

**THE INFLUENCE OF BEATRICE OF NAZARETH  
ON MARGUERITE PORETE:  
*THE SEVEN MANNERS OF LOVE REVISED***

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Since Romana Guarnieri's extraordinary discovery in 1946<sup>1</sup> that *The Mirror of Simple Souls*, a widely copied and circulated mystical treatise of the Late Middle Ages, was written by Marguerite Porete, the book has been the subject of growing academic research. Many authors have indicated a similarity between this text, or parts of it, and the mid-thirteenth century Middle Dutch mystical treatise *The Seven Manners of Love* by Beatrice of Nazareth.<sup>2</sup> The first to suggest this, soon

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**ABBREVIATIONS**

- COLLEDGE e.a.** MARGARET PORETTE, *The Mirror of Simple Souls*, foreword by Kent EMERY, transl. Edmund COLLEDGE, Jack C. MARLER and Judith GRANT, Notre Dame Texts in Medieval Culture 6, Notre Dame 1999.
- GUARNIERI & VERDEYEN** MARGUERITE PORETE, *Le Mirouer des simples ames – Speculum simplicium animarum*, ed. Romana GUARNIERI & Paul VERDEYEN, Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis 69, Turnhout 1986.
- MCGINN,** Bernard MCGINN, *The Flowering of Mysticism*, New York 1998.  
*Flowering*
- REYPENS & VAN MIERLO** BEATRIJS VAN NAZARETH. *Seven manieren van minne*, ed. Leonce REYPENS & Jozef VAN MIERLO, Leuvense studiën en tekstuittgaven, Leuven 1926.

<sup>1</sup> Romana GUARNIERI, "Lo *Specchio delle anime semplici* e Margherita Porette," *L'Osservatore Romano*, 16 June 1946.

<sup>2</sup> Guarnieri situated Marguerite and Beatrice in the perspective of the heretical Quietism of the Free Spirit ("Il movimento del Libero Spirito," *Archivio Italiano per la storia della pietà* IV (1965) p. 358), which led to a severe reaction from Bernard Spaapen, who claimed that though Marguerite may have been a heretic, Beatrice most certainly was not (Bernard SPAAPEN, "Hebben onze 13de-eeuwse mystieken iets gemeen met de Broeders en Zusters van de Vrije Geest?," *Ons Geestelijk Erf* 40 (1966), p. 369-391); also "Le mouvement des 'Frères du Libre Esprit' et les mystiques Flamands du XIII<sup>ème</sup> siècle. À propos d'une publication récente," *Revue d'ascétique et mystique* 42 (1966), p. 423-437. It is interesting to note that Spaapen claims (p. 375, n. 19): "Concerning Marguerite Porete, research must show whether her 'without a why'—which she may have borrowed from Beatrice of Tienen—may not be understood in an orthodox sense, just as many other expressions from this 'dévoté égarée' that the editor of *Le Mirouer* interprets as heretical may, in our opinion, be explained in an orthodox way." "Wat Margareta Porete betreft, het zou te onderzoeken zijn of haar 'sans nul pourquoi' – dat zij mogelijkervijze ontleend heeft aan Beatrijs v. Tienen – niet in orthodoxe zin kan verstaan worden, zoals verschillende andere uitdrukkingen van deze 'dévoté égarée', welke door de uitgeefster van *Le mirouer* in ketterse zin geduid werden, o.i. voor een orthodoxe uitleg vatbaar zijn." Without engaging in the discussion too deeply, one may question whether Marguerite's condemnation was not in fact the result of the socio-political climate of early 14<sup>th</sup>-century France and the growing division between scholastic theology and mystical literature rather than the supposedly heretical content of the book itself. Beatrice, whose birth most probably predated Marguerite's by more than half a century, is beatified in the Cistercian Order.

after the publication of Guarnieri's discovery, was Stefanus Axters in his *Geschiedenis van de vroomheid in de Nederlanden*: "The Germanisms in the *Mirouer des simples ames* (...) point to the as yet undetermined influence of older German or Dutch mystical texts."<sup>3</sup> Approximately one decade later, in 1969, Jean Orcibal referred to "numerous (...) analogies with the beguines and the speculative Brabantine Middle Dutch mystics (especially Beatrice of Nazareth)," adding in a footnote that Marguerite's exemplarism can be found in Beatrice, as well as "the expression 'without a why' (...), probably borrowed from Beatrice of Nazareth."<sup>4</sup> More recently, Paul Verdeyen has stated that "There is a striking resemblance between this text and the similar description by Beatrice of Nazareth in her treatise *Seven manieren van minne*,"<sup>5</sup> while Max Huot de Longchamp, echoing Axters' earlier position, has written that "She wrote in French, but an attentive reading of *The Mirror* will note the numerous Flemishisms (...). Indeed, her excellent knowledge of contemporary Flemish mysticism invites us to think that she probably knew the language."<sup>6</sup> According to him: "Regarding the division of the spiritual itinerary in seven states (...): we also find them in *The Seven Manners of Love* by Beatrice of Nazareth, which dates from the period of the *Miroir* and there are numerous connections between the two."<sup>7</sup> Irene Leicht<sup>8</sup> and Emilie Zum Brunn<sup>9</sup> affirm the same.

Nonetheless, detailed comparative research of these works has yet to be conducted.<sup>10</sup> If a textual and theological connection between Beatrice and Marguerite

<sup>3</sup> "De Germanismen in het *Mirouer des simples ames* (...) [wijzen] op een tot nog toe niet nader uitgemaakte invloed van oudere Duitse of Nederlandse mystieke teksten," Stefanus AXTERS, *Geschiedenis van de vroomheid in de Nederlanden*, vol. 2: *De eeuw van Ruusbroec*, Antwerp 1953, p. 177.

<sup>4</sup> "Nombreuses (...) analogies avec les beguines et les mystiques spéculatifs de langue thioise (surtout Beatrijs de Nazareth) (...) 'l'expression «sans pourquoi» (...) emprunt probable à Béatrice de Nazareth." Jean ORCIBAL, "Le «Miroir des simples âmes» et la «secte» du Libre Esprit," *Revue de l'histoire des religions* 88 (1969), p. 56.

<sup>5</sup> "Er is een opvallende gelijkenis tussen deze tekst en een gelijkaardige beschrijving van Beatrijs van Nazareth in haar tractaat *Seven manieren van minne*," Paul VERDEYEN, "Porete (Porette, Porrette, Poirette, Poireite, Porte), Margareta," *Nationaal biografisch woordenboek*, vol. 13, Brussels 1990, p. 659.

<sup>6</sup> "Sa langue est le français, mais une lecture attentive du *Miroir* remarque de nombreux flandricismes (...). Son excellente connaissance de la mystique flamande contemporaine invite d'ailleurs à penser qu'elle savait sans doute en partager la langue," MARGUERITE PORETE, *Le miroir des âmes simples et annéanties*, introduction, traduction et notes par Max HUOT DE LONGCHAMP, Paris 1984, p. 22.

<sup>7</sup> "Quand à la repartition de l'itinéraire spirituel en sept états (...): on la retrouve dans les «sept manières d'aimer» de Béatrice de Nazareth à l'époque du *Miroir* avec de nombreuses passerelles d'un ouvrage à l'autre.» *Ibid.*, p. 239.

<sup>8</sup> "In some respects, the remaining stages of the *Mirouer* correspond to the *Seven manieren* of Beatrice of Nazareth." ("In etwa entsprechen sich im übrigen die 7. Stufe des 'Mirouer' und die 'Seven manieren' der Beatrijs von Nazareth.") Irene LEICHT, *Marguerite Porete: eine fromme Intellektuelle und die Inquisition*, Freiburger theologische Studien 163, Freiburg 1999, p. 179.

<sup>9</sup> Emilie ZUM BRUNN, "Non-Willing in Marguerite Porete's 'Mirror of Annihilated Souls,'" *Bulletin van het Belgisch Historisch Instituut te Rome - Bulletin de l'institut historique Belge de Rome* 58 (1988), p.13.

<sup>10</sup> *The Seven Manners* and the seven states in *The Mirror* have, of course, been the subjects of several individual studies, which will be referenced where apposite in this contribution. Of particular

can be established, however, it will shed new light on the development of the tradition of love mysticism in the Low Countries, on the ways in which mystical language and ideas circulated in the medieval Low Countries and on the sources used by Marguerite Porete. Moreover, it will highlight a continuity in the tradition of love mysticism between Marguerite Porete and her predecessors that has been called into question by a number of researchers.<sup>11</sup> An appreciation of this continuity, may, in turn, be of value for research into the later development of love mysticism in the Low Countries—and elsewhere—and its sources and inspiration (e.g. the mystical theology of John of Ruusbroec).<sup>12</sup>

No date is recorded for the writing of *The Seven Manners of Love*, but since we do know the years of Beatrice of Nazareth's birth and death (1200-1268) and we might justifiably assume that she wrote the text during her adult life, it can be dated to the mid-thirteenth century. It is thus the oldest datable mystical prose text in Middle Dutch.<sup>13</sup> Regarding its author, Beatrice, we have relatively extensive information at our disposal thanks to her extant *Vita*, the original writing of which Roger De Ganck dates to approximately 1275.<sup>14</sup> For our purposes it suffices to mention that according to her *Vita*, Beatrice was educated by the beguines at Zoutleeuw between the ages of six and nine before moving to the Cistercian convent of La Ramée where she encountered two other representatives of the *mulieres religiosae* movement, Ida of Nivelles (1197-1231) and Ida of Gorsleeuw (1203-1260). The latter may already have known Beatrice as she was also educated by the beguines at Zoutleeuw. Beatrice entered the Benedictine convent at Florival—in transition to the Cistercian Order at the time—at fifteen, and soon after moved to Maagdendaal where she took her vows at sixteen. In 1235, the Cistercian Abbey of Nazareth was founded on the banks of the River Nete outside Lier, and in 1237, Beatrice was appointed its prioress, an office she held until her death in 1268.

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importance concerning *The Mirror* are Louise GNÄDINGER, "Die Lehre der Margareta Porete von der Selbst- und Gotteserkenntnis: Eine Annäherung," *Denkmodelle von Frauen im Mittelalter*, ed. Béatrice ACKLIN-ZIMMERMANN, Dokimion 15, Fribourg 1994, p. 125-148, and Barbara HAHN-JOOß, *Ceste Ame est Dieu par condicion d'Amour: Theologische Horizonte im Spiegel der einfachen Seelen von Marguerite Porete*, Münster 2010, p. 40-49. Concerning the fourth to sixth states, see Paul MOMMAERS, "La transformation d'amour selon Marguerite Porete," *Ons Geestelijk Erf* 65 (1991), p. 88-107, especially p. 94-98. The specific intent of our contribution is, however, to conduct a textual and theological comparison of *The Seven Manners* and *The Mirror*.

<sup>11</sup> See Caroline Walker BYNUM, *Holy Feast, Holy Fast. The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women*, Berkeley 1987, p. 185-86. Amy HOLLYWOOD, "Suffering Transformed," in *Meister Eckhart and the Beguine Mystics. Hadewijch of Brabant, Mechthild of Magdeburg and Marguerite Porete*, ed. Bernard MCGINN, New York 1994, p. 87-113.

<sup>12</sup> See also Pyong-Gwan PAK, *The Vernacular, Mystical Theology of Jan van Ruusbroec: Exploring Sources, Contexts and Theological Aspects* (unpublished PhD dissertation, Boston College 2008), p. 527-544.

<sup>13</sup> It is generally accepted that Hadewijch must have been active in approximately the same period, but since no information whatsoever is available about her, it is simply impossible to establish an exact date.

<sup>14</sup> *The Life of Beatrice of Nazareth 1200-1268*, translated and annotated by Roger DE GANCK & John Baptist HASBROUCK, Cistercian Fathers Series 50, Kalamazoo 1991, p. xxii.

From this brief summary of her life we may deduce that Beatrice was familiar with beguine life and culture as well as with the milieu of Brabantine mystical women. Ida of Nivelles' *Vita* informs us that she (Ida) was also educated by beguines before entering the Cistercian Order and received mystical experiences. Beatrice's *Vita* appears to suggest that they corresponded with one another until 1231, when Ida died. Beatrice must also have been well-acquainted with the nobility of Brabant and Flanders, who were an active presence in the foundation, organisation and lives of religious communities in their territories. Indeed, the lands needed for the foundation of the Abbey of Nazareth had been granted by Henry I of Brabant in 1225 and it was thanks to the intervention of Henry II of Brabant, Joanna, Countess of Flanders and Hainault and the bishop of Liège, who jointly submitted a request to the general chapter of the Cistercian Order in 1236, that the monastery was officially admitted into the order.<sup>15</sup>

Beatrice's relatively short text is written in Middle Dutch prose and comprises seven chapters, the last of which is several times longer than any of the others. The first line of the text is particularly enlightening: "There are seven manners of love that come from the Most High and return to the Highest" (*Seuen manieren van minnen, die comen vten hoogsten ende keren weder ten ouersten*). Though the human person is active—either outwardly or inwardly—in many of Beatrice's descriptions, the activity of the person serves only to prepare the soul to receive the gift of God's self-revelation and a more profound experience of His love. Beatrice prefaces several of the manners with the word *selcstont*, meaning 'sometimes' or 'occasionally'. She hereby makes clear that depending on the responsiveness of the soul, it may experience different manners or modes of the loving relationship with God at different times.

There is no question but that *The Mirror of Simple Souls* is one of the most enigmatic<sup>16</sup> and yet important mystical treatises of the Late Middle Ages. The latter is evidenced by its wide, albeit incognito circulation, the former by its author's unfortunate fate.<sup>17</sup> Marguerite Porete was burned at the stake as a relapsed heretic in 1310. Very little is known about the author herself and modern readers are thus forced to rely on conjecture and the limited information we have at our disposal in the records of her trial. It may be supposed, however, based on the content of *The Mirror*, that Marguerite received an excellent education and was well-acquainted with the Christian mystical tradition.<sup>18</sup> This contribution will avoid the on-going

<sup>15</sup> K. BREUGELMANS & F. VANHOOF, "Abbaye de Nazareth à Lière puis a Brecht," *Monasticon Belge* VIII, Liège 1992, p. 109.

<sup>16</sup> Bernard MCGINN calls it "one of the most difficult texts of mystical literature of the Middle Ages" ("The Four Female Evangelists of the Thirteenth Century: The Invention of Authority," in Walter HAUG & Wolfram SCHNEIDER-LASTIN, *Deutsche Mystik in abendländische Zusammenhang: Kolloquium Kloster Fischingen 1998*, Tübingen 2000, p. 189).

<sup>17</sup> In a recent article, Lerner has disputed the claim that the circulation of manuscripts was wide but thin. Robert LERNER, "New Light on the Mirror of Simple Souls," *Speculum* 83 (2010), p. 91-116, esp. p. 116.

<sup>18</sup> Bernard MCGINN (*Flowering*, p. 244) suggests she may have received an 'upper-class' education.

debate as to Marguerite's orthodoxy, focusing instead on the extent to which it may have been influenced by Beatrice's Middle Dutch text and the literary and theological similarities between the two. It is impossible to determine the precise route by which Beatrice's text came into Marguerite's possession, but the most probable ways will be discussed below.

Although there are numerous allusions and references to *The Seven Manners* throughout *The Mirror*, chapter 118 bears the most striking resemblance. Here Marguerite describes "seven states" of the devout soul: "which we call states of being (...). They are the degrees by which one climbs from the valley to the summit of the mountain, which is so isolated that one sees nothing there but God."<sup>19</sup> The description of these states of being in chapter 118 of *The Mirror* might be considered the mainstay of the whole treatise, despite the fact that she only provides a systematic overview of the states near the end of the book. They are, however, the central framework around which her treatise is constructed. Indeed, there are numerous references to the states in earlier chapters. For example, in the very first lines of her prologue, she says: "The soul, touched by God and stripped bare of sin, in the first state of grace has ascended through divine grace to the seventh state of grace, in which state the Soul has the fullness of her perfection through her enjoyment of God in the land of life."<sup>20</sup> Marguerite thus prefaces her entire book on the conviction that there are seven ways in which the soul experiences its relationship with God, without providing any further elucidation of them at that point. In chapter 58 she reveals that the central focus of *The Mirror* is to describe the fifth state.

In addition to discussing the possible literary and theological influence of Beatrice on Marguerite, this contribution will also comment on the precise meaning of the ascent to God and how it is related to the notion of indwelling in the two works discussed. Indeed, Marguerite appears to have interpreted Beatrice's manners not as the various ways in which the relationship might be experienced at different times, but rather as successive steps in a spiritual ascent to God.<sup>21</sup> The

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<sup>19</sup> *Sept estaz, que nous appellons estres (...). Et ce sont les degrez, par ou l'en monte de la vallee ou mont de la montaigne, qui est si esseulee, que on n'y voit sinon Dieu* (GUARNIERI & VERDEYEN, p. 316, l. 4-7). For the English translation, unless otherwise mentioned, we follow the translation by COLLEDGE e.a.. The above quotation, slightly modified, appears on p. 140-141.

<sup>20</sup> *Ame de Dieu touchee, et denuee de peché ou premier estat de grace, est montee par divines graces ou septiesme estat de grace, ouquel estat l'Ame a le plain de sa perfection par divine fruiction ou pais de vie* (GUARNIERI & VERDEYEN, p. 10, l. 1-5; COLLEDGE e.a., p. 141).

<sup>21</sup> Though Beatrice uses the expression *manieren* and not e.g. 'steps', 'rungs', 'stages' or 'degrees', her text clearly describes spiritual development; in the *eerste maniere*, for example, she refers to the "good soul" *goede siele* (REYPPENS & VAN MIERLO, p. 3, l. 11), while in the *sevende maniere* the soul is referred to as "blessed soul" *salige ziele* (*Ibid.*, p. 28, l. 2). This, we suggest, is why Marguerite opted to use the term 'states'. On the other hand, it is essential to both authors that they do not describe a spiritual programme that can simply be copied by others or indeed fulfilled by the soul itself, since the initiative and activity of God is indispensable (MCGINN, *Flowering*, p. 405; Ritamary BRADLEY, "Love and Knowledge in Seven Manners of Loving," *Hidden Springs. Cistercian Monastic Women*, Medieval Religious Women, vol. 3/1, ed. John A. NICHOLS and Lillian Thomas SHANK OCSO, Kalamazoo 1995,

references to ascent in Beatrice's text, which are perhaps primarily an explanatory literary device, were interpreted by Marguerite as being successive transformative stages the soul must go through in order to be deified—the soul's ultimate objective. It is certainly true, however, that for both authors, the manners and states are different ways of experiencing one fundamental reality, namely that the soul is created in the image and likeness of God and that it is invited by Him from eternity to respond to His love, made manifest in His creative activity.

