of settlements continu’d upon matri-
chemical sentence for Bickerstaff.
The interrelations of the two manu-
ished essays confirms the familiar
 deep in Wortley’s debt for sub-
plication. Examination further re-
phrases and hints from Wort-
passages from his second version,
ated a lengthy passage from Wort-
revisions and omissions. Wher-
e: and removals, he accomplished an
rectness, polish, and consonance of
the details of author- and editor-
the eminent periodical a liberal,
stant social topic. And throughout
more than the second, Bickerstaff
ical tone which often reflects the
and appropriate touch that is the
of Addison.
years before his marriage to the
tribute his words and ideas on the
ation. The chapter ends two years
ladin revived the Spectator
 a letter on the Widow Club, a
aged in the politics of “How to
Husband.” Precisely four
ed a letter from Madam President
omy life with six husbands, a life
lly. This sextuple “widow”
then a very new mother. 1
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men and women have established a

POPE AND BOETHIUS

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Pope’s interest in the De consolatione philosophiae of Boethius is
attested by his partial translation of the ninth meter of the third
book, completed, perhaps, “not later than 1710.” 1 The transla-
tion involves only the first four and the last seven lines of the or-
iginal meter, leaving the intervening seventeen lines unused. The
meter itself is a kind of poetic summary of the beginning of Plato’s
Timaeus, although it is probable that Boethius was actually inter-
ested in the Christian implications of these materials. Pope’s
translation omits the obviously Platonic content of the meter, so
that the result gives impression of being a thoroughly Christian
prayer. In the original the poem is an invocation to “the Father
of all things.” It begins,

O qui perpetua mundum ratione gubernas
Terrarum caeleque sator qui tempus ab aequo
Ire iubes stabilisque manent das cuncta moueri,
Quem non externae pepulerunt fingere causae...

Pope translates:

O thou, whose all-creating hands sustain
The radiant Heav’ns, and Earth, and ambient main!
Eternal Reason! whose presiding soul
Informs great nature and directs the whole!
Who wert, e’re time his rapid race begun,
And wert’st the years in long procession run:

1 Minor Poems, ed. Norman Ault and John Butt (London 1954) 74. The
note on the title refers to “De Consolatione Philosophiae, lib. 3, metrum I.” The
reference should read, “metrum IX.” In this article the text of Boethius is
quoted from the Loeb edition.

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note on the title refers to “De Consolatione Philosophiae, lib. 3, metrum I.” The
reference should read, “metrum IX.” In this article the text of Boethius is
quoted from the Loeb edition.
Who fix't thy self amidst the rowling frame,  
Gav'st all things to be chang'd, yet ever art the same! ¹

The expression "perpetua... ratione," which emphasizes the idea that God continuously maintains a reasonable order in His guidance of the world, gives rise to Pope's more explicitly Christian epithet, "Eternal Reason." The use of Reason here rather than the more traditional Wisdom is faintly suggestive of a attitude toward the Deity somewhat like that expressed by Locke's "eternal cogitative being." Again, "terrarium caelique sator" produces the generalized "all-creating hands," and, in addition to heaven and earth, the "ambient main," added, perhaps, for the sake of rhyme. It is possible that Pope may have remembered the "fluctus avidum mare" of 2, met. 8. The original reflects the Platonic doctrine of the creation of time, familiar in the Timaeus, but Pope's "Who wert, e're time his rapid race begun" emphasized the eternity of God in a manner suggestive of conventional interpretations of the opening verses of the Gospel of John. Changes in emphasis in the translation of the last seven lines are not so marked. However, the original concludes with the lines,

Tu requies tranquilla pinis,  
Principium, usque, semita, terminus idem.

Pope substitutes the righteous for the pious, perhaps to suggest rational justice:

In thee the righteous find  
Calm rest, and soft serenity of mind.

Finally, in the last line he once more emphasizes the idea of eternity:

Our utmost bound, and our eternal stay!

