audience to interiorize them. Although re-enactment of the narrative has been forcefully suggested, affective identification is given new lease of life by suggesting appropriation of the feelings of Mary by the anchorite:

Bote lafdi for þe Ioie þet tu hefdes of his ariste þe þridde dai þer after; leue me vnderstonde þi dol & herteli to felen sum hwat of þe sorhe þet tu þa hefdes & helpe þe to wepe. þet i wið him & wið þe muhe imin ariste o domes dai gladien & wið 3u beon iblisse þet he me swa bitterliche wið his blod bothte.¹⁰⁷

It is interesting to note that the occurrences of the vocabulary of experience in the Latin writings increase substantially in the twelfth century.¹⁰⁸ The word "felen" in Middle English, equivalent to Latin *experire*, is frequently used by the *Ancrene*-author and is indicative of an awareness of self made possible through, first, acts of *contritio* and, second, meditative practice.¹⁰⁹ "Felen" in the mystical literature of the passion means to share the experience, to re-enact.¹¹⁰ The appearance of the word "felen" with its spiritual meaning in Middle English devotional literature suggests self-introspection made possible through affective engagement with texts.¹¹¹ In fact, in the two works already

¹⁰⁶ Thompson, *Wohunge*, p. 35.

¹⁰⁷ Thompson, *Wohunge*, p. 35.

¹⁰⁸ See Pierre Miquel, *Le Vocabulaire Latin de l'Expérience Spirituelle dans la Tradition Monastique et Canoniale de 1050 à 1250. Théologie Historique*, vol. 79 (Paris: Vrin, 1989).

¹⁰⁹ I am grateful to Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, University of Liverpool, for providing me with concordances of the words "felen," "felyng" for *Ancrene Wisse*, *Seinte Margarete*, *Hali Meidhad* and *Sawles Warde*; "felen" does not appear in *Ancrene Wisse*, part 7 (On Love), which is surprising, as the semantic range of the word contains a spiritual aspect, useful for the description of inner experiences, and used in *Be Wohunge* and *On God Ureisun of Ure Louerde*; other instances of "felen" and its substantive in *Ancrene Wisse* and the other "AB texts" do not seem to convey spiritual meaning.

¹¹⁰ To Rolle, "felen" is a synonym for "savouren". The *Cloud*-author and Walter Hilton make an abundant use of this word, and often equate it to the meaning of the word "to experience"; see Wolfgang Riehle, *The Middle English Mystics*, trans. Bernard Standing (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981), p. 111. For an account of thirteenth-century theories on affectivity, see Vincent Gillespie, "Mystic's Foot: Rolle and Affectivity," in Marion Glasscoe, *The Medieval Mystical Tradition in England* (Exeter: Exeter University Press, 1982), pp. 199–230.

¹¹¹ See *MED* entries for "felen," which give quotations from *On God Ureisun of God Almihti* and *Be Wohunge*; the first definition is "to have an emotional experience or

mentioned, "felen" is at the core of the notion of catharsis which is experienced through the reenactment of the passion. In an altered, supra-sensual state of consciousness, the anchorite, out of her body, experiences the spiritual espousal.¹¹² The influence of mariological interpretations of the Song of Songs allows for the use of nuptial imagery in the context of anchoritic literature written for female virgins. In the case of *Be Wohunge*, the imagery of the Song of Songs refers to and recalls rather the conditions particular to the *reclitorium*. The bower (the one in which Mary is depicted in Annunciation scenes but also that of the courtly lady in secular love lyrics and romances) becomes associated with the *reclitorium*, the meeting place for Christ and his lover-spouse:

Broht tu haues me fra þe world to bur of ði burðe. steked me i chaumbre. I mai þer þe swa sweteli kissen & cluppen. & of þi luue haue gastli likinge.¹¹³

The *reclitorium* creates safe conditions of reading. From this sanitized environment, where sensual perceptions are reduced to a bare minimum, the love imagery is most likely to have a spiritual effect. There is nothing the anchorite can do to requite equally the payment of the blood of Christ, except to comprehend the anchoritic life as a medieval crucifixion. The idea is beautifully conveyed in *Be Wohunge*:

Mi bodi henge wið þi bodi neiled o rode. sperred querfaste wið inne fowr wahes & henge i wile wið þe & neuer mare of mi rode cume til þet i deie.¹¹⁴

It continues further:

A. iesu swa swet hit is wið þe to henge. forhwen þet ideo o þe þet henges me biside; þe mucle swetnesse of þe; reaues me fele of pine.¹¹⁵

Repayment for the gift of the life of Jesus is an important concern of *Be Wohunge*. The medieval counterpart to the crucifixion is regarded as a sufficiently high price to create demanding expectations.¹¹⁶ Even though the practice is

reaction, to feel (fear, sorrow, anger, hope, joy, etc.); the second one, "to have spiritual communion with (God), feel (the Divine Spirit), feel or enjoy (the Grace of God)".

¹¹² Out of the body experience is mentioned in Talbot, *Life of Christina*, p. 137, as well as Salu, *Ancrene Riwe*, p. 14; their biblical source is 2 Cor. 12.1–5.

¹¹³ Thompson, *Wohunge*, p. 35. The *Ancrene*-author makes a strong case for Mary, not only as model for the anchorite, but as a true historical recluse: "Did not Our dear Lady lead a solitary life? Did not the angel find her in a place of solitude, alone? She was not outside, but was securely enclosed, for we find: *The angel being come in, said unto her: Hail, Mary; full of grace, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women*. At the time when this happened, she was indoors, in a place of solitude, on her own. Seldom has an angel appeared to anyone in the midst of a crowd. And, what is more, because her words are recorded in Holy Scripture only four times, as we have said before, this is clear proof that one who kept such silence must have been often alone." Salu, *Ancrene Wisse*, p. 71.

¹¹⁴ Thompson, *Wohunge*, p. 36.

¹¹⁵ Thompson, *Wohunge*, p. 36; see also Salu, *Ancrene Riwe*, p. 156: "see then, true anchoresses are not only pilgrims, nor yet only dead people, but are of this third kind, for all their joys lies in being crucified in pain and dishonour with Jesus on His cross."

¹¹⁶ See Thompson, *Wohunge*, p. 37.

worth its while in the earthly life, it attains an unprecedented value as a token for the heavenly life. The expectations of the narrative voice are no less than coronation and enthronement beside Christ in majesty: "& 3if i þe riht luuie. wilt me crune in heuene wið þe self to rixlen werld in to werlde."¹¹⁷ The scarcity of objects adorning the *reclitorium* contribute to the heightening of their visual impact in the mind of the recluse and to encourage creative reenactment from them. It is certain that the image of the crucifixion, and possibly the coronation of the Virgin, were adorning private altars in *reclusoria*. Although the Wooing Group does not point them out directly, the ways in which those images guide the meditation suggest more than mental images. The force of the meditations is best deployed when read in front of devotional objects. The *Ancrene*-author, for instance, points to the locus, "before the great cross," as the most appropriate space in the *reclitorium* to perform the meditations.¹¹⁸ The interplay between image and text allows the mind to effect solid affective links between the exterior world of the *reclitorium* and the inner world of the anchorite. From the visual representation of the cross on the private altar, the meditative text initiates its transference in the soul, where, with a correctly guided imagination, the *affectus* is enthused by the passion scenes and let the *affectiones* reverberate their desire for the love of God.

On *God Ureisun of God Almihti* makes references to enclosure and confinement in subtle literary strategies. The metaphorical reading of the light-shadow theme running in the opening lines of the text gains in significance when set against the conditions created by the *reclitorium*, where shadow, effectively preventing the dangerous sense of sight to operate, incites spiritual reading.¹¹⁹ There is another good indication that the narrative voice is talking from an anchoritic point of view. "Wenden" and "turnen" are repeatedly used to express conversion, change of direction, both literally and spiritually. The narrative voice expresses concern about not being able to match affective conversion with the already achieved physical conversion to the anchoritic life:

Let me beon þi leofmon. & ler me for to louien þe liuiinde louerd. woa is me ðet ich am so freomede wið þe. auh ase þu al hauest licamliche iwend me from þe worlde; wend me ec heortliche. & turn me allunge to þe.¹²⁰

Difficulty at affective identification with Christ, perhaps a relic of the Anselmian tradition, sets a different tone to the devotions performed before the image of the cross. Negative questions from the contemplative point to the spiritual embrace and lead her to consider the obstacles which make it unfeasible for her to

¹¹⁷ Thompson, *Wohunge*, p. 37.