## I. THE FIRST MANNER AND THE FIRST STATE

### 1. Beatrice's First Manner

As mentioned above, Beatrice begins her text by clarifying the common characteristic of the different manners of love, namely that they are relational and reciprocal and that they are characterised by invitation and response: "There are seven manners of love that come from the Most High and return to the Highest." This is the basis of the entire treatise and it is the hermeneutical key with which the whole text may be understood. Beatrice's text is about a loving relationship, but it is important to note that she uses the word *minne*—love—as a noun denoting God's relationality itself, as well as to refer to the relationship between the human and divine.<sup>22</sup> Indeed, for Beatrice, God—the Trinity—is love, and thus fundamental and radical relationality. Each of the seven manners is a different description of the way in which the soul may experience being in relationship with the primary loving relationship that exists in God between the Father and Son through the Holy Spirit.

After her brief introduction, Beatrice goes on to describe the first manner, the central theme of which—and one that recurs in much of the text—is the soul's desire. In this initial manner, the soul, unencumbered by qualms of conscience, seeks and desires to do all it can to attain the purity, freedom and nobility of love, in which it was created in the image and likeness of its creator. Beatrice's reference to the image and likeness of God is doubtless Christological.<sup>23</sup> She hereby

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p. 361-376). One might argue that the structure of *The Seven Manners* should best be conceived as three successive diptychs prefaced by an introduction and not as seven chronologically consecutive, distinct experiences (see "De structuur van de tekst," introduction to BEATRIJS VAN NAZARETH, *Seven manieren van minne, Middelnederlandse tekst met inleiding en hertaling door* ["Middle Dutch text with an introduction and translation by"] Rob FAESEN, Kapellen 1999, p. 37-41, and Jos HULS, *Seven manieren van minnen van Beatrijs van Nazareth. Het mystieke proces en mystagogische implicaties*, vol. 1, *Miscellanea Neerlandica* 28, Leuven 2002, p. 146-149). It is important to note, however, that Marguerite appears not to interpret the structure in this way.

<sup>22</sup> See "Het kernbegrip: minne," in the introduction to BEATRIJS VAN NAZARETH, *Seven manieren*, intro. Rob FAESEN, p. 42; MCGINN, *Flowering*, p. 405; Herman VEKEMAN "Minne in 'Seven manieren van minne' van Beatrijs van Nazareth," *Cîteaux* 29 (1969), p. 316; Roger DE GANCK, *Towards Unification with God*, Cistercian Studies Series 122, Kalamazoo 1991, p. 470-471.

<sup>23</sup> See footnote 127 in Rob FAESEN, *Begeerte in het werk van Hadewijch*, Leuven 2000, p. 155.

indicates that Christ is the exemplar of the life and the love that the soul seeks. She writes:

That she [the good soul] is drawn into the desire to obtain and to be in the purity and in the freedom and in the nobility in which she was made by her creator to his image and likeness. (...) Until the time that she receives sincerely and faithfully from God the ability to serve love with a free conscience and with a pure spirit and clear understanding without hindrance from former errors.<sup>24</sup>

There are a number of important elements in this quotation. Beatrice says that the ‘good’ soul who seeks, out of love, to correspond increasingly to its created state, does so with freedom of conscience. Without stating it explicitly, Beatrice hereby indicates that the soul is not encumbered by the burdens of conscience resulting from mortal sin. In other words, this manner is the description of a soul that acts in accordance with the law. It does not experience this as the crowning and completion of its life, however. The mere practice of the law is insufficient for the soul, and it is confronted with an intense desire and longing to be even closer to God and to be completely pure, noble and free. Beatrice suggests that this desire and longing is engendered in the soul by God, who calls or invites it to correspond once again to the state in which it was created: “For which she is made and called by God”.<sup>25</sup>

Beatrice leaves us in no doubt as to what exactly the soul desires. She does not simply appeal to an abstract notion of ‘increasingly profound love’; on the contrary, she characterises the object of the soul’s desire in three ways, namely as ‘equality of love’, ‘beauty of the virtues’ and ‘nobility of love’.<sup>26</sup> The first of these must certainly be considered of primary importance. Indeed, Beatrice explicitly claims that the soul desires to establish complete equality of love between itself and God. This is clearly related to the fact that the soul is created to the image and likeness of God and thus desires to correspond to that image. Since the image of God is Christ, the Son in the Trinity, he is the exemplar for the soul’s practice of the virtues and noble bearing. The biblical description of Christ’s humanity being ‘alike to us in all but sin’<sup>27</sup> would certainly not have been foreign to Beatrice. As we have seen, the ‘good’ soul Beatrice describes is presumed to reflect this aspect of Christ’s humanity in that it has overcome sin through the practice of the virtues. But this does not suffice the soul, which desires also to partake of the divine relationship of which Christ is a constitutive part, namely the Trinity. Made ‘in’

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<sup>24</sup> (...) *datsi es getrect in die begerte te vercrigene ende te wesene in die puerheit ende in die vriheit ende in die edelheit daer si in ghemaket es van haren sceppere na sijn beelde ende na sijn ghelikenesse (...) datsi met ernste ende met trouwen vercreghen hevet van gode datsi vorwaert meer, sonder lettenisse van verledene mestaden, moge dienen der minnen met vrier consciencien ende met puren gheest ende claren verstannisse* (REYPPENS & VAN MIERLO, p. 4, l. 14-18; p. 6, l. 46-51).

<sup>25</sup> *Daer si toe volmaket es ende gheroepen van gode* (*Ibid.*, p. 4, l. 23-24).

<sup>26</sup> *Die naeheit ter gelijcheit der minnen, in alre sierheit der dogheden ende in alre puerheit der naester edelheit der minnen* (*Ibid.*, p. 4-5, l. 29-31).

<sup>27</sup> Heb. 4:15.

Christ—the image of God—it is through Christ that the soul might become Christ’s equal not only in virtue, but in love, and share in the life of the Trinity. It is from this Christological—and thus necessarily Trinitarian—perspective that the two texts considered here will converge most strikingly.

At the end of the first manner, Beatrice makes an interesting observation. If the desire in the soul and the works in which it results are genuinely pure and noble, the soul is not committed to them out of fear of the wrath of God. As mentioned above, the ‘good’ soul Beatrice describes keeps the commandments and practices the law and thus has no qualms of conscience. The very fact that Beatrice describes certain souls who keep the commandments out of fear—that “are active and passive, work and abstain from fear of the Lord’s wrath and his righteous judgement or his eternal vengeance or his temporary punishments”<sup>28</sup>—indicates that this is a fundamentally different response to God’s invitation with radically different consequences.

## 2. Marguerite’s First State

In contrast to Beatrice’s emphasis and description of the souls who respond to God out of love, and desire to attain equality in the Trinity, Marguerite’s first state emphasises the category of souls briefly touched upon in the last paragraph of Beatrice’s first manner. Marguerite affirms that the first element of the soul’s search for equality with God is to be “stripped bare of sin” (*desnuee (...) de peché*<sup>29</sup>). She then makes explicit the life led in accordance with the law hinted at in Beatrice’s text, focusing on those who keep the law out of fear—“this soul considers and ponders with great fear that God has commanded her to love him with all her heart, and her neighbour also as herself”<sup>30</sup>—rather than those who desire God out of love. The activity and effort required for these souls to keep the commandments dominates their lives, precluding the possibility of seeking God more closely. The constant questioning and reflection Beatrice describes in the souls

<sup>28</sup> (...) *doet werken ende dogen, doen ende laten van anxte der abolghen ons heren ende dies ordeels van dien gerechtegen rechtte ofte dier eeweliker wraken ofte der tegankeleker plagen* (REYPPENS & VAN MIERLO, p. 6-7, l. 55-58).

<sup>29</sup> The complete expression in the Old French text is *desnuee a son pouvoir de peché* (MAX HUOT DE LONGCHAMP translates this as “dépouillée de son pouvoir de péché”, p. 195), while COLLEDGE e.a. render it “stripped bare of sin” (p. 141). The Latin translation reads *denudatur pro posse ab omni peccato* (GUARNIERI & VERDEYEN, p. 319, l. 9). The Middle English reads: *(is) disseuerid fro synne* (MARGARET PORETE, “The Mirror of Simple Souls,” ed. Marilyn DOIRON, *Archivio Italiano per la storia della pietà* V (1968), p. 338, l. 19-20). The insight that the Middle English translation is probably closer to the lost original than the extant Old French and Latin manuscripts may be enlightening here (see Robert LERNER, “New Light on the Mirror of Simple Souls,” *Speculum* 83 (2010), p. 91-116). Indeed, a number of lines later, Marguerite says about the soul in the first state: “that it would take her all her might to keep and observe the commandments” (*que son pouvoir a assez a faire de tenir et garder les commandemens*, l. 16-17), which self-evidently makes no sense if the soul has been stripped of its *pouvoir de peché*. The Middle English translation does not contain this inherent contradiction.

<sup>30</sup> *Et pource regarde et considere ceste Ame, par grant crainte, que Dieu luy a commandé a l’aymer de tout son cuer, et aussi son proesme comme soy mesmes* (GUARNIERI & VERDEYEN, p. 318, l. 11-14).



who seek to ‘grow in love’ is absent here, since Marguerite limits her discussion to the souls who question how best to keep the commandments. This shift of emphasis in Marguerite’s text might be explained by an appeal to practical experience. Indeed, Marguerite may simply have opined that of those souls who attain observance of the commandments—perhaps not unjustifiably, one may presume this to be a relatively limited number—there were very few who committed themselves to the further labours required to ‘grow in love’, in Beatrice’s terminology. Marguerite may simply have found it more realistic to emphasise the circumstances of the majority while only briefly indicating the attributes exhibited by those who do “undertake the great matter.”

In two significant respects, Beatrice’s and Marguerite’s texts bear marked similarities in their descriptions of the first manner or state of love. First, they both posit an important precondition that must be established before the soul can embark on its quest for a deeper relationship with God, namely that it must be unencumbered by the qualms of conscience caused by failing to keep the commandments or breaking the Law. Second, having attained such a condition, the soul is at liberty to work, unafraid, not solely to adhere strictly to the law for the law’s sake, but to search for God in love for its own sake—and this characterises both the second manner and the second state.

## II. THE SECOND MANNER AND THE SECOND STATE

### 1. Beatrice’s Second Manner

Beatrice’s second manner describes the relationship of the soul to God in terms of active service ‘without a why’.<sup>31</sup> One might consider the fundamental reflection in this manner to follow naturally from the line of thought in the foregoing manner. The soul that desires to go beyond the mere practice of the law to grow in love ought not to do so out of fear of God’s wrath, but neither must it desire any compensation or reward for its efforts. Beatrice clarifies her conception of ‘love without a why’ (*minne sonder waeromme*) with the metaphor of a young girl who works for her master simply for the joy of serving him and the pleasure it affords him to be served.<sup>32</sup> “Thus” (*Also*), Beatrice continues, “the soul desires to serve love with love, without measure and above measure, and above human sense and reason.”<sup>33</sup>

This service of love is characterised by intense, burning desire. Beatrice claims that the soul is not only ready and willing to do all it can to please love, it even

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<sup>31</sup> (...) *onsen here te dienne te uergeues, allene met minnen sonder enich waeromme ende sonder eneghen loen van gratien ofte van glorien* (REYPENS & VAN MIERLO, p. 7, l. 3-6).

<sup>32</sup> *Also gelijc alse .i. jonfrouwe die dient haren here van groter minnen ende sonder loen, ende hare dat genuecht datsi heme moge dienen ende dat hi dat gedoget datsi hem gediene* (*Ibid.*, p. 7-8, l. 6-10).

<sup>33</sup> *Begert si met minnen te dienne der minnen, sonder mate ende bouen mate, ende bouen mensche-like sin ende redene* (*Ibid.*, p. 7-8, l. 6-12).

faces any possible hardships with pleasure and ease.<sup>34</sup> The soul is both “prepared to serve” (*gereet in dienst*), i.e. prepared to respond to the recommendations of God, and, Beatrice implies, searching for opportunities to practice love for love’s sake (“she takes pleasure in finding something to do and to undergo in the service of love”).<sup>35</sup>

## 2. Marguerite’s Second State

Of all Beatrice’s manners and Marguerite’s states, the correspondence of the second manner and second state is perhaps most striking. Marguerite adopted Beatrice’s basic idea and reproduces it in a slightly more concrete and explicit form. “The second state is when the Soul considers what God recommends to his special loved ones over and above what he commands; and he is no true lover who can abstain from doing all that he knows will please his love.”<sup>36</sup> Just like Beatrice, Marguerite emphasises the gratuity of the love expressed in the second state. The soul is free to respond to the recommendations of love simply for the sake of pleasing the one it loves, namely God. Moreover, in the first part of her description, Marguerite treats the aspect of response to God’s recommendations. In the second part, discussed below, she also deals with the aspect of the human activity that searches for ways in which to please the soul’s beloved.

Marguerite concretises the expression of love in this state by referring to the exemplar of this activity, viz. Christ. As in Beatrice’s text, where she emphasises the struggles and pains of actively serving love—and how easily they are borne—Marguerite here describes the arduous activities of the soul in furtherance of that objective: “And so the creature abandons himself, and strains to act beyond the counsels of men in mortifying nature, in despising riches, delights and honours, to achieve the perfection of the evangelical counsels of which Jesus Christ is the exemplar. So she does not fear loss of possessions, nor men’s words, nor feebleness of body.”<sup>37</sup>

It may be argued that Marguerite’s reference to self-abandonment and feebleness of body are direct references to Beatrice’s “above human sense and reason” (*bouen menschelike sin ende redene*). *Redene* can be translated as ‘calculation’ (cf. ‘beredeneerd’ in modern Dutch) and thus refer to calculated love which seeks

<sup>34</sup> *Also hier in es, so es si so bernende in der begerten, so gereet in dienste, so licht in arbeide, so sachte in onghemake, so blide in vernoye (Ibid., p. 8, l. 14-16).*

<sup>35</sup> *So es hare dat genuעהlec datsi iet vint te doene ende te dogene in der minnen dienste (Ibid., p. 8-9, l. 18-20).*

<sup>36</sup> *Le second estât, ou degré, est que l’Ame regarde que Dieu conseille a ses espiciaulx amis, outre ce qu’il commande; et celluy n’est mie amy, qui se peut deporter d’acomplir tout ce qu’il sçait qui plaist a son amy (GUARNIERI & VERDEYEN, p. 318, l. 27-30; COLLEDGE e.a., p. 141).*

<sup>37</sup> *Et adonc s’abandonne la creature, et s’efforce de faire par dessus tous les conseilz des hommes, en oeuvre de mortiffiement de nature, en desprisant richesses, delices et honnours, pour acomplir la perfection du conseil de l’Euvangile, dont Jhesucrist est l’exemple. Adonc ne craint elle ne perte d’avoir, ne paroles de gens, ne jobloice de corps (GUARNIERI & VERDEYEN, p. 318-320, l. 30-36; COLLEDGE, e.a., p. 141).*

either to avoid misfortune or obtain reward. In such a case, the calculating human soul establishes itself—rather than the other—as the criterion for the relationship. We consider this self-abandonment to which Marguerite refers to be the human soul's free renunciation of its position as said criterion.

*Redene* may also be translated as 'reason' and this understanding would underline the above point *a fortiori*. One of the basic themes of *The Mirror* is the human soul's overcoming of reason for love's sake. In fact, Marguerite goes so far as to put reason to death in chapter 87 of her book. The central thrust of her argument is that when the human soul is a slave to reason, it is never genuinely involved in a mutual loving relationship with the other for the other's sake, but in self-centred and self-serving love.

In passing, we may also note a more explicit reference to Beatrice's Second Manner in *The Mirror*, but one that does not occur in chapter 118. In chapter 81 of the book, Marguerite uses a direct translation of the Middle Dutch phrase *sonder enich waeromme*, rendering it in French as *sans nul pourquoi*. To our knowledge, with the exception of poem 18 by Pseudo-Hadewijch, these are the only texts from this period to use this exact expression.<sup>38</sup>

### III. THE THIRD MANNER AND THE THIRD STATE

#### 1. Beatrice's Third Manner

In Beatrice's third manner, the soul recognises that the degree to which it is capable of loving pales in comparison to that of God. This elicits a hellish pain. Though the soul is prepared and willing to perform any task or any work of love, it remains "discontented and unsatisfied in all her works. But above all, she is most pained by the fact that, considering her great desire, she cannot do enough for love and that she lacks so much in love."<sup>39</sup>

Such expressions of insufficiency or inadequacy relative to God—and consequent pain and torment—are not uncommon in the Christian mystical tradition and are referred to as the *defectus amoris* or *amor deficiens*.<sup>40</sup> The soul recognises that

<sup>38</sup> See HADEWIJCH, *Mengeldichten*, ed. Jozef VAN MIERLO, Leuvense studiën en tekstuitgaven 15, Antwerpen 1952, p. 100 (l. 161). There appear to be many other similarities between the poems of Pseudo-Hadewijch and *The Mirror*. Alessia VALLARSA recently defended a PhD dissertation on the poem cycle, paying particular attention to their connection with Ruusbroec's mystical theology. See Alessia VALLARSA, "Nell'alta conoscenza del nudo amore": *Un testo anonimo della mistica brabantina del 14 secolo: Le Mengeldichten 17-29* (Unpublished PhD dissertation, Padua University and Ghent University 2010).

<sup>39</sup> (...) *onghenughet ende ongekust in al haren werken. Maer bouen al es hare dat die meeste pine datsi na hare grote begerte niet genouch encan gedoen der minnen ende dat hare so vele moet ontbliven in der minnen* (REYPPENS & VAN MIERLO, p. 10, l. 16-21).

<sup>40</sup> For example, WILLIAM OF SAINT-THIERRY in his *De natura et dignitate amoris* 21 (ed. Paul VERDEYEN, *Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis* 88, Turnhout 2003, p. 193, l. 575-578): "Reason has its own set paths and straight ways by which it progresses. Love, however, advances more by its *shortcomings* (...). Reason, therefore, seems to advance through what God is not toward what

irrespective of the effort it exerts or the works it accomplishes for the sake of love, it will never equal the infinite love of its beloved, God, because its ability to do so is curbed by its very nature: “because what she desires is impossible, and is not of the being of any creature.”<sup>41</sup> Beatrice thus expresses that the created soul can never of its own initiative or through its own efforts match the love of the creator. Though the soul clearly recognises this impossibility (“she knows well that this ... transcends all her power”),<sup>42</sup> it nevertheless yearns to respond fully, i.e. above its own capacity, to that which is given.

This manner is again characterised by ardent desire, which is directed toward establishing equality in the relationship in response to God: “And the many things she lacks in works, she would like to fulfil with all her will and with strong desire.”<sup>43</sup> Desire is not a new theme for Beatrice, but she now describes the desire as the will to do more than any other creature and to transcend its own nature as creature: “that she alone would be capable of doing as much as all the people on the earth and all the spirits in heaven and all the creatures above and below, and infinitely more.”<sup>44</sup> This, however, the soul is incapable of and tormented for its inadequacy.

