A STUDY OF BODY-AND-SOUL POETRY
IN OLD AND MIDDLE ENGLISH

DISSERTATION

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by

Mary Patricia Tuck, B.A., M.A.
Denton, Texas
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The English poetic expression of the legend of the body and the soul owes its existence to elements derived from a number of disparate sources. Details concerning the punishments of Hell and rewards of Heaven were borrowed from the religion of ancient Egypt, from early Egyptian Christian apocalypses and apocryphas, and from biblical and Talmudic sources. Manichaeanism gave the legend that structure which would best provide a moral lesson, that of the soul and body—or good and evil—in conflict. From patristic writings and from Latin and Old English homilies came numerous details concerning the grave, bodily corruption, signs of old age, and ubi sunt interrogatives. Visionary literature, especially visions of Hell beginning with the early Greek *Visio Pauli*, also provided material essential to the body-and-soul legend, primarily in descriptions of the torments of the damned and the glimpses of Paradise and in the idea of respite from torment. Augustinian and patristic theology provided the critical tools for the synthesis of these elements. The focus of these poems is the question of whether the soul or the body has the greater responsibility for salvation or damnation.
The earliest English poetic expression of the body-and-soul legend is the Address of the Soul to the Body, from the tenth century. The Worcester Cathedral Fragments, c. 1200, also deal with the legend. The fragment "Nou is mon holi and soint," from 1225-1275, is a brief account of the legend. The "Debate of the Body and the Soul," the first true debate on this theme in English, was written between 1275 and 1325. Another debate, "In a thestri stude y stod," dates from 1300. "On Doomsday" and the poem "Death" or "The Latemest Day," which follows in all four manuscripts, is dated variously from the early thirteenth century to 1300. "Sinners, Beware!," from about 1275, is associated with the tradition because of a short address by a soul at the end of the poem. "Over the Bier of the Worldling" is a thirteenth-century address. The Visio Philiberti is a mid-fifteenth century debate.

These ten poems contain certain elements which define the genre. The poems are either in the form of an address or a debate, and the occasion is either the moment of death, the Last Judgment, or one of the periodic returns of the soul to the body before Judgment. The soul either curses or blesses the body for its part in the soul's damnation or salvation. The themes of the grave as the dwelling place of the body and the corruption of the body in the grave are important to these poems. The soul emphasizes the performance or neglect of Christian duty, and the ubi sunt theme concerns the friends and material possessions the body has relinquished in death. Finally, the poems dwell on the
punishments of Hell in store for the soul—or more rarely, the rewards of Heaven.

One or more of these elements also appear in a number of contemporary poems, in English morality plays, in the *Ars Moriendi*, and in Lydgate's translation of the *Dance of Death*. In these later expressions of the body-and-soul legend the theme of responsibility for sin disappears, and the emphasis is on the more grotesque and gruesome aspects of death which finally developed into the idea of the macabre.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

One of man's primary concerns has always been his own death. In literary expressions this concern has taken the form of speculation about the ultimate end of consciousness, whether in oblivion in the grave or in some form of afterlife. The advent of Christianity narrowed the possibilities for the eventual destination of the soul, and man was either eternally saved or damned according to his life on earth. A sinful and wicked man who rejected the love and mercy of God and indulged in evil pleasures in life could look forward to an eternity of punishment in Hell, while a righteous man who disciplined his body, received the sacraments, and lived a sober and upright life could anticipate angelic support on his deathbed and perpetual joy in Heaven. The moment of death, the separation of the soul from the body, was the point at which the fate of the soul would be decided. The tradition of the soul praising or blaming the body for its conduct in life grew up around this point of separation. The expression of that praise or blame developed a definite literary form as a result of borrowings from a number of sources.
In this paper I will examine the sources for the tradition of the address of the soul to the body or the dialogue between the two. I will consider the Old and Middle English poetic expressions of the body-and-soul legend in terms of the criticism of the ten poems which specifically belong to that tradition and the elements which constitute that genre. I will also deal with those poems written at the same time which exhibit one or more of those elements, with the body-and-soul tradition in English morality plays, with the Ars Moriendi, and with the Dance of Death. I will demonstrate that a shift occurs in the consideration of death from a concern for the soul to a preoccupation with the grotesque and gruesome aspects of death. The address and dialogue forms fall into disuse as a vehicle for theological argument concerning the responsibility for sin, and the view of death reflected by the popular pictorial representations of the Dance of Death becomes prominent.

The present chapter examines the medieval theory of literary criticism which permitted the incorporation of non-Christian elements into Christian poetry, outlines the elements which make up the Old and Middle English body-and-soul poems, lists the poems, their manuscripts and modern editions, and describes briefly the occurrence of the body-and-soul legend in other contemporary poems, the English morality plays, the Ars Moriendi, and the Dance of Death.
Chapter II examines the background of the body-and-soul tradition in terms of the Egyptian and early Christian expressions of the legend which contributed much of the graphic imagery of the punishments of Hell in store for the wicked soul, of the Gnostic and Manichaean influence on the consideration of the flesh and the spirit, of Hebraic expressions of corruption, and of the Christian patristic view of death as a struggle with the devil for possession of the soul. Latin and Old English homilies, as well as vision literature and apocalyptic writings describing Hell, also contributed to the elements which make up the body-and-soul legend. The elements from these sources which constitute the genre of body-and-soul poetry are delineated.

Chapter III describes these ten Old and Middle English poems, providing manuscript information and criticism of the poems.

Chapter IV examines the occurrence in the ten poems of those elements which form the genre: form and setting, the curse or blessing by the soul, the motif of the grave as the resting-place of the body, the corruption of the body, the ubi sunt theme, and the description of the pains of Hell.

Chapter V looks at short contemporary poems containing one or more of the elements of the body-and-soul poetic tradition, the appearance of these elements in English morality plays, the Ars Moriendi as an

All of these expressions of the body-and-soul legend, including the illustrations of the Dance of Death, owe much of their existence to early Egyptian Christian literature. Apocryphas dealing with the lives of the saints show elements of the tradition which reappear later in the English poems, though the descriptions of Hell, demons, and the punishments of the sinful are thought to derive from the religion of ancient Egypt, remnants of which would have been transmitted to early Christian times. Biblical imagery contributed to the development of Hell and bodily corruption, and patristic writings and Augustinian theology gave theological depth to the mutual accusations of the soul and the body. Visionary literature, especially visions of Hell, beginning with the early Greek *Visio Pauli*, also provided essential details to the legend, primarily in descriptions of the torments of Hell and the glimpses of Paradise, and in the idea of the respite from torment for the damned. Gnosticism provided a means of viewing the essential separation

of flesh from spirit as that of evil from good, thereby releasing the soul from the responsibility for sin and enabling it to blame the body for damnation after death.

The synthesis of these disparate elements was achieved through the theory of Christian literature contained in St. Augustine's *De Doctrina Christiana*. According to Augustine, Christian literature must be written with the aim of promoting charity. The Bible, which is the best model for man's intellectual efforts, should never be read for the literal meaning, and serious literature in general should not be read for the style or story, which "afford false and deceiving pleasures in that they imply an attempt to enjoy an object of creation for itself."³

Augustine's theory, which influenced Isidore of Seville, Vergil of Toulouse, Bede, Alcuin, and others, resulted in the attempt to Christianize pagan myths in the light of Christian revelation. All literature not in line with Christian dogma could be seen as allegorical or figurative, so that through interpretation it

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³ Huppé, p. 23.
Isidore of Seville developed the theory of decor, in which literature should consist of the lovely and useful. "Only truth is to be loved for itself." Since loveliness is an attribute of God, loveliness in literature must be used as a means of leading man to the enjoyment of God.

The medieval theory of literary criticism also followed Augustine's pattern. One began with the littera, or words, in order to establish the sensus, or meaning, and proceeded from there to determine the sententia, or doctrinal significance of that meaning. The riddles so loved by early Anglo-Saxon monastics were a means of using obscurity as a way of perceiving the truth; to solve the riddle, one had to proceed from words through meaning to the significance of that meaning.

The notion of allegory also led to the incorporation of pagan symbols into Christian literature and their interpretation in a Christian symbolic fashion. Consequently, it was possible for Christian poets to produce works with a great range of depth and suggestion.

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5 Hupp, p. 31.

by using elements which were not on the surface Christian but which afforded possibilities for interpretation on a number of Christian levels.

The monastic centers and episcopal schools which produced much of the Anglo-Saxon literature attempted to convert popular pagan oral tradition into a vehicle for the spread of Christianity. Far from being the death-blow to Anglo-Saxon poetry that some nineteenth-century critics maintained, Christianity was responsible for the preservation of pagan poetic elements which would otherwise have perished.

In this way it was possible to integrate into the English poetic expression of the legend of the body and the soul elements from non-Christian sources. The Egyptian elements transmitted through early homilies, the biblical and Talmudic examples of the legend, the Gnostic principle of hatred of the flesh and the essential separation of flesh from spirit become absolutely Christian when utilized by the body-and-soul poems. The use of these elements was sanctioned by the Church.

7 E. C. Stanley, The Search for Anglo-Saxon Paganism (Cambridge: Brewer, 1974), pp. 9-9. This was the view of Jacob Grimm; ten Brink put forth the opinion that Christianity destroyed the productive power of epic poetry.

Fathers and their meaning was determined by the discovery of their doctrinal significance.

This significance involved the responsibility for sin shared equally by the soul and the body; the English poetic expression of this significance consists of certain specific elements. The poem is presented in the form of an address by the soul, or a dialogue between the soul and the body, in which the soul curses the body for its damnation or blesses it for its salvation. The soul has either just left the body at the moment of death, has returned to it on a periodic visit, or is awaiting final judgment at Doomsday. The resting-place of the body is described as a low-roofed, narrow house, and the corruption of the flesh which is the body's lot is described in varying degrees of detail. The ubi sunt motif is utilized to point up the contrast between the former and present states of the body, and deals with regret over the loss of material possessions and the absence of friends or companions. The soul berates the body for having neglected the Christian responsibilities of almsgiving, confession, reception of the sacraments, and attendance at services. The poems end with a description of the soul's punishment in Hell; in the later poems demons arrive to seize the soul and carry it away. More rarely, the blessed soul will praise the body for fasting and discipline, and will assure the body of eventual reunion in Paradise.
There are ten poems from the Old and Middle English period which belong to the body-and-soul tradition. The earliest poetic form of the legend is the Address of the Soul to the Body, also called Soul and Body, found in both the Exeter and the Vercelli books, written down around the second half of the tenth century. The Worcester Cathedral Fragments, dating from about 1200, also deal with the legend. A fragment entitled "Novis mon holi & soint" dates from 1225-1275 and appears in the MS Trinity College, Cambridge, 323. The first true debate on the subject, the "Debate of the Body and


the Soul," was written between 1275 and 1325, and is found in six manuscripts. Another true debate, "In a thestri stude y stod," is found in three manuscripts and dates from 1300. "On Doomsday" and the poem entitled "Death" or "The Latemest Day" which follows in all four manuscripts is dated variously from the early thirteenth century to 1300. "Sinners, Beware!," also called "The Saws of St. Bede," is found in the Vernon and the Digby 86 manuscripts, and is dated about 1275. This poem is associated with the tradition

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because of a brief address of a damned soul near the end of the poem, although most of this work is a description of all types of sinners who will be judged on Doomsday. "Over the Bier of the Worldling," from the thirteenth century, is an address which concentrates on the ubi sunt motif. The *Visio Philiberti*, an elaborate dialogue between the soul and the body, appears in the MS Porkington 10, and is dated 1460.

In addition to these ten poems which may be defined as constituting the body-and-soul legend in English verse, there are a number of poems written at the same time which use one or more elements from the tradition of the body and the soul for didactic and admonitory purposes. The poem "The Grave," from the transitional period immediately following the Norman Conquest, is an example of the theme of the grave as the dwelling-place of the body. There is nothing in this poem that is specifically Christian, and the whole poem is given over to describing the house in which the body resides. This poem is thought to be the source for the

16 MS Trinity College, Cambridge, 323, fol. 84a; ed. Carlton Brown, *English Lyrics of the Thirteenth Century*, p. 64.


Worcester Fragments, and phrases of description derived from "The Grave" appear in many other poems related to the body-and-soul tradition. The Old English Be Domes Daege deals with signs of the eschaton and the punishments of the damned and joys of the righteous in Heaven. The early fifteenth-century "Disputacion Betwyn the Body and the Wormes" is a dialogue employing the element of bodily corruption to express the equality of all men in the face of death. Other shorter lyrics consider the signs of old age and the approach of death, the vanity of human endeavor and of worldly goods, and the necessity for performing the duties of a Christian in this life in order to gain Heaven in the next.

Elements of the body-and-soul legend appear in the English morality plays which developed around 1400. The Pride of Life deals with man's foolish certainty that he shall not die, and his inevitable defeat at the hands of death. Mankind is a burlesque of the devils and horrors of Hell. The Castell of Perseverance contains the separation of the soul from the body and an

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address by the soul, the presence at the deathbed of the good and evil angels, and an attempt by the evil angel to carry the soul away to Hell. *Everyman* shows the summons by Death, for which man is always unprepared, the book of deeds in which is recorded man’s sinful and virtuous actions in life, and the angel who receives the soul into Heaven.

Contemporary with the poetic and dramatic expressions of aspects of the body-and-soul legend was a rise of interest in the practice of the art of dying. This idea was popularized by the conduct book entitled the *Ars Moriendi.* In its earlier versions this work endeavored to encourage people to lead better lives in order to be ready for death. Earthly life is described as a passage to eternal life, and he who does not learn to die cannot live in eternal joy. Later versions of the *Ars Moriendi* describe the struggles on the deathbed between the angels and the devil for the soul. The dying man is supplied with responses to the taunts of the devil and given appropriate prayers and scriptural references to keep the fiends at bay until the angels can assist the soul into Heaven. The *Ars Moriendi,* an immensely popular work, survives in over 300 manuscripts in Latin and Western European vernaculars.

Almost as popular as the Ars moriendi was the Dance of Death, in both its metrical and pictorial forms. The immediate literary predecessor for the Dance of Death was a work which appeared in France in the thirteenth century entitled "Les trois Morts et les trois Vifs" which tells of young noblemen out hunting who encounter three images of Death. These images lecture the young men on the vanity of human endeavor. The longer metrical Dance of Death appeared in France a little later and was a collection of interchanges between Death and all levels and conditions of men from the Pope to the Beggar. Death beckons to them and they must follow him. John Lydgate translated one of the French versions of the Dance of Death, and it was included at the end of The Fall of Princes under the title "The Daunce of Machabree."22 The pictorial representations of the Dance of Death appeared on the walls of churchyards in France, Germany, and England, the most famous being that in the churchyard of the Innocents in Paris, painted in 1424, and that in Basle, dating from the middle of the fifteenth century. Hans Holbein executed a very popular series of woodcuts of the Dance of Death, and also produced an alphabet of Death in which each letter shows Death

mockingly seizing one of the living and carrying them away.

It is from the examination of the more grotesque aspects of the body-and-soul legend that the later idea of the macabre develops. The grim humor and exaggerated concern for death and the grave which led to the Dance of Death in the late medieval period was responsible for a split in the elements that constitute the body-and-soul legend. The theological basis for the argument concerning the responsibility for sin dropped out of the popular expressions of the legend, such as those found in the morality plays and the Dance of Death. Where before the argument had been integrally related to the warning to sinners of bodily corruption and the pains of Hell, what remained was a grotesque and narrow view of the bony skeleton and grinning skull that summons all men to the grave; what lay beyond the grave was no longer as important as the grave itself.

What did lie beyond the grave and the destination of the soul in the body-and-soul legend has its roots in the religion of ancient Egypt, which was transmitted to early Christianity. Judaism contributed details of the corruption of the body, Gnosticism added the contempt for the flesh, and many later homilies on the subject of damnation gave to the legend details of punishments in Hell. Early Christian visionary literature aided in the formation of the view of Heaven and Hell found in
the legend of the body and the soul. These sources provide the elements which constitute the English poetic expression of the body-and-soul legend.
CHAPTER II

BACKGROUND

The body-and-soul legend is not itself Christian in origin. The details surrounding the expression of that legend were informed by Christianity, but the dualistic structure and concrete details derive from much older sources, undergoing significant change in transmission. The legend had its beginnings in the religion of ancient Egypt,¹ was used by Egyptian Church Fathers to illustrate a moral point, adopted further elements from Judaism, became a popular subject for homilies, and owes many of its later details to the visionary literature of the early Christian era.

The notion of the soul as a separate entity from the body is one which derives from the ancient Egyptians. The ka, or vital force, inhabits all men and is retained

after death. There was no greater duty for the living than to care for the dead and their tombs, in order to ensure immortality for the ka which lingered for a time in the tomb and required sustenance for its journey to the otherworld. To that end, food was provided and dishes to eat it from, as well as favorite objects of the dead person and other articles felt necessary to sustain the ka on its way. To the Egyptian, the afterlife was as real and vivid as the present existence. It was located in a particular place, and was filled with definite pleasures or torments.

At death, the Egyptian soul was led into Amenthe, the underworld, at the entrance to which sat a wide-throated monster, the Devourer. The soul then came to the final trial in the Hall of the Two Truths, the approving and the condemning. Here the soul was weighed on the balance scales by the jackal-headed god Anubis, and approached Osiris, lord of the dead, who pronounced sentence. If condemned, the soul was either plunged into a pit of fire, or sent back to earth to live as an animal. The cult of Ra provided guide books for the afterlife, the "Book of the Gates," c. B.C. 2000, and the "Book of the Other World," c. B.C. 1350-1200.

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In these guide books, the soul was said to go by land or water, after first crossing an intervening lake of fire.\(^3\)

It was a risky undertaking to leave one's ka in the hands of the living, who might forget to tend the grave, or from spite or mischief annihilate the ka. The religious emphasis on the afterlife was a cultural memento mori which in this case did not necessarily lead to greater pleasure in life, although the New Kingdom did produce banquet songs which advised making the most of life, since no one knew how it fared with the dead.\(^4\) This era also saw the circulation at banquets of small wooden figures fashioned like mummies in coffins, from the same impulse which later caused the appearance of the silver skeleton at Primalchio's feast and engraved skeletons on Roman drinking cups and wine jars.\(^5\) But the earlier Egyptian was more serious about death, and considered his ka to be the immortal part of him. A

\(^3\) Ernest J. Becker, *A Contribution to the Comparative Study of the Medieval Visions of Heaven and Hell* (Baltimore: John Murphy Company, 1899), pp. 16-17; Kurtz, p. 2; Russell, pp. 76-77.

The scene in the judgment hall is similar to the judgment scene in the *Vision of Thurcill*, where Thurcill is led by St. Julian before Sts. Michael, Peter, and Paul, who are the judges. Becker, p. 16.

\(^4\) Erman, p. 253.

manuscript from the Middle Kingdom contains a poem called "The Dispute with His Soul of One Who is Tired of Life," which is a dialogue between a speaker weary of living and his soul who argue their case before certain impartial judges. The speaker demonstrates longing for death:

Lo, my name is abhorred,
Lo, more than the odour of carrion
On days in summer, when the sky is hit.

Lo, my name is abhorred,
Lo, more than the odour of fishermen,
More than the shores of the swamps, when they have fished.

To whom do I speak today?
Brothers are evil,
Friends of today, they are not lovable.

To whom do I speak today?
Men are covetous,
Every one seized his neighbor's goods.

To whom do I speak today?
None remembereth the past,
None at this moment doeth good to him that hath done it.

The soul begs him not to speak thus, reminding him of the finality of death and of the fact that his death will come, even in the natural order, soon enough:

If thou callest burial to mind, it is sadness, it is the bringing of tears.

6 Ermen, pp. 86-92.
it is making a man sorrowful, it is
haling a man from his house and casting
him upon the hill. Never wilt thou go
forth again to behold the sun.

The speaker continues:

Death is before me today
As when a sick man becometh whole,
As when one walketh abroad after sickness.

Death is before me today
As when a man longeth to see his house
again,
After he hath spent many years in captivity.

As far as we know, this unusual poem is the earliest
literary dialogue between a body and its soul, and
shows a grim and stoic resignation in the face of death
that has echoes several thousand years later in the Old
English Soul and Body, the Worcester Fragments, and "The
Grave."

Also from the Egyptian Middle Kingdom is a poem
called "The Good Fortune of the Dead" in which the poet
says, in praise of death, that it brings man rest, after
the confused dream of life.

This land that hath no foe, all our
kindred rest in it, since the earliest
day of time, and they that shall be in
millions of millions of years, they
come thither every one. There is none
that shall tarry in the Land of Egypt,
there is not one that doth not pass
yonder.
The duration of that which is done upon earth is as a dream. 'Welcome, safe and sound' is said to him that hath reached the West.  

All who have ever lived have died, and all those who are to be born will also die. There is no joy to be derived from the contemplation of death.

The seriousness with which the ancient Egyptians contemplated their death gave rise to specific notions of the nature of the afterlife, particularly concerning the damned. Many of these ideas survived in the legend of the body and the soul and reappear centuries later. The balance scale which weighs the merit of the soul, the lake of fire, and the flames which burn eternally were all borrowed by later writers. So, too, was the scala coeli of medieval literature; as far back as the Pyramid texts souls were shown descending ladders to the underworld. There is thought to be Egyptian influence on the Greek "Lesser Mysteries" of Eleusis; to the initiates these rites dramatized in visions the torments and rewards to come in the afterlife. At the end of the tenth book of Plato's Republic sinners tell of the punishments of Hell. Some are skinned alive,

7 Erman, p. 253.
8 Dudley, p. 18.
9 Van Os, p. 5.
bound hand and foot, and thrown down a thorn-covered cliff.10 These visions later developed an independent literary form, and in that form influenced the development of the body-and-soul legend.

When Christianity arrived in Egypt, the old religion had fallen into a state of decadence and was no longer viable. "Internally it had begun to decay into mere formalism; externally it had become corrupted by confusion with other religions."11 Like Christianity, the old Egyptian religion embraced the idea of a future life which was possibly to be feared. The Christian notion of Hell was at this time rather vague, and the Egyptians had details from their Hell which were concrete and vivid. Consequently, the eschatological teachings of Christianity were given concrete expression, in part, by the older Egyptian religion.12

However, Christianity owes its notion of Hell not only to the Egyptians, but also to the Jews, whose Gehenna was a place of eternal damnation by fire for Gentiles and only temporal punishment for Jews. The fires from the Egyptian Hell may have influenced the Hebrew development of Gehenna and thus the Christian tradition, but it is well to bear in mind the fact that

10 Van Os, p. 6.
11 Dudley, pp. 7-8.
12 Dudley, p. 7.
eternal punishment by fire is almost universal. The
damned in India, China, and Japan are frequently tor-
tured by flames, and in some Polynesian legends the
wicked are punished by fire. In any event, Chris-
tianity did borrow such details as the balance scales,
the ladder, and the lake of fire.

There are no extant Egyptian texts from the early
Christian period which may be shown to be the literary
sources of the body-and-soul legend, but Dudley cites
two possibilities for the transmission of the legend
from Egypt to Rome, where two versions of an early
Latin homily on the subject exist which contain refer-
ces to Egypt. Either the legend originated in Egypt
and was brought to Rome, or because of the intimacy of
the connections between the Church in Rome and that of
Alexandria, the constituents of the legend were known in
Rome.

Alexandria was one of the centers of early Church
writing and activity. Such figures as Clement, Origen,
and Athanasius were helping shape the Church; Anthony,
Paul of Thebes, and Pachomius introduced monasticism to

13 Van Os, p. 278.

14 Louise Dudley, "An Early Homily on the Body and
Soul Theme," Journal of English and Germanic Philology,
8 (1914), p. 225.

15 Dudley, Egyptian Elements, p. 9.
the Christian world, and the Egyptian Church Fathers produced apocryphal books, apocalypses, and lives of the saints and ascetics. The Alexandrian book trade was so superior that all of the oldest and best manuscripts of the Septuagint now remaining were written by scribes from Alexandria.\footnote{16 Dudley, \textit{Egyptian Elements}, p. 9, n. 11.} Given this impulse in Egypt to disseminate knowledge, it seems very likely that the body-and-soul legend would have found its way to Rome.

The beginnings of the body-and-soul legend in homiletic literature are traced to Egypt through two Latin homilies. One of these homilies, Sermon 69 of the pseudo-Augustinian \textit{Sermones ad Fratres in Eremo}, contains the phrase, "quoddam exemplum horrible, quod quodam homo sanctus in excessu mentis positus vidit, et audivit de quodam anima de Aegypto exeuente, et contra corpus suum contendente."\footnote{17 Dudley, \textit{Egyptian Elements}, p. 1; J. P. Migne, \textit{Patrologiae Latinae} (Paris: 1874), col. 1356.} The second homily, from a Roman manuscript of the eleventh or twelfth century, introduces its account of the vision with, "Audiamus quid Macaris qui curam gerebat animarum in Alexandria, quibusdam verba faciens, se a quodam fratre..."
monacho in excessu mentis posito audisse peribetur."  

A mere mentioning of sources should not in itself indicate the veracity of the writer of medieval homilies, but the phrases used are not mere formulae, and such similarities in the homilies to the legend as the address of the soul to the body at the moment of death, the Gates of Hell and devils resembling dragons, vats of fire, and moans from the sinners lend credence to the Egyptian attribution.

Christian Egyptians, having borrowed certain eschatological elements from the old religion, developed the notion of the farewell address of the soul to its body at the moment of death. Under the influence of the monastic ascetic ideals which arose in Egypt, the farewell became either a speech of praise from a good soul or a vituperative curse from a damned one. Dudley maintains that this stage of the development of the legend was reached in Egypt.  

There are two speeches in the Necrosima, or Funeral Songs, of Ephraem Syrus, d. A.D. 375, which contain valedictions by the soul to the body. In the first the body replies in farewell to the soul; in the second the soul makes its adieus

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18 Van Os, p. 279; Baticouchkof, p. 576.  
"Let us hear what Macarius cites, who was in charge of souls in Alexandria, telling certain people what he heard from a certain monk in great mental distress."

19 Dudley, Egyptian Elements, pp. 149-50.
alone. In the Coptic History of St. Mark, Mark bids his body rest in peace, bidding farewell to his eyes and hands which have labored for God, and finally to his body.

The Coptic Apocryphal Gospels of the Death of Joseph and the Falling Asleep of Mary, the Coptic Life of Pachomius, and the Testament of Abraham, the Testament of Job, and the Fourth Book of Ezra, which have been assigned an Egyptian origin on the basis of internal evidence, all contain scenes of separation of the soul from the body. The Vitae Patrum cites a soul which refuses to leave its body and must be tricked into emerging. These separation scenes in the early Egyptian literature are essential to the legend of the body and the soul because of the address or dialogue which takes place at this point.

Images of the devil also derived in part from Egyptian and Coptic sources. Late apocryphas and Egyptian gospels provide vivid pictures of how demons and the devil were visualized in New Testament times. In their struggles with sin and the devil, the desert fathers provide word pictures of the devil which are

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20 Batiouchkof, p. 11, n. 2; Eleanor Heningham, "Old English Precursors of the Worcester Fragments," EELA, 35 (1940), 299, n. 35.
21 Dudley, Egyptian Elements, p. 105.
22 Dudley, Egyptian Elements, pp. 17-27.
very similar to those found in the Middle Ages, complete with horns and wings. Demons with animal heads are of Egyptian origin; the pitchfork, the traditional accoutrement of the devil, also is Egyptian. In the Coptic Life of Pachomius, the pitchfork is the means of extracting the evil soul from the body with as much pain and suffering as possible; in the Vitae Patrum a trident is used. Iron shears were also used to capture the recalcitrant soul. The good soul was taken without pain, but in the Apocalypse of Elias the angels sent for the evil souls carry fiery whips. As the legend develops in Western Europe, the original purpose of hooks, whips, and forks is forgotten, and the demons use these instruments only as a means of torture after the separation of the soul from the body.

Another element of Egyptian origin is that of the soul riding to Hell on the back of a demon. Frequently in representations of the other world in ancient Egypt a man is depicted carrying his own soul or riding with it on the back of a bull. This notion is carried over into Christian times; in the Vitae Patrum, the


24 Dudley, Egyptian Elements, p. 25.

25 Dudley, Egyptian Elements, p. 27.

26 Dudley, Egyptian Elements, p. 28.
old man sees black horses ridden by black beings with fiery rods who seize the wicked souls. In the Gnostic 
*Pistis Sophia*, the worst sinners are carried over the earth for three days by devils with the faces of horses. 
In the vision of Pachomius and in the *Eulogy of Pisentios* a black horse carries the wicked soul to Hell.27 In Guthlac's vision of Hell, one of the characteristics of the demons who come to torment him is horses' teeth.28 The theme of the soul riding to Hell is also seen in the thirteenth-century Middle English debate in which the soul rides to Hell on the back of a fiend. In the *Castell of Perseverance* the Malus Angelus departs to Hell with Anima on his back.29

There is also Egyptian precedent in the notion of the *ka* for the separation of the body and the soul into two separate entities, which is one of the most striking features of the legend. However, the fact that the soul belongs to the world of the spirit and the body to the world of the flesh also has echoes in the equally ancient, and in terms of Christianity, more pervasive, heresy of dualism.

27 Dudley, *Egyptian Elements*, p. 120.


The principles of Gnosticism were that the world was not created by God but by the Demiurge, or Creator-God, and that therefore God is not responsible for the evil in the world. Man was in some way born with a spark of divinity, and it is God's task to rescue those pieces of divinity which are trapped in the flesh. Under the guidance of Marcion, in the middle of the second century A.D., the organization of the Gnostic church took place. Marcion urged extreme asceticism and contempt and hatred for the flesh, since the world and all things pertaining to it were to be regarded as evil. Marriage and procreation only furthered the work of the Demiurge and delayed the task of rescuing all the divine pieces within men. The problem of the origin of evil lies at the heart of Gnosticism, and it is easy to see the influence of dualism in the body-and-soul legend.

From the beginning, Christianity has had to struggle against dualism. The first centuries of the life of the Church were devoted to discovering and rooting out heresies, of which by far the most insidious was that of dualism, for which the term "Manichaean" was used:

When an educated orthodox theologian spoke of doctrines being "Manichaean,"

he had no intention of evoking all the complicated tenets that were Mani’s. He merely wished to imply dualism, and Dualism in its strictest form.31

Mani’s preaching career began in Mesopotamia in A.D. 242 and ended with his death in Persia thirty-four years later. Within less than a century after his death, Manichaean churches were flourishing in the East. In Africa St. Augustine fell under the spell of Manichaeanism for nearly ten years, though he later became a most bitter foe of his former religion. Greek, Syrian, and Arabic sources show Manichaeanism to have been strong in Western Asia, Syria, and Mesopotamia up until the tenth century.32 The Paulician heresy, a simplification of the elaborate Gnostic and Manichaean rituals, smoldered for centuries in Greece, Armenia, Bulgaria, and Bosnia. The Paulicians, along with the Bogomils and other dualistic offspring of Gnosticism, were responsible for the development of the Cathars in the eleventh century.

The heresy of dualism re-emerged in strength in Italy in 1028 with the establishment of a Manichaean community at Montefiore to which the name Cathar was

31 Runciman, p. 25.
applied. Catharism came to Italy either from missionaries from the Balkans, where Bogomilism was strong, or perhaps from pilgrims to the East who returned with heretical knowledge acquired in Bulgaria or Constantinople. With the inception of the crusades, exposure to the heresy of the East was made even more possible, particularly in view of the fact that in the early twelfth century the Byzantine Empire was much occupied with the task of expelling the Bogomils.

From Italy Catharism came to France very early in the eleventh century, and eventually the Cathars controlled the whole of southern France, with headquarters at Toulouse and Albi, from which town the Albigensian Crusade took its name. This fierce purge of the Cathar heretics in 1244 finally rooted them out of France. In the late twelfth century they had been driven from England, and were expelled from Bavaria and the Rhine cities in the early thirteenth century.

33 Heer, p. 202. Runciman, p. 117, gives the date for the establishment of this community as 1030. The name derives from cathari, Greek for "the pure," and was the name given to the Elect, or Perfect, as Cathars called their initiate class.

34 Runciman, p. 118.

35 Heer, p. 205.

36 Heer, p. 216; Denis de Rougemont, Love in the Western World (Greenwich, Conn.: A Fawcett Premier Book, 1965), p. 86.
The Gathars believed neither in Hell nor in Purgatory. The world belonged to the devil, and the material part of man must remain in this world, whereas the soul, ultimately detached from matter, ascends to the celestial world. Cathars denied marriage and practiced extreme asceticism. The "Perfect" attempted to live in accordance with the spirit and had the right to commit suicide to hasten the separation of their souls by the voluntary fast, or endura.\(^{37}\)

The consolamentum was the only sacrament recognized by the Cathars. This ceremony combined aspects of baptism, confirmation, ordination, and unction and was the ritual which admitted a Believer into the company of the Perfect. A Cathar handbook of the ritual of the consolamentum exists in Lyons, though it was probably changed somewhat by the Cathars at the time of the purge to eradicate some of the more obviously heretical formulae. One important phrase uttered in the vernacular by all present at the ceremony indicates clearly the dualistic nature of this religion: "Have no mercy on the flesh born in corruption, but have mercy on the spirit held in prison."\(^{38}\)

\(^{37}\) Hoer, l. 211; de Rougemont, p. 84.

\(^{38}\) Runciman, pp. 154-55, n. 1; de Rougemont, p. 84.
The dualistic notion of the spirit being imprisoned in the flesh is one which is seen in the Egyptian poem from the Middle Kingdom mentioned earlier, in the dualism of the Pythagoreans, for whom the soul was trapped within the body like a prisoner,\(^3\text{9}\) and in a different manner but with the same concept in the Anglo-Saxon riddle "Soul and Body," in which the soul is called a "noble guest cherished in his excellent dwelling."\(^4\text{0}\) The Old English Soul and Body has the soul say, "Eardode ic þe on innan. Ne meahte ic þe of cuman, fleowsc befangen. . . ."\(^4\text{1}\) St. Francis spoke of Brother Body as the cell and the soul as the hermit that dwells within. The difficulty that the angels and demons have in the Egyptian Christian apocryphas and apocalypses in removing the soul from the body also testifies to the widespread prevalence of this idea.

The Manichaean insistence on the evil of the flesh and indeed of all the material world is mirrored in the body-and-soul legend in the speeches of blame which the wicked soul uses to curse its body. The Church Fathers were unanimous in regarding the flesh as good because it was made by God, in considering the

\(^3\text{9}\) Russell, p. 13\text{2}.

\(^4\text{0}\) Gordon, p. 30\text{3}.

\(^4\text{1}\) The Nuremberg Book, p. 55, I, 33-34.
body as the temple of the Holy Spirit, and in explaining how at the Resurrection of the Dead the body will be made worthy of salvation and be reunited with the soul.

While there are New Testament references to the flesh opposing the spirit, in no way do they indicate that the origin of sin is to be found in the flesh: "I bruise my body and make it know its master" (I Cor. 9:27), "That nature sets its desires against the spirit, while the spirit fights against it" (Gal. 5:17), and "For our fight is not against human foes, but against cosmic powers" (Ephes. 6:12). This last statement makes it clear that St. Paul rejects the idea that the flesh is evil, stating that sin comes from the devil.

However, there is in the body-and-soul poetry a definite strain of hatred for the body which is expressed in a number of ways. In the Old English Soul and Body the soul dwells at length on the aspect of bodily corruption, telling the body how loathsome it has become and how the worms are feasting upon its rotting flesh.

Virtually all of the Old and Middle English poems dealing with the body-and-soul theme make mention, frequently at some length, of the state of corruption to which the body is subject. Kurtz has called this theme "the meanest and most grotesque symbol of hatred of the body and fear of

42 Kurtz, _Gifer the Worm_, p. 246.
death" and would like to place the blame for the development of the theme in Anglo-Saxon literature with the Cathars, maintaining that Catharism arose in the Rhineland, an area frequently visited by Anglo-Saxon monks and missionaries. However, to recognize the dualism inherent in the legend is not to ascribe a Cathar origin to the tradition. The Manichaens, Cathars among them, certainly had a low regard for the flesh, but nowhere in what is felt to be Cathar literature does this tradition appear. That troubadour poetry from southern France which is thought to be Cathar, and the Arabian mystical poetry arising from Manichaeanism and Sufism in the East contains numerous references to death, but never to the state of the body afterwards.

In addition, the Christian doctrine in the English poems of this tradition is entirely orthodox; Innocent III's De Contemptu Mundi contains a scathing examination of the lot of the body after death, equal to anything in the Old English Soul and Body. In view of the pervasive character of dualism in the Church, it seems more likely that the impulse toward contempt of the flesh.

43 Kurtz, Gifer the Worm, pp. 259-61.
46 Kurtz, p. 239.
arose from that source, but that the specific and parti-
cular expression of it to which Kurtz objects belongs
to another tradition which combined charnel-house
imagery and the torments of Hell for the purpose of
moral exhortation. If the flesh is of itself regarded
as evil, it is no wonder that the soul, the divine part
of man, should blame the body. But the Christian prin-
ciple which places greater responsibility on the soul
goads the body into answering back.47

Specific details of the separation of the body and
the soul, details of Hell, and the dualism and hatred
of the flesh inherent in the legend have their origins
in the ancient Egyptian religion, in early Christian
Egyptian writing, and in Gnosticism and Manichaeanism.
Judaism also was responsible for supplying details
involving a grim preoccupation with death, the grave,
and the corruption of the body. The Book of Job in
particular provides a number of passages in which these
elements appear:48

If I measure Sheol for my house,
If I spread my couch in the darkness,

If I call the grave my father
and the worm my sister,

47 C. K. Ferguson, "The Structure of the Soul's
Address to the Body in Old English," JSPP, 69 (1970),
88.
48 Holy English Bible (New York: Oxford University
where, then, will my hope be, 
and who will take account of my pity?  