¹¹⁸ Salu, *Ancrene Riwe*, p. 14; see also Aelred, *La Vie de Recluse*, pp. 14–15.

¹¹⁹ See how Salu, *Ancrene Riwe*, pp. 21–28, warns against a distorted use of that sense; see also Jean Leclercq, "Umbratilis: Pour l'Histoire du Thème de la Vie Cachée," *Revue d'Ascétique et de Mystique*, 156 (1963), 491–504; see also Barratt, "Anchoritic," p. 42.

¹²⁰ Thompson, *Wohunge*, p. 5.

achieve. Allusions are made to the motherhood of Christ.¹²¹ On the cross, Christ invitingly stretches his arms as a mother opens her arms to embrace her children:

Hwi ne bihold ich hu þu streihtest þe for me on þe rode? hwi ne worpe ich me bi tweonen þeoilke ermes so swiðe wiðe to spredde. & i opened so þe moder deð hire ermes. hire leoue child for to bi cluppen?¹²²

In such a flow of negative statements, affective substantiation becomes more difficult. The metaphorical meaning of words like "cluppen" and "cussen" is not grounded on experiential knowledge. However, even if the experience of *unio* is postponed for later, the geography of the inner body where the experience will take place is clearly delineated: "hwi ne iuele ich þe i mine breoste so swete ase þu ert?"¹²³ The experience of inner bliss, the high embrace, cannot take place before the low embrace, i.e., through an affective imitation of his passion in the *reclitorium*, before the cross. There, however, is less affective engagement with the crucifixion; the meditation is generated by the descriptive details of a visual image implanted in the mind of the author:

& habben him so abaundune. ðet he wule ðet ðin wille oueral beo i uorðed for to sheawen us þis; he streccheð þene ritht erm uorð. ase he stont orode. & beieð adun toward þe. his deorewurðe heaued.¹²⁴

Are the traditional details disrupted here? Is Christ freeing his right arm from the nails to stretch it forth? In the Ebrach-Wurzburg Psalter, a manuscript of the beginning of the thirteenth century, one illumination describes charity embracing Christ on the cross, translating visually tropological interpretations of the Psalter.¹²⁵ A German stained glass of the early fourteenth century depicts *caritas* and the crucified Christ, with his right arm, embracing one another, while at the same time *caritas* thrusts a dagger into his right side.¹²⁶ Interpretation of and meditation on biblical passages give new lease of life to the otherwise fixed concept contained in visual or textual depictions. The translation of the image into

¹²¹ For a study of the theme of the motherhood of Christ, see Rosemary Woolf, *English Religious Lyric*, pp. 189–190; see also the seminal studies by Caroline Walker Bynum, "And Woman his Humanity": Female Imagery in the Religious Writing of the Later Middle Ages," *Fragmentation and Redemption: Essays on Gender and the Human Body in Medieval Religion* (New York: Zone Books, 1991), pp. 151–179; *Jesus as Mother: Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982); see especially chapter 4, pp. 110–169.

¹²² Thompson, *Wohunge*, p. 6; the *Ancrene*-author makes a case for the importance of the cross to the recluse: "All our happiness must be in the cross of Jesus Christ. This saying has particular point for recluses, whose joy should consist altogether in God's cross." Salu, *Ancrene Riwe*, p. 154; see also p. 156.

¹²³ Thompson, *Wohunge*, p. 7.

¹²⁴ Thompson, *Wohunge*, p. 9.

¹²⁵ See Gertrude Schiller, *Iconography of Christian Art: The Passion of Jesus Christ*, vol. 2 (London: Lund Humphries, 1972), figure 447.