Beatrice describes the pain caused by this inadequacy and inequality in love as a living death: “she feels as though she suffers living death and dying, feels the pain of hell; and all her life is hellish.”<sup>45</sup> It is not entirely clear what Beatrice means precisely by this reference to a living, hellish death. It may simply be that she uses it as a literary device to convey a sense of great pain. It is also possible, and perhaps more likely, that she uses the image of hell to suggest something of the all-consuming, destructive power of the fire of hell, much like her approximate contemporary Hadewijch does in her sixteenth poem, where she discusses the seven names of love and provides an explanation for each:

Her [minne] seventh name is the Hell  
Of love that causes me great pain.  
Because she is all-consuming and all-damning  
And nobody escapes her  
Who is seized by her and grasped  
For no mercy enters there.

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God is. Love, putting aside what God is not, rejoices to lose itself in what he is.” *Habet etiam ratio suos tramites certos et directas semitas quibus incedit; amor autem suo defectu plus proficit (...). Ratio ergo per id quod non est, in id quod est uidetur proficere; amor postponens quod non est, in eo quod est gaudet deficere* (emphasis ours).

<sup>41</sup> *Want datsi behgert dat es onmogelike, ende onwesenlec allen creaturen* (REYPENS & VAN MIERLO, p. 10-11, l. 23-25).

<sup>42</sup> *Si weet wale dat dit es (...) bouen alle har macht te doene* (*Ibid.*, p. 10, l. 22-23).

<sup>43</sup> *Ende dats hare oec so vele ontbliuet in den werken, dat wilt si eruullen met geheelen wille ende met starker begerten* (*Ibid.*, p. 11, l. 30-33).

<sup>44</sup> *Datsi mochte doen allene also vele also alle mensen van ertrike ende also alle die geeste van hemelrike ende al dat creature es bouen ende beneden, ende entelleke vele meer* (*Ibid.*, p. 11, l. 25-29).

<sup>45</sup> *Ende so es hare also of si al levende stervet ende stervende die pine van der hellen gevoelt; ende al hare leven es hellechtich* (*Ibid.*, p. 12, l. 47-49).

Just as hell destroys all  
 And in her one finds nothing  
 But torment and great pain,  
 Always to be restless,  
 Always storm and new pursuit  
 All-consumed and all-devoured  
 In her unfathomable essence...<sup>46</sup>

From Hadewijch's quotation, it is apparent that she understands the hellishness of love in terms of its consuming, engulfing, destroying and devouring power. Beatrice, in expressing "the ghastriness of meticulous desire,"<sup>47</sup> may be referring to the same effects of the fire of hell. From this perspective, Beatrice suggests that the soul is consumed by its unfulfilled desire.

The third manner ends with a reference to the fourth, and Beatrice already gives away that there is some hope for the tormented soul that finds itself in this manner of love. The works performed by the soul on its own initiative to please love can bring it no further because it will always fall short, but now the loving other—God—will take the initiative and comfort the soul: "that our Lord comforts her and places her in another manner of love and of desire and in even closer knowledge of himself."<sup>48</sup> God grants the soul more intimate knowledge of Himself and by so doing, transforms the dynamics of the relationship between Himself and the soul. In other words, in Beatrice's conception, once the soul has reached the limits of its active capacity and has been destroyed by the burning desire to transcend itself, it is in a state ready to receive God, who takes the initiative to relieve it from its pains by giving it greater knowledge of Himself. Beatrice hereby anticipates the development she will discuss in the fourth manner.

## 2. Marguerite's Third State

The predominant theme of the third state of being in *The Mirror*—and one of the central themes of the whole treatise—is the transformation of the will in the soul wrought by a self-inflicted destruction of the personal will in order for God to occupy the 'space' in the soul thereby created. The soul is thus able to live according to the will of God.

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<sup>46</sup> *Hare seuende name dat es helle Der minnen daer ic aue quelle. Want si al verslindet ende verdoemt Ende in hare niemant op en comt, Die hare beuult ende diese beueet, Dat daer ghene ghenade toe en gheet. Ghelijc dat die helle al verderuet Ende men in hare niet el en verweruet Dan onghenade ende sterke pine, Altoes in ongheduerne te sine, Altoes storm ende nuwe veruolghen, Al verslonden ende al verswolghen, In hare grondelose natuere (...).* HADEWIJCH, *Mengeldichten*, p. 83, l. 149-160.

<sup>47</sup> *Datsi mochte doen allene also vele also alle menschen van ertrike ende also alle die geeste van hemelrike ende al dat creature es bouen ende beneden, ende ontelleke vele meer* (REYPPENS & VAN MIERLO, p. 11, l. 25-29).

<sup>48</sup> *Datse onse here troest ende set in andre maniere van minnen ende van begerten ende in noch naerre kinnesse te heme* (*Ibid.*, p. 12-13, l. 53-56).

From the beginning of her description of the third state, it is clear that Marguerite interprets the two foregoing states as the soul's attachment to the works of perfection practiced in order to please God, but always practiced on the soul's own terms ("through the inflexibility with which she undertakes every labour").<sup>49</sup> She describes the soul's commitment to the works as a "burning desire of that Love to multiply in herself such works."<sup>50</sup> Marguerite reasons that on the basis of the foregoing states, the soul loves nothing except the works of perfection that it performs to please God, but that since "no other gift is esteemed in loving except to give the loved one [God] that which the lover [the soul] most loves,"<sup>51</sup> the soul considers it necessary to "sacrifice" these works of perfection to God. This step in Marguerite's reasoning might best be understood as the soul's realisation that despite its love for God, its will "loves nothing except works of goodness."<sup>52</sup> As she indicates, though the soul performs the works of perfection in order to please God, the soul's will loves nothing but the works themselves. Marguerite's line of thought is thus that if the works of perfection are loved in and of themselves, and become an end in themselves, they divert the soul from God.

Marguerite further considers that since the soul's will is actively engaged in these works and indeed, is sustained ("nourished") by this activity, the soul's will dies when the works are sacrificed to God for the fulfilment of love. "She renounces those works in which she has this delight and puts to death the will which had its life from this, and obliges herself to obey the will of another."<sup>53</sup> The latter clause of this sentence is of particular importance as it indicates one of Marguerite's central themes: that as an act of the will, in order to fulfil the loving relationship with God, the soul adopts the will of God to operate within itself.

The development of Marguerite's thought with respect to these works might be considered the logical conclusion of Beatrice's thought. If Marguerite interpreted Beatrice's description of the intense longing of the will to transcend its created nature in fulfilling the works of perfection as love of the works themselves, it is not particularly surprising that she concludes that they must be sacrificed. Marguerite's insight is thus that the works of perfection may, if they become the object of the soul's love, hinder rather than help the soul's ascent to God, the proper object of that love.

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<sup>49</sup> *Par raideur de grans emprises de tous labours* (GUARNIERI & VERDEYEN, p. 320, l. 47; COLLEDGE e.a., p. 142).

<sup>50</sup> *Ung desir boullant de l'amour de multiplier en elle telles œuvres* (GUARNIERI & VERDEYEN, p. 320, l. 40-41; COLLEDGE e.a., p. 142).

<sup>51</sup> *Car aultre don n'est de pris en amour; que donner a amy la chose plus aymee* (GUARNIERI & VERDEYEN, p. 320, l. 44-45; COLLEDGE e.a., p. 142).

<sup>52</sup> *Que la voulenté de ceste creature n'ayme fors œuvres de bonté* (GUARNIERI & VERDEYEN, p. 320, l. 46-47; COLLEDGE e.a., p. 142).

<sup>53</sup> *Et pource relenquist elle telle œuvres, dont elle a tel delit, et met a mort voulenté qui avoit de ce vie, et se oblige, pour faire le martire, en obédience d'altruy vouloir* (GUARNIERI & VERDEYEN, p. 320-322, l. 53-56; COLLEDGE e.a., p. 142).

At the very end of her description, Marguerite describes how the divine will is to be adopted in the soul and she does so in terms of self-destruction: “So one must crush oneself, hacking and hewing away at oneself to widen the place in which Love will want to be.”<sup>54</sup> In order to love God more fully, the soul must renounce its works, and thus its will, and break itself open by destroying itself in order for God’s presence to enter and grow in the soul. In other words, Marguerite appears to argue that until this point, the soul itself is the locus of its activities and the ‘inflexible’ determining factor in the relationship with God. At this point, however, by breaking itself open, the soul has allowed God to enter and fill the space the soul has created within itself. What is more, in Marguerite’s conception, by doing so, the soul has created a space in which God would wish to dwell.<sup>55</sup>

It may be clear from the above that the development of the argumentation in Beatrice’s third manner and Marguerite’s third state diverges considerably. The *defectus amoris* theme in Beatrice’s work is completely absent from Marguerite’s text on this point. The latter does not describe the deepening of the divine-human relationship in terms of the pain caused by the human soul’s inadequacy and desire to equal the love received. Rather, Marguerite discusses the growth of the divine presence in the soul in terms of free human self-renunciation in the furtherance of the relationship. By, in some sense, breaking its own boundaries—i.e. ceasing to perform works as an end in themselves—the soul makes of itself a place where God would want to dwell. Conversely, in Beatrice’s text, it is the pain caused by insufficiency that leads God to compensate the limited human ability to love with the fullness of His love, by ‘placing’ the soul in another manner. Herein lies another divergence, namely that in the third manner, the soul suffers its hellish life until the time “when our Lord comforts her and places her in another manner of love and of desire.”<sup>56</sup> Though the element of pain is present in Marguerite’s text, the soul inflicts this pain upon itself, humbling itself to prepare a place where God would want to dwell.

Marguerite adds one final element that is reminiscent of Beatrice’s first manner, namely that the soul must “burden itself down with several states of being, so as to unburden itself to attain its being.”<sup>57</sup> The implication here is that the true “being”

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<sup>54</sup> *Ainsi se esconvient il mouldre en deffroissant et debrisant soy mesmes, pour eslargir le lieu ouquel Amour voudra estre* (GUARNIERI & VERDEYEN, p. 322, l. 61-64; COLLEDGE e.a., p. 142).

<sup>55</sup> See WILLIAM OF SAINT-THIERRY, Meditation VI, 11: “When, however, you dwell in us, we are surely your heaven, but you are not sustained by dwelling in us. It is your sustaining that makes us a dwelling for you. You are also our heaven, to which we may ascend and in which we may dwell. As I see it, heaven is our dwelling in you and yours in us.” *Cum autem nos inhabitas, caelum tuum sumus utique, sed non quo sustineris, ut inhabites, sed quod sustentas ut inhabitetur; to quoque caelum nobis existens ad quem ascendamus et inhabitemus. Nostra ergo, ut uideo, in te, vel tua in nobis inhabitatio caelum est* (*Meditationes devotissimae*, ed. Paul VERDEYEN, Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis 89, Turnhout 2005, p. 36, l. 86-90).

<sup>56</sup> *Datse onse here troest ende set in andre maniere van minnen ende van begerten* (REYPPENS & VAN MIERLO, p. 12-13, l. 53-55).

<sup>57</sup> *Encombrer soy mesmes de plusieurs estres, pour descombrer soy mesmes, pour actaindre son estre* (GUARNIERI & VERDEYEN, p. 322, l. 63-64; COLLEDGE e.a., p. 142).

(*estre*) of the human person is something that it must seek through a process of closer proximity to God. Beatrice specifies this in her first manner: correspondence to the image and likeness of God.

We suggest, in conclusion, that though the argumentation of the texts develops differently, the fundamental relational development described in each text is very similar. Both in Beatrice's third manner and Marguerite's third state, the relational dynamics are transformed in that the locus of the relationship changes from the human soul—and its activity—to God, and particularly his indwelling in the soul. This is only hinted at in Beatrice's third manner, but it is fully developed in the fourth.

#### IV. THE FOURTH MANNER AND THE FOURTH STATE

##### 1. Beatrice's Fourth Manner

Beatrice begins her fourth manner slightly differently than all the others. She begins: "Our Lord also gives another manner of love, sometimes in great consolation and sometimes in great desolation, which we will now describe."<sup>58</sup> This is the strongest indication in Beatrice's text that the fourth and fifth manners are intended to be viewed side by side as, respectively, the experiences of consolation and desolation in what Ruusbroec would later call the 'interior life'.<sup>59</sup> Whether or not Beatrice intended her text to be subdivided in this way, Marguerite does not appear to have read her so.

As she indicates in her introductory line, Beatrice's fourth manner is characterised by great pleasure. She begins her description of how love "is sweetly awakened in the soul, and joyfully arises and that it stirs the heart without any agency of human works."<sup>60</sup> Beatrice hereby gives us the first clue as to how this manner of love is to be understood. Love has become active in the soul suddenly, preventing the soul from taking any initiative. Beatrice makes clear that no human works are involved in this sudden and powerful eruption of love in the soul. As a result, the soul experiences a sensation of being touched, embraced and joyfully overwhelmed by love. It is important to note that in this manner, Beatrice appears to distinguish between *minne* as a proper noun for the relationality of the Trinity and God (*gode*) as a proper noun for God in His essential, divine nature. By making this distinction, Beatrice emphasises that the soul now finds itself involved in the relationship of love that constitutes the Trinity without transforming into God

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<sup>58</sup> *Noch pleget onse here ander maniere te gheue van minnen ende selcstont in groter waelheiden, selcstont in groter welegheiden, daer wi nu af seghen willen* (REYPPENS & VAN MIERLO, p. 13, l. 2-5).

<sup>59</sup> See "De structuur van de tekst," in BEATRIJS VAN NAZARETH, *Seven manieren*, intro. by Rob FAESEN, p. 37-41.

<sup>60</sup> *suteleke in der zielen verwecket wert, ende blideleke op-ersteet ende datsi har seluen beruert int herte sonder enich toe-doen van menscheliken werken* (REYPPENS & VAN MIERLO, p. 13, l. 6-9).



in His divine essence. This is of great importance for a correct understanding of Beatrice's conception of the further development of the relationship and its effects.

After emphasising that this relationship comes about "without any involvement of human works" (*sonder enich toe-doen van menscheliken werken*), Beatrice goes on to describe the dramatic effects of the experience on the soul's sensations. A number of her statements are of particular importance for our comparison. For example:

Then she feels that all her senses are united in love and that her will has become love, and that she is sunk and devoured so deeply in the abyss of love and has become completely love herself.<sup>61</sup>

These lines describe an experience of being unified or made one (*geheilicht*) in love.<sup>62</sup> We find here a clear example of what Albert Deblaere described in his contribution to the *Sacramentum Mundi* lexicon when summarising the mystical experience:

Touched by love, the lower and emotive faculties integrate in the unity of the heart. This power of feeling, being united with that of the spirit, forms the ground of the soul, in which God's creative power and grace are active. No longer as distinct faculties (such as memory, intellect and will) but as one single total dynamism, the foundation of being, they are touched by the veiled presence of the beloved and activated by this experience.<sup>63</sup>

Deblaere thus clarifies the fundamental conception of the human soul according to the Middle Dutch mystics, including Beatrice. Indeed, as Beatrice says, the soul is unified and drawn into the abyss of love where, in her words, it becomes love. Statements such as "the soul becomes completely love" do not necessarily imply that the soul is transformed into the divine essence. Beatrice distinguishes between God as loving relationality (*minne*) and God's divine nature. From this perspective, the soul does not become God in the sense that it adopts or is transformed into the divine nature, but it does correspond to God in that it partakes in the loving relationality of the Trinity. In Deblaere's terminology, this encounter occurs in the ground of the soul's being. Beatrice—and Marguerite for that matter—conceives of this ground as an abyss, indicating that at the deepest level, the soul is fathomless and that it is in this abyssal reality that the encounter with God occurs, drawing the soul into the relationality of the Trinity.

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<sup>61</sup> *dan ghevuelt si dat al hor sinne sijn geheilicht in der minnen ende har wille es worden minne, ende datsi so diepe es versonken ende verswolgen int afgront der minnen ende selue al es worden minne* (*Ibid.*, p. 14-15, l. 21-26).

<sup>62</sup> Here we follow the interpretation of *geheilicht* found in REYPENS & VAN MIERLO (p. 14, n. 22).

<sup>63</sup> Albert DEBLAERE, "Altniederländische Mystik," in *Sacramentum Mundi: Theologisches Lexicon für die Praxis*, vol. I (1967), p. 112 "(...) von der Minne berührt (*gherenen*), integrieren sich die niederen und emotionalen Kräfte in die Einheit des Herzens; diese geeinte Gefühls- und Geisteskraft ist der Grund der Seele, in dem Gottes schöpferische Kraft und Gnade wirken; nicht mehr als einzelne Vermögen, als Gedächtnis, Verstand, Wille, sondern als eine einzige ganzheitliche Dynamik, als Wesensgrund werden sie von der verschleierte Gegenwart des Geliebten ergriffen und daraus tätig."

Beatrice introduces a second, and self-evidently highly important element for our comparison here, namely the transformation of the will. Through the experience of being touched by the loving relationship of the Trinity, the soul's will becomes that loving relationality (*har wille es worden minne*). In other words, through this encounter with God, the soul acquires knowledge of the divine will and acts in accordance with that will. As we have seen above, this emphasis on the transformation of the will is one of the central themes of Marguerite's book and she adopted and rethought it in her description of the third state.

Finally, at the end of the fourth manner, Beatrice describes a further effect of the soul's experience of the pleasure and delight of love, namely that love has overwhelmed and overpowered the soul to such an extent that it loses control of itself:

When she feels that she is in the abundance of wellness and in great fullness of heart, her spirit is always sunk in love and her body sinks away from her, her heart melts and her powers fail. (...) That she can barely control herself and that she often loses control of her limbs and all her senses.<sup>64</sup>

This paragraph is also related to Deblaere's comment, quoted above, on the experience of the touch and the draw of love. In Beatrice's conception, the soul no longer experiences itself as distinct faculties, but as one dynamism drawn together in the abyssal ground of its being. According to Beatrice, this experience causes an ecstasy as a result of which the soul loses physical control of itself.

## 2. Marguerite's Fourth State

Marguerite's fourth state consists of three elements. First, she writes:

The soul is drawn up by the height of love, into delight in the thoughts that come in meditation, and freed from all outward labours and from obedience to another, through the height of contemplation.<sup>65</sup>

Marguerite indicates—completely consonant with Beatrice's description—that the experience of love in this state comes about without human action—in her words “freed from all outward labours” (*relenquie de tous labours de dehors*). In other words, God takes the initiative to raise the soul up above its human limitations to a state where it meditates on God. Meditating on God and being obedient to him through the transformation of its will give the soul great delight. It no longer practices works for their own sake or to demonstrate its devotion, but is guided by the will of God, which it has freely adopted.