(17:13-16)

The terrors of death suddenly beset him 
and make him piss on his feet.

For all his vigor he is paralyzed with fear; 
strong as he is, disease awaits him.

Disease eats away his skin, 
Death's eldest child devours his limbs.

He is torn from the safety of his home, 
And Death's terrors escort him to their king.  

(18:11-14)

One man, I tell you, dies crowned with success, 
lapped in security and comfort, 
his loins full of vigor and the marrow juicy in his bones; 

Another dies in bitterness of soul and never tastes prosperity; 

Side by side they are laid in earth, 
and worms are the shroud of both.  

(21:23-26)

The worm forgets him, the worm sucks him dry; 
he will not be remembered ever after.  

(24:20)

His soul draws near to the pit, 
his life to the ministers of the grave.  

(33:22)

These passages show a tone that is strikingly similar to that of the Old English *Soul and Body*, "The
Grave," the Worcester Fragments, and others. The grave, the darkness, the worms, the fact that both the rich man and the poor man sleep in the earth, the forgetfulness of the living, and the terrors of death all reappear much later. The English expressions of the legend, however, come the closest in tone to the verses in Job. 49

One of the Jewish notions which Christianity retained and which was used in the body-and-soul legend was the idea of the messenger of death. The soul was fetched away by angels of God, and carried to the bosom of Abraham. 50 In the New Testament story of the beggar Lazarus, his soul is carried to Heaven by angels. Occasionally a ladder is used to enable souls to reach Paradise; and to carry him to glory while still alive Elijah had a chariot, which was also used by the dead in the Indian Rig Veda to reach Heaven. Eventually these messengers became either good angels for blessed souls, or demons who seized the wicked. 51

The body-and-soul legend is predicated on the notion that the soul does not immediately depart for its ultimate destination, but either remains for a

49 Kurtz, Gifer the Worm, p. 256.
50 Kurtz, Dance of Death, p. 4.
51 Patch, p. 7.
while to curse or bless its body, or else returns to it at a later time to do so. According to Talmudic tradition, the soul stays near its body for twelve months, and in the Midrash, the soul stays until the nose rots. The nose is probably used because that was one of the more common exits for the soul, and when the nose is gone, there is no longer any possibility that the soul would gain re-entrance.

The unpublished MS British Museum Additional 37049, fols. 82-84, contains a piece called "A Prose Disputacion betwyn the Saule and the Body," dating from the early fifteenth century. This is a retelling of a Talmudic fable of the body and the soul. In the Talmudic source, a body and a soul are before the Judgment Seat, trying to avoid the blame for their former life. The body maintains that the soul has sinned, since death has caused the body to lie in the grave like a stone. The soul blames the body, saying that since death it flies around in the air like a bird. The rabbi interpreting the fable compares their situation to the king who had a beautiful pleasure garden with trees bearing ripe fruit. He placed two guards in the orchard, one lame and the other blind. Presently the king came and saw that the fruit was gone. The lame man claimed he was

not responsible since he was unable to walk; the blind
man denied guilt because he could not see, though each
had helped the other in the theft of the fruit. So
the king stacked them both up, one on top of the
other, and judged them as one person. In this same
way the Lord judges the body and the soul—as one.53
There is a reference in 1. 257, MS Porkington 10, to
the body being blind and lame without the soul, though
the meaning has been changed from the Talmudic exemplum
and the body is using the image to disclaim all res-
ponsibility for sin.54

J. D. Bruce does not feel that this borrowing from
the Talmud in any way affects the larger poetic tradition
or the relation between the address and the dialogue
forms, but rather represents the attitude of mind from
which the dialogue poems eventually sprung.55 This
extract from the Talmud was thought by Linow to prove
that the body-and-soul legend had its origin in Judaism,
but the weight of evidence is now against this theory.56

The Judaic influence does not include the devil as
a threat to the soul, as do a number of early Christian
sources. The early martyrs are described as having

53 Van Os, p. 281.
54 Halliwell, p. 23.
55 J. D. Bruce, "A Contribution to the Study of
Body and Soul Poems in English," LIII, 5 (1890), 337.
56 Van Os, p. 178.
vanquished the devil when they meet their death.
Tertullian remarks that it is faith which rescues the
Christian from the devil, and that by patience in his
martyrdom he overcomes the devil. The vision of St.
Perpetua before her martyrdom demonstrates that she
perceived the struggle not to be with the wild animals
but with the devil: "And I perceived that I should
not fight with beasts, but with the Devil; but I knew
the victory to be mine." Gregory the Great mentions
a number of instances where the death-throes take the
form of a combat with the devil. In the *Homilia in
Evangelia* he tells of the monk Theodore, at the point
of death, who sees the devil as a dragon:

... I am now being crushed by the
dragon. The frothings of his mouth are
besmearing my face; my throat is being
strangled by his mouth. Behold my arms
are now being crushed by him; he already
has swallowed my head in his mouth.

Another monk, who appeared virtuous but in reality was
a grievous sinner, also struggled with a dragon:

57 Alfred C. Rush, "An Echo of Christian Anti-
quity: Death a Struggle with the Devil," *Traditio*, 3
(1947), 325; *ibid.*, 1, 324.
58 Rush, p. 324.
Behold, now I am given over to the dragon to be devoured. He has already bound my knees and feet with his tail. He has thrust his head into my mouth and is now sucking out my very life.  

In several homilies Gregory dwells on this same theme, that the hour of our death will be terrifying to us because of our sins; at that moment the devil will try once more to win our souls. And again he states that "the prince of this world has much in us. However, at the time of our death he is not able to snatch us away because we are made members of Him in whom he has nothing." Describing the death of Chrysaorius, a wealthy man from Valeria, Gregory states that

Coming to his last, in the very hour in which he was to leave the body, he saw, with open eyes, hideously black spirits stand before him and threaten him violently, ready to drag him off to the prison of hell.  

St. Ignatius of Antioch likened his own martyrdom to this devil-combat: "Let there come upon me wicked tortures of the devil, may I but attain to Jesus Christ."  

60 Rush, p. 371.  
61 Rush, p. 370.  
63 Rush, p. 373.
The martyrs were not alone in their struggles with the devil; St. Jerome described the "consecrated life of a devout soul" as a daily martyrdom. The Egyptian desert fathers had to contend with demonic visitations, and St. Anthony's famous vision of the devils who tempted him helped to popularize this notion. St. Guthlac was likewise beseeched by devils as he prayed. The virtuous martyr in the Old English Juliana is visited by the devil. A short homily by Macarius of Egypt illustrates the deaths of a saintly and a sinful Christian by describing the angels who lead the saintly man's soul to God and the demons, wicked angels, and powers of darkness that swarm to the evil soul and drag it to hell. A passage from another homily ascribed to Macarius states that

Like tax-collectors sitting in the narrow ways, and laying hold upon the passers-by, and extorting from them, so do devils spy upon souls, and lay hold of them; and when they pass out of the body, if they are not perfectly cleansed, they do not suffer them to mount up to the mansions of the heaven and meet their Lord and they are driven down by the devils of the air.

Cyril of Alexandria's homily on the same subject, De Exitu Anima, also describes the "terrible demons who

64 Rush, p. 377.

65 Bloomfield, p. 53.
come to the soul like black Ethiopians" and cause much consternation to the dying. Consequently it became the duty of all Christians, not just martyrs and ascetics, to resist the power of the devil, especially at their deaths.

This struggle with the devil at death is a theme seen not only in visionary and homiletic literature dealing with the separation of the body and the soul, but also in the English body-and-soul poems. In the "Debate of the Body and the Soul" the soul is carried off by the same type of black devils which Chrysaorius saw; the Visio Philiberti contains the fiends which seize the wicked soul and carry it to Hell for torment. In "Sinners, Beware!" the devils lead both the soul and the body into Hell and beat them with pikes and awls. The soul in "Death," carried off by loathsome devils, moans that the fire-burning dragon will swallow him up.

Homily XLVII by Wulfstan also contains references to the fight between the demons and the soul:

\[\ldots\text{arest stapd se modiga deofol to mid his gefelic and wyle mid pinre sawle campjan and pe uppobrodan wlic færa pinga, pe pu wic god agylte furh modigynsse.}\]

67 Van Os, p. 192.
The theme of the devils' seizure of the soul at the moment of death is also found in an Irish homily from the Leabhar Breac. In this homily two hosts, angelic and demonic, arrive to greet the newly released soul, and when it is ascertained that the soul is to be damned, it is then seized by the devils. There is also a medieval Danish ballad entitled "The Rich Man's Soul," in which the soul is surrounded by devils who attempt to whisk him off to Hell. In this case, however, the soul is saved by the intervention of an angel. In another version of the same poem the soul is saved by three drops of blood from Jesus. In the morality play The Castell of Perseverance, Anima is carried off to Hell by Male Angelus after Bonus Angelus has left and it has been decided that Anima is damned. There is an intimation of the struggle of good and evil angels for

68 Van Cs, p. 191.

69 Robert Atkinson, The Passions and the Homilies of the Leabhar Breac (Dublin: Published by the Academy, 1937), pp. 507-08.


71 Allison, p. 103.
a soul after death, in the vision of the monk Furseus
in Bede's *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*. \(^{72}\) Bryhtnoth in the *Battle of Maldon* beseeches Our Lord to
save his soul from the devils that would seize it (11. 175-
80), and in St. Andreas, Andrew fights with the devil
who has told the Larmadonians to kill him. \(^{73}\)

By far the most direct influence on the English body-
and-soul legend was homilies, both in Latin and in Old
English. Most of the Latin homilies containing body-and-
soul exempla were either translated into Old English or
adapted by the homilists and changed into more striking,
vivid expressions of the joys of Heaven and the pains of
Hell, though Hell figured much more prominently in Old
English homilies than did Heaven. According to Chambers,
Old English homilies were influential as late as the
beginning of the thirteenth century. \(^{74}\)

Judgment of the soul and the subsequent punishment
or reward were popular themes both in literature and in
iconography. Church doors frequently had a doom, or a
scene of judgment, to remind Christians of their end,

\(^{72}\) Bede, *Ecclesiastical History of the English
People*, ed. James Campbell (New York: Washington Square

\(^{73}\) Richard Morris, ed., *The Blickling Homilies

\(^{74}\) A. W. Chambers, *On the Continuity of English
Press* (London: Early English Text Society 156, 1936),
pp. xix–xxiv.
and it was not uncommon for church walls to be painted with judgment scenes. On the pilgrim's way to Canterbury in Sussex is Chaldon Church, on the oldest wall of which is a Norman painting of a judgment scene some seventeen feet long and eleven feet high, depicting the Ladder of Salvation leading to Heaven from Hell. It is divided into four quadrants, the lower two showing the tortures of Hell, including a bridge of spikes held over the flames. The bridge has lost its earlier meaning as a test bridge for sinners and is merely intended as a form of torture. Below the bridge two demons with pitchforks prod sinners in the fire, but only to give pain, not to remove their souls. Two more demons stir a huge cauldron full of simmering sinners. The wicked souls on the Ladder try to avoid a devil's hook by climbing up the Ladder to Heaven. The upper two quadrants show Satan and St. Michael weighing souls on a set of scales. An angel writes down their measurements and their fate in a book of deeds. An angel bears away a blessed soul while a devil snatches a wicked one.\(^75\) The presence of so many of the details of the body-and-soul legend in a small church would seem to indicate the wide popularity of this theme in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. These details also occur in many of the

Old English homilies, variants of which were undoubtedly preached as if the details were read off the wall of the church itself.\textsuperscript{76}

Homiletic literature was a rich source for elements used in the English poetic expression of the legend of the body and the soul. There are several Latin homilies in the pseudo-Augustinian collection Sermones ad Fratres in Eremo which relate to the body-and-soul theme. These sermons were collected by and ascribed to Jordanus de Saxonia, who died in 1380, but many of the sermons are a great deal older than the date of the collection.\textsuperscript{77} Sermon 69 from this collection was used by Dudley to help demonstrate the Egyptian origin of many of the body-and-soul details, and is found in two Latin and two Old English versions. The second Latin homily is from a Roman manuscript of the eleventh or twelfth century, discussed by Batiouchkof, and is credited to Macarius.\textsuperscript{78} It describes the death of a good man, as well as that of a sinner. The two Latin and two Old English homilies are discussed in Dudley's article, "An Early Homily on the Body and Soul Theme," in which she postulates the existence of a single Latin homiletic


\textsuperscript{78} Batiouchkof, p. 576.
original which contains elements of all four. These elements are the name of Macarius and the vision of the blessed soul, which appears only in Batiouchkof's homily and in the Old English Soul and Body from the Exeter and Vercelli Books. In addition, the homilies all share the same structure, that of a soul, damned and carried off to Hell, who beholds the mouth of the dragon of Hell. Willard feels that Sermons 66 and 68 from the same Latin collection are also sources for the speeches of the sinful soul, but Dudley does not mention these.

After comparing his homily with the Old English Soul and Body, Batiouchkof concludes that there is indeed a connection between the Latin homily and the Anglo-Saxon poem, but there is no evidence that the homily was the direct source of the poem. However, given the existence of a very early Latin original from which these homilies and the Soul and Body derived independently, it is possible to see how the Old English poem could have developed earlier than other English or continental poetic expressions of the legend. In this fashion Dudley has obliquely exonerated Thorpe, who maintained that a Latin original of

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79 R. Willard, "The Address of Soul to Body," Phil. 50 (1957), 960.
80 Batiouchkof, p. 8.
the Old English *Soul and Body* doubtless existed. This statement had been doubted; now, at least, its existence has been theorized. The Latin original postulated by Dudley would have had for its sources, according to Batiouchkof, a Greek legend of the body and the soul, the Greek *Visio Pauli*, and "a legend of the way in which a rich man and a poor man die."  

Kurtz maintains that the Old English *Soul and Body* is much closer in tone and detail to another Latin homily from the same collection, Sermon 48. In this sermon, which revels in the imagery of bodily corruption, we witness the disintegration of a rotting corpse:

\[
\text{a decayed head, stomach, and kidneys; toads, born of the brains, jumping among skulls; serpents walking in the filth; worms, generated in the viscera, working upon the stomach.}
\]

Kurtz bases his derivation on the fact that "two Greedy ones (duo famelici)" feed in the eye-pits of the corpse. His primary concern, however, is to find the historical antecedents of Gifer himself, the infamous worm-captain

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83 Kurtz, *Gifer the Worm*, p. 257.
of the Old English *Soul and Body*, and he overlooks or sidesteps the fact that this sermon is not in the body-and-soul tradition, but is rather at this point concerned with the description of man's bodily condition after death. It is possible that the author of *Soul and Body* had read this sermon and found the notion of greedy worms attacking the eyes suitable for his purposes, while remaining within the body-and-soul tradition. Certainly it is a striking detail, and nowhere else in body-and-soul literature is there such a personification as Gifer.

According to Heningham in "Old English Precursors of the 'Worcester Fragments,'" there are five independent treatments of the legend of the body and the soul in Old English homilies. There is an address made at the moment of death found in MS Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, 201, edited by Thorpe, and another version of the same text edited by Napier from MS Bodleian Hatton 113. This address is thought to be the oldest Old English *exemplum* of the body-and-soul legend. There is an address at the time of the soul's return to the body from MS Junius 85 dating from the middle of the eleventh century, another homily containing an address on the soul's return in the twelfth-century MS Cambridge II.1.33, a doomsday address from MS Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, 302, MS British...
Museum Cotton Faustina A. 9, edited by Asseman, from the late eleventh century, and a longer doomsday address, the Verceilli Homily IV. 85

In addition to these homilies, *A Manual of the Writings in Middle English* cites several more as sources for the body-and-soul poems: MS Bodleian 5210, 213a, formerly Junius 99; MS Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, 41; Blickling Homily VIII called "Soul's Need"; "De Sancta Andrea" from MS Trinity College, Cambridge, 335, fol. 71b; and the homiletic poem *Be Domes Daeg*, found in MS Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, 201, fol. 161. 86 Bloomfield also mentions Bryhtferth's Manual, written in 1011, which contains an appendix including a sermon in which pride and fornicatio approach the soul when it leaves the body. The preacher warns that the air is full of demons who travel throughout the world. 87

Various details from these homilies appear in the English body-and-soul poems. In the homily in MS Corpus Christi 201 the soul turns and looks at the body before beginning its speech. This turning back is similar to that in the *Vidio Pauli*. The same thing occurs in the Worcester Fragments, though this detail is missing in the

85 Heningham, pp. 295-96, n. 18.
87 Bloomfield, p. 114.
Latin homiletic source. The Latin homilies omit detailed references to the worms which destroy the body, but both the Old English poets and the Old English preachers retain them. In Sermon 69 of the Sermones ad Fratres in Eremo, the hooks wielded by the demons are still for the purpose of tearing the wicked soul from the body, but in the Old English homilies and poems, they are used to torment the soul after the separation and during the soul's journey to Hell. The place and purpose vary, but the manner remains the same. In the Latin homilies the devils speak among themselves, although in both the Old and Middle English homilies and poems the devils, when they speak, address only the soul.

In his study of "The Address of the Soul to the Body," Willard concerns himself with a comparison of the versions of the relief granted to those suffering souls in Hell. The early Greek Visio Pauli is the origin of the theme of the respite. The vision granted St. Paul of the suffering and pain of the damned in Hell causes Paul and the whole company of

68 Heningham, p. 303.


angels and saints to cry out to God in pity for the
torments of the damned, and God grants a momentary
rest to these souls on the memorial of the Resurrection. In the Vatican Syriac text of the Visio Pauli there is
no respite mentioned at all, either because of a lacuna
in the text or because the redactor was not in sympathy
with the notion of relieving the sufferings of the
wicked. The Coptic texts grant a rest from Easter to
Ascension, the Ethiopic text provides for only a single
night of rest, and the Harvard Syriac text establishes
the tradition of relief for a day and a night every Sun-
day. In the shorter Latin versions of the Visio Pauli,
the respite is for every Sunday, but the longer Latin
redaction maintains the tradition of an annual rest
at Easter. It was Batlouchko's belief that these
abbreviated Latin versions are much later than the
long version, and "in all probability the Old English
legend of the body and the soul had already crystallized
before the formation of our abbreviated redactions of
the Apocalypse of Paul." This longer version was
known in England, for it shows up in the MS Junius 85.
In Soul and Body the soul returns every seven nights to

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91 Van Os, op. 264-66.
92 Willard, p. 969.
93 Willard, p. 976.
the body, but it is not specified whether this is on Sunday. Willard feels that this weekly return may have originated with the Sunday Epistle, which defined Sabbath practices and mentions that those souls in Hell, if they had ever been baptized, enjoyed a rest from the ninth hour of Sunday until dawn on Monday. This Sunday Epistle arose from the Sabbatarian movement of the sixth and seventh centuries, and the legend was that Christ Himself sent a letter outlining the specifications for Sunday observances. In view of the change from annual to weekly rest, the reason for the respite changes in the Old English homilies and poems, and stems more from a reverence for Sunday than from the memorial of the Resurrection. If Willard's thesis regarding the Sunday Epistle is correct, it would account for the change.

In the Voyage of St. Brendan, the monks see a man perched on a rock in the middle of the ocean, tormented by wind and waves, who says he is Judas Iscariot. He enjoys his respite from the first to the second vespers of every Sunday from Christmas to Epiphany, from Easter to Whitson, and on the Feasts of the Purification and the Assumption. The theme of respite here has become

94 Altschuler, p. 175, n. 10.
95 Willard, p. 970, n. 31.
a bit muddied, combining several elements from the different versions of the Visio Pauli.

In the Vercelli Soul and Body, the soul returns for one night, once a week, for three hundred years or until the end of the world, whichever comes first. The elaborate determination of Sunday, defined by Anglo-Saxon law as being from the ninth hour of Saturday to Monday dawn, was not an influence on this poem because the law was written in the eleventh century, though earlier legislation defined Sunday as being from sunset on Saturday to sunset on Sunday. The soul in the poem must leave at cock-crow, when "halige men lifiendum gode lofsang do&" or presumably on Sunday, since priests were instructed to sing Mass at least once a week, "embe seofon niht," the phrase which appears in Soul and Body.

The Junius 85 homily states that the soul must return to its body in order to curse or bless it, and it is stated that the soul will come to the body frequently ("gelomlice"). The precise times of the return do not seem to matter. In Soul and Body the period is for one night, though the Junius and Cambridge homilies do not specify the length of the respite.

97 Willard, p. 971.
99 Blickling Homilies, p. 45. 1. 31.
Wulfstan's Homily XLVI narrates the scenes of devils and angels contending for the souls of the wicked and the righteous which St. Paul saw in his vision. Sins are weighed on the balance scales, with the comparison of weighing gold with pennies. If the pennies pull stronger than the gold, it means the man has cheated, and he will be damned. So, too, for the soul: the sins may tip the balance and send it to Hell.\textsuperscript{100} This homily also contains references to the book of good and bad deeds, compiled every day of a man's life, to be used as evidence at his judgment.

The treatment of these themes in the homilies is necessarily different from that in the poems. The \textit{exempla} in the homilies had to be more specific and objective, and because of the nature of the genre, the poetry on the subject could afford to be more suggestive. However, the details do emerge as constants within the tradition.

Several of the Blickling and Wulfstan homilies contain a number of the motifs employed by the body-and-soul legend. Wulfstan's Homily XXX discusses the signs of approaching old age and death, and his Homily XL describes the horrible grave and the corpse that becomes food for worms.\textsuperscript{101} The Blickling Homily II

\textsuperscript{100} Van Os, pp. 192-93.
\textsuperscript{101} Van Os, pp. 187-88.
tells of the body, abandoned by the animating soul, becoming as a stone or log, still, and soon rotting. The image of the dead body as a stone is the same as that in the Talmudic source for the prose disputation in MS British Museum Additional 37049. Wulfstan's Homily XXX declares that "par beoð þa sawla forgytene fran eallum þam, þe hi ær cuðon on eorðan." The Blickling Homily V depicts the body after death as most foul and stinking, with sealed eyes and closed mouth and nostrils. No man would willingly approach it. The Blickling Homily known as "Soul's Need" urged men to be mindful of the day of their death and of the fact that their bodies will lie in the earth, the flesh will rot, and the worms will crawl over them and issue from their joints.

"Soul's Need" also recommends visiting the tombs of the rich to gain an understanding of the vanity of earthly riches. Homily V, from the same collection, points out that the beauty of this world soon comes to an end, as does the beauty of the body after death.

102 Blickling Homilies, p. 21.
103 Van Os, p. 186.
104 Blickling Homilies, p. 59.
106 Blickling Homilies, p. 97.
Life is only a short respite from death, and human life is full of sorrow. Hell is eager for the wicked, who will be punished with terrible tortures. Wulfstan's Homilies XLIX and XXX declare that though we deck ourselves in jewels and riches, we shall end in misery. The bodies adorned by earthly treasures decay and become dust. No one can escape death.

Both the early homilies and the early Eastern versions of the legend of the body and the soul show the soul as being unwilling to die; it must either be dragged out or persuaded to leave the body. The early Eastern versions emphasize the deathbed scene, for this is where the soul and the body part company. The later Latin and Old English homilies which contribute to the English body-and-soul poems stress the willingness of the soul to listen to the teachings of the devil, the horror of bodily corruption, and the complaint of the soul that death was too long delayed. In the English poetic expression of the legend, only in the first fragment of the Worcester Fragments do we find a deathbed scene. The signs of old age and approaching death are noticed, and the funeral preparations are made. The emphasis in this poem is not on the deathbed

107 Blickling Homilies, pp. 57-61.
108 Van Os, pp. 186-87.
109 Heningham, p. 293.
separation of the body and the soul, but rather on incorporating into the existing elements certain details from contemporary life in place of what Heningham calls "the more weird Eastern elements," in order to make more real and vivid the condition of man.

In the later medieval poems on the subject, the details of the setting, which do derive from the East, have given way to expanded addresses or dialogues. The impulse was to use the format of the address or dialogue as an arena for homiletic instruction, and consequently the details of the separation, and even of the bliss of Heaven or the torments of Hell, become secondary. The details are still there, but their purpose has changed.

Some of the more specific details in the legend of the body and the soul, having to do with damnation, demons, angels, and the pains and joys of the future life, come from the large body of visionary literature, which carries with it the tradition of visits to the underworld. A vision was granted as an exhortation, a warning, or as a means of encouragement to others to whom it might be described. The justification for using dreams and visions in this way comes from the visionary elements in the Bible, from the book of


111 Patch, p. 89.
Numbers, from the dreams of Joseph and Pharaoh, Nebuchadnezzar, and Revelations. There is also the vision of Timarchus, from Plutarch’s Discourses, in which Timarchus went to a sacred cave, gained an oracle, and stayed for three nights and one day. When he entered the cave he felt a blow on his head and his soul left his body through the sutures in his skull. His soul saw islands of color and fire, floating on a variegated sea, two fiery rivers, and a dark chasm from which issued howls and bellows. Eventually the soul returned and Timarchus regained consciousness.

The persecution of the Jews from B.C. 200 to A.D. 150 produced a body of apocalyptic literature containing visions of the end of the world. The Sibylline Oracles are apocalyptic and prophetic, originating with Jewish Christians as early as the second century. The second book of this collection lists the punishments reserved for sinners in Hell:

... all these will the wrath
Of the immortal God cause to approach
The piller, where around a circle flows
The river inexhaustible of fire.
Then will the angels of the immortal God,
Who ever liveth, surely punish them
With flaming scourges and with fiery flames,
Bound from above with ever-during bonds.

112 Russell, pp. 175-76; A. C. Spearing, Medieval
Oracles (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,
1972), pp. 7-9, p. 12.
113 Patch, p. 52.
Then, in Gehenna, in the midnight gloom,
Will they be to Tartarean monsters cast,
Many and fierce, where darkness is supreme.\textsuperscript{114}

A fiery wheel also will encompass the wicked and press them down.

The \textit{Apocalypse of Baruch}, written at the end of the first century or the beginning of the second century, is a book of Jewish revelations in which an angel escorts Baruch on a tour of Heaven. The \textit{Visio Esdras}, from approximately the same period, presents Hell as a valley, and the fiery river is the barrier between the holy mountain of Heaven and the valley of Hell. The river is spanned by a bridge. The fiery gates are guarded by two lions breathing fire from their eyes, mouths, and nostrils.\textsuperscript{115} The \textit{Apocalypse of Peter}, a fragmentary work dating from the late first or early second centuries, shows details of the holy mountain, steep cliffs, and fiery waters. Men and women are hung on fiery wheels; there is a burning lake into which sinners are flung from the cliffs.\textsuperscript{116} The \textit{Narrative of Zosimus}, c. A.D. 250, mentions wild beasts and the fiery river.

\textsuperscript{114} Patch, pp. 84-5.
\textsuperscript{115} Patch, p. 87.
\textsuperscript{116} Van Os, p. 262.
The Dialogues of Gregory the Great contain a well-known instance of the test bridge, wherein a soldier brought back to life recounts his vision of the bridge stretching from Heaven to Hell, and of the holy souls walking across to Heaven while the wicked and damned are pulled off by demons. 117

The popular and widely copied Visio Pauli is the source for most of the eschatological material used in later vision literature and absorbed by the body-and-soul tradition. The original work was written in Greek, in at least two versions from the fourth century, only one of which has survived. This vision is mentioned by St. Augustine in a tract on the Gospels, 118 as well as by Epiphanius. 119 There is a confusing number of versions of this vision in various languages, as well as abbreviated redactions and metrical versions. It should be sufficient to note that this immensely popular work was disseminated throughout the Christian world at an early date, probably transmitted by oral tradition in much the same form in which it appears in the thirteenth-century Latin manuscripts. 120

117 Patch, p. 95.
119 Becker, p. 74.
120 Becker, pp. 75-79; Van Cs, p. 26⑨.
In the *Visio Pauli*, St. Paul wishes to see the torments of Hell, and St. Michael the Archangel agrees to take him. There are burning trees at the gates of Hell; sinners are hanging from these trees by various parts of their bodies. Seven sources of pain are enumerated: snow, ice, fire, blood, serpents, lightning, and stench. There is a burning wheel, which torments a thousand souls at every turn. St. Paul sees a horrible flood, spanned by a bridge; righteous souls pass over the bridge unharmed, while sinners fall from it and are bound together. Souls are placed in the flood up to the parts of their bodies that have sinned. They gnaw on their own tongues. Women dressed in black are tortured by snakes and devils. Other sinners are placed before a feast but are prevented from eating; they are the ones who refused to fast on earth. Finally Paul comes to a pit sealed with seven seals. Whoever enters in will never find mercy, because in the pit lie those who refused to believe in Christ and would not be baptized. As Paul watches, a sinful soul which had just left its body is brought in by seven devils who turn the soul back three times to look at its body, saying that both will be reunited on the day of resurrection and both will suffer together. Paul then sees a righteous soul led to Heaven by angels, who also turn the soul back to view its body. The damned beg Paul and St. Michael to intercede for them, and finally God
agrees to grant a respite from the pains of Hell from Saturday until Monday of every week.\footnote{Becker, pp. 76-7; Van Os, pp. 264-66.}

Traces of this seminal vision appear in many of the popular visions of the early medieval period. The Vision of Sunniculf, by Gregory of Tours, mentions the fiery river and the test bridge. The Vision of Furseus in Bede's Ecclesiastical History contains a dark valley with regions of ice and fire. In the late seventh-century Vision of Barontus, the author sees devils and angels battling for his soul. In the monk of Wenlock's vision there were souls like black birds, a river of pitch, and a test bridge. Felix of Croyland's Life of St. Guthlac has details of demonic visitations while Guthlac was praying. Guthlac saw troops of demons with large heads, long necks, thin faces, yellow skin, filthy beards, shaggy ears, fierce eyes, foul breath, horses' teeth, throats vomiting fire, thick lips, and strident voices, who carried him away, threw him in muddy water, and scourged him with iron whips.\footnote{Felix of Croyland, pp. 101-07.} The Vision of Tundale, dating from 1150, contains a lengthy scene concerning the test bridge. Tundale is on a narrow bridge studded with iron nails when he meets another soul carrying a sheaf of grain and leading a cow he had stolen.
Neither can pass, until Tundale suddenly finds himself on the other side. St. Patrick's Purgatory contains a bridge which narrows for sinners but broadens for the righteous to journey safely to Heaven. The ninth-century Vision of Adamnan also has a bridge which widens and narrows, and in the early thirteenth-century Vision of Thurcill sinners sit immersed to various depths in a cold salt lake spanned by a bridge with nails and sharp spikes.

Two of the most important elements of the Visio Pauli which are essential to the body-and-soul legend are the idea of the respite and the fact that the angels force the soul to turn and consider its body. The idea of the respite is united with details of the soul's lingering near the body after death and visiting the scenes of its former life and the soul's addressing the body at the hour of death.\footnote{Willard, p. 959.} The interaction of these two themes gives rise to the legend that the soul returns at intervals to bless or curse its body. In the homiletic literature which derives from the Visio Pauli there are three traditions concerning the time at which the soul makes its address: at regular annual or weekly intervals, at the hour of death, and at the Last Judgment, though this last is only found in that poetry with a
strong doomsday flavor. The second element is that of
the soul turned back. As Dudley points out, it is easy
to understand why the evil soul should be turned back to
the body. "If the removal of the soul from the body was
thought to be painful, the turning back of the soul be-
comes, by the repetition, a form of torment." It is
not so clear why the good soul is also turned back,
unless in the Visio Pauli we have a very early form of
the soul's farewell to the body.

One of the characteristic motifs of vision lit-
erature is a critical retrospection of the earth or
the body temporarily abandoned by the soul. This
backward glance occurs in the Vision of Furseus, where
the angels carrying Furseus compel him to look back
upon the world, where he perceives the punishments of
Hell in allegory. The same look back occurs in the
Testament of Abraham, the Apocalypse of Zephaniah, and
the Vision of St. Salvius. The general pattern is
that as the angels, or occasionally birds, conduct the
soul away from earth for the purpose of a view of the
other world, the soul looks down and observes the sin-
ful state of the world. It is possible that this

124 Dudley, Egyptian Elements, p. 27, n. 18.
125 Bede, pp. 144-45.
126 Patch, pp. 128-30.
critical glance backwards in the visions also contributed to the development of the soul's farewell.

It may now be seen that the constituent parts of the English poetic voice of the body-and-soul legend derive from a number of disparate sources. The basic fact of the separation itself stems from a dualistic impulse which has troubled the human psyche and the Church for many centuries, though in the body-and-soul poems the dualism is expressed in a totally orthodox manner. The form is either that of an address or a dialogue, the one coming from a line of homiletic and vision material, the other being a natural outgrowth of the address, coupled with the Christian doctrine of responsibility for sin. The setting is dependent on the form used; the body may or may not answer the arguments of the soul, the body has either just died, which is characteristic of the dialogue, or is being visited by the soul on some regular return, as in the address. Elements such as the respite, the farewell to the body, and the regret at the long delay of death also derive from homiletic and vision literature. The soul may bless or curse its body; it may blame the body for the neglect of its Christian duties or praise it for the performance thereof. The theme of bodily corruption and the grave as a dwelling-place have a long history stretching back to Job; the ubi sunt motif considers both the vanity of worldly goods and the
implacability of death, also an ancient motif. The details of the punishments of Hell and the rewards of Heaven are composite pictures of Egyptian, Greek, and Hebrew eschatological views, as well as those borrowed from homilies and visions. The result of the combination of these elements is a striking group of poems in Old and Middle English, whose parameters may readily be defined.

Having examined the sources for the elements which constitute the body-and-soul poems in English, it is now necessary to consider these ten poems in critical detail. I shall describe the content and structure of these poems and discuss various critical views concerning them. I shall explain the theological position concerning blame and responsibility for sin which is at the heart of the argument in these poems, and I shall look at the way in which each of these poems deals with the problem.
CHAPTER III

ANALYSIS AND CRITICISM

The poems in Old and Middle English which deal with the theme of the body and soul take either the form of an address of a soul to its body, or a dialogue between the two, for the purpose of revealing the soul's feelings of resentment or gratitude toward the body for its damnation or salvation. The difference between these two types of poems is one of form, for the didactic purpose remains constant, and the content is in general the same in each instance. This chronological discussion of these body-and-soul poems will focus on the way in which the problem of the responsibility for sin is handled.

Along with the separation of the body and the soul, the notion of ultimate responsibility for sin is central to the legend. The problem is not clearly solved in the poetry, for both body and soul are punished, the soul in Hell with dreadful tortures and the body on earth by worms and corruption.¹ In the dialogues the body has an opportunity to refute the arguments

¹ Ferguson, p. 79.
and attacks of the soul with all the theological ammunition at its disposal; but by virtue of the structure of the address, this forum is denied the body. Consequently, it is possible to view the form of the address as an extended type of poetic irony; though the soul disclaims responsibility for damnation and blames the body, listeners would be aware of the theological position which places the greater burden of guilt on the soul.

This position was first enunciated by Gregory the Great, who explained that sin is committed in the heart in a four-fold way: from the devil comes the suggestio, from the flesh the delectio, from the spirit comes the consensus, and from pride the defensionis audacia. The devil is responsible for the first temptation, in which the flesh takes pleasure. The delectio is the point at which the soul levels its accusations at the body. But after the delectio, the spirit gives its consent, and this is the point of sin. It is not a sin to be tempted; the sin lies in succumbing to that temptation. For this the body blames the soul.

The theme of responsibility for sin is one which lies at the heart of the Old and Middle English poems.

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2 C. Abbetmeyer, "Old English Poetical Motives Derived from the Doctrine of Sin" (Diss. University of Minnesota 1903), p. 35.
of the body and the soul. In both the outspoken re-
criminations of the dialogues and the cold, contemptuous
diatribes of the addresses, the primary concern is who
is to blame.

In this group of body-and-soul poems the addresses
are more numerous than the better-known dialogues.
The scholarly consensus is that the dialogue form
evolved from the address, but it is also true that
the address form continued to exist simultaneously
with that of the more complex form. However, it is
equally true that in the more ancient sources for
the legend of the body and the soul both forms exist.
The seven poems in the form of an address vary in
date from the ninth or tenth century to around 1300,
while the dialogue form has a more circumscribed
time period, from between 1250 to the end of the
fifteenth century, the date of the *Visio Philiberti*.
In view of the evidence from early homilies on the
subject which are considered to be the primary in-
fluence on the Old and Middle English body-and-soul
poems and which contain both addresses of the soul as
well as dialogues between the soul and the body, it
seems clear that both traditions were in existence
at the same time. It was the rhetorical impetus

3 Bruce, pp. 386-87.
from the medieval tendencies toward allegory and disputation that made the dialogue form preferable at that time.