Altogether, Pope showed little interest at this time in the expression of Christian ideas in Platonic language. His translation is an interpretation which leaves nothing puzzling or misleading for the "righteous" reader.

The editors of Pope's Minor Poems suggest a parallel between lines 3-4, 7-8 as they are quoted above and lines 267-270 of the first Epistle of The Essay on Man: ²

All are but parts of one great frame,  
Whose body Nature is,  
That, chang'd thro' all,  
Great in the earth, as in the air.

Although Professor Maynard's passage in the notes to his edition indicates that the ideas it contains have never been thought of as "world-soul," a concept which purposes throughout the Middle Ages of the twelfth century. The structure of the meter which Pope did use:

Tu triculisciam mediocriter  
Conectens animam per ait.

This fact suggests that if Pope had any use for his lines in the Essay, he was the translation. Be that as it may, which may have been suggested.

For example, in 1, 5, 131ff., and 135ff., into "the Absurdity of conceiving a Creation":

Ask for what end the heavens  
Earth for whose use? Per use.

"For me kind Nature with her view  
"Suckles each herb, and  
"Annual for me, the gras  
"The juice nectareous, and  
"For me, the mine a thes.  
"For me, health gushes from  
"Seas roll to waft me, surf  
"My foot-stool earth, my  

With this we may compare Deserunt pedes mei:

An uos agrorum pulchritudo deleit  
operis pulchra portio. Sic quoniam

¹ Quoted from the edition of M.
² Pope's note as quoted by Mack.
POPE AND BOETHIUS

All are but parts of one stupendous whole,
Whose body Nature is, and God the soul;
That, chang'd thro' all, and yet in all the same,
Great in the earth, as in th' aerial frame...  

Although Professor Maynard Mack cites other parallels for this passage in the notes to his edition of the poem which certainly indicate that the ideas it contains were not uncommon, the lines may nevertheless be thought of as a reflection of the Boethian meter. The second line quoted above includes the Platonic concept of the "world-soul," a concept which had been widely used for Christian purposes throughout the Middle Ages, especially after the middle of the twelfth century. The same concept appears in the portion of the meter which Pope did not translate:

Tu triplicis median naturae cuncta mouentem
Conectens animam per consona membra resoluit.

This fact suggests that if Pope had the meter in mind when he wrote his lines in the Essay, he was thinking of the original and not of his translation. Be that as it may, there are other passages in the Essay which may have been suggested by Pope's reading of Boethius.

For example, in 1.5.131ff., Pride, or the proud man, falls into "the Absurdity of conceiting himself the Final Cause of the Creation":

Ask for what end the heav'nly bodies shine,
Earth for whose use? Pride answers, "'Tis for mine:
"For me kind Nature wakes her genial pow'r,
"Suckles each herb, and spreads out ev'ry flow'r;
"Annual for me, the grape, the rose renew
"The juice nectarous, and the balmy dew;
"For me, the mine a thousand treasures brings;
"For me, health gushes from a thousand springs;
"Seas roll to waft me, suns to light me rise;
"My foot-stool earth, my canopy the skies."

With this we may compare De cons. 2, pr. 5:  
An unus agrorum pulchritudo delectat? Quidni? Est enim pulcherrimi operis pulchra portio. Sic quondam sereni maris facie gaudemus; sic

1 Quoted from the edition of Maynard Mack (London 1950).
2 Pope's note as quoted by Mack, ibid. 31.
caelum sidera lunam solemque miramur. Num te horum aliquid attingit?
Num audeis alcuin alium splendore gloriaris? An uernis floribus ipse
distingueris aut tua in aestiuos fructus intumescebit ubertas? Quid inanibus
gaudis raperis? Quid externa bona pro tuis amplexar is?