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<sup>64</sup> *Alse aldus har seluen gevuel in die oueruloedicheit van waelheit ende in die grote volheit van herten, soe wert hare geest altemale in minnen versinkende ende hore lichame hare ontsinkende, hare herte versmeltende ende al hare macht verderuende. (...) Datsi cumelike hare seluen can gedragen ende datsi dicwile ongeweldich wert haere lede ende al hare sinne* (REYPENS & VAN MIERLO, p. 15-16, l. 36-44).

<sup>65</sup> *Le quart estat est que l'Ame est tiree par haultesse d'amour en delit de pensee par meditacion, et relenquie de tous labours de dehors et de obedience d'aultruy par haultesse de contemplacion* (GUARNIERI & VERDEYEN, p. 322, l. 66-69; COLLEDGE e.a., p. 142).

Marguerite's second point in the description of this state is that in this contemplation, the soul is convinced that it has reached the highest possible point of the mystical experience because it is so overwhelmed by delight. She writes:

Then the Soul holds that there is no higher life than to have this of which she is made mistress, for Love has so generously filled her with his delights that she does not believe that God has any greater gift to bestow on any soul here below than this love which Love for love has poured forth within her.<sup>66</sup>

She thus makes clear that the space opened by the soul in itself at the end of the third state, has now been filled by God with His love. This love must be understood as a relational exchange. God pours forth his love, drawing the soul up above itself into a state of contemplation. As a result, the soul is obedient to Him through the transformation of its will.

Marguerite's third point concerns the deception in the soul that this experience brings about. She writes:

Ah, it is no wonder if such a Soul is overwhelmed, for Gracious Love makes her wholly drunken, and so drunken that she does not let her pay heed to anything but to herself, because of the intensity with which Love delights her. And therefore the Soul can esteem no other state of being, for Love's great brightness has so dazzled her sight that she does not let her see anything except her love. And in this she is deceived, for there are two other states of being, here below, which God bestows, which are greater and nobler than is this; but Love deceived many a soul by the sweetness of the pleasure of its love, which overwhelms the Soul as soon as it draws near to her.<sup>67</sup>

This appears to be a direct reference to Beatrice's text, whereby Marguerite seeks to clarify what she may have considered the more radical statements in Beatrice's fourth manner. Though Marguerite clearly and undoubtedly agrees that when God pours forth His love in the soul, the experience is one of tremendous pleasure, Marguerite does not go so far as to make statements such as "that she must always be for love and cannot practice anything but love,"<sup>68</sup> which we find in Beatrice. Marguerite does, however, support Beatrice's claim that the soul loses

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<sup>66</sup> *Adonc tient l'Ame que il n'est point de plus haulte vie, que de ce avoir, dont elle a seigneurie; car Amour l'a de ses delices si grandement resasié, que elle ne croit point que Dieu ait plus grant don a donner l'Ame aultre ycy bas, qu'est telle amour que Amour a par amour dedans elle espandue* (GUARNIERI & VERDEYEN, p. 322, l. 76-80; COLLEDGE e.a., p. 143).

<sup>67</sup> *Hee, ce n'est pas merveilles, se telle Ame est sourprinse, car Gracieuse Amour la fait toute yvre, et si yvre que elle ne la lesse entendre fors que a elle, par la force dont Amour la delite. Et pource ne peut l'Ame aultre estre mectre en pris; car la grant clarté d'Amour a sa veue tellement esblouÿe, que elle ne la lesse rien veoir, outre son amour. Et la est elle deceue; car il est deux aultres estres, ycy bas, lesquieulx Dieu donne, qui sont plus grans et plus nobles que n'est cestuy, mais Amour a mainte ame deceue pour la douceur du desduit de son amour, qui sourprenent l'Ame, si tost qu'elle s'aprouche d'elle* (GUARNIERI & VERDEYEN, p. 324, l. 81-90). See also Marguerite's chapter 23, which also treats the soul's drunkenness (GUARNIERI & VERDEYEN, p. 84-88; COLLEDGE e.a., p. 143).

<sup>68</sup> *Datsi atemale der minnen moet wesen ende niet anders dan minnen enmach plegen* (REYPENS & VAN MIERLO, p. 15, l. 34-35).

control of its senses through this experience, for which she uses the image of drunkenness. This may refer to earlier reflections on the mystical imagery of the Song of Songs. See, for example, William of Saint-Thierry's *Commentary on the Song of Songs*, chapter XXIV, 116 where he writes:

The bride is led into the wine cellar, into the joy of the Lord, her bridegroom; but in the first experience of this great happiness, she can keep neither measure nor reason because the wine is so abundant and overwhelming. She loses her order and becomes drunk of great ardour, experiencing the frailty of human deficiency in the encounter with God.<sup>69</sup>

Passages such as this are clearly echoed in Marguerite's text, though she writes that the effects of the inebriation are bedazzled sight resulting in the deception of the soul that there is no deeper state of love. It is interesting to note that the loss of measure and reason is an aspect of Beatrice's description of the fifth manner, as we shall see below.

Evidently, *The Seven Manners* and *The Mirror* are again very similar here, and appear to convey the same basic concepts and ideas. In both descriptions, when the soul has done all it can in outward activity, God takes the initiative, touches the soul (Beatrice) and pours forth His love into it (Marguerite), drawing it above itself in enjoyment. The soul is overwhelmed and loses self-control.

## V. THE FIFTH MANNER AND THE FIFTH STATE

### 1. Beatrice's Fifth Manner

It is clear from Beatrice's description of the fifth manner of love that the *defectus amoris* recurs here, but in another form. Now the soul no longer experiences painful deficiency with respect to what it desires to fulfil in works—as in the third manner—but rather a deficiency with respect to love itself. This experience is again accompanied by ardent desire. Beatrice writes:

And boldly she is also drawn into the desire to fulfil the great works and the pure works of love, and to desire the manifold demands of love. Or she desires to rest in the sweet embraces of love and in the desirable wellness and in the enjoyment of possession, so that her heart and her senses desire this and earnestly seek it and passionately intend it.<sup>70</sup>

<sup>69</sup> *Inducitur ergo sponsa in domum vini, in gaudium domini et sponsi sui; sed ad primas boni illius experientias, modi uel rationis impatiens a vini copia exordinatur usque ad ebrietatem nimii feruoris, usque ad languorem infirmitatis humanae deficientis in salutare Dei* (WILLIAM OF SAINT-THIERRY, *Expositio Super Cantica Canticorum*, ed. Paul VERDEYEN, Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis 87, Turnhout 1997, p. 83, l. 99-104).

<sup>70</sup> *Ende stout wertsij oec getrect in die begerte tervulne die grote werke ende die pure werke der minnen, ochte terlangene die menichfoudeghe eischinghen van minnen. Ofte si begert te rustene in die suete behelsingen van minnen ende in die begerleke waelheit ende in die genuuechlicheit van hebbinghen, so dat hare herte ende hare sinne dit sijn begerende ende erensteleke sukende ende hertelike meinende* (REYPPENS & VAN MIERLO, p. 17-18, l. 8-17).

Beatrice thus makes clear that the soul desires to respond as completely as it can to the love it receives, which is here described as love which “is strongly awakened and tempestuously arises”<sup>71</sup> in the soul. The sensation of the ‘storm of love’ must here be understood as the invitation referred to at the very beginning of her text, and as she noted there, God is its origin. The soul’s response to this ‘storm’ is described as great inward activity. The soul is “so strong in spirit and so undertaking of heart, and courageous of body and prosperous in works and very active both outwardly and inwardly, that it seems to her, that everything about her is all-working and active, even when she is outwardly at rest.”<sup>72</sup>

As in the third manner, the soul responds to the invitation of God with great zeal for activity, though this time it is no longer external activity, but an inner orientation and deepening of the relationship. This again confronts the soul with its inadequacy with respect to God because as creature, it simply cannot match the enormity of the love of its creator, causing great pains of incompleteness; “ manifold pains of great dissatisfaction.”<sup>73</sup> Beatrice describes this pain as follows:

In the meantime, love becomes so unmeasured and overpowering in the soul and stirs her heart so strongly and ardently, that it seems to her that her heart is manifoldly painfully wounded and that the wounds are daily refreshed and worsened, in agonising pains and new acuteness. And so it seems to her that her veins burst and her blood boils and her marrow macerates, her bones weaken and her breast burns and her throat dries up, so that her face and all her limbs feel the heat inwardly and the tempest of love. She also sometimes feels that an arrow pierces through her heart into her throat and on into her brain as though she might lose her senses.<sup>74</sup>

This description of the pain of insufficiency is clearly an allusion to Christ. Beatrice does not choose her images randomly, but alludes to Psalm 21 (the first line of which Jesus Christ cried out when he was crucified):

I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint; my heart is like wax; it is melted within my breast; my mouth is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to my jaws.<sup>75</sup>

<sup>71</sup> *Starkeleke verwecket wert ende stormeleke op-ersteet* (*Ibid.*, p. 16, l. 3-4).

<sup>72</sup> *So starc in den geeste ende vele begripende in therte, ende vromeger an dien lichame ende spoedeger in den werken ende seere doende van buten ende van binnen, so dat hare selven dunct, dat al werket ende onledich es dat an hare es, al es si oec al stille van buten* (*Ibid.*, p. 18, l. 18-21).

<sup>73</sup> *Menegerande wee van groter ongenuechten* (*Ibid.*, p. 19, l. 27-28).

<sup>74</sup> *Ondertusschen so wert minne so onghemate ende so overbrekende in der sielen alse har selven so starkeleke ende so verwoedelike berurt int herte, dat hare dunct, dat har herte menichfoudeleke wert seere gewont ende dat die wonden dagelix ververschet werden ende verseert, in smerteliker weelicheiden ende in nuer jegenwordicheiden. Ende so dunct hare dat har adren ontpluken ende hare bloet verwalt ende hare march verswijnt ende hare been vercrencken ende hare borst verbernt ende hare kele verdroget, so dat hare ansijn ende al hare lede gevuelen der hitten van binnen ende des orwoeds van minnen. Si gevuelte oec die wile, dat een gescutte geet dicwile dor har herte toter kele ende vort toten hersenen alse of si hars sins gemissen soude* (*Ibid.*, p. 19-20, l. 33-49).

<sup>75</sup> *Sicut aqua effusus sum, et dispersa sunt omnia ossa mea. Factum est cor meum tanquam cera liquescens in medio ventris mei. Aruit tanquam testa virtus mea, et lingua mea adhaesit faucibus meis, Ps. 21:15-16 (Vulg.).*

Before he died, Christ thirsted and after his death, before the deposition, he was pierced with a lance to ensure that he was dead: “one of the soldiers pierced his side with a lance, and at once blood and water came out.”<sup>76</sup> Beatrice’s description of the arrow may well be a reference to this piercing by the lance.

This veiled—Beatrice does not mention Christ or the psalmist explicitly—allusion to the Passion is clearly related to Beatrice’s conception of the effects of love. In the Gospel, Christ abandons his will for that of his Father (cf. Mt. 26:39) and, in execution of his Father’s will, suffers torture and death on the cross. Christ subjects himself to torture and death, inflicted upon him by sinners, in order to fulfil his Father’s will and the work of perfect love, the salvation of mankind. Beatrice’s Christological allusion suggests that in an analogous fashion, the soul’s fallenness and its resulting separation from God causes it to experience similar pains when trying to fulfil the work of perfect love. As Christ cried out “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” when he was given over to death at the hands of his persecutors, Beatrice describes the great distance the soul feels relative to God: “Her soul is fed and her love nurtured and her spirit caught up because love is so far above her grasp that she can receive no enjoyment from it.”<sup>77</sup> It must be noted that Beatrice does not provide any literal reflections on the Fall or the soul’s fallenness or sinfulness and its resulting separation from God. These are all implicit elements in the development of her thought.

Furthermore, this Christological comparison is by no means coincidental. Beatrice clearly seeks to indicate an increasingly close relationship between the soul and Christ, which was precisely the desire of the soul Beatrice described in the first manner.

Beatrice ends the fifth manner with a description of the opposing sensations of this experience:

The more she is given from above, the more she demands, and the more she is shown, the more caught up she is in desire to come closer to the light of truth and the purity and the nobility and the enjoyment of love. And ever more and more she is attracted and drawn, but not satisfied or sated. The thing that torments and pains her, that same thing heals and comforts her most; and the thing that cuts the deepest wound, that alone brings her health.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Jn. 19:34.

<sup>77</sup> *Hare siele wert ghevoedt ende hare minne ghevoestert ende har geest verhangen want die minne es so hoghe boven alle begripelicheit datsi negeene gebrukelicheit van hare en-mach vercrigen* (REYPENS & VAN MIERLO, p. 21, l. 58-62).

<sup>78</sup> *So hare meer wert gegeven van boven, so si meer es eiscende, ende so hare meer wert vertoent, so si meer verhangen wert in begerten naerre te comene den lichte der warheit ende der purheit ende der edelheit ende der gebrukelicheit der minnen. Ende altoes wert si meer ende meer getenet ende getrect, ende niet genuget no gesadet. Dat selve dat hare meest tert ende quetst, dat selve est dat har meest ganst ende sacht; ende dat hare dipst sleet die wonde, dat gevet hare allene ghesunde* (*Ibid.*, p. 22-23, l. 70-80).

Beatrice suggests that the pain that results from being distinct from God in nature and separated from God through sin is healed by God's love through the light of truth and the purity, nobility and enjoyment of love. The light of truth is certainly another Christological reference and Beatrice emphasises yet again that the soul desires to correspond to Him. The pain of recognising human sinfulness and insufficiency is healed by the forgiveness in Christ. Beatrice characterises the experience as a painful, purgative fire that transforms the thing it burns, namely the soul's sinfulness, into love. We may note, finally, that experiencing the pains of the Passion as a prerequisite for union with God is a theme developed extensively by Hadewijch, though with respect to the doctrine of deification, her connection with Beatrice must be investigated further.

## 2. Marguerite's Fifth State

On a merely formal, textual level, Marguerite's fifth state appears to be considerably different from Beatrice's fifth manner, but upon closer inspection of the content it is clear that Marguerite has adopted many of Beatrice's elements, rethought and then reformulated them. She begins her description with two reflections the soul makes about the fundamental difference between the divine nature and its own human nature, namely that God is fundamentally the creator while the soul is fundamentally creature. This causes great dismay in the soul, as Marguerite writes:

The fifth state is when the soul considers that God is he who is, of whom all things are, and that she is not, and that it is not from her that all things are. And these two considerations give her a wondrous sense of dismay, and she sees that he is all goodness who has put free will into her, who is not, except in all evil. Now divine goodness has put free will into her, out of pure divine goodness, so within that which is not, except in evil, which therefore is all evil, is enclosed the free will of the being of God, who is being, and who wishes that that which has no being should have being through this gift from him.<sup>79</sup>

This quotation contains of number of essential elements for a correct understanding of Marguerite's conception of mystical union. First, as mentioned above, she makes a clear distinction between divine nature and human nature; the recognition of which causes great dismay in the soul precisely because of this distinction. This appears to be a reformulation of the *defectus amoris* whereby it results

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<sup>79</sup> *Le quint estat est que l'Ame regarde que Dieu est, qui est dont toute chose est, et elle n'est mie, si n'est dont toute chose est. Et ces deux regards luy donnent une merveilleuse esbahyssance, et voit qu'il est toute bonté, qui a mis franche voullenté en elle qui n'est mie, sinon en toute mauvaistié. Or a la divine Bonté mis en elle franche voullenté, par pure divine bonté. Or, a ce qui n'est fors en mauvaistié, qui est donc toute mauvaistié, est dedans luy enclos franche voullenté de l'estre de Dieu qui est estre, qui veult que ce qui n'a point d'estre ait parmy tel don de luy estre* (GUARNIERI & VERDEYEN, p. 324, l. 94-103; COLLEDGE e.a., p. 143).

from the soul's awareness of a fundamental ontological distinction between itself and God.

Second, Marguerite claims that the soul's being subsists solely in evil, but that it has the potential to attain 'true' being through God's gift of free will. The question is whether Marguerite intends here literally to indicate that the soul is fundamentally ontologically corrupt—i.e. that it does not exist except in evil—or whether her description is intended to clarify that the soul's nature and God's are distinct and that the creature sins. If the latter, it does not necessarily imply that the soul's nature is inferior to God's in that it is essentially corrupt, merely that its nature is that of a creature, not the creator. In other words, the soul's being is completely dependent on God for its existence. Without God, who created it, the *esse* of the human soul would simply disappear.

Marguerite then introduces a new, Christological element to her description, though she does not refer to Christ explicitly, but to the spreading of divine light:<sup>80</sup>

And so the coming of Divine Goodness is preceded by a rapturous outpouring in the movement of Divine Light. And this movement of divine light which is spread by light within the Soul shows to the spirit's will that he who is deals justly, so that she who is not, the Soul, may wish her will to move from the place where it is, and where it must not be, so that it can be returned to where it is not, whence it came, and where it must be. Now the Soul's Will sees, by the light of the spreading of divine light—which light is given to this Will to return it to God, to where it cannot return without this light—that it cannot progress by itself if it does not separate itself from her own willing, for her nature is evil-willing, by that inclination towards nothingness to which nature tends, and her willing has reduced it to less than nothing. Now the Soul sees this inclination and this perdition in nothingness of her nature and of her own willing and by the light she sees that one's Will must will only the divine will and not any other, and that it was for this that this Will was given her. And so the Soul abandons this Will and the Will abandons this Soul, and then returns and surrenders and submits to God, there whence it was first derived, without keeping back anything of its own, in order to fulfil the perfect divine will.<sup>81</sup>

<sup>80</sup> See Jn. 1:5-9. GNÄDINGER (see n. 10 above; p. 143 and p. 146, n. 43) argues that the image of light and lightning is inspired by Christian Neo-Platonism, and particularly by Pseudo-Dionysius.

<sup>81</sup> *Et pource espant la divine Bonté par devant ung espannement ravissable du mouvement de divine Lumiere. Lequel mouvement de divine Lumiere, qui est dedans l'Ame espandu par lumiere, monstre au Vouloir <... > du lieu la ou il est, ou il ne doit pas estre, pour le remectre la ou il n'est, dont il vint, la ou il doit estre. Or voit le Vouloir, par lumiere de l'espandement de divine Lumiere (laquelle Lumiere se donne a tel Vouloir, pour remectre en Dieu ce Vouloir, lequel ne s'i peut sans telle Lumiere rendre) que il ne peut de soy prouffiter, se il ne se despart de son propre vouloir; car sa nature est maligne par l'inclinacion du nient dont nature est enclinee, et le vouloir l'a mis en moins que nient. Or voit l'Ame ces te inclinacion et ceste perdicion du nient de sa nature et de propre vouloir; et si voit par lumiere que Vouloir doit vouloir le seul divin vouloir; sans aultre vouloir; et que pource fut donnè ce vouloir. Et pource se despart l'Ame de ce vouloir; et le vouloir se despart de telle Ame, et adonc se remect et donne et rent a Dieu, la ou il fut premièrement prins, sans rien propre de luy retenir; pour emplir la parfaicte volenté divine* (GUARNIERI & VERDEYEN, p. 324-326, l. 103-121; COLLEDGE e.a., p. 143-144). The missing line in the French is supplied from a Latin manuscript: *ostendit uoluntati animae aequitatem illius quod est et notitiam illius quod non est* (COLLEDGE, e.a., p. 143, n. 12).