I. Soul and Body

The Old English Address of the Soul to the Body, or Soul and Body, is the chief representative of the address and the oldest poetic expression of the body-and-soul legend in Western literature. One version, found in the MS Exeter Cathedral 3501, fol. 98a, contains only the first 126 lines, omitting the speech of the righteous soul. This manuscript dates from the second half of the tenth century. The other version is located in the Vercelli Book, Biblioteca Capitolare cxiii, fol. 101b, dating from the same time. This version of 166 lines contains both the speeches of the damned and blessed souls. There are only minor differences between the two texts in the first 126 lines. In a detailed analysis of the two versions Alison Gyger demonstrates that the Address was transmitted orally and that both versions were written down from memory, thus postulating the existence at some point of a common original. The differences in the two texts, she feels, are the result of lapses of memory, and

involve word substitution, changes in grammatical function, words omitted from lists, and minor word changes or omissions. The text of *Soul and Body I*, that found in the Exeter Book, is one line shorter than that of the Vercelli Book *Soul and Body II*, excluding the address of the righteous soul. *Soul and Body I* is incomplete, ending abruptly in the middle of a sentence at the bottom of fol. 103b, though in all likelihood very little of the poem has been lost.

The first part of this poem has been dated by Stopford Brooke as early as the beginning of the eighth century on the basis of the reference to the soul visiting the body weekly for three hundred years, or the end of the world, whichever comes first. He feels this period of three hundred years may reflect the contemporary belief that the world would end in the year A.D. 1000. However, he feels that the second part of the poem, that of the speech of the righteous soul, is of a later date. His theory is based on the supposition that the version in the

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6 Vercelli Book, p. 127.
7 Vercelli Book, p. xxxix.
Exeter Book is the earlier and that the author of Soul and Body I added the second section much later. Other, more conservative, dates for the poem place it in the late ninth or early tenth century.

Critical objection to this poem is that the first part is fairly generally held to be filled with gratuitous horror, terror, and grotesque, hideous imagery relating to bodily corruption, while the second part is accused of being inferior and stylistically weak. Smetana explains that the poem is unified by the theme of both punishment and reward pivoting around the return of the two souls. In the first case it is a reluctant and expiatory encounter, while the second is a joyful reunion. Smetana demonstrates the poem's artistic integrity by citing the parallel lines of the first and second portions of the poem which contrast the condition of the two souls. Certainly the address of the saved soul is only one-third the length of that of the damned, but sin is always more interesting than virtue, and in terms of the didactic purpose of the poem, more profitable.


11 Smetana, pp. 195-96.
The first sixteen lines of the poem are homiletic and introductory. The poet warns man to consider the fate of his soul when death separates it from the body. After death the wretched soul will return to the body once every seven nights for three hundred years, unless God ends the world before that time has passed. The soul then rebukes the body as the cause of its damnation: "Little did you care for me; little did you realize worms would eat you. Since I left, you are no longer dear to any man. It would have been better had you been born an animal, had you not been baptized, for now you must answer for us on Judgment Day. Even the tiniest joint shall suffer. We shall suffer together such torments as formerly you made for me." The soul must then return to Hell until the next reunion.

Following the soul's speech to the body, the poet describes the process of corruption. The captain of the worm-team is given the curious name of Gifer, or Greedy. It is he, with his needle-sharp jaws, who eats a path for his swarming troops. The state of this body, once adorned with fine garments and now clothed with worms, should be a warning to all men.

In the second part the poet introduces the blessed soul, who also addresses its body and commiserates on its wormy condition. The soul congratulates the body on having fasted and disciplined itself in life, for
now the soul enjoys heavenly bliss. The grave is the body's reward in this life, but at the Last Judgment the body need have no fear; soul and body shall be reunited and enjoy Paradise as one.

The structure of this poem consists of a preface by the poet, the introduction of the lost soul, the address to the body by the lost soul, editorial comments on the state of the body, the introduction of the saved soul, and the address by the saved soul to the body. The crux of the poem seems to be the state of the body, a condition of corruption which affects the redeemed and damned souls alike. There is no indication here of the Eastern notion that the bodies of the holy dead resist corruption. The speech of the blessed soul makes it clear that corruption after death is part of the human condition, and the poet's description is actually dispassionate and objective, especially when contrasted with the hysterical moanings of the damned souls in the later dialogues as the devils approach:

Biiȝat heafod tohliden, handa toliȝode, geaȝlas toginene, goman tosliitene, sina beoȝ asocene, swyra becowen, fingras tothorepe, Rib reafiaȝ reȝe wyrmes,

12 Cf. The Brothers Karamazov and the disquiet resulting from the corruption of the body of holy Fr. Zossima.
This description seems a far cry from "grisly horrors of the grave": it does not appear to be a "dementia of hatred . . . degenerate realism and ignoble fear"; the tone is not "pitched to the shriek of horror and terror of dissolution"; nor is the horror due to the intensity of faith. Legouis and Cazamian note that it is "impossible not to notice how aptly the rude verse and violent rhetoric of the Anglo-Saxons render their dismay and emphasize their horror." Tasteless this passage may be, but it hardly warrants such critical indictment. It is much less disgusting than the early fifteenth-century *Disputacion Betwyn the Body and Wormes*, found in MS British Museum Additional 37049, or the later medieval representations of the macabre and the Dance of Death. One is not

13 Kurtz, *Gifer the Worm*, p. 235; p. 256.
14 Anderson, pp. 169-70.
startled, as in the later dialogues, by the dead body sitting upright in its winding sheet on the bier, addressing the soul.

The peculiar personification of Captain Greedy, the worm-captain Gifer, does not appear anywhere else in the literature of the body and the soul. It is impossible to determine the source of this original little creature, who only acts upon the body in the way his nature demands, but to whose presence Kurtz objects with such condemnation. Kurtz theorizes Sermon 48 of the pseudo-Augustian collection *Sermones ad Fratres in Eremo* as a possible source for this little worm, but whatever his ancestors, his presence in the Old English *Soul and Body* has a curious effect on the angle of vision of the poem. Suddenly one's attention is removed from consideration of the body and is fixed upon the person of Gifer. Quite possibly the poem would be grimmer without Gifer's presence, as Smetana suggests, but it is necessary to shift the focus of attention from the damned soul and its rotting body for a few lines in order to introduce the blessed soul on the same level at which the damned soul was brought forth earlier. Given that the scene of bodily corruption is the

17 Kurtz, *Gifer the Worm*, p. 257.

18 Smetana, p. 200.
pivotal point of this poem, Gifer's unprecedented personality allows the parallel structure of the two sections to emerge.

The poem's parallel structure also relies on contrast. In the larger structure, of course, the damned and saved souls are set against each other, but in matters of their damnation and salvation there are several points to be noted. The first is that of overindulgence of the flesh. The damned soul accuses the body of gluttony and drunkenness:

\[
\text{Wære þu þe wiste wlamc ond wînes æd,}
\text{þrymful þunedest, ond ic ofpyrstæd wæs}
\text{godes lichoman, gastes drynces.}
\text{(Vercelli Book, p. 55, ll. 39-41)}
\]

The blessed soul praises the body for its discipline while alive:

\[
\text{Eæstest ðu on foldan ond gefyldest me}
\text{godes lichoman, gastes drynces.}
\text{(Vercelli Book, p. 56, ll. 142-43)}
\]

The repetition of the line "godes lichoman, gastes drynces" helps point up the contrast.

A second parallelism is found at the end of the first section when the body is described as growing cold, which before had been guarded with garments:
The blessed soul tells the body that though it is worm-eaten, its soul has come adorned to Heaven:

_Wine leofesta, þeah þe wyrmas gyt
gifre gretæ, nu is þin gast cumen,
þegere gefrætwod, of mines fæder rice,
arum bewunden._

(Vercelli Book, p. 58, ll. 135-38)

There is a parallel structure of clothing either the body or the soul: in the first instance, in life the body has warmed itself with fine raiment and in death is clad in worms; and in the second, the soul is fairly adorned and surrounded with mercies while the body suffers corruption.

At the Last Judgment, there will be damnation for the body of the lost soul, and Paradise for the saved:

_Scealt þu minra gesynta sceama þrowian on þam myclan dæge þonne eall manna cynn se ancenneda ealle gesamnæ._

(Vercelli Book, p. 56, ll. 49-51)

_Forðan þu ne þearft sceamian, þonne sceadene beþ
pa synfullan ond pa scéðstan on þam mæran dæge, þæs þu me geæfe._

(Vercelli Book, p. 58, ll. 145-47)
Another critical point to be considered in this poem is the emphasis placed on the tongue's destruction by death and worms. It is torn into ten pieces, and Gifer makes inroads so that the body cannot refute the arguments of the soul. The purpose of this tongue rending is to show that the body has no answer either to the soul or to God at the Last Judgment. The muteness of the body at the time of the address is an analogy of its final inarticulateness before God.19

II. The Worcester Cathedral Fragments

The Worcester Cathedral Fragments represent the next stage in the development of body-and-soul poems. These fragments were discovered in the Worcester Cathedral Library, where the parchment on which they were written had been used for binding other books. They are listed as Worcester Cathedral F. 174, fols. 63b-66b. These seven fragments are composed of 349 alliterating lines written as prose; all of the fragments are approximately the same length. The manuscript is dated 1180,20 but the fragments were composed at an

19 Ferguson, p. 24.

earlier time. The manuscript is in the West Midland dialect.

Fragment A begins with the image of the crying of a newborn child foreshadowing the painful separation of soul from body at death. The signs of old age are listed and a deathbed scene is shown. The dying man exclaims, "Wo me þet ic libbe, þet ðæfres mine lifdawes þus longe me ielesteþ." When the man is dead, his body is laid on the ground and measured for his grave, so that he may not take more than his share of earth. His wife binds his mouth and eyes. His friends flee from him, fearing to touch the body.

Fragment B begins with the soul's reproachful address, which continues to the end of the poem. The soul asks the body where now is his pride, his money gained by extortion, his gold dishes and raiment. The executors are eager for the dead man's estate. The man should have paid for masses for his soul, and received the sacrament, but because he preferred his wealth, his soul is now damned.

Fragment C contains the image of the grave as the dwelling-place of the body. Though the body sat on horseback while alive, now it rides with its back to

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the ground. Those to whom the body showed anger and refused charity rejoice at its death. The grave is a narrow house, with low sides; the roof lies on the body's breast, its bed is cold, and it is unclothed. Worms devour the flesh, even the bones.

In Fragment D the worms enter the brain of the body and gnaw the lips; everyone who sees it is frightened. Relatives burn the straw from its bed and bury the clothes. The body thought it would never die, but it should have realized the fate awaiting it. Sin is the cause of death. The body is accused of loving strife, perjury, and lying; it was gluttonous and was never satisfied. Now all good things are gone and only bitter things remain.

In Fragment E the soul accuses the body of fouling the earth in which it lies. On the Day of Judgment the body will rise and face its sins. The body lay in bed and refused to go to church; though its ears are closed now, it will be summoned by trumpets to appear before God. Because the body was evil, both the soul and body will be punished eternally.

Fragment F continues the thought of Fragment E; the soul accuses the body of failing to face its sins while alive and now being punished with corruption.

In Fragment G the soul claims the body deceived it. The soul reproaches the body because it is now damned to Hell. At first, the soul was pure and
innocent, entrusted to the care of the body at baptism, but the body broke its baptismal vows. It listened to the devil and was led astray.

This is the only one of the body-and-soul poems to place such an emphasis on the deathbed scene and subsequent funeral arrangements. The basic outline of deathbed, address, and a devil scene omitted in the Worcester Fragments, is that of an Old English homily in MS Corpus Christi 201, where it is said to be the vision of a certain holy man. The deathbed scene ultimately derives from early Coptic apocryphas and visions, though this poem makes no reference to the devils which gather at the deathbed, as the earlier homiletic versions do. In the first part of the Worcester Fragments, the poet has substituted for the devils who come for the soul the homely details of burial preparations and a list of the signs of old age. The address occurs immediately after death, and no mention of the weekly respite is included here. The soul berates the body with a lengthy list of offences which fall under the seven cardinal sins and their branches, accusing the body of deceit, pride, strife, unrighteousness, haughtiness, anger, avarice, discord, perjury, gluttony, and sloth. Van Os hears

23 Heningham, p. 297.
in the passage concerning buying masses for the soul
a clerical voice urging remembrance of its own class;
the lines concerning the vows taken at baptism also
give a clerical slant to the poem. 25

Louise Dudley seeks to prove that the Oxford
fragment from MS Bodleian 343, fol. 170, known as
"The Grave," is the source of the Worcester Frag-
ments. Buchholz had felt that "The Grave" was pos-
sibly one of the Worcester Fragments, but Dudley
demonstrated the Worcester derivation on the basis
of lines from "The Grave" which appear scattered
throughout the Fragments, but which are consecutive
in the earlier poem. "If the author of the 'Frag-
ments' used 'The Grave' as one of his sources, and
borrowed from it entire verses, he would very nat-
urally scatter them in his poem, even though they
were consecutive in the original." 26

Lines 20-27 of Fragment F contain an interesting
reference to the body's being as prickly with sins
as a hedgehog. The body feels no pain from the prick
of sin, but the soul suffers the sting and in Hell
is pained by sin. The hedgehog is one of the various
animals used to represent the sin of envy. 27

25 Van Os, p. 198.
(1914), 8.
27 Bloomfield, pp. 246-47.
The passage in Fragment A concerning the signs of approaching old age is not a common feature of the body-and-soul poems, but Homily XXX by Wulfstan contains a similar passage:

The *ubi sunt* tone of this homiletic passage is missing from the lines in Fragment A, which simply comment on the process:

Wilson feels that the Worcester Fragments have closer affinities with the Middle English poems on

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28 Van Os, p. 185.
this subject than with the Old English. However, the Fragments are transitional pieces between the Old and Middle English expressions of the legend. The Fragments are an example of an extended address, a form which lost popularity during the Middle English period; they do not contain detailed descriptions of the devils which seize the soul, nor do they dwell at length on the various punishments to which the soul is subject in Hell. This poem does contain the description of the low-roofed grave, a feature which occurs in the Middle English poems but is lacking in the Old English Soul and Body. There is no mention of the weekly respite, but the deathbed separation and address are more typical of the later poems. The source for this poem may have been the even earlier poem "The Grave," but the Fragments were almost certainly influenced by the many Old English homilies containing this theme. It would be hard to assign this poem absolutely to either category.

III. "Nou is mon holi & soint"

The mid-thirteenth-century fragment of twenty-two lines of rhymed couplets is found in MS Trinity College, Cambridge, 323, fol. 27v. This poem, dated 1160-1180, is

R. W. Wilson, pp. 170-72.
is Northwest Midland in dialect.\textsuperscript{31} Despite its brevity, it contains virtually all the elements which constitute the body-and-soul poems:

\begin{verbatim}
Nou is mon holi & soint
& huvel him comit in mund;
\penne me seint aftir \pe prest
\pat wel con reden him to crist.
After \pe prest boit icomin
\pe feirliche deit him hauit inomin;
\Me prikit him in on vul clohit
& legget him by \pe wout.
A-moruen bopin sout & norit
\Me nimit \pa body & berrit hit forit.
\Me grauit him put \opr ston,
\pen-in me leit \pe fukul bon.
\penne sait \pe soule to \pe licam,
Wey \pat ic ever in \pe com!
\pu holdes friday festen to non,
\Ne \pu setterday almesse don,
\Ne \pen sonneday gon to church,
\ne cristene verkis wrche.
Neir \pu neyver so prud
of hude & of hewe ikud,
\pu salt in horpe wonien & wormes \pe
to-cheuuen
& of alle ben lot \pat her \pe vere lewe.\textsuperscript{32}
\end{verbatim}

In this brief poem, there is a deathbed scene attended by a priest, death and burial, and the soul's cursing the body and reproaching it for the neglect of its Christian duties of fasting, almsgiving, good works, and church attendance. The body was proud while alive, fair of face and of high renown, but now dwells

\textsuperscript{31} Oakden, p. 44.
\textsuperscript{32} Brown, p. 31.
in the earth; worms will chew it and it will be hated by all good people. There is no mention of the pains of Hell that the soul will suffer on account of the sins of the body, but since this little poem is considered a fragment, it is possible that the conclusion which would deal with this feature has been lost.

Bruce states that the text of this poem is too mutilated to furnish much evidence for its placement in the body-and-soul tradition, though the parts which are preserved he feels to be similar to the Worcester Fragments. Since the poem contains so many portions of the legend, Van Os contends that it is not as incomplete as previous criticism had held. It is certainly an economical account of the theme.

IV. "On Doomsday"

The short poem "On Doomsday" is an extended address of a soul anticipating Judgment, without any explicit reference to the body. This poem combines elements from the body-and-soul legend with the ever-popular eschatological material from other sources; the result is a work which relies heavily on doomsday features and is primarily admonitory in tone. It is composed of eleven quatrains, rhyming aaaa.

33 Bruce, p. 396.
34 Van Os, p. 200.
"On Doomsday" is found in four manuscripts: MS British Museum Cotton Caligula A.ix, fol. 246a; MS Trinity College, Cambridge, 323, fol. 43a; MS Jesus College, Oxford, Part II, fol. 182a; and MS Bodleian 1687 (Digby 86), fol. 197b. This last version omits stanzas 7, and 12 through 15, adding two new stanzas between 10 and 11, but without significant change in the meaning of the poem.

In this work, the speaker announces his fear of the Judgment Day, for he has frequently sinned. At Doomsday, fire shall consume both water and land. Angels shall blow trumpets to announce the Doom. In vain do the sinful weep and moan. Adam's sin brought Doomsday; the rich who in life were well clothed and rode fine horses shall mourn; weapons will not aid them, for only good works can save them from Hell. They shall see the Mother of God and Christ who suffered for them. The righteous shall be on Christ's right hand and the wicked shall stand fearfully on the left. The righteous shall hear Christ invite them into the Kingdom, where there is a place for them with the angels. The sinful are cursed and driven into Hell where there is burning fire. The poem ends with a prayer that Our Lady may intercede for our salvation.

These lines, closely linked in all four manuscripts with the following poem, "Death," or "The Latemest Day," are often taken to be a part of that
The doomsday tradition is closely allied with that of the body and the soul, since the theme of judgment of wicked and holy souls figures prominently in the latter. It is but a short step to a general consideration of the eschaton in the context of the address or dialogue, and often the themes become mingled in the poetry.

The setting in this poem is a vision of the end of the world; the damned make their moans of fear, and sin and death are seen to be a part of the human condition. Man must give alms and do works of charity in order to be saved. The rich and proud will be punished for their sins, while the righteous gain Paradise. The discussion of the Last Judgment ends neatly with a final prayer for our salvation, for in the vision the blessed have been escorted into Heaven and the sinners whisked away to Hell.

There is a marked similarity between this poem and lines 75-100 of the debate found in MS Harley 2253. These lines in the Harley debate deal with the signs of doomsday, specifically the four angels blowing their trumpets, the appearance of St. Mary and Christ, and the judging of the righteous and evil souls. In the Digby 86 manuscript, "On Doomsday" follows this debate.

35 Wells, p. 693.

36 Beatrice Allen, "'The Debate of the Soul and the Body' in Digby 86," MLR, 22 (1927), 189.
V. "Death"

"Death," or "The Latemest Day," is closely associated with "On Doomsday," following it in all four manuscripts; even the meter is the same. The Jesus College, Oxford, and the Cotton Caligula manuscripts of "Death" contain sixteen introductory lines which begin, "Therep of one pinge, pat ye owen of penche," which the Digby 86 and Trinity College manuscripts omit. The Trinity College version is the shortest, having 108 lines; the Digby version has 114, and the two containing the introductory lines have 132. The additional lines do not contribute anything of substance to the content of the poem.

This poem is intended as a warning and exhortation to the rich and well-born, that they must pay for their sins on earth. It is bleak and graphic and attempts to shock, but is thought not to be detached enough to achieve poetic effect.\(^{38}\)

The poem is addressed to the wealthy, who cannot hope to escape death. Though man enters the world with nothing and acquires bowers and halls, his soul shall suffer for his wealth. When we die, we will leave the world to face judgment as naked as when we were born.


When death comes, our speech, sight, and thought will be removed from us; our bodies will be sewn into shrouds and lie like stones. Friends are eager to grasp the possessions of the dead. Then the soul curses the body:

Away wrecche folc baly, 
ny þu lyst on bere. 
Ich schal habbe for þe 
feondes to i-vere. 
Away þat þu sure 
to monne ischape were. 
(Morris, p. 173, ll. 83-88)

The soul asks the body where its friends are now; they would not willingly meet the body in its present state. In *ubi sunt* rhetoric the soul asks the body about its dishes, sweet messes, cups, bread, and ale. Relatives will not have masses sung for the soul, but will quarrel over the property of the dead man. Because of the body's sins, the soul will burn in fire and shiver in ice.

Nv schal þin halle 
myd spade beon i-wrouht, 
And þu schalt þer-inne 
wrecche beon ibrouht, 
Nu schulle þine weden 
alle beon iscouht, 
He wule swoopen þin hus, 
and vt myd þe swoftes, 
(Morris, p. 177, ll. 145-52)

All that the soul hated appeared good to the body; now the soul shall be punished and roasted by Satan.
The devil will be ready with his rake and his dragon who spits fire to swallow up the soul. The devil has horns on his head and knees; from his nostrils come red gleams, from his eyebrows hot fire. His eyes are deep and great as a coal-pit. No tongue can tell how loathsome he is.

The poem concludes with a pious wish that we all may be free from lechery and live in concord with the Church, that we may please Christ at Judgment.

This address adds something new to the tradition; the pains of Hell are enumerated and described, the devil appears, and the soul pleads inability to describe adequately the horrors of Hell. These descriptions show the influence of visionary literature, where souls are temporarily separated from their bodies and taken on a tour of Heaven and Hell as a warning to others. Homiletic literature also contributed to the descriptions of Hell.

Bruce states that both in the introduction and in the address of the soul, "Death" bears a strong resemblance to the Worcester Fragments and "The Grave," though the descriptions of the pains of Hell and of the devil owe more to a conception in the dialogue poems. 39

39 Bruce, p. 394.
He outlines the first part of "Death" and Fragment A in order to show the relationship between the two.

I. Opening of the two poems in which the circumstances of our birth are connected with those of our death:

"Death" 17-44
Fragment A 5-10; 22ff.

II. Mourning of the soul in the hour of death.

"Death" 45-48
Fragment A 11, 16

III. Failure of the powers and faculties of the animate body.

"Death" 49-56
Fragment A 17-23

IV. Pangs of the separation.

"Death" 56-64
Fragment A 27-30

V. Shrouding of the corpse and desertion of friends.

"Death" 65-80
Fragment A 37-43

VI. "Sorie Cheere" of the soul in addressing the body.

"Death" 81ff.
Fragment A 46.

The address of the soul in "Death" has a parallel in Fragment C, l. 3, and the body's earthly possessions

being taken away from him in Fragment B, 11. 14-16, occurs in "Death," 11. 133-36. The rhetorical interrogatives of the ubi sunt motif, the accusation that the body is completely responsible for their common damnation, and the charge that Christian duties were neglected appear in "Death," 11. 97-132, and in Fragment B, 11. 5-34. The motif of the grave as the dwelling place of the body is more coherently manifested in "Death," 11. 145-76, than in the scattered references to this topic in the Fragments. From 1. 193 to the end of "Death" there is no further resemblance to the Worcester Fragments, for the poem veers off into graphic details of the fire and ice of Hell, Satan and his race, the dragon, the bath of pitch and brimstone, and the Devil with horns on his head and knees. The notion that one of the worst sins a man could commit was to neglect his duties to the Church is prominently displayed here, as it is in the Worcester Fragments, pointing to clerical and homiletic influence.

The poem has a curious structure. The first eighty-two lines constitute the lengthy introduction and deathbed scene, the address follows with the standard imprecatory and details of the grave, corruption, and its attendant sorrows. Then follow fifty-six lines of the fearful soul's view of Hell, and the poet concludes with a brief, typically pious wish that we may
not suffer the same fate as the soul in question. The soul's speech ends abruptly with the words,

Ne may no tunge telle
hw lodlich is he qued.
Hwo so lokede him on
for kare he winte beo ded.
(11. 245-48)

The plea for preservation begins with the next stanza:

Holde we vs clene
vt of hordom.
Masses leten singe
and almes-dede don.
(11. 249-52)

The missing element which causes this abrupt change from address to prayer is the scene of the devils arriving and carrying the soul to Hell. The later dialogues include the details of the pains of Hell and the descriptions of the demons who dwell there, as does "Death." However, in this poem the address merely ends with the description of the devil and makes no arrangement for the soul's exit to Hell. The lack of completion of the soul's situation structurally weakens the end of the poem.

VI. "Over the Bier of the Worldling"

The brief poem entitled "Over the Bier of the Worldling" is similar to "Nou is mon holi & soint" in
its economy of language and compression of theme. It is also found in the MS Trinity College, Cambridge, 323, fol. 84\textsuperscript{a}, and is dated between 1225 and 1275.

\begin{verbatim}
Nu ðu vnseli bodi up-on bere list
Were bet ðine robin of fau & of gris?
Suic day huit i-comin ðu changedest hem ðris,
ðad makiit ðe Heuin herpe ðad ðu on list,
ðad rotihin sal so dot ðe lef ðad honkit on ðe ris,
ðu ete ðine mete y-makit in cousis,
ðu lettis ðe pore stondin ðrete in forist & in is,
Þu noldist not ðe bi-þenchen forte ben wis
For-þi hauistu for-lorin ðe Ioye of parais.\textsuperscript{41}
\end{verbatim}

It is unclear whether the soul or the poet is addressing the body, but in such a short space a number of important elements of the body-and-soul legend have been included. The body is cursed, its former life mentioned in contrast to its present condition, obligations to the poor were ignored, and Paradise has been forsaken. There is no mention of the popular motif of the grave as the house of the body, but this short poem undoubtedly belongs in the body-and-soul tradition.

VII. "Sinners, Beware!"

Still another address of the soul to the body is found in the admonitory poem called "Sinners, Beware!"

\textsuperscript{41} Brown, p. 64.
or "The Saws of St. Ende." It is located in two manuscripts: MS Jesus College, Oxford, 29, Part II, fol. 75a, which dates from the second half of the thirteenth century; and MS Bodleian 1687, fol. 127b, the Digby 86, which dates from around 1275. The first version contains fifty-nine six-line stanzas and the second, sixty-one, rhyming aabaab. Again, nothing of substance is found in the additional stanzas.

The poet asks God to preserve us from sin, and from the devils who seek to ensnare us. No tongue may describe the pains of Hell. There is cold, heat, hunger, and thirst; worms torture the soul. The seven deadly sins mar the soul and keep man from Heaven. Proud men in fine clothes shall be punished in Hell-smoke. No one can buy his way into Heaven; though the poor have nothing and so have no fear, yet Satan will trouble their souls if they sin. The poor may still be damned unless they bear their lot with a meek heart.

Wealthy monks will be damned, as will priests who sing masses out of greed, soldiers who have killed other Christians, and perjurers. The peasant may be damned if he does not tithe; proud ladies, adulterers, lecherous monks and nuns will all be damned.

No man knows the day of his death. When the body is in the earth, worms will grind it to ashes. The body lies low and rots. No friends remain near it. We are born naked and naked we die; there are not
five in the whole world who have not sinned.

God comes at the Judgment and shows the signs of His Passion. He praises the righteous and permits the devils to lead the wicked away. The soul says to the body,

Acursed wurpe þi nome,  
þin heaued and þin heorte,  
þu vs hauest iwroht þes schome,  
And alle þene eche grôme,  
Vs schal euer smerte.  

The poem ends with the usual prayer that God may preserve our souls and bring us to Heaven.

This poem combines into one poem most of the subjects treated in medieval religious literature, touching at the same time on various social problems of the day. The poet delineates the joys of Heaven and pains of Hell, the deadly sins, the Judgment Day, death and the grave, corruption, and the complaint of the soul to its body. The address in "Sinners, Beware!" is very brief, but the poem contains enough of the other elements to justify its placement in the body-and-soul tradition.

The statement expressing inability to describe the pains of Hell has been seen before in these

42 Morris, Old English Miscellany, p. 83, li. 332-36.  
43 Van Os, p. 144.
addresses, and is generally followed by a description of those pains. In "Sinners, Beware!" they are the customary ones: darkness, smoke, stench, cold and heat, hunger and thirst, worms, and torture by devils. The damned weep that they were ever born. The blessed are totally indifferent to the sufferings of the damned. One peculiar touch is that of the devils driving the sinners to Hell with pikes and awls; as a means of demonic torture, awls occur nowhere else in these poems.

Another unusual element in this poem is the fact that it is not addressed solely to the well-born and wealthy. Much is made of the poor who must bear their poverty meekly and of the peasant who toils and yet must tithe or endanger his soul. References to contemporary social evils include the proud rich, the unjust lawyer, the perjured and cheating tradesman, over-dressed adulterous women, and the lecherous religious. This type of list may be found in other medieval prose and poetry, especially in homiletic exempla.\textsuperscript{44}

This poem has close affinities with the visionary literature of the time, particularly in view of the comprehensive range of subjects presented and the vaguely apocalyptic setting. However, it lacks both the concrete character of the visions as well as the

\textsuperscript{44} Van Os, p. 145.
The address form arose naturally out of the body-and-soul legend, but it only provided for the soul's accusations and curses. It was in the dialogues between the two that the theological argument for the responsibility for sin reached its fulfillment.

It is difficult to trace the origins of the poetic form of the dialogue or debate. Critical opinion is quite diverse: it derived from the religious scholasticism of the Middle Ages; as a literary form its antecedents are in Greek philosophy; it originated in the south of France with the troubadours, spread to northern France, and thence to England; it came from flytings and riddle contests of the folk and from the poetic form of the classical eclogue. Obviously, since all these influences were important in the development of the vernacular debate, it would be impossible for any one theory to claim precedence.

45 Van Os, p. 145.

46 Anderson, p. 169.


49 Hanford, p. 17.
Dialogues and debates appear in both popular and academic form and are both literal and allegorical. There were in the popular tradition debates between wine and water, peasant and noble, riches and poverty; the dialogues concerning body and soul or vice and virtue had a theological and pedagogical bias and are thought to be a learned imitation of the more popular debates.\textsuperscript{50} This is clearly a poetic mode which flourished for a space of about two hundred and fifty years and then declined in popularity.

The dialogue is especially appropriate for the body-and-soul theme, for the metaphor "dramatizes with a peculiarly direct and satisfying realism man's feelings about moral choice."\textsuperscript{51} The accusations by the soul demand an answer which this literary form provides. The grim tone of the addresses is gone, and the poem becomes more a forum for the airing of theological arguments concerning the responsibility for sin than a graphic representation of the consequences thereof.

VIII. "Debate of the Body and the Soul"

The mid-thirteenth-century poem generally called the "Debate of the Body and the Soul" is thought to be...
based on the twelfth-century Latin *Visio Fulberti* and is frequently attributed to Robert Grosseteste. It exists in full or in part in seven manuscripts, in six-line stanzas or rhymed couplets, written in East or Southeast Midland. All texts of this poem agree in the important details.

The poem begins with a vision of a dead knight lying on a bier. The soul immediately begins its reproaches, using the ubi sunt motif and cursing the body. After a series of speeches delivered alternately by the body and the soul, the soul is carried off to Hell amid the mocking of the devils. The dreamer

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52 Printed by Wright in *The Latin Poems of Walter Mapes*, pp. 95-106.


54 MS Laud 108, fol. 206b, from the late thirteenth-century, which contains 61 stanzas, and MS Auchinlech, fol. 31b, dated c. 1330-1340, with 74 stanzas, are the two earliest texts. MS Vernon (Bodleian 3936), fol. 266a, 62 stanzas, from the end of the fourteenth century, and the MS Simeon (British Museum Additional 22253) are sister manuscripts, though the Simeon text is defective because the manuscript is mutilated, and only the first 25 stanzas survive. MS British museum Additional 37787, fol. 34a, c. 1400, also has 62 stanzas. MS Royal 18 A.x, fol. 61b, c. 1350-1400, has 67 stanzas and contains the most independent readings of all the texts. MS Digby 108 (Bodleian 1703), fol. 136a, has 68 stanzas, and is dated c. 1400.

Wright prints both the Laud 108 text (pp. 334-39) and the Vernon text (pp. 340-45). The Royal 18 A.x text is printed by Hermann Varnhagen, "Zu den Streitgedichten Zwischen Körper und Seele," *Anglia*, 2 (1879), 226-55.
awakes in terror of what he has seen, and the poem ends with thankfulness that Christ can redeem us.

The soul's first speech, done in the *ubi sunt* pattern, details the knight's former possessions.

Wher are now alle þy ryche wedes,  
þy somers and þy ryche beddes,  
þy proude palfreys and þy stedes,  
pat þou aboute with þe leddes?  
(Varnhagen, p. 230, ll. 25-28)

Where are now alle þyn hey toures,  
þy chambres and þyn hye halle,  
þat peynted were with proude floures,  
And þy ryche robes alle?  
(Varnhagen, p. 230, ll. 33-36)

Where are now þy cokes snelle,  
þat shulde go to greyth þy mete?  
(Varnhagen, p. 230, ll. 41-42)

The knight's heir rejoices at his death and his wife seeks a new husband. All that is left of the knight's material possessions is a few feet of earth.

The body, lifting its ghastly head from the bier, groans. Everyone dies, it tells the soul.

So dede Sampson and Sesar;  
No man may now fynde a mote  
Of hem, ne of here moderes þat hem bar.  
Wormes gnowe ato here throte,  
So shal þey myn, i am wele war.  
(Varnhagen, p. 233, ll. 154-58)

The body explains to the soul that it is not to blame: God gave wit and wisdom to the soul and placed it as
the body's guide:

Ne what was good, ne what was ille,  
But as a beste doumb and daft,  
And as thou ledest me peretille.  
(Varnhagen, p. IX, 190-92)

The soul is taken aback at the learning of the body:

Body be stille!  
Where hast thou leerned al pis wit,  
To yeve me pis answer grille,  
Per thou lyst bolned as a bit?  
(Varnhagen, p. 235, 201-04)

The soul explains that although dead, the body is not past pain, for the Judgment awaits them. The soul claimed it urged the body to remember its duties to Christ, but the body choose not to listen, and the soul submitted.

The body replies that whatever it knew of moral choice came from the soul:

What wyst i of wrong or ryght,  
what to take or what to done,  
But as thou puttest in my thought,  
Dat al ys wisdom shuldest have cone?  
(Varnhagen, p. 237, ll. 273-76)

The body moans that it should have been a sheep, an ox, or a swine, and so should never have sinned.

The soul maintains that the body refused to pay any heed when it begged the body to give alms, fast,
and go to church. The body preferred its fine clothes and worldly wealth to charity and good deeds, and now is damned.

The body wishes that it had never been born:

Allas! my lyf is lost.
Pat evere leved i for py sake!
Pat myn harte ne hadde brest,
When i was fro my modur take,
Or ben into a pit icast,
With an eddere or with a snake!
(Varnhagen, p. 239, ll. 355-60)

The body asks the soul if there is any saint who will intercede for them.

It is too late, replies the soul. If the body had even intended atonement while alive, God would have defended them both against the devil. But not all the masses in the world could save them now.

I ne may no lenger dwelle,
For to stonde and speke with þe;
Hellehoundes here i yelle,
And fendas mo þan i may se,
For to fette me to helle,
And i ne may nowhider flee;
And þou shalt come with flesh and felle
At domes day and wone with me.
(Varnhagen, p. 240, ll. 393-400)

The remainder of the poem concerns the devils who arrive to carry the soul to Hell. They taunt it and torment it, and finally the soul is flung into the deepest pit of Hell where the sun is never seen.
It is easy to see that in the dialogue form the focus of attention is now upon the question of who is responsible for damnation. The Latin Visio Fulberti, thought to be the basis for this poem as well as the fifteenth-century debate found in MS Porkington 10, contains an acknowledgement by Caro that though both may be considered culpable for their situation, Anima should bear the greater responsibility:

Amdo, dico, possumus adeo culpari: 
et debemus utique, sed non culpi pari: 
tibi culpa gravior debet imputari, 
multis rationibus potest hoc probari.\(^5^4\)

In the Porkington debate the body stoutly maintains that without the soul it can do neither right nor wrong, asking of the soul, "For your offence, why reprove me?"\(^5^5\) In the "Debate of the Body and the Soul" the body uses the accepted argument of greater responsibility of the soul, but not until the hell-hounds approach is it willing to assume even a part of the blame.