The heavenly bodies and the annual succession of Nature’s bounties
display, as Pope says in his essay “On Nature and Death,” the
“Wisdom and Power of their Creator”; they are not the special
property of any single man. Pope goes on to condemn the proud,
as he says in his note, for “expecting that perfection in the moral
world which is not in the natural.” Just as there are plagues and
earthquakes, deviations in nature, so there are deviations in man:

If plagues and earthquakes break not Heav’n’s design,
Why then a Borgia, or a Catiline?
The proper attitude toward both forms of deviation is to submit:

Why charge we Heav’n in those, in these acquit?
In both, to reason right is to submit.

We may find a similar attitude toward natural disasters and tyrants
in De cons. 1. met. 4:

Quisquis composito serenus aequo
Fatasm sub pedibus egit superbum
Fortunamque tuens utramque rectus
Insultum potuit tenere ultium,
Non illum rabies minacque ponti
Versum funditus exagitantis aestum
Nec ruptis quoties uagus caminis
Torquet fumificis Vesaeus ignes
Aut celsas solit jure turre
Ardentes uia fulminis mouebit.

Pope concludes that

The gen’ral Order, since the whole began,
Is kept in Nature, and is kept in Man.

It is certainly Lady Philosophy’s intention to demonstrate the Prov-
dential order in the affairs of men, and she has exactly the same


problem to contend with that the
astute Boethius complains, i. 1.

Ommna certo fine gubern
Hominum solos respues t
Merito recto cohibit mi

The first book of the Essay contains the
downright statements of the juri

terature :

All Nature is but Art, and
All Chance, Direction, with
All Discord, Harmony, in
All partial Evil, universal
And, spite of Pride, in
One truth is clear, “We

Professor Mack observes in a pa
line is “the theme of Boethius’
, it forms a part of the thematic
, a part of the argument stated
specifically in 5. pr. 1 :

Si quidem, iniquit, aliquis eventum
conexione productum casum esse cum
tino et praeter subiectae rei sig
esse decerno. Quis enim coercente
 temeritati reliquis potest? Quo
geritur aliquid quibusdam de caus
casus uocatur, ut si quis colendi ap
pondus inueniat. Hoc igiur fortu
non de nihilo est; nam proprias ca
natusque concursus casum uidetur

The harmony of creation is emp
idea that “partial evil” is actually
in 4. pr. 7: “Ommnem... bonam p
Lady Philosophy does not say in
is right,” she says something ve
quidquid citra spem vides gen

problem to contend with that Pope faced later. For the disconsolate Boethius complains, 1. met. 5:

Omnia certe fine gubernans
Hominum solos respuis actus
Merito rector cohibere modo.

The first book of the Essay concludes with one of the most downright statements of the justice of Providence in English literature:

All Nature is but Art, unknown to thee;
All Chance, Direction, which thou canst not see;
All Discord, Harmony, not understood;
All partial Evil, universal Good:
And, spite of Pride, in erring Reason's spite,
One truth is clear, "Whatever is, is right."

Professor Mack observes in a note to this passage that its second line is "the theme of Boethius's De cons. phil." 1 More properly, it forms a part of the thematic structure of that work, just as it is a part of the argument stated in Pope's lines. The idea appears specifically in 5. pr. 1:

Si quidem, inquit, aliquis euentum temerario motu nullaque causarum consequione productum casum esse definit, nihil omnino casum esse confirmo et praeter subiectae rei significationem inanem prorsus uocem esse decernio. Quis enim coercente in ordinem cuncta deo loco esse ullus temeritati religius potest?... Quotiens, ait, aliquid cuiusquam rei gratia geritur aliquidque quisbudam de causis quam quod intendebat obtingit, causum uocatur, ut si quis colendi agri causa fodiens humum defossi aurum pondus inueniat. Hoc igitur fortuito quidem creditur accidisse, uerum non de nihiloe est; nam proprias causas habet quorum improuisus inopinatusque concursus casum uidetur operatus.