¹²⁶ See Schiller, *Iconography*, vol. 2, figure 453.

"Moder al þet þu wult; al ich wulle,"¹²⁷ substantiates the importance of the intercessory role of the Virgin Mary in the mind of the narrative voice of *On God Ureisun of God Almihti*. Whatever the craftsmanship necessary for the making of those subtle literary devices, such emphasis on the role of the Virgin still evidences embarrassment in moving the soul to the love of Christ.

The texts of the Wooing Group participate in important ways in the shaping of English spirituality. Confined by the limited landscape of the *recluserium*, its design and objects, they create conditions of reading which allow for the safe transfer and accommodation of monastic practices to a new audience. Devotion to the passion and to the Virgin arouse the thirteenth-century recluses in ways which will be used and elaborated upon by further generations of hermits and anchorites, those that are often labelled the Middle English mystics, i.e., Richard Rolle, Walter Hilton, the *Cloud*-author, Julian of Norwich, and Margery Kempe. There is therefore evidence for continuity in the practice of affective piety in England, from the eleventh century of Anselm to the fourteenth century. The Wooing Group must be appraised as an important thirteenth-century contribution by the Middle English language to the evolving interest in the spiritual life.

¹²⁷ Thompson, *Wohunge*, p. 9.

The Solitary Heroine: Aspects of Meditation and Mysticism in *Ancrene Wisse*, the Katherine Group, and the Wooing Group

Anne Savage

There is much in *Ancrene Wisse* and the related texts – *Hali Meiðhad*, *Sawles Warde*, *De Wohunge of Ure Lauerd*, the *Ureisun* prayers, and the *Lives* of Saints Margaret, Juliana, and Katherine¹ – that would have been spiritually applicable to the life of any committed Christian, secular or religious. In fact, even some of the most specialized of these works make their presence felt within the laicized devotional English literature of the late medieval period,² two centuries after their original compilation in the early thirteenth century. The *Life* of St. Juliana is addressed to all those who cannot understand Latin, that of St. Margaret to everyone, though to virgins especially. *Sawles Warde*, too, with its allegory of the house of the soul in the care of Will and Wit, has a general appeal. The Wooing Group manifests a kind of affective spirituality which developed into a widespread popular piety in the fourteenth century.³

¹ Corpus Christi Cambridge 42, the Cotton MSS Cleopatra C.VI, Nero A.XIV and Titus D. XVIII contain *Ancrene Wisse*; in Nero also are some Passion meditations and prayers from the Wooing Group, and in Titus are *De Wohunge of Ure Lauerd*, *Sawles Warde*, *Hali Meiðhad*, as well as the life of St. Katherine. The Katherine Group, these latter three plus the lives of saints Margaret and Juliana, are in Bodley 34. British Library Royal 17.A.XXVII contains all but *Hali Meiðhad* and includes one member of the Wooing Group, *De Oreisun of Seinte Marie*, which also appears without a title in Nero.

² See Nicholas Watson, "The Methods and Objectives of Thirteenth-Century Anchoritic Devotion," p. 137 in Marion Glasscoe, ed., *The Medieval Mystical Tradition in England*, IV (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1987): "A good example of what we might call this democratisation of devotional literature is provided by the Vernon and Simeon manuscripts. If the Bohun arms engraved on these do in fact suggest that one or both of them was prepared for (or at least by arrangement of) the devout laity, we have the phenomenon of seculars taking an interest not only in a work like *Piers Plowman*, but in the *Stimulus Amoris*, *The Scale of Perfection*, *The Form of Living*, the popularising *Abbey of the Holy Ghost* – and, even more remarkably, in a meditation derived from two works in the thirteenth-century Wooing Group, *A Talking of the Love of God*, and a version of the highly specialised *Ancrene Wisse*."

³ Margery M. Morgan, "A Talking of the Love of God and the Continuity of Stylistic Tradition in Middle English Prose Meditations," *The Review of English Studies*, n. s. vol. 10 (1952), 7–116, discusses the stylistic continuity of prose meditation into the fifteenth