This paragraph indicates that according to Marguerite, it is through the presence of the soul's exemplar, Christ (cf. Marguerite's second state), in the soul that the soul can fully appreciate how wretched it is when it wills anything other than the divine will. It is only due to the illumination that comes through the light of Christ in the soul that the soul knows the will of God and can transform its own will into the divine will.

Marguerite appears to have a surprisingly negative appraisal of human nature as such and its tendency to will evil in opposition to the divine will. One might, however, understand her text to imply that there is no goodness in the human soul or in human nature that does not have both its *arche* and *telos* in God, who created it. From this perspective, Marguerite's text is not particularly surprising. Through Christ—and in a certain sense *in* Christ—the soul is able to conform its will to that of God, its creator.

Marguerite continues with a description of the soul's recognition of its nothingness: "Now such a Soul is nothing, for through her abundance of divine knowledge she sees her nothingness, which makes her nothing and reduces her to nothingness."<sup>82</sup> Again, this should not be understood as nothingness as such, as though the soul realises that it has no existence. Rather, it is the moment of the soul's awareness that its existence depends entirely on God and that without God, it would simply not exist. The soul does not exist by virtue of its own creative power or ability to sustain its being, but because God has created it and sustains it.

The awareness and recognition of its nothingness, Marguerite goes on, lead the soul to become everything: "for she sees herself through the depth of her knowledge of her own evil, which is so profound and so great that she cannot find there any beginning, compass or end, but only an abyss, deep beyond all depths, and there she finds herself in a depth, in which she cannot be found."<sup>83</sup> According to Marguerite, by fully appreciating its own nothingness, the soul sees the true depth of its being—an abyss of wretchedness and evil—and is thus joined there to its exemplar and redeemer, Christ.

The imagery of the abyss is not new, indeed, Beatrice also uses it in her text, but Marguerite reinterprets it in a surprising way. While Beatrice uses the image of the abyss to describe the fathomless depth of divine love in her fourth and seventh manners,<sup>84</sup> Marguerite rethinks the abyss as referring to the soul and the fathomless depth of human sin. It is important to note, however, that according to

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<sup>82</sup> *Or est telle Ame nulle, car elle voit par habondance de divine cognoissance son nient, qui la fait nulle, et mectre a nient* (GUARNIERI & VERDEYEN, p. 326, l. 130-131; COLLEDGE e.a., p. 144).

<sup>83</sup> *Car elle voit par la profondeur de la cognoissance de la mauvaistié d'elle, qui est si parfonde et si grant, que elle n'y trouve ne commencement ne mesure ne fin, fors une abysme abysmee sans fons; la se trouve elle, sans trouver et sans fons* (GUARNIERI & VERDEYEN, p. 326, l. 132-135; COLLEDGE e.a., p. 144).

<sup>84</sup> In the fourth manner: *ende datsi so diepe es versonken ende verswolgen int afgront der minnen ende selve al es worden minne* (REYFENS & VAN MIERLO, p. 14-15, l. 24-26); in the seventh manner: *in die diepe afgronde der godheit* (*Ibid.*, p. 29, l. 10-11).

Marguerite, the fathomless depth of the sinful soul is in fact the location of its encounter with Christ, the divine light, and the place where the soul conforms its will to that of God:

These lowest depths make her see very clearly the true Sun of most exalted goodness (...). And this divine goodness shows himself to her through goodness, which draws her and changes her and joins her through union with goodness into that pure divine goodness of which Goodness is mistress.<sup>85</sup>

Marguerite thus strikingly combines the concept of the fathomless love of God with the fathomless depths of the human person as the location of the most profound encounter between God and the human soul. It is in the depth of human sin—the abyss of evil in Marguerite’s terminology—that Christ reveals himself to the soul and draws the soul into the relationship of the Trinity, where “her beloved makes her one.”<sup>86</sup>

In conclusion to the fifth manner and fifth state, we may say that Beatrice’s and Marguerite’s descriptions are similar in three significant respects. First, both authors begin with the pain the soul experiences when it appreciates fully the fundamental ontological distinction between itself as creature and God as creator. Second, this pain is exacerbated by the awareness of God’s loving goodness and the soul’s sinfulness. Beatrice likens this pain to the pain inflicted on Christ during the Passion while Marguerite employs the abyss motif to emphasise the fallenness of human nature. Third, the depth and intensity of this pain is at once a purgative healing process, whereby, according to Beatrice, the soul desires to grow increasingly close to the light, purity, nobility and enjoyment of God’s love.<sup>87</sup> On this last point, however, according to Marguerite, the soul’s desire is fulfilled. She concludes her description with the soul’s complete abandonment of its will and its transformation into the love of God (“This gift brings about this perfection in her, and changes her into Love’s nature, which delights her with consummate peace, and gives her fill of divine food”<sup>88</sup>), something which for Beatrice, at the point, is not yet a fulfilled reality.

It is important to note, finally, that when Marguerite writes that the soul has been changed into Love’s nature, she does not express that the soul has become God in the sense that it has lost its created reality and has become the creator, which would be impossible. Rather, she expresses that the soul participates in the divine nature in that it is joined to the Son and taken up in the unity of the Holy

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<sup>85</sup> *et ce bas luy fait veoir tres cler le vray Soleil de haultiesme bonté (...). Laquelle divine Bonté se demonstre a elle par bonté qui la tire et mue et unie par jointure de bonté en pure divine Bonté, dont bonté est maïstresse* (GUARNIERI & VERDEYEN, p. 328, l. 148-152; COLLEDGE e.a., p. 145).

<sup>86</sup> *son Amy la fait une* (GUARNIERI & VERDEYEN, p. 328, l. 157-158).

<sup>87</sup> *Den lichte der warheit ende der purheit ende der edelheit ende der gebrukelicheit der minnen* (REYPPENS & VAN MIERLO, p. 22, l. 73-75).

<sup>88</sup> *lequel don fait en elle ceste perfection, et si la mue en nature d’Amour, qui la delite de remplie paix, et assovyt de divine pasture* (GUARNIERI & VERDEYEN, p. 326, l. 123-125; COLLEDGE e.a., p. 144).

Spirit. The nature of God is loving relationality—the Father and the Son joined in the love of the Holy Spirit—and it is into this communion of love that the soul enters. Though this idea, expressed so radically, is absent from Beatrice’s fifth manner, she does develop it in her sixth.

## VI. THE SIXTH MANNER AND THE SIXTH STATE

### 1. Beatrice’s Sixth Manner

Strikingly, Beatrice begins her sixth manner with a reference to “the bride of our Lord” (*die bruut ons heren*).<sup>89</sup> This contrasts with the “young girl” (*jonfrouwe*) of the second manner,<sup>90</sup> indicating a deepening of the relationship—from servitude in works to a spousal relationship in the abyss of love. It also marks a continuity with the spousal imagery of the Song of Songs and the older mystical tradition,<sup>91</sup> which, incidentally, is echoed in Marguerite’s fifth state<sup>92</sup> as well as in later mystical works.<sup>93</sup> The sixth manner is again characterised by rapturous pleasure, which begins with the soul “coming further and climbing higher to bolder courage” where it feels “closer existence to and higher knowledge of God”.<sup>94</sup> Beatrice then clarifies how she conceives of the knowledge of God. It appears that when she speaks about *naerren wesene* (closer being or existence to), she is referring to the proximity of the soul to God’s love, or in other words, the extent to which the soul

<sup>89</sup> REYPPENS & VAN MIERLO, p. 23, l. 2.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8, l. 8.

<sup>91</sup> E.g., “Upon this flowery bed takes place a wonderful union and a sweet mutual fruition of incomprehensible joy that is ungraspable even to those in whom it occurs, between the person and God, the created spirit and the uncreated. We call them bride and bridegroom in order to find human words with which to express the tenderness and sweetness of the union.” *In hoc siquidem fit coniunctio illa mirabilis, et mutual fruition suavitatis, gaudiique incomprehensibilis, incogitabilis illis etiam in quibus fit, hominis ad Deum, creati spiritus ad increatum; qui sponsa dicuntur ac sponsus, dum uerba quaeruntur quibus lingua hominis utcumque exprimi possit dulcedo et suauitas coniunctionis illius* (WILLIAM OF SAINT-TIERRY, *Expositio super Cantica Cantorum* (see n. 69 above; p. 70, l. 12-15).

<sup>92</sup> “And because she wishes only for one, for the Spouse of her youth, and only one is he.” *Et pource ne veult que ung: l’Espoux de sa jouvance, qui n’est que ungs* (GUARNIERI & VERDEYEN, p. 328, l. 154-156). In a possible allusion to Beatrice’s ‘young girl’, Marguerite also writes that in the fifth manner, the soul “loses her pride and her girlishness, for her spirit has grown old.” *Pert (...) orgueil et jeunesse, car l’esperit est veillard devenu* (*Ibid.*, p. 328, l. 163-164).

<sup>93</sup> E.g., John of Ruusbroec’s masterpiece *The Spiritual Espousals* is premised on a mystical analysis of the sentence “See, the Bridegroom cometh, go out to meet Him” where, as Ruusbroec explains at the very beginning of the text: “This Bridegroom is Christ, and human nature is the bride whom God has made to the image and likeness of Himself.” *Dese brudegom es Cristus, ende menschelijcke nature es de bruyt, die god ghemaect hevet toe den beelde ende toe de ghelijckenisse sijns selfs.* (JOHN OF RUUSBROEC, *The Spiritual Espousals*, ed. Joseph ALAERTS, Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis 103, Turnhout 1988, p. 150, l. 4-5.) See in this regard Beatrice’s first manner: *daer si in ghemaket es van haren sceppere na sijn beelde ende na sijn ghelikenesse* (REYPPENS & VAN MIERLO, p. 4, l. 16-18).

<sup>94</sup> *Vorder es comen ende hoger geclommen in meerren vromen (...) in naerren wesene ende in hogeren bekinne* (*Ibid.*, p. 23, l. 1-5).

partakes in God's love.<sup>95</sup> This she connects to the idea of the knowledge of God, which she conceives of as the measure of the conformity of the soul's will to that of God. *Minne* has now conquered the soul entirely:

She feels that love has conquered all the resistance within her, and that it has remedied the defects and mastered the being, and has become entirely sovereign over her [the soul] without contradiction, so that she has possessed the heart with surety and may enjoy in rest and must practice with freedom.<sup>96</sup>

This quotation is a radical statement of the transformation of the soul's will into the will of God. It might be interpreted to mean that the soul itself is no longer an active subject, since it is completely mastered by God. If this were the case, however, the soul's will would, according to Beatrice, cease to exist as such since it would become a mere pawn to be manipulated by God. It is important to keep in mind, therefore, what Beatrice actually connotes when she uses the word *minne* here. *Minne* should in this context be understood as the mutual relationship of love between the soul and God. In this sense, *minne* is a mutual collaboration between the soul and the Trinity whereby anything that might form an obstacle to the practice of love is overcome. Understood in this way, Beatrice can indeed claim that love acts freely within the soul. William of Saint-Thierry's *Commentary on the Song of Songs*, referenced above, may be helpful for a correct understanding of Beatrice's text on this point. On the loving encounter between the human person and God, he writes:

And as lovers kiss one another, transferring their spirit in a sweet, mutual exchange, so does the created spirit pour itself out completely in the creating spirit and conversely, the creating spirit pours itself out in the spirit of the human person. Thus, the human person becomes one spirit with God.<sup>97</sup>

This text by no means implies that the created spirit has ceased to exist, or that the created spirit has transformed substantially into the creating spirit. The soul and God have become one in spirit, rather than the one adopting the other's nature—thus maintaining the distinction between the creature and the creator. In Beatrice's words:

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<sup>95</sup> The word *naerre* (comparative of *na*, "near") is probably a reference to *die naheit ter gelijcheit* ("the closest similarity") from the first manner (*Ibid.*, p. 4, l. 29-30).

<sup>96</sup> *Si gevult dat die minne verwonnen heft al hare wedersaken binnen hare, ende datsi ghebeter heft die gebrekingen ende ghemeestert heft dat wesen, ende hars selfs altemale sonder wederseggen geweldich es worden also, datsi therte beseten heeft in sekerheiden ende gebruken mach in rusten ende ufenen moet in vriheiden* (*Ibid.*, p. 23-24, l. 5-14).

<sup>97</sup> *Et sicut solet in amantium osculis, suavi quodam contactu mutuo sibi spiritus suos transfundentium, creatus spiritus in hoc ipsum creati eum Spiritui totum se effundit; ipsi uero creator Spiritus se infundit, prout uult, et unus spiritus homo cum Deo efficitur* (WILLIAM OF SAINT-THIERRY, *Expositio super Cantica Cantorum*, p. 70, l. 21-25).

Then she feels a divine power and a clear purity and a spiritual sweetness and a desirable freedom and a discerning wisdom and a blissful equality with God.<sup>98</sup>

It is relatively implausible that, had Beatrice intended the reader to understand her description of the soul's union with God as a substantial fusion, she would describe it in terms of the soul's 'feelings'. If an essential fusion were to take place, one in which the soul was transformed into the substance of the creator, not only would it imply the contradiction that the soul would become its own creator, but further, the soul would actually cease to exist as such. It is thus far more probable that Beatrice intends her description of the union to be understood in the same line as William of Saint-Thierry's, namely that in the union, a relationship of total equality is established not as an ontological transformation of essence, but rather as a mutual encounter in love. Beatrice explains this using the metaphor of the housewife:

Then she is like a housewife who has arranged her house well and managed it wisely and ordered it finely and provisioned it protectively and guarded it carefully, and works discerningly; and she brings in and takes out, and she acts or abstains according to her will; so it is with the soul: she is love and love sovereignly and mightily reigns in her, at work and at rest, acting and abstaining outwardly and inwardly according to her will.<sup>99</sup>

The association Beatrice makes between the soul and God clarifies her conception of the mutuality of the encounter. The work of love in the soul is the work of relationship. The soul has not become a helpless tool that is manipulated by God, but collaborates totally with God in ordering its life, the locus and orientation of which is the relationship itself. The soul has such intimate knowledge of the will of God precisely because it is immersed in this loving relationship. The parallel Beatrice draws above illustrates the complete mutuality and reciprocity of the encounter.

Beatrice conceives of the way this reciprocity is experienced as an indwelling of the two relational partners in one another as in a house. It must be noted that indwelling can by definition not constitute fusion or the abolition of the distinction between creator and creature. The image of the housewife is intended to illustrate the mutuality and reciprocity of indwelling in the other, namely of the soul in God and God in the soul. Beatrice's image also emphasises that the soul does not find itself in a strange, alienating place, but precisely 'at home' in the other.

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<sup>98</sup> *Dan so gevult si ene godeleke mogentheit ende ene clare purheit ende ene geestelike sutheit ende ene begerlike vriheit ende ene onderscedege wijsheit ende ene sachte effenheit te gode* (REYPPENS & VAN MIERLO, p. 24, l. 20-24).

<sup>99</sup> *Dan es si gelijc ere husvrouwen die hare husce wale heeft berigt ende wiseleke besceden ende scone gheordineert ende vorsienlike bescermt ende vroedelike behoedt, ende met onderscede werct; ende si doet in ende si doet ute, ende si doet ende laet na haren wille; also gelijc met derre sielen: si es minne ende minne rengnert in hare geweldelike ende mogendeleke, werkende ende rustende, doende ende latende van buten ende binnen na haren wille* (*Ibid.*, p. 25, l. 25-34).

Beatrice uses two images to further clarify that this mutual indwelling is one in which the partners are ‘at home’; it is in some sense their natural habitat. The soul is in its proper place when it dwells in God and vice versa:<sup>100</sup>

And just as the fish swims in the breadth of the sea and rests in the depths, and as the bird that bravely flies in the spaciousness and the height of the sky, she feels that her spirit wanders freely in the breadth and depth and in the spaciousness and in the height of love.<sup>101</sup>

Beatrice thus refers back to the very beginning of her text, where she stated that the soul is called to conform to the image and likeness of God. The soul’s attainment of this state is for Beatrice the completion of the act of creation. The soul has attained the life for which it was created, namely to live fully in the image and likeness of God as a total, mutual, free indwelling in God and thus a partaking in the life which the Son lives with the Father through the Holy Spirit.

According to Beatrice, the soul becomes completely receptive to the divine impulses, living its life completely in accordance with the divine will. It is not, however, completely free of itself yet. As Beatrice notes, the soul can still climb higher, become completely free of itself and have love reign even more strongly within her.<sup>102</sup> These references to the reign of love within the soul and the soul’s rest in love might be misunderstood to imply both that the soul no longer has a will or is no longer able to exercise it and that the soul is completely inactive. Beatrice clearly states, however, that love has here taken its rightful place. No longer is the relationship with God subject to outward influences or the activity of the soul subject to works or struggles. Rather, all are subject to the will of God, which the soul spontaneously knows through the relationship:

Then love makes her so bold and so free, that she does not fear people nor demons, nor angels nor saints, nor God himself in all her acting and abstaining, work or rest; and she feels clearly that love is awake and active within her in the rest of the body as well as in many works. She knows well and feels that love is not subjected to works or the pains of the one in whom she reigns.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> See our footnote 55 and the reference to William of Saint-Thierry’s 6<sup>th</sup> Meditation.

<sup>101</sup> *Ende also gelijc als die visch die swimmet in die wijtheit van der vloet ende rast in die diepheit, ende als die vogel die kunlike vlieget in die gerumheit ende in die hoegheit van der locht also gelijc gevult si haren geest vrieleke wandelende in die witeit ende in die diepheit ende in die gerumheit ende in die hoeheit der minnen* (REYPENS & VAN MIERLO, p. 25-26, l. 35-42). It is interesting to note that Marguerite also uses the images of swimming in the ‘sea of joy’ and of the bird flying in the sky, in chapters 28 and 22 respectively (GUARNIERI & VERDEYEN, p. 96, l. 1; p. 82, l. 1-6). In both cases, Marguerite uses the images as metaphors for total mutual indwelling and the common will shared between God and the soul. The latter case is particularly interesting as the chapter also contains one of Marguerite’s few references to the common life, which will be discussed further below.

<sup>102</sup> *Datsi in meerre hoeheit es gecommen, ende datsi atemale hars selfs es worden vri ende dattie minne geweldeler regneert binnen hare* (REYPENS & VAN MIERLO, p. 26, l. 48-51).