The harmony of creation is emphasized in 2. met. 8. Again, the idea that "partial evil" is actually good is stated in terms of Fortune in 4. pr. 7: "Omnem... bonam prorsus esse fortunam." Although Lady Philosophy does not say in so many words, "Whatever is, is right," she says something very similar (4. pr. 6): "Hic igitur quidquid citra spern videas geri, rebus quidem rectus ordo est,

opinioni uero tuae peruersa confusio." Moreover, she denies the possibility of evil (3. pr. 12): "Malum igitur... nihil est, cum id facere ille non posse, qui nihil non potest ".

The second epistle of Pope's Essay yields no very striking parallels with the De consolatione philosophiae. Epistle 3, however, contains a description of the "chain of Love" (lines 7 ff.) which, as Professor Mack indicates in his note, has as one of its antecedents De cons. 2. met. 8. Again, both Boethius (2. met. 5) and Pope (lines 147 ff.) describe the Golden Age, but with rather different purposes in mind. In Epistle 4, after explaining that happiness does not lie "in Externals," Pope continues,

Fortune her gifts may variously dispose,
And these be happy call'd, unhappy those;
But Heav'n's just balance equal will appear,
While those are plac'd in Hope, and these in Fear;
Not present good or ill, the joy or curse,
But future views of better, or of worse.
Oh sons of earth! attempt ye still to rise,
By mountains piled on mountains, to the skies?

The idea that fortune creates hope and fear appears in the last meter of the first book of the De consolatione:

Tu quoque si uis
Lumine claro
Cernere uerum,
Tramite recto
Carpere callem,
Gaudia pelle,
Pelle timorem
Spemque fugato
Nec dolor adsit.

Lady Philosophy here admonishes her pupil to avoid hope and fear based on externals. She had said earlier (1. met. 4),

At quisquis trepidus pauet uel optat,
Quod non sit stabilis suiue iuris,
Abiecit cliepeum locoque motus
Nectit qua ualeat trahi catenam.

Although Pope's initial point about the equalizing effects of hope and fear is not in Boethius, his admonition to the "sons of earth"

makes essentially the same point. The "sons of earth" are, of course, those who "hope to achieve happiness" as Boethius says (4. met. 7), says Professor Mack calls attention to in the language of 2. pr. 6: "Quis dissercam quae uos uerae dignitatis?"

Pope continues by asserting and the senses lie in "Health,Brightness, founded on virtue. The gifts of virtue or to the vicious, but the virtuous,
The good or bad the gift, but these less taste then Say, in pursuit of profit Who risk the most, that Of Vice or Virtue, which meets contempt, Count all th'advantage pab Tis but what Virtue fie The idea that the wicked "take of happiness and gain only that explained at length in De cons. passage concludes with the follow wicked: "Faciunt enim quaelibet id bonum quod desiderant se ad
cunctur, quoniam ad beatitudinem are truly happy, Pope says, who evide:

Oh blind to truth, and Who fancy Bliss to Vice Who sees and follows the Best knows the blessing, It is clearly Lady Philosophy's dis scheme " so that he may find

1 Ibid. 135.
makes essentially the same point that Boethius does. The "sons of earth" are, of course, those who set their hearts on earthly things and hope to achieve happiness from them. They need to learn, as Boethius says (4, met. 7) "superata tellus sidera donat." Professor Mack calls attention to a parallel between Pope's figure and the language of 2, pr. 6: "Quid autem de dignitatis potentiaque disseram quae uos ueret dignitatis ac potestatis insci caelo exaequatis?"

Pope continues by asserting that the real pleasures of reason and the senses lie in "Health, Peace, and Competence," which are founded on virtue. The gifts of Fortune may fall either to the virtuous or to the vicious, but they cannot make the vicious happy:

The good or bad the gifts of Fortune gain,
But these less taste them, as they the worse obtain.
Say, in pursuit of profit or delight,
Who risk the most, that take wrong means, or right?
Of Vice or Virtue, whether blest or curst,
Which meets contempt, or which compassion first?
Count all th'advantage pros'rous Vice attains,
'Tis but what Virtue flies from and disdains.