The Visio Fulberti contains a speech by the soul which states that it would have been better to be born an animal than to suffer as it does now. The

\(^{5^4}\) Halliwell, p. 23, l. 259.
Old English Soul and Body has a similar passage; this theme, a common one in the body-and-soul legend, is generally stated by the soul. However, in the "Debate of the Body and the Soul" it is the body which states this idea:

I shulde have be but as a scheepe,
Or an ox or as a swyn,
Pat et and drank and lay and sleepe,
Slayn and pased al his pyn;
Ne nevere of catel nome ne keepe,
Ne chose þe water fro þe wyn;
Ne now ne shulde in helle deepe
For þe suffre al þis pyn.
(Varnhagen, p. 237, ll. 296-304)

The seven deadly sins also appear in this poem, and a new element is introduced, that of the world, the flesh, and the devil as the three enemies of man. This concept first made its appearance in the religious writings of the thirteenth century. The seven deadly sins were assigned to the three enemies, the flesh being responsible for gluttony and lust, the world tempting man to avarice and envy, and the devil inciting man to pride, wrath, and sloth. This poem dwells at length on the sins of luxury, pride, lechery, haughtiness, and gluttony; the character of these sins and the figure of the knight makes it

56 Van Os, p. 209.
likely that its admonitions are addressed to the upper
classes who were liable to commit these sins.

For the first time in these poems we have a full
scene after the address or dialogue depicting the
devils seizing the soul and tormenting it before they
drag it back to Hell. This is the scene lacking in
"Death." One thousand devils rush in and claw the
soul with their talons. They have humps on their
backs, long claws, and are black and foul. Some of
the demons tear open the soul's cheeks and jaws, pour
molten lead into the wounds, and make it drink the
remainder. Then the chief devil appears and pierces
the soul to the heart with a red-hot poker. Because
his heart was so full of pride, the fiends make deep
wounds in it. Since the soul loved fine clothes, they
fling a burning robe on him and place a helmet on his
head. They next bring out a devil like a horse, with
a saddle of sharp burning spikes, all glowing with fire.
The soul is slung into the saddle and dragged about, all
the while being torn with hooks and spears. The devils
bid the soul blow his hunting horn, and a hundred
fiends bring the soul to bay. They draw him with ropes
to the gates of Hell, where the soul utters a final
plea to Christ for mercy, but the demons fall upon
him, and he sinks into the deepest pit of Hell.

This scene shows in supernatural form the outward
trappings of the knight which contributed to his sins
while alive. Since he loved fine garments, his soul is garbed with a burning cloak and a helmet fitted to its head. The soul is then placed on a demon-horse which rages about breathing smoke and flames from its gaping jaws, and wearing a saddle studded with spikes. This recalls the jousts and tournaments in which the knight participated, and the soul in death is graphically punished for the excesses of the body. In an interesting reversal, the soul is made to blow the hunting horn and is itself brought to bay by the hell-hounds. It was seen earlier in the dialogue that the knight's favorite occupation was hunting, and he much preferred to go forth into the fields or forests than to attend the services of the church. Finally the soul is bound with ropes and dragged to the gates of Hell, a prize captured by the demon hunters. This lengthy scene following the debate is not just one filled with gratuitous details of devils and punishments. The enactment on the demonic level of the types of pleasures the knight had enjoyed while alive provides a unifying principle to the poem as a whole. The devil's parting comment to the soul concerns the fact that since the knight served the devil well while alive, his soul will feel more at home among the damned. Poetically this extended metaphor is interesting and unifying and contributes to the quality of the poem.
However, the didactic purpose is submerged in the specific portrayal of one knight and his damnation.

A few more details in this poem should be noted. At the beginning of the second stanza, the soul turns back and looks at its body:

And whanne pe gost it shulde go,
It withheld and withstood,
And loked on pe body pat it cam fro.
(Varnhagen, p. 229, 11. 9-11)

This turning back has its origin in the fourth-century Greek Visio Pauli in which the devils who have seized a wicked soul force it back three times to consider its body. The theme of the turning back of the soul developed through a line of visionary literature and homilies, and as the devils disappeared from the deathbed to allow time for the address or dialogue, the turning back of the soul became the point at which the address or dialogue could be inserted.57

In its first speech, the body tells the soul that death comes to everyone and cites Sampson and Caesar as examples of the worthy dead. The imputation of sins to the soul points up the irony of comparison between our knight and the worthies of history.

The formula of "Matins, Mass, and Evensong" is used by the soul to indicate the services the knight

57 Dudley, Egyptian Elements, p. 27, n. 18.
refused to attend:

I had the thenke on soule-nede,
matines, masse, and eve-song.
(Wright, p. 335, l. 49)

Sunday Matins and Mass, and Saturday and Sunday Evensong were the services generally available, and all Christian people were urged to attend these observations. The knight would not even comply with the basic requirements of church attendance.

Finally, the sin of gluttony is made particularly horrible because of the quantity of flesh the worms have to eat:

Where are now ðy cokes snelle,
ðat shulde go to greyth ðy mete
with ryche spyces, for to smelle,
Whan were set for to frete,
To don ðy foule flessh to swelle,
ðat now shal wylde wormes ete?
And in a stronge peyne of helie
With ðy glotony ðou hast gete.
(Varnhagen, p. 230, ll. 41-48)

The "Debate of the Body and the Soul" does not explore theological possibilities for the responsibility for sin, but instead is concerned with paralleling the condition of the knight in life with that of the soul in damnation.

IX. "In a thestrī stude y stod"

Unlike the "Debate of the Body and the Soul," the other thirteenth-century body-and-soul debate, "In a thestrī stude y stod," does not explicitly mention the "Matins, Mass, and Evensong" formula, nor any of the other specific Christian duties that the body neglected. In this poem the soul bewails the fact that the body would not turn to Christ and do His will, accusing the body of having cheated and given false judgments, but the interchanges between body and soul do not partake of the theological repartee that characterizes the "Debate of the Body and the Soul."

"In a thestrī stude y stod" appears in MS Digby 86, fol. 195\(^b\) (Bodleian 1687), in MS British Museum Harley 2253, fol. 57\(^a\), and in the MS Trinity College, Cambridge, 323, fol. 29\(^b\), which is dated c. 1275. All versions are approximately the same length, and the language is West or Southwest Midland. 59

The interchanges in this debate are much shorter than those in the "Debate of the Body and the Soul," being only four lines, or one stanza, each, until the soul begins to speak of the signs of doomsday, a speech which continues until the soul departs for Hell. There is also no devil scene in this debate, and the

punishments of Hell are only obliquely alluded to. More emphasis is placed on the rotting state of the body and the grave in which it must dwell than on the torments reserved for the soul in Hell.

All five of the body's responses to the soul have to do with the fact that he is now dead and the worms will eat him; death comes to all men, and his bones are bare, his house is the grave:

I wende my worldes wynne me wolde ever laste. The bones that y am ynne to helle he wolleth me caste. (Wright, p. 346, ll. 11-12)

Nou ys come here my deth ant myn ende day, Bounden am y hond ant fot that y ne may away; Nou aren mi dawes done, y wende ha lyved ay. (Wright, p. 346, ll. 18-20)

Wormes holdeth here mot, dome byndeth faste; Naken he habbeth here lot on my fleyshe to caste, Mony fre bodi sha'l roten, ne be y nout the laste. (Wright, p. 347, ll. 26-28)

Y wot that y shal rotien for al my mucheles pride. Wormes shu'le ete myn herte ant my whyte syde, Stynken worse then any hound so hit may bytyde. (Wright, p. 347, ll. 34-36)

Me is nou wo y-noh, myn bones aren al bare; Kin hous ys maked of erthe, y-turnd ys al to kare. (Wright, p. 347, ll. 42-43)

In this poem the body accuses himself of pride, saving the soul the trouble. The body also does not fling counter-accusations at the soul, but expands on the soul's constant reminders that because of sin, it now lies in the grave in a state of corruption. The
body does not show any particular distress over its present condition and repeatedly tells the soul to leave it alone:

Wrecche gost, thou wen away, hou longe shal thi strist laste?
(Wright, p. 347, l. 25)

Wrecche gost, thou wend away, ful wel thou const chyde.
(Wright, p. 347, l. 33)

Wrecche gost, thou wend away, fare ther thou shalt fare!
(Wright, p. 347, l. 41)

The soul's speeches alternate between accusing the body of sins and inquiring in ubi sunt rhetoric about his former possessions. In an abrupt change from these two types of speeches, after the soul has reproached the body for not thinking more about God, it launches into a description of the signs of doomsday. The soul lists only seven of these signs; the medieval tradition was fifteen, but the number varies, as do the nature of the particular signs themselves. 60

The first day produces a blood-red dew; the second an unquenchable fire that shall burn everything that stands; the third day brings a flood; the fourth a strong wind that blows down castles, halls, bowers.

and even the hills; the fifth day sees everyone alive gathering toward Heaven; the sixth day brings four angels who blow trumpets that make the earth quake; and the seventh day sees everyone, living or dead, become thirty years old, awaiting the coming of Christ to give Judgment. As a final summary the soul tells the body that they both will be damned for their sins and suffer in Hell with Judas. The soul then departs for Hell, the body to the earth. After commenting on the inevitability of death for everyone, the poem ends with the customary prayer that Jesus will spare us and bring us to Heaven.

The fire and the trumpeting angels appeared before in the poem "On Doomsday," though the description is much more detailed here. The soul seems to be explaining the signs of doomsday to the body more for its information than as a means of rebuking or frightening it:

Body, wyld thou nou lythe, and y wol telle the Of wondres fele ant ryve er domes-day shall be? (Wright, p. 347, ll. 49-50)

The soul has effectively put a stop to the body's repetitive acknowledgment of its corruption with this lengthy disquisition on doomsday.

The didactic purpose motivating the body-and-soul poems has become all but lost in this one. Only passing references are made to the particular sins of this body,
and the notion of sorting out ultimate responsibility is not even touched on. The soul accuses the body, but the body's reply indicates that it either was not listening carefully or does not care whether it receives the burden of blame. The final lines of the poem contain a compelling image of the grave and a summation of every point the body made earlier:

Fare we shule to a bour that is oure long hom, Nouther more ne lasse bote from the hed to ton, Ther shal rotie ure fleyshe al to the bon, When the flor is at thy rug, the rof ys at thy neose, Al this wolrdes [sic] blisse nis nout worth a peose.

(Wright, p. 349, 11. 120-124)

No mention is made of the rewards of Heaven that are due the righteous, and the only mention of Hell is in the lines,

The bondes that y am ynne to helle he wolleth me caste.

(Wright, p. 346, 1. 12)

Jhesu, vader, and holy gost, shild me from helle shoures!

(Wright, p. 347, 1. 40)

This debate is much more a vehicle for the theme of bodily corruption, the finality of the grave, and the signs of doomsday than it is for the problem of responsibility of sin.
X. Visio Philiberti

The English translation of the Latin Visio Fulberti, generally called the Visio Philiberti, is found in the National Library of Wales, MS Porkington 10, fols. 63b-79b, item 19 of this collection. It consists of eighty-nine stanzas written in rime royal, with a two-stanza epilogue, "Erthe upon Erthe," fol. 79b. The manuscript dates from about 1460.

In this dialogue we find the fullest expression of the body-and-soul theme and the most detailed arguments concerning the responsibility for sin. The poem begins with a nine-stanza introduction in which the poet makes note of the fact that he has translated this work from the Latin with "sympul connyng and bestyal rudenisse" (Halliwell, p. 13, l. 23), and earnestly begs aid from Christ and St. Mary that he may receive grace sufficient in telling his tale that he not offend with his rude wit. The vision, he says, was seen by one French hermit named Philiberte, a king's son.

The soul turns back to the body, an action seen before in poems on this subject, curses it, and in the usual ubi sunt phrases, indicates that the dead man was of the nobility. The grave is now the dwelling place

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of the body; his only friends now are the worms. The sins of the body are mentioned in this first speech of the soul and are the ones generally employed: gluttony, lechery, extortion, excessive love of wealth, sloth, indifference to the poor, and willingness to listen to the devil. The soul states that now the roof lies on the body's nose, his heirs have disposed of his goods, his wife does not weep for him and would not give a foot of land to see him restored to life. He took no heed of stories of the dead and the damned while alive, and now he is brought to the grave, where worms creep into his flesh. The primary argument of the soul in this first speech, though, centers around the accusation that though the soul was made in the image of God and was intended to ascend to God in glory, the body made the soul despise God; the body had the governance and would never assent to do penance or love according to God's will. The body may not feel pain now, but at the Judgment Day they will both be sorely punished.

The body rises up at these words, with as much grisly motion as in the "Debate of the Body and the Soul," and begins furiously to rebut the soul's argument:

Wyche of us to is most worthi here,
To bere the blame, anon ye schall here.
(Halliwell, p. 21, ll. 202-03)
The body realizes that it perhaps has made mistakes, but asks,

How myht the body syne, I pray the take hede, Withoute the soule? thou cannist not this denye.
(Halliwell, p. 21, ll. 208-09)

The world, the devil, and the flesh are the old alliance of temptation against the body; God made the soul in His image and ordained that the body should be the servant of the soul:

God formyd the after his owne ymage,
And made the ryht with many vertues dyverse,
And ordent the body bothe in yought and age,
To be thy thral, thy servant, and thi page.
(Halliwell, p. 21, ll. 219-22)

The body says that it kept its part of the arrangement. God gave the soul reason, mind, and will for the purpose of keeping the body from confusion and of resisting sin. The soul, who was in charge, cannot blame the body:

Withoute spret, pardy, the body his nout;
Withoute spret the body is nout susteynnyde;
To kepe the body thou were made and wrohte.
(Halliwell, p. 22, ll. 239-41)

Finally the body denies all responsibility:
Thy symppul fleche, the wyche is corryptybulle, 
withoute the spret can noudyre good ne harme. 
How nyht hit be, hit is unpossybulle 
That the body, the wyche is nothinge warme, 
But deyde and cold, schuld put forth his arme, 
Or withowte the soule any memburs meve; 
Withowte the soule the body may nothing greve. 
(Halliwell, p. 23, 11. 246-52.

The body queries,

Why schuld the servant bere the masteris blame? 
Without the sole the body his blynd and lame; 
By felyng, my mevyng, ale commyht of the; 
For thin offens why reyprevyst thou me?

The soul's bitter accusations grieve the body, and it 
says, "Go frome me, sole, and wex me no more" (Halliwell, 
p. 23, 1. 266).

The soul counters by saying the body was never favorable to the soul; it thought itself immortal and 
so would not chasten its conscience with vigils, fasting, 
and works of charity. The soul admits guilt over not 
having restrained the body, but maintains that the 
body's appetites carried them both away. It reproaches 
the body for not setting its heart on God. The world 
crept up on them both like a thief and lured them away 
from God. All their friends are gone; not one will 
even visit the grave.

At this statement the body begins to weep. It 
ever thought it would die and lie low in the grave.
It admits that both have offended Our Lord, but re-
iterates that the soul must bear the greater burden
of guilt:

We have offendyt ouer Lorde God sovereyne,
But thin offyns his a gret del more:
Why schuld the body have so gret a payne
As the sole? he hath not offendyt so sore,
I have gret wrong, as me-thingit therefore,
To be ponnescheyd with the sole in fere.
(Halliwell, p. 27, 11. 351-56)

The soul will answer on the Judgment Day for the
body that was in its charge. The soul was given
the key to the five wits; without the soul, the body
would rage and play without control. The body must
obey the soul as a child obeys its master for fear of
a beating. Death has now plucked the body on the
sleeve, and its chamber is narrow and straight. The
body is aware of Judgment Day and says that the greatest
pain he will ever suffer is the separation of the soul.

There is nothing more to be said by the soul in
argument. It regrets that it was ever born; it would
have been better to have been an animal. No tongue
can tell of the sorrows of Hell.

The body asks whether there might not be a ray of
 gladness to brighten Hell? The soul "seyd noathinge,
but stod stil and weppyd" (Halliwell, p. 32, 1. 434).
Will alms or discipline help now, asks the body. "Sume
of this methinkys alway schal spee" (Halliwell, p. 31,
1. 441).
The soul responds that this is an unreasonable question. No one is redeemed out of Hell. There is no respite:

For all this world, lordschype and treyssere,
The fend wyl not soffer une sool out of helle
To be reyfrechid the tyme of halfe an hour.
(Halliwell, p. 32, ll. 456-58)

The richer or more noble the sinner, the greater his fall.

The soul is now taken by devils in a scene only slightly more tame than that in the "Debate of the Body and the Soul," though the devils are described in detail, having mouths and hair ablaze, burning eyes and faces, brass horns with fire, eyes like thorns, and a smell of strong smoke about them, all with comments to the effect that they are indescribable. With blazing tongs the soul is scourged, beaten, and dismembered. It is bound with chains; molten metal is poured into its mouth, and it is cast into a pit with fire and burning sulphur. The fiends curse the soul in a parallel scene to the curses hurled by the soul at the body, whereupon the soul weeps as the body did, crying for mercy. Too late, say the devils, for Heaven's porter has closed the gate. Even if the soul could say the Creed, it would still endure darkness and the bitter heat of Hell.
The final thirteen stanzas are taken up with admonitions to the sinful to give up their worldly wealth and practice humility and chastity, for all men must die:

Let not your dedus yourselve begyle: whyl ye be here for youre soule prowde, wynt and dysscressyone let be youre gyde; Keppe yowe wel frowe the synnys vii, And after youre end ye schale comme to Heyvyne. (Halliwell, p. 39, ll. 620-24)

Except for the first speech by the soul, the interchanges between soul and body are all approximately the same length, becoming shorter towards the end of the dialogue. This is not a debate where the answer must be determined by the reader; the body has the better arguments, and in the end the soul acknowledges this fact.

It is interesting that in this debate the idea of the respite granted the suffering souls in Hell has completely disappeared. The devil will not allow even so much as half an hour's refreshment to the damned. This element from the Visio Pauli is not included in the Latin Visio Fulberti, from which this debate comes, though the soul's turning back to the body derives from the Greek vision, as do some of the infernal torments.

The mention of the soul's dismemberment as a punishment is not common in these poems, although the
Old English *Soul and Body* contains a reference to the joints being punished separately on the Day of Judgement:

\[
\text{ponne ne bid nan na to } \text{pas lytel lid}
\]
\[
on lime aweaxen,
\]
\[
\text{pat suo ne scyle for anra gehwylcum onsundrum riht agil\'dan, ponne re\'e bid}
\]
\[
dryhten at \text{pam dome}.62
\]

The ninth torment of a medieval Irish version of the *Fifteen Tokens of Doomsday* directs locks and fiery bonds to be blazing on every member and on every separate joint of the sinners in Hell because they were unable to control their bodies in life.63 An "Old Irish Table of Penitential Commutations" allows for the rescue of a soul from Hell by the performance of 365 Our Fathers, 365 genuflections, and 365 blows of the scourge every day for a year, for this number is in proportion to the number of joints and sinews in the body, by which it is punished in Hell.64 In the *Vision of Tundale*, Tundale is handed by the guiding


64 Hill, "Punishment According to the Joints of the Body in the Old English *Soul and Body II*," Notes and Queries, 15 (November 1968), 409.
angels to the demons, who hew him into tiny pieces, and then he is made whole again. He sees the damned souls torn and mangled and renewed to undergo this torture once again. The dismemberment in the Visio Philiberti is doubtless a reflection of this same motif.

The reference in line 256 to the body being blind and lame without the soul is reminiscent of the fable from the Talmud concerning the blind and lame men who are set to watch the king's orchard and of the expansion of that story which appears in prose form in MS British Museum Additional 37049, which dates from the first half of the fifteenth century. In the Porkington debate, however, the meaning of the reference has been changed, and it no longer refers to the dual action of the soul and body together, or their subsequent common judgment.

These ten poems constitute a type of poem whose primary purpose is to explore the question of the ultimate responsibility of sin. The duality expressed by the separation of soul and body is necessary in order for the argument to arise. Frequently, especially in the addresses, the resolution is left to the listener. The prominence given to the soul in the address form heightens the irony of its accusations, while the

65 Becker, p. 11.
punishments which await the soul tacitly answer the question of blame. The dialogues provide the opportunity for more overt argument, at the sacrifice of a certain stoic grimness of tone. The elements which they share and which define the boundaries of this genre, however, are expressed in basically the same fashion. These elements are the form and setting of the poem, the curse or blessing uttered by the soul, the neglect or performance of Christian duties, the grave as the dwelling-place of the body, bodily corruption in the grave, the ubi sunt interrogatives, and the reward or punishment of the soul. Each of these ten poems will now be analyzed in terms of these specific elements.
Both the grimmer, more stoic address form of the body-and-soul poetry, and the dialogue form, which allows for greater theological argument concerning the responsibility for sin, are defined by certain elements which they share. These elements are the form and setting of the poems, which will be considered together because of their close relationship, the initial curse or blessing directed at the body by the soul, the list of Christian duties and obligations which the body performed or neglected, the motif of the grave as the resting place of the body, the theme of worms and corruption, *ubi sunt* interrogatives lamenting the loss of friends and possessions, and the details of Hell, demons, and the punishments the soul will suffer. The ten poems which constitute the Old and Middle English poetic expression of the body-and-soul legend will now be examined for the way in which they utilize each of these elements.

The poems are dependent on the fact of separation of the soul from the body at death in order to produce either the address or the dialogue. The address, which is always spoken by the soul, generally emphasizes the
disintegration of the body in the grave. The dialogue is always initiated by the soul and stresses the pains of Hell, although there is usually a description of bodily corruption as well.

In the poetic expression of the body-and-soul legend we find only these two forms, though the homiletic expression which influenced the poems manifests three major stages in the development of the tradition: an address form in which the soul speaks to the body, a point at which there is one accusation by the soul and one defense by the body, and the dialogue containing a number of interchanges. The middle stage has as its representative an Irish homily from the _Leabhar Breac_, a fourteenth-century compilation of much older homiletic material. This homily contains a deathbed scene, the demons' removal of the soul, the demons' taunting the soul, and an exchange of reproaches by the soul and the body, followed by the blessed soul's entry into Paradise. The presence in this homily of other extraneous elements obscures the conversation between the body and soul, but it does show the intermediate stage in the development from address form to dialogue form.

The particular setting of each poem is dependent on the form used. In the addresses, the body makes no reply to the reproaches of the soul; in the dialogues

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1 Atkinson, pp. 507-14.
the body either counters with arguments indicting the
soul or, as in the case of "In a thestri stud y stod,"
mournfully repeats what the soul has said.

The occasion for the soul's address is either at
the moment of death or during the respite granted to
suffering souls in Hell. In the seven addresses in
these body-and-soul poems, only the Old English Soul
and Body takes advantage of the respite. "On Doomsday"
and "Sinners, Beware!" place the address within the
eschatological framework of Judgment Day. The dialogues
take place after death but before burial. While the
body is lying on its bier, the soul mentions that the
next day it will lie in the grave. The soul often
turns back to look at its body or to say farewell.
Frequently the soul expresses regret at death or laments
that death has been too long delayed, given the sinful
state of the body in which it dwelt. The soul feels
itself imprisoned in the body and senses the devils
gathering around to carry it to Hell.

The first utterances of the soul are a curse or
blessing upon the body, before launching into the
details of the body's conduct in life. The soul
claims that it would have been better had it been
an animal, though in the "Debate of the Body and the
Soul" the body says this. The first speech then
elaborates the reproaches of sin that the soul levels
at the body.
The motif of the grave as the dwelling-place of the body carries with it a grim description of low roof, narrow walls, and the seven feet of earth which is now all the body can claim. In the Worcester Fragments the relatives measure the corpse carefully so that it will not take up more than its share of earth. The poem "The Grave," thought to be the source for the Worcester Fragments, is a chilling description of this feature. The grave as a dwelling-place for the body is not as prominent a motif in the Old English Soul and Body or in the more eschatological poems. In Soul and Body the body is already in the grave and presumably knows what it is like. Since the doomsday poems focus more on the Judgment and subsequent torment in Hell or bliss in Heaven, the idea of the grave becomes less prominent. In those poems in which the address or dialogue takes place at the time of death or before burial, this element becomes important, frequently indicating temporal punishment for the body as a counter to the spiritual punishment of the soul.

The body is repeatedly told by poet and soul alike that its portion is worms and corruption. The outstanding example of worms, of course, is Gifer in the Old English Soul and Body. The worm is also the representation of sin or of the conscience that gnaws the
soul. Included in this element are the signs of approaching old age, which withers the body and fore-shadows its death.

The rhetorical interrogatives of the *ubi sunt* motif found in these poems are of two types: the first refers to material possessions and the second to people. The soul asks the body, "Where are your golden dishes, your lands, your rich garments?" This type of question represents the vanity and uselessness of earthly goods. The second type of *ubi sunt* questions asked by the soul is, "Where are your friends now? Where is your wife?" and demonstrates the inevitability and implacability of death. The contrast is made in these passages between the former and the present condition of the body. The wife does not weep; she looks for a new husband. Friends do not visit the grave, and the heirs and executors are eager to divide the estate. The dialogue poems are lavish in their use of details in the *ubi sunt* questions, which give a fuller picture of the character of the dead man.

The final element is that concerning the reward or punishment of the soul. It ranges in expression from the vague and general references to the pains of Hell and joys to Heaven to the vivid and specific tortures of the later dialogues. The soul is seized, punishments are meted out, devils and Hell described.
The blessed soul tends to drop out of the later poems except for those dealing with the eschaton, and the focus is on the damned, though the portrayal of the righteous soul along with the wicked soul is more common in homilies on the body-and-soul theme. The fate of the soul is torment in Hell, as the fate of the body is corruption.

I. The Form and the Setting

Soul and Body begins with a short homiletic introduction urging men to consider the state of their souls before they die; it is a long time after death that God will give final judgment:

Huru, ðæs beholfæ hæleða æghwylc
þæt he his sawle sið sylfa gefence,
hu þæt bið deopic þonne se deaf cymeð,
asynred þa sybbe þe ær samod waron,
lic ond sawle! Lang bið syðjan
þæt se gast nimeð æt gode sylfum
swa wite swa wulder, swa him on worulde ær
eine þæt eordæt ær geworhte.
(Vercelli Book, p. 54, 11. 1-8)

Following this brief statement of purpose, the poet indicates that the events of the poem occur during one of the weekly visits of the soul to the body. There is no lengthy introduction to set the tone or heighten the suspense, and no deathbed scene to produce pity. The soul simply begins its address with
the reproach, "Hwæt, ðu dreorega, to hwan drehtest ðu me, eorðan fulnes eal forwisnad, lames gelicnes!"

(Verceili Book, p. 55, ll. 17-19).

This respite is, of course, that procured by St. Paul and St. Michael on behalf of the souls in Hell in the Visio Pauli. The soul expresses the feeling that it had been imprisoned within the flesh:

Eardode ic þe on innan. Ne meahte ic ðe of cuman,
flæsce befangen, ond me fyrenlustas
pine geþrungon.
(Verceili Book, p. 55, ll. 33-35)

Death has been too long delayed for the soul:

Dat me ðuhte ful oft
Dat hit ware XXX ðusend wintra
to þinum deaðege.
(Verceili Book, p. 55, ll. 35-37)

The idea that the soul feels death is delayed shows up again in these poems pointing to the fact that this aspect of the legend has undergone changes from the Eastern versions in which the soul is unwilling to come forth at death and must be forcibly removed by the devils or lured out by angels.²

² Dudley, Egyptian Elements, pp. 18-28.
The Trinity College fragment, "Nou is mon holi & soint," the Worcester Fragments, and "Death" begin their addresses at the moment of death. The first twelve lines of the Trinity fragment are given over to describing a man who falls ill, sends for a priest, dies, is sewn into his shroud, and is buried. The address begins abruptly, "|enne sait fe soule to |>e licam" (1. 13) without any preparation for the monologue, which continues to the end of this short poem. There is no turning back of the soul, no farewell to the body, and no regret at death. The only regret is that the soul was ever a part of such a wretched person.

The Worcester Fragments handle the problem in a slightly different way, though the address still occurs at death. Fragment A describes the deathbed scene and burial preparations, and the address is introduced in the last line, "|onne besih^ |eo soule sor'liche to |>en lichame" (Buchholz, F. A, p. 2, 1. 46). This refrain appears five more times in the course of the poem: in Fragment C, l. 2; in Fragment D, l. 17 and l. 27; and in Fragment E, l. 3 and l. 36. It is used as a transitional device and as a means of maintaining the awareness of the nature of the poem. Each time the refrain appears, it signifies a change in the reproaches uttered by the soul. The first instance is at the beginning of the address proper; in Fragment C the line appears to
introduce the emphasis on the grave and the corruption of the body. In Fragment D the lines separate the details provided by the soul concerning the body's lack of friends and its frightful condition from the soul's accusations of specific sins. Fragment E uses the refrain to set off the discussion of the body's sloth and willingness to listen to the devil.

The Fragments also contain the feeling uttered by the soul that for its relatives, death was too long in coming: "Hoom þuþte al to longe þet þu were in liue" (F. B, 1. 12). The soul regrets that it was ever associated with such a body: "Weile! þet ic souhte so secourhfulne buc!" (F. B, 1. 19), and "Walawa ond wa is me, þet ic æfre com to þe" (F. F, 1. 4).

The theme of the respite from Hell is not employed in this poem, nor does the soul turn back to consider the body. Fragment A pertains to the death and burial of the body; the other six fragments are the soul's address, and the body makes no further appearance.

"Death" approaches its address more circumspectly. After the initial introductory lines of warning to the wealthy about the inevitability of death and the pains of Hell, the dead body is introduced in line 65. After the body has been disposed of and buried in a shroud, the address begins with line 83 with the usual curse, "Away þu wrecche folc baly, nu þu lyst on bere" (Morris, Old English Miscellany, p. 173, ll. 84-85).
The address continues to line 248, where the soul describes the devil. The regret over the association of soul and body appears in lines 87-88: "Away that you eure to monne ischape mere." The soul wishes that the man had never been born. This is slightly different from the theme frequently seen in the soul's curse, where either body or soul complains that it should have been an animal, not a man, and thus have escaped damnation.

Both "On Doomsday" and "Sinners, Beware!" place the address in the context of an eschatological vision. There is no specific setting for "On Doomsday," for the poem begins with the statement, "Hwenne ich penche of domes-day, ful sore ich may adrede," and launches immediately into an account of the end of the world and the judgment of the wicked and the righteous. "Sinners, Beware!" is primarily concerned with the enumeration of the types of sinners from all social and religious ranks. The first six stanzas of this latter poem are of the same homiletic cast observed in Soul and Body, the next four touch on the pains of Hell, and the next three deal with the seven cardinal sins. It is not until the very end of the poem, after the list of sinners and the account of the Judgment itself, that the soul addresses the body, and then it is only to curse it:
This curse is uttered as the wicked, both body and soul, are led away to Hell and beaten by the devils. This is the only occurrence of the address taking place after the Judgment, when soul and body are reunited and punished together. The soul's address at this point as an example of synecdoche is not out of place and fits smoothly into the transition from the Judgment to the final prayer by narrowing the focus from all wicked souls to one individual case representative of all.

The two debates based on the Latin Visio Fulberti, the "Debate of the Body and the Soul" and the Visio Philiberti, both place the dialogue within the framework of a vision. The "Debate" begins:

As i lay in a wynternyght,  
A litel drouknynge befor pe day,  
Me thoughte i sey a rewely syght,  
A body pere it on bere lay.  
(Varnhagen, ll. 1-4)

As the dreamer watches, the soul lingers by the bier and begins to speak, initiating the dialogue with the customary curse. The poet of the Visio Philiberti,
apparently feeling that his tale needed authority, loaded his introduction with information to lend it credence. The French hermit Philberte is even elevated to royalty; it is his vision that is recounted:

This ermet be name was cleappyd Philberte, Secrete with God, as in conclysion
The matter schowyht, who wysely wyl advert,
And in his slepe he hade syche a vyssyone:
He saw a boddy not feynyd be illisione;
Deede and pale, and one the erthe laye;
And, as hit semyd, the spret was away.
(Halliwell, p. 15, ll. 65-70)

Immediately the soul weeps and reproves the body "in his languag." When the vision is finished and the soul has been taken to the darkness and bitter heat of Hell, the poet awakes:

Then endyth my drem: of this I sawe no more.
When I hade hard complaynt alle
Betwyne the body and the soule in fere,
Frow my eyne the teris begane to fa'lej
I pray to God with myne herte in fere.
(Halliwell, p. 35, ll. 533-37)

The poet of the "Debate," however, chooses a more dramatic way to awake from his dream:

When it was forth, pat foule lode,
Fast it gan to drawe day;
On ilk an her a drope stode,
For fryht and fere pere as i lay;
To Jesu Crist with mylde mode
Faste i gan to crie and pray;
I was so ferd, i was ner wode,
Fat i shulde have ben born away.
(Varnhagen, p. 244, ll. 513-20)

As soon as the soul is cast down into the pit of Hell, the dreamer awakes, sweat on every hair and frightened to the point of madness that he might also have been carried off by the fiends. This is a more satisfactory ending to the vision because it reinforces, on the poet's personal level, the didactic purpose behind the poem.

In both of these debates the theme of the soul turning back to consider its body is made clear. In the "Debate" the soul, before it leaves, approaches the body:

Wan the gost it scholde go,
yt bi-wente and with-stod,
Bi-helod the body there it cam fro,
so serfulli with dredli mod.
(Wright, p. 334, ll. 5-6)

In the Visio Philiberti the soul stands by the body and weeps (l. 71). This turning back to the body originated in the Visio Pauli, where the evil angels escorting the wicked soul to Hell force it back three times to look at its body, cursing it and saying that what it left it would return to on the day of the resurrection and be requited for all the wickedness
of the body. The good angels carrying the righteous soul to Heaven also turn the soul back, not for the purpose of punishment but to ensure that the soul will recognize its body when it returns to it again.

The original purpose for the turning back has been lost in these dialogues because no longer are the devils or angels present at the deathbed to escort the soul to its destination. The setting, in fact, is no longer the deathbed but a time between death and burial when the body is left alone on its bier. The devils appear only when the soul has finished its final speech.

All nine lines of "Over the Bier of the Worldling" are in the form of the address. The speaker begins by directly cursing the body on the bier, and continues in the same vein throughout the poem:

Nu ṭu vnsele bodi up-on bere list
Were bet ṭine robin of fau & of gris?
(Brown, p. 64, l. 1-2)

The fact that the entire poem constitutes this address adds to the emotional impact of the message.

The debate "In a thestria stud y stod" does not place the dialogue within the framework of a vision, nor does it have any homiletic or preparatory introduction:

3 Van Os, p. 265.
In a thestri stude y stod
a lutel strif to here,
Of a body that was un-god,
ther hit lay on a bere.
Tho spek the gost wyth drery mod,
ant myd sorful chere,
"Wo wrth thy fleyshe, thi foule blod:
whi lyst thou nou here?"
(Wright, p. 346, 11. 1-4)

Several exchanges later the soul reproves the body for having lived too long: "Thou havest y-lyved to longe,
wo wrute the so suykel!" (l. 21).

Apparently the poet simply overhears this conversation. Stylistically this is weak; the absurdity of the separation and vocal speeches of the participants in the debate should be surrounded by a concealing cloak of visionary rhetoric. It is rather surprising that it is not, given the tendency in the fourteenth century toward dream-poetry and visions, and the degree to which this particular theme lends itself to the format of the vision.

II. The Curse or Blessing

The initial curse or blessing on the part of the soul frequently carries with it the expressed wish that both soul and body should have died at birth, had never

4 Spearing, p. 7.
been born, or should have been born an animal rather
than face damnation. The desire to deny God's creation
is evidence of the immense hatred of the flesh which
the soul animated.

The curse of the soul in the Irish homily from
the Leabhar Breac is typical of the initial curses
in these poems:

O stubborn body, temple of the devil,
black, dark, miserable, devilish abode,
stinking well, nest of worms, treasury
of the collection of every sin . . . thou
storehouse of old sins and addition of
new ones, ashamed of good, without shame
of evil.

This curse is returned in kind by the body:

O stubborn soul, hardened, black, dark,
low-born! O rock for hardness in the
matter of receiving God's teaching, thou
dry soil, wretched, ice-bound, inveterate,
thou black, dark well in which the demon
oft bathed after thou hadst done thy
pleasure, thou stinking puddle . . .

The body wishes it were free of the soul, that it
were mere earth or stone or tree. This mudslinging
exchange of insults is more extravagant than the
curses in the poems, doing nothing to forward the

5 Atkinson, pp. 511-12.
argument concerning the responsibility for sin that develops in the poems. By the time of the Porkington debate, the argument is almost purely theological, and the insults have become formulaic.

The homily De Sanctu Andrea contains the speeches of souls leaving their bodies. The good soul praises its body:

Awi leof ware þu me, nu ich shal þe forleten. þu ware me lastful on alle þo þe ich wolde. We ware onmode godes wille to done.

The wicked soul curses its body:

Aweilewei þu fule hold þat ich auere was to þe iteied. Longe habbe ich on þe wuned, swo wo is me þe hwile.6

In this homily the soul also expresses the idea that death for the evil is too long delayed.

Within the context of the curse, the Old English Soul and Body offers a number of alternative possibilities that would have been preferable to human existence:

It would have been better to have been a bird, a fish, a beast on earth, the fiercest of wild animals in the wilderness, or even a worm, than to be a baptized man who is damned.

The righteous soul blesses the body with appropriate praise:

The sorrowful one, "drecrega," is contrasted with the "leofesta," the dear one, and is followed in both instances by the image of corruption of the body by worms.

"Nou is men holi & soint" expresses the curse and hatred of the body's existence in the single line, "Wey þat ic ever in þo com!" (l. 14).
Fragment B of the Worcester Fragments begins the curse with *ubi sunt* rhetoric, the regret at the association being expressed several lines later: "Weile! 
Jet ic souhte so seoruhfulne buc!" (1. 19). The death-bed scene is too vivid to permit the soul's expressing the wish that the body had never been born, or had been born an animal. That wish would weaken the impact of Fragment A, and so the soul contents itself with the reproaches of sin and reminders of corruption.