<sup>103</sup> *Dan maectse minne so coene ende so vri, datsi en ontsiet noch menschen noch viant noch ingel noch heiligen noch gode selve in al haren doene ofte latene, in werkene ofte in rastene; ende si gehuevt wale, dattie minne es binnen hare also wacker ende also sere werkende in der rasten des*

This, we contend, is fundamentally the same position defended in Marguerite's work, namely that the soul does not abandon its will and works, but that the relation with outside influences is completely subordinated to the primacy of the will of God. In this regard, the content of Marguerite's fifth state is in fact inherently closer to Beatrice's sixth manner than her sixth state is. Indeed, Marguerite's sixth state might be considered the fulfilment of what Beatrice describes in her sixth manner, which she ends with an indication that such fulfilment is possible:

But all those who wish to come to love, they must search in awe, and follow faithfully and practice with desire, and they may not spare themselves in great works and in many pains and to suffer in great discomfort and to be scorned. They must consider every small thing to be great until the time that they arrive at the state when love, reigning within her, works the sovereign work of love, and makes all things small and eases all labour and soothes all pain and pays every debt. This is an angelic life and afterwards follows eternal life that God, by his goodness, might give us all.<sup>104</sup>

Beatrice describes the fulfilment of this angelic life in her seventh manner. Marguerite, however, diverges from Beatrice on this point, opting to reserve her seventh and last state for eternal life. She therefore reworked a number of the central elements in Beatrice's sixth and seventh manners into her sixth state and used various other elements and images from Beatrice's seventh manner throughout *The Mirror*.

## 2. Marguerite's Sixth State

As mentioned above, Marguerite mentions the seven states of the soul a number of times earlier in her book before providing her full description of each state in chapter 118. In chapter 61, she writes:

The sixth [state] is glorious, for the opening of the sweet movement of glory, which the noble Far-Near gives, is nothing else than a manifestation which God wishes the soul to have of her own glory which she will have forever. And therefore in his goodness he gives her in the sixth state this manifestation of the seventh.<sup>105</sup>

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*lichamen also in vele werken: si kent wale ende gevult, dattie minne niet engehelet in arbeide noch in pinen, in die ghene daer si in regneert (Ibid., p. 27, l. 52-61).*

<sup>104</sup> *Maer alle die willen comen ter minnen, si moetense sueken met vreesen ende na-volgen met trouwen ende ufenen met begerten, ende si ne mogent in sparen, in groten arbeide ende in vele pinen ende in onghemake te dogene, in versmaheit te lidene, ende alle clene dinc moetensi achten groet, tote dien male, dat si daer toe comen, dattie minne, binnen hare regnere, die geweldelike werc der minnen werct, ende die alle dinc clene maket ende alle arbeide sachte ende alle pine versutet ende alle scout quijt. Dit es itoe hier een ingelec leven ende hier na volghet dat ewelec leven dat god omme sine goetheit moete ons allen gheven (Ibid., p. 27-28, l. 62-79).*

<sup>105</sup> *Le siziesme est glorieux, car l'ouverture du doux mouvement de gloire, que le gentil Loingprés donne, n'est aultre chose que une apparicion, que Dieu veult que l'Ame ait de sa gloire mesmes, que elle aura sans fin. Et pource luy fait de sa bonté ceste demonstration du setiesme estat ou siziesme (GUARNIERI & VERDEYEN, p. 176-178, l. 10-15; COLLEDGE e.a., p. 82).*

It is thus important to realise that Marguerite conceives of this ‘state of being’ as a brief, momentary experience of the beatific vision. Though in chapter 61 she calls the sixth state glorious because it is a manifestation of the glory the soul will experience in heaven, in 118 she rejects the idea that the soul is actually ‘glorified’ in this experience and that the distinction between the sixth state on earth and the beatific vision is greater than one might first have thought:

This Soul in the sixth state is made free of all things and pure and illumined, yet not glorified, for glorification is of the seventh state, and that we shall have in glory, of which no-one is able to speak.<sup>106</sup>

Let us now examine Marguerite’s description of this ‘opening’ of glory:

The sixth state is when the Soul does not see herself at all (...). But God of his divine majesty sees himself in her, and by him this Soul is so illumined that she cannot see that anyone exists, except only God himself,<sup>107</sup> who is, of whom all things are, and that which is, is God himself. And this soul sees nothing but God himself, for whoever sees this, sees nothing but God himself, who sees himself in this very Soul by his divine majesty. And so this Soul in the sixth state is made free of all things and pure and illumined.<sup>108</sup>

According to Marguerite, the most profound experience of mutual indwelling the soul can have in its earthly life is that it is drawn up above itself into the Trinity where it sees nothing but the divine persons and where God contemplates himself in the soul. The self-contemplation of God in the soul must be understood from a Christological perspective. To say that God contemplates himself in the soul is an expression not of the substantial transformation of the soul into God, but of the complete conformity of the soul’s will to the will of God, as Christ’s will corresponded to the Father’s. To claim that God contemplates himself in the soul because the soul has become, essentially, God, would contradict Marguerite’s fundamental presupposition that an ontological distinction remains between the creature and the creator:

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<sup>106</sup> *Et adonc est l’Ame ou siziesme estat de toutes choses enfranchie et pure et clariffiee, - et non mie gloriffiee; car le gloriffiement est ou septiesme estat, que nous aurons en gloire, dont nul ne scait parler* (GUARNIERI & VERDEYEN, p. 330, l. 183-187; COLLEDGE e.a., p. 145).

<sup>107</sup> This is the Middle English rendering of the text. See Doiron (n. 29 above; p. 342, l. 12-13), which is more consistent with the rest of this section than are the French and Latin (*ne voit elle sinon elle mesmes, nullus uidet nisi ipsi solus*, “the soul sees nothing but herself”); see our footnote 29. Surprisingly, though Colledge e.a. mention the variant in footnote, the modern English and French translations repeat this rather incongruous reading, which must surely be an error.

<sup>108</sup> *Le siziesme estat est, que l’Ame ne se voit point (...). Mais Dieu se voit en elle de sa majesté divine, qui clarifie de luy ceste Ame, si que elle ne voit que nul soit, fors Dieu mesmes, qui est, dont toute chose est; et ce qui est, c’est Dieu mesmes; et pource ne voit elle sinon elle mesmes; car qui voit ce qui est, il ne voit fors Dieu mesmes, qui se voit en ceste Ame mesmes, de sa majesté divine. Et adonc est l’Ame ou siziesme estat de toutes choses enfranchie et pure et clariffiee* (GUARNIERI & VERDEYEN, p. 330, l. 175-184; COLLEDGE e.a., p. 145-146). See our footnote 107 for the more likely reading of *ne voit elle sinon elle mesmes*.



For whatever is has its being of God's goodness; and God loves his goodness, wherever he has given it in goodness, and his given goodness is God himself, and God cannot so separate his goodness that it does not remain in him; and therefore he is what goodness is, and goodness is what God is. ... And so there is no-one except him who is, and who sees himself of his divine majesty in this state of being, through the transformation of love of that goodness which has been poured forth and has been restored to him. And so of himself he sees himself in such a creature, without appropriating anything from the creature; all is his own, but his very own.<sup>109</sup>

In the sixth state, then, even if only for a brief moment, God contemplates the human soul as it was created, namely of his goodness and in his image and likeness. Marguerite thus expresses the fulfilment of the desire Beatrice indicated in her very first manner: "to receive the purity and the freedom and the nobility in which it was made by her creator, in his image and likeness. (...) To the perfection to which she is created and called by God."<sup>110</sup> Marguerite, however, does not abrogate or obliterate the distinction between the creator and the creature. On the contrary, as she explicitly states, God does not appropriate anything from the creature, which remains as such a creature. In responding to his love fully and pouring forth this love into God, God and the soul become one spirit in love.<sup>111</sup> God recognises himself in the soul because the soul partakes in the totality of love, which is precisely what God is in his relationality.

This brief aperture reveals to the soul that it is joined to the Trinity by its full response to God's call in corresponding to the person of the Son, which is possible through the Holy Spirit. The depth of the soul's sinfulness and its fallen nature, described by Marguerite as an abyss of evil, have been overcome by God's grace and the soul has been joined to the life of the Trinity. In exactly the same words as Beatrice used, Marguerite states that "Love (...) by its exalted goodness has paid this debt."<sup>112</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> *Car ce qui est, il est de sa bonté; et Dieu ayme sa bonté, quelque part qu'il ait par bonté donnée; et sa bonté donnée est Dieu mesmes, et Dieu ne peut sa bonté departir, que elle ne luy demoure; pource est il ce que bonté est; et bonté est ce que Dieu est (...). Et si n'est, fors cil qui est, qui se voit en tel estre de sa divine majesté, par muance d'amour de bonté expandue et remise en luy. Et pource se voit de luy en telle creature, sans approprier rien a creature; tout est de son propre, mais son propre mesmes* (GUARNIERI & VERDEYEN, p. 330-332, l. 190-200; COLLEDGE e.a., p. 146).

<sup>110</sup> (...) *te vercrigene ende te wesene in die puerheit ende in die vriheit ende in die edelheit daer si in ghemaket es van haren sceppere na sijn beelde ende na sijn ghelikenesse (...) tote dier volcomenheit daer si toe volmaket es ende gheroepen van god* (REYPPENS & VAN MIERLO, p. 4, l. 14-24).

<sup>111</sup> See also the expression William of Saint-Thierry uses in this regard (see our footnote 97).

<sup>112</sup> *Amour (...) par sa haulte noblesse a ceste debte payée* (GUARNIERI & VERDEYEN, p. 332, l. 202-203); *dattie minne (...) alle scout quijt* (REYPPENS & VAN MIERLO, p. 28, l. 69-72).

## VII. THE SEVENTH MANNER AND THE SEVENTH STATE

### 1. The Seventh Manner

Beatrice's seventh manner expresses the conflicting sensations attendant upon experiencing the angelic life the soul enjoys in the sixth manner and its simultaneous confrontation with its own concrete, created reality in time and space, 'exiled' as she puts it, from God. This experience is characterised by pain, desire and arduous activity. Questions have been raised as to whether the seventh manner was not interpolated, since it appears to mark a clear discontinuity from the preceding six manners, both in form and content.<sup>113</sup> The end of the sixth manner would certainly appear to suggest that the treatise has reached its logical conclusion: "This is now an angelic life and afterwards follows eternal life that God in his goodness may grant us all."<sup>114</sup>

The seventh manner can be divided into three main elements. In the first, Beatrice describes how the soul is drawn out of and above its human nature in time into the life of the Trinity in eternity, where it lives in the company of the highest spirits and the Seraphim. Second, Beatrice describes the contrasting experience of earthly exile. The soul that lives in the Trinity in spirit is prevented from attaining complete union with God because of its indissoluble physical reality in time. This causes great pain and contempt for the world. Third, Beatrice expresses, in the future tense, the life the soul will enjoy in heaven, when it will be freed from its physical, earthly exile and can enter the joy of the Lord.

Beatrice begins by describing the soul that is drawn out of itself by eternal love into the eternity of love. She writes:

That she is drawn above humanity into love and above human sense and reason and above all the work of our heart, and is drawn only by eternal love into the eternity of love and into the ungraspable wisdom and the restful heights and into the deep abyss of the Godhead, who is all in all things and who remains ungraspable above all things and who is immutable, all-being, all-powerful, all-encompassing and all-powerfully working.<sup>115</sup>

The formula "the eternity of love and into the ungraspable wisdom and the restful heights" (*ewelicheit der minnen ende in die onbegripelike wijsheit ende die ongerusleke hoeheit*) is clearly Trinitarian, indicating that according to Beatrice, the fulfilment of mystical union occurs when the soul partakes in the life of the

<sup>113</sup> Leonce REYPENS, "De seven manieren van minnen geïnterpoleerd?," *Ons Geestelijk Erf* 5 (1931), p. 287-322.

<sup>114</sup> *Dit es itoe hier een ingelec leven ende hier na volght dat ewelec leven dat god omme sine goetheit moete ons allen gheven* (REYPENS & VAN MIERLO, p. 28, l. 77-79).

<sup>115</sup> *Datsi es getrect boven menschelicheit in minnen ende boven mensceliken sin ende redene ende boven alle die werke ons herten, ende allene es getrect met eweliker minnen in die ewelicheit der minnen ende in die onbegripelike wijsheit ende die ongerusleke hoeheit ende in die diepe afgronde der godheit, die es al in alle dinc ende die onbegripelec blivet boven alle dinc ende die es onwandelec, al-wesende, al-mogende, al-begripende ende al-geweldeleke werkende* (*Ibid.*, p. 28-29, l. 2-14).

Trinity. In describing this life, Beatrice refers to the Trinity explicitly: “Often, her desirable conversation is with the spirits and especially with the burning Seraphim, her sweet rest and enjoyable home are in the great Godhead and the high Trinity.”<sup>116</sup>

This conversation in heaven and restful enjoyment in the Trinity culminates, according to Beatrice, in following and contemplating God’s majesty with both heart and spirit. As a result, the soul loses all “regard for saints nor people nor angels nor creatures except with the common love in Him with which she loves everything. Him alone has she chosen in love above all and below all and within all that she desires to behold, to have and to enjoy Him with all the desire of her heart and with all the power of her spirit.”<sup>117</sup>

Following this description of the angelic conversation and life of restful enjoyment in the Trinity, the text suddenly changes, turning to a description of the miserable exile that the soul experiences on earth. She writes:

She is indifferent to the world, the earth wearies her, and no earthly thing can please or satisfy her. And it is a great pain that she must be so far and appear as an outcast. She cannot forget her misery, her desire is unquenchable, her longing pains her pitifully, and she is measurelessly and mercilessly tortured and tormented.<sup>118</sup>

Beatrice explicitly associates this ‘worldly prison’ with the soul’s physical existence and thus draws a sharp contrast between the spiritual reality of the blessed soul’s heart and spirit—in eternity—and its physical reality in time. The soul “ardently desires to be released from this misery and to be dissolved from this body and she often repeats with pain in her heart what the apostle said: I desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ.”<sup>119</sup>

The above line expresses two distinct dimensions of the soul’s desire. First, Beatrice describes a passive and unmediated encounter between the Trinity and the soul, and simultaneously a constitutive part of this encounter is the desire to experience it. This is the fulfilment and apogee of the soul’s spiritual development. The lover and beloved are both simultaneously present and absent to one another in

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<sup>116</sup> *Die wile es daer boven onder die geeste hare begerleke wandeling ende meest onder die bernende seraphine, in die grote godheit ende in die hoge driebuldicheit es hare liefleke rustinge ende hare genuechleke woning (Ibid., p. 31, l. 45-49).*

<sup>117</sup> *Si ne can geachten noch heiligen noch menschen, noch inge noch creaturen dan met gemeenre minnen in heme daer si al mede mint. Ende heme allene heft si vercoren in minnen boven al ende onder al ende binnen al so datsi met al der begerlicheit hars herten ende met al der cracht hars geests, so begertsi heme te siene ende te hebbene ende te gebukene (Ibid., p. 32, l. 53-60).*

<sup>118</sup> *Die werelt versmaetsi, erderike verwasset hare, ende datten ertrike behort dat encan hore noch gesuten noch genughen. Ende dat es hare .i. grote pine, datsi so verre moet wesen ende so vremde scinen. Hare ellende enmach si niet vergeten, hare begerte enmach niet gestillet werden, hare verlancnisse queltse jammerlike, ende hier mede wertsij gepassijt ende getorment boven mate ende sonder genade (Ibid., p. 32, l. 63-70).*

<sup>119</sup> *Hier omme es si in groet verlancnisse ende in sterke begerte ute desen ellende te werdene verledecht, ende van desen lichame ontbonden te sine ende so segtsie die wile met sereleken herten alse die apostel dede die seide: Cupio dissolvi et esse cum cristo. Dat es: “Ic begere ontbonden te sine ende te wesene met kerste” (Ibid., p. 33, l. 72-78).*

time and eternity. “She is drawn up above human manners and above her own nature, in the desire of being on high. There is her being and all her will, her desire and her love.”<sup>120</sup> Beatrice thus reveals a highly developed notion of the mutual presence and absence of the lover and beloved. In the first section of the seventh manner, God is experienced as present in his absence, as the soul is also present in eternity while remaining absent from God in time. Beatrice indicates that the direct encounter with God at the beginning of the seventh manner is not a permanent state. “Often” (*die wile*), her conversation is in heaven, with the Seraphim and the Trinity. The transitory nature of the experience described is developed in the second section, where Beatrice discusses her bodily captivity and the soul’s desire that is not satisfied.

The second dimension concerns Beatrice’s emphasis on the absence of her body from the eternal reality of God. This exile and earthly captivity make her long for death. We might interpret her desire to die in a number of ways. First, it might be an indication that complete, permanent union with God is not possible when the soul is encumbered by a material body, whatever the soul’s—albeit temporary—unmediated encounter with the Trinity. A second and related interpretation is indicated by her quotation from the Epistle to the Philippians, and must thus be interpreted Christologically (this is, incidentally, the only place Beatrice mentions Christ explicitly). According to Beatrice, death is desirable precisely as the fulfilment of the soul’s spiritual life. Beatrice quotes Phil. 1:23: “‘Cupio dissolui et esse cum cristo.’ Which means: ‘I desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ.’”<sup>121</sup> As Christ humbled Himself unto death, the soul also longs to die and to be glorified so that it may enjoy the direct, eternal and complete presence of God forever. As Beatrice says at the very end of the treatise: “‘Qui in te intrat, intrat in gaudium domini sui et cetera,’ which means: ‘O Lord, he who enters into you, enters into the joy of his Lord, and he will not fear Him, but will possess Him excellently in the most Excellent.’”<sup>122</sup>

When one considers that Beatrice describes the soul’s will as becoming completely love,<sup>123</sup> we must assume that the human will is transformed into complete correspondence with the will of God. If that is so, the soul would only desire to die

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<sup>120</sup> *Si es herheuen bouen menscelike maniere in minnen ende bouen hars selfs nature, in begerten daer boven te wesene. Dar es hare wesene ende al har wille, hare begerte ende har minne* (*Ibid.*, p. 31, l. 34-36).

<sup>121</sup> *Cupio dissolui et esse cum cristo. Dat es: “Ic begere ontbonden te sine ende te wesene met kerste”* (*Ibid.*, p. 33, l. 77-78), see Phil. 2:8.

<sup>122</sup> *Qui in te intrat, intrat in gaudium domini sui et cetera, dat es, “O here, die in-ghet in di, hi geet in die bliscap sijns heren ende hine sal heme niet ontsien, maer hi sal hem hebben alre best in den alre besten”* (*Ibid.*, p. 38, l. 158-163).