The idea that the wicked "take wrong means" in their pursuit of happiness and gain only that which the virtuous "disdain" is explained at length in De cons. 3, pr. 2 and 4, pr. 2. The latter passage concludes with the following observation concerning the wicked: "Faciant enim quaelibet, dum per ea quibus delectantur id bonum quod desiderant se adepturos putant; sed minime adipsantur, quoniam ad beatitudinem probra non venient." They are truly happy, Pope says, who see and follow the scheme of Providence:

Oh blind to truth, and God's whole scheme below,
Who fancy Bliss to Vice, to Virtue Woe!
Who sees and follows that great scheme the best,
Best knows the blessing, and will most be blest.

It is clearly Lady Philosophy's desire to show her pupil this "great scheme" so that he may find happiness in following it.

1 Ibid. 135.
As for worldly advantages, Pope explains at length that wealth, honors, titles, birth, greatness, fame, and superior parts do not bring true happiness. The discussion very roughly parallels that in De cons. 3, where the emptiness of a similar series of advantages is described. Specific arguments are sometimes similar as well. Pope's treatment of honors concludes,

Worth makes the man, and want of it, the fellow;
The rest is all but leather or prunella.

We shall look in vain for "leather or prunella" in Boethius, but in 3. met. 4 we learn that the costume of high office may adorn the wicked:

Quamuis se Tyrio superbus ostro
Comeret et nieueis lapillis,
Inuisu s tamen omnibus uigebat
Luxuriae Nero saeuentis.
Sed quondam dabat improbus uerendis
Patribus indecoros curules.
Quis illos igitur putet beatos
Quos miseri tribuent honores?

Boethius had also said (3. pr. 4) that worth makes the man: "Inest enim dignitas propria uitutu, quam protinus in eos quibus fuerit adiuncta transfundit." With reference to titles, Pope expresses some doubts about purity of lineage in noble families, but he concludes,

What can ennoble sots, or slaves, or cowards?
Alas! not all the blood of all the Howards.

In other words, nobility lies in worth rather than in ancestry, an idea vividly expressed in De cons. 3. pr. 6, and met. 6. Summing up, Pope says,

Bring then these blessings to a strict account,
Make fair deductions, see to what they mount.
How much of other each is sure to cost;
How each for other oft is wholly lost...

The idea that the pursuit of one false good can be made only at the expense of others appears in De cons. 3. pr. 9:
POPE AND BOETHIUS

Qui diuitiae, inquit, petit penuriae fuga, de potentia nihil laborat, uillis obscusurque esse maulit, multas etiam sibi naturales quoque subtrahit uoluptates, ne pecuniam quam paravit amittat. Sed hoc modo ne sufficientia quidem contingit ei quem ulenti deserit, quem molestia pungit, quem uilitas abicit, quem recondit obscuritas. Qui uero solum posse desiderat, profigit opes, despicit uoluptates, honoremque potentia car- rentem gloriam quoque nihil pendit. Sed quonque quoque multa deficient uides. Fit enim ut aliquando necessariis egeat, ut anxietiesbuis mordeatur cumque haec depellere nequeat, etiam id quod maxime po- tebat potens esse desisstat. Similiter ratiocinari de honoribus, gloria, uo- luptatibus licet.

Finally, the principle with which Pope concludes, “Virtue alone is Happiness below,” is explained at length in De cons. 4. pr. 3.

In general, Pope's arguments are not quite so rigorous as those of Boethius, perhaps because he could expect his audience to fill in for him from the stock of commonplace Christian thought. He does not push their implications quite so far either, except, perhaps in the concluding lines of the first Epistle. Whether or not he actually had the De consolatione in mind when he wrote his Essay would be difficult to decide. The ideas and the figurative language of Boethius had been widely imitated for centuries at the time Pope wrote, so that he might easily have found both elsewhere. Nevertheless, the early translation of the meter does indicate that Boethius may have had a formative influence on Pope's thought. The fact that there are certain similarities between the De consolatione philosophiae and The Essay on Man, moreover, reinforces the conclusion long since established by students of Pope that the content of the Essay is essentially traditional.