The curse in "Death" combines both elements in one stanza:

Away þu wrecche fole baly,
ny þu lyst on bere.
Ich schal habbe for þe
feondes to i-veres.
Away þat þu eure
to monne ischape were,
(Morris, p. 173, ll. 82-88)

The curse continues with the *ubi sunt* reminders to the body of mortality until the soul begins the description of the pains of Hell.

The curse in "Sinners, Beware!" is based on the idea of the body as the cause of the sufferings of the soul. This one soul represents the total of all the wicked sent to Hell. In the context of the vision of Judgment Day nothing more is needed than the statement that the body is responsible for damnation. The
idea that it would be better had the wicked not been
born is expressed earlier in the poem: "far is wop and
wonyng, and muche bymenyng, pat heo ibore were."
(Morris, p. 74, ll. 55-57), and again following the
list of sinners:

Soliche betere heom were,
pat heo ibore nere,
\enn \ider schulen wende.
So \at ich eu lere,
Hwo so enes cumet \ere,
He wrephy buten ende.
(Morris, p. 78, ll. 175-80)

In the "Debate of the Body and the Soul" the soul
utters the initial curse, but it is the body that
elaborates on the curse by wishing to have been an
animal.

The first speech contains the usual lamentations
by the soul that it should have had such a wretched
body:

Allas and welewod.
\ou fekele flessh, \ou false blood!
Why lyst \ou \ere styncand so,
\at whylome were so wyld and wood?
(Varnhagen, p. 229, ll. 13-16)

In this debate it is the body that expresses the wish
that it had been an animal:
I scholde have ben but as a schep,
Or as an oxe or as a swyn,
That eet and dronk, lay and sleep,
Slayen and passed al his pyn.
(Wright, p. 341, ll. 137-40)

Before the body asks the soul if there is anything to
be done to avert their damnation, once again it utters
the thought:

Allas! my lyf is lost,
Hat evere leved i for fy sake:
Hat myn harte ne hadde brest,
Whan i was fro my modur take,
Or ben into a pit icast,
With an eddere or with a snake!
(Varnhagen, p. 239, ll. 355-60)

The MS Laud 108 version of these lines is slightly
different:

Allas! that my lif hath last,
that I have lived for sunne sake;
Min herte that anon ne hadde to-borste,
hwan I was fram mi moder take,
I mihte have ben in erthe kest,
and i-leihen and i-roted in a lake.
(Wright, p. 337, ll. 158-60)

The difference is slight, being primarily one of the
details of where the body would rather have been, but
there is a curious distinction between the two versions.
The Royal and the Vernon debates have the body regret
living for the soul's sake, while in the Laud version
the body has lived for sin's sake. The Royal and Vernon
versions imply that the body is blaming the soul here, but the line in the Laud manuscript indicates remorse and repentance on the part of the body. In view of the following lines when the body asks the soul if any aid is now possible, the Laud reading seems more logical.

The Porkington debate does not contain any animal references in either the soul's or the body's speeches, though the initial curse by the soul shows regret that the body had ever been born:

Why hadyst thou not better thi soule keppyte?  
Alas, that ever thou commyst of Adam and Eve!  
(Halliwell, p. 15, ll. 73-74)

Several stanzas later, the soul repeats this thought:

God, that we twayne  
The day of owre byrth we had byn in our grave!  
(Halliwell, p. 17, ll. 110-11)

The body in this debate, however, is more aware of the consequence of sin than is the soul. The body resolutely reminds the soul that it knows it will rot in the grave and that it will arise again at the Judgment to give an account of its sins. It does not indulge in moans that conditions should have been otherwise, but its last speech further reveals its character, when it asks the soul if alms-deeds or offerings will help now. Those usually work, it says. If that had been
its attitude in life, it is no wonder that the soul is so concerned now.

In "In a thestrie studie y stod," the soul's curse appears both in its first and in its final speeches:

Wo wrth thy flayshe, thi foule blod:
whi lyst thou nou here?
(Wright, p. 346, l. 4)

Welawey! ant at the ende, alas:
Body, wo wurth the time that thou y-bore was!
(Wright, p. 348, ll. 93-94)

These curses are almost mild compared with the invective of Soul and Body, the Irish homily, and the "Debate of the Body and the Soul." In the later expressions of the body-and-soul theme, such as those in the Ars Moriendi and the Dance of Death, the curse or blessing has completely disappeared, for the problem is between man and death, not between man and his soul.

III. The Christian Obligations

Integrally related to the curse is the accusation by the soul that the body has sinned greatly. The body has been unwilling to perform the duties of a Christian: almsgiving, confession, attendance at the services, reception of the sacraments, and fasting. In addition, the body is accused of all the seven cardinal sins and their branches. Even in death the body and the soul
indulge in self-pity, which provides the reason for the address or debate, and the accusations of the soul and body attempt to provide the justification for their damnation by blaming each other.

The Old English homily "Sauwle þearf" mentions some of the ways a Christian can achieve salvation. It is necessary to practice humility and to remember the vanity of earthly riches. One must give alms and give to God whatever he himself likes best. One must keep the body pure from lustful sin and incline the heart toward God. 7

"Be Domes Daeg" implies that one can gain Heaven by asking forgiveness for sins and turning toward God: "hwi ne feormast þu mid teara gyte torne synne?" 8

The Irish homily declares that the only ones who can enter Heaven are those who are chaste, sinless, and righteous, who do no evil to their neighbors, who seek not their own benefit, and who do not annoy their neighbors with any kind of evil. The details in this homily accuse the soul of gluttony, deceit, pride, greed, worldliness, and every kind of wickedness, and particularly of not listening to the teaching of God's word. 9

7 Morris, Blickling Homilies, pp. 99-103.
8 Lumby, p. 6, 1. 78-79.
9 Atkinson, pp. 507-09.
The short poem "On Serving Christ" in the MS Jesus College, Oxford, 29, mentions that to gain Heaven, one must be humble and patient and must forsake war. 10

The body-and-soul poems generally make specific reference to the sins of the body, though in Soul and Body there is no mention of neglect of fasting, the services, and the sacraments. The blessed soul praises the body for fasting, poverty, and humility, but the sinful soul only mentions the sins of gluttony, lust, and pride:

Hwæt, þu huru wyrmawyrman gyfl
lyt gepohtest, þa þu lustgryrum callum
ful geæodest.
(Vercelli Book, p. 55, 11. 22-24)

Wære þu þe wiste wlanca nd wines swd,
þrymful þunedest.
(Vercelli Book, p. 55, 11. 39-40)

The soul also asks the question, "What will you respond to God on the Judgment Day?"

Ac hwæt wylt þu þær
on þam domdæge dryhtne sæcgan?
(Vercelli Book, p. 57, 11. 95-96)

In the dialogues, it is the body that addresses this question to the soul.

10 Morris, Old English Miscellany, p. 91, 1. 37.
"Nou is mon holi & soint" makes it quite clear what the body has neglected:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{tu noldes friday festen to non,} \\
\text{Ne ye setterday aemesse don,} \\
\text{Ne yen sonneday gon to churche,} \\
\text{no cristene verkiis wrche.} \\
\text{(Brown, p. 31, ll. 15-18)}
\end{align*}
\]

This is one of the more explicit and concise references to the duties expected of Christians, and it comprises the bulk of the soul's address in this short poem.

Gluttony, pride, and avarice are the sins of the body in "Death." In the context of the ubi sunt questions, the soul asks about the sweet dishes and bread and ale the body had been fond of. The body always looked to increase its wealth:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Euer tu were abuten} \\
\text{to echen pin ayhte.} \\
\text{For ti we beo pan ende} \\
\text{bofe bi-pauhte.} \\
\text{(Morris, p. 177, ll. 124-28)}
\end{align*}
\]

The remark that his relatives will seldom have masses sung or make offerings for him indicates that the body seldom did these things either and for his sins cannot expect his relatives to perform these duties. The prayer at the end of the poem only mentions singing masses, doing almsdeeds, and remaining in concord with the Church as ways to avoid Hell.
The line "Ai Þat ich hatede hit Þuhte Þe ful god" (ll. 186-87) demonstrates the contrast between what the soul wanted and what the body provided. This same contrast appears in Soul and Body when the damned soul claims that in the body's gluttony the soul was starving and that when the body fasted, the blessed soul was fed.

The soul in the Worcester Fragments claims that the body willingly listened to the devil to avoid going to church:

\[\text{purh þæs deofles løre, þeo þe lìkede wel,}\]
\[\text{þæ ðe wel tuhte his ðearpe ond tuhte ðe to him.}\]
\[\text{þu iherdest þene drem; he was drihten ful loþ.}\]
\[\text{He swefede þe mid þen swæsige; swote þu slepest}\]
\[\text{Longe on þine bedde; loþ was þe to chirche.}\]
\[\text{Ne mostes þu iheren þeo holie dræms,}\]
\[\text{þeo bellen rungen, þet unker becnunge wæs,}\]
\[\text{Ne holie løre, þe unker help wære.}\]
\[(\text{Buchholz, p. 7, F. E, ll. 21-28)}\]

The body refused to redeem his soul with masses and did nothing for God:

\[\text{Noldest þu nouht þærof dælen for drihtenes willon.}\]
\[(\text{Buchholz, p. 3, F. B, l. 33)}\]

The major sin of pride is expressed by the soul in Fragment B, again within the framework of the ubi sunt questions. "Where are the pounds you extracted from the poor? Where are your gold dishes and rich
garments?" The heirs are anxious to divide the estate. The house has been swept clean of every trace of the dead man. The sin of gluttony receives this notice:

For pin wombe was pin god ond pin wulder was iscend.  
Forloren pu hauest peo ece blisse; binumen pu hauest pe paradis;  
Binumen pe is pet holi lond; pen deofle pu bist isold on hond.  
For nolest pu nefre habben inouh, buten pu hefdest unifouh.  
(Buchholz, p. 6, F. D, 11. 36-39)

Scattered throughout the poem are references to strife, discord, perjury, deceit, and unrighteousness. Fragment G contains the idea that the sin of treason was committed against Christ the King by the breaking of the baptismal vows.

"Sinners, Beware!" opens with the statement that it is the devil who makes us sin through his envy of men:

He makep vs don sunnen,  
And habben of mon-kunne  
Swi^e muchel onde.  
(Morris, p. 72, 11. 7-9)

We must honor God and pray, and avoid pride. The devil wants to ensnare us with the seven deadly sins:
Frude and modynesse,
Ne arhhede ne scrynesse.
And nype and ek onde,
Wrappe and swikelnesse,
Hordom and yaernesse,
Peos we auhte understonde.
(Morris, p. 74, ll. 79-84)

The poor and the rich both must practice humility and patience.

After a listing of the seven cardinal sins, examples of the sinners from all social classes is provided, including monks who hope to enjoy their wealth, priests who say mass for greed, soldiers who have killed fellow Christians, false pleaders, proud and adulterous ladies, and peasants who do not tithe.

We should repent on our deathbed:

Alle vre sunnen endye,
Bi-wepen and bi-reusye,
And so to heouene wende.
(Morris, p. 78, ll. 184-86),

do penance for our sins with prayer and alms:

And vre sunnen aquenche
Mid beden and myd almesse.
(Morris, p. 79, ll. 218-19),

and make our confession:

Vte we loten vs schryue.
(Morris, p. 79, l. 229)
At the conclusion of the poem, Christ addresses the sinners who are bound for Hell, explaining to them how they earned their damnation. The sinners claim that they never saw Christ in need:

\[\text{Louerd myd vre eye,}\]
\[\text{Neuer we } \text{f} \text{e ne yseyen}\]
\[\text{Hwenne } \text{pu neode heddest.}\]
\[(\text{Morris, p. 82, ll. 304-06})\]

In a paraphrase of Matthew 25:31-46, Christ replies:

\[\text{He sey } \text{penne Myne}\]
\[\text{Poure vn-hole hyne}\]
\[\text{To eure dure come.}\]
\[\text{For chele hy gunne hwyne,}\]
\[\text{For hunger hi hedde pyne.}\]
\[\text{Ye nolden nyme gone.}\]
\[\text{\textcopyright errof ye nolde hede,}\]
\[\text{Ne yeuen of eure brede,}\]
\[\text{Of drenche ne of clope.}\]
\[\text{To day ye schule } y \text{-frade}\]
\[\text{And vnder-fo lupre meye.}\]
\[\text{For ye me becp ful lope.}\]
\[(\text{Morris, p. 82, ll. 307-18})\]

This paraphrase of Matthew is also used for praising the righteous, whose reward for caring for the poor is Heaven. Since this poem is primarily concerned with admonishing sinners, it provides many details of the sins for Christians to avoid and the virtues to acquire.

"Over the Bier of the Worldling" sums up the teaching in "Sinners, Beware!" in a single line, "Pu
let us pare stonde in forist & in is" (1, 7)
and for this the "vnseli bodi" has lost the joy of
Paradise.

"On Doomsday" stresses the value of giving alms:

\[\text{Bute heore almes-dede}
\text{Heore erynde schal bere,}
\]
\[
\text{(Morris, p. 165, ll. 39-40)}
\]

The rich who are clothed in fine garments shall pay
for their pride in the next world.

The body in "In a thesttr stude y stod" is ac-
cused of cheating and giving false judgments:

\[\text{False domes deme, chaunge two for fyve;}
\text{Falsenesse ant swykedom thou wrohst es ful ryve.}
\]
\[
\text{(Wright, p. 346, ll. 6-7)}
\]

The soul asks the body where its pride is now. The
body replies that it is well aware "that y shal rotien
for al my muchele pride" (1, 34). This particular sin
receives most of the attention in this debate. The
prayer at the end asks that we be saved from pride,
which except for the sins mentioned in the soul's
first speech, is the only sin the soul is concerned
with. As for the element of self-pity in this debate,
the body is entirely free of it. All it wants to do
is get on with the business of corruption.
The two debates based on the *Visio Fulberti* are the most explicit in setting forth the sins of the body and the duties of the righteous. The "Debate of the Body and the Soul" begins with the sin of pride, as do most of these poems, and contributes an unpleasant image of gluttony; the body has fed so well in life that there is more flesh for the worms to consume.

The seven cardinal sins appear here, all of which the body has committed:

Gloterie and lecherie
prude and wicke covetise,
Nithe and onde and envie to God
of hevene and alle hise,
And in unlust for to lye,
waste, wane, non of thise,
That I schal nouh ful dere abye,
a weyle sore may me grise.
(Wright, p. 336, ll. 93-96)

The soul claims that the body obeyed the three enemies of man, and in listening to the devil, did all that the world bade and all that the flesh craved. The devil, the world, and the flesh were contributing factors in the body's sins:

The fend of he'lle that haveth enviże
to mankinne, and evere hath had,
Was in us as a spie,
to do sum god hwan I the bad;
The world he toc to companiże,
that mani a soule haved for-rad,
They thre wisten thi folye,
and madin wretche the al mad.
(Wright, p. 337, ll. 129-33)
To be saved, one should do penance, fast, and keep watch against the devil, who tries to tempt us to sin. Before the demons arrive, the soul utters a final complaint against the body's neglect of those practices which would have assured them salvation:

But haddest thou a lytel are,  
whan us was lyf togidere lent,  
whan pou pe feltest seek and sare,  
Shrive pe and pe fend ishent,  
And have late ronne on rewely tere,  
In weye of amendement,  
Ne thurst us nevere have had care,  
pat god ne wolde us wel defent.  
(Varnhagen, p. 240, ll. 377-84)

The final prayer reminds sinners to repent, saying that Christ's mercy is greater than any sin:

Tho that sunful ben, I rede him red,  
to schriven hem and rewen sore:  
Nevere was sunne i-don so gret,  
that Cristes merci ne is wel more.  
(Wright, p. 339, ll. 244-45)

In the Visio Philiberti the soul, instead of accusing the body of pride, claims that it was the body that caused it to turn away from God:

But thou, alas! madyste me to dyspyse  
My God.  
(Halliwell, p. 16, ll. 103-04)

The body never did penance for its sins, which involved the usual gluttony and love of worldly possessions,
extortion, and lack of pity for the poor. The "old aliance" (the devil, the world, and the flesh) and the sins they represent, are blamed for the body's misdeeds. The soul says the body refused to make vigils, to fast, or to give alms, being confident that it would not die. The arrogance of refusing to consider one's ultimate end is a form of pride to which the bodies in these poems are addicted:

I may lyve longe yeyt, I have no rede
To amend myself; of deth I take no hede:
I wylle dance whyle the world wylle pype;
The frut fallyt syld, but yeys hit be rype.
(Halliwell, p. 25, ll. 291-94)

The image in the "Debate" of the devil working in man like a spy appears in this debate in terms of the world's being like a thief:

The world methinke I may reysemble wele
To a thefe that came, both faynd and close,
And when thou wenyst he be as traw as styelle,
He sonnyt dyssaywyth the, thou schalt never odyre suppose,
But as a sarpent that creepyt under they roose,
Lythe awayet, every tyme and houre,
To sley the best that dare toche the floure.
(Halliwell, p. 26, ll. 323-39)

The world is like a thief and a serpent, waiting to attack man. This is why it is necessary for Christians to be alert and watchful to the wiles of man's three enemies.
In its final speech the body tries to buy its way out of Hell with last-minute offerings and works of charity. The final stanzas of the poem contain advice to those Christians who wish to avoid damnation, based on the steps taken by the royal hermit Philberte to ensure his own salvation. Taking vows of poverty, he became a hermit and made a humble promise that he would live in chastity, seeking always God's will. He directs good Christians to remember the day of their death and to provide for their souls that they may come to Heaven.

IV. The Grave as the Dwelling-Place of the Body

The sin of Adam leads all men to death and the grave. There is no escape from the low-roofed, narrow-walled house prepared for us. A Latin epitaph from the first century A.D. states this theme:

The rich man builds a house, but the wise a tomb.
For that is but our lodging; this our home.
There for a while we sojourn; here abide.11

The twelfth-century poem "The Grave" is the most somber and graphic poetic expression of the theme of the grave as the dwelling-place of the body. In this

poem are details of a theme found in virtually all of the body-and-soul poems. Dudley maintains that, on the basis of the grave motif, "The Grave" was the source for the Worcester Fragments, but the notion apparently captured the imagination of medieval writers, for the theme appears in a number of places, many of them unrelated to the body-and-soul legend.

"The Grave" is an address, presumably spoken by Death. In cold, objective terms the speaker describes the grave that is prepared for every man. A house was readied for man before his birth. Its height and depth are not measured, nor is it closed up until man dies. The house is not highly timbered, and the sides are low. The roof lies on man's breast; he shall dwell in the earth, cold, dim, and dark. Death holds the key.

While this poem contains the major imagery of this theme, another equally ancient notion that figures in the poems is that of the seven feet of earth, all that man may claim in death. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle's entry on the death of William the Conqueror mentions the seven feet of earth that is all the once-mighty king possesses. 

The Heimskringla of Snorri Sturluson (1178-1241) contains an account of the Battle of Stamford Bridge,


in which Harold of England says that he will give the Norwegian king, for his trouble, "seven feet of English ground, or as much more as he may be taller than other men."\(^{14}\)

The Latin *Visio Fulberti* also contains a reference to those seven feet of earth:

\[
\text{Quid valent palatia, pulcrae vel quid aedes?}
\text{vix nunc tuus tumulus septem caput pedes.}\(^{15}\)
\text{(Wright, p. 96, 11. 21-22)}
\]

The popular fourteenth-century moral poem "*With I and E*" also contains a reference to this idea:

\[
\text{Of all thine aughte that thee was raughte}
\text{shall thou nought have, I hete,}
\text{But seven fote thare-in to rote,}
\text{and in a winding shete.}\(^{16}\)
\]

The Old English *Soul and Body* does not contain the explicit details of the grave which the later poems have, though there are a few references to the body in the grave:


\(^{15}\) *What are your palaces and beautiful possessions worth now? Your tomb is now seven feet of earth.*

The bones lie bare, the body is deaf and dumb; the body cannot reply to the soul:

Lige$ dust hit w*xs,
ne m*eg him ondswær ænge gehatan,
georum gaste, geoce c*dfe irocfe.
(Vercelli Book, p. 57, 11. 105-07)

"Nou is mon holi & soint" contains several lines that relate to the grave theme, though they are more like the burial preparations seen in the Worcester Fragment A:

Me prikit him in on vul clohit
& legett him by þe wout,
A-moruen boþin sout & norit
Me nimit þat bodi & berrit hit forit,
Me grauit him put óþer ston,
þer-in me leit þe fukul bon.
(Brown, p. 31, 11. 7-12)

"Death" has three stanzas which describe the burial and the grave:

Anon so þe saule,
bip i-faren vt.
Me nymer þe lycome
and preoneþ in a clut,
\[ \text{pat wes so mody and so strong,} \\
\text{and so swyfe prud} \\
\text{And wes iwuned to weryen} \\
\text{mony a veyr schrud.} \\
\text{(Morris, p. 173, ll. 65-75)} \]

\[ \text{Nu schal pin halle} \\
\text{myd spade beon i-wrouht.} \\
\text{And pu schalt per-inne} \\
\text{wrecche beon ibrouht.} \\
\text{Nu schulle pine weden} \\
\text{alle beon isouht.} \\
\text{Me wule swoopen pin hus} \\
\text{and vt myd pe swofte.} \]

\[ \text{pi bur is sone ibuld} \\
\text{pat pu schalt wunyen inne.} \\
\text{be rof and pe virste} \\
\text{schal ligge on pine chynne.} \\
\text{Nu pe schulle wurmes} \\
\text{wunyen wip-inne.} \\
\text{Ne may me heom vt dryuen} \\
\text{myd none kunnes gynne.} \\
\text{(Morris, pp. 178-79, ll. 145-60)} \]

The last two stanzas show a great deal of similarity to the images in "The Grave," particularly in the notion of the house built with a spade, the body brought inside, and the roof that lies on the chin.

The Worcester Fragments duplicate this same imagery:

\[ \text{Nu pu hauest neowe hus, inne beprungen;} \\
\text{Lowe becpe helewowes, unheize becpe} \\
\text{sidwowes;} \\
\text{pin rof liip on pine breoste ful neih,} \\
\text{Colde is pe ibedded, clopes bideled;} \\
\text{Nullep pine hinen clopes pe senden,} \\
\text{For heom punchep al to lut, pet pu heom} \\
\text{bilefdest.} \]

\text{(Buchholz, F. C, p. 4, ll. 29-34)}

Lines 30-31 of this passage are clearly taken from those in "The Grave":
The other passage from the Worcester Fragments dealing with this theme mentions that the sinful body has defiled the very earth in which it lies; this notion is unique to the Fragments:

Clene bifi þeo earpe, ær þu to hire tocume;
Ac þu heo afülest mid þine fule holde;
þet is þet fule holde, afursed from monnen.
Nu þu bist bihuded on alre horde fulest,
On deope seaþe, on durelease huse.
(Buchholz, F. E. p. 6, 11. 4-8)

The idea of the specific amount of earth necessary to bury a body is seen in Fragment A, as the man's body is measured for the grave:

Mont hine met mid one þerde ond þa molde seotten.
Ne mot he of þære molde habben nammore.
(Buchholz, p. 2, 11. 34-35)

There is a trace of the ubi sunt theme in the lines from "Sinners, Beware!" which describe the body in the grave:

Ne lyþ and roteþ lowe.
Namaþ he þat boo his owe.
Of aȝhte no of londs,
Ne namaþ he may ne mowe.
(Morris, p. 79, 11. 205-08)
In the debates based on the *Visio Fulberti* the contrast is more explicitly enunciated between the vast lands the body controlled in life and the small amount of earth that is all he can lay claim to now.

"Sinners, Beware!" also has several lines on the burial:

\[ \text{Hwenne bali me byndep,} \\
\text{On here me hyne bi-winde,} \\
\text{And bryngep hine on eorpe.} \]

*(Morris, p. 78, ll. 199-201)*

The Worcester Fragments initiated the homely details of the burial scene, and in several of these poems they constitute an introduction to the details of the grave.

"In a thestri stude y stod" does not contain lengthy details of the grave theme within the context of the dialogue. The body mentions several times that the grave is his final resting-place:

\[ \text{Nou ys come her my deth ant my ende day,} \\
\text{Bounden am y hond ant fot that y ne may away.} \]

*(Wright, p. 346, ll. 16-19)*

\[ \text{Mine hous ys maked of erthe, y-turne ys al to kare.} \]

*(Wright, p. 347, l. 43)*

After the soul has departed for Hell and the body for the grave, the poet tells us that the worms sit on the body's breast and eat his chin. The final prayer
after the dialogue is concluded contains the imagery from "The Grave," here also combined with the *ubi sunt* motif:

> Alle we shu'le deye, be we never so proude,  
> For alle owre toures heye, ligge we shule throute,  
> In forstes ant in snowes, in shures ant in cloude,  
> Of alle oure riche clothes tid us never a shroude.  
> (Wright, p. 349, ll. 113-16)

> Fare we shule to a bour that is oure long hom,  
> Nouther more ne lasse bote from the hed to ton,  
> Ther shal rotie ure fleyshe al to the bon.  
> When the flor is at thy rug, the rof ys at thy neose,  
> Al this woordes [sic] blisse nis nout worth a peose.  
> (Wright, p. 349, ll. 120-24)

Lines 113-16 are similar in theme to the brief lyric from the MS Trinity College, Cambridge, 323, fol. 47b:

> Wen þe turuf is þi tuur  
> & þi put is þi bour,  
> þi wel & þi wite rote  
> sulen wormes to note.  
> Wat helpit þe þenne  
> al þe worilde wnne?17

The same theme is also found in "Earth upon Earth":

> Yit schait thou erthe for alle thi erthe  
> Make thou neuer so gay.

17 Brown, p. 54.
All of this imagery is the same type as that in "The Grave." There is no evidence for considering "The Grave" the direct source for this expression in all the poems, though it is curious that frequently the same expressions are repeated.

The idea that the roof of the grave rests on the chin of the body is also seen in the "Debate of the Body and the Soul":

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{fy boure is beeld ful colde in clay,} \\
\text{fy rof to reste upon fy chin.}
\end{align*}
\]

(Varnhagen, p. 232, ll. 95-96)

The Vernon manuscript agrees with the Royal in this element, though the earliest manuscript of this poem, the Laud 108, does not contain this detail, nor that of the seven feet of earth:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Now shalt you have lond ne lyth,} \\
\text{But sevene fote, onethes pat.}
\end{align*}
\]

(Varnhagen, p. 231, ll. 83-84)

The Laud 108 manuscript repeats the idea that the body is deaf and dumb, which was last seen in the Old English Soul and Body:

\[18\] H. G. Fiedler, "Earth upon Earth," MLR, 3 (1907), 223,
Def and curb I liggge on bare,
that I ne may storis hand ne fet.
(Wright, p. 335, l. 72)

This debate does not borrow as much from the Visio Fulberti as does the later version in the Farkington manuscript. The Visio Philiberti draws on the motif of the seven feet of earth:

Thi hale is now of vii fete
(Halliwell, p. 19, l. 94),

and mentions the roof which rests upon the nose:

For now thy haulle roofe lyth uppon that noose;
Hit is so streyt, thou hast no membre
at ese.
(Halliwell, p. 18, ll. 138-39)

The soul speaks ironically about the body's final resting place:

Thi wester nowe is nothing presiouse,
The wallure therof is but symepul i-now3e;
The schape me thingk is not make ful curiuse
Al thi bede-schettes beth alle row3e.
(Halliwell, p. 19, ll. 169-72)

Towards the end of the dialogue the body contrasts its former state with its present condition:
"On Doomsday" has no mention of the grave as the dwelling-place of the body because the setting is at the final judgment, when the bodies have left their graves and rejoined their souls, and the two are judged as one. "Over the Bier of the Worldling" also contains no reference to this element; its brevity and economy concentrate on the neglected Christian virtues and loss of Paradise.

The details in the grave motif common among the poems are the cramped quarters of the grave, the immobility of the body, the fact that the roof of the house rests on the chin, breast, or nose, and the seven feet of earth that is all that now belongs to him. The grave is called a house, a bower, or a hall, in ironic comparison to the social consequence of the body while alive. This element is occasionally combined with the ubi sunt motif in order to emphasize the contrast between the former life of the body and its present condition. The mention of the grave is also related to burial scenes in some of the poems.
V. The Corruption of the Body

Accompanying the theme of the grave as the dwelling-place of the body is the corruption that attends the body upon burial and the worms that aid the process. This was a theme with which medieval writers were much taken, particularly in the fourteenth century, when the various epidemics of plague which swept through Europe brought into prominence a heightened awareness of man's mortality. The loathsomeness of the body, its lack of friends, and the signs of old age and approaching death appear in several early homilies as details of the body's corruption. Wulfstan's Homily XXX, which is rich in images from the body-and-soul legend, contains a list of the failing faculties of man in which the eyes become dim, the tongue hisses, the ears fail, the hands become weak, the hair falls out, the teeth turn yellow, and the breath stinks.¹⁹

A short poem from the Jesus College manuscript entitled "Signs of Death" objectively rehearses the indications of approaching death:

Hwenne thin heou bloketh,
And thi strengthe woketh,
And thi neose coldeth,
And thi tunge voldeth,
And the byleueth thi breth,

¹⁹ Van Os, p. 185.
And thi lif the at-geth,
he nymeth the nuthe wreche,
On flore me the strecceth,
And leyth the on bere,
And bi-preconeth the on here,
And doth the ine putte, wurmes ivere,
Theonne bith his sone of the,
als so thu neuer here.20

The Irish homily from the Leabhar Breac refers to the body as a "nest of worms,"21 and "The Grave" contains two references to the worms and the bodily corruption in the grave:

瑟 pu scealt wunien and wurmes pe todeleð.
(Buchholz, p. 11, l. 16)

For some pu bist ladlic and lad to iseonne.
(Buchholz, p. 11, l. 22)

The Blickling Homily "Sauwle pearf" also mentions that the body must rot in the earth:

pone gelemped paet eft æfter feawum dagum
oppe feawum gearum, paet se ilca lichoma
by3 on byrgenne from wyrum freten &
forglendred.22

Wulfstan's Homily XL also contains a similar passage:

21 Atkinson, p. 511.
22 Blickling Homilies, p. 99.
And þonne scæn þam líchenan bið lǽlice legerbed gegyrwed, and in þære cealdan foldan gebrostmær, and þæt lic þær to fulnesse weorðæs, and þæm wælslitendum wyrmum weorðæd to ðæt.23

The MS British Museum Additional 37049, fols. 32b-35a, contains a lengthy dialogue between a body and the worms, set into a vision, which occurred in a "ceson of huge mortalite, Of sondre disseses with the pestilence,"24 The body, that of a woman, complains to the worms that they are discourteous to her former beauty and loveliness. The worms tell her that they will only stay until her bones are scoured clean and fall apart; only they can stand her stinking flesh. They sent lice and fleas as messengers while she lived to prepare her for vermin in her coffin; the worms tell her that receiving crosses of ashes on Ash Wednesday should remind men of death. The body apologizes for her pride and asks that she and the worms "be frendes at this sodayn brayde, Neghours and luf as before we gan do. Let vs kys and dwell to gedyr euermore."25 Although sinful, this body prays at the poem's end to be received into Heaven. The prologue to this work is also an example of the theme of worms and corruption:

23 Van Cs., p. 186.
25 Brunner, p. 34.
Take hede vn to my fygure here abowne
And se how sumtyme I was fressche and gay,
Now turned to wormes mete and corrupcoun,
But fowle erth and stykyng siyle and clay. 26

The attitude of the body towards the worms that eat
her flesh in this poem is similar to the attitude of
the blessed soul in Soul and Body, who regrets the
inconvenience caused its body by the worms, but assures
the body that they shall be reunited in Paradise. There
is no hint that the corruption is a means of punishing
the body; this is simply what one can expect to happen
after death.

This same manuscript also contains a poem on the
Dance of Death theme which refers to worms:

Why is thi hert so sett in gladnes
For to wormes mete thou art grathed & made,
For erth is gifen to erth in sothfastnes
The flesche is borne in to dethe to be hade. 27

The line, "For erth is gifen to erth in sothfast-
nes," resembles the poem "Earth upon Earth," one
version of which follows the Visio Philiberti in the
Porkington manuscript. One of the stanzas in this
version dwells on the worm theme:

27 Brunner, p. 28.
Why that erth lovis erthe merwel me thinke,
For when erth uppon erth is broght to the brynke,
Or why erth uppon erth wyl swet or swynke,
Then schal erth frou the erth have a fool stynke
To smele,
Wars then the caryone that lyis in the fele.28

Another version of the same poem found in the Brighton manuscript expresses the same theme in simpler terms:

For whanne erthe vnder erthe
Is brouhte withynne brynke,
Thanne schal erthe of the erthe
Haue an oribyle stynke.29

The two-stanza epilogue to the Visio Philiberti refers to the signs of age which herald death:

When age commyth, and schorteth is here brethe,
And dethe commyth, he is not far behynde.30

"With I and E" ends with a reminder of the death and corruption that are man's lot:

What so it be that we here see--the fairhed of thy face,

28 Halliwell, p. 41.
29 Fiedler, p. 222.
30 Halliwell, p. 39.
Thy blee so bright, thy main, thy might,
thy mouth that mirthes mase;
All mon as wase to powder passe, to grave
when that thou gase;
A grisely gest then bes thou prest in armes
for to brace.
With I and E—leve thou me—bes nane, as I
thee hete,
Of all thy kith dare sleep thee with a night
under thy shete.31

The fourteenth-century macaronic poem "Esto
Mortis" also mentions the worms:

Vnde vir extolleris, thow schalte be wormes
mete.
Qui quamdiu vixeris thy synnys wolte thou
not lete.32

As these examples indicate, the investigation of
the effects of the worms and corruption on the buried
body was a tremendously popular addition to the memento
mori motif in medieval literature. However, the temp-
tation to revel in the hideous details was too great
to allow the allegorical interpretation of the worms
to emerge in most cases. Innocent III's De Contemptu
Mundi relates sin to beasts and reptiles; sin is des-
cribed as the worm that gnaws the conscience and the

31 Oxford Book of Medieval English Verse, pp. 407-
08, 11. 47-48.

32 Carlton Brown, Religious Lyrics of the XIV
Century (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952), p. 239,
11. 7-8.
corruption that rots the soul. Only one of the body- and-soul poems mentions this allegorical view of worms, "Sinners, Beware!":

And pe wurmes eke
pat do$ pe saule teone.
(Morris, p. 73, ll. 53-54)

The remainder of the poems are as concerned as the examples mentioned above to demonstrate the terrible power of the worm over the body. The soul occasionally mentions that the corruption of the body is the result of sin, but virtually nowhere is it expressed that these worms represent sin. Much more common is either a fairly dispassionate account of the disintegration of the body or an almost ghoulish concern with the way in which the corruption transforms it. The catalogue of the signs of old age becomes in some cases a list of the parts of the body as they perish under the onslaught of time and the worms.

The soul in Soul and Body tells its body that now it lies in the earth and feeds worms:

ond pe sculon her moldwyrmas manige ceowan,
slitan sarlice swearte wihta,
gifre ond grædige.
(Vercelli Book, p. 56, ll. 72-74)

33 Solo, p. 416.
In a detached but moving passage the soul says that
the body means little now to its relatives and friends:

Ne eart þu þon leofra nānigum lifigendra
men to gemæcan, ne meder ne ðæder
ne nānigum gesyþban, þonne se sweatha hreþen.
(Vercelli Book, p. 56, ll. 52-54)

The outstanding example of worms and corruption
is, of course, Gifer and his team. In lines 103-26
of Soul and Body, the disintegration of the body is
described. The head is cleft, the hands are disjointed,
the jaws gape; worms chew up the neck, drink the blood,
and tear the tongue. Gifer is the one who prepares
the way for the other worms to follow by tearing the
tongue and teeth and eating through the eyes into the
head, so that the previously mentioned decomposition
may take place. "Bið þonne wyrma gifel, æt on eorþan"
(Vercelli Book, p. 58, ll. 124-35).

The phrase "wyrm to wiste" is also used by the
blessed soul in commiserating with its body on its
present state of corruption and reinforces the
parallell structure of the poem. The blessed soul
instructs the body that this is the portion God ordained
for the flesh, but that flesh and soul shall be reunited
and enjoy Heaven as one.
"Nou is mon holi & soint" combines the *ubi sunt* motif of contrast of former and present condition with the worm element:

Neir ðu never so prud
of hude ð of hawe ikud,
þu salt in horpe wonien and wormes þe
to-cheuen
& of alle ben iot þat her þe vere lewe.
(Brown, p. 31, ll. 19-22)

This poem also contains the idea that the body has become so loathsome that its friends and relatives shun its company. This idea reaches the height of horror in the "Debate of the Body and the Soul" with the image of the corpse walking down the street and its former friends running away in terror.

"Death" dwells on the decay of the individual parts of the body:

*Nv schal for-rotyen
*þine tep and þi tunge
þi lawe and þi milte
þi lyure and þi lunge,
And þi protobolle
þat þu hide sunge,
And þe schalt in þe putte
Vaste been iþrunge.
(Morris, p. 178, ll. 169-76)

The corpse's former friends flee:

*Nv heo wullep wrecche
Aile þe forlice
And as if that were not enough, "Nu þe schulle wurmes wunyen wið-ynne" (Morris, p. 178, ll. 157-58).