<sup>123</sup> See supra, Beatrice’s image of the housewife (*Ibid.*, p. 25, l. 25-34) and in the seventh manner: “There is her being and all her will, her desire and her love: in the certain truth and the pure clarity and in the noble height and in the brilliant beauty, in the sweet company of the highest spirits.” (*Dar es hare wesene ende al har wille hare begerte ende har minne: in die sekere waerheit ende in die pure clarheit ende in die edele hoecheit ende in die veruende scoenheit, in die suete geselschap van den oversten geeste*, *Ibid.*, p. 31, l. 37-42).

if God desired it to die. It has proved difficult convincingly to reconcile Beatrice's description of the conformity of the soul's will to that of God—who reigns completely within the soul—and the soul's indwelling in the abyssal reality of the Godhead with her sudden emphasis on unfulfillable desire and separation from God.<sup>124</sup> She says of this separation: "She cannot yet rise up to there, and here below she is neither rested or settled, and she cannot bear to think of Him for longing, and lacking Him makes her suffer from desire. And thus she must live in great discomfort."<sup>125</sup> Despite Beatrice's assurance that "she follows Him there [in his majesty] and contemplates Him with heart and spirit, she knows Him, she loves Him"<sup>126</sup> etc., she then says "she wants always to follow, know and enjoy Love, but this she cannot do in this misery."<sup>127</sup>

After her description of this disconsolate exile, Beatrice ends her treatise in the future tense with a description of the time of glory and the consolation the soul will receive after death:

Therefore, she longs to return to the land where she has built her home ... because there all obstacles will be removed and she will be received by her beloved. (...) There the soul will be unified with her bridegroom, and become one spirit with him in inseparable faith and eternal love. Who has practised this in the time of grace, will have its enjoyment in eternal glory, where one will do nothing but praise and love. May God grant this to us all. Amen.<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>124</sup> Reypens considered the passage to be interpolated. If this were the case, evidently the problem would be solved (see REYPENS, "De *seven manieren van minnen* geïnterpoleerd?," n. 113 above). HULS (see n. 21 above; vol. 2, p. 789) explains it as follows: "The rift experience between the mediation of created existence and the reality of God, who in his unmediatedness forms the uncreated ground of this existence, draws the soul into an impossible tension. On the one hand, in the unmediatedness of the reciprocity, it looks forward to a reality that lies beyond the horizon of its existence. On the other, it cannot escape from this existence. It is held in a life, which in its createdness will always be a shadow of the uncreated life in God. (...) This longing for the life beyond created existence is emphasised by a quotation from the epistle of Paul." "De kloofervaring tussen de middellijkheid van het geschapen bestaan en de werkelijkheid van God die in zijn onmiddellijkheid de ongeschapen grond van dit bestaan vormt, brengt de *sile* in een onmogelijk spanningsveld. Enerzijds staat zij in de onmiddellijkheid van de wederkerigheid uit naar een werkelijkheid die voorbij de horizon van zijn bestaan ligt, anderzijds kan zij dit bestaan niet verlaten. Zij wordt vastgehouden in een leven dat in zijn scheppelijkheid altijd een afschaduwing zal zijn van het ongeschapen leven in God. (...) Deze hunkering naar het leven voorbij het scheppelijke bestaan wordt benadrukt door een citaat uit de brief van Paulus." VEKEMAN (see n. 22 above; p. 48) does not analyse Beatrice's description of the soul's desire to die as such, but he does question why the author of the *Vita Beatricis* avoided the issue. BRADLEY (see n. 21 above; p. 367) does not provide an extensive analysis of the soul's desire to die, but we agree with her explanation of the soul's desire for permanent union with Christ after an 'ecstatic interim'.

<sup>125</sup> *Dar boven encansi noch niet comen, hier neder enmachsi noch geresten noch geduren, ende om heme te pensene encansi van verlancessen niet gedragen, ende sijns tonberne gheeft hare van begerten die quale. Ende aldus so moet si leven met groten ongemake* (REYPENS & VAN MIERLO, p. 34, l. 98-103).

<sup>126</sup> *Si volget heme daer ende sieten ane met herten ende met geeste. Si kintene, si mintene* (*Ibid.*, p. 31, l. 50-52).

<sup>127</sup> *Hier omme wiltsi altoes der minnen volghen, minne bekinnen ende minne gebruiken, ende dat enmach hare in dit ellende niet gescien* (*Ibid.*, p. 37, 143-145).

<sup>128</sup> *Daer omme wiltsi te lande-wert tiden daer si har woninge in heft gesticht (...). Want si kint wale: daer wert alre lettenisse af-gedaen ende si wert daer liefleke van lieve ontfanen. (...) Daer wert die siele geenicht met haren brudegome, ende wert al een geest met heme in onscedeliker trouwen ende*

Beatrice hereby locates complete and permanent union with the bridegroom—Christ—and becoming one spirit with Him, in the afterlife. This appears to conflict considerably with the descriptions of union with God we find in the sixth and the beginning of the seventh manners. Indeed, Beatrice had already indicated at the beginning of the sixth manner that the soul had become ‘the bride of our Lord’, but a bride, apparently, who is not united to her bridegroom until after death.

Whatever Beatrice’s intentions, the text as such appears to present two problematic contradictions. The first involves a spiritual-physical dualism. Though the human spirit may be deified and participate in the life of the Trinity ‘above human nature’, human life remains a miserable exile until the body is dissolved and the soul is glorified in heaven. The second concerns the transformation or conformity of the will. As we have seen above, the soul’s desire to be taken up into the Trinity is fulfilled when the will is conformed to that of God. Beatrice clearly describes this in the sixth manner. It is, however, difficult to reconcile this position with the unfulfilled desires Beatrice describes in the middle section of the seventh manner.

It is our contention that Marguerite attempted to resolve these contradictions in Beatrice’s text by emphasising that created human nature is affirmed as such when the soul is deified and that this is done primarily through the transformation of the will.

## 2. Marguerite’s revision of the Seventh Manner

Marguerite reorganises the structure of the seven manners in her seven states, reserving her seventh state for the afterlife. It is important to note that according to Marguerite, the ‘soul without a will’ lives primarily in the fifth state. As discussed above, however, the soul in the fifth state is occasionally drawn into the sixth state, an opening or aperture of heaven, in which the soul receives a glimpse—as if by lightning—of its own glory.<sup>129</sup> In the sixth manner, Marguerite follows Beatrice in distinguishing between purity and illumination on the one hand and glorification on the other. Echoing Beatrice’s description of heaven, Marguerite states that the soul “knows, loves and praises none but Him [God]” in this state.<sup>130</sup>

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*in eweliker minnen. Ende die hem geufent heft in den tijt der graciën, die sal sijns gebruiken in eweliker gloriën, daermen niet anders en sal plegen dan loven ende minnen. Daer moete god ons allen toe bringhen, amen (Ibid., p. 37-39, l. 145-171).* The reference to union with the bridegroom at the end of the seventh manner connects to the reference to the bride of our Lord at the beginning of the sixth, a further indication that Beatrice’s intended the two to be seen as a diptych.

<sup>129</sup> See Chapter 58 of *The Mirror* (GUARNIERI & VERDEYEN, p. 168-170). The image of the mystical experience experienced as a flash of lightning is to be found in a number of earlier mystical texts. See, for example, the *vita* of Lutgard of Tongeren by THOMAS OF CANTIMPRÉ (*Acta sanctorum junii* 4, 206D) and the much older *vita* of Aldegund (*Vita S. Aldegundis abbatisae Melbodiensis primae*, Bibliotheca Hagiographica Latina 1669, p. 807).

<sup>130</sup> *Et pource ne cognoist ceste Ame sinon luy, et si n’ayme sinon luy, ne ne loue sinon luy* (GUARNIERI & VERDEYEN, p. 330, l. 189-190; COLLEDGE e.a., p. 146. See *si kintene, si mintene, si begertene so seere* (REYSPENS & VAN MIERLO, p. 31, l. 52).

Regarding the first of the aforementioned issues in Beatrice's text, it may be useful to discuss first the similarities between our authors' conceptions of spiritual union—life in eternity—before considering Marguerite's treatment of the soul's existence in time. The most significant association between Beatrice and Marguerite is their use of 'abyssal' language to describe the mutual indwelling that is the highest experience and expression of union with God. Beatrice was the first vernacular mystical author to use the image of the abyss to describe this union. She uses the term twice, in the fourth and seventh manners, both times in reference to the soul becoming love in the abyss of the Godhead.

The theme of abyssal indwelling is taken up and expanded by Marguerite. Indeed, reading the *Mirror* in light of *The Seven Manners*, it appears that Marguerite has a very similar conception of what this indwelling means. Though it has been said that "Marguerite does not explicitly speak of God as abyss,"<sup>131</sup> and while it is true that she uses abyssal language most often to describe the soul's nature as an abyss of sin, she does refer to God as the "abyss of glory" (*l'abbî de gloire*) in chapter 60 of the *Mirror*.<sup>132</sup> She thus strikingly juxtaposes the fathomless realities of the human soul and the divine nature.<sup>133</sup> In chapter 38, we find the expression of the soul's abyss of poverty: "I who am an abyss of utter poverty. And nonetheless, it is into this abyss of poverty that you are willing to put, if I do not offer any resistance, the gift of grace."<sup>134</sup> The resistance to which Marguerite refers is obviously the resistance of the will. She thus makes clear that in her conception, as she describes in her fifth manner, mutual indwelling occurs when the freely offered gift of love is freely received and the soul submits its will to God, through which, the soul attains true freedom.<sup>135</sup> The *Mirror* has a more fully developed but also

<sup>131</sup> MCGINN, *Flowering*, p. 263.

<sup>132</sup> *L'abbî de gloire, qui tire l'Ame et embellist de la beaulté de sa nature* (GUARNIERI & VERDEYEN, p. 176, l. 36-37).

<sup>133</sup> This imagery is of biblical inspiration. See Ps. 41:8 (Vulg): *Abyssus abyssum invocat*, but Marguerite's conception may well have been influenced by a short text attributed in the Middle Ages to Bernard of Clairvaux, but now thought possibly to have been written by William of Saint-Thierry, *In lacu*, in which he writes *Sed, o Domine, abyssus abyssum invocat: abyssus profundissimae miseriae meae, abyssum altissimae misericordiae tuae*. ("But, oh Lord, abyss calls unto abyss: the abyss of my deepest misery to the abyss of your great mercy.") For the background of *In lacu* and the manuscript association with William's *De Contemplando Deo* see Jean DÉCHANET, "Le Pseudo-Prologue du *De Contemplando Deo*," *Cîteaux in de Nederlanden* 8 (1957), p. 5-12 and Dom Jacques HOUILLIER, "Introduction," in GUILLAUME DE SAINT-THIERRY, *Oraisons Méditatives*, Sources chrétiennes 324, Paris: 1985, p. 37-39.

<sup>134</sup> *Moy qui suis abysme de toute povreté?! Et neantmoins en telle abysme de povreté vous voulez mectre, se en moy ne tient, le don de telle grace* (GUARNIERI & VERDEYEN, p. 122, l. 15-17; COLLEDGE e.a., p. 58).

<sup>135</sup> *The Mirror* contains a number of other expressions of indwelling. See chapters 22 (GUARNIERI & VERDEYEN, p. 84, l. 19-20), 28 (*Ibid.*, p. 96, l. 5-6) and 42. Chapter 22 (*Ibid.*, p. 130, l. 19), in fact, contains numerous allusions to Beatrice's text. At the beginning of the chapter, Marguerite uses the image of the soul as bird that flies in the heights of the sky; an expression of the soul's unburdened freedom as we find it in Beatrice's sixth manner (*Ibid.*, p. 82, l. 3-6; REYPPENS & VAN MIERLO, p. 26, l. 37-39). Marguerite goes on to say that "This soul is not alarmed at tribulation, she does pause to seek consolation, she does not falter because of temptation, she does not diminish because of loss" (*Ceste*

a more balanced conception of the mutuality of indwelling. This is clear from Marguerite's use of abyssal language to describe both the divine and human nature. Marguerite thus guards against any hint of pantheism, since the encounter between God and the soul is a fundamentally *mutual* encounter of two fathomless realities.

It is through this conception of life lived both in time and eternity that Marguerite resolves the spiritual-physical contradiction we find in Beatrice's text. According to Marguerite, once the will is surrendered to God, the soul does not experience the created, physical world as an exile. She does, however, share Beatrice's indifference to the world, using it only as a gift from God given to be used in the execution of His will: "Who should have scruples about taking what he needs of the four elements, of the brightness of heaven, of the heat of fire, of the moisture of water and of the earth which supports us? (...) These bounteous elements are made by God (...) and so such souls use all things made and created of which nature has need in as much peace of heart as when they use the ground on which they walk."<sup>136</sup> Moreover, Marguerite refers to the body as a wretched desert only with regard to the indeterminate period of idleness before the soul ceases its resistance to the divine will and receives the gift of grace.<sup>137</sup> In *The Mirror* we find the fulfilment of

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*Ame ne s'effroie pour tribulacion, ne ne arreste pour consolacion, ne ne desseure pour temptacion, ne ne amenyse pour nulle subtraction*, GUARNIERI & VERDEYEN, p. 82, l. 13-15; COLLEDGE e.a., p. 42). Compare Beatrice's "Often, she refuses all consolation from God Himself and from his creatures (...) And thus she remains unsatisfied and unsated in all gifts because she is forced to miss the presence of her love" (*Also ontsegt si allen troest dicwile van gode selue ende van sinen creaturen (...) Ende so bliuet si ongesadet ende ongestoghet in allen ghiften, om datsi noch daruen moet der iegenwordicheit hare minnen*) (REYPENS & VAN MIERLO, p. 34-35, l. 108-117). Though she uses the same terms, Marguerite in fact inverts these expressions in Beatrice as expressions of the 'lack' of God experienced by the soul in earthly exile. According to Marguerite, the consolations and gifts of God are rejected because they pale in comparison to love itself. See Chapter 26: "Meditation, which the soul gets from Love without wishing for any of Love's gifts which are called consolations and which comfort the soul through a feeling of sweetness in prayer, teaches this to the soul, and no other custom does it teach her than pure love. For if anyone were to wish for God's comforts through feelings of consolation, they would impede Perfect Love from taking hold" (*telle meditacion – que l'Ame prent en Amour, sans vouloir nulz de ses dons, que l'en appelle consolacions, qui l'Ame confortent par sentement de douceur d'oraison – l'apprent a l'Ame, et nulz aultres usaiges ne luy aprent que pure amour. Car qui voudroit les confors de Dieu par sentement de consolacion, ilz empecheroient l'emprise de Fine Amour*, GUARNIERI & VERDEYEN, p. 94, l. 11-17; COLLEDGE e.a., p. 45). For Marguerite, it is selfish attachment to the consolation of the gifts that must be rejected. Chapter 28 contains the other comparison of the soul with an animal we find in Beatrice's sixth manner, namely of the fish in the sea: "Such a soul swims in the sea of joy, that is in the sea of delights flowing and streaming from the divinity (...) she dwells in joy and joy dwells in her" (*Telle Ame, dit Amour, nage en la mer de joye, c'est en la mer de delices fluans et decourans de la Divinité (...) elle demoure en Joye et Joye demoure en elle*, GUARNIERI & VERDEYEN, p. 96, l. 2-6; COLLEDGE e.a., p. 46). See also *Ende also gelijc als die visch die swimmet in die wijtheit van der vloet ende rast in die diepheit* (REYPENS & VAN MIERLO, p. 25-26, l. 35-37).

<sup>136</sup> *Qui est celuy qui doie faire conscience de prendre son besoing des .iiij. elemens, comme de la clarté du ciel, de la chalour du feu, de la rousee de l'eaue, et de la terre qui nous soustient? (...) Lesquieulx elemens gracieulx sont faiz de Dieu (...) et aussi telles Ames usent de toutes choses faictes et creees dont Nature a besoing, en autelle paix de cueur, comme elles font de la terre sur quoy elles marchent* (GUARNIERI & VERDEYEN, p. 72, l. 41-50; COLLEDGE e.a., p. 37-38).

<sup>137</sup> See also chapter 38 of *The Mirror* (GUARNIERI & VERDEYEN, p. 120-122).



the primordial objective of spiritual life described in a way that does not reduce the created world to a prison. Though she advocates the soul's death to the world,<sup>138</sup> this is only so that the soul may have life in the Trinity, and thus live in the world according to the will of God. The soul must die to earthly, self-centred cares and concerns precisely so it that can manifest the will of God in the world. In this last regard, Marguerite's theology is completely consonant with that of Beatrice, but rather than longing for physical death, the soul embraces true life.<sup>139</sup>

### VIII. TRANSMISSION

Having analysed the literary, conceptual and mystical-theological parallels between *The Seven Manners* and *The Mirror*, we must now turn to a consideration of whether our hypothesis that Marguerite read Beatrice is tenable historically and geographically. To this end, we must address a number of questions.

The first concerns their respective languages. Beatrice wrote in Middle Dutch, while Marguerite wrote in Old French. The question of the possibility that Marguerite spoke Dutch has been addressed previously, namely in Max Huot de Longchamp's introduction to his translation of *The Mirror*. He indicates various Flemishisms, upon which Axters had already remarked.<sup>140</sup> He adds the geographical consideration that she lived in the Diocese of Cambrai and was thus most probably acquainted with the lands bordering the River Scheldt.<sup>141</sup> By contrast, Kent Emery Jr. has argued that "there is no evidence that Margaret read German or Dutch, although, (...) it is not wholly implausible to imagine that French- and Dutch-speaking women living in the same communities shared the tropes of their spiritual understanding. Nevertheless," he continues, "the similarities among these women writers do not suffice to place them in the same 'school of spirituality.'"<sup>142</sup> It should be evident from the above that rather than sharing mere tropes of spiritual understanding, the mystical thought of Beatrice and Marguerite shares many of the same foundations, developments and conclusions, including elements such as mutual, abyssal indwelling and

<sup>138</sup> Chapter 42 (*Ibid.*, p. 132, l. 23-25).

<sup>139</sup> See also Beatrice's description of the common life. The soul can no longer pay heed to creatures except with the common love it shares with the Trinity (REYFENS & VAN MIERLO, p. 31-32, l. 52-60). See also chapter 22 of *The Mirror*, in which Marguerite says that the soul is "common to all by the generosity of pure charity, and yet she takes nothing from anyone because of noble graciousness, of pure goodness, with which God has filled her" (*Elle est commune a tous par largesse de pure charité, et si ne demande nient de nully par la noblesse de la courtoisie de pure bonté, dont Dieu l'a remplie*, GUARNIERI & VERDEYEN, p. 82-84, l. 15-17; COLLEDGE e.a., p. 42). For an analysis of Beatrice and Marguerite's conceptions of the common life, with a possible antecedent in Richard of Saint-Victor, see JOHN ARBLASTER & ROB FAESEN, "Commune a tous par largesse de pure charité: Common Love in Beatrice of Nazareth and Marguerite Porete," *Ons Geestelijk Erf* 83 (2012), p. 297-323.