The list in the Worcester Fragments of the signs of approaching death is similar to that found in the Wulfstan homily. The ears become deaf, the eyes become dim, the nose becomes pointed, the lips shrink, the tongue shortens, the mind goes, and the strength fails. The worms destroy all that is left. The body did not believe that it would ever die and dwell with worms:

Ne icneowe þu þe sulfen
þet þu scoldest mid wurmen wunien in eorpan.
(Suchholz, F. C, p. 4, ll. 27-28)

This poem also contains the longest and most detailed passages dealing with the destruction caused by worms:

þe sculen nu waxen wurmes be siden,
þeo hungrie feond, þeo þe freten wulfe,
Heo wulfe þe freclícfe freten, for heon þin
fleas likeþ.
Heo wulfe þret þin fuþe holde, þeo hwule
heo hit findeþ.
ponne hit al biþ agon, heo wulfe gnawen
þin bon,
þeo orleasæ wurmes. Heo windeþ on þin armes;
Heo brekeþ þin breoste ðond borþeþ þurh ofer al.
Heo rooweþ in ond ut; þet hord is hore owen.
Ond so heo wulfe waden wide in þine wombe,
Todelen þine ðermes, þeo þe deore waren,
Lifre ond þine lihte lódclice torenden.
(Suchholz, F. C, pp. 4-5, ll. 37-48)
The images of the worms entwined in the arms of the corpse and the grisly grin are extremely effective, but these passages have lost the tone of objectivity that characterizes other manifestations of this motif. The soul takes perverse pleasure in detailing to the body exactly what will happen in the grave.

Fragment E contains a shorter account of the destruction of the body:

Poetically this is a more chilling description than the longer ones in the earlier fragments. The two short sentences which form line 11 show the final dissolution of the skeleton after the worms have destroyed everything else. "Liggeffe bon stille" appears in line 21 of Fragment A as the end of the list of signs of
approaching death, and in this context the bone represents the corpse. In Fragment E, however, it represents ultimate immobility and disintegration.

The Worcester Fragments expand on the worm theme in much the same way as "The Grave" dwells on the details of the body's house, though in the Fragments the theme is mingled with others from the body-and-soul legend, and it is not only the elaboration of the motif of worms and corruption.

In "Sinners, Beware!" the worms grind the body to ashes:

\[\begin{align*}
\&s\ wurmes\ hine\ ifyndep \\
To\ axe\ heo\ hyne\ gryn\&p \\
\&ar-to\ we\ schule\ iwurp.
\end{align*}\]

(Morris, p. 78, ll. 202-04)

The notion of the immobility of the corpse is expressed in conjunction with that of corruption:

\[\begin{align*}
He\ lyp\ and\ rotep\ lowe, \\
Nauep\ he\ pat\ beo\ his\ owe, \\
of\ ayhte\ ne\ of\ londe, \\
Ne\ nauep\ he\ may\ ne\ mowe \\
pat\ durre\ one\ prow, \\
Bi\ hym\ sitte\ ne\ stonde.
\end{align*}\]

(Morris, p. 79, ll. 205-10)

"Over the Bier of the Worldling" makes brief mention of this theme:
Both the body and the soul in "In a thestri stude y stod" contribute observations on the impending corruption of the flesh:

\begin{quote}
Wormes holdeth here mot, domes byndeth faste; maked he habbeth here lot on my fleyshe to cast. Momy fre bodi shal roten, ne be y nout the laste.
\end{quote}

(Wright, p. 347, ll. 26-28)

The soul responds that "wormes shulen ete thy fleyshe for al thyn heye parage" (l. 32), and the body agrees:

\begin{quote}
Y wot that y shal rotien for al my muchele pride. Wormes shule ete myn herte ant my whyte syde. Stynken worse then any hound so hit may bytyde.
\end{quote}

(Wright, p. 347, ll. 34-36)

He is nou wo y-noh, myn bones aren al bare.

(Wright, p. 347, l. 42)

When the soul has departed for Hell, the body is buried "under mold" and its eyes are cold. "The wormes sitteth on ys brest and eteth of ys chyn" (Wright, p. 348, l. 103). The body in this debate is more content to rot than most, and complacently echoes all the soul says about its corruption. The handling of this element in
this poem more closely resembles the objectivity of "The Body and the Worms"; there is no suggestion that the body is punished for its sin by corruption, and if the soul intends to frighten this body into repentance by recounting the depredations of the worms, its tactics do not succeed.

The references in the Visio Philiberti to the worms and the dissolution of the body are not as detailed as in others of these poems. The soul frequently addresses the body as "O stynkyng fleche!" (1. 106), "Thow fylthye fleche!" (1. 154), and "O mollyd carryen!" (1. 270), more as an epithet than as a condemnation. The soul tells the body that "the wormes bene thi kyn and thin alyanse" (1. 95), and lists the decaying parts of the body:

Thi moth, thi eene, thi tonge, and thi brethe,
Thi fete and thi handys stynke alle of dethe!
(Halliwell, p. 18, ll. 139-40)

The soul attempts to threaten the body:

And tho thi skynne be neuer so hard and towge,
Jet wylle the wormus into thi body crepe;
Wherefore, thou fleche, thou hast grete caus
to wepe.
(Halliwell, p. 19, ll. 173-75)
The body that "lyist here dede and palle of hewe" (l. 77) replies that without the soul, the body is indeed cold and motionless:

That the body, the wyche is nothinge warme, 
But deyce and colde, shuld put forth his arme, 
Or withoutt the soule eny membur meve; 
Withoutt the soule the body may nothing greve. 
(Halliwell, p. 23, ll. 249-52)

The body describes the action of death:

Now ame I dede, my colour is appalyde; 
My sole is gone, the body may not meve. 
(Halliwell, p. 28, ll. 379-80)

What is the body, whenne hit is one bere? 
Hit is not ellus but wormus mete. 
(Halliwell, p. 29, ll. 390-91)

In this poem the expressions of the worm and corruption motif are secondary to the theological argument carried on by the body and soul; thus they achieve the more objective tone of "In a thestri stude y stod" and "The Body and the Worms."

A more personal note appears in the "Debate of the Body and the Soul," along with the idea that the body's friends have all deserted it:

Ne nis no levedi brut on ble, 
That we'l weren i-woned of the to lete, 
That wolde lye a niht bi the, 
For nou ht that men niht hem bi-here;
Thou art unseemly for to se,
Uncomli for to cirssen suwete;
Thou ne havest frend that ne wolde fie,
Cone thouu sterlinder in the strete.
(Wright, p. 335, ll. 57-60)

The image of the corpse stalking down the street is vivid and effective, as is the thought of spending the night with the corpse. The body is resigned to its eventual corruption; Sampson and Caesar both died, and as worms gnawed their throats, so will they the body's. The body realizes that death has wrought a change; the idea that the corpse is deaf and dumb appears here, expressed by both the body and the soul:

Lōūi chaunched is my chere,
Sin the tyme that thouʒ me let.
Def and dumb I ligge on bere,
That I ne may sterin hand ne fet.
(Wright, p. 335, ll. 71-72)

þyn eyen are blynde, and kun not kenne,
þyn mouth is doumb, þyn eren def;
And þou þat lyst here grennende,
Fro þe cometh a wikked wef.
(Varnhagen, p. 235, ll. 253-56)

This last speech by the soul combines the ideas of the list of the decaying parts, the muteness of the body, the corpse's grin, and the stench of corruption.

There is no mention of this theme in "On Doomsday" for the same reason that there are no images of the grave as the dwelling-place of the body. The setting is Judgment Day, when the bodies rise from the dead and
rejoin the souls for punishment or reward. Consequently, the corruption has already taken place and does not need to be mentioned; the emphasis is on the blame for damnation.

VI. The Ubi Sunt Interrogatives

The theme of corruption of the body carries with it the contrast between the body's former state while alive and its present condition. While the general contrast is between the living and the dead, in the later body-and-soul poems this contrast becomes more elaborate and involves lengthy lists of all the possessions which the body will no longer enjoy. The body may respond with similar lists of the great ones of the world who have died and rotted. There are two traditions to the ubi sunt interrogatives: the first involves the uselessness of earthly goods in the face of death, and the second refers to people, either those who have died or who have abandoned the dead and represent the universality and implacability of death. The late medieval Dance of Death and danse macabre develop out of this second tradition.

Batiouchokf demonstrates the antiquity of this theme in homiletic literature by citing a homily of Cyril of Alexandria, in which ubi sunt questions
The ubi sunt rhetoric in that homily is very similar to that in the Wulfstan Homily XLIX. Here the questions concern the emperors and kings of the world who have died, the magistrates and the wealthy. "Hwær com worulde wela? Hwær com foldan ðægernes?"  

Though we amass riches in this life, yet shall we end in misery to await judgment.

"Sauwle ðearf" contains a long ubi sunt passage detailing the many possessions and friends of the wealthy dead, all of them gone. Their wives, feasts, adornments, pleasures, wisdom, jewels, friends, servants, and followers are all gone, and the bodies of the wealthy lie in the earth and swarm with worms.  

One of the more common elements of the ubi sunt theme is a listing of all the famous or beautiful people who are no longer alive. The poem "A Luue Ron" from the MS Jesus College, Oxford, 29, contains such a list:

Hwer is paris and heleyne  
that weren so bryht and feyre on bleo.  
Amadas, tristram, and dideyne,  
yseude and alle theo,  
Ector with his scharpe meyne,  
and cesar riche of worldes feo.  
Heo beoth igylden vt of the reyne  

34 Batiouchof, p. 13, n. 2.  
35 Van Os, p. 187.  
36 Morris, Blickling Homilies, p. 99.
So the scheft is of the cleo.
Theyh he were so riche mon
as henry vre kyng
and al so veyr as absalon,
That neuede on eorthe non evnyng.37

It is as if they had never lived; all their heat is
turned to cold after their death.

In "The Body and the Worms" the body contrasts
her former freshness and beauty with her present stinking
state. The worms reply that in their time they have con-
sumed the great of the world:

The neyne worthy Judas machabeus sure
Julyus Cesar, Godfray de bolayne
Alexander Davyd Ector and Athure
Kyng Charls Duk Josue the captayne
With al the troiane knyghtes most souerayne
Pollysene Lucres, Dydo of Cartage.38

"Earth upon Earth" contains a passage on this
theme, as does the moral poem "With I and E," in which
the poet states that even if one were as wise as Solomon
or as fair as Abso'lom, yet one cannot withstand death.
The heirs and executors are hungry for the estate; they
"skikk and skekk full baldely in thy bowrs."38 The
Irish homily from the Leabhar Breac puts the rhetorical

37 Morris, Old English Miscellany, p. 95, ll. 81-84.
38 Brunner, p. 32, stanza 12.
questions into the mouths of the devils who are tormenting the soul: "Why are you now without desire for food, which formerly you loved? Why do you not drink, and seek varied dishes?"

Many of the expressions of the Dance of Death show the contrast between life and death, and depend on the theme of the universality of death to underscore their warning to the sinful. This theme is more fully developed in the later poems, though even the Old English Soul and Body contains specific references to the worldly goods which the body no longer may enjoy:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Ne maeson te nu heonon adon hyrsta } & \text{ a readon} \\
\text{Ne gild ne seolfor } & \text{ ne pinra goda nan.} \\
\text{Ne pinre bryde beag } & \text{ ne pin boldwela} \\
\text{Ne nan } & \text{ para goda te } \text{ tu iu ahtest.} \\
\text{(Vercelli Book, p. 56, 11. 57-60)}
\end{align*}
\]

In the expression of the second tradition of the ubi sunt motif, the loss of family and friends, the soul tells the body that it is no more dear to companions and parents than the black raven, which bird was a familiar visitor to the dead on the battlefield.

"Death" introduces a new detail to this theme, that of the friends who try to gain the property of the dead man:

\footnote{Atkinson, p. 508.}
And his freondes stryuep
To gripen his iwon.
(Morris, p. 173, ll. 75-76)

The body may no longer sit "on bolstre ne on benche."
(1. 90) All his friends are gone that used to greet him:

Hwer beo alle fine freond
Dat fayre pe bi-hehte.
And fayre pe igretten
Bi weyes and bi strete.
(Morris, p. 175, ll. 97-100)

They are all afraid of the corpse; they are now wearing his fine clothes:

Ny is aferd of pe
Bi mey and bi mowe
Alle heo werepe pe weden
Pat er werep tin owe.
(Morris, p. 179, ll. 161-64)

All the dishes are gone, the napkins which glided through the hand, the bread and ale and all the servants.

Generally in these poems the ubi sunt details are not scattered throughout the poems as are many of the other motifs, but appear as one or two fairly lengthy passages spoken by the soul. The effectiveness of the questions would be reduced were they to be interspersed throughout the address or dialogue.
The Worcester Fragments concentrate these rhetorical questions in Fragment B, though Fragment A mentions the former friends of the dead man who are now afraid to touch the corpse for fear of fouling their hands (11. 40-41); Fragment B also contains mention of the body's former state:

Hwar is nu þeo modinesse, swo muchel þe þu lufedest?
Hwar beoþ nu þeo pundes þurh . . . newes igndered?
Heo weren monifolde, bi markes itolde,
Hwar beoþ nu þeo goldfæt, þeo þe guldene comen to pîne honden?
þin blisse is nu al agon; min sceoruwe is fornon
Hwar beoþ nu þine wæde, þe þu wel lufedest?
Hwar beoþ, þe seten sori ofer þe,
Seden swuþe þeorne þet þe come bote?
(Buchholz, F. B, p. 2, 11. 4-11)

The repetition of the phrase, "Hwar beoþ nu," emphasizes the contrast between the former and present states of the dead. Fragment C adds a little more detail:

Ne þearft þu on stirope stonden mid fotan,
On henne goldfônne bowe, for þu scalt faren al to hose,
Ond þu scalt nu ruglunge ridan to þære sere.
(Buchholz, F. C, p. 3, 11. 3-5)

During life the dead man rode high on horseback, but now he rides with his back to the earth.

"On Doomsday" contains a general reference to the rich who in life wore ermine and rode fine horses:
Monye of pissee riche
fat werenede fouh and frey,
And ryled uppe stede
And uppon palefreyn,
Heo schullep at pe domen
Suggen welaway.
(Morris, p. 165, ll. 27-32)

"Over the Bier of the Worldling" also mentions
the ermine worn by the wealthy:

Were bete more robin of fau & of gris?
Suic day hauti i-comin ha changedest hem
tris.
(Brown, p. 64, ll. 2-3)

The ubi sunt passages in "In a thestri stude y
stod" also mention the ermine and the horses that the
body no longer possesses. The castles, towers, and rich
clothes are gone:

Body, wher aren thy solers, thi castles, ant
thi toures?
Thine ryche clothes ant thine covertoures?
Ful lowe shalt thou lygyen, for alle thine
heye bouses.
(Wright, p. 347, ll. 37-39)

The soul does not mention to the body in this poem
that it has been deserted by its friends, though in the
final comments of the poem, the poet touches upon this
aspect of the theme:

Ne haveth he frend on erthe that thenketh
upon hym.
Al this worldes pride ant ai this worldes ahte
Ne mihte holde a monnes lyf a day to the nahte.
(Wright, p. 348, ll. 104-06)

The final prayer reiterates this theme, that we shall all die, whatever our high position, and that, for all the towers we own, we shall lie outside in frost and snow, rain and fog, and all our fine clothes will not provide us a shroud.

The Laud 108 manuscript of the "Debate of the Body and the Soul" contains a long and detailed list of all the objects the body has lost through death. The soul begins by asking the body where is his pride, now that he is laid low. "Where are your towers, your chambers and halls, painted with flowers? Where are your fine clothes and soft bed? Your proud palfreys and horses, your hounds and falcons? Your cooks who prepare your food with spices?" (Wright, p. 334, ll. 8-22). This list indicates various sins, particularly those of gluttony, pride, and vainglory.

The Vernon manuscript lists the gleemen and pipers that the body has given up to death:

Wher be theose gleemen the to glewen,
Harpe and fithele and tabour bete?
This pipers that this bagges blewren,
And that thou mad the jyfes grete,
The riche roteis olde and newe,
To helpen of the ther thu seete?
(Wright, p. 340, ll. 49-54)
The Royal manuscript contains a more detailed account of the theme of lack of friends and family. The executors of the estate and the heirs are eager for their share of the wealth, and the dead man's wife does not mourn for him:

\begin{verbatim}
þy fælse hæyr is now ful fayn,
þy fayre ðe to undergo.
(Varnhagen, p. 232, ll. 105-06)

Ne þy wyf wolde no more wepe,
To nyght myght she have no rest,
Ne for fele thoughtes slepe,
What man hire befelle best,
In þy stede for to qepe.
(Varnhagen, p. 232, ll. 113-117)

And þy seketours shal now sekke
Al þy good, now þou art deð.
(Varnhagen, p. 232, ll. 121-22)
\end{verbatim}

The Visio Philiberti expresses this motif in much the same way. The questions by the soul here concern lands taken by extortion, palaces that the body built, gold and silver and great honors, clothes, beds, spices and sauces, dishes and linens, pillows and white sheets. The specific details differ, but the sins represented by the mass of material wealth are the same. All is changed by death:

\begin{verbatim}
Thy gret ryches that thou hast gette some tyme,
With farade, with fawyre, with strenjte, or with dræde,
Be chanzyt into erthe and slyme.
(Halliwell, p. 18, ll. 141-43)
\end{verbatim}
There is no one who cares for the body now that it is dead:

In hevyne and erthe thou hast never a frynde;
Thy fadyre and thi modyre of the takys noo kepe;
Thyne eyrris hath all, thy good is dysspend;
Thy lusty wyfe dothe no lengure weppe.
(Halliwell, p. 18, ll. 148-51)

No one would lift a finger to restore the body to life:

I knowe this well, this eyrrys ne thi wyfe
Wyl not jeyfe o fote of thi lond
To reystore the agayne here to thi lyve,
And jeyt alle thi trust thou puttest in here hond.
(Halliwell, p. 19, ll. 155-58)

The body put its trust in things of this world, and they have betrayed it in the end. The soul assures the body that friendship does not extend beyond death, and none of his former companions cares for him now:

Tho that wer thi frynddys be now waxt al strange,
Uppon thi grave they wyl not ons beholde,
And nowe that abbay is torned to a grange,
Farewel thi frenschype, thi kechyne is cold!
O fremel flech, ful oft I have the told,
When thou art dede, thi frenschype is alsepe.
(Halliwell, pp. 26-27, ll. 330-35)

After hearing this information, the body weeps. In parting remarks to the body, the soul describes the pains of Hell which are sharper and hotter for those
of great estate; the richer or more noble the sinner, the greater his fall and the more severe his punishment. To a sinner with as much material wealth as this body possessed, this could not be comforting news.

"Sinners, Beware!" does not contain the *ubi sunt* motif, which properly belongs to the context of the address or dialogue to be effective. The reference in "On Doomsday" is very general and is directed toward a whole class of people, the rich. The address in "Sinners, Beware!" is the representation of the words of all wicked souls to their bodies, and in this poem the *ubi sunt* motif would blur the focus and detract from the theme of punishment for sin.

All of the accouterments of elevated social position and noble life are included in the list of worldly goods that the body has lost through death. The people who surrounded the dead man in life have rejected and abandoned him in death. They are eager to lay their hands on his property and his wealth, and even his wife looks for another lover. A man's property, buildings, and riches cannot help him in the face of death. It is ironic to consider that even though a man has a high position, he will end with seven feet of earth, like all men.
VII. The Punishments and Rewards of the Soul

Once a man has died and is laid low in the earth, his soul has approached the body for the purpose of praise or reproach, and the address or dialogue is completed, the soul must proceed with the business of its damnation or salvation. This is the final element in the body-and-soul legend, though in the poems the description of Hell and its devils and torments is generally followed by a prayer that God will save us from the same fate. The earlier poems, content to hint vaguely at the horrors of Hell, do not divulge as much detail about the devils and the methods they use to punish the sinful soul as do the later addresses and dialogues. One of the more significant aspects of the theme of punishment is the introduction of the descriptions of Satan and his attendant demons.

The concept of the devil was aided by the development of the idea of evil angels. These demons were in part personifications of evil attributes previously associated with various gods, which also acquired some of the characteristics of monsters. All of these details were passed on in the iconography and legends of the devil himself. As everyone knows, the devil has horns, cloven hoofs, and a tail, and carries a

41 Russell, p. 170.
a pitchfork. The attributes of the devil are an amalgam of details from a number of distant sources.

Ancient gods such as Shiva, Poseidon, and Vishnu were often associated with bulls and portrayed as bulls. Egyptian royal regalia included horns, signifying royal power. The horns of the bull were a symbol of power and fertility, which power and potency was transferred to the gods. The crescent moon was also such a symbol, since it looks like horns. The horned moon came to represent not only fertility, but also night and darkness, death and the underworld. The horns of the devil, basically a mark of his power, have a negative character, and are also associated with death, Hell, and uncontrolled sexuality.42

The cloven hooves derived from Judaism; animals with cloven hooves are unclean. They also frequently have horns and a tail. The trident was associated with Poseidon and Shiva and quite possibly became the pitchfork which the devil carries to prod sinners.43 The early Christian Egyptian apocalypses showed demons prying reluctant souls out of their bodies by means of a hook or a pitchfork, and in devil-lore, this was the original use of the instrument. The Etruscan god of death, Charun, sometimes carried a hook similar to

42 Russell, pp. 69-70.
43 Russell, p. 70.
the pitchfork, but more often wielded a mallet with which he hit the heads of those about to die. This implement is identified with the scythe that Death carries in Christian iconography.\(^4^4\)

The demons which surround the wicked soul to escort it to Hell are hideously ugly. They are the opposite of all that is pleasing, good, and beautiful, though curiously enough, the evil demons who presumably do Satan's will actually serve the justice of God by tormenting the sinners and the damned in Hell.

These demons wait for the moment of death and attempt to seize souls to carry them off. Bryhtnoth in the Battle of Maldon prayed to be delivered from the fiends who were waiting to snatch his soul. This semi-physical struggle with the devil in death was assisted by angels who protected the soul from the devils and carried it to Heaven. This theme is seen frequently in the Coptic accounts of death.

In these Coptic apocalypses the soul of the blessed one is carried to Heaven in a cloth. In the Falling Asleep of Mary the cloth is linen; in the Death of Joseph it is a silken napkin neatly folded around the soul.\(^4^5\) In medieval illustrations angels take the soul to Heaven in a cloth. By the same process that

\(^{44}\) Russell, p. 157.

reduced the evil angels to hideous demons, it is not
too difficult to imagine the fiery, foul black cloth
for the wicked soul, though this appears nowhere in
either illustration or written examples. What it might
explain, however, is the burning robe placed around the
soul in the "Debate of the Body and the Soul," and the
robe of sin which the devils drape over the wicked soul
in the Irish homily from the Leabhar Breac.\footnote{Dudley, \textit{Egyptian Elements}, p. 134; Atkinson, pp. 509-10.}
In the
"Debate" the robe is also related to the devils' mocking
the position of the soul while alive, for the scene
includes the placement of a helmet on the soul's head;
in the Irish homily it is clearly explained by the
demons that this is the robe of sin that all men wear.
It had been bright, clean, and beautiful at first, but
has become foul, filthy, and frightful, marked with sin.

The various types of punishment to which the soul
is subjected also have a lengthy history. The tenth
book of Plato's \textit{Republic} describes sinners skinned
alive, bound hand and foot, and hurled down a thorn-
covered cliff.\footnote{Van Os, p. 6.} The Egyptian hell contained fire,
the souls of the dead in Persia had to pass over a
test bridge, and the Greeks visualized a revolving
wheel for Ixion, the tortures of Tantalus, and the
moaning of the damned. In Book VI of the *Aeneid*, sinners are thrown into a pit, devoured by snakes and vultures, tied on a wheel, and scourged. In other classical visions of the underworld sinners are exposed to alternate heat and cold, put into lakes of molten metal, and thrown into a sulphurous pit. Biblical descriptions of Hell include a pit, often bottomless, a prison, a furnace, a lake or fire, pitch, and brimstone. Heaven is either a meadow fragrant with flowers and inhabited by people dressed in white or a city surrounded with high walls and many gates.

However, since the classics were neglected in the Middle Ages and the study of Greek and Hebrew virtually unknown, these details from classical literature must have been transmitted in legend and tradition, for first-hand information would have been available only to a few. 48

The earlier body-and-soul poems are noticeably reticent on the subject of the specific pains and torments of Hell. It is not until the thirteenth century and later that one finds the lavish descriptions of devils and punishments which are typical of the later addresses and dialogues. It is also the case that classical literature was gradually being reintroduced to Western Europe through the Crusades and expanded

48 Van Os, p. 13.
travel and trade. It is possible that these later poems acquired details from written as well as oral sources. It is certainly true that the *Apocalypse of Peter* was known to the Church Fathers and that the *Visio Pauli* was fairly widely disseminated, and from these sources, as well as legends and other traditions, comes the list of the pains of Hell to which the wicked soul is subject.

The *Cursor Mundi* provides a list of torments, the authority for which is the *Elucidarium de Summa Totius Christianae Theologiae* by Honorius Augustodunensis, written around 1090, and itself supported by patristic authority. The *Mirror of St. Edmund*, from the beginning of the thirteenth century, differentiates between the pains of the soul and the pains of the body in Hell. There are seven for each: the body is tortured physically, the soul morally. Each pain has its opposite joy in Heaven. Later versions become much more explicit both in the list of the torments and in the physical details of the devils.

The Irish homily from the *Leabhar Breac* is extravagant in the list of sufferings the soul is to endure. The soul will be spitted, placed on rocks of ice, put into the watery, dirty, black pit with venomous beasts on its slimy walls, be hacked and burned by black

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49 Van Os, p. 151.
50 Van Os, pp. 142-43.
demons, and beaten with red-hot mallets and chains with spikes.\textsuperscript{51}

The Old English poem \textit{Be Domes Daege} contains a list of the tortures of Hell which includes filthy places of fire, fierce torment, heat and cold, and the scorching of the furnace. The souls also boil in pitch and burn in a dark cave.\textsuperscript{52}

In the Anglo-Saxon conception of Hell there is a mingling of Germanic pagan and Christian elements. The Germanic Hell is a place of cheerless gloom, stench, frost, and extreme cold, inhabited by snakes and fearful monsters. The Christian idea of Hell included heat, fire, and specific punishments. These two traditions exist side by side in the English expressions of Hell.\textsuperscript{53}

In an effort to make Hell as fearsome as possible, the poets retained the well-known elements of the older religion and added to them the newer Christian torture by flames. The dragon guarding the mouth of Hell is reminiscent of the same idea in Northern mythology.\textsuperscript{54}

The fourteenth-century allegorical poem called "A man pursued by a unicorn," from the MS British Museum

\textsuperscript{51} Atkinson, p. 513.
\textsuperscript{52} Lumby, p. 12, 11, 185-95.
\textsuperscript{53} Waller Deering, \textit{The Anglo-Saxon Poets on the Judgment Day} (Halle: Max Niemeyer, 1990), p. 58.
\textsuperscript{54} Deering, p. 59.
Additional explanations of the image of the unicorn as death and the gaping dragon at the foot of the tree as the mouth of Hell itself.55

Another aspect of the description of Hell's pains in the body-and-soul poems is the expressed inability to describe them adequately. In an effort to increase the horror and terror of Hell, the poets claim that they cannot begin to tell how dreadful are the punishments in store for the body. This statement is generally followed by a fairly detailed description of the things they could not describe.

The poet of the Old English Soul and Body does not elaborate on specific types of punishments the soul suffers. The gloomy and grim atmosphere surrounding the soul's address is sufficient to impart fear without detailing the torments of Hell. The soul is bound with Hell-torments:

Na fre ðu me wi3 swa heardum helle witum ne generedest þurh þinra nieda lust,
(Verceilli Book, p. 56, ll. 47-48)

The place where the soul now abides is cruel:

secan þa hamas þe ðu me her scife, 
ond þa arlesan eardungstowe.
(Verceilli Book, p. 56, ll. 70-71)

The idea that the body will be punished eternally in every joint of its sinful body is found in this passage, which also points forward to the final judgment of soul and body as one, and the subsequent torment of the two together:

\[
\text{ponne ne bið nan na to þas lytel līð on lime aweaxen,}
\text{þat þu ne scyle for anra ðæhwylcum onsundrum}
\text{rīnt agildan, þonne rede bið}
\text{dryhten æt þam dome. Ac hwæt do wyt unc?}
\text{Sculon wit þonne eft ætsonne siðan brucan}
\text{swylcra yrmdæ, swa þu unc her ær scrife!}
\]  
(Vercelli Book, p. 57, ll. 97-102)

The joys of Heaven are only hinted at. The rejoicing soul in the Father's kingdom is surrounded with mercies, but it does not expand on this theme in praising the body for its discipline in life:

\[
\text{Moton wyt þonne ætsonne syþan brucan}
\text{ond unc on heofonum heahpungene beon.}
\]  
(Vercelli Book, p. 59, ll. 158-59)

In "Nou is mon holi & soint" there is no mention of Hell or the torments to which the soul is doomed. The idea of punishment is implicit in the accusations by the soul that the body had neglected its obligations as a Christian, and in the line, "Wey þat ic ever in þe com!" (l. 14). The final lines of this poem refer
to the bodily corruption and worm-eaten state of the corpse, and in view of the nature of this short address, this constitutes the body's punishment. That of the soul is not considered.

The Worcester Fragments are also nonspecific in dealing with the pains of Hell. The soul refers generally to Hell's torments, but does not elaborate on the individual tortures in store. Fragment E mentions the Day of Judgment when the body shall rise and be accused of its sins:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Ac ure drihten eft of deape heo ar\text{\textsuperscript{r}}ep,} \\
\text{So he alle men de\text{\textsuperscript{p}}, \text{\textsuperscript{t}}onne domes dai cume\text{\textsuperscript{p}},} \\
\text{\text{\textsuperscript{t}}onne scalt pu, erming, up arisen,} \\
\text{\text{\textsuperscript{t}}imeten \text{\textsuperscript{t}}ine mor\text{\textsuperscript{p}}ededen, \text{\textsuperscript{t}eo \text{\textsuperscript{t}}e murie weren,} \\
\text{\text{\textsuperscript{s}}ecruhful ond sorimod, so \text{\textsuperscript{t}}in lif wrouhte.} \\
\end{align*}
\]
(Buchholz, F. E, pp. 6-7, ll. 12-16)

This same fragment has a passage which comes closer to the description of Hell:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{\text{\textsuperscript{t}}onne sculen wit sipien to aire secr\text{\textsuperscript{r}}ue mest,} \\
\text{\text{\textsuperscript{t}}aren mid faondes in \text{\textsuperscript{p}et eche fur,} \\
\text{\text{\textsuperscript{s}}eornen \text{\textsuperscript{t}er efre; ende nis \text{\textsuperscript{t}er nefre.}} \\
\end{align*}
\]
(Buchholz, F. E, p. 7, ll. 47-49)

Here all the soul says is that it will dwell with demons in Hell-fire and there is no end to it.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{\text{\textsuperscript{t}}or \text{\textsuperscript{p}ine fule sunne ic scal nu inne helle,} \\
\text{\text{\textsuperscript{t}reizen \text{\textsuperscript{t}er wrecche sip, all for \text{\textsuperscript{p}ine fule lif.}} \\
\end{align*}
\]
(Buchholz, F. G, p. 9, ll. 5-6)
This restrained reference to Hell is more typical of the Old English poem and not at all similar to "Death," which is vivid and particular in the enumeration of the punishments.

In "Death" the first reference to Hell is its indescribable pains:

Ne myhte no tunge telle
pat euer was ibore,
pe stronge pyne of helle
paugh he hedde iswore.
(Morris, p. 173, ll. 57-60)

Following the soul's curse and the ubi sunt questions, the soul tells the body that now it burns in fire and shivers in ice and will ever be in pain. In seven stanzas at the end of the poem the soul details its specific tortures and provides a description of the devil. For the body's sins, the soul will be punished with hunger, cold, burning fire; it will be roasted by Satan. It is dark in Hell:

Ich schal to pestre stude
per neuer ne cume lint.
per ich schal ime te
Mony o ful wiht.
(Morris, p. 181, ll. 203-06)

The soul must bathe in bitter pitch and brimstone, and Satan will be there ready with his rake. The fire-burning dragon will swallow up the soul. This dragon
also represents the mouth of Hell that swallows up
the wicked.

The devil is described as having horns on his head
and on his knees:

Hwo iseye þene qued,
nw lodlich heo beo.
Hornes on his heued,
hornes on his kneo.
Nis no þing alyue
Þat so atelich beo.
Wo is heom in helle
Þat hine schulleþ i-seo.
(Morris, p. 183, ll. 225-32)

When the yawning devil stares, red gleams come forth
from his nostrils, and fire springs from his eyebrows.
His eyes are as deep and great as a coal-pit. "Ne may
no tunge telle, hw lodlich is the qued" (ll. 245-46).
No one who looks at him may live.

"Sinners, Beware!" also finds it difficult to
speak of Heaven or Hell, but provides scriptural
authority for the inadequacy:

Hit seþ in þe godspelle,
Ne may no tunge telle,
þe blisse þat þer is euere
Ne of þere pyne of helle,
þar-to we besto to snelle.
A-way, neo ne endep nouere.
(Morris, p. 73, ll. 37-42)

Hell is dark; no light shines there. No one helps
another. There are horrible worms that torture the
soul. Sinners weep and moan that they were ever born.
And there is no respite:

And par nys no yeyn-cherrynge,
Ne par nys non endynge,
Pe ones cume in pere.
(Morris, p. 74, ll. 58-60)

Following the judgment, the wicked, soul and body, are led away to Hell by demons who beat them with pikes and awls. The righteous souls in Heaven take no notice of the damned in Hell and are indifferent to their sufferings. Again, the joys of Heaven are not as interesting as the pains of Hell and only passing reference is made to Paradise. The admonitory purpose of the poem forces the thought of Hell, not the contemplation of salvation; in order to warn against sin, the consequences must appear dreadful.

The sight of Christ and St. Mary in the vision of the end of the world in "On Doomsday" is a form of punishment for the wicked. The references to Hell in this poem also are vague, since it is primarily a recitation of the signs of doomsday and a warning to sinners. The rich cry alas, and can only be helped by the performance of acts of charity. The wicked stand at the Lord's left hand and their sins are written down in a book of deeds. Then the wicked are bidden to go into Hell's burning fire.
This poem only mentions two of the many signs of doomsday, the fire that burns the world and the angels who announce the day by blowing trumpets. The poem gains structural strength by the lack of more doomsday details, for the fire in the beginning of the poem reflects the burning fire of Hell, and the righteous are told they shall dwell with angels.

"In a thestri stude y stod" also does not contain many of the details of Hell. Although it deals with the signs of doomsday also, it lacks the integrity of "On Doomsday" because it enumerates seven of those signs and appears to have as much interest in the foreshadowing of the eschaton as in the problem between the body and soul concerning responsibility for sin.

At the Judgment Christ reveals His wounds and says "to Sathanas the un-hende, 'Fare away the foule swyke ant thi cursede genge!'" (11. 91-92). At this point in the debate the soul begins to weep:

Welawcy! ant at the ende,
alias: 
Body, wo wurth the time that thou y-bore was:
My shal into heile for thi trespas,
Ant tholien harde piren wyth that sory Judas.
(Wright, p. 348, 11. 93-96)
The final lines of the poem deal with imagery of the grave and the vanity of earthly goods. The body has earlier mentioned that the state in which he finds himself leads to Hell, and the soul begs to be saved from Hell, but nowhere in this poem are the vivid details of punishments and devils that are found in "Death" and which also appear in the "Debate of the Body and the Soul" and the *Visio Philiberti*. In these last two dialogues we have the most graphic presentation of the soul being tortured by the demons who come to carry it away. The punishments, which begin even before the soul reaches Hell, mirror the sins the body has committed in life. In the "Debate" a thousand devils spring on the soul, grasp it with their hooks, and tug it to and fro:

Summe were rugged and summe tay'led,  
With brode bunches on her bak,
Scharpe clawes and longe nayles,  
Was non of hem withoute lak;
On ilk haive it was assayled,
With many a devele blo and blak.
(Varnhagen, p. 241, II. 409-14)

The soul begs for mercy, but to no avail.

The devils then pry open the soul's jaws and force molten metal down its throat. A master-fiend appears and thrusts a burning spear through the soul's heart; and other demons pierce the soul's sides, back, and breast with red-hot steel, asking the soul how its
heart feels, that once was hot with pride, and now is punished for that sin.

Since the soul had loved fine clothing, the demons place the burning robe around him and the helmet on his head, and he is mounted upon the devil-horse "pat loude neyed and gaped wyd" (Varnhagen, p. 242, l. 443). He is mounted "As he shulde to tornament" (Varnhagen, p. 242, l. 450). He is then cast down from the saddle and hunted by the hell-hounds and trampled by them.

The devils make the soul blow on its hunting horn the same songs he had played while alive:

> And bede he shulde hunte and blowe
> And calle on Bemound and Beufys,
> Ratches pat him were wont to knowe,
> Sone fey shulde blows pe prys.
> (Varnhagen, p. 242, 1l. 467–70)

Finally the soul is brought to bay and tethered by a hundred devils who drag him to the gates of Hell. The earth opens from the yelling of the fiends, and such a stench of brimstone and pitch arises that men might smell it from five miles away. The soul utters one last plea to God to save him:

> God, pat sittest on hey,
> On me fe shape you have marcy!
> Why schope you me pat were so sley? 
> And fe creature was i,
> As many ower pat sitte fe by, 
> And pat you hast so wel don by.
> (Varnhagen, p. 243, 1l. 463–88)
The devils reply that it will do no good to implore mercy from Christ or His Mother, for he has lost their company forever.

For you hast served us ful yore;
By buited bred you shal abye,
As oter bat leve upon oure lore.
(Varnhagen, p. 243, ll. 502-04)

This statement by the devils extending their hospitality to the soul reflects on the earlier accusation by the soul to the body that ever were the rich welcome at his castle, but never the poor:

The riche was welcome whon he com,
The pore was beten that he stonk.
(Wright, p. 341, ll. 69-70)

The soul now pays for the sin against charity and hospitality. Finally the soul is slung into the deepest pit of Hell where the sun is never seen, and the earth closes over the wretched sinner.

The scene of the devils and Hell in the Visio Philiberti is not as dramatic and shrill as that in the "Debate." Although it also contains many details of the devils and the punishments of the soul before it arrives in Hell, there is not the frenzied action of the mock tournament, the clothing of the body, the ride on the devil-horse, and the hunt of the hell-hounds.
When the soul has finished its complaint to the body, the devils arrive to fetch it away. "They were so feyrful, there is no man coulde paynt" (Halliwell, p. 32, l. 472). The soul trembles and quakes at their coming, which is heralded by a great tempest and much thunder. The devils carry iron spears in their hands to fret and chase the soul. Fire proceeds from their mouths and ears; they chase the soul like lions. No one could see them and live:

Here contenance, here eyne, were so orryble,
Al brennyng fyre, schynyng as the glase,
To tel yow al it is impossibulle;
Here hornnys were gret, thei semyd al of brase;
Gret stronge smoke about them there wase;
Brennyng fayre wase about ther hornysse,
And al here eyrus wer scharpe as any thornus.
(Halliwell, p. 33, ll. 485-91)

These fiends harry the soul with blazing tongs so that he is scourged and beaten; he is then dismembered, in an echo of the Anglo-Saxon joint-by-joint punishment of the body. The soul is then bound with chains and molten metal poured into his mouth. Finally the devils curse the soul in the same manner as the soul had previously cursed the body:

O false attaynte! O thou cursyd theve!
Now arte thou bond, thou mayst never aryse!
Thow arte quyte for thi long servyse!
Thow mayst not eschape—thow arte tyid so faste.
(Halliwell, p. 34, ll. 508-11)
The soul begins to weep and makes a final plea for mercy, but the devils tell him it is too late, "the porter of hevvyne hathe cloussyd the gate" (1. 522). Even if the soul were to recite the Creed, it would not bring aid. The soul is cast into great darkness and bitter heat where there is never light. His beauty is changed and his might is passed; weeping will not help.

This poem shows more care than the "Debate" for keeping the element of Hell, devils, and punishments separate from the dialogue or address proper. Within the context of the dialogue, all the other elements are mentioned: the grave, the ubi sunt rhetoric, corruption, the neglect of Christian responsibilities, and the curse of the body. By not overtly emphasizing in the dialogue the torments of Hell, the poet is able to show the consequences of sin to the soul in a way that is less theatrical than that shown in the "Debate" and more designed to instill fear in the listeners, who draw their own conclusions about the relationship between sin and punishment.

It is these eight elements which define the body-and-soul poems in Old and Middle English. They must be in the form of an address or dialogue; they contain references to Christian duties, the grave, corruption, and the former state of the body; and they imply some form of punishment to either the body, the soul, or both. A number of other homilies, prose pieces, and
poems written at the same time as the body-and-soul poems show some of the same elements, particularly those concerning the grave, corruption, and Christian obligation, and the elements in these works can be traced to the same sources as those in the body-and-soul poems. At least one of these extra-canonical poems, "The Grave," has been shown to be the source of the Worcester Fragments and possibly to have influenced other body-and-soul poems as well. The Ars Moriendi and the Dance of Death were also influenced by the same sources. It would be useful to examine these other aspects of the legend in the light of their relationship to the body-and-soul poems and of their common background.
CHAPTER V

INFLUENCE ON LATER LITERATURE

The thirteenth through the fifteenth century was a period which produced the vivid and descriptive body-and-soul debates, the *Ars Moriendi*, the Dance of Death, and a number of other works which expressed aspects of the legend of the body and the soul. It was a time of great interest in exploring man's fear of death, though expressions of that fear appear earlier. During this period a large body of writing emerged which was concerned with the theme of *memento mori*, with the grisly effects of corruption on the body in the grave, with the *ubi sunt* reminder of man's mortality, and with the necessity of living a Christian life in order to avoid the punishments of Hell in the next world.

The earlier writings on these themes are more subdued in tone than the later works and deal more with the uncertainty of the life to come. The short poem called "Bede's Death Song" exemplifies the attitude of resolution and concern for the care of the soul. This poem appears in a letter written by Cuthbert, abbot of Monkwearmouth and Jarrow, and in it Bede
speaks of this care which is necessary to ensure salvation:

Fore the neid faerae  
Naenig uuurthit  
Thonc smotturra  
Than him tharf sie  
To ymbhcgyganna  
Aer his hin-iong ae  
Huet his gastae  
Sodaes aeththa vflaes  
Aefter deoth-daage  
Doemid uuieorthae.  

Before death, one should take care in considering what evil or good he has done, and how he is to be judged after he dies. This deliberate and stoic expression of preparation for the inquest after death is similar in tone to the Old English Soul and Body and also to the Anglo-Saxon riddle entitled Soul and Body, in which the soul is described as a noble guest cherished in an excellent dwelling. If the servant, or the body, treats this guest kindly, both will find refuge and gladness; if the servant disobeys, they will have sorrow. In this riddle the question at


2 Chambers, England Before the Norman Conquest, p. 118; Bede, pp. vii–ix.

3 Gordon, p. 203.
the heart of the body-and-soul poems concerning the responsibility for sin is answered by the language used. The soul is called the guest and also the master, and the body is the servant. The master gives the orders or the guest has needs, and the servant has the choice of disobeying or carrying them out. This attitude is the traditional Christian response to the question and is not at all similar to the recriminations of the soul in the Old English Soul and Body, or the arguments produced by both soul and body in the later addresses and dialogues.

The short poem known as "The Grave," or the Oxford Fragment, is a stoic expression of the motif of the grave as the house for the dead. It contains no element of Christianity at all. It is merely a description of the fate that awaits every man; it is "the quintessence of the elegiac, the essence of the terror of death with no Judgment Day to break the spell." The poem has been described as "trenchantly grim," showing an inner core of pagan negation and an "unflinching ability to face the inevitable end." One critic feels that the lament for what has passed and the unnatural concern for

4 Anderson, p. 189.
5 Kennedy, Earliest English Poetry, p. 331.
6 Anderson, p. 189.
death and decay arise out of the Anglo-Saxon defeat
and the Norman domination of England. This position
is unlikely in view of the relative popularity of
this theme in the literature of unconquered people as
well. The motif appears in ancient Egyptian literature,
in Latin poetry, in the sermons and writings of the
Church Fathers, and in other Western European lit-
erature, though it is true that probably nowhere does
the theme achieve such a grim intensity of vision and
terse, unforgettable imagery as in "The Grave."

This poem appears in the MS Bodleian 343, fol.
170a, in handwriting of the twelfth century, with
three lines added in a thirteenth-century hand. The
poem was probably written not long before 1100; it is
a very late specimen of Old English poetry, showing
evidence of transition to Middle English linguistic
forms.8

"The Grave" has been neglected critically, largely
because of its exclusion from Anglo-Saxon poetic col-
lections on the basis of its post-Conquest date, and
from medieval collections because of its language. It
belongs to the shadowy regions of post-Conquest Old
English literature, and is something of an anomaly.

7 Everett, p. 25.
Louise Dudley has demonstrated that "The Grave" does not belong in the body-and-soul poems, but in the even more popular literature dealing with death and the grave.9 However, this reclassification of such an early poem on this subject is curious in that "The Grave" is utterly lacking in the hortatory tone that characterizes the medieval death and grave lyrics. The moralizing use of the ubi sunt motif and the references to judgment or damnation are absent.

Douglas Short has investigated "The Grave" in terms of its rhetorical structure and has demonstrated that the unique aesthetic quality of the poem derives as much from the controlling metaphor as from the elaborate rhetorical strategems used.10 "The Grave" uses the metaphor of the grave as a house, by no means a fresh idea, as a structural device accomplished by the use of words which literally denote a dwelling or parts of a dwelling, by the references to helewages, sidwages, rof, and dure, and by words which refer to the preparation of the grave in terms suggestive of building a house, and finally by the verb wunien, denoting the literal occupation of the grave-hus.11


11 Short, p. 293.
The anaphora of the first two lines is extremely effective in immediately setting forth the idea of the poem:

```
Se wese bold gebyld, er hu iboren were,
Se wese bolde imynt, er hu of moder come. 12
```

A second instance of anaphora occurs in lines 5-6, which develop the image of measuring the grave:

```
Nu me he brinca, per hu beon scealt,
Nu me sceal pe meten and pa molde seoðæa.
```

There is also an alternation in the pronoun cases: he occurs in the a-verses and hu in the b-verses. This pattern of repetition contributes to the emotional effect of the poem; the audience finds itself as much the subject of the poem as the grave itself.

The transition in theme from the grave to bodily corruption occurs exactly halfway through the poem. The sentence in lines 11-12 summarizes the first half of the poem and introduces the idea of decay which is developed in the second part:

```
Swa hu scealt on molde wunien ful caide,
Dimre and deorcæ, pet fulæst on hondo.
```

12 This edition of "The Grave" appears in R. Buchholz, Die Fragmente der Reden der Seele an den Leichnam, p. 11.
In the 22 lines of the poem a series of shifting perspectives on the grave is presented: it is first an inevitable fate determined before birth, it is a finished house, and finally it encloses the decay of the body.\textsuperscript{13}

The three final lines of the poem, which were added in a later hand,

\begin{verbatim}
For sone bi\textsuperscript{3} pin haxet faxes bireued;
All bi\textsuperscript{3} des faxes feirnes forsceden;
Male hit nan mit fingres feire stracien.
\end{verbatim}

begin a description of the mouldering corpse, probably with the intention of following through the other parts of the anatomy. It is not known how these lines came to be attached to this poem, but until Dudley demonstrated the integrity of the original 22 lines, the poem was classified as a fragment on the basis of the unfinished nature of this later description.\textsuperscript{14}

"The Grave" was also long considered to be a part of the Worcester Fragments, but Dudley refutes Buchholz by calling attention to the rhyme of the Worcester Fragments, the greater age of "The Grave," and the scattered use in the fragments of consecutive lines

\textsuperscript{13} Short, pp. 295-99.
in "The Grave."\textsuperscript{15} She deduces from this evidence that "The Grave" was in all probability the source of the Worcester Fragments.

The prose "Dysputacoun betwyn the saule and the body" appears in the MS British Museum Additional 37049, fols. 82\textsuperscript{a}-85\textsuperscript{a}; this manuscript contains a number of poems and short pieces dealing with the themes of death and the grave.\textsuperscript{16} The illustrations accompanying the text of the "Dysputacoun" show the soul as a young person, naked and well-formed, standing beside the body, a dark, grinning corpse in a winding sheet. An angel with folded arms leans out of a cloud and observes their conversation. The illustration on fol. 84\textsuperscript{a} shows a lame man in a tree, helped up by a blind man; both are eating the fruit they have stolen. A king watches them from the window of his castle.

The soul initiates the dialogue with the customary curse in \textit{ubi sunt} terms. "Where is now your pride? Where are your possessions?" The soul wishes for revenge and blames the body for making the soul lead a sinful life. The body is responsible for the soul's loss of the bliss of Heaven.

The body, lifting itself up in a gesture familiar from the body-and-soul dialogues, replies that it is

\textsuperscript{15} Dudley, "The Grave," pp. 4-8.

\textsuperscript{16} MS British Museum Additional 37049, microfilm.
not at fault. The soul cannot despise or blame the body, but had better blame itself. The body claims that the soul abandoned it and left it alone. The soul was noble, sent from God, but both soul and body are now damned because the soul would not lead the body away from sin.

The soul then mentions the corruption in store for the body, and eventually both the body and the soul agree that they are eternally damned to the pains of Hell. At this point the dialogue breaks off and the Talmudic story of the lame and blind men set to guard the king's orchard is introduced. The lame man is lifted into the tree with the help of the blind man and procures the fruit which they both eat. The king discovers their theft and condemns them both to death. The allegory of this tale is then explained: the fruit is like the Forbidden Fruit in the Garden of Eden, and the soul and body are like Adam and Eve—they are judged and punished as one, for both are responsible for the sin.

The allegorical use of the body-and-soul legend is also seen in a tale from the Cesta Romanorum. The emperor Liberaus embarks on a visit to the Holy Lands and leaves his wife in charge, with his brother to act as steward. The brother tries to seduce the empress, who refuses and has the brother thrown in prison. He appears to repent and is released. Shortly
afterward, the empress and the brother are out riding and are separated from the rest of the party. Again attempting seduction, he strips her of her clothing and hangs her by her hair from an oak tree. She is rescued and, after being threatened by various other men, enters a convent. Meanwhile, the brother and all the other men who mistreated her are afflicted with leprosy. The interpretation of the story is that the soul is placed in danger by the body, which strips the soul of its virtues and hangs it on worldly love. But in the end the soul turns to the devout life.\textsuperscript{17}

Sin is frequently represented by disease, and the sacraments as the medicines that cure it. A moral poem from the fifteenth century, "Medicine to Cure the Deadly Sins," explains the healing powers of the sacraments. The seven sins are wounds or sores in the soul, and the medicines against them are humility, prayer, charity, grace, abstinence, and confession. These virtues are also called herbs that reduce the swelling of the sores.\textsuperscript{18} Often leprosy was the disease used; patristic writings extracted the


allegorical interpretation from biblical references to leprosy. The leper healed by Christ was seen as a parable of Christ forgiving repentant sinners. In the story from the *Gesta Romanorum*, the leprosy contracted by the wicked men represents the sins of the flesh, and in the context of the body-and-soul legend, the corruption of the body after death.

The MS British Museum Additional 37049 not only contains poems and prose works on the death-and-grave motif, but it is also copiously illustrated with graphic representations of the themes of punishments in Hell, devils, deathbed struggles between angels and devils, worms and bodily corruption, Heavenly reward, and Doomsday. These illustrations are useful in showing the popularity and dissemination of the themes which appear in the body-and-soul poems, and in revealing the tendency in the later medieval works towards the exaggeration of emphasis on judgment and corruption and the development of the Dance of Death.

A three-way conversation between an angel, a devil, and a dying man is found beginning on fol. 115b of this manuscript. The piece begins with the seven ages of man, and his death, at which time the angel and devil contend for the soul. The angel is conventionally drawn, but the devil is a monstrous being with a tail.

19 Brody, pp. 141-42.
horns, wings, and a large snout. At the man's death, the soul, emerging from his mouth in the shape of a small child, is received by the angel. The devil is shown stamping one very large foot and exclaiming, "Here the soule is gone fro me alaas!" (fol. 29a).

A slightly different variation of the deathbed struggle between angels and demons for a man's soul is a selection on fol. 39b which has to do with preparation for death. The accompanying illustration shows death killing a man with a long spear or hook. Death says, "I have sought thee many a day: for to haue the to my pray." There is a priest standing by who tells the man, "Comitt thy body to the grave; pray Christ thy soule to save." Christ answers the man's prayers: "Tho it be late ere thou mercie crave: yet mercie thou shall haue." The demon is again thwarted of his soul.

Fol. 19a also shows a man on a bier, with death holding a hook, and the devil with a club, standing at the foot of the bier, an angel at the head. The soul is shown as a small child, begging Our Lady to intercede for it. Death and the devil are sure the soul is theirs, but Christ asks God the Father to save this soul, and the Father agrees.

This manuscript contains several pieces which deal with the theme of Doomsday and the Last Judgment. Fol. 17a contains a piece on the Judgment describing
the activity surrounding the eschaton. The illustration to this work is similar to the description of the scene of Judgment in "On Doomsday." There are two angels blowing trumpets; the mouth of Hell is the mouth of a hairy monster, gaping wide; sinners are being shoved in by a devil with horns on his head, wielding a hook. Christ sits on a rainbow with His wounds prominently displayed, and other angels carry the cross on which He died. The blessed souls are escorted into Heaven by angels. In "In a thestri stude y stod" one of the signs of the eschaton was that everyone would become thirty years old, and in this picture, all the souls are naked and everyone appears to be the same age.

In another view of the Judgment on fol. 73a, devils, forced from Heaven by St. Michael, fall into the mouth of the Hell-monster, the other end of which is also a mouth into which sinners are proceeding.

The ladder leading to Heaven also appears in the illustrations in this manuscript. On fol. 37b, monks hold a ladder, each rung of which is inscribed with a virtue: meekness, poverty, chastity, charity, and obedience. The top of the ladder is Heaven, where Christ holds a large cloth in His hands, filled with righteous souls. In the Doomsday scene on fol. 73a, angels receive the souls of the righteous in a cloth. It is the reverse of this cloth for the blessed souls that Dudley postulates as the burning robe of the
"Debate of the Body and the Soul" and the garment of sin worn by the wicked soul in the Irish homily from the Leabhar Breaic.\textsuperscript{20}

The illustrations of the devils in this manuscript tally with the descriptions in the body-and-soul poems and in the vision literature, particularly that of St. Guthlac. Fol. 74\textsuperscript{a} shows a line of monstrous demons marching into the gaping, fanged mouth of the Hell-monster. They are hairy with tails, wings, horns, big bellies, peculiar eyes, and hideous grins. There are also a number of pictures of Death killing man with the long spear or hook, and in one instance, Death aims an arrow at a seated monk.

One illustration which does not parallel any description in the body-and-soul poetry is that on fol. 24\textsuperscript{b}, accompanying a poem on how our friends can help us out of Purgatory and into Heaven by means of almsdeeds, prayers, and sacraments. The righteous stand in the heavenly city watching people being hoisted out of a pit of flames in a large bucket.

The poem on fol. 33\textsuperscript{a} entitled "A disputacioun betwyn the body and the wormes," edited by Brunner, contains graphic imagery of bodily corruption, though the attitude of the body towards the worms that destroy her flesh is curiously complacent. The

\textsuperscript{20} Dudley, \textit{Egyptian Elements}, p. 134.
illustration for this poem, found on fol. 32b, shows an effigy of a lovely woman in fine clothes on top of the tomb, her head resting on a tasseled pillow. Underneath the tomb one sees the corpse revealed in a decaying shroud, with worms and four-legged creatures crawling all over her. Appearing with this illustration, the prologue to the poem warns all to observe how this lady's freshness and beauty have turned to stinking slime and clay:

When thou leste wenes, venit mors to superare
When thi grafe grenes, bonum est mortis meditari.

Throughout the poem are pictures of the grinning dead body wearing the same headdress as the effigy on the tomb, engaged in conversation with four plump worms the size of pythons.

Fol. 87a shows another worm-infested tomb, an effigy of a king on the top, the corpse underneath, with the words, "the fayr flesche falles and fades away."

A poem found on fol. 61b contains a description of the pains of Hell which is similar to the pains described in the later body-and-soul poems. In Hell there are ugly fiends, a bitter and foul bath, sharp hunger and thirst, great vermin, hot tears and weeping, and bands of iron which bind the souls hand and foot.
The illustration shows sinners tumbling into the mouth of the Hell-monster, while above an angel announces salvation for the righteous.

Both the works and their accompanying illustrations in this manuscript are graphic representations of damnation, salvation, and Doomsday. The details are those which appear in the body-and-soul poems, in the church wall paintings such as that in Chaldon Church, Sussex, and in works otherwise unrelated to the body-and-soul legend. Many of these same details appear later in the Dance of Death.

The Old English *Be Domes Daege* discusses the signs of the eschaton, the punishments of the damned, and the joys of the blessed, all within the framework of the vision. No tongue can describe the terrors of Hell, which consist of fire and sulphur, heat and cold, weeping and woe, and a mighty stench. Sinners burn in the dark cave of Hell, where there is neither peace nor hope. In Heaven the righteous enjoy the company of the saints and angels.

The bliss of Paradise is expressed as being the opposite of Hell; there is peace, no pain, no fear, care or mourning, want or death. In contrast to the vividly negative qualities of Hell, however, Heaven is rather pallidly portrayed. One would seek Heaven in

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21 Lumby, pp. 12-14.
order to avoid the horrors of Hell, but not for its own sake. The lack of positive description of Heaven in both the body-and-soul poems and in these ancillary expressions of themes from that legend is due to the admonitory character of the works, which strive to warn by example of damnation rather than salvation. The Old English homilies also emphasize Hell over Heaven, perhaps on the principle that it is easier to frighten people into good behavior with the dread of Hell than to bribe them with promises of the company of angels.

The Irish homily of the Leabhar Breac describes Heaven as a place of light, of singing, and of processions of angelic hosts and saints before the throne of God. The blessed soul is urged to come forward into the hands of the angels, into the nine grades of Heaven, and into the unity of the Trinity. Again, this description does not provide the vivid visual details which are seen earlier in this homily.

Two short lyrics from the thirteenth century, "Wen the turuf is thi tour" and "Proprietates Mortis," exhibit several themes from the death and grave literature. "Wen the turuf is thi tour," found in the MS Trinity College, Cambridge, 323, fol. 47b, is similar to "The Grave" in tone, mentioning the theme of the grave as the dwelling-place for the body, worms, bodily corruption, and the ubi sunt motif in six lines:
The white throat is a frequent image in the motif of bodily corruption, appearing in the later dialogues' discussion of the decay of the body, in "The Body and the Worms," and in several homilies which deal with this motif.

"Proprietates Mortis," from the MS Trinity College, Cambridge, 43, fol. 73, contains a list of the signs of old age and approaching death, and describes the grave as the house which rests upon the nose:

Wanne mine eynnen misten,
And mine heren sissen,
And mi nose koldet,
And mi tunge ffoldet,
And mi rude slaket,
And mine lippes blaken,
And mi muth grennet,
And mi spotel rennet,
And min her riset,
And min herte griset,
And mine honden biuien,
And mine ffet stiuien,
Al to late, al to late,
Wanne the bere ys at the gate.

Thanne y schal fflutte
Ffro debede to fflore,
Ffro fflore to here
Ffro here to bere,
Ffro bere to putte,

22 Brown, English Lyrics of the XIII Century, p. 54.
And te putt ffot-dut.
Thanne lyd min hus vype myn nose,
Off al this world ne gyffe ihic a pese.23

This list of the signs of old age is similar to that found in the poem "Signs of Death" from the kS Jesus College, though without reference to worms. Wulfstan's Homily XXX also lists these signs, as does Fragment A of the Worcester Fragments. "Death" catalogues the decay of the separate parts of the body, and the first part of "Nou is mon holi & soint" describes a man falling ill, dying, being sewn into his shroud, and being put in the grave.

Two other poems from the thirteenth century, "Of thre messagers of deeth" and "A disputison bitwene a god man and the deuel" mention the worms and bodily corruption, the contrast between the former and the present states of the body, the lack of friends, and the motif of the grave as the low-roofed house of the body. "A disputison bitwene a god man and the deuel" also deals with the problem of responsibility for sin, in this case placing the blame on the body; what the body does, the soul will suffer for.24

The moral poem "With I and E" preaches the inevitability of death in 

23 Brown, English Lyrics of the XIII Century, p. 130.
24 Van Os, p. 212.
The trumpets shall blow on Doomsday, the poem continues, and all men must render an account of their sins. For the wicked, Judgment will be grim. Of all man's goods only seven feet of earth and a shroud will be left to him. Man will become so loathsome that no one would sleep with him, even for a night.

This poem contains the themes of the contrast with former and present states, Doomsday, the necessity for living a Christian life, and the corruption of the grave. Because of its tone of admonition and warning and the themes it employs to that end, it represents an outgrowth in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries of the body-and-soul tradition that emphasized the elements with more emotional appeal, discarding those which would dictate the structure of the poem itself, such as the dialogue or address form.

of the body in the grave which is the result of death:

Kyndeli is now mi coming
in to this world wiht teres and cry;
Litel and pouere is myn hauing,
Briyel and sone i-falle from hi;
Scharp and strong is mi deying,
I ne woth whider schal i;
Fowl and stinkande is mi roting—
On me, ihesu, yow haue mercy.26

This poem is similar to the late twelfth-century poem from the MS British Museum Arundel 292, fol. 3b:

Whenne Ithenke thinges thre,
Ne may I never blithe be;
The ton is that I shall away;
The tother is, I ne wot whilk day;
The thridde is my moste care--
I ne not whider I shal fare.

The fear of death and the Judgment is evident in both of these short lyrics, as well as the inevitability of both.

The eight-stanza poem from the MS Vernon, fol. 407b, "Against My Will I Take My Leave," echoes the uncertainty and inevitability of the two short lyrics. The grave as a house for the body is mentioned, along with the ubi sunt expression of contrast:

26 Brown, Religious Lyrics of the XIV Century, p. 68.
When that vr lyf his leue hath lauht,
Vr bodi lith bounden bi the wowe,
Vr richesses alle from vs ben raft,
In clottes colde vr cors is throwe,
Wher are thi frendes ho wol the knowe?
Let seo no wol thi soule releue.
I rede the, mon, ar thou ly lowe,
Beo redi ay to take thi leue.27

Four of the internal stanzas of this poem end
with a warning to men to amend their lives now while
they may, rather than risk damnation eternally. The
image of bidding goodbye to the world, to friends,
and to possessions appears as the final line in each
stanza, and represents death, which is never explicitly
mentioned otherwise in this poem. This is a more
sophisticated expression of the farewell to the world
and the body than is seen in the body-and-soul poems.
Despite the subject, there is an elegance of phrase
and rhyme and a lightness of touch that makes this
poem unusual. The first and last stanzas bid farewell
to the merry company the poet has enjoyed, the second
and seventh ask God's mercy on all, and the four in-
ternal stanzas deal with the loss of friends in death,
the uncertainty of our damnation or salvation, the
corruption of the body in the grave, and the warning
to sinners. The structure of the poem brings the
reader back to the farewell first expressed in the

27 Brown, Religious Lyrics of the XIV Century,
  p. 135, l. 33-40.
first stanza, with the whole poem tied together by the refrain of taking one's leave.

The macaronic poem "Esto memori Mortis" begins with the *ubi sunt* regret, reminds men that they shall be worms' meat, and warns against pride. Hell's pains are fearsome and the body remains in the grave until Doomsday. "Be redy therefor y warne the, De te peccata fugando" (Brown, *English Lyrics of the XIII Century*, p. 240, l. 42).

The thirteenth-century poem, "On Serving Christ," found in the MS Jesus College, Oxford, 29, reveals a concern with Doomsday similar to that in "Sinners, Beware!" The Lord will come and show His wounds; no matter how richly clothed are the wealthy, they shall give an account of their sins. Sinners cannot flee the fires of Hell. Christians must forsake war. Then follows a list of various saints who suffered martyrdom for Christ's sake, including St. Peter, St. Laurence, St. John the Baptist, and St. Thomas of Canterbury. Finally the grave and death theme appears:

All we schulle to þe dep dreoreliche gon.  
And bi-leuen vré leowe freond, euervych on.  
Ne graueþ þis gode, in greote and in ston.  
Þær wæreþ vre wíte, in wurmene won.  
Ne geyneþ vs no grene, ne no scarlat non.  
Þe robes of russet, ne of rençyan.  
Ne þe ronke racches, þat ruskít þe ron.  
Boþe him schal rotye þat body and þe bon.  

This poem concludes with a prayer that the Lord will save us and have mercy on us. Except for the lines concerning the deaths of the four martyrs, this poem is very similar to "On Doomsday" in the theme of the eschaton, the Judgment of the wicked, and the disposition of the body in the grave. However, this poem does not mention the righteous nor have the Judgment Day setting, and no wicked soul addresses its body in blame for their damnation. This poem is purely hortatory in tone, urging men to serve Christ and warning sinners to amend their lives before death.

The poem "A Luue Ron" relies heavily on the ubi sunt motif in making its point that one should turn one's heart to Christ and forget the pleasures of the world:

\textit{\textup{\textit{\textup{thus is thes world as tu mayht seo}}}}
\textit{\textup{\textit{Al so is pe schadewe pat glyt away.}}}

\textit{\textup{Man's love is not constant on earth, and at the end death will rob him of everything:}}

\textit{\textup{An ende hwat helpe hit to helg}}
\textit{\textup{Al depe hit wil from him take.}}

\textit{29 Morris, Old English Miscellany, p. 94, ll. 31-32.}

\textit{30 Morris, Old English Miscellany, p. 95, ll. 63-64.}
Following these lines is a long list of the famous who are now dead, among them Paris and Helen, Dido, Tristram, Hector, and Caesar. Even if a man were as rich as King Henry, his pride would not keep him from death. This theme of the implacability of death is one common to the body-and-soul poems, as is the ubi sunt rhetoric.

This poem has as its controlling image the idea of taking Christ as one's lover. A maid of Christ has entreated the poet, Thomas of Hailes, to make a love song, and he has produced this poem in response to her request. The lover has sent a message: his house is fairer than the temple of Solomon; it stands on a secure foundation and nothing can destroy it. The house is full of bliss; everyone within plays with angels in peace and charity. The lover has given the maid a treasure more precious than gold or silver that she must guard always: her virginity. In choosing a lover, the poet says, she must choose the best.

The list of the worthy dead appears intrusive in the midst of the development of this image. The specific references to particular people seem out of place in the more general and subtle descriptions of Christ the Lover. This poem is unusual in that in its imagery of Heaven, Heaven is the house of the lover Christ, to which one comes after death if one accepts His proposal. This idea provides an interesting
contrast to the more popular and widespread motif of the grave as the house of the body, where all is cold, wormy, low, narrow, dark, confining, and eternal. Christ's house is light, happy, filled with playful angels and joyful singing. The result of the grave is bodily corruption, which has been seen as the physical counterpart to the spiritual torment of the soul in Hell, and though there is no mention of the physical corruption of the body in this poem, the image of the house of Christ is similar enough in description to the house of the body that the relationship between Heaven and Hell is obvious.

A fifteenth-century address, "Farewell, This World is But a Cherry Fair" is uttered by a man who has just died. It begins with an unusual image of death having arrested the man and brought him to appear before God. Death knocks at the gate and says, "Checkmate," to the living. The freshness of this image is reminiscent of that in the Visio Philiberti, "Now dethe hath take me by the sieve." (l. 383) This poem is filled with allusions to the vanity of the world and the treachery of material things which desert one in death:

This feckill world so false and so unstable
Promoteth his lovers but for a littel while.
(11. 22-23)

Death has laid the corpse of the speaker, imagined
here as a king, in the earth to be the food of worms.

The third stanza begins, "Speke soft, ye folkes,
for I am laid aslepe," (1. 15), and reminds one of
epitaphs asking the living for silence that the dead
not waken. Trust in the world is a dream from which
death awakens man. The final line of this stanza,
"I say no more, but be ware of an horne" (1. 12),
refers to the trumpets which will announce the Day
of Judgment.

The Latin tag at the end of the poem reads,
"Beati mortui qui in domino morivntur, Humiliatus
sum vermis." The leveling effect of death upon all
ranks of people aids in their view that the world is
folly and vanity and lasts as long as a cherry fair,
a common image of transience in the poetry of the
fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

"Vanitas Vanitatunm," from the MS Ashmole 61,
is a mixture of the ubi sunt motif and the ages-of-man
theme, with contempt and scorn for the works of the

32 "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord;
I am brought low as a worm."

33 Burrow, p. 28, n. 9.
wealthy. The list of castles, halls, bowers, and towers in the second stanza is similar to the ubi sunt lists in the body-and-soul dialogues, particularly the details in the "Debate of the Body and the Soul." Here are the interior details of the homes of the rich, the tournaments and worldly honors, the fair ladies in fine clothing, the young, strong, and beautiful. All of them will perish.

When Age schall come, croke both hand & kne, Than schai thu knaw that was bot vanyte. (11. 41-42)

Careless youth passes away with its mirth and frivolity. Middle Age strives to increase its riches. But when Old Age comes and man must die, he realizes that all was vanity. Even the poor, who labor endlessly for the wealthy, realize at their death, "Yit is oure labour not bot vanyte." (1. 77)

An alliterative poem from the MS Harley 116, called "The Mirror of Mortality," begins with an apostrophe to Death and continues in an ubi sunt vein, making specific references in the final stanzas to Ralph, Lord Cromwell, and his lady, who are "restinge vndire the stone." The alliteration in this poem

Brown, Religious Lyrics of the XV Century, p. 238.
Brown, Religious Lyrics of the XV Century, p. 245, l. 60.
is frequently forced, producing such lines as "Popes
and prelates stand in perplexite" (1. 25), "That mover
arte of mornynge & of moone" (1. 2), and "Muse in this
mirrour of mortalite" (1. 55), but the contrast between
the present and former states of the past worthies of
the world is well enunciated and detailed. The joy of
life is transitory and soon gone; man must consider
his old age and his death.

The short poem, "Three Lessons to Make Ready for
Death," found in the MS Laud Miscellany 733, emphasizes
the basic Christian responsibilities for preparation
for death. This twenty-one line poem begins with a
two-line introduction explaining that the poet was
lying in bed on Christmas Day and heard a voice telling
him to rise and go to church, to realize that the
world is uncertain, and to make preparations for death.

Remember that thou shall dye,
Ffor this world yn certentee
Hath nothyng save deth truele.
Therfore yn thy mynde vse this lessone:
Liffe so that deth take the yn sesone.36

The first lesson the voice provides is knowledge of the
seven deadly sins, the second is confession and satis-
faction, the third is repentance and contrition. If

36 Brown, Religious Lyrics of the XV Century,
p. 246, ll. 5-9.
a Christian learns all three lessons well, he will never die "owte of sesone."

The late fifteenth-century seven-stanza "Lament of the Soul of Edward IV," attributed to John Skelton, is unusual in that it is an address uttered by a historical figure. The poem is primarily a regret for mortality in ubi sunt language. There is an echo of "Earth upon Earth" in 1. 14:

I ly now in mowlde as it ys naturall,
Ffore erthe vnto erthe hath his Reuerture. 37

In dull, repetitive phrases Edward's soul is made to contrast his former worldly possessions and estate with his condition in the grave. The soul mentions the length of his reign, his invasion of France, the riches of his kingdom, and, with typical ubi sunt questions, asks about his victories, his royal clothing, horses, buildings and castles, and his wife. Stanza five contains a list of the defenses of England that he had strengthened, such as Dover and London; of all his royal buildings and towers, only Windsor is left to him, the castle where he is buried. The following stanza contains the obligatory naming of the worthy dead of history, such as "Alysaunder the grett," "strong Samson," and Solomon and Absolom. Man's fate,

seeing he is "butt a sake of stercory" (1. 75),
according to St. Bernard, is to become worms' meat.
Worms were ordained to eat the flesh of all men, and
even now Edward sleeps in his grave.

Each of the seven stanzas ends with the Latin re-
frain, "Ecce nunc in puluere dormio." The Latin tag
at the end of stanzas or the entire poem was a common
device in medieval poetry; it is found profusely in
the more overtly religious lyric poetry of the four-
teenth and fifteenth centuries and operates as a
unifying device. The placement of the tag in this
poem at the end of the rime royal stanzas is not as
well managed as it is in other poems where the tag is
worked into the text itself. In several stanzas it
bears little relationship to the content of the pre-
ceeding lines.

This poem shows similarity in the ubi sunt de-
tails to the body-and-soul dialogues which mention the
material possessions and the people, especially the
wife, who have been left behind. The theme of worms
and bodily corruption is present in this poem, as is
the idea of the grave as the dwelling-place of the
body, implicit in the Latin tag. This poem is inter-
esting because of the personal details of Edward's
life that are mentioned, but in terms of providing a
warning to sinners to repent, forsake the world, and
turn to God, it falls far short of the mark because
it is such a personal statement. The anonymity of earlier poems with a similar theme speaks more simply and directly to the listeners.

The short poem "Death, the Port of Peace" from the MS Royal 9.0.ii, is similar to "The Grave" in that death apparently is speaking. Death is described as the port of peace in storms of disease, a refuge to the wretched, and a comfort of mischief and unrest;

Howe cometh al ye that ben y-brought
In bondes--ful of bitter besynesse
Of erthly luste, abydyng in your thought?
Here ys the reste of all your besynesse,
Here ys the porte of peese & restfulnes
To them that stondeth in storms of dysese,
Only refuge to wreches in dystrese,
And al conforte of myschefe & of mysese.

This poem lacks the stoic sense of the inevitability of death; in images that point forward to later modes of expression concerning death, death is described as a restful, peaceful, secure haven after the storms of life. There is no sense of the fear or terror of death, nor of the judgment that accompanies it.

In a curious reversal of the usual theme of terror of death, the seven-stanza poem from the MS Cambridge University Gg.1.32, entitled "Death, The Soul's Friend," bids man think kindly on death, which signifies the

38 Brown, Religious Lyrics of the XV Century, p. 259.
beginning of the life for the soul in Heaven. Death is nothing to fear since it comes to all men:

Thynk that thou ert ded alway,  
Qwyllis that thou dwellis here;  
Thynk thy leff be-gynnis ay,  
Qwen thou ert layd apon a bere.  