<sup>140</sup> See our footnote 3.

<sup>141</sup> MARGUERITE PORETE, *Le miroir des âmes simples et annéanties*, trans. HUOT DE LONGCHAMP (see n. 6 above), p. 22.

<sup>142</sup> COLLEDGE e.a., "Foreword: Margaret Porette and Her Book" by Kent EMERY, in MARGUERITE PORETTE, *The Mirror of Simple Souls*, p. xiii.

the common life, which would later become essential to Ruusbroec's thought. If careful distinctions are to be made between 'schools' of Christian spirituality, Beatrice and Marguerite certainly belong to the same 'school', to which earlier writers such as William of Saint-Thierry, approximate contemporaries such as Hadewijch and Pseudo-Hadewijch and later writers such as Ruusbroec also undoubtedly belong. Colledge, Marler and Grant argue that Marguerite's book "shows beyond any doubt that she was an educated woman." But they go on to say, in the very next sentence, that "there is no solid evidence that she knew any language or literature other than French."<sup>143</sup> We find the supposition that an educated woman born in the thirteenth century would not have been in the least familiar with the Latin language or Latin literature relatively unlikely. Furthermore, we consider it unlikely that Marguerite, the author of a book like *The Mirror*, would have drawn the inspiration for her text exclusively from French sources or French translations of Latin sources, as Colledge, Marler and Grant suggest.<sup>144</sup>

Having said that, Huot de Longchamp's argument is not entirely convincing either. There is no reason to suggest that, simply because Marguerite lived near the linguistic border and may have known various Dutch words or expressions, she was by any means fluent. We do not consider 'Flemishisms' in her text as sufficient grounds to conclude that she knew the language well, though they do not exclude the possibility that she did. On the other hand, as Huot de Longchamp states, her knowledge of contemporary Flemish mysticism was indeed excellent. This is clear not only from her integration of Beatrice's thought into her own, but also from the similarities between her work and the poems of Pseudo-Hadewijch, not to mention Hadewijch herself.<sup>145</sup> We are inclined to think that Marguerite's knowledge of Dutch was most likely to have been basic, but that she was sufficiently proficient to read and competently interpret Dutch texts, perhaps with some assistance.

Turning our attention now to the concrete transmission of the text, we must concede that it has not been possible to find any concrete historical evidence of the fact that Marguerite read Beatrice's text, though a great deal of circumstantial evidence supports the supposition that the former was familiar with the latter. Beatrice's acquaintance with the nobility of Brabant, Flanders and Hainault has been indicated above. In view of the suggestion that Marguerite received an upper-class education,<sup>146</sup> she too may have been acquainted with the nobility or the court of Hainault, where Beatrice's treatise may have circulated. If that is the case, Marguerite would have had access to it there.

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<sup>143</sup> COLLEDGE e.a., "Introduction," p. lxvi.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>145</sup> For the seminal article on Hadewijch and Marguerite, see Kurt RUH, "Beginnenmystik: Hadewijch, Mechtild von Magdeburg, Marguerite Porete," *Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum und deutsche Literatur* 106 (1977), p. 265-277.

<sup>146</sup> See MCGINN, *Flowering*, p. 244.

A second, more tangible and obvious link centres on the Abbey of Villers in Brabant. Marguerite, in the justification added to her book, mentions Dom Franco, Cantor of Villers, as one of three theological authorities who read her book and found no fault with it.<sup>147</sup> It has proved impossible to identify Cantor Franco, as the first necrology of Villers is unfortunately lost. If we reasonably assume, however, that Marguerite did not choose her three authorities at random,<sup>148</sup> but selected those whom she knew to be acquainted with the subject matter, we can thus conclude that her selection of Dom Franco was not only deliberate, but carefully considered. In any event, it is certain that Marguerite knew the Abbey of Villers and Dom Franco. Could it be that it was via Villers—through Franco, or through one of the other members of the community at Villers—that Marguerite came into contact with Beatrice's work? There is strong evidence to suggest that this is so, based on the fact that it is highly likely that the community of Villers had become familiar with Beatrice's work as early as the last quarter of the thirteenth century.

The evidence—albeit circumstantial—of the above claim rests on the fact that many of the confessors of the Abbey of Nazareth were drawn from the community of the Abbey of Saint Bernard on the Scheldt, which had been founded in 1237 by twelve monks from Villers.<sup>149</sup>

It is certain that in the period 1261-1317—a period which saw the death of Beatrice, the writing of her *Vita*, Marguerite's appeal to Dom Franco and her later trial and execution—no less than three men were elected abbot of St. Bernard's before being elected abbot of Villers. One was even abbot of St. Bernard's twice and held the post at Villers in between. The first was Arnulph of Gisteltes, who was abbot of St. Bernard's between 1261 and 1264, then prior until 1264. He was elected abbot of Villers in 1270, a post he held until his death in 1276. Raduard of Mechlin was abbot of St. Bernard's before June 1303 until late 1307 or early 1308 when he was elected abbot of Villers. In 1310, he was re-elected abbot of St. Bernard's, but died one year later at Cîteaux, attending the General Chapter. John of Malre was elected abbot of St. Bernard's in 1311 and then abbot of Villers in 1315. He died at Clairvaux in 1317. Furthermore, according to the *Monasticon Belge*, many of the Dutch-speaking monks of Villers withdrew to St. Bernard's during the exile under the first abbacy of Jacques de Plancenoit (1310-1315), by which time Marguerite was, of course, already dead.<sup>150</sup> We thus conclude that for decades there was a close

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<sup>147</sup> *Postea uidit eum et legit unus monachus cisterciensis, qui vocabatur Dominus Franco de Villariis abbatia. Qui dixit quod probaret bene per Scripturas, quod ueritas est quicquid dicit iste liber* (GUARNIERI & VERDEYEN, p. 407, l. 20-23).

<sup>148</sup> See Sean FIELD, "The Master and Marguerite: Godfrey of Fontaines' Praise of the Mirror of Simple Souls," *Journal of Medieval History* 35 (2009), p. 136-149 on the discerning choice of Godfrey of Fontaines as the third reader.

<sup>149</sup> Whether the earliest confessors were monks from St. Bernard's is unclear, but we are not entirely convinced by Reypens' suggestion that they were in fact from Cîteaux. See *Vita Beatricis: De autobiografie van de Z. Beatrijs van Tienen O.Cist. 1200-1268*, ed. Leonce REYPPENS, Antwerp 1964, p. 33\*, n. 3.

<sup>150</sup> Émile BROUETTE, "Abbaye de Villers, à Tilly", *Monasticon Belge* IV, Liège 1968, p. 341-405, esp. p. 380.

association between the Abbey of Villers on the one hand and the Abbeys of Saint Bernard's (founded by Villers) and Nazareth, which is a likely connection for the transmission of Beatrice's text to Villers, especially in light of the latter abbey's long affiliation with mystics and the mystical tradition.<sup>151</sup>

Though we must concede that when, in 1309, a catalogue was drawn up of Villers' impressive library, as voluminous as it was, neither Beatrice's nor Marguerite's works were among the collection.<sup>152</sup> It was not until 1320 that John of St. Truiden, a monk of Villers, compiled the oldest extant manuscript containing Beatrice's *Vita* when he was confessor at Vrouwenpark in Wezemaal. Reypens and Van Mierlo, however, date the copy of the *Vita* in that manuscript somewhat earlier. Older manuscripts of *The Seven Manners* and the *Vita Beatricis*, now lost, undoubtedly existed, and it is hardly plausible to imagine that either the monks of St. Bernard's, who provided Nazareth with confessors, or the monks of Villers, three of whose abbots came from St. Bernard's in that period, were unaware of Beatrice and her story until the compilation of the first extant manuscript in 1320, especially if the confessor who wrote the *Vita* was indeed from St. Bernard's.<sup>153</sup> Without any additional, reliable historical evidence, however, it is impossible to name the confessor of Nazareth who wrote the *Vita* or to ascertain whether he was indeed a member of St. Bernard's.

The link with Villers, not to mention Beatrice or the older Cistercian mystical tradition, may cast new light on Marguerite's question in 'the song of love' in chapter 122 of *The Mirror*:

What will the Beguines say and the religious, when they shall hear the excellence of your divine song? The Beguines say that I am all astray, and priests, clerics and the Preachers, Augustinians and Carmelites and the Friars Minor because I write of the being of Perfect Love.<sup>154</sup>

Could it be mere coincidence that Marguerite mentions here all the religious orders of significance,<sup>155</sup> as well as the secular clergy and even the beguines, but does not include the Cistercians in her list of detractors? In our opinion, this may

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<sup>151</sup> See, for example, Edouard DE MOUREAU, *L'abbaye de Villers-en-Brabant aux XII<sup>e</sup> et XIII<sup>e</sup> siècles* (Brussels 1909), p. 104-109; Simone ROISIN, "L'efflorescence cistercienne et le courant féminin de piété au XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle," *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique* 39 (1943), p. 342-378.

<sup>152</sup> The catalogue is published in *Corpus Catalogorum Belgii: The Booklists of the Southern Low Countries* vol. IV, ed. Albert DEROLEZ, Brussels 2011, p. 213-226.

<sup>153</sup> It is impossible to prove that the confessor in question was a monk of St. Bernard's, but the abbey's necrology lists several names—without dates—who fulfilled that function, one of whom may have been the author. In this regard see REYFENS, *Vita*, p. 32-35.

<sup>154</sup> *Que diront beguines, et gens de religion, quant ilz orront l'excellence de vostre divine chançon? Beguines dient que je erre, prestres, clers, et prescheurs, Augustins, et carmes, et les freres mineurs, pource que j'escris de l'estre de l'affinee Amour* (GUARNIERI & VERDEYEN, p. 344, l. 94-103; COLLEDGE e.a., p. 152-153).

<sup>155</sup> We must concede that the Carthusians are not mentioned either, but consider it very possible that the trust Marguerite evidently placed in the Cistercians also extended to the Carthusians, following William of Saint-Thierry. See the introduction of his *Epistola ad fratres de Monte Dei*.

well be a subtle reference not only to her sources, but also to the readers she knew would understand the intended meaning of the text.

## CONCLUSION

The history of 'Porete studies' has developed along various lines. Besides historical and literary investigations on *The Mirror* and its author (concerning the book's relationship with French courtly literature, or the study of the documents of Marguerite's trial, for example), there are two distinct research trends. The first—and oldest—began with Romana Guarnieri herself and is primarily concerned with questioning the heterodoxy—or orthodoxy—of the text. Michael Sargent has suggested, in fact, that this question dominated the field to the extent that it skewed research.<sup>156</sup> In reaction to the predominance of the question of orthodoxy in the research, the second trend focused primarily on Marguerite's relationship with beguine spirituality and, frequently, Meister Eckhart, with whom she undoubtedly shares marked similarities.

Few authors have investigated in detail Marguerite's role as a critical inheritor of the Cistercian spiritual tradition, particularly in relation to William of Saint-Thierry and Beatrice of Nazareth. With the exception of the brief references we find in the authors mentioned in the introduction, Camille Bérubé is the only scholar to devote considerable attention to this tradition.<sup>157</sup> This background, we believe, must be explored further, specifically in relation to the authors mentioned, but also to Hadewijch and the Pseudo-Hadewijch, and not least to Ruusbroec, whom Marguerite undoubtedly also influenced.<sup>158</sup> Our analysis of the "seven manners" and "seven stages" of love has clearly justified the brief statements, mentioned in the introduction, that inspired the present contribution. We will summarise our main conclusions here in four steps: the textual and structural similarities and dissimilarities and the theological similarities and dissimilarities.

With respect to the structure and form of *The Mirror's* 118<sup>th</sup> chapter and *The Seven Manners of Love*, we must note that there are a number of strong textual similarities. The development from the first to the fourth manner in Beatrice's text is closely paralleled in Marguerite's text, both with respect to form and content. In the fifth state, however, the structure of Marguerite's text begins to diverge considerably from that of Beatrice, though the spiritual development they describe continues to bear similarities. As is evident from our analysis

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<sup>156</sup> Michael SARGENT, "The Annihilation of Marguerite Porete," *Viator* 28 (1997), p. 253-279, esp. p. 254-256. GNÄDINGER (see n. 10 above; esp. p. 137, n. 20).

<sup>157</sup> Camille BÉRUBÉ, *L'amour de Dieu selon Jean Duns Scot, Porete, Eckhart, Benoît de Canfield et les Capucins*, Rome 1997, esp. p. 43-53.

<sup>158</sup> See our footnote 12 and Paul VERDEYEN, "Oordeel van Ruusbroec over de rechtgelovigheid van Margareta Porete," *Ons Geestelijk Erf* 66 (1992), p. 88-96. See also "Ruusbroec's Opinion on Marguerite Porete's Orthodoxy," *Studies in Spirituality* 3 (1993), p. 121-129.

above, Marguerite has reworked material from Beatrice sixth and seventh manners into her fifth and sixth states, reserving the seventh state for the afterlife ‘of which none are able to speak’. To some extent, of course, we also find this in Beatrice’s text, in her description of the time of glory at the end of the seventh manner. Furthermore, there are numerous occasions in which Marguerite has integrated into her text, though not necessarily in chapter 118, precise expressions found in *The Seven Manners*. Not least among these is Beatrice’s “without any why” (*sonder enich waeromme*), which Marguerite translates literally as *sans nul pourquoi*, an expression to which Romana Guarnieri took such umbrage. The meaning of this expression is precisely the same in both authors. Marguerite has also adopted many of the same metaphors and images, though again, these do not feature in chapter 118.

We can thus conclude that on a formal, textual level, the question of Marguerite’s revision of Beatrice’s text is a complex one. It is clear that Marguerite has not unquestioningly adopted the structure and content of Beatrice’s text. Despite Marguerite’s critical revision and reformulation, however, Beatrice’s inspiration is unmistakable. Evidently, Marguerite drew on many sources and it is thus no surprise that she has reworked much of her material. It must be noted, however, that there is little in the text of Beatrice that has not been integrated into *The Mirror*. Even concerning the places of disagreement between the two texts, Marguerite has not omitted Beatrice’s ideas, she has simply revised them to accord with her own spiritual theology.

With respect to the theological content of *The Seven Manners* and chapter 118 of *The Mirror*, we conclude that, as with the form, the mystical development described in the first to fourth manners and states is essentially the same. In the first and second manner and state, the ‘good’ soul, unencumbered by qualms of conscience thanks to living in accordance with the law, commits to loving God purely for love’s own sake (love without a why). Both in Beatrice’s third manner and Marguerite’s third state, the relational dynamics develop and transform in that the locus of the relationship changes from the human soul—and its activity—to God, and particularly his indwelling in the soul. In the fourth manner and state, the soul receives an overwhelming experience of ecstatic bliss. God touches the soul (Beatrice) and pours forth His love into it (Marguerite), drawing it above itself in enjoyment.

Marguerite’s primary concern begins to diverge significantly from Beatrice’s in the fifth state. Though the purgative descriptions in the two texts bear some similarities, Marguerite focuses far more strongly on the transformation of the will and an inner process of deepening self-knowledge. This corresponds, of course, to the central theme of *The Mirror*. Though Beatrice certainly touches upon this theme, her central focus is on feeling the pains of the Passion as a prerequisite for the full experience of God’s love. For Marguerite, the radical transformation of the will is the prerequisite for deification, which takes place on the most fundamental level of the soul. Relinquishing one’s will leads to complete kenosis into the Other. This

does not, however, imply complete ontological annihilation, since Marguerite conceives of the soul's being as relational.

Finally, concerning desire and the deified life, we conclude that the most striking difference between the texts of Beatrice and Marguerite is Beatrice's desire for death and the transformation of the will in Marguerite. When, according to Marguerite, the will is transformed, there is *de facto* no desire in the human person any longer, since its will is completely transformed into that of God. Marguerite describes the dynamism of the relationship in terms of a type of constantly renewed assent to perform the divine will completely selflessly, and that this constitutes the soul's participation in the divine life. The soul in Beatrice's text, on the other hand, longs for death and permanent union with Christ. It is of particular significance, despite this difference, that both Beatrice and Marguerite describe, in the last stage of human spiritual development, that the soul does not pay heed to creatures or created reality except with the common love of perfect charity, the manifestation of the Holy Spirit's love in the world.<sup>159</sup>

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<sup>159</sup> See our footnote 139.

*L'influence de Béatrice de Nazareth sur Marguerite Porete: Une relecture des Sept manières d'amour*

Cet article examine comment la tradition cistercienne, en particulier à travers Béatrice de Nazareth († 1268), a été reprise de façon critique par Marguerite Porete († 1310) dans le chapitre 118 de son *Miroir des âmes simples*. Les descriptions de la montée et de l'union mystiques dans ces écrits comportent de fortes ressemblances. L'exposé nuance cependant l'affirmation générale suivant laquelle Béatrice et Marguerite appartiendraient à des écoles spirituelles différentes, et jette une nouvelle lumière sur Marguerite comme héritière critique de ses sources. Chacune des sept manières dans le texte de Béatrice et chacun des sept états dans celui de Marguerite sont analysés de manière détaillée en considérant à la fois la forme littéraire et le contenu mystique et théologique.

*The Influence of Beatrice of Nazareth on Marguerite Porete: The Seven Manners of Love Revised*

This contribution investigates how the Cistercian tradition, especially through Beatrice of Nazareth († 1268), was critically reused by Marguerite Porete († 1310) in chapter 118 of her *Mirror of Simple Souls*. The descriptions of mystical ascent and union in these texts bear marked similarities. This contribution thus nuances the general assumption that Beatrice and Marguerite belong to different spiritual schools, and sheds new light on Marguerite as a critical heir of her sources. Each of the seven manners in Beatrice's text and seven states in Marguerite's text is analysed in detail, both with respect to literary form and mystical-theological content.

*Der Einfluss von Beatrix von Nazareth auf Margareta Porete: Von Sieben Weisen heiliger Minne – eine Revision.*

Dieser Beitrag untersucht, wie die zisterziensische Tradition, insbesondere jedoch Beatrix von Nazareth († 1268), von Margareta Porete († 1310) im Kapitel 118 ihres *Spiegel der einfachen Seelen* kritisch übernommen wurde. Die Beschreibungen mystischen Aufstiegs und mystischer Vereinigung in diesen Texten weisen markante Ähnlichkeiten auf. Dieser Beitrag nuanciert deshalb die allgemeine Annahme, dass Beatrix und Margareta verschiedenen spirituellen Schulen angehören, und wirft ein neues Licht auf Margareta als eine kritische Erbin ihrer Quellen. Jede der sieben Weisen in Beatrix Text und der sieben Zustände bei Margareta wird sowohl hinsichtlich der literarischen Form wie auch des mystisch-theologischen Inhaltes eingehend analysiert.