The poem explains that we are all wretched worms in our sins, but God may bring us to Heaven. Even if death comes to us suddenly, still it should not be feared.

The long dream poem by John Lydgate, The Assembly of Gods, or The Accord of Reason and Sensuality in the Fear of Death, is a profound expression of the terror of death. In an involved setting littered with classical characters, Reason and Sensuality express their reasons for fearing death. The elements in this poem that are similar to those in the body-and-soul poems are the nonspecific tone of dread and references to the approach of Death signified by the decay of the body. In this poem the poet meets with Venus and journeys to the Garden of Pleasure, where

39 Brown, Religious Lyrics of the XV Century, p. 238, ll. 61-54.
the gods and certain personified abstractions discuss death. One must fight against death:

When he seeth Dethe so neere at hys hande
Yet ys hys part hym to wythstande,
(p. 57, ll. 1959-60)

The singular little poem "Earth upon Earth" is essentially an expression of the ubi sunt motif and the necessity for fulfilling one's Christian duties in terms of the individual man. Man, created out of the dust of the earth, shall be brought back into the earth with death, and then all his efforts to gain power and property will have been for nothing. There is a reference to the bread and ale which appears in the ubi sunt lists of the body-and-soul poems: "For there is nother to gett, bred, ale, ne wyne." ⁴¹

When man is placed in the earth, worms eat him and he stinks. ⁴² Man shall suffer torment after death, though whether by the pains of Hell or the corruption of the body is unclear:

Now goth the erthe apon erthe
Disgesily ragged and to rent,
Therefore schal erthe vnder erthe
Suffer ful grete turment. ⁴³

⁴¹ Fiedler, p. 226.
⁴² Halliwell, p. 41.
⁴³ Fiedler, p. 222.
Man's castles and towers will be taken from him:

Erth upon erth wynnis castylles and towris;
Then sayeth erth to erth, al this is ourus,
When erth upon erth has bylde al his boures,
Then schal erth fro the erth soffyre scharpe schorys.\(^44\)

The Porkington version mentions the executors of man's estate who cannot be trusted to carry out any charitable efforts on the dead man's behalf: "Yefe thi almus with thi hand, trust to no secatour."\(^{45}\) The sense here is that man must perform his own almsdeeds and not expect his executors to do so after his death. Because man came naked into this world and shall die wearing only a shroud, he has an obligation to clothe the naked while he can, as God has commanded. Though man seeks to gain riches while alive, the Gospel says that the poor go to Heaven, the rich to Hell because they would not keep God's commandments. Man must give shelter to those in need, for the earth provides shelter for the rich; he must feed the hungry, for there is no food in the grave. If man lives upon earth in such a way as to prepare himself a place in Heaven, he is assured of "myrth withowten end."\(^{46}\)

\(^44\) Fiedler, p. 225.
\(^45\) Halliwell, p. 41.
\(^46\) Halliwell, p. 42.
This poem is controlled by the extended metaphor of the earth, which means man, death, and the grave. The image occasionally becomes confusing:

Yit schalt thou erthe for alle thi erthe
Make thou never so gay,
For thi erthe in to erthe,
Clynge as clotte in clay.47

Erthe expands its meaning to encompass this life and the possessions of this world, but generally the metaphor keeps the reader aware of mortality by the clear association of man with earth and man's mortal end in this life with the grave.

In the stanzas dealing with man's Christian duties, the obligation is introduced in terms of man's original state at birth and his condition at death. Man enters this world unclad and departs it in a winding-sheet, and therefore in humility he should clothe those in need. He can take no food with him into the grave, and so should feed the hungry. His house in the earth will be small and mean, and so he should provide shelter for those who need it. The stark objectivity of referring to man as earth provides a tone of detachment unusual in the fifteenth-century admonitory expression of preparation in this

47 Fiedler, p. 223.
life for the world to come. The controlling metaphor in "Earth upon Earth" is structurally similar to that in "The Grave," though the latter poem contains no element of Christianity or hope for release from the dwelling place of the body. "Earth upon Earth" indicates that if man turns his thoughts to God and performs works of mercy in this life, the bliss of Heaven will be his, even though his body lies in the earth.

An unusual expression of the body-and-soul legend appears in the fifteenth-century poem entitled, "How Man's Flesh Complained to God Against Christ." This address is uttered by the wicked body, but it is not directed to the soul. The flesh complains to God that Christ has alienated its soul, with which before it had lived in harmony. The soul will not permit the body to enjoy worldly pleasures and bids it think of the grave. Formerly the body was the master, but now it is the servant of the soul, which bids it act to oppose sin. Jesus and the soul are united against the body and warn it against sins of the flesh. The soul chastises the body and returns to Christ. The soul despises the body's fashionable clothes and spends all her time with Christ, eating and drinking with Him.

God replies to the body that its complaint against its soul is an indictment of its own vices and sins. Because of its indulgence, the soul no longer loves the body and is ashamed of it. God says He will be merciful and bring the soul to Heaven, but He warns the body not to continue sinning from excess hope of mercy or from despair of ever being saved. His grace is available to those who try to do good, and therefore the body should meekly accept what God sends, do almsdeeds, and help the poor.

The conclusion reached in this poem is the same as in all other body-and-soul poems, though in this case it is God who speaks for the soul and argues against the body. The setting of this poem is different from those in the body-and-soul tradition, for the controversy takes place during man's life, but the didactic purpose is the same, that of exhorting man to refrain from sins of the body and strive for Christian virtues. This poem follows more closely the mainstream of body-and-soul poetry, being chiefly concerned with the body-soul disagreement and less so with the secondary elements which were more attractive in poems of this later period. There are no vivid descriptions of Hell or the punishments in store for the wicked soul, no speculations on the transitoriness of life and the inevitability of death, and no curses by either the body or the soul. The soul is not allowed to speak
directly, for the body only reports to God what the soul has said; the device of allowing the body to damn itself in its complaint against the soul is one which does not occur in the body-and-soul poems.

These later expressions of motifs seen in the body-and-soul poems tend to emphasize the more tangible elements at the expense of the theological argument concerning the responsibility for sin. The poems of this later period are concerned with the ubi sunt theme, signs of old age, the punishments of Hell or rewards of Heaven, the devastation of the grave, the vanity of worldly goods, and the implacability of death. The use of the particular setting of address or dialogue as a vehicle for the argument falls into disuse and the hortatory and admonitory character of the body and soul legend becomes much more prominent. These later poems assume that the sins of the flesh will damn the soul, and if Christians attend to their duties and keep themselves chaste, they will gain Heaven. The sin of pride that occupies the bulk of the soul's accusations in the body-and-soul poems is not as important in these ancillary expressions of the motifs; the concern here is more with Christian duties, repentance, and chastity.

The allegorical representation of the struggle with death and the necessity for man to prepare himself for his end is given dramatic expression in the
fifteenth-century morality plays, which are thought to derive from the Dance of Death or from pulpit literature dealing with the preparation for death.\(^4^9\) Whatever their immediate antecedents, the morality plays demonstrate the idea that Death comes to everyone out of season, that there is no escape from Death, and that one must prepare for one's end. Personified vices and virtues aid in the dramatic examples of the Church's teaching on the subject.

The earliest of these plays, the fragment The Pride of Life, dates from around 1400. The prologue provides an outline of the plot, in which the King, assisted by his knights Strength and Health, states that he does not fear Death and will live forever. The Queen reminds him that all men must die and begs him prepare for death as the church urges. The Bishop arrives and delivers a lengthy sermon on the evils of the time, which has traces of ubi sunt rhetoric, but the King is adamant in his refusal to consider his end. The prologue explains that Death comes and battles with the King and overcomes him, for his knights and servants cannot give him support or aid against Death. The prologue also indicates that an accusatory interchange between the body and the soul occurred in the second half of the play, which is now lost.\(^5^0\)

\(^4^9\) Albert Baugh, p. 284.

\(^5^0\) Alison, p. 102.
The longest and most comprehensive of these morality plays, *The Castell of Perseverance*, dated c. 1425, contains specific motifs from the body-and-soul legend. The separation of the body and soul occurs when Anima emerges from under the bed upon which Humanum Genus has just died. Anima upbraids the body for its sinful conduct, accusing it of covetousness and lust:

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Body! thou debyst brew a byttyr bale,
to thi lustys whanne gannyst loute.
thi sely sowle schal ben a-kale;
I beye thi dedys with rewly route;
& al it is for gyle.
euere thou hast be coveytows
falsly to getyn londe & hows;
to me thou hast brokyn a byttyr jows.
(p. 163, 11. 3011-20)
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There is a break in the manuscript shortly after this accusation, so it is impossible to discern whether Humanum Genus was allowed to reply. The Bonus Angelus, unable to aid Anima, departs; the Maleus Angelus then entertains Anima with a lengthy description of the torments of Hell and hastens away, attempting to carry Anima on his back to Hell in a scene similar to that in the " Debate of the Body and the Soul" in which the soul is forced to ride the infernal devil-horse.

The descriptions of Hell by Malus Angelus are substantially the same as those in the body-and-soul dialogues and serve the same purpose of heightening the fear and terror of the audience in preparation for the dragging of the terrified Anima to Hell. The wicked soul is to hang from hooks in Hell, burn in flaming bonds, and lie in filth. Unlike the poetic dialogues, where the primary sins are pride and gluttony, the sin here for which Anima is punished is covetousness. The Bonus Angelus cannot help: "Aseyns Coveytyse can I not telle." There are also no legions of devils to prick and torment Anima on the way to Hell, though for the purpose of dramatic presentation, hordes of demons would not only be difficult to manage but would detract from the force of the speech by Malus Angelus prior to the departure to Hell. Another point of difference is that in the end, Anima is saved by Mercy and Peace, two of the Four Daughters of God, who plead with God to pardon the soul; Anima is allowed to enter Paradise.

Another of the Macro plays, Mankind, c. 1460, shows adaptation of vestigial body and soul elements to the morality plays. At the beginning of this play the character of Mercy exhorts man to thank God for redemption and salvation, and at the end chastises man for paying too little attention to his words. But the rest of the play, however, is given over to
Coarse humor and low comedy which produces rather a contradiction of the morality but which shows the great popular appeal of the representation of the devil, Hell, vice, and the evils of the world.

The concise and outstanding Everyman confines itself to the summons from Death and man's preparation for it. God sends His servant Death to fetch Everyman and ready him for the pilgrimage which no man can escape. Death observes that Everyman is not ready for the journey: "Full lytell he thynketh on my comynge." When Death appears, Everyman tries to bribe him:

O Deth! thou comest when I had ye leest in mynde!
In thy power it lyeth me to save;
Yef of my good wyl I gyve ye, yf thou wil be kynde;
Ye, a thousande pounde shalte thou have,
And thou dyfferre this mater tyll an other daye.

(11, 119-23)

The book of deeds in which is recorded the actions of a man's life appears in Everyman's remonstrances with Death as he begs for more time, saying that if he could be allowed twelve more years, he could build up his moral account in his book of reckoning and thus not fear the consequences of death.

An echo of the ubi sunt theme and the Dance of Death occurs in Death's speech to Everyman in which he claims that he cannot be persuaded to stay his hand for gold, silver, or riches; or for pope, emperor, king, duke, or prince.

The necessity to perform acts of charity and to go to confession is emphasized in the scene where Knowledge brings Everyman to Confession, who gives penance and reminds Everyman of God's mercy to repentant sinners. Knowledge then advises Everyman to go to Priesthood to receive the sacraments, particularly extreme unction, for the sacraments are the soul's medicine and cure the ills of sin. At the end of the play, when Everyman has been deserted by all his associates in life and only Good Deeds accompanies him into the grave, an angel receives his soul into Heaven.

There are no descriptions of the pains of Hell in this play as there are in The Castell of Perseverance and damnation is only obliquely alluded to. The thrust of Everyman is the preparation for death, which includes the observance of Christian obligations and the denial of worldly goods and relationships, the reception of the sacraments, and the remembrance of God's mercy and love. The motifs of the unreadiness of man for death, the book of deeds, the performance of Christian duties, and the angel who receives the soul of the righteous are all that remain in Everyman of the body-and-soul.
legend. The theme of this play is remarkably similar to that of the *Ars Moriendi*, a work concerned with death and judgment that appeared a number of years before *Everyman* was written, but whose popularity coincided with the emergence of the morality plays.

The same period which saw the fuller development of the body-and-soul legend in the debates and the secondary expression of elements from that legend also witnessed the rise of interest in the craft of preparation for death. The *Ars Moriendi* originated in France in the thirteenth century and was included in the *Somme du Roi* compiled by Lorens d'Orléans, a thirteenth-century Dominican who was confessor to King Philip the Bold of France (1270-81). This is a composite work with six major sections, one of which is the *Ars Moriendi*; the *Somme du Roi* was put into English as *The Book of Vices and Virtues* by an unknown Midlands translator about 1375, though the *Ars Moriendi* was known in England before that date.\(^5^3\) The *Ars Moriendi* was essentially a conduct book on the "Arte and Crafte to Knowe Well to Dye."\(^5^4\) It exists in at least 300 manuscripts in Latin and Western European vernaculars and represents a reasonable Christian response to the terror of death and judgment. The


\(^5^4\) O'Connor, p. 1.
earlier versions of the *Ars Moriendi* such as that in *The Book of Vices and Virtues* were designed to encourage people to live better lives; later versions show the battles between an angel and a devil for the soul of the dying man and instruct moriens to answer the deathbed taunts of the devil with appropriate prayers or scriptural responses. Other versions, generally from the fifteenth century, are simply collections of prayers for the dying.55

The *Ars Moriendi* emphasizes the constant presence of death and the accompanying necessity to prepare for it, though it is in the later versions of this work, those from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, that the morbid consciousness of death is present. The development of the *Ars Moriendi* parallels that of the body-and-soul poetry, moving from a considered, stoic tone to the vivid descriptions of Hell designed to frighten the wicked into abandoning their sinful ways.

The *Ars Moriendi* from *The Book of Vices and Virtues* begins with a paradox, that to live well one has to learn to die:

> The man ne dieth not gladly that hath not lernded hit, and therfore lerne to

dye and than shalt thou kunne lyve, for ther schal no man kunne lyve wel but he have lerned to dye. 56

Life is described as but a "passynge tyme" to another life that is without end, either in sorrow and pain or in eternal joy.

An ubi sunt passage in typical language expresses the regret at the passing of life:

And that witnesseth wel the kynges, the erles, the prynces, and the emperours, that hadde sum tyme the joye of the world, and now thei lyen in helle and crien and wailen and waryen and seyn: "Alas, what helpeth now us oure londes, oure grete power in erthe, honoure, nobleeye, joye, and bost?" 57

Life passes sooner than a shower; now are we born and now we die. Crowns of pearls, garlands, rich robes, and all other goods are gone from us. This passage is given to show us that life on earth is only a passage to life eternal, whether in Heaven or Hell. If a man thinks he has fifty or sixty years, he is mistaken; death has them and will not give them up. Day and night lead only to death, and the more men do, the less they know. All must die, yet do not know how to.

56 Blake, p. 132.

57 Blake, p. 133.
"Deeth is but a partynge bitwen the body and the soule," as every man knows.\textsuperscript{58} Holy men who love God realize that all men should die three deaths. They should die to sin, to the world, and finally abide the third death, which is the separation of soul from body. Men should practice dying by separating in thought the soul from the body. "Send thin herte into that other world, that is into hevene or into helle or into purgatory, and ther thou schalt see what is good and what is yvele."\textsuperscript{59} Contemplate the sorrow and pain of Hell, observe the purifying fires of Purgatory, and witness in Paradise how virtues and goodness are held in high esteem.

The description of the torments of Hell is similar to the lists of pains in other sources. There is "defaute of all goodnesse and gret plente of al wikkednesse," burning fire, stinking brimstone, foul storms and tempests, devils, hunger and unabated thirst, weeping and "sorwes more than any herte may thenk or any tunge may devyse," and all without end. When the reader sees to what end a mortal sin could bring him, he will prefer to be flayed alive rather than to consent to that sin.

\textsuperscript{58} Blake, p. 134.

\textsuperscript{59} Blake, p. 135.
Purgatory is full of souls that repented in this life, but are not yet fully purified and cleansed and must be tried by fire and refined until no more filth or sin remains and they are as pure as at their baptism. By confession, repentance, and prayer one becomes aware of the holy fear of God that is the beginning of a good and holy life.

It is more difficult to describe Heaven in terms of what it contains, as most descriptions of Paradise are in terms of what is not there: there is no sorrow, no weeping, and no pain. There is authority for the agony of Hell, from which was also abstracted the purging fires of Purgatory, but all anyone knows about Heaven is that God is there, angels and saints are there, and it will be rather like an extended church service, with processions and singing:

There is the joyful companye of God, of angesles and of halewen. There is plente of al goodnesse, fairnesse, richesse, worschips, joye, vertues, love, wit, and joye and likynge everemore lastynge. There is non ypocrisie, ne gile, ne losengerie, ne non evel-acord, ne non envye, ne hunger, ne thirst, ne to moche hete, ne cold, ne non yvele, ne non akynge of heved, ne drede of enemyes, but eberemore festes grete and realle weddynges with songs and joye withouten ende.60

60 Blake, p. 137.
An interesting comparison follows the discussion of Heaven. A man who loves God and turns toward Him out of love will proceed faster to the Kingdom of Heaven than will a man who pursues virtue out of fear of Hell. Those who love God "renneth as greyhoundes for thei have evere here eighen to hevene, for there thei seen the praie that thei honten and cheseth after." But those who inclune toward Heaven through fear of Hell are likened to hares, who run to escape their enemies, and not for love of their prize.

The didactic purpose of the early versions of the Ars Moriendi is different from that of the body-and-soul poetry. The Ars Moriendi does not seek to terrify sinners into abandoning their evil ways and living a righteous life, but rather soothes the fear of death and demonstrates how one can prepare for it by careful examination of the possibilities of existence after the separation of the soul from the body.

The later versions of the Ars Moriendi provide the dying man with a list of responses to the temptations which surround the deathbed. These responses derive from both scriptural and patristic writing on the subjects of sin, death, Hell, and Heaven, and also include portions of the Creed and various prayers. The principle temptations which attack the dying are doubt and lack of faith, vainglory, and the attachment to
material possessions and relations. Men are urged to disassociate themselves from their worldly goods and practice objectivity in their personal relationships, in order to make the parting easier at death. These later versions, not as objective in tone as the earlier ones, draw on the notion of the deathbed struggle with the devil which was seen in early Christian death narratives. It is assumed that the devil will be present at the moment of death, to try a final time, with all his strength and all the temptations he can muster, to win the soul. An angel stands by to attend the dying, and in some cases provides the responses to be said by Moriens to the devil.

To the credit of medieval Christians who took their responsibilities seriously, the Ars Moriendi was more popular and enjoyed more success than did the Dance of Death. The Dance of Death developed in both its visual and literary forms at the time of the later versions of the Ars Moriendi, which has been called the spiritualization of the dance macabre. However, the Ars Moriendi was more important for Christians in pointing the way through death to salvation.

The relationship of the Ars Moriendi to the body-and-soul legend is not one of direct influence. All

61 O'Connor, p. 7.
of the death motifs in Western literature enjoyed a great vogue from the thirteenth through the fifteenth centuries. The plague has been blamed for this phenomenon; plague, like death, was something no one could escape. Doubtless it was a factor in the popularity of the death and grave theme, but by the time the Dance of Death evolved in popular pictorial representations in the last half of the fifteenth century, the great waves of plague of the fourteenth century were distant history. The ancient Egyptian religion was more concerned with death than with life, the decadent Romans indulged in death fantasies, eighteenth-century English literature produced the Graveyard School of poetry, on All Souls Day modern Mexicans eat tiny sugar skulls bearing their names, and in this country in the past ten years there has been a growing interest in death, dying, and the afterlife, all without the benefit of the plague. One does not need the plague to remind one of death; one needs only to be mortal. Death is an inescapable fact and a universal concern; it is not necessary to look further for the reason for the popularity of literary and artistic themes dealing with death.

The thirteenth century saw not only literary expressions of the theme of death, the grave, and the judgment, for at this time in France a religious order was formed called "Les Frères de la Mort," which
evidenced an over-abundance of concern with death. The brothers had skulls embroidered on their scapulars and greeted each other with the phrase, "Pensez à la mort, mon très cher frère." Before eating they were required to kiss a skull affixed to the foot of a crucifix. All cells were equipped with a skull for contemplation. The words "Il faut mourir" were found everywhere. Pope Urban VIII finally suppressed the order in 1633. This order emphasized the equality of all men in death, a notion which is as prevalent in the consideration of death as is the grave itself. This idea is found in Egyptian literature, in Lucan's Dialogues of the Dead, in Innocent III's De Contemptu Mundi, in all ubi sunt rhetoric, in admonitions to despise the world and live for the future life, and in descriptions of the grave and the corruption of the body. It is the notion of the equality of all men before death that is the controlling theme of the Dance of Death.

The origins of this theme are obscure. In the thirteenth century a metrical work appeared in France under the title "Les trois Morts et les trois Vifs," three manuscripts of which are extant. The poem tells of three young noblemen who are hunting in the forest when they are intercepted by three images of Death.

who lecture them on the vanity of human endeavor.\textsuperscript{64}

In a painting by Andrew Orcagna in the Campo Santo at Pisa, this situation is depicted with some variation. The hunters arrive at the cell of St. Macarius the Egyptian, who gestures with one hand toward three open coffins which contain one skeleton and two dead bodies, one of them a king.

In the churchyard of the Innocents at Paris the story of "Les trois Morts et les trois Vifs" was attached to a painting of the Dance of Death, a work executed in 1424. Verses of it had been engraved over the portal of that church in 1408 by order of Jean, Duc de Berry.\textsuperscript{65} It is also found in contemporary books of hours and in service books prefixed to the burial office.

A Latin poem in thirty-four couplets from the thirteenth century, called the \textit{Vado Mori}, is the source for a three-stanza poem in English found in three manuscripts from the following century. The Latin poem asks various types of people where they are going, the answer being \textit{vado mori}. The English expression of these lines in found in MS Cotton

\textsuperscript{64} Francis Douce, \textit{Holbein's Dance of Death} (London: George Bell and Sons, 1890), p. 27.

\textsuperscript{65} Douce, p. 29.
Faustina B. vi, Part II, fol. 1\textsuperscript{b}, the MS British Museum Additional 37049, fol. 36\textsuperscript{a}, and the MS Stowe 39, fol. 32\textsuperscript{a}; it is called "Knight, King, Clerk Wende to Death." The poem contains \textit{ubi sunt} rhetoric and the theme of the grave:

I wende to dede, a kyng y-wys;
What helps honour or warldis blys?
Ded is to man the kynde way--
I wende to be clad in clay.

I wende to dede, clerk ful of skill,
That cowthe with wordes men mate & stytle,
So Sone has the dede me made an ende--
Bes war with me! to dede I wende.

I wende to dede, knyght styf in stowre,
Throw fyght in feld e I wan the flowre;
No fyghts me taught the ded to qwell--
I wende to dede, soth I yow tell.

The Stowe manuscript adds eight more lines, spoken by Death, which state that though all living things now flee from him, yet king, nobleman, knight, clerk, beast, and bird will be struck down.

The Latin version contains an expanded list of those who bewail their fate, though the "Trois Morts et les trois Vifs" contains dialogue between those living and those now dead. The living and dead are usually limited to three of each, and the living are merely warned that death is the end of their course on earth and that they should live good lives in order

\begin{enumerate}
\item \textit{Brown, Religious Lyrics of the XV Century, pp. 248-49; Brunner, pp. 21-22.}}
to enjoy the life to come. In the Latin version of "Les trois Morts" there is only one dead person in a coffin, and he is only a reminder of what man will be and therefore does not speak. The tradition of the vado mori poems is similar in origin to that of the body-and-soul addresses in which the dead soul utters a monologue of warning to the living.

It was Douce's theory that the term macabre derives from the name of St. Macarius of the "Trois Morts et trois Vifs" poems, having undergone corruption in transmission. He claims that the word macabre is found in the French versions only, and in the orthography of the manuscripts would have been written Macabre rather than Macaure, the letter O having been substituted for U "from the caprice, ignorance, or carelessness of the transcribers." This theory of the disputed origin of the word is somewhat more reasonable than others which have been put forward. The term macabre is not a compound of to make and to break, as was thought by Villaret, nor does it appear to be the Arabic word madbarah or magabir, which means churchyard, the theory propounded by Van Praet of the Royal Library.

67 Kurtz, Dance of Death, p. 17.
68 Kurtz, Dance of Death, p. 18.
69 Douce, p. 29.
at Paris. The term has been variously suggested to refer to the Maccabees, or Macrobius; it was not until the nineteenth century that it revived and acquired the added meaning of the combination of the gruesome and the grotesque, the horrible with a touch of humor.

It is likewise uncertain how the dance came to be associated with this theme. It has been suggested that the word dance is used in a general sense of defile, procession, or even cortege. Douce mentions the discovery in 1810 of fragments of a Roman sarcophagus near Cumae on which were represented three dancing skeletons. There is also a Roman lamp on which are depicted three dancing skeletons, and such are said to be found in one of the paintings at Pompeii. There were constant statements by the church in the early medieval period concerning dancing in churches and churchyards, the most famous example of which is found in the Nuremberg Chronicle, which tells of the twenty-eight people in the diocese of Magdeburg who danced on Christmas Eve and, refusing to stop, were cursed by the priest. They danced without ceasing

71 Kurtz, Dance of Death, p. 1.
73 Douce, p. 11.
for a year, until they obtained forgiveness from the archbishop, at which time they slept for three days and died soon afterwards. This story is found in a number of other chronicles and in the English Handlyng Synne, written by Robert of Brunne around 1303.

There is some confusion as to whether there were actual physical representations of a pageant of death or a dance of death, but it is known that the large painting of the Dance of Death at the Innocents was finished in 1424. There was a famous Dance of Death in Basle in the churchyard of the Dominican convent dating from about the same time. This painting was destroyed in 1806, whether by natural forces of time and weather, or by a mob, is uncertain depending on the sources. There were a number of inferior paintings of this subject containing fewer characters than the larger, more famous ones, scattered over continental Europe and England. In parts of Bavaria and Switzerland it was found painted on bridges. There was a Dance of Death at Old St. Paul's in London, commissioned during the reign of Henry VI by one Jenkyn Carpenter; it was pulled down in April of 1549. There remains only a single figure of a Dance of Death in Hungerford Chapel, Salisbury Cathedral, which dates from around 1460; there was a Dance of Death in the chapel at

74 Buce, p. 33.
Wortley Hall, Gloucestershire, another in the church at Stratford upon Avon, and the remains of one in the church at Hexham, Northumberland. A Dance of Death tapestry hung in the Tower of London during the mid-sixteenth century.\textsuperscript{75}

John Lydgate translated the French version of the metrical Dance of Death which accompanied the painting at the Innocents at Paris. This translation appears at the end of The Fall of Princes under the title "The Daunce of Machabree." Its expressed purpose is to show "the state of manne, and howe he is called at uncertaine tymes by death, and when he thinketh least thereon."\textsuperscript{76} It is possible that Lydgate's verses appeared with the painted Dance of Death at St. Paul's.

\textsuperscript{75} Douce, pp. 45-46.
\textsuperscript{76} John Lydgate, The Fall of Princes, III, p. 1025.
\textsuperscript{77} Marchant, p. 4.
In all metrical versions of the Dance of Death there is an exchange between Death and the person being led away. There is generally some form of prologue or introduction to the effect that Death comes to all, whether of high or low degree, that the time of one's death is uncertain, and that this life is a pilgrimage to Heaven.

Lydgate's introduction provides authority for his translation from the inscription at Paris:

Like the sample which that at Parise
I fonde depict ones vpon a wal
Full notably, as I rehearse shall.
Of a Frenche clarke takyng acquaintaunce
I toke on me to translaten all
Out of the Frenche Machabrees daunce.
(p. 1026, 11. 19-20)

He says that he copied faithfully the "daunce at Saint Innocentes." Lydgate's verses were first printed in 1554 at the end of Tottell's edition of The Fall of Princes, five years after the St. Paul's Dance of Death was destroyed.

Lydgate's translation contains elements associated with the body-and-soul legend that were particularly popular at this time, most notably the ubi sunt theme. The Pope feels that it is appropriate for him to lead the dance, since he held the highest position on earth while alive. The Emperor realizes there is
no help against death, and now all he has is "a simple shete, there is nomore to seyn, To wraypen in my body and visage" (p. 1028, ll. 85-86). He states that "lordes great haue litle auauntage" (l. 88). The Cardinal speaks of the vanity of worldly wealth and tells how "grise nor ermine" shall accompany him in the dance. The Patriarch echoes the statement of the soul in the Visio Philiberti that the higher the estate or position, the greater the fall:

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Hie clymbyng vp a fall hath for his mede. 
Great estates folke wasten out of number; 
Whc mounteth high, it is sure and no drede, 
Create burden doth hym oft encomber. 
(p. 1029, ll. 133-36)
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The Baron and the Squire both bemoan the loss of material possessions and their friends. Death tells the Baron to forget his trumpets, his pleasures, and his ladies with whom he danced in the shade, and the Baron agrees that his ambition has been in vain. The new clothes and knowledge of new dances, fresh horses and arms of the Squire are gone; he is invited now to dance with Death. The Usurer must lose all his gold and silver through the sudden action of Death.

The image of the dance itself is developed in the interchange between Death and the Minstrel. Death explains the steps to the Minstrel, saying
he will grip him by the right hand and they will join the others:

For in musike by craft and accordaunce
Who maister is shal shewen his science,
(p. 1040, ll. 535-36)

The Minstrel answers that this dance is one strange to him:

Wonder diuers and passingly contrarye;
The dredfull footyng doth so ofte chaunge
And the measures so ofte tymes varye,
which now to me is nothyng necessarye.
(p. 1040, ll. 538-41)

The Monk also mentions the difficulty of learning this dance, and remarks that "al be not merye which that men seen daunce" (l. 1036, l. 392)

The Constable and the Sergeant are the subject of a joke from Death, who says to the Constable, "It is my ryght to arest you and constreyne, with vs to daunce, my mayster Sir Cunstable:" (p. 1030, ll. 137-38). The Sergeant is enjoined to "make no defence nor rebellion" (l. 362) and is told

For there is none so sturdy chaunpion
Thogh he be mightie, another is also strong.
(p. 1036, ll. 367-68)

The Sergeant develops the word play further:
Kowe durst thou Death set on me arest,
That am the kynges chosen officer,
Which yesterday, bothen east and west,
Mine office dye, ful surquedous of chere;
But new this day I am arested here,
And can nought flee, thon I had it sworn. 

Death mentions to both the Emperor and to the Astronomer that Adam's sin is the cause of man's death: "Adams children al they must deye" (1. 80); "And all shall dye for an apple rounde" (1. 288). Early sixteenth-century printings of the illustrations for the Dance of Death begin with the temptation in Paradise and the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden. Holbein's woodcuts of the Dance of Death show Death accompanying Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden and helping Adam work the soil while Eve holds a distaff and nurses her firstborn.

Death tells the Physician that for all his craft and study of medicine, he still must die. "Good leche is he that can himself recure" (1. 424). The Physician replies that though in life he had sought a cure for the pestilence, "Againes Death is worth no medicine" (1. 432).

78 The image of Death arresting a man also appears in the poem "Farewell, This World is But a Cherry Fair," where the speaker announces, "I am arrested to aper at goddes face."

The Laborer has long wished for Death after a life of work with the spade and pike, digging and hauling in wind and rain for another master:

For I may say and telle planlye howe,  
In this worlde there is reste none.  
(p. 1041, 11. 559-60)

Death's speech to the small child who is to die echoes the complaint of the evil soul to its body that it has lived too long. Death is consoling the child on its death, saying "Who lengest liueth most shall suffer woe" (p. 1042, l. 584). The child, only born yesterday, today must die:

I come but now, and now I go my way;  
Of me no more tale shall ye be told.  
(p. 1042, 11. 589-90)

No man shall withstand the will of God, and it does not matter whether one is old or young when Death comes.

The Friar, the Hermit, and the Carthusian provide the proper responses to Death. The Friar admits that the world is vanity and nothing may defend against death. "Wise he the sinner that doth his lyfe amend" (p. 1042, l. 576). The Hermit does not fear death:

To liue in desert called solitarie  
May again Death haue respite none nor space;
At vnset houre his commyng doth not tary;
And for my part welcom by Goddes grace.
Thankynge hym with humble chere & face
Of al his giftes and great haboundaunce,
Finally attirmyng in this place,
No man is riche that lacketh suffraunce.
(p. 1043, ll. 617-24)

Death answers, "That is wel sayd," and urges every man
to thank God, love and fear Him with all his heart
and might, and remember that he cannot escape death.

A better lesson there can no clerk expresse,
Than til to-morow is no man sure to abide.
(p. 1043, ll. 631-32)

The Carthusian admits that

... everyman, be he neuer so strong,
Dreadeth to dye by kindly mocion
After his fleshly inclinacion.
But please to God my soule for to borowe
Fro Fiendes myght and fro damnacion:
Some arne to-day that shal nought be to-morow.
(p. 1037, ll. 335-60)

Throughout the "Daunce of Machabree" runs the
tHEME OF MORTALITY; worldly goods increase the dif-
culty of dying, knowledge and power do not avail
against death, and youth, position, or age cannot
save one from death. After the whole cast of char-
acters has been invited to join the dance, Death
presents a picture of a king "ligging eaten of wormes."
In Tottell's edition the accompanying illustration is
similar to those found in the MS British Museum Additional 37049, and shows a well-dressed personage pointing to a bier upon which his likeness lies naked, with worms twining along his limbs:

Ye folke that loke vpon this portrature, 
Beholdinge here all estates daunce, 
Seeth what ye been & what is your nature: 
Meat vnto wormes; nought els in substaunce. 
And haueth this mirrour aye in remembraunce, 
Hows I lye here whylem crowned a kyng, 
To al estates a true resemblaunce, 
That wormes foode is fine of our liuyng. 
(pp. 1043-44, 11. 633-40)

Man's life is brief and ends with this dance; there is no better victory than to gain Paradise.

There is a curious discrepancy between the poetic expression and the graphic illustration of the Dance of Death. When Death is drawn as a grinning skeleton there is an atmosphere of malevolence surrounding his figure that does not indicate Heaven in the offing for anyone he touches. The figure of Death is more similar in tone to the flamboyant devils of the later body-and-soul dialogues than to the personification of the inevitable passage from life to Heaven or Hell. The drawings from the 1485 La Danse Macabre, taken from the 1424 painting at the Innocents, show Death mocking those he touches by pulling on their robes, seizing their staffs of office, assuming threatening postures, grinning and posing as he grips them by
their arms, and making faces at them. The Holbein wood-cuts reveal even more self-conscious mockery. Death fights with the Soldier, assists the Plowman in his work, wears a stole around his bony neck when he summons the Preacher, leads the Bishop away from an aimlessly grazing flock of sheep, and struts away with the Abbot, having seized his miter, wearing it himself, and flourishing the crozier.

Holbein also executed an Alphabet of Death in which each of the letters appears against a scene of Death seizing his victims and mockingly attempting to drag them away. The Emperor is confronted by Death wearing a crown, the Nun is led away by Death dressed in a habit, the Jester struggles with Death in high boots crowned with a wreath, and Death catches the hands of the child in the cradle as if to play. The scene behind the Z is that of the Last Judgment, with the righteous separated from the sinners by a rainbow upon which sits Christ.

Holbein's Death is not merely a skeleton, but a leering, mocking travesty of the doorway to eternal life. There is a sense of finality about the Dance.

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80 Marchant, pp. 16-31.
81 Holbein.
82 Douce, pp. 221-22.
of Death illustrations and a sense that the people
touched by Death are damned.

The shift in the consideration of death marks
the beginning of the development of the macabre and
indicates a divergence of theme in the body-and-soul
legend. The theological examination of sin and re-
demption, no longer tied to grim warnings of death
and bodily corruption, is reserved for more abstract
speculation, while the grotesque and gruesome con-
siderations of death are appropriated by the imagination
of the popular culture in drama, poetry, fiction, and
the graphic arts. The mode of address or dialogue
is no longer a vehicle for argument, the stoic tone
of the early expressions of the legend has disappeared,
and the effective mingling of concern for the soul with
grim details of warning has no place in the literature
of the Renaissance. Certain details handed down from
Egyptian literature, patristic writings, and visionary
literature occasionally appear in later works, but the
legend of the body and the soul found an appropriate
voice in a restricted form only during a time when the
concerns expressed by that legend were dominant in the
culture and when people were willing to accept such
warnings to amend their lives.

The evidence from the later versions of the Ars
Moriendi, which were largely prayers for the dying,
suggests that the Christian consideration of death is no longer that of determining responsibility for sin but that of preparation for death. At the same time the grotesque and bony figure of Death itself with its terrors and fears of the unknown stalks through contemporary art, tugging at the sleeves of men. When these two elements operated together in the body-and-soul legend, the terror and fear were grounded in the reality of avoidance of Hell and damnation; death was an inevitable passage to eternity. When the elements became separated, Death became something to be feared in itself, and, like whistling as one passes a graveyard, an element of mockery and grim humor crept into the theme of death and the grave, based on the notion that "it can't happen to me." Bravado in the face of death produced the macabre, as the admonitory legend of the body and soul breathed its last.
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